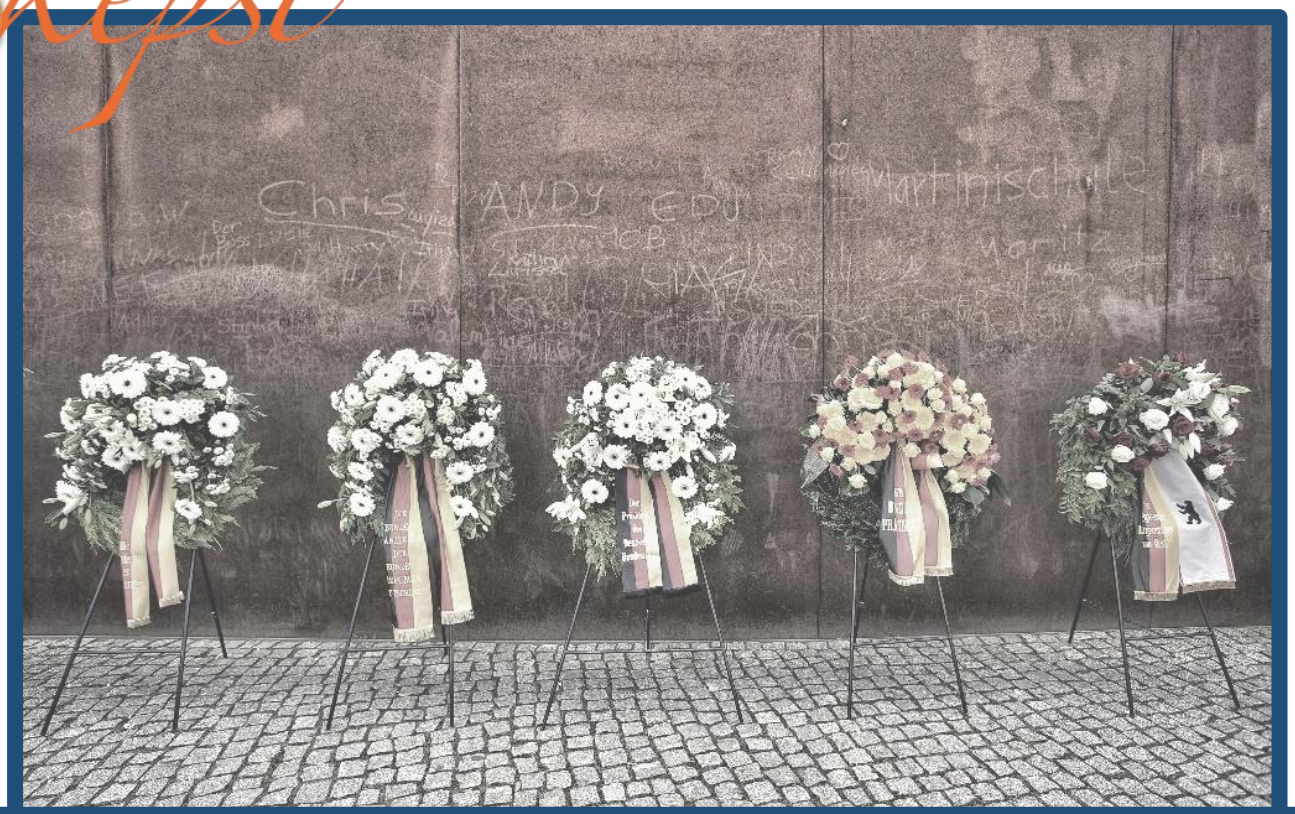
Skepsi



Volume 9 — Winter 2018/19 **Borders**

Urban Caravanserais, Translational Practices and Transcultural Commons in the Age of Global Mobility
Arianna Dagnino — *The University of Ottawa*
On the Right Side — Borders of Belonging
Nadja Stamselberg — *Regent's University London*

Volume 10 — Winter 2018/19 **Remembrance of Things Past**

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University of Kent

ISSN 1758-2679

COVER IMAGE: BERNAUER STRAßE, BERLIN; Lobo Studio, Hamburg
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The aim of *Skepsi*'s editorial board is twofold: to honour the spirit of SECL by striving to take advantage of its unique position as a crossroads in academic studies in Europe and to become a forum for European postgraduate researchers and postdoctoral scholars by developing collective thinking processes in the context of academic research.

Our title, S*kepsi* — which comes from the Ancient Greek 'σκέψις [skepsis]' or 'enquiry' and the Modern Greek 'σκέψη [sképsi]' or 'thought' — symbolises our will to explore new areas and new methods in the traditional fields of academic research in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Originality and creativity in the approach of thought and of texts are crucial for us: to enhance and to promote these aspects will be our contribution to the tremendous range of existing academic publications.

Skepsi

The interdisciplinary online journal of European thought and theory in humanities and social sciences

VOLUMES 9 & 10, WINTER 2018/19
ISSN 1758-2679
http://blogs.kent.ac.uk/skepsi
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Acknowledgements

With the publication of this issue, we would like to thank everyone who was involved with our conferences in 2016 and 2017, *Borders* and *Time to Remember: Anniversaries, Commemorations and Celebrations*.

First and foremost, we take this opportunity to thank Professor Glenn Bowman of the University of Kent and Professor Julian Wolfreys of the University of Portsmouth, the keynote speakers of *Borders* and *Time to Remember: Anniversaries, Commemorations and Celebrations* respectively, as well as all those who presented papers at the conferences, some of whom travelled a considerable distance to do so. Thanks are due to those who submitted articles for consideration as well as peer reviewers and the loyal team of copy editors. proof readers and formatters. We thank all of them for their hard work to keep up the quality of the journal.

As always, we have said farewell to several of our members. David Bremner and Dominique Carlini-Versini, who were both involved with *Borders*, left us at the beginning of the 2017/18 academic year, as did Joyce Leung, who was involved with *Time to Remember: Anniversaries, Commemorations and Celebrations*. Ann Kinzer who was Conference Co-ordinator for *Time to Remember: Anniversaries, Commemorations and Celebrations* and *Wandering and Home*, our 2018 Conference, left us at the beginning of the current academic year, as well as Louise Willis, the Journal Co-ordinator in 2016/17, and Juan Luis Toribio Vasquez, who has been involved with our conferences in 2017 and 2018. We wish them all well in the future. In their place we welcome Silvia Esposito, Muradiye Kiyak, Zsofia Millich, and Mihaela Varzari, who joined us in 2017, and Sophie Chavarria, Santiago Fernandez, Marek Iwaniak, and Sara Bouhaddi, our latest recruits.

Finally, as this double volume incorporates our tenth, we pay tribute to everyone who has been involved with *Skepsi* since its inception in 2007. A list of all the annual conferences that have taken place, all the issues that have been published, and the names of all editors will be found at the end of this issue.

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Foreword

The image on the front cover of this issue depicts what is probably one of the most notorious man-made structures of modern times: the Berlin Wall or, as it was officially known by the regime which constructed it, the *Antifaschistischer Schutzwall* [Anti-Fascist Protection Rampart]. During the thirty or so years of its existence, it marked a physical border, the one that separated East and West Berlin. It also came to be regarded as a symbol of the ideological divide between East and West Europe, the 'iron curtain' that 'descended across the continent' after WW2, as Churchill described it in his speech of 5 March 1946.

The Berlin Wall is no more; it is a memory in the minds of those who lived with its presence. Following the opening of the border on 9 November 1989, people set about demolishing it; official demolition began the following summer, and today only a few sections remain. They serve not only as a reminder of Wall itself and the ideologies that divide peoples but also as a monument to the many people who died in their attempt to get out of one regime for whatever reason and live in another; the flowers in the image are tributes to their memory. The image thus represents the themes of this double issue of *Skepsi* which presents articles resulting from *Borders* and *Time to Remember – Anniversaries, Celebration and Commemoration*. the conferences of 2016 and 2017 respectively.

One definition of the term 'border' is the dividing line or frontier between political or geographical regions. Unsurprisingly, many of the papers that were delivered at the conference held on 27 May 2017 focussed on this concept of a border. However, as is illustrated by the Berlin Wall, a border can be the invisible line of demarcation that distinguishes intellectual concepts. The two articles selected for *Borders* and published in this issue, one of which began life as a paper delivered at the conference, reflect on the border's physical and intellectual functions.

The first of these, Arianna Dagnino's 'Urban Caravanserais, Translational Practices and Transcultural Commons in the Age of Global Mobility', takes as its starting point the phenomena that Arianna terms 'neo-nomadism' and the 'neo-nomad', terms that remind us nomadism as a way of life and the nomad have existed for millennia and still do, though with increasing difficulty. The focus of her article is how to alleviate both the 'sense of displacement, disconnection or de-rootedness' experienced by today's migrants and the ''anxiety [resulting from] a perception of fragmentation of community and of disruption of social cohesion' experienced by the host societies into which they eventually settle. The solution is not, she argues, to try and enforce cultural assimilation on migrants or even adopt a policy of

multiculturalism both of which 'hinge upon and sanction the stifling "us" and "them" dichotomy' but to embrace transculturality, a perspective that 'rejects the idea of cultures as discrete, self-contained units'. To do this, we can learn from the past, to the caravanserais of past centuries, the 'open-ended, trans-social, trans-class and intercultural […] "spaces"' that used to be found along the trade routes of Asia, north Africa and south-east Europe and 'promoted the crossing of ethnic, religious, and national identity boundaries'.

The 'stifling "us" and "them" dichotomy' is further explored by Nadja Stamselberg in 'On the Right Side — Borders of Belonging', in which she examines how the complex ontology of borders requires a rethinking of the philosophical concepts of identity and the concept of hospitality from a philosophical standpoint, in particular the Deriddean aporia, the contradiction between two of Kant's *dicta*: on the one hand, that the stranger in our midst has a right to expect unconditional hospitality, and, on the other, that residence in a foreign country can only be exercised by invitation and can therefore be hedged about by conditions.

The title of the 2017 conference reflects the fact that it was our tenth, so our intention was to invite an exploration of the phenomenon of marking anniversaries, particularly significant ones such as a centenary, with either celebration or commemoration, depending on the event being remembered. In the event, none of the articles submitted addressed this phenomenon, but, rather than abandon what would have been the tenth volume of *Skepsi*, the decision was taken to wait until articles, if any, had been selected for publication after peer review and then choose a title that reflected a common thread that ran through them. All of the three articles selected, one of which began as a paper presented at the conference, introduced aspects of remembering, hence Volume 10's title, *Remembrance of Things Past*.

The first of these, Kimberley Bulgin's 'The Refugee Identity Crisis: How Athens is Trying to Bridge the Gap Between a Person and their Homeland through Heritage and Meaning Making' discusses the relevance of heritage in the context of the refugees now living in Greece as a result of political events in early 2016. She argues that the steps which have so far been taken by Athens to settle refugees and encourage them to think of Greece as home by making use of heritage, both Greek heritage and that of the refugees, could be interpreted as steps towards creating a transcultural community, echoing Arianna's modern caravanserai.

Heritage, or rather the way heritage can metamorphose into a parody of itself when the peoples of whose culture it is part are subjected to outside influences and become too distanced from their roots, is discussed in 'Waldimir Kaminer and Jewish Identity in "Multikulti" Germany', in which Joseph Cronin explores the phenomenon of the *Kontingentflüchtlinge*

[Quota Refugees], Russian-speaking Jews allowed into, first, the former German Democratic Republic and, after re-unification, the Federal Republic of Germany between 1990 and 2006 through the medium of Waldimir Kaminer's fiction, in particular *Russendisko* [Russian Disco], a collection of short stories. These are loosely based on his own experiences as a *Kontingentflüchtling* and his observations of the problems and tensions that resulted as the *Kontingentflüchtlinge* joined communities of *Alteingesessenen* [Old-established] Jews, some of which stemmed from the way the immigrants' knowledge and understanding of Jewish traditions had been corrupted by decades of living in the highly antisemitic regime of the former Soviet Union.

The memories at the core of Nihad Laouar's article '"It is at the ghosts within us that we shudder": Voicing the Anxieties of Liminality in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*' are those of the horrific experiences on the Western Front during WW1 that haunt the troubled Septimus Warren Smith in *Mrs. Dalloway* and ultimately bring about his suicide.

Serendipitously, all three of these articles directly or indirectly refer to borders. Migrants, whether voluntary, as were the *Kontingentflüchtlinge*, or enforced, as are the refugees currently in Greece, have, by definition, crossed at least one border; the focus of Nihad's article is the phenomenon of liminality, of being on the margins, in a 'no-man's land' between two conditions. Likewise, the first two articles introduce elements of remembering or, arguably, not remembering: the caravanserais of yesteryear show us how to resolve the problems that arise from today's global mobility: philosophical concepts that have become too inflexible to accommodate the conflicting expectations of the migrant and host societies need to be, if not forgotten, then certainly rethought. In a year which has seen the centenary of the Armistice and the eightieth anniversary of Kristallnacht, the themes of borders and remembering are particularly relevant. We commend this issue to you.

Skepsi

Volumes 9 & 10, WINTER 2018/19
BORDERS & REMEMBRANCE OF THINGS PAST

Urban Caravanserais, Translational Practices and Transcultural Commons in the Age of Global Mobility

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Abstract

We are living in times of massive migratory flows, increasing ethnic tensions, and cultural/religious radicalisations. One of the possible solutions to address partially the negative aspects of economic globalisation and the disruptive effects of mass-migrations (including ghettoisation, diminished home affordability, urban anomie) on both diasporic communities and receiving societies is to envisage new housing complexes meant as poly-functional hubs of mutual hospitality. This article puts forward the suggestion to rediscover — in its rather idealised form — the socio-cultural concept, symbolic role, and translational practices of the caravanserai, the place which, in late antiquity, lodged nomads and allowed people on the move to meet and interact with members of sedentary communities. Contemporary architects and designers have already started re-envisioning the role of the caravanserai as a transcultural 'third space' that courageously cuts across ethnic, cultural, linguistic, and religious borders. The 21st century development of the urban caravanserai may also be understood as a model for highly inclusive low-rise, high density urban housing complexes. This model — the transcultural Commons — contemplates a mix of residential units, commercial, and trades activities, craftsman workshops, arts studios, educational enterprises, and public spaces for active fruition. By blurring the boundaries between residential, commercial, social, and creative spaces, it reinstates the productive use of property and the residents' engagement with the Commons.[1]

Keywords: Neo-nomadism, global nomads, caravanserai, global mobility, sedentarism, diasporic communities, cultural identity, static quality, dynamic quality, housing, low-rise, high density, transcultural Commons, third space, neoliberal capitalism, cultural translation, translational practices.

The present article starts with a brief overview of key aspects related to neo-nomadism, migrancy, the negative impact of global mobility, and the power of identity. It then

[1] This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

introduces the notion of transculturality (Epstein 2004, 2009; Welsch 1999, 2009) and links it to the figure of the 'transcultural nomad'. Further, it illustrates the significance of 'transcultural third spaces' (Dagnino 2015) and the balancing dynamics of 'static quality' and 'dynamic quality' (Pirsig 1991) in correlation with the role of the caravanserai in late antiquity. After describing the latest urban developments and property practices according to a neo-liberal agenda (in that respect, cities such as London, New York, and Vancouver are typical), it outlines the possibly redeeming role of modern caravanserais and transcultural Commons.

1. The Janus face of global mobility

When, twenty years ago, I wrote a book titled *I nuovi nomadi* ('New Nomads' 1996), a whole plethora of new communication technologies was ushering us into the digital age. Among other things, the information revolution fostered opportunities for global-local interactions, itinerant life-styles, and de-territorialised work patterns. Within this context of increasing global mobility, I envisaged the emergence of a new social figure — the neo-nomad — and of a new existential approach — 'neo-nomadism'. I described neo-nomads (or global nomads) as individuals:

> capable of easily swimming in the waters of ethnic, social and linguistic differences […] great experts in sudden metamorphoses […] who know how to adapt to a world where it will no longer be possible to track down a centre, a direction, a perpetually steady point of reference (Dagnino 1996: 13–14).[2]

I thought of them as pioneers of a new kind of existential and professional mobility — away from linear, consolidated career paths, stubborn material accumulation, unsustainable development, and static, enclosed identities.

In hindsight, this characterisation seems to have captured the symbolic essence of our liquid, de-massifying, and post-industrial times (Bauman 2007, 2011). Twenty years later, though, I am here to acknowledge the somewhat limited scope of that early vision of the neo-nomadic phenomenon. In that slim book, while analysing the socio-cultural effects of a new array of digital technologies, I mainly and inevitably focused on the lifestyle and the ensuing worldview of a specific kind of border-crosser professionals, the so-called 'knowledge workers' (Drucker 1999). This meant, however, overlooking some crucial and critical challenges posed by global mobility in its broadest meaning and development. At that time, in fact, I only scantily dealt with what we may call 'the collateral damages of global mobility' and the stark differences between voluntary nomadism and nomadism by constraint — the one practised perforce by (economic) refugees, exiles, and migrant labourers. In the final chapter of the book, which I

[2] My translation.

entitled 'The Faustian Pact', I mentioned 'the disruptions induced by intercultural exchanges and/or by dislocation'; I even listed 'the sense of de-rootedness and estrangement, the loss of identity, and the isolation of the outsider (whether he or she is a migrant, a nomad, an expatriate, an exile, or a refugee)'. Yet my attention was set upon specific individual subjects and their 'personal legend' (Dagnino 1996: 125).

2. The reifying power of cultural identities

Since then, I have spent a great deal of time studying how global mobility impacts on individuals, groups, and societies. One aspect in particular has drawn my attention and led me to re-visit and expand my early theorisations in this area of studies. This critical element is what I call the reifying power of cultural identities (see also Hannerz 1996; Bayart 2005). This power is best seen in action in times and places of massive migratory flows. On the one hand, it feeds upon the sense of displacement, disconnection, or de-rootedness experienced by the newcomers (let us call them *the guests*). On the other hand, it is nourished by the anxiety that members of host societies develop due to a perception of fragmentation of community ties and of disruption of social cohesion. As a result, these massive migratory flows lead, more often than not, to a reassertion and radicalisation of cultural, ethnic, or religious identities in both groups — the guests and the hosts, the immigrant and the receiving. This trajectory eventuates into two broad options in terms of ideologies and their ensuing state policies. The first one — which we might call assimilationism — sanctions mainstream authority over society and the cultural imaginary that underpins it. As various examples around the globe currently show us, this outlook can lead to expressions of nationalistic, ethnic, or religious revanchism. In this context, one culture, upholding the values of integrity and the notion of a supposed homogeneity and 'purity', strives to retain dominance over the others and/or to impose its own particularism. To the newcomers, this form of monoculturalism means they need to assimilate as quickly as possible, in the hope of being rapidly accepted by the host society (the slogan here is 'assimilate or perish'). This entails giving up one's previous cultural identity (renouncing one's language, traditions, customs), which inevitably eats away one's cultural dignity.[3] The second option is the one offered by multiculturalism, which turns out to be little more than, in Amartya Sen's words, 'plural monoculturalism' (2007: 157) and is characterised, as Mikhail Epstein puts it, by 'the pride of minorities' (2009: 329). What these scholars imply is that multicultural societies

[3] See Jeffrey C. Alexander (2001).

replicate the monocultural paradigm by 'fracturing' it in tightly knit homogeneous enclaves.[4] Such a pattern often produces cultural ghettoisation and thus may foster conflictuality as well as ethnic and national fundamentalism.[5] As Ulrich Beck notes, one of the choicest paradoxes of multiculturalism is that:

> [I]t emphatically rejects the essentialism of national homogeneity when defending minority rights, yet itself easily falls into the trap of essentialism […] Multiculturalist moralism shuts its eyes to the potential for violence which has long since been shown to result from giving free rein to ethnic identities (2006: 67).

The post-Yugoslavian writer Dubravka Ugrešić puts it a bit differently:

> The hosts do all kinds of things that they're so proud of, while it never occurs to them that maybe they do so not to pull immigrants out of the ghetto, but rather to subtly keep them there, in the ghetto of their identities and cultures […] to draw an invisible line between *us* and *them*, and thus render many social spheres inaccessible (2014: 225).

3. An alternative perspective: transculturality

Both the assimilationist and the multiculturalist propositions hinge upon and sanction the stifling 'us' and 'them' dichotomy. This disruption is being felt even within a purely literary context, where to a certain extent opposing categorisations are advocated: on the one hand, mainstream national/autochthonous writers and, on the other hand, (im)migrant or minority ethnic writers (see Castan 1996; Jurgensen 1999; Orton and Parati 2007). In both cases, cultural specificity and stressed essentialised difference (in ethnic, national, racial, religious, territorial, or linguistic terms) seem to be the epicentre of social and political organisation (and control) at the level both of the nation-state and of the state of literature.

This perspective, however, is not without alternative, and the radicalisation of cultural identity is not inevitable. A third option is possible. It is in this respect that I here introduce the transcultural proposition, on which I have been working in recent years (see Dagnino 2013, 2015). 'Transculturality' (Welsch 1999) is a perspective that frames cultures as dynamic

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[4] For a discussion on assimilation politics, multiculturalism, and interculturalism, especially in a European context, see Chiro and Vadura (2010).

[5] For Welsch (1999) it is the premise that is wrong: '[C]ompared to traditional calls for cultural homogeneity the concept [of multiculturality] is progressive, but its all too traditional understanding of cultures threatens to engender regressive tendencies which by appealing to a particularistic cultural identity lead to ghettoisation or cultural fundamentalism' (197). Epstein also challenges the mosaic multicultural model, which simply recognises the equal rights and value of self-enclosed cultures and questions the model's ability to address 'the contemporary cross-cultural flows' (2009: 329). Thus, he proposed his own interpretation of the model of cultural 'interference':

> Can we move on now from the model of difference (and *différance*) that dominated the humanities from the 1970s to the 1990s?—move on to a model of 'interference', on the assumption that the most beautiful patterns in culture (as in nature) are made by the overlap of waves coming from various traditions, periods, and disciplines? I do not mean 'interference' as in 'intrusion' or 'intervention.' I am thinking of the use that the word has in physics: the mutual action of two or several waves (of sound, light, etc.) in reinforcing or neutralising each other (Epstein 2004: 47).

processes of amalgamation and confluence. As such, it rejects the idea of cultures as discrete, self-contained units and, consequently, does not lend support to the reifying power that cultural identities tend to display in circumstances such as those induced by mass migration. Working both at a macro-cultural level and at 'the micro-level of individuals' (Welsch 2009: 8), transculturality can also represent an alternative mode of identity building which we acquire at the 'crossroads with other cultures' and which leads to a dimension beyond any given culture (Epstein 2009: 330). If we relinquish views of singularity and discreteness and accept both that culture possesses a prismatic and ever-changing nature and that cultures are open and mutually transforming organisms in constant reciprocal relation, we may find an alternative to the monocultural paradigm underpinning both the nationalist/assimilationist option and the — only nominally — multiculturalist proposition. Paraphrasing Aihwa Ong (1999) when explaining why she chose the term 'transnationality' instead of globalisation to capture 'the horizontal and relational nature of the contemporary economic, social, and cultural processes that stream across spaces,' we, too, might say that transcultural, rather than the term intercultural or cross-cultural, denotes the 'transversal, the transactional, the translational, and the transgressive aspects of contemporary behavior and imagination' triggered by the changed and changing dynamics of cultural production and identity building (1999: 4).

Assuming a transcultural perspective does not mean, however, either positing or advocating the demise of cultural identity (see Dagnino 2015: 127–29). To outgrow one's primary culture and affiliations does not mean to disown them and their foundational role, rather, it means not to be or feel limited by them. People have always tried to find out where they belong, where their cultural roots are, and they still show a desire for rootedness: 'the security of an identity' cannot be ignored or wiped out (Bartoloni 2008: 86). Yet, the still dominant model of a 'terrestrial' nationalised, and singular *identité-racine* (root-identity) seems inadequate nowadays to respond to the challenges posited by increased cultural exchanges and migratory flows (Glissant 1997).

I emphasise that assimilationism and multiculturalism, nationalism or patriotism, and local interests and affiliations are the conditions and the forms of organisation of a society, while transculture/ality is an individual condition which is hardly applicable, for obvious pragmatic reasons, at a collective level. Clearly, transcultural policies cannot be imposed by some government agency. Perhaps, transcultural societies may only exist if they are made up of increasing numbers of transcultural individuals who are able to enact translational practices and reproduce transcultural identities/modes of being. That is why transculture/ality should be

understood neither as an ideology (as the term transculturalism would imply) nor as a political stance but as a mode of identity formation, as a critical tool, and as a concept for individual artistic and cultural (that is, translational) resistance to the complex power dynamics expressed on the one hand by global capitalism and on the other hand by nation-states in this era of increasing mobility.

The transcultural perspective suggests that — in line with 'nomadic' critical theorists such as Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and Rosy Braidotti (1994, 2006) — the menace or risk of the loss of identity prompted by a destabilising world of global mobility can be overcome by adopting a postnational, rhizomatic (that is, relational), and translational sense of identity. The writer Amin Maalouf (2004), among others, encourages us to look for 'routes', not 'roots', as the concept of identity stemming from a single totalising origin (root) is discarded in favour of the notion of a plurality of paths (routes) and interpretations.[6] As a result, on the transcultural frontier identity and sense of belonging are not defined by a single, terrestrial native root (the one neatly tracing where you come from), but by an emotional network of ethereal ramifications, non-hierarchical interdependent relations, and mental cartographies: imaginary roots for 'imagined communities' (Anderson 1983).[7] In this light, transculturality suggests an approach that privileges intersections, cultural mediation (in a translational mode) and shared ventures rather than polarities and differences. In so doing, it allows us to challenge the limits of monocultural/monolingual identifications and to question their ensuing xenophobic anxieties.

