Volume 2, Issue 2
Spring/Summer 2021

Academic and artistic explorations of borders in the 21st century

Cover: “Bucolic Borders”
By François Cayol
(portfolio enclosed)
AVAILABLE SOON!

Borders and Bordering in Atlantic Canada

Edited by Victor Konrad
and Randy W. Widdis

Borders and borderlands are the results of bordering, a process that produces both integration and differentiation and convergence and divergence among territories and peoples. The chapters in this collection present selective interpretations of borders, bordering and borderlands that focus on Atlantic Canada. Collectively, these essays offer some regional fundamentals—ports, governance, historical constructs, trade patterns—as well as some innovative studies on bordering in the region. As such, the book addresses the underlying themes of Borders in Globalization: culture, flows, governance, history, security and sustainability.

About the Editors

Victor Konrad is an Adjunct Research Professor for the Department of Geography at Carleton University. He was Section Lead for the Culture Theme of the Borders in Globalization project.

Randy W. Widdis, a Professor Emeritus in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at the University of Regina, served as lead for the Historical Theme section of the Borders in Globalization Project.

This issue is dedicated to the indigenous peoples of Turtle Island, as self-determining nations and communities as well as survivors of Western settler colonialism and ongoing settler violence and encroachment onto Indigenous lands and waters.

More and more, the rest of us are learning what we should have known all along, if we had listened. European colonization was genocidal for millions of Indigenous peoples.

Canada, where our journal is based, is guilty of crimes against humanity, a legacy that is not past but still present.

We will strive to learn from more Indigenous voices and to publish more works by Indigenous scholars and artists.

— The BIG Team, Coast Salish Territory (on Vancouver Island)
Volume 2 Issue 2 Spring & Summer 2021

BORDERS IN GLOBALIZATION

REVIEW

CONTENTS

Letter of Introduction
By Michael J. Carpenter ................................................................. 8

ARTICLES

Borders, Citizenship, and the Local: Everyday Life in Three Districts of West Bengal
By Shibasis Chatterjee, Surya Sankar Sen, and Mayuri Banerjee ................................................................. 10

Unsustainable Borders: Globalization in a Climate Disrupted World
By Simon Dalby ........................................................................... 26

Cross-border Life in an American Exclave: Point Roberts and the Canada-US Border
By Pierre-Alexandre Boyler ............................................................. 38

Teaching Borders A Model Arising from Israeli Geography Education
By Tal Yair-Wosxel ...................................................................... 52

Les frontières marocaines à l’épreuve de la pandémie Covid-19
By Saida Latmani ........................................................................ 61

POETRY SPECIAL SECTION

A World Anthology of Border Poetry: Blurred and Political
Edited by Natasha Sardzoska and Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly ................................................................. 69

Introduction
By Natasha Sardzoska and Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly ................................................................. 70

Poems by
Agi Mihol, João Luiz Barreto Guimarães, Maram Al Masri, Grazyna Włodziszko, Fabiano Alborgnotti, Gili Hofmovich, Daniel Catalano, Prisca Agustoni, Marilena Renda, Giselle Lucia Navarro, Göko Zdravski, Tahir Chakhian, Yekta, Indrė Valentinaitė, Luca Benassi, Nurduran Duman, Stéphane Chaumat, Ren (Katherine) Powell, Tomica Bajski, Franca Mancinelli, Tiago Alves Costa, Emma Louzycz, Dragom Jovanovic, Danilo, Violette Abou Jalad, Tatiana Friatus, Francesca Crisciti, Rafael Soile, Laila Tsipi Michaeli, Tareq al Karmy ........................................................................ 74

ARTWORK

By François Cayol .......................................................................... 125

Borderlanders: People from the In-between Spaces (portfolio)
By Daniel Meier and Hussein Baydoun ......................................................... 134

Borders & Personal Mythologies: An Interview with Emeric Lhuisset
By Elisa Ganivet ............................................................................. 141

ESSAY

The Dutch-German Border: Open in Times of Coronavirus Lockdowns
By Martin van der Velden, Doods Sijtjema, Maartens Goossens, Bas Maartense ......................................................... 149

FILM REVIEWS

Bacurau: The ‘Deep Brazil’
By Aileen El-Kadi ........................................................................ 154

Leila: Exposing the Borders Within
By Dhananjan Tripati ....................................................................... 156

BOOK REVIEWS

Review of Klaus Dodds’ Border Wars
By Simon Dalby ............................................................................. 158

New Border Studies on Israel/Palestine: Review of Two Books
By Daniel Meier ............................................................................. 160

About the Journal
For Contributors ............................................................................. 163
Dear Readers,

The Editors of Borders in Globalization Review are pleased to share with you the Letter of Introduction to our fourth biannual publication (Volume 2, Issue 2).

In this issue, you will find a special section on the poetry of borders, as well as new articles, essays, art portfolios and features, plus film reviews and book reviews. Most prominently, and breaking ground in border studies, our Chief Editor Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly and our Poetry Editor Natasha Sardzoska collaborated to produce a collection of contemporary border poetry, *A World Anthology of Border Poetry: Blurred and Political*, with a co-authored introduction. The collection itself features poems by 29 poets from diverse backgrounds. As the editors write, “Poetry blurs paradigms of borders, raises boundaries, and destroys them at the same time”. The poetry section is bookended by an academic article on the concept of borders in his work. We’ve also included an essay on the 2020 experience of the Dutch-German border, one of the few borders in the world to stay open throughout the onset and course of the pandemic. And finally, the issue is rounded out by film and book reviews. Thanks to our Film Review Editor, Kathleen Staudt, we present a distinct pair of film reviews on two very different cinematographic works yet both futuristic border dystopias: one a Brazilian film (Bacurau, 2020), the other an Indian series on Netflix (Leila, 2020). Last but not least, readers will find two book reviews, one by Simon Dalby and one by Daniel Meier, on recent publications in border studies.

Looking beyond this milestone of four issues and two years, what can readers expect from BIG_Review going forward? In addition to building on our foundations, watch for more content in diverse languages and for additional multimedia formats such as video and podcast. We’ve also launched our BIG_Book series and have begun collaborating with the BIG Dyads Database. We are especially excited to be part of a new BIG research project: exploring contemporary border issues in collaboration with Indigenous scholars (stay tuned!).

Sincerely,

Michael J. Carpenter, Managing Editor
Borders in Globalization Review

On behalf of Chief Editor, Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly, and the BIG team
Borders, Citizenship, and the Local: Everyday Life in Three Districts of West Bengal

Shibasish Chatterjee  
Surya Sankar Sen  
Mayuri Banerjee

Borders have been considered essential to understanding the self and the other, with identities on either side established through function and exclusion. These processes, initially considered to be the preserve of the state as exercised through its policies of border management, also exist in tandem or in an asynchronous manner at the local level. Constituted of processes of identification and networks of interdependencies, localized construals of the borderland and subsequently positioned engagements, come to shape notions of accessibility and restriction as well as perceptions of the “other.” These engagements are not always reflective of statist positions on the border which are often uniform in the conceptualization of its capacity to contain. They subsequently come to reflect the variations of divergent historical and locational realities. There is a need to further extend the analysis of borderlands beyond statist framings as passive recipients of policy as well as recognize the critical positioning of local adaptive processes at the local level. Constituted of processes of identification and networks of interdependences, at the local level various other forms of belonging which are often uniform in the conceptualization of its capacity to contain. They subsequently come to reflect the variations of divergent historical and locational realities. There is a need to further extend the analysis of borderlands beyond statist framings as passive recipients of policy as well as recognize the critical positioning of local adaptive processes.

In the case of South Asia, reorientating academic attention to the state’s priority of security and regulation. At the local level, such exclusions are further reinforced by the state’s priority of security and regulation. The borderland, therefore, becomes an important site for local respondents and negotiates with the state’s schema of citizenship and territoriality in its regular cross-border socio-cultural, economic and political interactions. Second, to assume the “local” as passive recipients of state policies is a serious misjudgment (Chaturvedi 2000). While the state has established itself as the primary source of community identification and affiliation, there operates informally at the local level various other forms of belonging which predate the establishment of international borders and also circumvent the rigid norms of inclusion and exclusion instituted by the state. Therefore, in a way the local through its own adaptation and modification of legal conditionals not only strives to assert its agency vis-à-vis the state but also acts as an important stakeholder in the state’s territorializing projects.

It is in this context that this article seeks to enunciate how the ideas about border and borderland issues take shape in the imaginations of the “local” and how these relate to the statist and nationalist references of the nation-state. To that end, a study was conducted to record local perception in the Indian state of West Bengal. Considering the enormity of the task involved and the authors’ familiarity with vernacular audiences, the study presented in the following section will be focused on three districts of the province of West Bengal—Bankura, Darjeeling and Murshidabad.

The study employs a mixed-method approach, with data collected through a survey on participants’ perceptions, presented alongside a contextual engagement with field narratives derived from focused group discussions and individual interactions with local inhabitants from the specified field sites. The study aims to understand the local meanings of the term borders, citizenship, alien and the nation-state in three different settings, among people who are not part of the regular discourse on foreign policy or national and international security issues. Our precis of the statist perspectives on borders and its associated processes and dynamics which shape the state’s securitizing ideologies do not take into consideration local aspirations and concerns. However, these notions impact the daily life activities and livelihood prospects of the local inhabitants in a way that national elites are hardly able to perceive. Does this therefore mean that these people socialize into the ideas imposed by the policy elites as the mainstream discourses, particularly the real ones, claim? We argue that these answers have been predominantly sought deductively by offering broad generalizations and moving from there towards engagements with particular cases through these pre-formed interpretative leitmotifs. In this position of contrast, we prefer the inductive route of moving from the cases to arrive at generalizations, if any.

The article is divided into three sections. The first section lays out the conceptual framework of the study rooted in the idea of borders and borderlands as representativeness of multiple ideas and meanings that simultaneously co-exist and compete with each other to shape life in these liminal zones of existence. Accordingly, a single understanding of these spaces inhibits a responsive approach towards borders and borderland issues. This line of thought is continued in the second section that presents the survey data collected from the three districts of West Bengal. Here, through tabular representation of the opinions voiced in the interviews we put together an analysis of the diversity of the local perception encountered. In the final section, we discuss how far the insights derived from the study confirm our initial hypothesis.

Borders, State and the Local

The relevance of borders in contemporary times has come to be defined by notions of access and restrictions against mobility, which in turn subsequently define ideas of belonging and alienation. At the state level, such exclusions are further reinforced by the state’s priority of security and regulation. The borderland, therefore, becomes an important site for local respondents and negotiates with the state’s schema of citizenship and territoriality in its regular cross-border socio-cultural, economic and political interactions. Second, to assume the “local” as passive recipients of state policies is a serious misjudgment (Chaturvedi 2000). While the state has established itself as the primary source of community identification and affiliation, there operates informally at the local level various other forms of belonging which predate the establishment of international borders and also circumvent the rigid norms of inclusion and exclusion instituted by the state. Therefore, in a way the local through its own adaptation and modification of legal conditionals not only strives to assert its agency vis-à-vis the state but also acts as an important stakeholder in the state’s territorializing projects.

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The dynamics of interactions and contestations underlying the bordering processes at all levels of the border are revealing of the perpetuity of such processes (Grassini & Švinklův 2014). The spatial variegations underlying such processes often point to a rearticulation of these processes in understanding the different ways in which the state’s power as manifested in the border decisions with, as well as within, the international and transnational. Considering these processes operational at disaggregated levels of the local. These processes, comprised of both cooperative and conflictual interrelations, have been experienced by both state and non-state actors, representing a struggle between change and constancy, constitute a integral constituent of the spatial category of the modern borderland (Chatterjee & Sen 2019).

However, the representation of borders as limits of state power inextricably links it to understandings of state territoriality. By viewing borders as limits established by modern state-making practices there is a risk of obscuring the fact that these sites contain for the subsuming category of the borderland. The seeming immutability of state borders often presuppose their correspondence with historical and social boundaries that pre-date its existence, thereby precluding the possibility of its denial by those who engage with the tangible and intangible means and processes of territoriality. Therefore, it would be prudent in this context to view borders as dynamic spaces tied to particular locales and characterized by varying interrelations amongst state and non-state actors, representing different cross-border spatialities and identities. A relevant point of corroboration of this perspective would be David Newman’s argument about how territory and borders travel together in different planes and scales (2011). Therefore, to position the border as the marker of territoriality often delimits analyses from the meanings of the border through uniform and externalized conceptualization of the same that do not account for the polycultural nature of these lines.

Agniew (1994, 1998, 2008) posited that the border must be understood from a dual perspective. First, it must be contextualized within the state as the articulation of its physical reality in regulating the movements of people and commodities; and second, as a national category that prompts societal and inter-personal engagements along territorial terms in conditioning “the exercise of intellect, imagination, and political will” (Agniew 2008, 170). Therefore, in order to understand the coexistence of physical borders, or the state’s discursive frameworks of belonging, one must account for the impacts of the same on our interactions and perceptions with the different categories of territory and citizenship established as such. Therefore, it becomes necessary for us to consider borders not only as external markers of differential access and recognition but also the impacts of bordering, ordering and ordering, which often manifest themselves in interactions and contestations between categories of the naturalized insider and the alien outsider. The existences of such meanings are variable across different borderlands localities, as are the extents of the limitations they embody. However, the border in its
ymological and experiential forms exists as limits: what we need to acknowledge in the connected spaces that are the various forms of responses the constraints they exercise across different subjects. The variability of the impacts of its existence is itself an outcome of a struggle by the borderers in their attempts to escape the observable in the border’s existence as a source of security for some, whereby for others its existence may constitute an adverse threat to their material or cultural territory. Therefore, futile to view borders as set functions; instead, it is important to analyze their inherent fluidity and variability as essential functions to the performances they entail.

At this point it becomes necessary to acknowledge this disjuncture between state borders and the borderers in our minds. The different origins of these two variants often manifest as distinctive, unrelated and conflicting existences. Often, these two borders come together and interact at the local level, manifesting in its unique expressions in the creation of different cross-border social identities and perceptions. A relevant point of corroboration of this perspective would be David Newman’s argument about how territory and borders travel together in different planes and scales (2011). Therefore, to position the border as the marker of territoriality often delimits analyses from the meaning of the border through uniform and externalized conceptualization of the same that do not account for the polycultural nature of these lines.

Additionally, the meaning of borders varies according to the context in which they are understood. The engagement of specific collective with the borderers is determined by their own position within the state’s structuration of its territory. Statist proclivities towards the management of its territories are often founded upon principles of regulations and checks, manifesting in the form of border fences, check-posts and other security apparatus. In contrast to this, borderland inhabitants view these spaces as permeable and negotiable, which exist in the presence of illicit cross-border economies, border crossings prompted by economic considerations or even for the sustenance of kinship ties.

Similarly, there exist other categories which fit in between the two aforementioned perspectives. It is the transborder economies of trade and tourism are relevant examples of this particular positionality. Even states are not always united and uniformly labour to stifle and influence movements. Therefore, this territory becomes relevant towards understanding the position of the identities of inhabitant, encroacher, alien and resident borderers in transforming such complex latticework of interactions and interdependencies that stand altered by globalization (Raffesin 2012, 139). However, even within such new categorizations of border transcendence, the role of the state in conditioning the same appears to be significant. The role of the borderers and the subsequent compaction of cross-border relationships and growing interdependencies across borders, prompted by a no-man’s land between and among national, local and international actors (Laine 2016, 468). This positions the work of scholars such as Chatterjee and others, at a significant juncture of critical geopolitics. Instead of expediting a perspectival shift from the state to the local in the realm of understanding itself, it situates borders as “complex, multiscale, multidimensional” spaces; their adaptability and existence in both “symbolic and material forms” are determined by the configurations by the state and local actors at these sites (Laine 2016, 468-9).

Scholars have countered the prioritization of national security readings of borders through the introduction of anthropological and living accounts of flows, forms” are determined by the interactions of both the state and local actors at these sites (Laine 2016, 468-9).}

Scholarship that positions itself within the paradigm of critical geopolitics (O’Sullivan & Dalby 1996) has drawn upon poststructuralist thinking in order to bring about a perspective on the local and how borders are produced “borders to borders per se” (Passi 2013). Their work extended the scope of a territorially conceptualized understanding of the border as a conduit for unregulated flows of both people and commodities which have impacted the local economies and sociologies of proximate American states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona and California has positioned it as a no-man’s land between and among national, local and international actors (Laine 2016, 468-9). This has drawn upon the work of scholars such as Chatterjee and others, at a significant juncture of critical geopolitics. Instead of expediting a perspectival shift from the state to the local in the realm of understanding itself, it situates borders as “complex, multiscale, multidimensional” spaces; their adaptability and existence in both “symbolic and material forms” are determined by the configurations by the state and local actors at these sites (Laine 2016, 468-9).