4. The 5D interpretive model of transculturality

Let me push this reasoning one step further. For those who engage — due to their profession or intellectual curiosity — in investigating societal phenomena and in conceiving solutions for societal issues, transculturality may not be just a worldview and a mode of identity building but also a heuristic model. To this end, we might take into consideration what I call the 5D interpretive model of transculturality, which I have outlined in a more recent development of

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[6] A founding critique of nation-based identities has already emerged in the field of anthropology from James Clifford's *Routes* (1997), in which he outlines new forms of belonging that, in Ursula K. Heise's words, 'would transcend exclusive commitments to a particular nation, culture, race, or ethnicity in favour of more global modes of awareness and attachment' (2008: 57). Clifford shows the way in which local cultures form and manipulate their identity 'from connections to a variety of places ('routes') rather than their anchoring in just one locale ('roots')' (Heise 2008: 57).

[7] The writer Pico Iyer provides an exemplary model when he explains in his interview with Angie Brenner (2007) that to him home is not identified as a country but, rather, as a private metaphysical space, no matter where it is, where one feels comfortable: 'I am not rooted in a place, I think, so much as in certain values and affiliations and friendships that I carry everywhere I go; my home is both invisible and portable'.

my theorisation on cultural flows and global mobility (Dagnino 2015: 154). Its five dimensions are:

1) Time (that is, the historical dimension);

2) Context (in terms of socioeconomic realities, technological developments, political processes, geographical variables);

3) Practice (in terms of lived experience, language(s), communication, interaction);

4) Meaning (in terms of dominant ideologies, worldviews, cultural constructs); and

5) Agency (in terms of self-reflexivity, critical thinking, innovation, imagination, cultural translation, creative outputs).

This analytic framework provides a multi-perspectival viewpoint that acknowledges the complexity of social life and facilitates an inclusionary, interdisciplinary approach to the study of cultural products and social phenomena. The 5D model suggests taking into account first of all the specific mode of modernity in which the phenomenon or issue under investigation has developed (Time) — indeed, we know that different societies show different societal states and patterns, even when they happen to co-exist within the same timeframes. We then need to look at the socio-economic frameworks, technological innovations, political processes, geographical locations, and spaces (Context); we also have to take into consideration patterns of behaviour (Practices), as well as sources of narratives and prevailing discourses (Meaning) present at that time in that specific social arena. Last but not least, we have to include in the picture the role and voice of competent, individual human agents, with their interdependent and active experiences (Agency). What emerges from this exploration should then be read in a contrapuntal way, 'not to impose a false harmony but to achieve a counterpoint of various voices that maintains rather than smooths tension' (Nelson 2008: 206). The emergence of this polyphony of voices, voices that require processes of cultural translation and interpretation if they are to be understood and unravelled, allows us to think critically and imagine creatively in ways that do not correspond to the dominant contemporary understanding of the world with its belief attachments, political agendas, and social conditioning.[8]

[8] For an overview of the meaning and role of cultural translation and of translational processes understood as social practices, see Buden and others (2009).

5. Transcultural nomads and transcultural spaces

To conclude the exposition of this long premise, I propose endowing the symbolic figure of the neo-nomad with a more complex transcultural perspective, allowing the emergence of 'the transcultural nomad'. This shift is not merely semantic. This agent of change in global times not only views and experiences the world beyond traditional cultural dichotomies and juxtapositions but somehow fulfils a societal responsibility by promoting concepts of cultural mediation and translational practices that can open up and lead the way towards a transcultural shared 'third space'. We can think of a transcultural 'third space' (or 'transpace') not only as a 'heterotopia' (Foucault 1984)[9] but also as a mental state and intellectual sensibility achieved through a process of transculturation, or transcultural mediation/translation — this process leads to transcending 'the distinctions between aliens and nations, friends and foes, foreigners and natives' (Beck 2006: 66); it thus provides an alternative to the monocultural and monolingual paradigm embodied, on the one hand, by the forced homogeneity of assimilationism and, on the other hand, by the intrinsic separateness of multiculturalism.[10]

Transpaces do not deny the formative importance of native or national cultures and their accompanying worldviews but they allow an openness to the reception, integration and negotiation of other cultures, languages, and worldviews. These all-inclusive spaces of subjective consciousness and cultural possibilities are created anytime people gather under the sign of a third, inclusive, hybridised, globalised culture or practice (let's just think for example of yoga, global tango, soccer, Kung-Fu, rap or jazz music). For this reason, transpaces can also acquire a tangible dimension through physical locations and bodily transcultural practices.

It is not by chance that I direct the spotlight on material urban spaces, also understood as places (see Metzger).[11] Despite the increasing virtualisation of our lives, the physical — and

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[9] Heterotopia is a concept in human geography to describe places and spaces that function in non-hegemonic conditions originally elaborated by the philosopher Michel Foucault (1967) in the course of the conference *Des espaces autres* held under the auspices of the *Cercle d'études architecturales* on 14 March 1967. These are spaces of *otherness*, which are neither here nor there, that are simultaneously physical and mental, such as the space of a phone call or the moment when you see yourself in the mirror. A translation into English by Jay Misckoviec of Foucault's article, likewise entitled 'Des espaces autres' and published in 1984 in *Architecture, mouvement, ontinuité*, was subsequently published in *Diacritics* in 1986 (see Bibliography).

[10] This conceptualisation of the transcultural third space as a means of identity and relationship negotiation, where 'we may elude the politics of polarity and emerge as the others of ourselves,' resonates with Bhabha's 'third space', the 'in-between' space where hybridisation occurs, but, in many ways, it expands it (1994; see also Rutherford & Bhabha 1990).

[11] In this article, space is understood, according to a sociological perspective, as the social space in which we live and create relationship with other people, societies and surroundings. I am prone to conflate the two terms, 'places' and 'spaces', in an effort to transcend the dichotomy inherent in the way the two concepts have been historically understood in the fields of Urban Sociology and Human Geography (Agnew: 2011). Following Jörg Dürrschmidt (2000), Jayaram (2009) uses the terms 'locale' and 'milieu' instead of the more conventional pair of 'place' and 'space' (continued on next page):

not only symbolical or psychological — dimension of space maintains a fundamental and undisputed centrality. The suburbs in which we live, the boulevards and avenues along which we walk, the town squares and coffee shops in which we gather, the parks in which our children play are all physical spaces (see Neal 2010). Should not we thus try to re-envision the way we share (or do not share) those spaces in order to generate and promote a mode of being in society that can be alternative to the totalising cultural monolithism assumed both by the assimilationist and the multiculturalist paradigm? Is it not indeed by working on spaces — and on practices performed in them — that we can envisage the urban environments, the residential developments, and the community initiatives of the future? I am here advocating those transcultural 'third spaces' that will facilitate the fruitful and harmonious encounters between the sedentary and the transient, between local populations and transnational or diasporic communities — beyond the binary opposition of 'us' and 'them'.[12]

In this regard, the past can be a great teacher. Let us think, for example, of the open-ended, trans-social, trans-class, intercultural souks, caravanserais, oases, agorae, and harbour cities of ancient times. Those 'spaces' (from Aleppo to Samarkand, from ancient Alexandria to Constantinople) promoted the crossing of ethnic, religious, and national identity boundaries. Those hubs of cultural confluence and 'mutual hospitality' expanded our cultural horizons.[13] They inspired the writer Italo Calvino (1972: 43) to write how, by night, around the campfires of Euphemia, a fictionalised city of barterers and merchants, people came from 'seven nations' to tell their stories of 'wolves, sisters, treasures, scabies, lovers, battles' and weave their memories 'at every solstice and equinox'. In those souks and ports of the past, the wayfarers and the sedentary played their respective and respected roles. While trading goods under a tent, by a fire or near a sailing boat, they would also trade memories, ideas, craftsmanship, and cultural practices (music, food, religious rituals, and beliefs). As Andrew Lawler observes in

> […] a distinction needs to be made between the locale (place) and the milieu (space) dimensions of the urban form. The locale dimension of a city, that is, its physical/territorial boundary, is demarcated, even if arbitrarily, administratively. That is what we see on the map; and that is what administrators define as the jurisdiction of the city. The milieu dimension, on the other hand, is identifiable in terms of the processes around which the city dwellers' life revolves. These processes could be (a) social (involving groupings and intra- and inter-group interactions, with varying degrees of complexity resulting from size and composition of the population), (b) cultural (referring to ways of thinking and acting), and (c) political (having to do with relations of power/control, not necessarily in the formal sense).

[12] A note of caution is in order here: the distinction between sedentary and transient communities is less straightforward and much more complex and problematic than generally assumed; more often than not, diasporic communities tend to re-territorialise in another space/place.

[13] On the concept of reciprocal hospitality see Malherbe (2000), *Le nomade polyglotte*.

the introduction to Tom Schutyser's (2012) photographic book *Caravanserai: Traces, Places, Dialogue in the Middle East*, '[t]hese staging posts formed the world's first globalised overland network and stand as a testament to a flourishing period of multicultural exchange in the Muslim world'. These were the participatory and shared spaces of ancient times.

Obviously, this highly-romanticised account of the historical role of caravanserais lacks in complexity. More studies would be required to unearth and bring to light the complex dynamics and inevitable cultural conflicts that must have arisen among such diverse and numerous groups of peoples in late antiquity. Accordingly, it would be interesting and particularly relevant to understand the role of past cultural mediators, translators, and negotiators in addressing, managing, and resolving disputes and cultural differences occurring in these inns of the past.[14] Unfortunately, the lack of documentary evidence and historical data hinders the study of the social dynamics of these facilities (Bryce, O'Gorman and Baxter 2013).[15]

6. The balancing dynamics of static quality and dynamic quality

Yet, despite the fact that, in the last two decades, global mobility has become the defining element of our contemporaneity, we have increasingly forfeited the caravanserai's inclusive, open-ended, and mutually enriching way of conceptualising space. An unchallenged neoliberal outlook and course of action has progressively eroded the three pillars on which, I argue, a balanced, societal dynamics necessarily rests: 1) 'cultural exchange', 2) productive land/property ownership, and 3) the Commons. Let me here explain what I mean by the 'erosion' of these three pillars.

1) The mutually enriching process of 'cultural exchange' has been gradually stifled by:

- The homogenising landscape of the shopping mall (Voyce 2016);
- The isolating incommunicability of vertical urban towers; and
- The fragmentation inherent in socio-economic urban ghettoes and ethnic enclaves (Abramovitz and Albrecht, 2013).

2) The productive ownership of property has progressively morphed into a mere lucrative — though totally sterile — form of capital investment (Rolnik 2013). To mention just a few among the consequences of such a development:

[14] For an overview of the role of the caravanserai in late antiquity, see Haidar (2014), Bryce, O'Gorman and Baxter (2013), Campbell (2011), and De Cesaris, Ferretti and Osanloo (2014).

[15] The absence of historical data requires innovative methodologies, such as material culture; thus, through the perspective of social architecture, Bryce, O'Gorman and Baxter (2013) argue, drawing upon Blake (1999): '[T]hat the built environment reflects the social system of the time and the ways in which that system is expressed, reproduced, and experienced and therefore reflects the structure of urban life' (210).

- Tiers of existing affordable and social housing have been zoned and coded out of existence, with the inevitable homogenising effect caused by gentrification.
- Growing numbers of properties are being kept empty by virtue of being first and foremost a financial investment — thus subtracting social and cultural capital from local communities.[16] It has been shown that empty properties pose a threat to the lifeblood of local communities:

> Empty properties contribute to residential instability and a weakening of social cohesion, which undermines the stability of communities, with the social glue that holds communities together melting away (Fox O'Mahony 2015).

- The social fabric of local communities is compromised by a free-for-all real estate market increasingly dominated by anonymous investors who have no ties to nor responsibilities towards local communities (Rolnik 2013). As a consequence, we witness an increased disinvestment by property owners and wealthy elites from local communities.

3) With respect to the erosion of the Commons, public spaces are increasingly being commercialised or even replaced by the so-called POPS — Privately Owned Publicly-Accessible Spaces (Schmidt, Németh & Botsford 2011) — which often have a less inclusive character than truly public spaces. This process is linked to the progressive withdrawal from the street and the insistence on privacy and territoriality, giving houses and the development of gated communities an even stronger role as refuges centred on oneself and one's family (see Sennett 1976). Urban public spaces have been increasingly under neoliberal attack and often been transformed into centres of private commerce and consumption where security and private interests are highly prioritised, threatening the notion that public space is for all to enjoy (Low and Smith 2005). Since the publication in 1961 of Jane Jacobs's monumental work, many studies have been conducted on the erosion of the Commons and of public services in major metropolises inside and outside the West,

[16] The UK Government's explicitly acknowledges the problem of empty homes. In the Foreword to the Consultation Paper on 'Options for Dealing with Squatting' (2011), the Government recognises that 'we must also tackle problems affecting the wider housing market and bring more empty homes back into productive use' (https://www.justice.gov.uk/downloads/legislation/bills-acts/legal-aid-sentencing/squatting-eia.pdf). 'Yet,' Lorna Fox O'Mahony (2015) remarks:

> [T]he Government has displayed a notable lack of censure towards owners who leave property empty; and, indeed, accepts that holding empty residential property is a legitimate or practical financial strategy. This — in turn — highlights the Government's conception of real property ownership as a proxy for capital investment, away from […] an understanding of land ownership that is material and organic. The new model of 'ideal citizen-owner' is not the person who makes productive use of land, but the capital investor.

leading to regulatory practices that often homogenise, sanitise, and exorcise difference from public space (Kohn 2004; Miller 2007; Németh and Hollander 2010).

The compound effect of these latest urban developments and property practices leads to greater polarisations and juxtapositions throughout society. It also has another consequence, subtle yet worrying: it imperils the needed balance between local communities and global cultural trajectories, between territorial stability and transcultural mobility, between — I would argue — 'static quality' and 'dynamic quality'. I here briefly recall the two components of Robert Pirsig's value-based Metaphysics of Quality (1991). 'Static quality' is the fundamental structure of culture itself. It is the asset that comes from fixed rules, from the tradition and values that have expressed them. 'Dynamic quality', on the other hand, is an asset external to any individual culture and cannot be caged in any system of precepts but needs to be constantly rediscovered according to cultural development, which implies openness to the other, to the unknown, and to alternative ideas. The two qualities need each other to exist and prosper: dynamic quality — the 'neo-nomadic' quality of freedom and cultural exchanges, if you like — creates the world in which we live, but only the configurations of static quality, the quality of 'sedentary' order, keep it functioning.

But how do we restore, achieve, or re-imagine this balance? On the one hand, how do we ensure that the stability patterns of local communities aren't fractured by the pressures of globalising mobility and by potentially devastating forms of anomie; on the other hand, how do we avoid the erosion of basic structures of cultural meaning, values, and points of reference among diasporic and (im)migrant communities? In both cases, how do we neutralise the shared sense of estrangement and its main noxious consequence, cultural radicalisation? These questions inevitably lead to a broader set of reflections and enquiries: What makes a community nowadays? How can the local, territorial, symbolic, culturally specific, and professional elements of society act and interact in the creation of a common sense of belonging? What gives cultural value to land, to place and to community living in times of global mobility? How do we re-envisage the role of local communities and cultural identities in this age of increasing disruption of community bonds and traditional sense of belonging?

7. Challenging the existing: 21st century caravanserais as transcultural 'third spaces'

Suggesting solutions to the sort of conundrum I have just outlined would seem far-fetched to say the least. As social scientists and comparatists, however, we might (indeed, should) put forward the idea to recreate in the 21st century those transcultural Commons of the past — those spaces, in particular those caravanserais, so apt to foster the communal production and fruitful sharing of ideas, dreams, aspirations, customs, and memories.

From the age of late antiquity until the advent of the railroad, caravanserais — often state-sponsored — provided accommodation for caravans, merchants, and nomadic people along the trade routes of Central Asia, North Africa, and South-Eastern Europe (De Cesaris 2014; O'Gorman 2007). Many of their traces can still be found in those cities which were prominent at the time, from Aleppo to Samarkand, from Damascus to Valencia (Burns 1971).

The typical caravanserai was a two-level, square, rectangular, round or hexagonal arcaded complex, with an open central courtyard. Its design and community spaces were meant to encourage interactive participation between locals and people on the move while at the same time providing social utility. Apartments lined the interior of both floors, with shops and warehouses on the lower level and family quarters on the upper. Communal activities and inter-personal membership were encouraged not only through trade and negotiation but also through public facilities such as shared kitchens and dining areas, bathhouses, small gardens, and spaces for prayer (Ahmad and Chase 2004). Most of those amenities suggest the social significance of 'breaking bread' together and of ritual storytelling (Brackney 2012: 29). Indeed, the functions listed above — cooking, dining, commerce, worship, sharing leisure time, and storytelling (or any other form of creative expression) — are still at the core of spontaneous social interaction and community building.

In such surroundings, a vibrant cosmopolitan society was forged by individuals of distinct cultural, religious, and professional identities united by common endeavours, cultural curiosity, creativity, or just pure economic ambition. As Van Dyke explains:

> The caravanserai ultimately excelled in providing a utilitarian system which could be endlessly configured to provide the cultural and everyday necessities of its varying tenants, thereby functioning as a cultural exchange in its own time (2011: 45).

Larry Harvey, the founder of the 'Burning Man Festival', which is annually held in a temporary city in Nevada's Black Rock Desert, also emphasises this aspect:

> Though fueled by mercantilism, [the] legacy of [the caravanserai] to us is a grand commerce of ideas — a swirling exchange of languages, legends, technologies, philosophies and art that helped shape nearly every aspect of our modern world (Harvey and Mangrum 2014).

It is no wonder that the 2014 edition of 'Burning Man' was called 'Caravansaray'.

The role played by caravanserais as hubs of intercultural exchange has been critical through the centuries and justifies their rediscovery by modern-day urban planners, architects, and social analysts.[17] On a more visionary tone, the 21st century caravanserai may be imagined as a complex that not only replicates but amplifies and further develops its original concept. It might therefore contemplate a mix of residential units, commercial and trades activities, craftsman workshops, arts studios, educational enterprises, and public spaces for active fruition. This poly-functional configuration would provide some sort of continuity and cross-pollination between private and public spaces, between individual and collective activities, between working time and leisure time. The closest thing to this modern concept of the caravanserai are some pioneering and visionary experiments attempted in the 1960s–1970s by the likes of Lou Sauer, Werner Seligman, Kenneth Frampton and Theodore Liebman. These architects mainly focused on housing complexes broadly branded as 'low-rise, high-density'. Discussing a recent New York exhibition on this subject,[18] the architect Karen Kubey (2012), executive director of the Institute for Public Architecture (IPA), indeed remarked that low-rise, high-density solutions are:

> […] dense enough to achieve urban benefits such as access to public transportation and civic and commercial amenities, while also providing a sense of individual identity for residents and accommodating an integration of [common] open spaces (para. 5).

Once again, one can stress the importance of an integrated use of the Commons and the role it can play, as envisioned by the landscape architect Karl Linn. In Linn's view (2007), neighbourhood Commons represent urban variations on the traditional village green bringing neighbours and strangers together — much as the caravanserais did in the past by bringing nomads and non-nomads together.[19]

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[17] A re-interpretation of this concept in now-a-days terms has been proposed in East London. 'Canning Town Caravanserai' (caravanserai.org.uk) is an experiment in temporary urbanism promoted by the firm of architects the architectures Ash Sakula. It offers informal spaces for chance encounters between locals, travellers, and temporary residents through a series of platforms for cultural events, commerce, play, and gardening. In Toronto, architects at LGA Architectural Partners were given the task of reconstituting an old warehouse in order to provide a safe haven for the homeless. Taking their cue from the permanent but adaptable structure of the traditional caravanserai, they conceived twelve group 'houses' and linked them through a central public space. Each 'house' is furnished with a shared kitchen, which can be thought of as a liminal space between privacy and sociability, thus creating the conditions for collaboration and negotiation. These are only preliminary attempts to infuse modern visions of urban housing and social living with the spirit that animated the caravanserais of the past, those crucibles of cultural cross-fertilisation.

[18] The 'Low Rise High Density' exhibition was held in New York at the Centre for Architecture in April 25–June 29, 2013, <http://cfa.aiany.org/index.php?section=upcoming&expid=254> [accessed: 27-Mar-16].

[19] See Fox:

> Linn was in the business, quite literally, of creating rootedness: where a garden flourished, Mr. Linn believed, so, too, would a community. His gardens are noted for their use of native plants,

Envisaging a constellation of 21st century caravanserais spread across the urban landscape might also contribute to finding creative solutions to another compelling need of our liquid societies: the re-territorialisation of our social networks. Indeed, we need to find ways to fill the gap (find the 'third space') between immaterial and material forms of belonging, between the places we inhabit with our bodies and the multiple allegiances we develop across our virtual, cultural, and spatial wanderings. Spaces may well be temporary while human relations last and now more than ever represent the only stable moorings; yet, in order to develop lasting human bonds, we still need the physicality of those spaces specifically designed to encourage human interaction.

Conclusion

Our cities are increasingly becoming alienating spaces built on affluence, social division, isolation, aggressive consumerism, and racial or ethnic ghettoisation (Fujita 2010; Wacquant 2009). The opening of the world to globalising forces and growing migratory patterns seems to produce, by reaction, new closures, renewed siege mentalities, and resurgent segregationist impulses. This to a social scientist should not come as unexpected. Yet, as social scientists, we understand that this trajectory urgently needs to be dealt with. Architecture and urban planning — if conceived to serve a broader social cause and approached from a transcultural perspective — can do much to counter this undesirable development. They can do so by conceiving spaces for encounter and cultural translation and by providing spaces meant as 'community anchors' (or moorings) for permanent or temporary re-territorialisations. Advocating a civic, socially-engaged architecture through urban experimental projects is not just a utopian ideal. Enlightened self-interest as well suggests considering that same route. If not properly addressed, the negative aspects of economic globalisation, the disruptive effects of growing migratory patterns, and the ensuing massive re-locations of people can adversely reverberate at all levels of society. As Cambridge Professor Emeritus of Law Kevin Gray warned as long ago as 1994, if 'we fail to endorse a broader collective participation in the goods of life [we] will eventually observe a polarised society participating in its own disintegration' (1994: 48–49).

It is up to the current and new generations of designers, architects, and urban planners to envisage a network of transcultural caravanserais as future hubs of hospitality, as 'homes' away from 'home'. It is up to them to re-create those 'neighbourhood Commons', those communal institutions of cultural translation where the 'static quality' warranted by rootedness and

bubbling fountains, colorful mosaics, benches positioned to encourage face-to-face contact and, above all, their involvement of neighborhood residents (Fox 2005, para. 4).

sedentariness co-exists with and is enriched by the 'dynamic quality' brought by individuals and groups riding the waves of global mobility. Architecture and design cannot be given the burden to cure a world-in-crisis grappling with cultural radicalisation and the upsurge of xenophobic tensions. Yet new projects and new spaces for more inclusive and participatory ways of being together and for more harmonious and variegated forms of urban cohabitation may produce positive effects (Su-Jan 2016; Valentine 2008). They might show us how to make up for the growing loss of territorial roots, for the dangerous disappearance of mutual aid, for the lack of physical exchange, and for economic systems ever more disenfranchised from the values of local communities.[20]

If an experimental use of the Commons may offer an alternative to the battle between public and private, then, as Justin McGuirk observes, we should find ways in which communing is not limited to reclaim the use of community gardens and public spaces through limited and often short-lived 'acts of autarchy and resistance'. Instead, it should inspire planners and pioneers of a new urban politics to reimagine the city as Commons and to develop a common strategy for managing it.[21] The ultimate question is that posed by McGuirk (2015): 'Can commoning be scaled up to influence the workings of a metropolis — able to tackle questions of housing, energy use, food distribution, clean air?'

And, within this greater urban vision, can transcultural Commons provide us with a network of modern urban caravanserais, of 'third spaces' meant to cut courageously across and bring together ethnicities, cultures, and religions?

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[20] For a discussion on how architecture and urban planning are redefining their strategies in order to come up with creative and interdisciplinary ways (often involving an integration of interior design and industrial design) to 'make places' for the community, see Leveratto (2015b and 2016). As Leveratto suggests:

> '[…] urban space develops, as any other interior, around the "gesture" of the subjects who inhabit it, in a dimension in which the possibility to exert a real control on their environment is explicit, even though only symbolically. This is a control through a gradual process of bodily projection, which represents the "range" of the innate ability to live in the world by "taking care of it"' (2015b: 11).

[21] See in this regard the vision put forward, among others, by Gehl (2010) and Leveratto (2015a, 2016).

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Acknowledgments

This research was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

The author thanks the reviewers of this article for taking the time to provide valuable feedback; she would also like to thank the copy-editor, Harriet Clements, for her careful editing and proof reading.

A shorter and less articulated version of this article was published, in Italian, in the book *Wandering in Knowledge: Inclusive Spaces for Culture in an Age of Global Nomadism*, ed. by Luca Basso Peressut, Imma Forino and Jacopo Leveratto (Santarcangelo di Romagna: Maggioli: 2016).

On the Right Side — Borders of Belonging

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Abstract

Today the open borders of the European Union are becoming increasingly securitised, boarded and barb wired lines of exclusion. Fuelled by the media and their increasing portrayal of the refugees and migrants as opportunists and terrorists, subsequent political discourse has done little to generate forms of recognition that work against identification of the asylum seeker as a hate figure. Despite the amplified visibility of the plight of the refugees and migrants and sensational headlines and images that enter our everyday lives, the exclusionist sentiment persists.