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these lines, often through novel, discursive methodologies and processes of localized reconfigurations in response to the state’s presence. In this context, the idea of the local, not as a spatially contained cultural and social category, but as a dynamic category contingent upon its social, economic, and political conditions, becomes significant.

On the Local Sites of Enquiry and their Mutable Realities in the Contemporary Political Frame

In the South Asian context, the significance of borders, in terms of the regulatory and delimiting functions they perform, has been shaped by the experiences of their modern, postcolonial variances. Prior to that, borders were ascribed to the existence of territories and the political entities that encompass them. These borders are not static, but determined by the planes of contention amongst states, which encompasses similar roles and performances to those of the state, but whose existence and functioning are attuned to the specific requirements of a particular community. In introducing the local, encompassing the relationships and perceptions of its actors therefore becomes a necessary inclusion in analyses of spatiality.

The local can therefore be understood as an alternative to the conventional spatial category that exists within a continuum of adaptation, accommodation, and contestation with statist, geopolitical control over space, not only at the borders. In the context of this enquiry, it would be helpful to view the ‘local’ as a spatially dynamic and social category, which encompasses similar roles and performances to that of the state, but whose existence and functioning are determined by the planes of contention amongst states and the factors that influence their stay (Gillian 2002). Therefore, the border also exists as a space of exclusion based upon the operation of exclusionary labels. The local, encompassing the relationships and perceptions of its actors therefore becomes a necessary inclusion in analyses of spatiality.
in ethnic, cultural and linguistic similarities, manifesting in interactions that are often mediated through landscapes of economic and cultural significance such as border markets and sites of worship. The topography of the district flows between small towns and sparsely inhabited stretches of mountainous grasslands. Located on the Eastern Himalayan region, the district lies close to proximity with neighboring hilly regions of Nepal and Bhutan. These are interconnected through linkages straddling economies of tourism and social capital networks of familial ties traversing state borders.

The third constituency consisted of settlers from borderlands of Charaulayangar, Charparashpara and Phulara, under Jangla police station of Murshidabad, whose political economy of daily existence intergates borders and territoriality all the time. This site has been a conduit for illegal migration and trade through villages proximate to its borders with Bangladesh. These attempts to evade economic barriers instituted by the states are further expedited by local demands to bypass the inadequacies of public distribution systems at the states' periphery. The site has been a frequent stage of confrontation between the state and livelihoods and life processes that exist in contradistinction with its ambit of permissible mobiles and legitimized identities.

As is evident from their relative distances away from the border, these areas represent three distinct configurations of territorial formations and practices that have emerged in consonance with the same. These interactions have experienced fluctuations in response to historical, cultural and socio-political shifts. The byword of the political economy of everyday lives in these borderlands often lies in familial networks of familial ties traversing state borders. These changes have spawned corresponding and conflicting emplacements and temporalities at the local level, in response to these, limits (Rajaram & Grundy-Warr 2007, xxx). The processes that such changes have given rise to have allowed for both to be reinvented. Thereby establishing a more contextual and fluid rendering of these limits textured by local interactions and experiences. Similarly it has spawned a process of contextual appellations of the self and other as well.

The dichotomies present between the rigid legalistic frameworks for regulation of the state and the ever-changing demands for mobility and transactions of people on either side of the border, and the manner in which the same have been reconfigured in the context of the changing times is a testament to the adaptability of the borderland in the face of the resistances to power. Similarly, perceptions of the borderland held by groupings that are situated at a distance from these sites also become relevant in understanding the proliferation of statified configurations of spatial and identity, which constitutes the grounds for its operationalization beyond the formal implementation processes of the state. This is a space that has held relevance in understandings of the ideas of the self and the nation, these proliferations dictate the manner in which issues and identities are produced. While these spaces are perceived and engaged with. Whether it is in determining who constitutes the other, or what is considered legitimate, legal, or legitimate in the same, the existence of localized replications and enforcements of these processes are often not confined by the account- ability expected by the state. The tendency to be dominated by notions of exterminating circumstances of travel restrictions since 2020.

Explorations into Local Perceptions of the Borderland

The first question (Table 1) of the study focused on local perceptions of the international border. The majority of the participants across the three districts defined the international border as a line separating two states. As an outcome of Mundhata's proximity to the international border separating India and Bangladesh, all participants from the site compared the international border to a line separating two states, with one respondent likening the international border to an act that is a bund or raised pathways enclosing individual agricultural landholdings that are often used as significant toll entrances to spheres of individual possessions over land at the local level. Respondents from Darjeeling evinced similar perceptions of territorial demarcation. However, 65 percent of them described the international border in terms of natural and man-made features which either demarcated the limits of state terri- tory such as border pillars, wire-fences or noticeboards stating jurisdictional limits, or acted as natural barriers against local, cross-border mobilities such as rivers or forested landscapes. Participants of the bankural border shared significant portion of the respondents from the interiors of the Bankura district were confined to its existence as a line separating two states, commonly alluding in their responses to the international borders separating India and Pakistan or India and China. While the broader imagination of the international border remained relatively similar, the particularities of localized perceptions at the point of departure also varied. Indicators in the different ways in which the subaltern experiences the frontier and the spatialities it orates. For instance, perceptions of the border held by respondents from Bankura mirrored their distance from the borders, the majority of whom more often crossed borders between India and its neighbors, primarily those with which it shares a history of conflict, indicate that in addition to the process of contact across borders, their perceptions have been largely shaped by prevalent political narratives on border conflicts and regional bilateralism accessed through mediated news media. In contrast, every respondent of the border drawn from participants from Darjeeling and Mushidhabad demonstrate that physical objects located at the borderline become central to their experience of its materiality.

The proliferation of statified, security-centric perspectives on the border were discernible in a majority of responses drawn from the sites of study. The impacts of the territorial- ization of South Asian identities by its many parts have left an indelible impact on Indian politics and statecraft. The necessity of regulation and control of movements and identities have been a part of state’s exclusive control over immigration and integration, state’s securitization of its frontiers. This idea of regulation and control of state frontiers has had a considerable impact on local interactions with the border and how border residents view the issue.

In the context of this survey, the respondents were asked about their opinions regarding the regulation of international borders shared with neighboring states, and a majority of responses across all three study sites were in support of such a regulation, stating it as a necessity to ensure their protection from ‘external threats’ (Table 2). However, the percentage of interviewees acknowledging the necessity for border control measures fluctuated from Bankura (53 percent) to Darjeeling (42 percent) and Mushidhabad (9 percent). The responses created a recurring participant narrative articulating the need to secure national territories against foreign threats in the form of infiltration of the territories by the hands of respondents associated socially disruptive or illegal activities with the border space, and sometimes such perceptions were extended to their enumeration of the external others as terrorists, infiltrators or thieves.

Table 1. “What does the international boundary represent?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Respondents</th>
<th>Border between states</th>
<th>Border as demarcated by objects</th>
<th>No idea</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bankura</td>
<td>18 (60%)</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>5 (17%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Darjeeling</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (22%)</td>
<td>24 (65%)</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mushidhabad</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>7 (100%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18 (60%)</td>
<td>8 (26%)</td>
<td>28 (6)</td>
<td>6 (17)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

However, underlying the assumptions of national security, unease over adverse impacts of border control was also reflected in the responses of the participants. In fact, every respondent who took part in the study agreed that the state’s surveilling and regulatory mechanisms were anathema to border residents and that the high costs of border control have disproportionately affected their livelihoods and life processes. A principal in total respondents from Bankura and 60
percent from Darjeeling were of the opinion that stringent border controls have negatively impacted cross-border interactions, as well as communications, even though the residents in the other areas have been resident on. For instance, respondents from Darjeeling stated that the state’s control over borders has impacted and to an extent limited familial networks and cultural bonds between communities that came to be separated and bounded by the modern state. This has similarly impacted networks of dependence, both social and economic that have historically undergirded borderland relationships and their quotidian interactions.