This article grew out of the discussion panel that followed a screening of the documentary *On the Bride's Side* (*Io sto con la Sposa*) (2014). Written and directed by an Italian journalist Gabriele del Grande the film follows a fake wedding party comprising five Palestinians and Syrians fleeing the Syrian war on a journey from Milan to Sweden to claim political asylum together with a number of Italians who have joined the party in support and solidarity.[1]

Keywords: migration, asylum, refugee, borders, Derrida, Kant, identity, borderlands, hospitality, immigration, cosmopolitanism

> The condition of a refugee is the paradigm of a new historical consciousness (Arendt 1978: 55–67).

The catalyst for this article was a screening of *On the Bride's Side*, a documentary which challenges our perception of migration, asylum seekers, and borders which transform masses into people and numbers into names. Made in 2014 by the Italian journalist Gabriele del Grande, who both wrote and directed it, the film depicts both a political act of defiance and a real and fantastic story as it follows a journey from Milan to Sweden taken by five Palestinians and Syrians fleeing the Syrian war with the intention of claiming political asylum. For this purpose, they and a number of Italians who have joined them in a gesture of support and

[1] This article was first presented as a paper at *Borders*, *Skepsi*'s ninth conference, held at Woolf College, University of Kent, on 27 May 2016. Parts of this article have previously appeared in my essay 'Visions of Europe: The Ethics Behind the Aesthetics' (Stamselberg 2014).

solidarity present themselves as a wedding party, hence the title. The film highlights the two foci of this article: the concepts of borders and hospitality in the context of migrancy.

Today, the increased visibility of the boat people, of the walkers, crawlers, runners, detainees, the young and the old, the discouraged ones, the ones that are turned away and sent back, only to try again, provokes mixed reactions in us. But their plights are subverted to their motives and fates, which, whether sensationalised or not, whether deserving or opportunist, are analysed on the front pages of daily newspapers. One can argue that our gaze does not bypass their presence anymore; they are no longer merely miscellaneous pieces of cultural debris but instead resist the tendency to mythologise them and are able both to play with and to question the distancing effects of representation.

The addition of refugee and other migrant voices to the choir of post-national Europe questions the nature of belonging and reimagines exclusion through the spatial architecture of the political. The experience of border crossing and of redefining boundaries and belonging is at the centre of refugees' and other migrants' existence, and the effects of this mobility have in the past decade radically defined the European social, economic and cultural landscape. At the same time, the discourse of national revival that currently prevails in Europe calls for accepting the narrative of the Western condition as a criterion, championing localism and regionalism over globalism, thus further scrutinising the plight of both refugees and other migrants.

This article presents a cognitive frustration that attempts to make sense of the notions of exclusion and belonging through both a rhetoric of border, wherein a concern lies with the lines delimiting contents and concepts, and tracing traits of border-like edges through the concepts of hospitality. In order to make sense of the perpetual uneasiness between politics, which requires one to take a position, and philosophical work, which demonstrates ongoing commitment to questioning and critique, I turn to the French philosopher Jacques Derrida as my main theoretical springboard. It is my belief that his repeated attempts to rationalise aporias consistent with the relationship between politics of identity and *différance* transcend the existing dichotomies and offer an alternative way of engaging with and understanding the dialectics of exclusion.

1. Borders

In the context of refugees and other migrants, a border, or what Balibar terms a borderline, can be broadly defined as the dividing line or frontier between two nation-states; Balibar describes it as 'combining administrative, juridical, fiscal, military, even linguistic functions' (Balibar 2009: 191). Picture a border, and what comes to mind? It might be 'Customs, police, visa or

passport, passenger identification […]' (Derrida 1993: 12); perhaps the transit camps into which tens of thousands of migrants are tucked and 'the *no man's land* of harbour or railway areas' where they are left (Balibar 2015; original emphases). The definition of a border might be simple; this section will explore its complexities.

Borders present, as Smith and Varzi argue, an opposition of two different types: in a geographical context, those corresponding to qualitative differentiations in the underlying territory (coastlines, rivers, etc.) are *bona fide* (or physical) boundaries, while those that are induced through human demarcation are *fiat* boundaries (2000: 401–02). In other words, a *fiat* boundary is a man-made construct to indicate, for example, the extent of a region, a country, etc. However, while a *bona fide* border is stable, barring the effects of nature, a *fiat* border is not, as an examination of maps showing the political divisions of Europe over the past two hundred years or so will confirm. A *fiat* boundary is therefore contingent, dependent on changing events and conditions that are unpredictable, in particular the goodwill or otherwise of the two nation states that the *fiat* boundary divides.[2]

However, as Borradori points out, borders or, as she terms them, boundaries are not used merely to demarcate a political or physical entity:

> Like geography, the philosophical job of clarifying the meaning of concepts categories and values as well as of theoretical fields such as ethics and politics consists in drawing boundaries around them (Borradori 2003: 145).

For example, the European Union can be thought of not only by reference to its geographical boundaries but also as a philosophical concept, namely a political and economic union of the member states. The significance to this concept of not only boundaries and limits but also the relations of inclusion that they establish becomes apparent from an analysis (or deconstruction, to use a Derridean term) of it: they are essential to the European Union's promise of open borders within the Union and other associated concepts, such as the issue of European identity or belonging, what Amin calls the 'Idea of Europe' (Amin 2004), to which I'll refer again. Conceptual boundaries are *fiat* boundaries and are therefore susceptible to change, just as geographical *fiat* boundaries are, and, just as an alteration to a geographical *fiat* boundary indicates a change to the area it demarcates, so, says Borradori, any modification of a conceptual boundary indicates a redefinition of both the concept itself and the framework of related concepts in which it's situated (2003: 145).

[2] As Smith and Varzi observe, 'people kill each other over fiat borders, and they give their lives to defend them' (2000: 405).

Derrida's reflections on the concept of boundary focus, Borradori says, on 'the fact that a boundary is as much about identification as it is about exclusion' (2003: 145); in other words, the boundary that identifies something, be it a physical feature on a map or a concept, by the same token defines what is *excluded* from the identification. However, continues Borradori:

> Derrida's contention is that traditional philosophy tends to evade the double function of boundaries by down-playing their contingency. […] The Western philosophical tradition denies the potential instability intrinsic to any contingent [i.e. *fiat*] boundary (2003: 145).

Philosophy is failing its responsibilities, says Borradori, if it does not 'call into question the way in which we understand the identity of what [a boundary] encircles' (2003: 146). Since a modification to a conceptual boundary corresponds, as we have seen, to a redefinition of the 'identity of that it encircles', that identity cannot be regarded as certain; it is therefore called into question. Furthermore, it can also be argued that the double function of boundaries means that any change to the boundary must also indicate a change to what is *excluded* from the identification. Accepting both the contingency of boundaries and of the structural ambiguity that pertains to their double function is, therefore, the way in which we understand the identity that the boundary demarcates.

Both critical reflection on the nature of limits and boundaries and acknowledgment of their double function transform our views of identity, which philosophical thought conceives to be established by the exclusion of what lies beyond the boundary within which the identity is enclosed; there are thus two identities understood as self-contained totalities, which are mutually excluded (Borradori 2003: 146). The consequence of this concept of identity is that identity is seen as being internally homogenous. It is this, the assumed internal homogeneity of identity, that Derrida deems to be the fault of traditional metaphysics, his objection being that one totality is not 'perfectly immune to the other' rather the reverse, as 'traces of what a totality expressly excludes are always silently contained within it' (Borradori 2003: 146) — the reference to 'trace' reminding us of Benjamin: 'The trace is the appearance of a nearness, however far removed the thing that left it behind may be. […] In trace, we gain possession of the thing' (Benjamin 1999: 447). Critical reflection on or deconstruction of the nature of limits and boundaries, Borradori maintains, 'searches for these traces and uses them to give voice to what doesn't fit the dominant set of inclusions and exclusions', the dominance of one set over another being the by-product of the rigid, irreducible pairs used by different theoretical fields. 'Deconstructive interventions detotalize self-enclosed totalities by placing them face to face with their internal differentiation' (Borradori 2003: 147–48).

A limit or boundary is, therefore, not necessarily a rigid and impermeable *cordon sanitaire* around a totality; it can be flexible and porous, allowing the passage of those 'traces of what a totality expressly excludes', arguably traces of the Other. Boundaries are not like solid walls; they are pierced by openings or thresholds, 'those mysterious zones of interaction that mediate between different realities' (Galloway 2012: vii), zones in which the Self meets the Other. Borradori is discussing conceptual limits and boundaries in the context of metaphysics, but the same observations hold good for borders in the sense of a frontier between two nation-states. Rather than being unbroken lines of demarcation, these, too, are like thresholds, 'those mysterious zones of interaction that mediate between different realities', a phrase which resonates with the phrase 'the place[s] where the opposites flow into one another', Balibar's definition of borderlands (Balibar 2009: 210). Borders are akin to borderlands.

While borders in general give rise to the ontological issues already discussed and may be difficult to individuate as a result, in the context of borders as frontiers between nation-states, their definition and status are problematised by the phenomenon of the borderland, whether we understand that term as land located on or near a frontier or boundary or, figuratively, as an indeterminate state or condition. If a border is, in fact, borderland, its ability to demarcate precisely the extent of a nation-state is compromised; this problematises the definition of a border as a line that divides one nation-state from another. Since citizenship is determined by reference to a nation-state, problematising the definition of a border has the effect of also problematising the border's status in determining citizenship and identity.

Borders, as McMaster argues, 'are breaking down, shifting and, in some cases appearing or disappearing altogether'; this has 'repercussions for the traditional constructs of citizenship' (2003: § 15). Refugees epitomise this problem:

> [I]n many cases they do not reside in their 'country' of birth, but neither are they citizens of their new country or place of residence. Before they are granted legal citizenship of their new country, [refugees] are 'non-citizens', not belonging, legally non-existent. They are caught in the proverbial no-man's land, in the borderlands of existence, marginalised, without power or access to the institutions within the country of residence; they are in the shadowlands of citizenship (McMaster 2003: § 15).

Being 'legally non-existent', McMaster continues, refugees are 'recognised as the "other" and positioned as outsiders' (McMaster 2003: § 17). Refugees and other migrants, as I argue elsewhere, thus 'become the real border citizen' (Stamselberg 2014: 82), waiting in 'the borderlands of existence' for citizenship and hence access to the benefits of being a citizen, who exists by reference to a nation-state defined by its borders.

Rumford indicates the uncertain status of borders, when he argues that 'whereas borders were once singular and existed at the boundary of polities, they are now multiple and are dispersed throughout societies' (2006: 160), a point extended by Balibar, who 'argues that Europe itself is a borderland, a zone of transition and mobility without territorial fixity' (Rumford 2006: 162; citing Balibar 2004). Although mobility is recognised 'as one of the main productive forces of our age', (Mezzadra 2007; quoted Stamselberg 2014: 82):

> [T]he most mobile population, the migrants, are subjected to the action of mechanisms that tend to produce specific forms of immobility, culminating in the administrative detention system that has been established throughout Europe – and beyond its borders' (Mezzadra 2007; quoted Stamselberg 2014: 82).

I referred earlier to the concept of European identity or belonging. This 'Idea of Europe' is a concept predicated on shared cultural commons that, Amin asserts, 'has a long and varied history' and is based around four so-called myths of origin: 'first, the rule of Roman law; second, solidarity based on Christian charity and mutuality; third, liberal democracy rooted in the rights and freedoms of the individual, and fourth, commonality based on reason and other Enlightenment universal principles' (Amin 2004: 6, 2).[3] It is the perceived absence of these shared cultural commons that marks a person as not 'belonging' to Europe and therefore a stranger, the Other. The influx of the Other in increasing numbers across European borders, argues Amin, challenges the Idea of Europe's parameters by implying that that they are no longer capable of supporting the authenticity of European identity or belonging;[4] the Idea of Europe therefore needs to be reinvented (Amin 2004: 17–28).

The quotation from Derrida in the paragraph that introduces this section comes from 'Finis', the longer of the two essays which comprise *Aporias*. The phrase occurs in a passage which begins with Derrida's statement that the 'crossing of borders always announces itself according to the movement of a certain step [*pas*] — and of the step that crosses a line' (Derrida 1993: 11). 'Customs, police, visa or passport, passenger identification', says Derrida, are the visible signs of the line's institution, and the line is there whether the 'certain step' crosses it or not. If they are to arrive at their intended destination on the other side of the border, however, migrants and other refugees will have to take that 'certain step'. Hospitality, which I discuss in the next section, then displaces but does not, however, supersede the importance of the border, as Derrida makes clear:

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[3] The historical myth of origin is the view that a people or culture can be understood by discerning and listing essential cultural characteristics of a particular nation or culture.

[4] It can therefore be argued that problematising the parameters of identity also questions historical essentialism, which supports the notion of authenticity being tied to historical myth of origin.

> Nowadays, a reflection on hospitality presupposes, among other things, the possibility of a rigorous delimitation of thresholds or frontiers: between the familial and the non-familial, between the foreign and the nonforeign, the citizen and the non-citizen, but first of all between the private and the public, private and public law, etc (Derrida 2000: 47–49).

2. Hospitality

Derrida's 'On Cosmopolitanism' (2001) is the text of an address he gave at the invitation of the International Parliament of Writers in 1996 during its conference dedicated to the subject of cosmopolitan rights for asylum seekers, refugees, and immigrants held that year at Strasbourg, a topic as relevant today as it was twenty or so years ago. Derrida takes as his starting point the question of *villes franches* (free cities) and *villes refuges* (refuge cities) as places where migrants can find sanctuary for his discussion of the 'original concept of hospitality' in the context of cosmopolitanism (2001: 5); in other words, is there a duty of hospitality owed to person Derrida defines in 'Finis' as the *arrivant*, and, conversely, has the *arrivant* the right to hospitality on his arrival?

2.1 The *arrivant*

Derrida digresses from his discussion of borders and thresholds in 'Finis' to pose the questions: 'What is the event that most arrives [*l'évenement le plus arrivant*]? What is the *arrivant* that makes the event arrive?'[5] He then recounts how he 'was recently taken by this word, *arrivant,* as if its uncanniness had just arrived to [him] in a language in which it has nonetheless sounded very familiar to [him] for a long time', before explaining his definition of the term:

> The new *arrivant*, this word can, indeed, mean the neutrality of *that which* arrives, but also the singularity of *who* arrives, of he or she who comes, coming to be where s/he was not expected, where one was awaiting him or her without waiting for him or her and without expecting *it* [*s'y attendre*], without knowing what or whom to expect and what or whom I am waiting for — and such is hospitality itself, hospitality toward the event (Derrida 1993: 33; original emphases).

The *arrivant* is, therefore, not just *any* person who arrives but the *very* person who performs an act of arrival by crossing a given threshold. In so doing, the *arrivant* affects the experience of the threshold itself, bringing to light the possibility of it prior to one's having any knowledge of the existence of an invitation, a call, a nomination, or a promise.

However, Derrida quickly makes it clear that he is not concerned with simply 'someone or something that arrives, a subject, a person, an individual, or a living thing, *even less one of the migrants* [he had] *just mentioned*' (1993: 34; added emphases) but with what he calls 'the *arrivant,* the most *arrivant* among all *arrivants,* the *arrivant* par excellence' (1993: 33; original

[5] The translator here adds a note: '*Arrivant* can mean "arrival," "newcomer" or "arriving."

emphases); the *arrivant* is 'whatever and/or whoever in arriving does not cross a threshold separating two identifiable places' (ibid.).

This notwithstanding, Derrida's descriptions of this '*arrivant* par excellence' could well apply with very little modification both to all migrants who arrive irregularly and to the nation-states in which they arrive. The very unexpectedness of the absolute *arrivant* makes the possibility of welcoming him or her problematic:

> He surprises the host—who is not yet a host or an inviting power—enough to call into question, to the point of annihilating or rendering indeterminate, all the distinctive signs of a prior identity, beginning with the very border that delineated a legitimate home and assured lineage, names and language, nations, families and genealogies. […] The absolute *arrivant* does not yet have a name or an identity. […] Since the *arrivant* does not have any identity yet, its place of arrival is also de-identified: one does not yet know or one no longer knows which is the country, the place, the nation, the family, the language, and the home in general that welcomes the absolute *arrivant* (1993: 34; original emphases).

Does not this to some degree describe the plight of migrants caught in the no-man's land of a camp awaiting a decision from the powers that be as to their ultimate destination, effectively in neither the country in which they've arrived nor the one they've left?

Almost as an afterthought to his definition of *arrivant*, Derrida adds '—and such is hospitality itself, hospitality toward the event' (1993: 33). In other words, hospitality is a result of the act of arrival, not a premeditated decision on the part of the 'host': 'One *does not expect* the event of whatever, of whoever comes, arrives and crosses the threshold — the immigrant, the emigrant, the guest, or the stranger' (ibid; added emphases).

However, Derrida gives no further insights in 'Finis' into any concept of hospitality from the point of view of either the host or the *arrivant*. For these we must revert to 'On Cosmopolitanism'.

2.2 Hospitality: the aporia

Discussing the 'original concept of hospitality' in 'On Cosmopolitanism', Derrida identifies it as 'a double or contradictory imperative within the concept of cosmopolitanism' (Critchley & Kearney 2001: ix), the classic Derridean aporia, that is, a kind of impasse or insoluble conflict between rhetoric and thought.

Derrida begins by identifying the concept of cosmopolitanism. To do so, he cites examples of how hospitality to the stranger was understood from the time of Moses up to the twentieth century. However, especially relevant to this article are his observations concerning Hannah Arendt's text 'The Decline of the Nation State and the End of the Rights of Man' (Arendt 1967), a text which, says Derrida 'we should closely scrutinise'. In it, Arendt recalls that the right of asylum has a sacred history and that it remains 'the only modern vestige of the medieval

principle of *quid est in territorio est de territorio*' (Arendt 1967: 280, quoted Derrida 2001: 7). Arendt is referring to the maxim that 'whatever is in the territory is of the territory'; in other words, the justification of one's presence is the mere fact of one's presence. Arendt continues:

> But although the right to asylum had continued to exist in a world organised into nation states, and though it has even in some individual cases survived two world wars, it is still felt by some to be an anachronism and a principle incompatible with the international laws of the state (1967: 280, quoted Derrida 2001: 7).

Derrida follows this with the comment that:

> When Arendt was writing this, *circa* 1950, she identified the absence in international charters of the right to asylum (for example in the Charter of the League of Nations. Things have doubtless evolved since then […] but further transformations are still necessary (Derrida 2001: 7).

Indeed, in today's climate, when the right to political asylum is less and less respected in Europe, we might well agree with Derrida when he says that:

> There is still a considerable gap separating the great and generous principles of the right to asylum inherited from the Enlightenment thinkers and from the French Revolution and, on the other hand, the historical reality or the effective implementation (mise en oeuvre) of these principles. It is controlled, curbed, and monitored by implacable juridical restrictions; it is overseen by […] a 'mean-minded' juridical tradition (2001: 11).

2.3. Hospitality: according to Derrida

It would, however, be a mistake to assume that this aporia makes hospitality completely unworkable. If it were, what are almost Derrida's closing remarks would have been otherwise:

> All these questions remain obscure and difficult and we must neither conceal them from ourselves nor, for a moment, imagine ourselves to have mastered them. It is a question of knowing how to transform and improve the law, and of knowing if this improvement is possible within an historical space which takes place *between* the Law of an unconditional hospitality, offered *a priori* to every other, to all newcomers, *whoever they may be*, and the conditional laws of a right to hospitality, without which The unconditional Law of hospitality would be in danger of remaining a pious and irresponsible desire, without form and without potency, and of even being perverted at any moment (2001: 22–23; original emphases).

The law of unconditional hospitality *needs* the conditional laws of a right to hospitality in order not only to survive but to remain forceful.

More important insights into Derrida's thinking on hospitality are to be found in *Of Hospitality* (2000).[6] Derrida first argues that the whole idea of hospitality depends upon an altruistic concept of absolute hospitality and is inconceivable without it. However, since genuine hospitality faced with any number of unknown Others is not a possible scenario, he argues that it is precisely the internal tension between the possibility and the impossibility of absolute hospitality that keeps the concept of hospitality alive. The more existential example of

[6] *Of Hospitality* comprises the transcripts of two seminars given by Derrida in January 1996 (printed on the recto pages) with a parallel 'Invitation' from Anne Dufourmantelle (printed on the verso pages).

this tension is that the notion of hospitality requires one to be the master and hence controlling. To be hospitable, one must first have the power to host. As such, hospitality makes claims to property ownership and partakes in the desire to establish a form of self-identity (2000: 3–74).

Furthermore, the host must, in order to be hospitable, also have some kind of control over the people who are being hosted, as Derrida later argues, maintaining that any attempt to behave hospitably is also always in part betrothed (translator's terminology) to the keeping of guests under control, to the closing of borders, to nationalism, and even to the exclusion of particular groups or ethnicities (2000: 151–55).

Consequently, the political difficulty of immigration consists precisely in negotiating between these two imperatives, between the unconditional and the conditional, between the absolute and the relative, between the universal and the particular. Nonetheless, this identification of a contradictory logic at the heart of the concept of hospitality and thus cosmopolitanism is staged in order not to paralyse political action but, on the contrary, to enable it.

It is to one of the Enlightenment thinkers that Derrida turns towards the end of his address to deconstruct the logical structure of the concept of hospitality (2001: 20–23). Kant, says Derrida, 'seems at first to extend the cosmopolitan law to encompass universal hospitality without limit […] expressly determines it as a natural law' (2001: 20). Such a law '[b]eing of natural or original derivation […] would be, therefore, both imprescriptible and inalienable (ibid)', in other words, it could neither be lost by effluxion of time nor taken away by any action.[7]

Derrida is referring to Kant's essay 'To Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Sketch', written in 1795, so a little more than two centuries before Derrida is speaking, and in which he formulates what he terms 'cosmopolitan right' (Kant 1983: 107–44). In it, Kant indeed makes the statement that '[c]osmopolitan right shall be limited to conditions of universal *hospitality*' (118; original emphasis). By 'hospitality', he explains, he does not mean an act of philanthropy but what he considers to be a 'natural right', namely 'the right of an alien not to be treated as an enemy on his arrival in another's country' (ibid.).

It is by the exercise of this natural right, Kant maintains, that 'distant parts of the world can establish with one another peaceful relations that will eventually become matters of public law' (ibid.). Any treaty formalising such 'peaceful relations' between two or more nation states

[7] 'Imprescriptible' and 'inalienable' are both legal terms.

could, in all probability, expressly include provisions concerning respective *rights of residence* (or as Kant terms it the '*right* to be a *permanent visitor*') as distinct from the '*right to visit*'.

Kant makes it clear that the natural right encapsulated in his term 'hospitality' only affords the alien the right to be a *temporary* visitor. The right of residence may be requested, but this 'would require a special, charitable agreement to make [the alien] a fellow inhabitant for a limited period', i.e. the alien can only become a 'fellow-inhabitant' if the law of the foreign nation-state so allows.

Derrida prefaces his discussion of Kant with the observation that:

> All human creatures, all finite beings endowed with reason, have received, in equal proportion, 'common possession of the surface of the earth'. No one can in principle, therefore, legitimately appropriate for himself the aforementioned surface (as such, as a *surface-area*) and withhold access to another man (2001: 20; original emphases).

That 'an infinite dispersion remains impossible' is because of 'what is erected, constructed, or what sets itself up above the soil: habitat, culture, institution, State, etc' (2001: 21). As a result, '[a]ll this, even the soil upon which it lies, is no longer soil pure and simple, and, even if founded on the earth, *must not be unconditionally accessible* to all comers' (ibid; added emphases). It is 'thanks to this strictly delimited condition (which is nothing other than the institution of limit as a border, nation, State, public or political space), [that] Kant can deduce two consequences and inscribe two other paradigms upon which it would be in our interest to reflect tomorrow' (ibid), as outlined above.

Derrida's one comment on Kant's condition that hospitality only extends to a right of visitation and excludes a right of residence, which is, therefore, 'made dependent on treaties between states', is that it 'is this limitation […] that perhaps, amongst other things, is what remains for us debatable' (2001: 22). He has more to say on Kant's 'defining hospitality in all its rigour as a law' (ibid). As a result, Kant has assigned to it 'conditions which make it dependent on state sovereignty, especially when it is a question of the right of residence' (ibid). Derrida continues:

> Hospitality signifies here the *public nature* (*publicité*) of public space, as is always the case for the juridical in the Kantian sense; hospitality, whether public or private, is dependent on and controlled by the law and the state police. This is of great consequence, particularly for the 'violations of hospitality' about which we have spoken considerably, but just as much for the sovereignty of cities [i.e. the *villes franches* and *villes refuges* referred to above] on which we have been reflecting, whose concept is at least as problematic today as in the time of Kant (ibid; original emphases).

This is the aporia, the 'double or contradictory imperative within the concept of cosmopolitanism', a 'concept that a country like France has been keen to adopt in fashioning its self-image of tolerance, openness, and hospitality' (Critchley & Kearney 2001: ix):

> [O]n the one hand, there is an unconditional hospitality which should offer the right of refuge to all immigrants and newcomers. But on the other hand, hospitality has to be conditional: there has to be some limitation on rights of residence (ibid).

The political difficulty of immigration consists precisely in negotiating between these two imperatives, between the unconditional and the conditional, between the absolute and the relative, between the universal and the particular. Nonetheless, as Critchley and Kearney observe, 'Derrida's identification of a contradictory logic at the heart of the concept of cosmopolitanism is not staged in order to paralyse political action, but, on the contrary, in order to enable it' (Critchley & Kearney 2001: x).

Europe, in the sense of the European Union, a territory that today is increasingly defined by its immigration practices and its discourse of political rights, is being re-nationalised. Introducing exclusion to the vocabulary of belonging forces us to re-conceptualise the politics of community, solidarity, identity and difference. However, exclusion is not limited to the European experience. An intrinsic part of social relations, it figures prominently in the discourse of identity as well as in that of political and legal modernity. The tension between recognition and a sense of belonging, on the one side, and the subjective marginalisation of exclusion, on the other, is reflected in the normative ideal of public discourse. These themes are not mutually exclusive. Rather, they are fundamentally interrelated.

There are two concepts of hospitality that today divide European and national consciousness. The word 'tolerance', today often used by so many, is assumed to be a legacy of the Enlightenment; Kant for example 'understood tolerance as the emancipatory promise of the modern age' (Borradori 2003: 159). But, claims Derrida in his dialogue with Borradori, '[t]he word "tolerance" is first of all marked by a religious war between Christians, or between Christians and non-Christians' (ibid: 161; Derrida speaking). Primarily a Catholic, Christian virtue, tolerance has been appropriated into non-Christian discourse and language. A form of charity:

> [T]olerance is always on the side of the reason of the strongest, where might is right; it is a supplementary mark of sovereignty, the good face of sovereignty, which says to the other from its elevated position, I am letting you be, you are not insufferable, I am leaving you a place in my home, but do not forget that this is my home […] (Borradori 2003: 127; Derrida speaking).

As such, tolerance is not a condition of hospitality but a limitation of it. In other words, it is a conditional, circumspect, careful hospitality that requires the Other to follow rules, a way of life, language, culture, political system, etc. This conditional hospitality, offered only with the

proviso that given rules and regulations are followed and obeyed, comprises an invitation. On the other hand, pure or unconditional hospitality comprises no invitation, and:

> [O]pens or is in advance open to someone who is neither expected nor invited, to whomever arrives as an absolutely foreign visitor, as a new arrival, non-identifiable and unforeseeable, in short, wholly other (Borradori 2003: 129; quoting Derrida).

This expression of unconditional hospitality hinges on Kant's distinction between two kinds of right: as Derrida terms them in 'On Cosmopolitanism', the 'right of residence (*Gastrecht*, which has the connotations of invitation by the host discussed in 'On Hospitality)' and the 'right of visitation' (*Besuchsrecht*) (2001: 21). Visitation without an invitation circumscribes the conditions under which one is invited and thus welcomed as an unforeseen and unexpected visit to come. As such it introduces an element of danger. The ability to let one's guard down, stand down one's defences and abolish borders often proves to be impossible. However, can hospitality without risk, backed by certain assurances, immunised against the unexpected and otherness, be a true hospitality? The unconditional hospitality advocated by visitation rather than invitation is a practical impossibility. Furthermore, its concept is devoid of any legal or political status.

> But without at least the thought of this pure and unconditional hospitality, of hospitality *itself*, we would have no concept of hospitality in general and would not even be able to determine any rules for conditional hospitality (with its rituals, its legal status, its norms, its national or international conventions)' (Borradori 2003: 129; original emphases; Derrida speaking).

It is precisely unconditional, pure hospitality, insists Derrida, that recognises and accepts the alterity of the Other. Not even dependent on a decision, unconditional hospitality is neither juridical nor political. Nonetheless, it is the very condition of both. The paradoxical nature of the two hospitalities lies in their simultaneous qualities of heterogeneity and indistinguishability (Borradori 2003: 128–30; Derrida speaking). What creates unconditional hospitality is its inability to retain its unconditionality when faced with the coming of the Other; in Derrida's words:

> I cannot open the door, I cannot offer him or her anything whatsoever without making this hospitality effective, without, in some way giving *something determinate*. This determination will have to re-inscribe the unconditional into certain conditions. 'What remains unconditional or absolute (*undedingt* if you will) risks being nothing at all if conditions (*Bedingungen*) do not make of it some thing [*sic*] (*Ding*)' (Borradori 2003: 129–30; original emphases; Derrida speaking).

We might well agree with Borradori, when she comments, in response to Derrida's observations just quoted, that '[t[he fact that these two poles [unconditional hospitality and hospitality by invitation] are at once heterogenous and indissociable is, philosophically, very difficult to think', and her questions which follow are as relevant today as they were when posed

back in 2001, in the wake of 9/11: 'How can political discourse assimilate it? Might the modern ideal of cosmopolitanism be the answer?' (Borradori 2003: 130). But it is beyond the scope of this article to answer them.

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Filmography

On the Bride's Side (*Io sto con la Sposa*). 2014. dir. by Gabriele del Grande, Antonio Augugliaro and Khaled Soliman Al Nassiry (Gina Films, DocLab)

[8] This is an edited version of the text of the Alexander von Humboldt Lecture in Human Geography 'Europe as Borderland', delivered at the University of Nejmegen, 10 November 2004 (pdf <http://gpm.ruhosting.nl/avh/Europe%20as%20Borderland.pdf> [accessed: 10-Jul-17]).

The Refugee Identity Crisis: How Athens is Trying to Bridge the Gap Between a Person and their Homeland through Heritage and Meaning Making

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Abstract

Athens as a case study is perfect for work on social development of refugees as it has, in the past few years, become a major centre of mass immigration. With thousands of citizens having settled into the city, Athens is now working on looking after these people holistically through reconnecting them to the past.

Everyone has a personal identity; one way in which this is acquired comes from our chosen country of residence through its economy, culture, and history. However, refugees, who have had to abandon the country in which they have been brought up and have lost all connection with any physical evidence of their past, have also lost this way of establishing a personal identity.

Athens is taking steps to connect not only refugees to the local heritage but also the local community to refugees by, on the one hand, giving refugees tours around museums and, on the other, staging exhibitions which illustrate the refugee experience centred around refugees' communities. Athens aims to include the community, in order to teach Athenians about the refugees' experience, and, ultimately, to encourage identity building through positive representation. These activities work to show refugees that, although they may be physically disconnected from their original heritage, it is possible to create a new heritage and its associated identity. Athens is reshaping the connotations inherent in the title 'refugee' by creating a community and therefore a new identity. This is an identity which has its roots in Athens, where refugees can make us of its historical background but, by highlighting Greece's democracy and Greek's famous hospitality, both Greeks and refugees can build a self-identity based on these concepts.[1] The possible outcome of what Athens is and has been doing to help its refugee population reflects conclusions that I have come to as a result of informal discussions with museum professionals and conversations with the people I met during my time in Athens.

[1] This article is based on a paper presented by the author at *Boundaries*, a University of Kent MA Festival and Conference held in Paris 30 May – 2 June 2017.

Keywords: refugee, Athens, identity, heritage, transcultural, museum, New Museology, representation, inclusion, division

Identity is probably not the first thing that comes to mind when considering the needs of people who have been violently displaced from their home in the way those living in refugee communities have been. However, when shelter and other basic needs have been met, the boundary between the self and the surrounding public becomes more apparent and this feeling is only exacerbated when refugees find themselves in an area where people have a strong sense of national identity, as is the case in Greece. Most refugees now in Greece did not intend it to be their final stop; they are there because of events in March 2016 which halted them on their way into Europe.[2] Not only have they been displaced from their home country and forced to abandon their belongings there but they have also lost their end-goal and are now stuck, it seems forever, in a state of limbo, not belonging anywhere, as refugees are seen as 'people without a place' (Papastergiadis 2006; cited Burnett 2013: 1).[3] Essentially, the refugee risks losing all sense of self and identity. The object of this article is to examine how Athens, having provided refugees with their basic needs since they began arriving in significant numbers, is working to bridge the gap between them and their lost identity.

The inspiration for this article came from the coincidence that during from my postgraduate studies in Heritage Management at the University of Kent's Athens campus, I was living not far from the refugee camp at Skaramagás, the largest in Greece. Using the same public transport as they did to travel to and from Athens, I got to know many people from a community with which I had never previously interacted as well as volunteers who worked with them. This gave me insights into a way of life about which my only information up till then had come from the media.

[2] The background to the current situation is that, prior to 2016, Greece allowed refugees from the Middle East and beyond who arrived via Turkey to enter but did not encourage them to remain, as it was unable to make adequate provision for them. Most, if not all, of them were aiming for countries in Europe, such as Sweden, Germany and Austria, via Macedonia and the West Balkans. The situation changed considerably during 2015, when more than a million refugees fled from Syria, as conditions there worsened (UNHCR 2016: 13). Instead of settling in neighbouring Middle Eastern countries, as had previously been the case, many of these set their sights on Europe, encouraged by the welcoming attitude of countries such as Germany, where Chancellor Angela Merkel declared, 'We can do it' (ESI 2016: 15).

[3] Burnett also observes that refugee camps themselves often have a 'placeless' status, being deemed to be not legally part of the country in which they are actually situated, and this 'enhances the impression of placelessness' (Burnett 2013: 1).

1. Refugees in Athens: Present and Past

The presence in Greece in 2018 of around 60,000 refugees, of which 15,000 or so are on the Greek Islands (Strickland 2018), is the outcome of two independent political decisions taken in 2016 to address the almost exponential increase in the numbers of refugees trying to enter Europe via Turkey and Greece during 2015.[4] The first of these was Macedonia's decision to close its border with Greece to unpapered immigrants in early March 2016. About ten days later, the EU and Turkey entered into an agreement whereby Turkey would take back refugees still on the Greek Islands and the EU would give Turkey six billion Euros towards the cost of making better provision for refugees in that country.[5] The combined effect was that refugees already in mainland Greece found themselves stuck there and refugees still on the Greek Islands found themselves unable to transfer to the mainland.

The sudden influx of refugees into Greece during 2015 and the situation that arose after the events of March 2016 made an immediate and obvious impact on Athens and Athenians. From late 2015 on, camps to accommodate the refugees still arriving from the Greek islands were hastily set up on the outskirts of Athens and near Piraeus, making use of buildings such as disused military bases and the old Olympic stadium. One of these was the camp at Skaramagás already mentioned; near Piraeus, this was initially a women and children only camp, but it now houses 3,000 families, Syrian, Afghani, Kurdish, and Iraqi. These official camps provide the refugees' basic needs of shelter and food, the cost of which is borne by NGOs and humanitarian agencies.

Communities of refugees have also been established in the Athens city centre areas of Victoria and Omonia. In addition to this, unofficial accommodation for refugees is being provided by Athens' thriving left wing groups, so called 'solidarity groups', who have been taking over large unoccupied buildings in the urban area and putting refuge families into them; it's estimated that currently over 2,500 refugees, of whom there are little records, are being housed in this way (Georgiopoulou 2018).

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[4] This increase is illustrated by data in *The Refugee Crisis through Statistics*. One table shows the month by month increase in the arrivals of refugees in Greece during 2015 from 1,694 in January to a peak of 211,663 in October before declining to an average of around 130,000 for November and December. Another table shows that 872,500 migrants arrived in Greece by the sea crossing from Turkey in 2015 compared with 43,500 the previous year (ESI 2017: 14–15).

[5] Writing on the anniversary of the EU-Turkey Agreement, Amnesty International's Greece Researcher Kondylia Gogou condemned the previous twelve months as 'Europe's year of shame' (Gogou 2017). Refugees still on the Greek Islands are living in appalling conditions; volunteers working with these refugees are convinced that '[the fact that refugees] have to endure [these conditions is] part of a broader plan' on the part of the camps' Greek operators and EU financial backers to deter further refugees from attempting to get into Greece (Strickland 2018; Witte 2018).

However, today's immigrants are not the first refugees to arrive in Greece in great numbers. Nearly a century ago, the outcome of political upheavals in the Eastern Mediterranean during the first two decades of the twentieth century as well as international pressures was the arrival of the *Mikrasiátes*, the Greeks from Anatolia (or Asia Minor), in 1922. These settled all over Greece and Macedonia, but a large majority settled in Central Attika, in Athens and the neighbouring towns of Piraeus, Elefsina and Elliniko.

Just as is happening today, the arrival of these refugees greatly changed the physical landscape of not only Athens, the population of which doubled, but also neighbouring towns; overall the population of the whole area increased by the addition of one million refugees (Karatzas 2012: 162). Initially, many public buildings were commandeered to provide housing for the refugees: school buildings, public baths, even the Athens Opera House (Hirschon 1989: 36). New suburbs were then built on the city's periphery to provide housing, but many of the new arrivals from Anatolia and the Balkan province in Turkey were unable to afford them, so they created illicit settlements, building where they could with whatever materials were to hand in styles that 'expressed their own architectural traditions'; Karatzas describes how the 'abrupt wave of refugees from Asia Minor' radically changed the appearance of neo-classical Athens (2012: 162–65).

2 Heritage

Heritage, says Harrison, is ubiquitous; we live among 'spectral images of the past, the heterogeneous piling up of historic materials in the present' (2013: 4). But he argues, this does not mean that it must be considered as just a historic phenomenon; it is also a social, economic and political phenomenon of late modern societies. Evidence of a shared human connectivity, heritage can be an object as large and as ancient as the pyramids of Giza or as small as a book handed down through the generations, emblems representative of the past which we preserve and treasure. It can be not only a city's long-built transport system but also the continued daily use of it, a practice from the past which we continue to uphold in the present; this is intangible heritage, that is, not represented by physical objects.

Intangible heritage is a representation of a culture, so naturally connects itself to identity through its creation (Lenzerini 2011:101–02). It reflects a group's practices, rituals and daily lives; it is an image of a time, place, and emotion. It is not just the physical form of old buildings or artefacts but our personal involvement in the area in which we live, be this a conscious activity such as taking part in the annual town festival or an unconscious one such as adopting the characteristics of local speech; heritage is life.

Heritage and memory are strongly linked. Heritage is the means whereby the past is not forgotten but kept alive in the present. It can be the 'glue' which helps communities bond together. The *Mikrasiátes* who flooded into Greece nearly a century ago give a good illustration of this. In her examination of *Mikrasiátes* who settled on Chios, James observes that it was '[s]hared memories [of their former life in Anatolia and their traditions that] allowed the refugees to reconstruct their lives, if not just as they had been, at least with continuity' (2001: 235); intangible heritage informed their sense of collective identity.

At a personal level, we surround ourselves with our own heritage, again both intangible and tangible: rituals, activities, religion, tastes, and objects. We keep physical memories of our family and friends who make us who we are in the form of photographs, we visit the same sites throughout our lives, and sing the same songs from our childhood. These are all evidence of our own personal identity and heritage, as well as the changes to our personal identity, which will be discussed in the next section, are closely related to the personal heritage with which we surround ourselves. If we look within ourselves, we'll find things with which we feel we are associated at a basic level; it could be a childhood song, the place where we lived for a brief time or a personal object we have grown up with. This is our own heritage, gleaned from countless influences on our life.

During its three-year programme which ended in January 2013, EuNaMus produced a number of reports.[6] In one of these, entitled 'Agents of Change: How National Museums Shape European Identity', it says that '[t]hrough their collections, these institutions […] provide solid anchors for a national sense of belonging, a role they have performed for centuries' (2012: 1).[7] Arguably, heritage shapes how we fit into a society and can enhance or decrease our feeling of belonging within a societal and cultural landscape.

From this, we can see that heritage has a key role in developing identity. Indeed, heritage can play a role in revitalising existing communities by encouraging a positive sense of identity. This idea is not new; it is being used, for instance, by the European Council of Culture and its annual choice of a European Capital of Culture, which not only boosts the local economy but also community morale (Moris et al, 2017). The Greek town of Elefsina (coincidentally, the town in which I lived when studying in Athens) is one of the latest choices for Capital of

[6] EuNaMus is the acronym of European National Museums: Identity Policies, the Uses of the Past and the European Citizen, a research project funded under the Seventh Framework of the European Commission.

[7] The concept that heritage, whether presented through representation in museums or being learned through the study of history, contributes to the development of identity has been a popular study since the 1970s with the advent of the movement known as New Museology, which shifted the focus from the artefacts exhibited to represent heritage to their audience.

Culture, having been nominated for 2021. As the organisation promoting Elefsina's candidacy for the title makes clear in its final bid book, the expectation is that the ECoC title will be the catalyst for the town's dynamism, creativity and social cohesion by involving its people to get more involved with heritage and work towards building a stronger community (Eleusis2021 2016).[8]

Heritage, both tangible and intangible, supports the awareness of a nation's past which is a component of a sense of national identity to a greater or lesser degree, depending on the individual. It follows that separation from the heritage that supports one's sense of identity, whether national or personal, will adversely affect it, the more so, if the separation is enforced, as is the case with refugees. The effects of such a separation — experiencing a loss of identity, the sense of being 'placeless', of not belonging anywhere — are only going to be exacerbated when refugees find themselves in a country such as Greece, where all its citizens have a strong sense of national identity, and the more so in Athens, on which the Greek's sense of national identity is centred (Karatzas 2012: 155).

Greeks are very aware of their long heritage, which they exhibit well. Every major town has an archaeological museum which tells the story of the town's heritage from times past, the people that lived there then and what they did. The mass marketing of the heritage from Ancient Greece means that the city's history is ever present to the visitor. To the tourist, this is exciting, but it can become suffocating for the long-term visitor, as I experienced. To be surrounded by museums, displaying only Greek artefacts and promoting only Greek heritage must make refugees feel their loss more keenly; even the mass of the Acropolis that dominates the city is a reminder that you are not home.

3. Identity

The concept of identity, the state of having unique identifying characteristics, is most relevant to the refugees who now find themselves in Greece.

3.1 Personal Identity

Our personal identity is influenced by many things: our experiences in life, our interests, what we believe and stand for; an important influence is the idea of our home. This home we connect

[8] Elefsina, known in antiquity as Eleusis, is historically important for several reasons. It is the birthplace of the poet Aeschylus, the focus of the annual Aeschylia festival. It is also where the Eleusinian Mysteries, one of Ancient Greece's secret religious cults, were celebrated annually at a site to which people walked from Kerameikos in Athens along a route known as the Sacred Road. Living in the town, I saw a different picture. Where the rituals were once held is an archaeological site, but it has a deserted air; the town is becoming depopulated as young people move away, and the area now better known for its abandoned factories and the oil tankers which make the coastline unusable.

to is not necessarily the country we were born in but can be the country we have resided in for a long time. Forced displacement from one's home will alter one's personal identity; this is certainly the case for a refugee (Griffiths 2001). The refugees now in Athens have been forced to abandon the home that was part of their personal identity, increasing their feeling of loss further and leading to their feeling of being people without a place, what Papastergiadis terms 'placelessness' (Papastergiadis 2006: 431–33; cited Burnett 2013: 1). This makes recreating a refugee's personal identity problematic: do refugees, as Burnett asks rhetorically, 'continue to base their identity on their country of origin, do they form an identity connected to a non-place or do they no longer have a part of their identity based on place' (2013:1)? A similar question could be asked, even if the refugee is sufficiently settled in the host country not to feel like a person 'without a place': should identity be based on the old home or the new one? It is beyond the scope of this article to attempt to answer this question.

The term 'personal identity' has a plethora of definitions; it can be how we see ourselves in relation to our surroundings and fellow beings, the way we define ourselves, how we choose to live our life, and the labels with which we are associated. All definitions agree, however, that this sense of self is based on our experiences, so it changes throughout our lifetime, depending on major life events and self-evaluation (Carducci 2009). We humans are subject to change, and the way we view our identity consequently changes. We grow older and change the way we dress, our taste buds become more diverse, and religious affiliations can be gained or lost; as a result, we can assume many different identities or identifications rather like masks, which can be worn either successively or even all at once (Ibáñez 1990: 15); national identity is one of these 'masks'.

3.2 National Identity

The way in which we see ourselves in relation to our fellow beings is known as 'collective identity'. One form of collective identity is national identity, the sense of belonging to one state or one nation. The concept of this envisages a community built of millions of people who have never met but feel a bond with through shared experience:[9]

> [The nation] is an imagined […] community […]. It is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow members […] yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. […] [I]t is imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, a nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship' (Anderson 2006: 6–8).

[9] References to Anderson are from the latest edition of his *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* first published in 1983.

National identity can be defined as the sense of a nation as a cohesive whole, as represented by distinctive traditions, culture, language and politics. It is way of 'branding' a group of people who collectively share the same subjective sense, 'we', and distinguishing them from those who do not, the outsiders, 'they'.

National identity is not the same as nationality, in that term's sense of one's legal status as a citizen of a nation state. Anderson uses the term 'nation-ness' to distinguish between the two concepts: 'nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it, in view of that word's multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts' (Anderson 2006: 4). In other words, we are not born with a sense of nation-ness; we acquire it from the culture around us. Heritage, therefore, is a major contributor to the 'mask' that is one's nation-ness. Greeks are an example of a people whose heritage and nation-ness are closely linked.

Modern Greeks are keenly aware of their heritage and history which go back nearly three thousand years. It was this intellectual affinity with classical Greek civilisation, as well as the Greek language, which formed the basis of what Kitromilides describes as 'proto-nationalism' in the Greek-speaking Christians who were at the core of the many small states which emerged after the break-up of the Byzantine empire in 1204 (2013: 23). However, the Ottoman conquest of Constantinople in 1453 and the consequential fall of the remaining Greek states meant that Greece, unlike many of the nations of Western Europe, did not become a nation-state until it gained independence from the Ottoman empire in 1832. Throughout this period, Greece, however, held on to its distinct language, history, religion, and customs to separate itself and promote nationalism (Ibid: 24).

However, argues Karatzas, the past culture, history, and religion on which this nation-ness is built is not that of what is now modern Greece but only of one part of it: Athens; modern Greece is 'Atheno-centric' (2012: 155). This is evident from the way Greek history is both embedded in many Greeks, who hold strong opinions about their past, and, together with culture and religion, is fully covered by representations in Athens' museums — the National Archaeological Museum, the Christian Byzantine Museum and the Museum of Greek Folk Art.

Nation-ness can be acquired by people who live in a country for a long time but were not born there. Refugees, like all migrants, arrive in the country which will be their new home with an already established nation-ness. If they live there for long enough, and especially if they are present there when experiencing key rites of passage such as puberty and marriage, they are likely to connect emotionally to the local nation-ness, even if they never completely lose their original nation-ness. One reason for this is the effect of isomorphism, the tendency to become

like the people around one: '[g]reater similarity […] result[s] from interaction, communication, and emulation' (Rosenau 1996: 259). Another is that one naturally develops an emotional attachment to the nation which is providing for one, so one's emotional attachment to one's original nation can weaken a little but is not completely lost.

In the case of refugees, the 'homesickness' refugees experience on finding themselves among people with an alien sense of nation-ness is going to be greater because they have not left their home by choice, and they are not well enough settled into the new community to develop an emotional attachment to the host country; they therefore cling on to their original nation-ness. As a result, there can be conflict between the groups whose nation-ness differs; this can lead to friction within the community, a situation which requires sensitive handling by the host nation.[10]

Nation-ness is not the same as nationalism, which is also a 'cultural artefact' (Anderson 2006: 4). Özkırımlı defines nationalism as a 'form of seeing and interpreting that conditions our daily speech, behaviors and attitudes' (2017: 4). Today, the term is often understood as an extreme form of patriotism marked by a belief in the superiority of one's nation over all others. It is this extreme expression of patriotism which is manifested in 'the recent problem of xenophobia and ethnic violence against immigrants, *Gastarbeiter*, and asylum seekers' (Özkırımlı 2017: 126–27) and which has, in recent years, been championed by political entities in both Western and Eastern Europe which focus on themes such as immigration, security, and economic austerity.[11] The refugee crisis has only served to make these arguments louder, as both fears about terrorist attacks and the consequent need for better security increase. This is the reason behind the surge in the popularity of far-right parties such as France's *Front Nationale* which very nearly won the presidential election in 2017. Another far-right party is Greece's *Popular Association — Golden Dawn*, founded in 1980, which opposes all non-European, especially Muslim, immigration into the mainly Greek areas of southern Greece and Athens and includes in its National Plan the expulsion of all illegal immigrants.[12]

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[10] Mittelman identifies 'conflicts between immigrant and established communities in formerly tight-knit neighborhoods' as one of the manifestations of globalisation (1994: 427; quoted Rosenau 1996: 248).

[11] Arguably, nationalism could be seen as a form of localisation and its rise in recent years as a reaction to increased globalisation, which Rosenau defines as 'objects and activities that spread across boundaries' (1996: 256). Rosenau identifies six categories of these 'objects and activities', one of which is 'people […] either as tourists, professionals, *refugees*, or *migrants*' (1996: 256–57; added emphases).

[12] Strickland comments that, unlike other far-right, populist and often neo-fascist parties across Europe, *Golden Dawn* has not successfully broadened its base since the massive influx of refugee arrivals started in 2015. However, he warns, whilst '*Golden Dawn* hasn't grown, there remains the grim fact that the neo-fascist party hasn't shrunk much, either' (Strickland 2018a).

4. Community Building: collective identity and 'imagined communities'

Although we can define what is meant by 'personal identity'; we cannot define or comment on a person's identity unless we are that person. What we can do is work towards helping a person rebuild or develop their identity. There are many ways of doing this, and it's beyond the scope of this article to mention them all. My focus is on those which, in one way or another, make use of Athens' heritage and can be interpreted as community building.

I referred earlier to collective identity, one of the 'masks' which a person wears. A group with which someone identifies is the people amongst whom they live: the community. In simple terms, a community means the people living in a given locality. However, it can also mean a group of people that has characteristics in common; they have a shared identity. When people living in the same locality recognise in each other a shared identity, they are said have a sense of community; individually, each has a collective identity.