The respondents from the study sites in Murshidabad and Darjeeling where more conspicuous about the human costs of border control and recounted personal experiences and local accounts of harassment, punishment and even loss of life often justified as necessary by assigned authorities in preserving the sanctity of state limits. These perceptions are indicative of their own personal and shared anxieties in having to bear the brunt of changes whereby their identities and intonations are often scrutinized by the state as a consequence of the liminality of their socio-cultural identities. Respondents from this site of study recognized the need for a heightened state presence at the border given its significance as one of the primary referents of national security. But they considered the border of repeated validation of identity equally problematic. Responses across all districts were, however, restricted with regard to possible reformations and relaxations in border control that could balance state considerations of security with individual desires for privacy. In the few responses that expressed possible changes, the articulation of grievances appears to be framed along lines of socio-spatial existence. Respondents from this site of study expressed their desire for a more lenient state presence as the sole organizer of economic and social processes. They outrightly rejected any way whatsoever. The apprehensions of the respondents in regard to this part of the survey were measured largely upon the implications of the same on local security or in terms of an unthinkable condition, whether in terms of the cognizable presence as the sole organizer of economic and social processes.

Nevertheless, two important narratives emerged from the survey. The first, the perception of a borderless economy was not necessarily welcome as respondents were unable to calculate any gains or losses. For instance, in Murshidabad, where a majority of the respondents claimed that they would be unaffected by the presence or absence of a border, they found it difficult to evaluate any positive or negative implications of a balance that would be equitable to prospects of both economic and border security. The nature of responses brings under scrutiny the role of economic and social relations. Its recession has, therefore, remained obscure from these spaces, as the absence of the state remains an unthinkable condition, whether in terms of the cogversible implications of the same on local security or in terms of an alternative scheme of socio-economic organization at the local level.

Opinions on the neighboring country varied across the different study sites (Table 3). Major responses into local opinions of people from their neighboring countries show that 37 percent of the respondents from Bankura and 54 percent from Darjeeling specified that they perceived people from the neighboring state as friendly if they were culturally congruent whether through shared beliefs or languages. In contrast, all the interviewed respondents from Murshidabad articulated their differentiation along state identifications of legal and illegal immigrants in the context of this question. They stated that while legal immigrants were socially acceptable, illegal immigrants if encountered were to be shunned for their likely involvement in anti-social activities.

The perception of the outsider as a threat was found to be expressed commonly in responses from all the three districts surveyed (similar to the perception encountered in regions of shared cultural assimilation and legal identity acknowledged as peripheral for the purpose of local acceptance, their perceptions of immigrants in general remained underlined by notions of distrust and suspicion. In Bankura and Darjeeling, a margin of 5 percent and 10 percent respectively was recorded in responses varying between conditional acceptance and absolute rejection of the presence of immigrants in their immediate locale. As stated above, respondents from Murshidabad consistently rejected illegal immigrants and considered them a threat to national security.

Elaborating on the response gathered by the survey, it may be argued that these local

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Table 2. “Is regulation of the international border important?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Bankura</th>
<th>Darjeeling</th>
<th>Murshidabad</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Essential</td>
<td>15 (53%)</td>
<td>21 (68%)</td>
<td>10 (32%)</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Necessary but should not be rigorous</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Idea</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18 (60%)</td>
<td>23 (74%)</td>
<td>10 (32%)</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3. “Do neighboring countries impact upon quotidian life cycles?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Bankura</th>
<th>Darjeeling</th>
<th>Murshidabad</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Plays an important role</td>
<td>8 (27%)</td>
<td>17 (57%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does not play any role</td>
<td>17 (57%)</td>
<td>3 (10%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure/ Maybe</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Idea</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4. “Does the international border impact upon economic pursuits?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Bankura</th>
<th>Darjeeling</th>
<th>Murshidabad</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gain</td>
<td>5 (20%)</td>
<td>15 (50%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss</td>
<td>15 (60%)</td>
<td>5 (20%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Would not affect</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don’t know</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>27 (87%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 5. “How is the identity of the cross-border inhabitant perceived?”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responses</th>
<th>Bankura</th>
<th>Darjeeling</th>
<th>Murshidabad</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friendly</td>
<td>11 (37%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Friendly</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>17 (54%)</td>
<td>2 (6%)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Sure</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Idea</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>8 (27%)</td>
<td>0 (0%)</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
perspectives in some aspects confirm the impact of international migration on citizenship identities. However, the magnitude of such impacts on the perceptions of the border is dependent upon proximity to the border itself. As the return of the majority have been in areas categorized as ‘borderlands’, the international boundary determines upon the validity of identities central to residence and livelihood practices of local inhabitants. However, in spaces situated at a distance away from the border these identifications serve as the foundations of socio-cultural differentiations among residents and outsiders, citizens and enclaves, etc. Borders, therefore, invariably impact notions of citizenship.

The opinions the survey can be summed up into a list of attributes of citizenship as expressed by interviewees. While respondents from Bankura specified permanent residency and the ability to vote as characteristic features of citizenship, those from Darjeeling and Murshidabad districts considered a sense of patriotism, alongside the possession of necessary legal documents, as fundamental and formal understanding of citizenship seems to have taken root among the respondents across three districts as most participants described citizenship in terms of legal identity validated by the state’s provision of certain documents. And within this broader category of responses the emphasis of local narratives on possession of legal documents came across as a fundamental requirement. Since possession of voter identity cards or other legal identification marks of citizenship in most responses, it was not difficult to ascertain that these possession of necessary legal documents came across as a fundamental requirement.

The larger picture that came to fore was that for these respondents living on the edges of society or community, differentiation from the alien was not merely an intuitive differentiation but existed as a practical tool of legitimation of their demands on the state. References to permanent residence or preferential treatment of citizens in allocation of privileges and benefits allude to the fact that their access to rights and protection from the state is highly conditional upon their recognition as full members of society and even recognition of their citizenship status can often be negated through applications or visits to the state. As mentioned in the preceding section, the relative ease of cross-border travel in and out of districts of Darjeeling, owing to vast stretches of high altitude, forested locale. As mentioned in the preceding section, the relative ease of cross-border travel in and out of districts of Darjeeling, owing to vast stretches of high altitude, forested and unguarded sectors of its borders with Nepal and Bhutan complicated the demarcation of citizenship status between citizen and alien, indicating that they tend to take international boundary and place of residence as central to differentiation of identity as citizen or alien.

On whether the status of citizenship required explicit differentiation from the status of alien, a striking uniformity of opinion was noted across three districts (Table 6). A substantial proportion of the respondents rather than making any differentiation between the terms “citizenship” and “alien” in terms of the absence of their state’s recognition. In Murshidabad, where the highest number of citizenship was important for securing state welfare as a majority of the respondents were dependent upon state rations and other benefits (most of them were dependent on state facilities). Additionally, the right to vote was often employed as a bargaining chip in interactions with elected representatives of the state in securing employment, monetary rewards and other fringe benefits. Citizens who were dependent on regular border crossings as a part of their livelihoods stated the importance of having state identification in legalizing their identity while traversing borders, thereby limiting the possibilities of any form of injury or persecution.

The final inquiries of the study were centered on people’s perceptions of the state, that is, how the state is viewed in popular renderings drawn forth through experiences of their interactions with the same in both direct and indirect manner (Table 7). In the study’s preceding inquiries the respondents had indirectly referred to the state as a provider of security, protection, welfare and other services. These inquiries also identified points of friction, especially in activities involving permissible cross-border travel, cross-border economic exchanges or even encounters with bureaucratic hurdles in the procurement of official documents necessary for securing basic securities and welfare of the state.

Therefore, while respondents were asked their opinion in this regard, two contrasting perspectives emerged. Across the districts of Bankura (67 percent) and Darjeeling (43 percent) the state was viewed as a corrupt establishment and an instrument of coercion characterized by a structured hierarchy towards its citizens in functioning. In addition, only 10 percent of the total respondents from Murshidabad mentioned political corruption as one of the defining characteristics of the state. The remaining majority viewed the state in a positive light, with 90 percent of the total respondents claiming that they viewed the state as playing an important role. 43 percent and 20 percent of the total respondents from Darjeeling and Bankura respectively viewed the state as a useful institution.

This deep divide in perception of the state can be attributed to the impacts of geographical variation and subsequently divergent experiences in interactions with the state, factors which have figured in previous responses as well. While in interiors of Bankura, local grievances were directed at the state’s unequal distribution schemes and the high-handedness of government officials, grievances of local residents from Darjeeling were centered on the prevalence of intrusive border patrolling methods which have disrupted familial ties as well as informal cross-border economies that a significant proportion of the local populace depends upon. At the same time, respondents from the same district who viewed the state as a beneficent state emphasized on the state’s ascription of citizenship, which was a shift from localized identifications and appellations to an understanding of the state in its performance of certain integral security, economic, and social functions. On the other hand, given that, respondents from the state’s border districts who reside in a space which has been frequently reported as a conduit for illegal entry into the state, it must be considered that their conceptualizations of citizenship were formed upon by an underlying fear of being reported to the local administration.

The final point of inquiry of the study was to engage with the role of the state in the construction of citizenship (Table 8). A majority of respondents from Murshidabad (86 percent) claimed that the state played an important role in shaping their identities. In the contiguous districts of Darjeeling and Bankura, respectively 59 percent of the total respondents of Darjeeling and 43 percent from Bankura acknowledged the state’s role in constructing their identities.

These contrasting views across three districts on the state’s perceptions and role in the construction of the identity of its inhabitants was interesting to note, especially in the context of the previously explored local articulations of what constituted citizenship. In the borderland areas of Murshidabad, identity documents issued by the state were necessary for availing of legal and administrative facilities and protection against local persecution. Whereas from respondents from Darjeeling, the denial of certain services for many employed in foreign countries like Nepal strengthened previously held perceptions of their own identities in line with the state’s assignment of citizenship, which was a shift from localized identifications and appellations
based on a shared cultural or linguistic identity. In Bankura, a majority of the respondents identified the provision of government services and jobs as the most common way in which the state shaped their identity as citizens.

The emphasis that local articulations of belonging are based on legal categorizations of state citizenship was discernible in the responses gathered across the three districts. Respondents often stated that access to government welfare and to legal, administrative and financial institutions were benefits reserved only for citizens. In their responses, respondents viewed access to the same, which often faltered at the borders, as a decisive factor between those who belong and those who do not.

These local perceptions of the border are borne out of quotidian necessities of its inhabitants to navigate through the changing conditions of life, brought forth by the state’s implementation of new policies and categorizations towards the management of such liminal zones. The lives of its inhabitants and their perceptions of the spatial limits of their mobilities, interactions and relationships across the border are continually reconstituted in the state’s attempts in ironing out the historicity of their interactions and interdependences with communities across the frontier under the near-re-conceptualizations of national territory.

Conclusion

As is evident from the results of this study, this disjuncture between the state’s conceptualization of territory and the space as constituted through quotidian interactions of its inhabitants often manifests in various forms. It is through these that the local inhabitants engaged with the state’s policies and paradigms to make sense of their material circumstances condition their understanding and interactions with both local and state categories of belonging. Therefore, there exists a necessity to view the relationship between statist conceptualizations and localized framings of border spatiality and identities as one that is continually reconfigured through interactions between the state and the inhabitants of these spaces. The interactions of these two dissimilar framings of spaces are not always directly tied to the state strategies that result in advantage with the state, but also in the local’s ability to negotiate these modulations to the circulations and necessities underlying its existence.

The study shows how ordinary citizens constitute their own imagined categories that make their lives intelligible. One crucial objective was to understand how individuals and communities proximate to the border engage with these identifications; and how those distant from it form their perceptions of these existences. In fact, the study found neither a wholesale questioning of the realist ontology nor an intrinsic rejection of national security in local narratives drawn from the survey. However, unlike the spatial imagery formed as classical social identity in critical IR scholars. The study did not provide any concrete evidence of valorization of a transborder community or any evidence that these identities are engrained. Indeed, there were many interviewees who spoke of the usefulness of the border to their livelihoods, made a distinction between legal and illegal immigrants, and demanded preferential treatment over non-citizens.

Similarly, there also exists a considerable disjuncture between the nationalist conceptualization of borders, territory and security and its more localized framings, which range from an elementary understanding of borderers to resenting stringent border controls or enlisting cross-border terrorism, illegal immigration, theft and trafficking as foremost security concerns. Also, the local itself is not a homogenous category and their perceptions are moulded by geographical realities and professional interests. For instance, respondents from Darjeeling and Murshidabad (both border regions) differed on the stringency of the border controls largely due to its differential impact on their livelihood practices; both agreed on the acute importance of citizenship and state in their daily lives as opposed to respondents from Bankura. It was also interesting to note that the residents of Bankura were more articulate with their views of legal and illegal immigrants than respondents from Murshidabad who emphasized on the need for maintaining a clear boundary and accord a high importance to their legal identity.

Therefore, it can be argued that unlike national construals, narratives at the local level derived from the lived experiences of its inhabitants are more representative of grassroots realities and their rationalizations of action and intervention, often justified on grounds of development and security. Similarly, the local inhabitants continued to find new ways to navigate through these new limitations or conditions which are enacted by the state on their lives. Often, these framings intersect, leading to a conflict or stress which the respondents, at the same time, continue to operate on parallel tracks, continually reconstituting their interactions and perceptions in response to rapidly changing and uncertain state policies and practices. Therefore, it can be argued that unlike national construals, narratives at the local level derived from the lived experiences of its inhabitants are more representative of grassroots realities and their rationalizations of action and intervention, often justified on grounds of development and security. Similarly, the local inhabitants continued to find new ways to navigate through these new limitations or conditions which are enacted by the state on their lives. Often, these framings intersect, leading to a conflict or stress which the respondents, at the same time, continue to operate on parallel tracks, continually reconstituting their interactions and perceptions in response to rapidly changing and uncertain state policies and practices.

Additional Information

This article is based on a study titled ‘Subalternity, “Nation” and the “International”: Ethnographic Evidence from West Bengal as part of an ICSSR Project titled “Reworking the National Knowledge Structures in IR: Some Indian Contributions”. We are thankful to the ICSSR for the financial support and to the chief investigator of the Project, Prof. Navinta Behera, for her support.

Notes

1 We consider the local not only as a spatially defined demographic category, but also as a set of processes and perceptions constituting a miscible category straddling the social, economic and political paradigms of exchanges and interactions, both within the group and beyond it with other entities, more notably in the context of this study, the state and the border.

First, there is no straight answer as to whether the ‘local’ holds a specific spatial imagery as claimed by the critical IR scholars. The study did not provide any concrete evidence of valorization of a transborder community or any evidence that these identities are engrained. Indeed, there were many interviewees who spoke of the usefulness of the border to their livelihoods, made a distinction between legal and illegal immigrants, and demanded preferential treatment over non-citizens.

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The respondents were all inhabitants of the localities surveyed and belonged to the lower middle to lower income groups. The educational qualifications of the respondents were not taken as a requisite granting selection for interview, but income was selected as the prime indicator. The survey elicited a sex ratio of sixty males for every forty female respondents interviewed, and the three chosen districts. Male respondents were mostly agriculturists, small traders, mill workers, while female respondents were primarily engaged in the upkeep of the household. All interviews were in either Bengali or Hindi in the districts of Murshidabad and Bankura. In Darjeeling, Nepali and Hindi were the languages of communication. All interviewers were locals and the interpretation of the transcriptions of narratives was conducted in consultation with their understanding of the implications of localised usages. There were interactions whereby the participants refused to consent to the survey due to apprehensions surrounding the recording of their opinions despite the pledged confidentiality of the exercise. Despite such hesitancy, a consent to participate in conversation which flowed unimpeded and constitutes a supplementary source of information for this study.

3. Newman defines borders as “the process of bounding, drawing lines around spaces and groups, is a dynamic phenomenon, of which the boundary line is more often than not, simply the tangible and visible feature which represents the course and intensity of the bounding process at any particular point in time and place.” A deeper understanding of the bounding process requires an integration of the different types and scales of boundaries into a hierarchical system in which the relative impact of these lines on the people, groups and nations can be conceptualized as a single process” (Newman 2003: 134).

4. A similar view comes from Nimmu Kurian. In her words, “A geopolitics of knowledge has closely accompanied the geopolitics of borders, often masking reasons of the state. For from offering alternative imaginaries, mainstream IR has largely tended to faithfully mirror the cartographic anatomy of the state. The mictic nature of formal research has meant that many of these questions have been studied in fractured frames, with scholarship often taking the cue from state-centric views. It has been disinterested in the everyday struggles and contestations of the borderlanders, preferring instead the esoteric diversions of information for this study.

5. In Darjeeling, Nepali and Hindi were the languages of communication. All interviewers were locals and the interpretation of the transcriptions of narratives was conducted in consultation with their understanding of the implications of localised usages. There were interactions whereby the participants refused to consent to the survey due to apprehensions surrounding the recording of their opinions despite the pledged confidentiality of the exercise. Despite such hesitancy, a consent to participate in conversation which flowed unimpeded and constitutes a supplementary source of information for this study.