The biggest contributor to a collective identity, maintains Karatzas, is a 'sense of belonging to the same place' (2012: 165). This is recognised by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in 'A Community based Approach in UNHCR operations' which gives guidance on how to implement the approach and help refugees feel that they are part of the local geography and part of a community (UNHCR 2008).

Sometimes, external initiatives are needed either to revive a sense of community that has been lost or to encourage a sense of community where none yet exists, for example, where new communities in the basic sense are being created; the mere fact that people are all living in a given locality does not mean that they will automatically develop a sense of community. This is community building; an example of this is the annual choice by the European Council of Culture of a 'European Capital of Culture', already mentioned in connection with its choice of Elefsina as the European Capital of Culture in 2021.

Today's refugees, who have been housed in the camps outside Athens and in social housing in Athens itself, will naturally develop a sense of community because of their shared culture, religion, ethnicity, and the experience of becoming a refugee. However, this will perpetuate the divide between Athenians and refugees that currently exists. The arrangements to provide shelter for refugees has had a negative outcome in that is that there is a physical divide between the refugee communities and indigenous Athens. This is obvious in the case of the camps, which are located outside of Athens. However, the way the official plan of settling refugees within the city has been carried has also created a divide which is not so obvious: the high concentration of refugees in just two districts of Athens has resulted in the formation of distinct refugee

communities there. The knock-on effect of this is that these areas have acquired a bad reputation and are regarded as 'no go' areas by Athenians.

The outcome of this physical divide is that there is little sharing of space and therefore little interaction between most Athenians and the refugee communities, apart from those parts of Athens where refugees have been unofficially accommodated by 'solidarity groups' in squats. Here refugees are less numerous, so they are less obvious as they mingle with their Athenian neighbours. Whilst this brings refugees more into the day-to-day life of Athens, it cannot be regarded a long-term solution or one that can be used everywhere. If, in the long term, this psychological divide is to be removed, there needs to be a sense of community between refugees and Athenians. This is the task that Athens now faces.

Times of crisis often result in forcing together groups of people who have different backgrounds, languages, cultures and needs. They are a community in the sense that they are all living in the same locality, but they are not a community in the deeper sense of having a shared identity. This is the situation in Athens. Each group needs to recognise that they have a shared identity with the other, to see the other as 'Us' and not 'Them'.

Ideas of community are formed physically through shared spaces and intellectually through shared ideals. This in turn creates what Anderson calls 'imagined communities', a concept which he introduced when defining a nation and to which I have already referred but which can be applied, with modification, to a group of people living in the same locality that have a sense of community: it is 'imagined' because even though the 'members of [the group may never have any contact with] most of their fellow members […] yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion'; it is a 'community' because 'regardless of the inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, [the group is] conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship' (2006: 6–8).

An initiative that helps refugees to develop a 'sense of belonging to the same place' has been to start tours of the city's major museums for refugee groups. In May 2016, Aristidis Baltas, the Greek Culture Minister, took one hundred refugees on a tour of the ancient site of the Acropolis and the newly built Acropolis Museum. Instead of simply explaining the historical significance of the site, he made use of the fact that Syria, like Greece, is steeped in archaeological importance, so the countries have a shared heritage. During the tour, he compared the damage done to the Parthenon in the seventeenth century when Greece was still part of the Ottoman empire with the destruction of Palmyra, a very important archaeological site in Syria that was destroyed in 2015 by ISIL, who either demolished parts of the site or sold

artefacts into the illegal trade in antiquities. This tactic has the effect of transferring culture and heritage from Syria to Athens, by showing that they are on the same side when it comes to importance of antiquities.

Throughout the visit he took pains to link the state of Greece to that of Syria; rather than focusing on what Greece can offer refugees, he emphasized those characteristics of the Greeks which would help them, their democracy, tolerance and acceptance of everyone despite race or religion (TornosNews.GR 2016). In his endeavour to ground the young people in Athens and convince them that this was their new, welcoming home, he talked of the world-famous Greek hospitality rather than Greek history. Initiatives like this can mitigate the initial, brutal shock of Greek identity refugees by showing them that the two identities can be reconciled.

Another such initiative took place in August 2016, when Athens hosted a three-hour concert organised by *El Sistema*, a music education programme founded in Venezuela with the object of teaching music to children of low income families; this was held in the Odeon of Herodes Atticus on the slopes of the Acropolis. A large group of refugee children performed for about an hour. One of the singers, a twelve-year-old boy is reported as saying before he went on stage that he felt good when he was going to perform at the concert, adding, 'It's good, and when I sing, I feel better' (Associated Press 2017).

Providing these children with cultural activities can potentially work on their self-confidence. High self-esteem links itself to positive social and personal identity-making through increased interactions with the community (Carducci 2009). By placing these refugee children in the city's most famous structure, the Athens municipality displayed them to the world, putting them front and centre as part of the community. Furthermore, the concert given by refugees was attended by Athenians, so community efforts such as this bring the two communities together.

Community building is anything which will foster a sense of shared identity and, in periods of crisis and war, is very important to those who have been displaced, as it enables them to experience feelings of normality and a sense of continuity from their previous life (Shabi 2016). I argue that representation can help people to discover shared experiences, the image of their communion, and is therefore effective in community building. This will be discussed in the next section.

5. Representation: the role of museums in community building

Representation is the production of meaning through classification and display in museums and galleries, places that Lidchi views as 'systems of representation' (Newman & McLean 2006:

57; citing Lidchi 2003).[13] What is being represented will, of course, depend on the objects being exhibited and the underlying purpose of the exhibition, whether permanent or temporary, but, by displaying objects, museums and galleries 'articulate or reinforce frameworks of knowledge […] and convey meaning and validity upon objects' (Ibid.). In the context of this article, representation means the representation of culture and, by extension, heritage.

The relevance of this to the refugees in Athens is two-fold; first, studies have shown that if we identify with the representation of culture in a museum, we are more likely to be motivated to visit it;[14] secondly and more importantly, exhibiting heritage with which the viewer identifies reinforces their sense of identity (Newman & Maclean 2006: 61–64).[15]

I have already commented on the likely effect on refugees of finding themselves in Athens, where the heritage of Ancient Greece is strongly promoted. A whole city, not aligned to their identity, is now the new home into which refugees have been forced. Neither they nor their culture, experiences, and interests are represented. They have no identity in that city and are left feeling placeless and empty, outsiders overwhelmed by the strong indigenous identity by which they are surrounded. Athens is taking steps to address this issue by including refugees in what is arguably Greece's best product: heritage. At first sight, being included in a city's heritage does not seem important. However, as I have shown, heritage is a way of seeing oneself; it has a key role in forming identity both personal and national. In general, most people would probably relate to the notion that heritage has a part in forming national identity, typified by the connection Greeks have to the Acropolis.

Museum representation also enables visitors to 'think of themselves as sharing aspects of their identity with others with whom they have had no personal contact' (Newman & McLean 2006: 63), a core element of Anderson's 'imagined community'. Furthermore, Newman & McLean maintain that such communities have much in common with 'essentialist forms of identity that do not reflect the complexities of modern life but present a simpler, more straightforward identity with which to make links' (Ibid); in other words, we have an innate

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[13] In the context of this article, it's a happy coincidence that the term 'museum' comes via Latin from the Ancient Greek 'Μουσεῖον (*Mouseion*)', that is a place dedicated to the Muses, divine patronesses of the Arts in Greek mythology.

[14] See Falk (2016), Allen (2010), Dodd et al (2013).

[15] Identity, in Baumeister and Muraven's view, is an adaptation to context: 'History, culture and the proximate structure of social relations create a context in which the individual identity must exist [and] individuals actively choose, alter and modify their identities based upon what will enable them to get along best in that context (1996: 405; cited Newman & McLean 2006: 61). Hein argues that when seeing the representation of our own culture we can connect to it through our sense of identity. This influences our learning, as our understanding of history comes from our personal, socio-cultural, and physical contexts over time. Learning can therefore be a contextualised process dependent not on what is being portrayed to us, the object physically in a museum, but upon prior knowledge, interests, abilities, and aspects we with which we connect (2006: 371–72).

ability to recognise what we have in common with people who are, on the face of it, very different from us. It is in this way that people from different cultures who have been thrown together in times of crisis can identify with each other. Museum representation is, therefore, a way to encourage community building. Admittedly, the permanent exhibitions of the city's museums are predominately Greece focused, which makes it hard for today's refugees to connect to what's on display, as it is not their history being represented. However, if more Athenians, as well as tourists and refugees, were aware of Greece's refugee past, this would open the opportunity for a new narrative and a new identity associated with today's refugee crisis.

For this new narrative and new identity to be accepted, Athens needs to promote the history of its previous refugee crisis. In so doing, it will remind its citizens that they have characteristics which can help create a sense of community today. Although the sudden arrival of refugees in great numbers has created any number of difficulties which currently seem incapable of resolution, the previous experience shows that Athens has been able to handle this situation. Amongst the pictures of the earlier period held by the University of Athens Museum are ones of children and people banding together. The hope is that today's refugee crisis will be resolved in the same way in the future. Identity-affecting experiences such as fleeing, seeking asylum, and settling into the city are being used as a centre of expression in cultural sites. By exhibiting these difficult experiences to the public, Athens is creating conversation, education, and inclusive practices. Presenting the plights of a new community gives its people exposure, and more people are given the chance to understand what is happening. With this exposure comes education, understanding, and, hopefully, acceptance.

The representation of refugees in Athens' museums is not new; there have in the past been exhibitions focusing on its history of immigration going back to 1922, most recently *Twice a Stranger: Forced Displacement and Population Exchange in the 20th Century* at the Benaki Museum (2012). The University of Athens museum, amongst others, has an archive of material representing the lives of the old refugee families — the curator there can even tell you about the time when an elderly visitor came back to the museum to look back at old photographs of themselves taken during the early years after arriving in Greece and how they revelled in the memories. Stories about settling and creating friendships and communities are shared by citizens in oral history.

Today's refugees have been the focus of exhibitions mounted in two of Athens' museums during 2016. The first of these, held in the Benaki museum, was a photographic exhibition,

Children on the Move, which focused on refugee children and also showcased handmade items and toys. This showed a different side to the crisis, and, by presenting refugee children, the Benaki exhibition appealed to the sensitive side of the Athenian viewers. The vulnerability on display challenged the stigma of the typical male adult pictured in the media and asked the viewer to think again about the real victims of the refugee crisis (Benaki 2016). *The Journey: People on the Move*, another photographic exhibition also held in the Benaki museum, recorded the migration from Turkey to Greece and on to the border to Europe. The object of this exhibition was to make viewers aware of what is going on outside their immediate area in terms of the refugee crisis (Solidarity Now 2017; Benaki 2016a). Alongside the photographs were pictures of their life back home that children had drawn, which added another human dimension for viewers and encouraged their empathy with refugees.

Later that year, the Cycladic Museum hosted an exhibition of work by the world-famous Chinese contemporary artist Ai WeiWei (Museum of Cycladic Art 2016). As well as a selection of his better-known works, this displayed works done during or inspired by his time spent with refugees in Lesbos from late 2015 to early 2016. A thought-provoking feature of the exhibition was a video message from Weiwei which is still available on the Cycladic Museum's online platform.[16] In this he gives a first-hand account of conditions on Lesbos. He speaks of how you can see how cut off these people are and how they are focused purely on survival. (Weiwei 2016). The guide book to accompany the exhibition concluded by quoting WeiWei's suggestion that boundaries are not geographical but rather to do with the individual's mind and his hope that by presenting refugees in the rawest way the viewers' understanding is altered and softened to their plight (Museum of Cycladic Art 2016; Guide Book).

Amongst the works which resulted from WeiWei's time on Lesbos was his *Iphone Wallpaper*, a collage of over 12,000 images which the artist took on his mobile phone; this occupied one room and a corridor. In comparison to other exhibitions which focus on travelling or physical objects, WeiWei portrayed the emotions of the refugees on Lesbos with photographs of the everyday, people smiling but also people distraught. His work inspired by his time on Lesbos is intended as a comment on the way that Europe seems to be abandoning its obligations to refugees (Museum of Cycladic Art 2016; Guide Book).

This exhibition generated empathy for the refugee by forcing one to look at what is really going on just on one's doorstep. My personal response to it was, first, a desire to help. I felt compelled to look at each of the images in *Iphone Wallpaper*, to recognise the individual in

[16] And now also on YouTube (see Bibliography).

each photograph, to try my hardest to understand what they were going through. However, I also felt uncomfortable, an outsider looking in on someone else's life, and was struck by the fact that there were no refugees present, when there easily could have been.

6. A New Identity: A Transcultural Community?

As we've seen, most major towns in Greece have a museum in which the story of its past and its people is represented. Today, there are new people in Athens and a new story that needs to be told. Having been provided with shelter and basic necessities, these communities are becoming more permanent, occupying areas within the city centre, as they seek asylum. Athens is taking steps to represent their lives by including them in what is arguably Greece's best product: heritage. If being included in a city's heritage does not, at first sight, seem important, we must remember the role heritage plays in forming identity.

However, what Athens is doing to help its refugee population find its identity can, I argue, have an entirely different outcome. By moving away from promoting the historical importance of Greek identity, Athens appears to be aiming to promote what Macdonald terms a 'transcultural identity' (2013: 162–87) comprising both the identity of the Greek community and the varying identities of the refugee communities. Unlike a multicultural society, which relates to, reflects or is adapted to different cultures, one of which is dominant, a transcultural society involves, encompasses or extends across different cultures, none of which is dominant; each culture has equal status with the others.

In her *Museums, national, postnational, and transcultural identities*, Macdonald argues that the increase of globalisation and the ease with which we can view and be part of others' national identity means that our own identity is now easier to change and merge with new ones (2003: 5-6). However, she insists, this is not to suggest that the two identities merge to the extent that they lose their individuality, rather the contrary; the aim is to connect the matching patterns that appear between the two histories and cultures, so that neither community feels that its already established identity is compromised (2003: 6–10). As we've seen, at any time, an individual has a variety of 'masks', which can be worn either concurrently or consecutively (Ibáñez 1990: 15). In a global environment, it's consequently possible, González argues, for someone to build an identity that combines a diversity of identifications from different countries; in this sense, 'the liaison between identity and locality vanishes' (2008: 807).

The aim is, then, to create for the refugees within Athens a new community which enables them to have a degree of involvement with Athenians greater than they have at present. Community building involves inclusion, a sharing of experiences, objects, and open

conversation. As well as through a sharing of spaces, this can be achieved though more involvement *with* the refugee community rather than *for* them. This requires refugees' involvement with the heritage sector, as has been already done in Berlin, where Syrian and Iraqi refugees have been engaged to lead tours for immigrants, so that they can make cultural connections between Germany and their country of origin (Oltermann 2016); refugees thus directly involve themselves with rebuilding their identity.

6.1 Personal response

Not all the initiatives introduced by Athens have been accepted by Athenians and refugees in equal measure. For example, since October 2016, Athens has been placing refugee children within its mainstream schools for a special introductory education system with the aim of quickly bringing them to a standard such that they join Greek children. For those that are not able to be placed in mainstream schools because of placement numbers there are alternative education systems in place to ensure all children have access to the Greek state-funded education system. The aim is to bring 22,000 refugee children into mainstream schooling.

However, this scheme had a mixed reception when it was introduced. In some places, the refugee children were welcomed on their first day with gifts of school books and sweets; in others, parents prevented the children from entering for a variety of reasons: that the children had not been vaccinated; that Greek schools are under-resourced and already over-crowded; that illegal immigrants should not have the benefit of state funded education (Zampetaki & Sideris 2017; Squires 2016; Strickland 2016). Conversely, it has not been taken advantage of by all refugees: there are, says Strickland, many refugee parents who are reluctant to send their children to Greek schools, because they hope to settle elsewhere in Europe eventually, so they see little point in the children learning Greek (Strickland 2016). However, some education in the camps is being provided by volunteer support; individuals and groups come from across the world to teach English and Greek to both children and adults. This is important, as it will make it easier for refugees to communicate with Greeks.

6.2 Assimilation

Assimilating two communities has happened before, although it has taken several decades. Because of the way urban authorities responded to the influx of refugees in 1922, the *Mikrasiátes* tended to stay together in their own communities and, as we have seen, created an identity that was very separate from that of metropolitan Greeks, a situation that continued for several decades (James 2001: 234–35; Hirschon 1998: 4–5) and to some extent still exists today:

I have met many Greeks, proud of their refugee history, who claim to be descended from *Mikrasiátes*.

However, there are differences between today's refugees and those of 1922. The refugees of 1922 had an intellectual affinity with classical Greek civilisation which today's refugees do not; they therefore already had a shared heritage with the Greeks of Greece. The question of a transcultural identity did not arise, therefore. Furthermore, whereas the arrivals from Asia Minor in 1922 were Greek Orthodox, most of those arriving today are from Syria and other countries where the dominant religion is Islam. Both these factors could affect the ease with which today's refugees will assimilate into their new environment.

A consequence of the intellectual affinity modern Greeks have with classical Greek civilisation is the commonly held assumption, still reflected in Athens' political and historical landscape, that Greek nation-ness has been 'built on the concept of an uninterrupted historical continuation of the Greek state from antiquity to the present, as well as a homogeneous Greek population that remained stable throughout the years', a notion which 'which largely ignored population movements' (Bounia 2016: 230).

Whilst the concept of 'a homogeneous Greek population that remained stable throughout the years' might be flawed, it is nonetheless true to say Greece is still, in terms of ethnicity, a largely homogeneous country. According to the GLRC report *Greece: State of Minorities*, more than 90% of Greeks identify themselves as Greek Orthodox, and the official position of the government is that there are no ethnic or linguistic minorities in Greece other than the Muslim minority in Western Thrace (GLRC 2012: 7).[17] Historically, Muslims in Greece have suffered discrimination, and the Roma, whom Greece counts among its Muslim minority, have been subjected to forced evictions (GLRC 2012: passim).

A tight societal identity places elevated levels of pressure on the incomer to conform to community roles, values and norms (Carducci 2009). The assumption of ethnic homogeneity is challenged by the present influx of immigrants, and, as a result, conflict can arise between the city and new communities and emerging identities which do not match its own. The popularity of *Golden Dawn*, which is opposed to any immigration by Muslims, particularly illegal immigration by refugees and whose supporters have been accused of acts of violence and hate crimes against immigrants must, therefore, not be overlooked.[18]

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[17] It is beyond the scope of this article to explain the presence in Greece of this Muslim minority, which amounts to almost 100,000 people, of which 50% or more are of Turkish origin, 35% Pomak (speakers of a Slavic dialect), and the rest Roma, also known as Sinti or Tsigani (GLRC 2012: 7).

[18] An example of this opposition to immigration by Muslim refugees occurred in April 2016 when *Golden Dawn* supporters clashed with people protesting against the Greek government's decision to resume deportations of

On the other hand, Greeks are, as I've said, famous for their hospitality; this has been demonstrated by the people of Athens, who have come out to welcome the refugees now settled within the city and in the nearby camps. Weekly food drives are held in the centre of the city for the homeless and refugees, charity is paramount, and donations are given often. An illustration of Athenians' innate sense of hospitality is their response to The Museum Without a Home — An Exhibition of Hospitality, an event held in Athens in November 2016 and created by Oxfam and the Greek section of Amnesty International to acknowledge the solidarity of Greek people towards refugees. It showcased a selection of everyday items, from kettles to toys, that had been donated by Athenians by displaying them at Athens' heritage sites and other locations, together with personal testimonies from both those who donated an object and those who received it (Oxfam 2016; Mistiaen 2018).[19]

6.3 Sharing of Space

Promoting the sharing of spaces by two strikingly different communities ensures that they mix: in this way friendships are formed, experiences are shared, and new identities are made. Social inclusion is key to community building within all sites and encourages a sense of belonging.

I have already commented on the physical divide between the refugee communities and other people living in Athens and the neighbouring towns. In the long term, this issue will be partially resolved as refugees are slowly removed from the camps and resettled within urban areas; eventually the camps will close. The biggest challenge, however, is how to remove refugees from the camps and rehouse them in such a way that 'ghetto'-like communities are not created, as this will perpetuate the divide. This will not be easy; Athens and the neighbouring towns in this part of Attica (Piraeus, Elefsina and Elliniko) have suffered from the uncontrolled way they expanded to accommodate the one million refugees who arrived in 1922.

6.4 Representation

Although the exhibitions and tours have been successful, they have in no way reached the refugees in Athens as a whole. An explanation for this is the fact that heritage professionals involve themselves very little with the new communities, so that museums and heritage sites are acting as a service *for* refugees rather than *with* them; even on the web page which gives details of the museum's future programme of exhibitions they are listed as the secondary user.

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refugees to Turkey, as required resume by the EU-Turkey Agreement (Smith & Kingsley 2016). These had been suspended in response to claims by refugees that it would not be safe for them to be returned to Turkey.

[19] Since then, the 'pop-up museum' has travelled to other locations (Positive.News 2018). In 2017, the Athens exhibition received two Gold ERMIS awards from Greece's most prestigious advertising and communications body (Oxfam 2017).

Furthermore, the conclusions reached by Dodd and others that museums typically fail to cater for people with disability because there is a lack of understanding and training (Dodd et al 2013) can, arguably, be as equally applied to other minority groups, including refugees.

It is therefore important to get more refugees in heritage spaces in Athens and for Athenians to see refugee-based exhibitions. This way, the gap between the Greek and the new communities can be bridged through a common use of space. By utilising and reshaping already well-established national museum collections to represent more communities, as well as by working to introduce refugees to Greek heritage, Athens can work towards helping refugee to recover a positive personal identity.

These failures and aims are being addressed by a series of workshops organised by the International Committee for the Collections and Activities of Museums of Cities (CAMOC) in partnership with the Commonwealth Association of Museums (CAM) and the International Committee for Regional Museums (ICR) and with support from the International Council of Museums (ICOM) as part of a project entitled *(Im)migration and Arrival Cities* (2017) to explore the roles that museums have in collecting, presenting and collaborating in the processes whereby '(im)migrants and receiving populations are making new forms of urbanism [and] cities and their citizens are adjusting to this increasing diversity' (CAMOC 2017); the first of these was held in Athens in February 2016.[20]

This project aims to set up a web platform on which municipal authorities and other bodies dealing with migration, as well as museums and museum professionals, can share knowledge and experiences and promote discussions on ethical and meaningful ways of engaging with 'new urban dynamics and the diverse realities of […] [so-]called "Arrival Cities"' (CAMOC 2017); in other words, how to present new communities to the already existing ones by working on this transcultural representation. This will primarily encourage museums to involve migrant communities in playing a part in retelling at first hand the narrative of these 'arrival cities'. The overarching goal is representation. Representation is important to not only the development of a sense of identity but also the feeling of belonging. How can a person feel welcome in a cultural and societal landscape in which they are not being represented?

Furthermore, although temporary exhibitions play their part in bringing the refugees' narrative to Athenians, the number of visitors to them is limited to the length of time that the

[20] The term 'Arrival Cities' is borrowed from Doug Saunders' 2011 book *Arrival City: How the Largest Migration in History is Reshaping Our World* (London: William Heinemann). One of the keynote speakers was the co-ordinator of the Hope-Now school at Skaramagás, and papers were presented on offering formal state education to the children living in refugee camps in Athens and NGOs working with migrants and/or refugees in Athens.

exhibition is open. This drawback would overcome by a museum of migration, and there have been discussions about establishing one in Piraeus, the port where immigrants traditionally arrive and settle, but, says Bounia, these 'have been in progress for years (2016: 230). However, bearing in mind the contrast between Athenian's reception of today's refugees and that experienced by those who arrived in the 1920s, it is important that care is taken not to allow what Macdonald calls a 'collective amnesia' to prevail (2013: 212). In other words, rather than dismissing a difficult past, the aim should be towards an 'integrated rehabilitation', where everybody treats the situation as one of learning (Vos 2011: 225; cited Macdonald 2013: 212).

Conclusion

I began by outlining some similarities between the recent influx of several thousand refugees into Greece with the arrival of the *Mikrasiátes* in 1922. I then explored the concept of heritage, its relevance to the concept of personal identity and its potential as a means of restoring a personal identity that has been damaged by the enforced displacement of the individual from one culture and resettlement in another, especially when the new environment has a strong sense of heritage and nation-ness. This led to a discussion of community building, the task of creating a sense of community in people living in the same locality where none yet exists and of the role heritage can play in this through representation. The steps which Athens has been taking towards community building will, I argue, result in a transcultural community.

Ultimately the success of this venture depends on willingness and involvement from both the Athenian and the refugee communities. Many Athenians admit that Athens itself is not yet a multicultural (as opposed to transcultural) centre (Bounia 2016: 239), so the transition from a monocultural identity to a transcultural one will take time. Refugees arrive with their already established nation-ness which is at odds with the culture and heritage by which they are surrounded. Helping them to acquire a trans-national identity is a delicate task, as the last thing that one wants is to do is erase their past by bulldozing their narratives, a large part of which is centred on their travelling and the horrors they have endured since leaving their own countries. Their narratives include much 'difficult' heritage which should not be ignored.

Whilst what Athens has offered to achieve a transcultural new identity for both the migrants and for Athens can be accepted, it is not enough simply to say that Athenians and refugees are now one community. Unless refugees feel that what they have gone and are still going through is understood, they will still feel excluded; this risks losing interaction with refugee communities. Their help is needed, so the focus needs to be on what they are lacking and want to see in their heritage, so that their nation-ness is affirmed.

The aim is to create a new community for the refugees within Athens, a community that will both offer them a better standard of living and allow them more involvement with their Athenian neighbours. Community building involves inclusion, a sharing of experiences, objects, and open conversation. This can be achieved through a sharing of spaces and more involvement *with* the refugee community rather than just providing *for* them.

As we've seen, Athens has, as a first step, been addressing the issue of representation using exhibition and advocacy work, so that refugees can picture themselves within the Greek landscape and begin to connect to ideas of Greek nation-ness. The next step has been to build upon the refugees' own personal identity, damaged as it is by their experiences, by using Greek heritage to encourage in refugees a sense of a more positive personal identity, one that focuses on hospitality, understanding, and shared experiences.

The hope is that the crisis which brought refugees and Athenians together will, one day, be looked on as part of Athens' heritage and represented in its heritage sites, as the 1922 migration now is, with examples of how the Athenians used charity to welcome the refugees, of the community made efforts to house them, and of museum-held events to represent them. Only when this happens will there be a transcultural identity which is shared by Athenians and refugees alike, an identity based on the refugee crisis, a phenomenon which each group has experienced differently, but which is ultimately the same; there will be a community 'conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship', any 'inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each' notwithstanding (Anderson 2006: 50).

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[21] This webpage has been substantially edited since it was first accessed.

Wladimir Kaminer and Jewish identity in 'Multikulti' Germany

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Abstract

Wladimir Kaminer has become something of a poster-boy for the '*Kontingentflüchtlinge* [Quota Refugees]', the term applied to Jews from the former Soviet Union who immigrated to Germany between 1990 and 2006, as a result of a decision made first by the GDR and then adopted by the reunified Federal Republic. Kaminer writes little about his Jewishness in his work, but, in his first book, *Russendisko* (2000), he discusses the Jewish identity of Russian-speaking Jews living in Germany, viewed through the lens of *Multikulti* [multicultural] Berlin. Kaminer depicts them as just another of Germany's ethnic minority groups and, as such, nothing special. Given both Germany's past and the reasons offered by the German government for allowing these Jews to emigrate in the first place, Kaminer's opinion is undoubtedly controversial. This article investigates how and why Kaminer adopts this position. It examines the pre-migration experiences of Jews from the former Soviet Union, which include: antisemitism, attitudes towards religion and discourse about the Holocaust in the Soviet Union, as well as the experiences (more unique to Kaminer) of Berlin in the 1990s, the heyday of multicultural optimism. Although Kaminer is an unusual case study who deliberately subverts the reader's expectations of his identity politics, this article aims to show that his writings on Russian-speaking Jews, while highly subjective, have a wider application than might first appear.

Keywords: Kaminer, Jews, Germany, Soviet Union, antisemitism, immigration, multiculturalism

> Im Sommer 1990 breitete sich in Moskau ein Gerücht aus: Honecker nimmt Juden aus der Sowjetunion auf, als eine Art Wiedergutmachung dafür, dass die DDR sich nie an den deutschen Zahlungen für Israel beteiligte. […] Es sprach sich schnell herum, alle wussten Bescheid, außer Honecker vielleicht. (Kaminer 2000a: 9)
>
> [*In the summer of 1990, a rumour was doing the rounds in Moscow: Honecker was taking Jews from the Soviet Union, by way of a kind of compensation for East Germany's never having paid its share of the German payments to Israel. […] Word got around quickly. Everyone knew, except maybe Honecker*. (Kaminer 2002b: 13)]

So begins Wladimir Kaminer's bestselling book *Russendisko* [Russian Disco], a collection of autofictional stories of Berlin life in the 1990s. The stories should not be read as historically accurate texts, nor are they intended as such. For instance, in the above quotation, the reference to Erich Honecker is factually incorrect. Honecker had been ousted as leader of the GDR in late 1989, and it was in fact Lothar de Mazière's government which enacted the policy Kaminer describes. But Kaminer is describing a 'rumour', and Honecker would have been a much more widely known figure in the Soviet Union. In typical style, Kaminer hints the inaccuracy to the reader — 'Everyone knew, except maybe Honecker'. 'Russen in Berlin [*Russians in Berlin*]', the opening chapter of *Russendisko* from which this extract is taken, relates Kaminer's personal migration story but also provides an introduction to an important development in the post-war history of Jews in Germany. Over 200,000 Jews have emigrated from the former Soviet Union to Germany since 1990 (Bundesministerium 2011: 109). After the first ministerial conference in the newly reunified Federal Republic of Germany in 1991, these immigrants were officially known as *Kontingentflüchtlinge* [Quota Refugees].[1] The migration of these Russian-speaking Jews fundamentally changed the composition and outlook of the Jewish population in Germany, on the one hand reviving many communities whose memberships were on the decline but, on the other hand, creating tensions and problems of coexistence with established Jews (known as the *Alteingesessenen* [Old-established]) living in Germany.[2]

Wladimir Kaminer was born in Moscow in 1967 to a Jewish family and emigrated in July 1990, one of the first of a cohort that has been called the 'fourth wave' of Jewish immigration to Germany from the USSR,[3] a migration that began in 1990 and lasted (officially) until 2006, when the federal government passed new legislation ending the special status of the *Kontingentflüchtlinge*.[4] Kaminer's biography appears to be a relatively straightforward, if idiosyncratic, success story. He studied dramaturgy and trained as a sound engineer in Russia, then, after moving to Germany, published stories in the German language in several newspapers

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[1] I will use the terms 'Russian-speaking Jews', '*Kontingentflüchtlinge*' and 'Jews from the former Soviet Union' interchangeably. All appear in the literature on this topic, however the latter is most accurate, as these Jews were, in the main, not *Flüchtlinge* [refugees] and came from various ex-Soviet republics, particularly Ukraine and Russia, as well as Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, and others.

[2] By established Jews I mean those who had settled in Germany after the war, many of whom were Eastern European Jews who had survived the Holocaust, and their descendants.

[3] According to Yfaat Weiss and Lena Gorelik (2012: 383–84), the first wave came after the Bolshevik revolution, the second during the Second World War and the Nazi occupation, and the third during the 1970s.

[4] The new regulations made entry dependent on three criteria: linguistic (that immigrants could demonstrate a basic knowledge of the German language), religious (that they would be qualified to join a Jewish community), and economic (that they could prove that they would be able to support themselves financially in Germany). This reduced the number of immigrants to approximately 1000 per year (Weiss and Gorelik 2012: 418).

and magazines. At the same time, he co-founded the now famous *Russen Disko* at the Kaffee Burger in Berlin. He is married to a Russian, has two children and lives what he described in an interview (2000b: 23) as 'ein ziemlich spießbürgerliches Leben [*a pretty dull middle-class life*]'.

This article will use Kaminer's *Russendisko* as both a subjective, literary case study and as a springboard for broader discussion of the fourth wave of Russian-Jewish immigration to Germany. It will investigate how Kaminer's particular take on the Jewish identity of the *Kontingentflüchtlinge* is determined partly by literary devices and also by their pre- and post-migration experiences. These include: antisemitism in the former Soviet Union, difficulties with integration into Germany's Jewish communities, differences from established Jews in Germany concerning religious knowledge and attitudes towards the Holocaust, and some Russian-speaking Jews' experiences of living side-by-side with other ethnic minority groups in an ostensibly multicultural society.

The first chapter of *Russendisko* is a rare exception for Kaminer in the sense that he writes explicitly about his Jewish identity, something that features hardly at all in the rest of his work. One of the few other examples where Kaminer discusses his Jewishness is in his contribution to *So einfach war das* [It was that simple], a collection of nonfictional accounts about growing up Jewish in Germany after 1945. Here, Kaminer focuses not on his experiences in Germany but on the day he received his Soviet passport at the age of sixteen:

> Meine Klassenkameraden wollten unbedingt meinen Pass sehen. Ich drückte mich, weil darin gleich neben dem Foto unter der Rubrik Nationalität "Jude" stand. Ein solches Dokument konnte mir keine zusätzliche Autorität verschaffen. Aber die blöde Lehrerin bestand darauf, wir sollten unsere Pässe unbedingt einander zeigen. "Kaminer will sich nicht ausweisen, er hat einen Judenpass!" schrie einer der Schüler. Die ganze Klasse lachte, alle wollten auf einmal nur noch meinen Pass sehen. Die Lehrerin murmelte irgendetwas über den Internationalismus des sowjetischen Bürgers. Das war für mich ein schwacher Trost. […] Eine wichtige Lebenslehre, die ich aus diesem Unterricht mit nach Hause nahm, war: Ich bin in einem Gastland aufgewachsen, gehöre nicht ganz hierher und muss meinen Pass nach Möglichkeit geheim halten. (Kaminer 2002a: 57–58)
>
> [*My classmates really wanted to see my passport. But I couldn't face it, because in it, right next to the photo, under the heading for nationality, stood the word 'Jew'. Such a document wouldn't give me any extra authority. But the stupid teacher insisted that we show our passports to each other. 'Kaminer doesn't want to identify himself — he's got a Jew's passport!' shouted one of the students. The whole class laughed; now everybody wanted to see my passport. The teacher mumbled something about the internationalism of the Soviet citizen. That was little consolation for me.* […] *An important life-lesson I took home from this class was: I've grown up in a host country, I don't quite belong here, and I must keep my passport a secret if at all possible.*][5]

Antisemitism in the former Soviet Union, which Kaminer touches on here, was a significant motivation for many Jews to emigrate in the early 1990s. A combination of political

[5] Translations from German are the author's unless otherwise indicated.

upheaval and economic instability in the wake of communism's collapse led to a new wave of anti-Semitic sentiment in the media and in public opinion in the former Soviet states. Although violent attacks against Jews ultimately did not take place (the victims turned out to be African students, East Asians and nationals of the Asiatic republics (Weiss and Gorelik 2012: 390)), the threat of violence, a threat with a dense historical legacy incorporating pogroms and Stalin's persecution of the Jews, was keenly felt by Jews living in the former USSR. Kaminer does not mention this in the context of his, or anyone else's, motivations for leaving, but in 'Russians in Berlin' he offers a refracted, multivalent depiction of how antisemitism operated in the Soviet Union.

Kaminer's father, we are told, had been a candidate for membership of the Communist party four times, entry into which would have enabled him to progress to manager of his planning department, which, in turn, would have earned him an extra thirty-five roubles a year. However, every time his father made a fresh attempt to join the party, a process in which he 'trank mit den Aktivisten literweise Wodka [und] schwitzte sich mit ihnen in der Sauna zu Tode [*drank vodka by the litre together with Party activists* [*and*] *sweated to death with them in the sauna*]', he was told:

> "Wir schätzen dich sehr, Viktor, du bist für immer unser dickster Freund […] Wir hätten dich auch gerne in die Partei aufgenommen. Aber du weißt doch selbst, du bist Jude und kannst jederzeit nach Israel abhauen" (Kaminer 2000a: 10–11).
>
> [*"We really like you, Viktor. You're our bosom pal for all time* […] *We'd have liked to have you in the Party. But you know yourself that you're a Jew and might bugger off to Israel any moment"* (Kaminer 2002b: 14)].

Casual antisemitism appears to be at the root of this attitude, yet elsewhere in the story, Kaminer playfully subverts the reader's expectations of an anti-Semitic Soviet body politic and of Jewish victim status within it. He writes:

> Normalerweise versuchten die meisten in der Sowjetunion ihre jüdischen Vorfahren zu verleugnen, nur mit einem sauberen Pass konnte man auf eine Karriere hoffen. Die Ursache dafür war nicht der Antisemitismus, sondern einfach die Tatsache, dass jeder mehr oder weniger verantwortungsvolle Posten mit einer Mitgliedschaft in der Kommunistischen Partei verbunden war. Und Juden hatte man ungern in der Partei (Kaminer 2000a: 9).
>
> [*Normally most people in the Soviet Union tried to cover up any Jewish forebears they had, because you only had hopes of a career if your passport didn't give you away. The root of this lay not in anti-Semitism but simply in the fact that every position that carried any responsibility at all required membership of the Communist Party. And nobody really wanted Jews in the Party* (*Kaminer 2002b: 13*)].

Here Kaminer inserts a logical fallacy to disrupt the narrative. It was not antisemitism that thwarted Jews' career prospects in the Soviet Union but rather the fact that they were not members of the Communist party. The reader is still considering this possibility — did Jews

simply not wish to join the Communist party? — when Kaminer adds, as if by way of explanation: '[a]nd nobody really wanted Jews in the party'. This paradoxical formulation can be interpreted as Kaminer's attempt to introduce his German readership to the 'logic' of attitudes towards Jews in the anti-racist, internationalist Soviet Union.

Jews from the former Soviet Union were initially allowed to migrate to the GDR when the first freely-elected *Volkskammer* [People's Chamber] decided to initiate a partial reorientation of the GDR's relationship to the German past. Jews were therefore allowed to enter East Germany ostensibly as a form of belated *Wiedergutmachung* [compensation], both for the Nazi crimes and also for reparations that the GDR had never paid. However, it was no coincidence that the GDR granted this immigration right at the same time that it was trying to open its export markets to Israel and the US, not to mention its attempts to gain diplomatic recognition from the State of Israel, which it felt it could achieve due to Israel's fears of a reunited Germany. Following reunification, in October 1990, the Federal Republic at first halted the immigration process before reinstating it in January 1991 under new regulations. The policy was again touted as a form of ongoing *Wiedergutmachung* to Jews; however, this time the unstated motive was the desire to revive Jewish life in Germany — potentially even to re-establish a German Jewry comparable to the one that had existed before the Nazis came to power. However, it seemed that nobody had thought to consider who these Jews were, and whether they would be willing or even capable of carrying out the task that had been set for them.

It turned out that the Jewish immigrants had very little in common with the Jews who lived in Germany before 1933. This was due to the way they were socialised in the Soviet Union. For one thing, the Soviet Union defined Jewishness not as a religion but as a nationality, which was recorded on the fifth line of a person's passport. Soviet Jews therefore tended to view their Jewish identity in national or ethnic terms, which was reinforced by the Soviet Union's anti-religious policies. These policies meant that Russian-speaking Jews often knew very little about Jewish religious practice (Schoeps, Jasper & Vogt 1996: 146). And the 'national' or ethnic classification led to considerable problems when it came to the Russian-speaking Jews' integration into Germany's *Jüdische Gemeinden* [Jewish communities].

The Jewish communities, being fundamentally religious organisations, defined Jewishness according to the *halacha* (the part of the Talmud that contains rules of conduct for Jews) and the *halacha* stipulates that to be Jewish, one must be born to a Jewish mother. The Soviet classification system, however, ran as follows: if you were born to two Jewish parents, you had no choice regarding your 'national' categorisation; you were Jewish. However, if only one of

your parents was Jewish, you could choose which of their 'nationalities' to adopt as your own. The consequence was that some people with one Jewish parent and one non-Jewish parent would take the Jewish 'nationality' of their father, making them Jewish in Soviet eyes but not under the *halacha*, while others with a Jewish mother and a non-Jewish father would take their father's 'nationality', meaning that, while halachically Jewish, they were not, or at least not officially, considered Jewish in the Soviet Union.

After arriving in Germany, Jews from the former Soviet Union were encouraged to register with their local Jewish community. Many of them discovered at this point that they were not considered Jewish enough to join, a scenario presented by Lena Gorelik (2005), another Russian-Jewish writer of the 'fourth wave', in her short story 'Herr Grinblum, Sie sind kein Jude! [*Mr. Grinblum, you are not a Jew!*]'. A sad irony of this was that people who 'only' had Jewish fathers (and were thus not considered Jewish by the communities), nonetheless had Jewish last names, which meant that they often bore the brunt of Soviet antisemitism. The situation was complicated because the Jewish institutions in Germany, run under religious principles, had little interest in accommodating non-halachic Jews. In a 2001 interview with *Der Spiegel*, the then President of the *Zentralrat der Juden in Deutschland* [Central Council of Jews in Germany], Paul Spiegel, commented: 'In den letzten Jahren sind 30 000 Menschen — gegen unseren Rat — hier aufgenommen worden, die nach unserem halachischen Religionsgesetz keine wirklichen Juden sind. [*In recent years, this country has accepted — against our advice — 30,000 people who are not real Jews according to our halachic religious law*]' (Spiegel 2001: 19). Research into this phenomenon by Yinon Cohen and Irena Kogan suggests that as many as fifty percent of the *Kontingentflüchtlinge* were not halachically Jewish (2005: 255) — meaning that Paul Spiegel's estimation was actually quite conservative.

There was also a *Fälschungsdebatte* [debate about forged documents] in the German press in the 1990s. This concerned non-Jewish Russians who had allegedly bought a Jewish 'nationality' in their passports in order to gain entry into Germany. Jeroen Doomernik estimated in a 1997 study that as many as twenty percent of the *Kontingentflüchtlinge* had fabricated their Jewish identity (Doomernik 1997: 83). However, in the absence of more recent studies, it is difficult to be certain of the accuracy of this figure. Kaminer considers this phenomenon only in terms of its ironic quality, noting that formerly people had used the same means to rid themselves of their stigmatised Jewish 'nationality': 'Die Juden, die früher an die Miliz Geld zahlten, um das Wort Jude aus ihrem Pass entfernen zu lassen, fingen an, für das Gegenteil Geld auszugeben. [*Jews who had formerly paid* [*the police*] *to have the word "Jew" removed*

from their passports now started shelling out to have it put in]' (Kaminer 2000a: 11; Kaminer 2002b: 14). In some cases, the incoming Russian-speaking Jews' lack of religious and cultural knowledge was misinterpreted as an indication that they were not Jewish at all. In 'Russians in Berlin', Kaminer describes the following encounter:

> In Köln, zum Beispiel, wurde der Rabbiner der Synagoge beauftragt, durch eine Prüfung festzustellen, wie jüdisch diese neuen Juden wirklich waren. […] Der Rebbe befragte eine Dame, was Juden zu Ostern essen. "Gurken", sagte die Dame, "Gurken und Osterkuchen". "Wie kommen Sie denn auf Gurken?", regte sich der Rebbe auf. "Ach ja, ich weiß jetzt, was Sie meinen", strahlte die Dame, "wir Juden essen zu Ostern Matze". "Na gut, wenn man es ganz genau nimmt, essen die Juden das ganze Jahr über Matze, und auch mal zu Ostern. Aber wissen Sie überhaupt, was Matze ist?", fragte der Rebbe. "Aber sicher doch", freute sich die Frau, "das sind doch diese Kekse, die nach altem Rezept aus dem Blut von Kleinkindern gebacken werden". Der Rebbe fiel in Ohnmacht. (Kaminer 2000a: 14)
>
> [*In Cologne, for example, the rabbi at the synagogue was asked to assess just how Jewish these new Jews really were.* […] *The rabbi asked one lady what Jews ate at Easter. "Gherkins", said the lady, "gherkins and Easter cake". "What makes you think they eat gherkins?" demanded the rabbi, agitated. "Oh, right, now I know what you mean", returned the lady, beaming. "At Easter we Jews eat matzos". "Well, fair enough, the fact of the matter is that Jews eat matzos all year round, and that means they eat them at Easter too. But tell me", enquired the rabbi, "do you actually know what matzos are?" "Of course I do", replied the lady, delighted, 'they're those biscuits baked to an ancient recipe, with the blood of little children". The rabbi fainted clear away. (Kaminer 2002b: 17)*]

Here, as elsewhere in his work, Kaminer relates a story which begins in historical reality (Jewish communities' efforts to 'screen' incoming ex-Soviet Jews), mounts in ridiculousness, and ends with a punch line which escalates the story's farcicality to its apex while *at the same time* bringing it back to a historical truth (the prevalence of a classic anti-Semitic trope, the blood libel, in the Soviet Union). Kaminer does not even provide a resolution to the story — i.e. was the woman actually Jewish? — not because she self-evidently wasn't, but rather, in keeping with the theme of ambiguity running through his work and, indeed, with the findings of historical research, because it is entirely possible that even a person born to Jewish parents in the USSR could have so little knowledge of Jewish history, religion and culture that they would innocently repeat anti-Semitic rhetoric such as this.

While the relationship between Russian-speaking Jews and the Jewish communities in Germany was undoubtedly fractious, it was only one aspect of their overall integration into German society. The Russian-Jewish population in Germany is dwarfed by that of the so-called *Spätaussiedler* [literally: late emigrant], ethnic Germans from the former Soviet Union who were also allowed to immigrate following the *Wende* (the 'change' post-1989), and who number approximately two million people. As one might expect for such a large community, certain alternative networks and institutional structures have developed. Therefore, if *Kontingentflüchtlinge* were unable to register with their local Jewish community, it would not

be surprising if they 'fell back' into the alternative structures of the wider Russian community. Even those who were able to register with a Jewish community did not necessarily find the integration process any easier. As Judith Kessler, who worked with the Jewish community in Berlin, has described, Russian-speaking Jews often had unrealistic expectations of what the Jewish communities could do for them, in terms of financial support and finding them jobs. This she attributed to the continuation of a 'Soviet mentality', characterised by a dependence on authority, indifference to public affairs, and reliance on informal networks (2008: 137). Add this to the fact that qualifications from the former Soviet Union are of little value in Germany's advanced capitalist society, plus the difficulties entailed in language acquisition,[6] and it is hardly surprising that, despite the high proportion of Russian-speaking Jews with a university-level education (Schoeps, Jasper & Vogt 1996: 42), a micro census from the year 2000 estimated that 50.3 percent of them were unemployed (Cohen & Kogan 2005: 261–62). However, this statistic is a little misleading when one considers that, at this point in time, 27 percent of the immigrants were over sixty years of age (Gorelik 2007: 21).

As previously stated, Kaminer mentions his Jewishness only rarely in his writing, and when he does it is usually for comical effect and/or ostensibly to downplay the significance of Russian-speaking Jews in Germany. Take this quote from 'Russians in Berlin':

> 'Die russischen Juden der fünften[7] Welle zu Beginn der Neunzigerjahre konnte man weder durch ihren Glauben noch durch ihr Aussehen von der restlichen Bevölkerung unterscheiden. Sie konnten Christen oder Moslems oder gar Atheisten sein, blond, rot oder schwarz, mit Stups- oder Hakennase. Ihr einziges Merkmal bestand darin, dass sie laut ihres Passes Juden hießen (Kaminer 2000a: 13).
>
> [*The Russian Jews of the fifth wave in the early Nineties were indistinguishable from the rest of the German population by their creed or by their appearance. They might be Christians or Muslims or even atheists; they might be blond, red-heads or dark-haired; their noses might be snub or hooked. Their sole distinguishing feature was that, according to their passports, they were Jews.' (Kaminer 2002b: 16).*]

Kaminer is stating here that Russian-speaking Jews are essentially no different from any other ethnic minority group or even from the rest of the German population. This becomes a subversive position only when one considers the recent history of Jews in Germany, which determined the German government's decision to invite them in, officially as a form of compensation and unofficially in order to fill an absence. Either way, the Russian-speaking Jews are viewed by the 'host' society as highly significant. So why does Kaminer take this

[6] In 1998, only fifteen percent of Jewish quota refugees reported 'good' or 'very good' knowledge of German language (Dietz 2000: 648).

[7] Kaminer's calculation of the 'waves' of Jewish emigration is slightly different from the one I am following. Specifically, he inserts dissident migration of the 1960s as a separate cohort.

position? There are two possible explanations;[8] the first has to do with differing attitudes towards the Holocaust between Russian-speaking and established Jews in Germany and the second with the more recent phenomenon of multiculturalism, experienced first-hand by Kaminer in 1990s Berlin.

Regarding the first explanation, it is possible that Kaminer is presenting the views of a cohort which did not perceive the Holocaust in such stark terms as did established Jews in Germany, many of whom are, or are descended from, former concentration camp inmates, and who as such view the Holocaust as a great trauma. Jews who lived in the Soviet Union, on the other hand, tended to view the Holocaust in quite a different light, based partly on experience and partly on the particular narrative propagated by the Soviet authorities. According to an empirical study conducted in 1993, only 9.3 percent of the Russian-speaking Jews questioned said that the Holocaust had affected their attitude towards Germany and the Germans (Schoeps, Jasper & Vogt 1996: 67–68). Such a statistic cannot be explained by experience alone, because while the losses suffered by Soviet Jews in the Holocaust were proportionately less than for other European Jews, their losses were nonetheless substantial. Therefore, the most important factor in determining their attitude towards the Holocaust was the way in which the Soviet government taught (or rather, did not teach) its citizens to think about it. The government line was simply that the Holocaust was not a significant event, at least compared to the 'Great Patriotic War' (the term for the conflict that the Soviet Union fought against Nazi Germany between 1941 and 1945). While the central discursive assumption in the Western world is that the Holocaust was a singular event, the deaths in which have a particular meaning and as such differ from other wartime deaths, this was not the case under Soviet communism. The Soviet government from Stalin to Gorbachev did not consider deaths in the Holocaust to be qualitatively different from civilian deaths, or soldiers' deaths on the Eastern Front. So while the Holocaust only affected Soviet Jews slightly less than it did other European Jews, the survivors and children of the survivors who lived in the Soviet Union did not see their suffering or losses in the Holocaust as historically significant. And while Kaminer is probably well aware of Soviet reluctance to confront the Holocaust, this does not change the fact that he does not write about it at all in his work,[9] which would imply that it did not play a significant role in shaping his Jewish identity.

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[8] Aside from literary motivations: Kaminer might be presenting a narrator who maintains an ironic distance from the prevailing identity discourse in Germany.