6. Critical geopolitics and border studies have spawned an astonishingly large literature. The works of Agnew, David Newman, Dabney, Toal, Spalk, Sarab, Raffestin, and Ed, CARISS, among several others, stand out. For further readings, refer to Secor et al (2015); Agnew et al (2007); Sharpe (2014).
Climate change and the responses to it reveal starkly different arguments about borders, security and the ethical communities for whom politicians and activists speak. Starting with the contrasting perspectives of international activist Greta Thunberg and United States President Donald Trump on climate change this essay highlights the diverse political assumptions implicit in debates about contemporary globalization. Rapidly rising greenhouse gas emissions and increasingly severe climate change impacts and accelerating extinctions are the new context for scholarly work in the Anthropocene. Incorporating insights from earth system sciences and the emerging perspectives of planetary politics suggests a novel contextualization for contemporary social science which now needs to take non-stationarity and mobility as the appropriate context for investigating contemporary transformations. The challenge for social scientists and borders scholars is to think through how to link politics, ethics and bordering practices in ways that facilitate sustainability, while taking seriously the urgency of dealing with the rapidly changing material context that globalization has wrought.

People are dying. Entire ecosystems are collapsing. We are in the beginning of a mass extinction. And all you can talk about is money and fairytales of eternal economic growth. How dare you!

—Greta Thunberg, address to the United Nations, September 23, 2019

The future does not belong to globalists, the future belongs to patriots.

—Donald Trump, address to the United Nations, September 24, 2019

Borders, Boundaries and Planetary Politics

The contrast between the passionate plea for serious action on climate change and extinction by Swedish and American activists and the official assuagement of the US President requires as a premise a quiescent earth (Clark & Szerszynski 2021). Much of the economic analysis of probable future climate change likewise assumes relatively simple and gradual geographical relocation of climate zones (Keen 2020), not the destabilization of the climate system and the potential for rapid shifts and major discontinuities that earth system science indicates are likely in the short-term future (Steffen et al 2018), if greenhouse gas levels and other environmental disruptions continue to increase as they have done over the last few decades.

Crucially, much of the discussion in the social sciences concerning climate, growth, progress and related matters implicitly assumes that the future will be more or less a continuation of the recent past, “continuationism” is its dominant mode of thought (Albert 2020). But the new formulations of planetary politics and the discussion of the Anthropocene make it clear that this is a very dubious assumption. Much of the discussion of globalization has been about social and political integrations andifications, about novel topologies as the links between places and products generate ever more complicated supply chains. What has not been integrated into the discussion frequently, even in the field of international relations (Burke et al 2016, Simmang 2020), is the simple but profound fact that all these processes of globalization, the extraction of resources, the building of trading systems and the extension of mass consumption, involve dramatic material transformations of the planet. These transformations are destabilizing the climate system and introducing increasingly severe perturbations in how numerous ecological systems function, while dramatically enhancing the risks to these new global economic activities and the humans dependent on them for subsistence (Simpson et al 2021). This new contextualization reveals numerous contradictions in terms of how borders and boundaries now function and, highlighted by the urgency of dealing with both climate change and the accelerating extinction crisis, requires a reconsideration of borders and bordering practices in light of the novel material circumstances that globalization has made (Dalby 2020). This essay does just that.

The recent re-articulation of national territories and the related presupposition of the inevitability of state rivalry in a competitive arena are in many ways a “return of geopolitics” and a rejection of the earlier promises of globalization (Bergson & Suter 2018). But, that said, the United Nations’ climate summit in September 2019 where Greta Thunberg vehemently admonished national leaders for their failures to act in the face of accelerating ecological disruption, focused once again on policy-based contributions by particular states to reducing greenhouse gas emissions. As in the Paris Agreement of 2015 (Falkner 2016), the role of sovereign territorial states is reasserted as the mode of governance to tackle an issue that plainly has little to do with national borders. This is also consistent with the standard practice of considering adaptation to climate change as a matter of mostly national adaptation rather than global initiatives (Benzon & Parson 2019).

The contradictions between global change and national jurisdictions, a long-term theme in environmental politics, keep piling up, and now earth system science has made it clear that the global economy is endangering a number of key aspects of the earth system, and unless course changes are initiated soon, potentially disastrous disruptions will result (Rockstrom and Gaffney 2021). As Greta Thunberg (2019) and her friends in the Extinction Rebellion (2019) movement recognize all too clearly, time has run out for dealing with climate change and the ecological havoc that is being unleashed by fossil fuel combustion. While President Trump reasserted the importance of territorial borders, both in his rhetorical excesses and in practical matters by imposing tariffs on numerous international trading relationships, Thunberg and friends understand that what is much more important is that the “planetary boundaries” that approximately demarcate a safe operating space for a complex human civilization, are being breached or soon will be by current economic patterns (Steffen et al 2018).

Invoking national sovereignty and attempting to reassert control by using border crossings as a prominent mode of rule allows national governments to avoid the responsibility for the fate of Swedish teenagers; and to simultaneously ignore the existence, by President Xi Jinping of China and numerous other leaders, that the states China and myriad others that have historically done most to cause climate change should be those who lead in dealing with the problem. With the accession of the Biden administration in 2021, the American policy has shifted, and the urgency of dealing with climate change has been accepted as at least the rhetorical premise for re-engaging with international efforts to deal with climate. Domestically this framing was used in the US in 2021 to push some innovations forward, but the questions of how to do this continue to run in to jurisdiional boundaries many of which are premised on assumptions of a stable earth and fixed geographies.

Thinking through these issues, invoking globalization, ecology and other modes of framing in an attempt to get some purchase for governance on the issue, in contrast to the persistence of territorial modes of jurisdiction, emphasizes the incommensurability between topo-graphical modes of reasoning in terms of jurisdiction, and topological modes of activity where long-distance connections and indirect consequences are what matter. All of which is now dramatically heightened by the need to act quickly on greenhouse gas emission reductions. The
numerous online Globaloa images of the Anthropocene are being shown to many, and distant places, not about matters of territorial delimitation. They reiterate the much earlier renderings of earth as a blue marble without territorial divisions, the NASA astronauts’ photographic activities half a century ago.

While this is a very old argument in terms of environment–of the earth as one but the world as many–these boundaries are being mostly obvious to national borders (Christoff and Eckersley 2013), the urgency of both the extinction crisis and accelerating climate change make these issues especially pressing (Pattberg and Zelli 2016). In Merje Kuus’ (2020) apt phrasing “The guiding question in political geography is not as much about what boundaries are or ought to be but how particular imaginaries and practices of bounding shape political practice in a concrete everywhere.” These boundary practices shape contemporary framings of global politics, suggesting that, in the novel contextualization of the Anthropocene, there are three overarching representations, those of an ‘endangered world’, an ‘entangled world’ and an “extactivist world” (Lovendred et al. 2020). Roughly speaking Greta Thunberg is about connections between distant places, not about territorial divisions, whether in terms of national borders or biogeographic separations. This is the case even if serious efforts are not as significant as the traditional notions of territorial jurisdiction at least implicitly assume.

Not least they fail to provide security precisely because of the invocation of national prerogatives over any larger obligation. This is where Westphalian notions of separation, and frequently rivalrous states might be an effective solution to some questions of political identity, but it provides a map or a superstructure to tackling climate change when it needs to be thought of mobile and flexible, not linear and fixed. All this requires efforts on the part of border scholars to think about large scale ecological change as part of how boundaries are enmeshed in larger transformations, as discussed by way of conclusion below in terms of Eckersley’s (2017) formulation of geopolity democracy. This is but one attempt to engage with the crucial political implications of understanding societies as part of a dynamic earth, rather than a superficial matter on a fixed planet.

The contrast between Trump’s and Thunberg’s political claims are very much about different geographical framings and representational practices, and which one matters most and to whom. Crucially the two figures also have very different implicit assumptions about time. For Trump what matters is the nation and those defined by citizenship in a particular place through time. For Thunberg this is a matter of any ethical claim on politics; the people that matter in particular place through time. For Thunberg this is no basis for dealing with ecology are often counterproductive as science now suggests it has to be, as a process of systematic ecological transformation of the planetary system.

Territories, Jurisdictions, Sovereignties

The politics of the Anthropocene, where all sorts of innovations are needed (Biermann and Lövbrand 2019), is still frequent in territorial traps where the geographical imagination is shaped by the process of aseanian territorial delimitation in an inter-connected system (Agnesh 2003). The former set of assumptions feeds into governmental claims to regional landownership, whether national or international, and the latter set of understandings of “globalization” (Shah 2012). The indirect and distant consequences, in terms of climate disruptions and ecological upsets in the process of complex transnational discussions; clearly security in any meaningful sense for the political community is not what borders can provide. The fantasies of using territory to control change persist nonetheless, as pro-urban politicians in many places, and the Brexit campaigners in Britain in particular, understand all too well (Agnesh 2000).

Whether “globalism” as a reinvigorated cosmopolitanism is either possible, or might be efficacious in the face of the reactionary geopolitical impulses in Donald Trump’s dismissal of globalists, is a key question for our times (Deudney 2018). To think in these terms requires reimagining the planet as a single place in which actions are interconnected and consequences cannot be evaded by the invocation of geographical separation. It also requires understanding that the functions of borders frequently happen far from frontiers; and border controls instead on the indirect tele-connections on many borders, not just those of the state ostensibly in question (Miller 2019). But, given the rapid ecological changes for dealing with ecology are often counterproductive as science now suggests it has to be, as a process of systematic ecological transformation of the planetary system.

As ecological change accelerates in the next few decades, rapid adaptations to new circumstances have to be made to the planning for transitions to more sustainable modes of life. This is the case even if serious efforts are made to rapidly reduce carbon dioxide emissions; there are already enough greenhouse gases in the atmosphere to make any clear understanding of the global environment, nor the ability to adapt to new circumstances, a flexibility that runs counter to the basic assumptions of territory and sovereignty makes for good politics on many issues, it is now a problem that plagues numerous efforts to grapple with environmental matters. Borders do not provide environmental security, but they can. It is now a problem that plagues numerous efforts to grapple with environmental matters. Borders do not provide environmental security, but they can. It is now a problem that plagues numerous efforts to grapple with environmental matters.

The urgency of tackling rapid global change requires that the supposed solutions to governance problems be interrogated in light of the novel insights that earth system science is making available (Zalasiewicz et al. 2018) rather than to do so on the basis that resources in terms of harvesting regulations, the new understandings of earth systems require that these processes are of ‘fundamental to the long-term future. Invoking sovereignty and insisting that resources were a matter of national jurisdiction, not something to be controlled by international agencies, was an entirely sensible policy to attempt to resist the re-imposition of neo-colonial control from abroad. While sovereignty makes for great politics, it is now a problem that plagues numerous efforts to grapple with environmental matters.

Contemporary what is most important now is securing the ability to adapt to new circumstances, a flexibility that runs counter to the basic assumptions of territory and property as the bedrock for institutions to deal with numerous threats, and conservation as species preservation in particular, may no longer be the key to adaptive responses to environmental disruptions. These are Of course mostly entangled with the popular imperatives of border restrictions as an attempt to “take back control” in the face of rapid change (Agnesh 2020).

The urgency of tackling rapid global change requires that the supposed solutions to governance problems be interrogated in light of the novel insights that earth system science is making available (Zalasiewicz et al. 2018) rather than to do so on the basis that resources in terms of harvesting regulations, the new understandings of earth systems require that these processes are of ‘fundamental to the long-term future. Invoking sovereignty and insisting that resources were a matter of national jurisdiction, not something to be controlled by international agencies, was an entirely sensible policy to attempt to resist the re-imposition of neo-colonial control from abroad. While sovereignty makes for great politics, it is now a problem that plagues numerous efforts to grapple with environmental matters.

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climate change dominates the discussion to the exclusion of other environmental matters. But given the simple facts that climate is stressing environments, and food production and water supplies very directly, this is perhaps not surprising. The 2018 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report on a 1.5 degrees Celsius climate change warning makes it clear that rapidly reducing the environmental disruptions caused by industrial development and related urbanization, agricultural and resource extraction processes, these practices have often had pernicious and counter-productive effects, once again because of implicit and sometimes explicit attempts to use territorial strategies to prevent migrations and exclude people (Buxton & Hayes 2016). While the attempts to counter poaching of endangered species by the use of armed park wardens have laudable aims, their unintended consequences in terms of animal numbers, the dynamics of political conflict in rural areas have fed into the militarization of conservation (Duffy 2014). The presence of weapons and the aiming of rural populations does not necessarily lead to the ends that these projects ostensibly seek: “For example, militarized conservation tactics in South Africa often resemble apartheid-era counterinsurgency efforts, where efforts to win the support of local people also coincide with strategies of “defensive violence” (Duffy et al. 2018, 68). War and conservation are uneasy bedfellows and the militarization of environmentalism may end up making things worse, because the dispossession of local populations frequently makes the processes of imposed rule appear fundamentally unjust and thus undermines the legitimacy of what might be seen as urgent necessities.

This is not least because the discourses around poaching and turn park rangers into heroes and local populations into villains while often disrupting survival strategies using local ecological resources. In a similar vein at the larger scale some of the environmental problems facing local people in the Lake Chad region in Africa in recent years have been caused by attempts by neighboring countries to close the national frontiers in attempts to contain insurgencies. One of the unintended consequences has been to make adaptation more difficult precisely by preventing people moving to access economic resources to deal with fluctuating environmental conditions (Vivekananda et al. 2019). Once again spatial strategies of security compound the environmental difficulties for people whose mobility is restricted.

At the larger scale these same notions of “fortress” responses to environmental insecurities feed into larger formulations of environmental and more specifically climate insecurity where peripheral disruptions and potential migrations are seen as part of the problem of the metropolis (White 2014). This frequently obscures the causal sources of disruptions which lie with the massive use of fossil fuels in the global economy. Movements of landless peoples trying to gain sustenance, is not new: ecology is tied into long historical patterns rural life in the Global South (Allhoff 1996). Chico Mendes, a key spokesperson for the Brazilian rubber tappers was famously assassinated in 1988, but the violent removal of environmental activists, frequently linked to claims of external meddling in domestic politics, adds another important dimension to the issue of the role of borders and violence in global environmental politics (Matjazova et al. 2018). Here national sovereignty is another mode of fortress thinking about a supposedly autonomous entity to be protected from external influence.

And yet just as bordering practices are being enforced, simultaneously the economics of the contemporary world make it clear that supply chains that stretch around the world do not operate on such territorial consider- ations; vulnerabilities here are a matter of messy linkages in numerous places, and frequently not specifically at borders and only sometimes because of the invocation of sovereignty, but more often because of the economic decisions that climate change presents to corporations has been linked to the commodity chains that supply products for the contemporary global market place; adaptation is much more than in-situ policies within local jurisdic- tions (Hedlund et al. 2018). Coupled to this is a growing concern about the future of agriculture and the food system. The impacts of climate change, where adaptation in the Global South where farmers are heavily dependent on rain-fed agriculture may be especially difficult (Vogel et al. 2019). As climate disruption causes difficulty in terms of planting crops and having them mature with suitable weather, the social effects of climate change may be large. Migration from rural to urban areas by people in search of sustenance, new economic opportunities and shelter is the most obvious mode of climate adaptation.

Understanding the need for climate adaptation as only a matter of adapting to new patterns of economic activity, and key issues of irrigation water supply, are premised on overall system stability and assumptions of what hydrological patterns and weather systems may be available. While rainfall and temperature vary from year to year, the range within which they fluctuate has been roughly stationary. The past may not be a precise predictor of what is coming in any particular year, but it has given a very good indication of the range of likely events. These have been key to planning developments for the future. For example, like dams and bridges where design criteria frequently include the ability to be able to cope with a one-in- one-hundred-year extreme event. Construction of such infrastructure has been key to development strategies and competition between states to enhance economic growth. In Peter Dalby’s analysis of innovation and policies of improved management, the “environmentalism of the rich” were seen as adequate responses to any unfortunate side effects of this mode of development.

But not anymore. As rising sea levels, increased scale and severity of floods, storms and wildfires are making clear, we have facilitated the combustion of fossil fuels despite clear awareness of the risks of climate change (Klare et al. 2017). Trans-boundary liability claims are the corollary of the arguments for loss and damage at international climate negotiations, many nations have studiously refused to deal with seriously, precisely because of the possible implications that those states which historically caused climate change can be held directly accountable for their actions. Once again, time matters in global-local interaction.