[9] With one small exception. In the story 'Alltag eines Kunstwerks [*The Everyday Life of a Work of Art*]', Kaminer describes how his artist friend, Sergei N., creates a sculpture which he unsuccessfully enters into 'dem großen Wettbewerb für das Holocaust-Denkmal [*the big competition for a Holocaust memorial*]'. It 'sollte den

However, perhaps the more prominent reason for Kaminer downplaying the significance of Russian-speaking Jews in Germany is his experience of Berlin in the 1990s — the heyday of *Multikulti* [multicultural] optimism. In the story 'Geschäftstarnungen [*Business Camouflage*]', for example, Kaminer discovers that the 'Turks' running the Turkish restaurant are in fact Bulgarians, the 'Italians' in the Italian restaurant are Greek, the 'Chinese' in the Chinese restaurant are really Vietnamese, the 'Indians' are Tunisian, and the African-American bar is run by a Belgian. Kaminer remarks that: 'Nichts ist hier echt, jeder ist er selbst und gleichzeitig ein anderer. [*Nothing is the real thing here, everyone is at the same time himself and someone else.*]' (Kaminer 2000a: 98; Kaminer 2002b: 89). Kaminer's narrator therefore rejects the idea of 'authentic' or fixed identities, instead seeing them as transient and constantly in flux. This places him in proximity to the theories of postcolonial scholars such as Homi Bhabha (1994) and Stuart Hall (1990). But whereas these two theorists are writing in a classic postcolonial context (migration from former British colonies), Kaminer writes from the standpoint of a Russian-Jewish immigrant to Germany, which has little in the way of theoretical discussion surrounding it. Oliver Lubrich (2003) has devoted a whole article to the question of whether Russian-speaking Jews can be considered 'postcolonial'. But while the concepts of hybridity and multiple identities were originally developed to deal with the phenomenon of postcolonial displacement, they are not necessarily confined to that context. Kaminer's writings make clear that all immigrants in Germany inhabit some sort of 'third space', between 'home' and 'host' cultures, even though in most cases their immigration has nothing to do with colonial experience. Moreover, Kaminer rejects the specificity of any form of ethnic identification in Germany, as demonstrated in the final sentence to his story 'Suleyman und Salieri [*Suleyman and Salieri*]':

> So gibt eine Mediendebatte ganz nebenbei vielen Menschen die Chance, sich neu zu sehen, nicht als Türke oder Russe oder Äthiopier, sondern als ein Teil der großen Ausländergemeinschaft in Deutschland, und das ist irgendwie toll (Kaminer 2000a: 74).
>
> [*And so a debate in the media can afford a great many people the opportunity to see each other in a new light, not as Turks or Russians or Ethiopians but as part of the larger community of foreigners in Germany. There is something wonderful about this* (Kaminer 2002b: 69).]

There has, as yet, been little scholarly discussion of Kaminer's work. This may be due to a perception that it is 'popular' literature, which, whether true or not, does not detract from its

konzentrierten Schmerz der Menschheit symbolisieren [*was supposed to symbolise all the pain of humanity in concentrated form*]' (Kaminer 2000a: 47; Kaminer 2002b: 45–46). After being rejected, it goes through several incarnations, being exhibited at an erotica fair before ending up at a children's adventure playground. This story could be read as a metaphor for the necessarily arbitrary and constructed nature of any attempt to represent the unrepresentable, but it is more likely that Kaminer is simply making comedy out of the vagueness of his friend's modern artwork.

cultural importance. One of the few scholars to engage with, and perhaps the only one to criticise, Kaminer's writerly persona, is Sander Gilman, who, in his book *Multiculturalism and the Jews* (2006: 216), argues that Kaminer downplays his Jewishness and plays up his Russianness because: 'His German audience wants happy memories of the Russian past', and, we are led to assume, not unhappy memories of the Jewish past. 'Happy memories of the Russian past' is a curious choice of phrase given what happened in the Second World War, but Gilman is nonetheless correct to assert that Kaminer writes far more about his Russian identity than about his Jewish identity. However, the argument that he does this to appease or pander to his German audience is more contentious and based, I believe, on a misreading of Kaminer's authorial intentions. His purpose is not to appease but rather to reclaim and refashion a space for Russian-Jewish identity that is not determined solely by German or (ex-)Soviet perceptions.

Wladimir Kaminer has become the poster-boy for the Jewish *Kontingentflüchtlinge*, although his experiences, or at least the way he recounts them, are not representative of his cohort. This is perhaps a deliberate strategy on Kaminer's part: he takes the collective memory of the Russian-speaking Jewish diaspora (concerning the Holocaust, for example) and disrupts it by taking a facet of it to a ludicrous extreme, or by portraying the exact opposite of what the reader expects. In doing this he makes the experience of being (ex-Soviet) Jewish in Germany a performative act. Kaminer is not beholden to the (post-)Soviet nor to the German narrative about him and his fellow immigrants but rather creates his own, which draws on both but subverts them in startling and often humorous ways. There is something unburdened about his self-positioning as a Russian Jew (emphasis on Russian) in *Multikulti* Germany, which has been countered indirectly by other writers of Russian-Jewish descent who live in Germany. Lena Gorelik (2004) and Olga Grjasnowa (2012), both of whom immigrated to Germany at a younger age than Kaminer, present formative struggles with Russian-Jewish-German identity in their fiction. Their writing demonstrates that being female also contributes to different, often more conflicted, conceptions of this identity triangle. Nonetheless, Kaminer's writings on Jewishness, scant as they are, provide a useful lens, albeit highly subjective and deliberately contradictory, through which one can think about what being Jewish in Germany means today, how myriad its forms are, and how the situation now differs from the pre-migration status quo. On the one hand, the *Kontingentflüchtlinge* have prevented the Jewish population's terminal decline, but, on the other hand, some would argue that this has been more than counteracted by problems of integration. It is undeniable that a new chapter in the history of Jews in Germany has begun, but what this actually means, in qualitative terms, for the Jewish population in

Germany, not to mention Jews outside of Germany, and for the non-Jewish world still coming to terms with the legacy of the Nazi genocide, is a difficult question to answer. It is perhaps even too early to say.

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Acknowledgements

I'd like to thank Maria Roca Lizarazu, Johnny Johnston, and Lena Ekelund for their helpful comments on an earlier version of this article. The two anonymous reviewers for *Skepsi* provided numerous suggestions which enabled me to improve the article considerably,

while Harriet Clements has been an excellent editor throughout the process of preparing the manuscript. Any remaining faults are, of course, my own.

'It is at the ghosts within us that we shudder': Voicing the Anxieties of Liminality in Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway*

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Abstract

The trauma of war is theme that begins to recur in early twentieth-century literature; Virginia Woolf's canonical text *Mrs Dalloway* offers a configuration of the haunting memories of the First World War.[1] This is depicted in her male character Septimus Warren Smith, a war veteran who returns to live in constant terror and guilt, as the disturbing memory of the past becomes a form of a ghostly revenant that inhabits his psyche. Septimus is thereby constantly visited by past memories which constitute an 'abject' that confuses the boundaries of the self and which consequently lead him to commit suicide. His haunted self becomes apparent through the ghostly conversation with his dead friend Evans whom he lost during the war. Combatants live in a state between life and death at the front line; this state becomes symbolic of the psychological struggle they experience upon their return, when attempting to readjust and fit in to post-war society. This article focuses on the way Septimus returns to live as a ghost of his former self occupying a space of ambiguity and terror. In addition, I will draw attention, through the female character of Rezia Warren Smith, to the way the changed state of masculinity affects the women around them. Rezia's character shows that women share a similar experience to that of their men, as they are also haunted by the past and come to inhabit the same liminal space, between life and death. That is to say, the psychological impact of male trauma upon women draws out their vulnerability, which, as modern women, they tried to keep buried. Such vulnerability comes in the shape of the 'Angel in the House' with her politics of domesticity and entrapment. To support this argument, I will be using Julia Kristeva's theory of 'Abjection', for it helps our understanding of the complex position of women in post-war Britain.[2]

[1] This work (London: Penguin Classics, 2000) will be cited throughout the article as '*Dalloway*'. Other works by Woolf will be cited in the usual way.

[2] This article is based on a paper presented by the author at *Time to Remember: Anniversaries, Celebration and Commemoration*, *Skepsi*'s tenth annual conference held at the University of Kent, 26th May 2017.

Keywords: First World War trauma, haunting memories, the return of the past, liminal spaces, women's trauma, Abjection, Angel in the House.

Modernism was marked by a series of cultural shocks; the greatest of all was the First World War that left indelible marks in the memories of veterans and their families. Psychotic fragmentation, disillusionment and uncertainty became the defining tenets of Modernism. Soldiers' experiences at the Front usually rendered them psychologically disturbed. The horrors of the war unravelled a different reality, that of fear, distress, and vulnerability, which obscured their vision of the future. Peter Childs points out that in literary Modernism:

> [T]here wasn't a unitary normative self to which each of us might conform, and many Modernists were sufficiently influenced by advances of psychology to change the way they represented human character. For Lawrence, Woolf, Joyce and others the self was not a stable but evolving, fluid, discontinuous and fragmented (Childs 2008: 59).

Seen as such, Modernism is a literary mode that becomes centralised on depicting the inner concerns of the individual or as Woolf calls it, 'the dark places of psychology' (Woolf 1984: 162). In other words, fragmented subjectivity, which continually questions the self, is at the heart of Modernist narrative. The instability of the self, in this regard, demands new forms of expression that only a Gothic language can make visible. While it is true that Gothic literature has undergone a series of transformations since it first emerged, one feature that remains a constant of the genre is its concern with revelations of unknown anxieties within the individual, and this is how it helps articulate the incommunicable realities of the First World War.[3] As such, Gothic imagery of the ghostly and hauntings give form to the trauma of the War and the nightmares associated with it. Added to this, the theme of ghostly revenants as extracted from the Gothic genre, has become central to documenting the trauma of war.[4] Therefore, this article

[3] The origins of Gothic fiction are attributed to Horace Walpole with his publication of the first Gothic novel *The Castle of Otranto* in 1764. Its elements have gone through a series of transformations in the hands of his followers such as Ann Radcliffe who feminised the Gothic genre by depicting the female experience of the eighteenth century under the tyranny of patriarchy, through the devices of the haunted castle and the recurrence of ghosts. At the end of the nineteenth century, Bram Stoker popularised the Gothic through the figure of the vampire in *Dracula* (1890), while Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde* first (1886) employed the concept of duality and doubling, making the Gothic more psychological.

[4] Trauma comes from an outside threat; it overwhelms the psychic defences of the subject and threatens its boundaries with collapse. In this sense, the subject develops 'unhomely' sensations which can be seen in the victim's detachment from reality as well as his inability to distinguish between what is real and what is not. The individual at this stage is subject to experiencing terror that shakes his vision of reality. That is to say, the boundaries of reality are transgressed by the constant return of the repressed memories from the war. Cathy Caruth points out that 'trauma is not locatable in the simple violent or original event in the individual's past, but rather in

will draw attention to the ghosts of Modernism that stem from the traumatic experience of the War affecting men and women alike. Focusing on the characters of Septimus Warren Smith and Lucrezia (or Rezia, as she is known), his Italian wife, in Virginia Woolf's war novel *Mrs Dalloway*, first published in 1925, I shall highlight the psychological effects that the atrocities of war had on men and equally on women. Septimus and Rezia both become detached from reality living as 'dejects', to borrow Julia Kristeva's term.[5] They come to share a space of liminality governed by its most active agents, darkness and the unknown.

Coming back from the trenches of the Western Front, Septimus finds himself locked up in his memories of his war experience while the spectral calls of Evans — his superior officer and comrade in arms who died in the War — 'hover on the periphery of his consciousness' (*Dalloway*: 45–46). The confining memories which now have the power to unsettle Septimus thus embody the Modernist ghost. Virginia Woolf, writing on the ghosts of Modernism in a review of Edith Birkhead's 1921 study *The Tale of Terror*, states that:

> [T]he skull-headed lady, the vampire gentleman, the whole troop of monks and monsters who once froze and terrified now gibber in some dark cupboard of the servant's hall. In our day we flatter ourselves that the effect is produced by subtler means. It is at the ghosts within us that we shudder, and not at the decaying bodies of barons or the subterranean activities of ghouls. Yet the desire to widen our boundaries, to feel excitement without danger, and to escape as far as possible from the facts of life drives us perpetually to trifle with the risky ingredients of the mysterious and the unknown (Woolf 1988: 306–07).

Woolf's view implies that the modern ghost is located 'within us', meaning that the motif of the ghost continues to have such a hold over literary Modernism. To explain, the ghosts that the reader comes across in Modernist texts, specifically in the text under study, are ghosts that dwell in the mind rather than the medieval castles of the eighteenth century. The twentieth-century ghost is rather defined by 'subtler means' which are emblematic of distortion of the subject. When the individual's subjectivity is exposed to an external threat, in this case by trauma, the boundaries of reality dissolve, as is the case with Septimus, whose outer world becomes 'contaminated by his interior stresses in the form of a number of hallucinatory experiences' (Foley 2017: 115). In Septimus's case, these 'hallucinatory experiences' take the form of seeing ghosts and hearing voices that emanate from his past experiences during the War. This is made clear in Rezia's account of his deterioration:

> He had grown stranger and stranger, he said people were talking behind the bedroom wall […] He saw things too he has seen an old woman's head in the middle of the fern […] he cried, into

the way that its very unassimilated nature — the way it was precisely not known in the first instance — returns to haunt the survivor later on (1969: 4).

[5] The 'Deject' is a term utilised by Julia Kristeva by which she refers to the outcast; she says, 'the deject is in short a *stray*' (Kristeva 2010: 8; original emphasis).

> the flames! and saw faces laughing at him, calling him horrible disgusting names, from the walls, and hands pointing round the screen (*Dalloway*: 72–73).

It can be suggested that those voices are part of the guilt of survival. Septimus had been among the first to volunteer. Going to France to fight for England, he had developed manliness and had soon won Evans' respect. When Evans was killed, not long before the Armistice, Septimus had been unable to show any emotions; as 'the last shells missed him. He watched them explode with indifference' (*Dalloway*: 95). Evans' ghostly revenant that haunts him after the War is a product of Septimus' feeling of guilt: '"I have — I have, […] committed a crime"' (*Dalloway*: 105) — but he does not understand what that crime was. He concludes that the voices and apparitions are a reproach for his indifference towards his comrades' cries; the dead return in ghostly form to condemn him for his apathetic behaviour in the theatre of war. The connection he makes between his 'criminality' and the haunting is made clear by the narrative:

> He had not cared when Evans was killed; that was worst; but all the other crimes raised their heads and shook their fingers and jeered and sneered over the rail of the bed in the early hours of the morning at the prostrate body which lay realising its degradation (*Dalloway*: 99–100).

Julia Kristeva's theory of 'Abjection' is useful in our understanding of Septimus's state in this passage.[6] According to Kristeva, the abject is that which 'disturbs identity, system, order. What does not respect borders, positions, rules' (2010: 4). In this light, a link can be drawn between the ghost and the abject. This means that the ghost, in this novel, functions as an abject. The ghost of Evans is 'a psychotic symptom of shell shock' which conjures up a general sense that war memories can act as an unseen attacker (Foley 2017: 114). Hence, his ghost can be considered as an abject that threatens the subjecthood of Septimus, and his bodily 'degradation' is the product of the abject's pulverisation of the subject. As a result, the individual's subjectivity is thrown into a space of abjection which enacts a dual presence of fear and desire.[7] Indeed, Septimus's fear is shown by his reaction to his first confrontation with Evans' ghost:

> 'For God's sake don't come!' Septimus cried out. For he could not look upon the dead. But the branches parted. A man in grey was actually walking towards him. It was Evans! But no mud was on him; no wounds, he was not changed. I must tell the whole world, Septimus cried (*Dalloway*: 76).

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[6] Kristeva's concept of the abject and abjection comes in an essay in her book *Powers of Horror*, where she defines the abject as:

> [a] massive and sudden emergence of uncanniness, which, familiar as it might have been in an opaque and forgotten life, now harries me as radically separate, loathsome. Not me. Not that. But not nothing, either. A "something" that I do not recognise as a thing. A weight of meaninglessness, about which there is nothing insignificant, and which crushes me' (2010: 2).

[7] Kristeva writes that the abject 'beseeches, worries, and fascinates desire' (2010: 1).

Septimus's rejection of the ghostly Evans is a manifestation of the fear engendered by his feelings of guilt for his lack of emotion when he witnessed his comrade's death. In another episode in the novel, he appears to identify with Evans' ghost because it reminds him of death, something that he, in the midst of the dark world of Modernity, desires, as is evidenced by his repeated statement: 'I will kill myself" (*Dalloway*: 107). He wishes to die not only because of his feelings of guilt but also because the way the society in which he lives denies the subject matter of trauma, compelling him to live like a ghost himself. In other words, Septimus becomes an abject himself, ghostly in his marginalised position.

Since the abject is that which 'disturbs identity,' it can be suggested that Septimus' acting as an abject in the modern world disturbs the nation's project of restoring its pre-war identity because the nation still believes in the continuity of its imperialistic power and cultural superiority (Kristeva 2010: 4). As such, the traumatic symptoms of vulnerability and weakness are labelled as sins by the contemporary society of the post-war period. This recalls Vivian de Sola Pinto's views in *Crisis in English Poetry*:

> The Nation at Home still believed in the patriotic myth of a beautiful, heroic war against diabolic enemies. The Nation Overseas was in touch with realities of life and death and was completely disillusioned with regards to the heroic nature of the struggle. Indeed, as the war went on, they became more and more solidly united in sentiment not against the Germans, but against (as it appeared to them) the callous, stupid Nation at Home, the government and, above all, the "brass-hats" of the staff (1958: 142).

The 'Nation at Home' in *Mrs Dalloway* is represented by Septimus' doctors, Sir William Bradshaw and Dr. Holmes, who cripple any sense of communication with him. Septimus thinks of Dr. Holmes as '[h]uman nature, […] the repulsive brute, with the blood-red nostrils' (*Dalloway*: 101), associated with a threatening society that refuses to recognise his illness and imprisons him in the modern world. Dr. Holmes, indeed, embodies the society that denies the subject of trauma; this becomes clear as he insists that 'there was nothing whatever the matter with [Septimus]' (*Dalloway*: 99). To preserve society's sense of stability the cause of the trauma needs to be discarded, just as the subject rejects the abject, society being the subject and the wounded veteran the abject. Although Kristeva's theory has been explained in terms of psychology, it can actually be applied to external purposes such as the example of society representing the subject who rejects the abject threatening its stability. Examples of the abject threatening the society's identity might include minorities such as homosexuals, people with

disabilities etc. Septimus, in this regard, represents 'wounded masculinity', a condition that the society in which he lives refuses to recognise and therefore rejects by denying it.[8]

Septimus is in what is known as a 'space of liminality', the notional borderland that separates two concepts, in this case, death and life, the 'in-berween' zone where the 'passenger' is caught.[9] This passenger can be a monster, a ghost, or a vampire. Monsters such as, for instance, that created by Frankenstein are liminal entities because they exist in the 'no man's land' between the natural and the supernatural.[10] The liminal in twentieth-century literature comes to define the place of traumatised veterans of war who occupy the in-between zones of time and space. Within this space, Septimus lives as a disembodied entity between life and death. This, in a way, recalls T.S Eliot's poem *The Waste Land* published in 1922, where he refers to the city crowd flowing 'over London Bridge […] up the hill and down King William Street' as bodies emptied of substance. In alluding to Dante's phantasmagorical lines 'I had not thought death had undone so many' (1963: 60–66), Eliot encapsulates the disillusionment of post-war England with its people walking around in circles like walking dead. Septimus is an example of Eliot's post-war man. Unwelcomed by his post-war society and constantly watched by his past, he lives in seclusion from his world, which becomes a space of anxiety to him. Even his doctor rejects him:

> Holmes himself could not touch this last relic straying on the edge of the world, this outcast, who gazed back at the inhabited regions, who lay, like a drowned sailor, on the shore of the world (*Dalloway*: 102).

This is to say that the many men of post-war Britain experiencing a sense of 'wounded masculinity' reside in the margins of the society between two thresholds, between life and death. Septimus thinks, 'I went under the sea. I have been dead, and yet I am now alive' (*Dalloway*: 75).

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[8] The phrase 'wounded masculinity' is not a defined term used in psychology, but it is accepted as a way in which to express the gap between how a man feels about himself as a man and what he believes it means to be a man, the ideal of masculinity. His perception that there is a gap will often cause result in mental distress because the man feels that he is to some degree falling short of this ideal. The phenomenon of 'wounded masculinity' was prevalent after WW1 among the many men who had suffered life changing trauma, both physical and mental, and thus found themselves dependent to some degree on women, for whom they should be caring and providing according to received notions of masculinity.

[9] Liminality, Victor Turner maintains, 'is frequently likened to death, to being in the womb, to invisibility, to darkness, to bisexuality, to the wilderness, and to an eclipse of the sun or moon' (1974: 95). It refers to that state of transience inhabited by the female subject in this case. Liminality is key to our understanding of Kristeva's theory of Abjection because the latter defines a boundary between two states of being that is 'the me' and 'the not me'. In line with this, the soldiers returned from war that are found in the literature of Modernism inhabit a space of abjection.

[10] See Manuel Aguirre's article on 'The Rules of Gothic Grammar' where he states that Gothic characters 'are detained in the liminal stage, the victims of an incomplete or perverted passage' (undated: 2). The men experiencing 'wounded masculinity' that are found in Modernism, although not Gothic characters, are likewise 'detained in the liminal stage'.

Having seen the ghosts that populate Septimus's space, we should as well examine the ghosts that visit Rezia. This is to show that women have been equally affected by war trauma, and that they are drawn into the male space of liminality as a result. While their trauma does not necessarily spring from a personal experience of warfare in the trenches as does that of men, they have experienced a suffering equal to that of men from witnessing the way society has demeaned men who have been traumatised by their war-time experiences and from the guilt at their passivity during the War. Arguably, women's participation in the war effort, particularly that which entailed humanitarian work such as serving in hospitals, was motivated not only through necessity but also to alleviate the burden of this sense of guilt.[11] As well as physically participating in war work as nurses and in other capacities, women had also suffered psychologically from the anxieties that resulted from the effect of the War on those at home without men to support them. However, the responsibilities that women took on either through their work or having to be their family's emotional support had a psychological cost: they became almost like strangers to the absent men. After the War, women found themselves forced to return to their traditional roles, as this was expected by their menfolk. In *Mrs Dalloway*, Rezia exemplifies the body of women who had not taken part in any war effort but had endured a suffering equal to that of the men who had seen action at the Front. Dorothy Goldman supports this, when she states:

> War literature is traditionally and narrowly defined as mud and trenches, barbed wire and slaughter; women's understanding of the war is inevitably less physical than that of men who fought at the front (1993: 6).

I argue that that one of the psychological costs of the War to women was that, when the men returned, women found themselves forced back into their traditional roles by the re-emergence of the 'Angel in the House' concept with the result that they became trapped in the web of domesticity.[12] Thus the Angel that Rezia confronts emerges as a result of Septimus' trauma. In her 'Henry James ghost stories', written after the First World War, Woolf states that

[11] See Angela Smith's introduction in *The Second Battlefield: Women, Modernism and the First World War* (2007: 7).

[12] 'The Angel in the House' is the traditional and idealistic image of the female; it was coined by Coventry Patmore in his poem entitled with the same name, published in 1856. It soon became a label which the patriarchal society of the nineteenth century adopted. His poem encourages ideals of the perfect, charming housewife, the self-sacrificing goddess of the middle class. Marylu Hill, in discussing the *Angel* figure in some Modernist texts, affirms that it is often associated with the mother, hence most mothers of Modernist fictions she state are 'lovely, silent, and acquiescent (at least on the surface) to the whims of patriarchy; indeed, to a certain extent all these mother figures willingly internalize masculine conceptions of femaleness' (2016: 13). *Mrs Dalloway*, in this view, witnesses a return of the *Angel* figure, i1n that she returns to perform her incomplete duties of domesticity, particularly mothering the returned soldier. This means that 'Modernists can never be done with the past; they must go on forever haunted by it, digging up its ghosts, recreating it even as they remake their world themselves' (Berman 2010: 346).

'we breakfast upon a richer feast of horror than served our ancestors for a twelvemonth […] we are impervious to fear' (1988a: 321). At this level, Woolf implies that women experienced a new sense of 'horror' emblematic of war trauma in the trenches. In addition, it is important to notice that Rezia endures a sense of being confined even when she is in the public sphere, as she becomes a carer for her psychologically wounded husband. In this novel, the Angel finds that she can promote herself by the mothering of the broken male character Septimus. As she witnesses this shattered man who seems to be detached from reality, Rezia is thrust into the female space of ambivalence which is emerging as a characteristic of women's complex position in Modernism, particularly during and after the First World War. Therefore the 'feast of horror' that Modern women 'breakfast upon' originates from witnessing war atrocities and feeling the responsibility to appease the chaotic state of the male. Women's newly gained freedom is consumed by their reinforced performance of the maternal.

Septimus and Rezia have been married for five years, and the reader first meets them as they are walking in Hyde Park. Rezia's struggles start to occur at the point of the narrative where she witnesses her husband's horrified and alienated self. Burdened with the responsibility to cure him, she starts to project a sense of marginalisation similar to his. Indeed, Rezia is a neglected character who has been overlooked by scholars in discussions of the Gothic and Modernism. She brings to light the experience of women who had to bear the physical and psychological chaos of their male relatives in a time of women's feminist prosperity.[13] Septimus' trauma evokes the Angel within her; this Angel figure is characterised by being confined by and subservient to her husband. In a way that recalls a trope of eighteenth-century Gothic fiction whose heroines are often imprisoned in the underground vault of some gloomy castle, Rezia, in literary Modernism, is trapped in the liminal passages of London's 'Waste Land'.

It is important to note that the places where Rezia most experiences her moments of feeling trapped as well as alienation are outside the domestic space. In London parks and streets, she experiences her utmost agony about her loneliness and vulnerability in the face of her husband's haunted world. This is to say that women are insecure outdoors. Ironically, although the modern woman of the period has managed to escape the confines of the home, she is still confined

[13] Goldman comments on women's war writings that despite their 'complaints about their pre-war restrictions and their wartime existence, there remains in their writing the pity for men's suffering. Even when there is outspoken opposition to the War, women express both pity and guilt: guilt at not being involved, at being merely onlookers of the massacre'; she also adds that the condition of the war has placed the woman into the 'archetypal female nurturing roles of mother, of nurse' (1993: 11).

outside the home. In this novel, she becomes confined as a result of witnessing the crisis of 'wounded masculinity' that engulfs post-war England.

Unlike Clarissa Dalloway, the central female character in the novel, who is portrayed with a sense of independence as she strolls in London streets, 'I love walking in London,' Rezia increasingly displays the appearance of being trapped as she accompanies Septimus for a walk (*Dalloway*: 6). This is made clear in the narrative: 'Help, help! She wanted to cry out to butchers' boys and women,' as Rezia listens to his war hallucinations of wanting to kill himself (*Dalloway*: 17). It can be noticed that there is a sense of 'unhomeliness' pervading both characters, for their experiences appear to be analogous. Their mutual suffering is dictated by foreignness and estrangement. Rezia is drawn to her husband's ghost-ridden world which renders her as vulnerable; she reflects 'far was Italy and the white houses and the room where her sister sat making hats, and the streets crowded every evening with people walking, laughing out loud, not half alive like people here' (*Dalloway*: 25). When she describes people as 'half alive', this does not, of course, exclude Septimus. Modernism generates an uncanny chaos spelled out by a crisis in the 'homely' of both of male and female consciousness. Nicholas Royle defines the uncanny as:

> The crisis of the natural, touching upon everything that one might have thought was 'part of nature': one's own nature, human nature, the nature of reality and the world. But the uncanny is not simply an experience of strangeness and alienation. More specifically, it is a peculiar commingling of the familiar and unfamiliar (2003: 1).

Modernist spaces become repositories of terrors for the individual; 'the crisis of the natural' here concerns both Septimus and Rezia. This crisis is manifested through their analogous experience of alienation and exile. As we know, Septimus's alienation stems from his trauma that confuses the ontology of time and space. Rezia, on the other hand, is exiled as she fails to restore her husband to normality and suffers as her efforts start to wane. Hence, she is marginalised not only because she is a foreigner but also because Septimus's mental condition marginalises her further. One instance occurs as Rezia witnesses Septimus's frightened self after seeing a passing motor car:

> And there the motor-car stood, with drawn blinds, and upon them a curious pattern like a tree, Septimus thought, and this gradual drawing together of everything to one centre before his eyes, as if some horror had come almost to surface and was about to burst into flames, terrified him. The world wavered and quivered and threatened to burst into flames. It is I who is blocking the way, he thought. Was he not being looked at and pointed at; was he not weighted there, rooted to the pavement, for a purpose? But for what purpose?
> "Let's go on, Septimus," said his wife, a little woman, with large eyes in a sallow pointed face; an Italian girl.
> "Come on", said Lucrezia (*Dalloway*: 16).

Septimus lives in seclusion and his thinking that '[i]t is I who is blocking the way' is indication of this. In his perspective, everything around him is a threat. The 'motor car' for instance functions as an object of horror emanating out of his war experience into post-war London. This act of surveillance can be explained through Derrida's concept of 'the visor effect' which takes place when the person feels that he is watched by a spectral entity. Derrida says: 'This spectral someone other looks at us, we feel ourselves being looked at by it, outside of any synchrony, even before and beyond any look on our part' (1994: 7). While Septimus is watched by the ghosts of the battlefield, Rezia is observed by the ghost of the Angel that confines and silences her. In 'Professions for Women', Woolf says:

> [the Angel in the House] was intensely sympathetic. She was immensely charming. She was utterly unselfish. She excelled in the difficult arts of family life. She sacrificed herself daily. If there was chicken, she took the leg; if there was a draught she sat in it—in short she was so constituted that she never had a mind or a wish of her own, but preferred to sympathize always with the minds and wishes of others. Above all—I need not say it— she was pure. Her purity was supposed to be her chief beauty—her blushes, her great grace. In those days—the last of Queen Victoria—every house had its Angel (2008: 141).

In this way, Rezia displays the same silence that is characteristic of the Angel that lives in her. This Angel figure presents itself in the form of a mother and a nurse. The novel illustrates this when it says, 'Nothing could rouse him. Rezia has put him to bed,' (*Dalloway*: 99); her act of putting her husband to bed both demonstrates her domestic role carried out by the Angel within her and epitomises his encapsulates infantilised situation. In addition to this, the Angel's characteristics of being a self-sacrificing and a subservient woman are found in the woman carer of returned veterans, so the conditions resulting from the war have led women to embrace the traits of a figure that they despise. Furthermore, in a *Room of One's Own,* first published in 1929, Woolf has given an illustration of the silent and victim woman writer who lacks freedom in a patriarchal society. Naming her Judith Shakespeare, Woolf argues that 'she lives in you and in me, and in many other women who are not here tonight, for they are washing up the dishes and putting the children to bed' (Woolf 2002: 111–12). Although it is beyond my focus, Woolf's expression about the woman writer evokes a Gothic ideology of haunting which is relevant to the character of Rezia. In this respect, Miglena Nikolchina states that 'both Shakespeare's sister and the Angel in the House are Woolf's allegories of female silence' (2004: 90).

We have seen the sort of ghosts that Septimus sees, but Rezia's ghosts are not as visible in the novel. Hers occupy part of herself of which she is not aware. This means there resides within her a ghostly self, inherent in her invisibility as she strolls through the passages of Modernity. Her invisibility lies in the sense that her inner terrors are unseen, and her cries of horror and

loneliness would go unobserved. This can be seen in a scene in which Rezia goes on expressing her estrangement from a place populated by the walking dead: '"For you should see the Milan gardens", she said aloud. But to whom? There was nobody. Her words faded' (*Dalloway*: 25). Rezia's current self is obscured by the ghost of the Angel whose task, during this period, is caring for the soldier who has returned in a shattered condition. Woolf has referred to such intrusive ghosts in her review of Henry James's ghost stories, in which she states that:

> Henry James's ghosts have nothing in common with the violent old ghosts-the blood-stained sea captains, the white horses, the headless ladies of dark lanes and windy commons. They have their origin within us. They are present whenever the significant overflows our powers of expressing it; whenever the ordinary appears ringed by the strange (1988a: 324).

This passage recalls the way in which the unknown invades the familiar and the ordinary. For instance, 'The ordinary' marriage life that Rezia has desired appears to be 'ringed by the strange'. In other terms, her life is 'ringed' by the terrors of her unknown and her neglected position. As such, her marriage only offers psychological entrapment. Although she is able to stroll in the city she remains imprisoned as long as she acts as a nurturer for Septimus. The following quote from the text shows the way she opts for a temporary release:

> "Septimus!" said Rezia. He started violently. People must notice.
> "I am going to walk to the fountain and back", she said.
> For she could stand it no longer. Dr. Holmes might say there was nothing the matter. Far rather would she that he were dead! […] She spread her hand before her. Look! Her wedding ring slipped — she had grown thin. It was she who suffered — but she had nobody to tell (*Dalloway*: 25).

As she attempts to escape her role of nurse to Septimus, she ends up returning like she returns to him after her walk. Thinking that she might find him dead as 'he threatened, to kill himself,' Rezia is surprised to see him 'still sitting alone on the seat' where she has left him (*Dalloway*: 26). This, in a way, symbolises the way that the post-war modern world necessitated a return of women to domesticity and to the maternal. Furthermore, the scene of her 'grow[ing] thin' is symptomatic of her suffering caused by her traumatised husband. Arguably, the scene in which her wedding ring slips can be read as a metaphor for the way she is being repressed by her marriage and the element of estrangement between them that results from this. Moreover, her temporary retreat as she walks 'to the fountain' and losing her wedding ring implies the fact that she wants to free herself from the inner confines that the Angel figure imposes on her. '"I am alone; I am alone!" She cried by the fountain in Regent's Park' (*Dalloway*: 26). In a way, marriage imprisons women like Rezia, but their existence outside it is one of the outcast, insecure and psychologically exposed. Rezia, like Septimus, is thrown into a liminal space between his world of the dead and the unwelcoming atmosphere of post-war London and

between her desire to rescue her marriage and to evade it. She attempts to restore Septimus to his pre-war state, but her efforts are unsuccessful as Septimus fails to respond, for he is immersed in his own world.

Women's literary Modernism is characterised by the ambivalence towards domesticity in general and the maternal in particular. For instance, Rezia expresses her agony about her marriage and the horror she is living throughout the novel:

> Horror! horror! she wanted to cry (she had left her people; they had warned her what would happen).
> Why hadn't she stayed at home? she cried, twisting the knob of the iron railing (*Dalloway*: 29).

Yet she also discloses her anguish about not having children; on the one hand 'she must have a son like Septimus', on the other she immediately rejects this notion: 'One cannot bring children into a world like this. One cannot perpetuate suffering, or increase the breed of these lustful animals' (*Dalloway*: 98). Traditionally, the maternal role is one of the active agents of the Angel figure which promotes the domestic confinement of women. The figure still intrudes into Modernity through its element of mothering damaged masculinities. The writer's later statement signifies the reluctance of women towards Motherhood. In a way, this covers mothers' pain and agony as they relinquish their sons to the war only to have them returning to them wounded. Woolf's narrative here recognises the haunting of the Victorian patriarchal maternal role that is forced to re-emerge as women of this period feel the guilt about the deaths and wounding of young men like Septimus; this is made clear in Woolf's words 'London had swallowed up many millions of young men called Smith; thought nothing of fantastic Christian names like Septimus with which their parents have thought to distinguish them' (*Dalloway*: 92).

Distancing themselves from their past identities, women in these Modernist narratives become other to themselves. Throwing the Angel out of her is one of Rezia's attempts to escape from her 'confinement'. When Septimus asks her why she has taken off her ring, she replies: 'My hand has grown so thin. […] I have put it in my purse' (*Dalloway*: 73). I have already argued that the scene in which her wedding slips can be read as a metaphor for the estrangement between Rezia and Septimus that results from the way her marriage represses Rezia; this scene of hiding her wedding ring in her purse could be read a metaphor for rejecting the domestic confinement of her marriage, thus rejecting the Angel. Refusing to be thrown out, the Angel reappears from her place of banishment to haunt her victim. Rezia is caught in the terror of the in-betweenness where darkness and uncertainty are its main components; she laments, 'But I am so unhappy, Septimus' (*Dalloway*: 77).

The liminal space of the trenches and the terror associated with it during the War come to resemble the position of men experiencing 'wounded masculinity' and their women carers. The liminality experienced in the trenches by soldiers like Septimus is reflected by the nebulous position of women during this period. This means that, despite the fact that most women have had little physical experience either of the fighting on the Western Front or of being in the trenches, they face a terror equal to that of their menfolk both during the War and in its aftermath. The Gothic languages of ghostliness and haunting allow a better understanding of the anxieties of the returned veterans and their women companions in this regard. Whereas the liminal helps us define the place of the foreigner and the stranger, it can be seen that the liminal phase 'can never be permanent else it can lead to fractured identities and cultures' (Sharma 2013: 119). Indeed, the act of Septimus's committing suicide as well as the unknown ending of Rezia at the close of the novel prove the ephemerality of this space. Although liminality seems to be threatening, it offers its passenger a temporary space of belonging where men and women are equal in their post-war experience.

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Afterword

As this issue is, albeit in part, our tenth volume, we make no apologies for indulging in a little retrospection. To explain the origins of *Skepsi*, we can do no better than adapt an e-mail that Fabien Arribert Narce, its founder, sent us on the occasion of our tenth conference. The idea to create *Skepsi* came to Fabien, then a postgraduate student with the School of European Culture and Languages (SECL) at the University of Kent as a result of a public meeting with Julia Goodfellow in the Autumn of 2007, when she first visited SECL after being appointed the University's Vice-Chancellor; during this meeting initiatives such as creating PG journals were mentioned. Shortly after the meeting, Fabien contacted, first, Alvise Sforza Tarrobochia and then all the others who are named as the first editors in the list of past editors and previous issues at the back of this issue, having been inspired by the idea of this exciting project.

From the outset the aim was to create that journal that was based in SECL and so would not only be European in outlook but also reflect SECL's diversity in terms of the cultures and national origins of its students. This is illustrated in the nationalities of the first editors, postgraduate students from France Italy, Spain, and Poland, as well as the title they eventually chose, *Skepsi*, a term borrowed it from ancient Greek, having realised that Fabien's suggestion, *Argos*, the name of a many-eyed giant in Greek mythology, has other connotations in the UK — a lucky escape!

From the outset, *Skepsi*'s aim has been twofold: not only to publish a journal but also to promote an annual post-graduate conference, papers from which could then be published in the journal. The first of these, *Graft and Transplant*, was held in May 2008 and the first issue of the journal, containing articles from nine of the people who had presented papers at the inaugural conference, was published the following December. Fabien says that the theme of the first conference was an allusion to the way the original group comprised 'fragments' from different parts of Europe. The list of conferences following that of issues and editors illustrates the diversity of topics that have been covered since that first one — and also some imaginative titles.

Since that first issue of the journal, there have been eleven more. While most of these have been dedicated to conferences held at the University of Kent and organised if not by *Skepsi*, then by other groups and individuals within the University, one of our issues, *Miscellanea* (volume 4 (2): Winter/Spring 2011/12), published the results of an essay competition, which *Skepsi* had organised, for postgraduate students at the University of Kent and the Canterbury

Christchurch University. Furthermore, we have not restricted ourselves to publishing articles; the issue (*De*)*parsing Bodies* (volume 5 (1): Autumn 2012) comprised a miscellany of peer reviewed articles, poetry and artwork. Also, the selection of an article for publication is not conditional on the author's having previously presented a paper at the relevant conference, as will be seen from the current issue.

In conclusion, we acknowledge out indebtedness to SECL for its support, both practical and financial, in promoting the conferences and publishing print copies of the journal.

About the Authors

Arianna Dagnino

Arianna Dagnino holds an M.A. in Modern Foreign Languages and Literatures from l'Università degli Studi di Genova and a PhD in Sociology and Comparative Literature from the University of South Australia. She is currently a lecturer at the University of British Columbia and the recipient of a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) postdoctoral fellowship at the University of Ottawa (School of Translation and Interpretation), where she conducts research in the fields of Transcultural and Translation Studies, with a special focus on writers who self-translate. Her main research interests focus on the effects of globalisation, mobility, and complex cultural flows on lifestyles, identities, creativity, and intercultural relations. She is interested on how processes of transculturation shape creative artefacts, cultural practices, and urban environments. Among her publications are *Transcultural Writers and Novels in the Age of Global Mobility* (Purdue University Press, 2015) and the transcultural novel *Fossili* (Fazi, 2010), which the author has self-translated into English and, in the process, heavily reworked, and which will be published under the title *The Afrikaner* (Guernica Editions, 2019).

Nadja Stamselberg

Nadja Stamselberg was awarded a PhD in Cultural Studies from Goldsmiths, University of London in 2008. She has taught at Kingston University and Queen Mary University of London. Since September 2012 she has been a lecturer in Cultural Studies at Regent's University London. Her most recent publication (with Juliet Steyn) is *Breaching Borders: Art, Migrants and the Metaphor of Waste*, London & New York: I.B. Tauris, 2014. The anthology, the contributors to which include Zygmunt Bauman, Sandro Mezzadra, and Nikos Papastergiadis aims to complicate, provoke, and problematize ubiquitous discourses by evolving new textual and interdisciplinary approaches to European cultural policies and unmasking the assumptions of essentialist identity politics that go undeclared at the borders of cultural discourse.

Kimberley Bulgin

Having graduated MA in Classical and Archaeological studies from the University of Kent, Kim Bulgin expanded her interest in museum management to study the management of heritage sites at the University's Athens campus, graduating MA in Heritage Management in 2018. She now works for a local education authority with a focus on inclusion,

attainment, and aspirations, running projects for the local education authority to get young people out to boost their career prospects with a strong emphasis on improving the provisions for SEND students (children and young people with special needs and disabilities).

Joseph Cronin

Joseph Cronin studied Politics and History at Durham University before completing his PhD in Modern Jewish History at Queen Mary University of London, where he was based at the Leo Baeck Institute. His primary research interests are: German-Jewish history, immigration and diaspora studies, transnationalism, and theories of identity. He is currently a Research Fellow at the German Historical Institute, London.

Nihad Laouar

Nihad Laouar is a research student at Canterbury Christ Church University. Her primary research interest is in Gothic literature and Modernism, with a particular concern for psychoanalysis and women writers. She is currently researching for a thesis on the 'Ghosts of Modernism', focused especially on the works of May Sinclair, Virginia Woolf, Rebecca West, Jean Rhys, and Daphne du Maurier.

Past Editors/Board Members and Previous Issues of *Skepsi*

Graft and Transplant: Identities in Question

Volume 1 (1) — Autumn 2008

Fabien Arribert-Narce, Valérie Aucoutrier, Wissia Fiorucci, Kamilla Pawlikowska, Alvise Sforza Tarabochia, Jaume Silvestre i Llinares

Considerations of Audience in Medieval & Early Modern Studies

Volume 2 (1) — Spring 2009

Fabien Arribert-Narce, Valérie Aucoutrier, Harriet Clements, Wissia Fiorucci, Claire Lozier, Kamilla Pawlikowska, Alvise Sforza Tarabochia, Jaume Silvestre i Llinares

Ambiguities: Destabilising Preconceptions

Volume 2 (2) — Autumn 2009

Fabien Arribert-Narce, Harriet Clements, Wissia Fiorucci, Kamilla Pawlikowska, Alvise Sforza Tarabochia

Bad Behaviour in Medieval and Early Modern Europe

Volume 3 (1) Summer 2010

Fabien Arribert-Narce, Krista Bonello Rutter Giappone, Harriet Clements, Wissia Fiorucci, Melanie Foehn, Maureen Kinkaid Speller, Kamilla Pawlikowska, Alvise Sforza Tarabochia

Pharmakon: Literature and Violence

Volume 3 (2) — Winter 2010

Fabien Arribert-Narce, Krista Bonello Rutter Giappone, Harriet Clements, Wissia Fiorucci, Melanie Foehn, Maureen Kinkaid Speller, Kamilla Pawlikowska, Alvise Sforza Tarabochia

Feminisms: The Evolution

Volume 4 (1) — Summer 2011

Krista Bonello Rutter Giappone, Harriet Clements, Maureen Kinkaid Speller, Kamilla Pawlikowska, Marco Piasentier, Alvise Sforza Tarabochia

Miscellanea

Volume 4 (2) — Winter/Spring 2011—2012

Krista Bonello Rutter Giappone, Harriet Clements, Guillaume Collett, Maureen Kinkaid Speller, Kamilla Pawlikowska, Nina Rolland, Marco Piasentier

(De) Parsing Bodies

Volume 5 (1) — Autumn 2012

Krista Bonello Rutter Giappone, Guillaume Collett, Maureen Kinkaid Speller, Kamilla Pawlikowska, Nina Rolland, Jo Pettitt, Marco Piasentier

Cradled in Caricature

Volume 5 (2) — Autumn 2013

Krista Bonello Rutter Giappone, Guillaume Collett, Maureen Kinkaid Speller, Kamilla Pawlikowska, Nina Rolland, Jo Pettit, Mathilde Poizat-Amar, Adina Stroia

Don't Panic: The Apocalypse in Theory and Culture

&

Ghosts in the Flesh

Volume 6 (1) — Winter 2014–2015

Marine Authier, Melanie Dilly, Rocío García-Romero, Adina Stroia

The Secret in Contemporary Theory, Society, and Culture

Volume 7 (1) — Summer 2016

Marine Authier, Mylène Branco, David Bremner, Dominique Carlini Versini, Ann Kinzer, Louise Willis

Disgust

Volume 8 — Autumn 2017

Harriet Clements, Ann Kinzer, Aina Martí, Juan Luis Toribio Vasquez, Louise Willis

Skepsi Conferences and Keynote Speakers[1]

Graft and Transplant, Identities in Question

24 May 2008, University of Kent, Canterbury

Ambiguities: Destabilising Preconceptions

22–23 May 2009, University of Kent, Canterbury

Pleasure in the Text; Pleasure of the Text

17th April 2010, University of Kent, Reid Hall, Paris

Log In. Making Sense of Social Networks

27 May 2011, University of Kent, Canterbury

Don't Panic. The Apocalypse in Theory and Culture

25–26 May 2012, University of Kent, Canterbury

Keynote: Professor Ivan Callus, University of Malta, 'Neandertal'

Ghosts in the Flesh

24–25 May 2013, University of Kent, Canterbury

Keynote: Professor Esther Peeren, University of Amsterdam, 'Fleshing out the Spectral Metaphor'

The Secret in Contemporary Theory, Society, and Culture

30 May 2014, University of Kent, Canterbury

Keynote: Professor David Vincent: 'Prying and Privacy in the Nineteenth Century'

Disgust

29–30 May 2015, University of Kent, Canterbury

Keynote: Professor Roger Giner-Sorolla (Kent) 'Disgust is Unreasoning for a Reason.'

Borders

27 May 2016, University of Kent, Canterbury

Keynote: Professor Glenn Bowman (University of Kent): 'Identity Against: Border Formation and Perceived Antagonisms'

[1] There were no Keynote Speakers for the first four conferences.

Time to Remember – Anniversaries, Celebration and Commemoration

26 May 2017, University of Kent, Canterbury

Keynote: Professor Julian Wolfreys (University of Portsmouth): 'The *ēthos* of Dwelling: The Memory of Castorp'

Wandering and Home

25 May 2018, University of Kent, Canterbury

Keynote: Prof. Rachel Bowlby (UCL/Princeton): 'Not at home — Some Wandering Subjects in Austen, Perec and Elsewhere'

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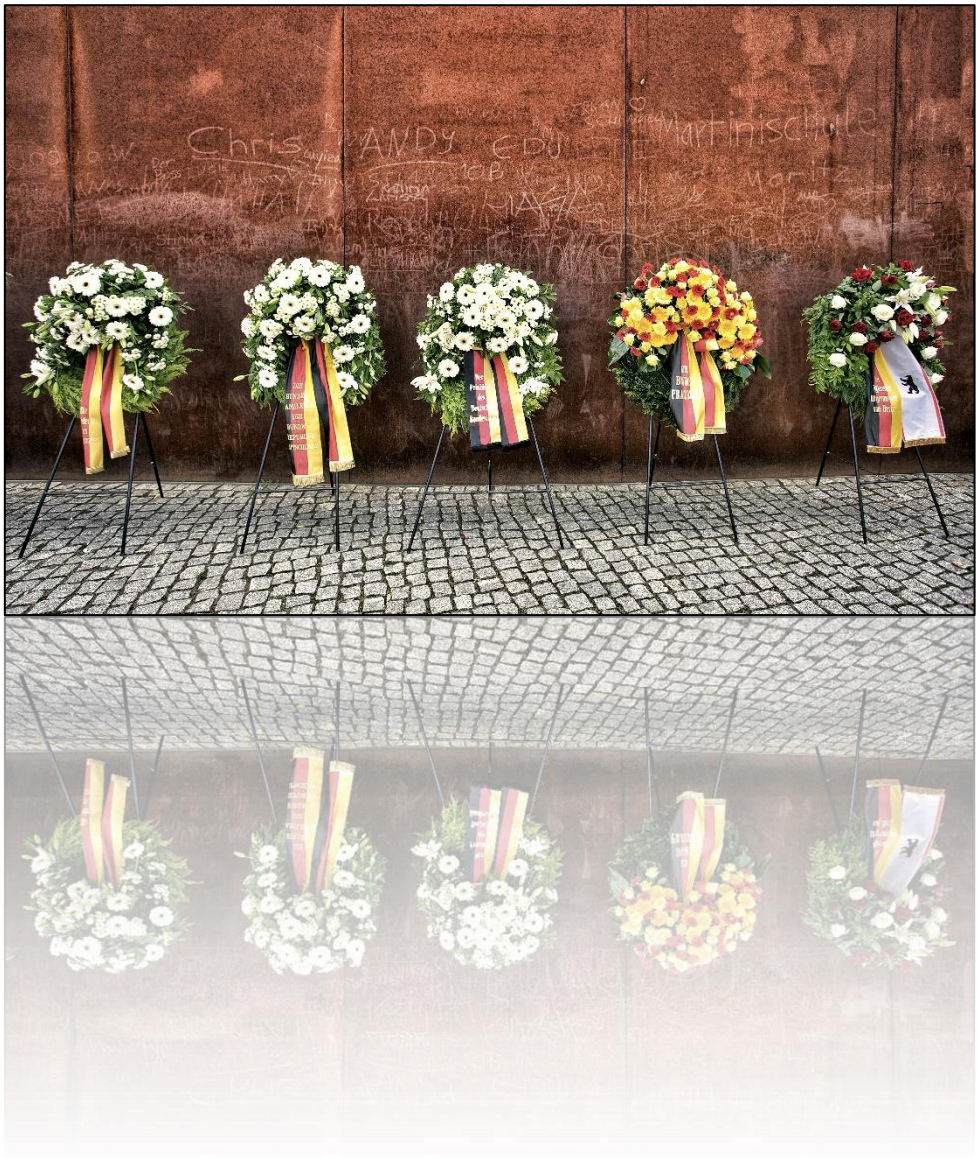
University of Kent

Volumes 9 & 10, Winter 2018/19



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ISSN 1758-2679