In addition to the direct effects of climate on agriculture and commodity chain disruption there are of course second-order effects as a result of climate policies undertaken by numerous states (Simpson et al. 2021). Effectively tackling climate change requires drastically curtailing the use of fossil fuels, and so in order as demand reductions in one state affect the production in others, these have trading consequences. How the shift from fossil fuels to renewable energy systems play out in the political economy and with what consequences is far from clear, but if climate is to be tackled effectively these shifts will have to happen, and quickly (Global Commission 2019). Is it possible to anticipate future trade restrictions on fossil fuels, with border checks to ensure that these soon-to-be-controlled substances do not escape or are not smuggled across national frontiers in violation of trade restrictions? As climate change action becomes ever more urgent such considerations are looming and will inevitably have implications in terms of what happens at borders, wherever their rules actually are implemented.
the stationarity assumption is giving way to an understanding that the world is being rapidly changed. The sheer scale of development and the growth of the global economy is not only causing local disruptions, pollution events, and uprisings, but now has begun to change how the earth system as a whole operates (Steffen et al. 2018). We are headed into a much more stable world where the future has been known through human history, and the realizations and geopolitical power plays of the future will increasingly play out in less predictable geographical circumstances.

This new situation of an increasingly artificial world being remade by the global economy, captured by the term Anthropocene (Lewis & Maslin 2018), literally the geological age of humanity, suggests that past environmental conditions are no longer a reliable guide as to the range of likely conditions in the future. The corollary is that species will move and hence ecosystem boundaries will be increasingly mobile. Stable borders neither constrain environmental change nor economic innovations, but in now in these new conditions they too are increasingly mobile, thus raising profound geographical questions about bordering strategies in these conditions of non-stationarity (Kereiva & Fuller 2016). Conventionally, borders are long being presumed to remain in place, staying the same, now confront the challenge of how to act when stable background conditions are no longer a given. The mere constancy of the past are not reliable as indicators of suitable conditions for many species struggling to adapt to fluctuating ecological conditions. Non-stationarity as it now add a very substantial new challenge to global governance (Daly et al. 2019), and in ecological terms convention strategies now need to be reassessed to facilitate the migration of species to more conducive climates rather than trying to keep places in a stable state.

The scale of contemporary disruptions now means that discussions of sustainability, and more precisely, the discussion of development as fixed, have to be rethought quite fundamentally. Conventional strategies, based on the massive use of fossil fuels to power human activity have now become, in Dryzek and Pickerings (2019) path pithy formulation, “dependence economics”. Getting off the path to ever-larger fossil fuel activity is now the challenge for development practitioners; their strategies now have to attempt to secure a functional planetary system for all of humanity if they are to be meaningful activities. The alternative, epitomized by Trumpian patriots, is for the rich and powerful to try to use a fossil-fueled system for all of humanity if they are to be meaningful. Conventional strategies, based on the massive use of fossil fuels to power human activity have now become, in Dryzek and Pickerings (2019) path pithy formulation, “dependence economics”. Getting off the path to ever-larger fossil fuel activity is now the challenge for development practitioners; their strategies now have to attempt to secure a functional planetary system for all of humanity if they are to be meaningful activities. The alternative, epitomized by Trumpian patriots, is for the rich and powerful to try to use a fossil-fueled system for all of humanity if they are to be meaningful.

Thinking about borders as mobile raises the question of border policy priorities. As Stover (2018) provocatively suggested in the case of Trump administration policy, money spent on border walls might be altogether better spent on climate change. From a climate justice perspective, the huge cost of dealing with the imminent inundation of real estate in Florida. The cost of relocating communities in Alaska and Louisiana has also raised issues of how coastal adaptability are they are no longer these are not usually considered in terms of border policy. In the phase of the Anthropocene, where fixed demarcations of numerous things can no longer be taken for granted, then perhaps mobile borders in terms of geopolitical change need attention as a matter of border management too. Non-stationary borders apply directly to the location of many borders in the rapid ecological changes currently underway.

The demarcation of territorial waters and exclusive economic zones depends on baselines drawn from coastal features, and the rapidly changing sea level is retreating, and eroding coastlines then those baselines are no longer fixed. Where maritime boundaries bisect straits and narrow passages between states, and the shorelines are retreating, then implicitly the jurisdictional demarcations are also in motion. By this logic, as Florida slips below the waves, Cuba’s maritime boundaries will migrate, and many questions do not constrain environmental change nor economic innovations, but in now in these new conditions they too are increasingly mobile, thus raising profound geographical questions about bordering strategies in these conditions of non-stationarity (Kereiva & Fuller 2016). Conventionally, borders are long being presumed to remain in place, staying the same, now confront the challenge of how to act when stable background conditions are no longer a given. The mere constancy of the past are not reliable as indicators of suitable conditions for many species struggling to adapt to fluctuating ecological conditions. Non-stationarity as it now add a very substantial new challenge to global governance (Daly et al. 2019), and in ecological terms convention strategies now need to be reassessed to facilitate the migration of species to more conducive climates rather than trying to keep places in a stable state.

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Local and Global: Geopolitik Futures?

The classic assumptions of political communities within and outside climate change in particular and the transformations of the Anthropocene in general. Neither do assumptions of progress, the inevitable benefits of expansion, and the possibilities of autonomous states with democratically rule to determine the important rules whereby citizens can participate in the formulation of political systems. While the idea that the future climate crisis requires reworking of cosmopolitism (Deudney 2018), a shared sense of a collective humanity, this alone is not enough in terms of how to rethink politics in a world where border disputes, no matter how violent or stringent, are unable to control the key ecological changes that endanger specific locales in various ways, and in the future, the conditions necessary for a large-scale human civilization.

This is not only about climate change, important though it is as a driver of transformation. Humanity is increasingly living in artificial circumstances as a result of machines, buildings, and infrastructure—a growing technosphere in the living earth system (Hoff 2014). While numerous new surveillance technologies are becoming available, on the large scale as cheap satellite launch vehicles make new opportunities for earth monitoring, and the Internet of things is now present in numerous modes, there is no guarantee that smart monitoring of ecological phenomena will help if it merely perpetuates existing modes of surveillance (Chaturvedi & Ritts 2018). Without substantial efforts tackling the more fundamental political economy of extraction and the deleterious consequence of waste production, in terms of greenhouse gases, but also in terms of toxic waste and the problems of plastic pollution too, all the data in the world and more border control will not be sufficient for the control of the planetary boundaries. While some controls on the trade of toxic materials are in place, the issues of ocean plastic pollution cannot be dealt with by traditional boundary practices (Mitchell 2015).

Humanity is entangled in connections—ecological, economic and political—that require us to understand ourselves within a system that the rich and powerful are seeking to commodify. This requires thinking beyond the conventional categories of international relations, which despite the looming existential crisis facing humanity, remains preoccupied with a political imagination of bounded spaces, rivalries and a growing global economy (Burke et al. 2016). Novel forms of planetary political action by these inherent territorialis would seem to be urgently necessary as soon as the earth system analysis, and the detailed projections as to what the future holds in terms of climate change, are invoked (IPCC 2018). And yet opposition to attempts to discuss these matters in terms of global governance is still not enough in terms of how to rethink politics in a world where border disputes, no matter how violent or stringent, are unable to control the key ecological changes that endanger specific locales in various ways, and in the future, the conditions necessary for a large-scale human civilization.

We are ignorant of their vulnerability to (and roles in producing) the life-threatening changes to earth system processes that are underway (Eckersley 2017, 995-6).

Simultaneously on the other hand: “The minimization of questions of resource extraction and agricultural practices in coming decades. But these matters cannot be effectively dealt with only by defensive local struggles that once again invoke a bounded community in need of protection from extractivist forces external to its borders (Routledge 2017). Traditional notions of sovereignty usually implicitly assume autonomy as a virtue, but Anthropocene insights, in common with contemporary border studies, render simplistic assumptions of separation ineffective as the premise for policy. In so far as exclusivist logics of self-determination presuppose separation, they are always in danger of occluding the key connections that make particular places.

A more connected notion of political action, one understanding that humans are interconnected profoundly with each other and with both the biosphere and the growing technosphere, is more conducive to the resource extraction and agricultural practices. However, this fragmentation of what the future holds in terms of climate change complicates matters; nations increasingly have to be considered as not having borders in the traditional sense (Dimitrov 2015). This also requires considering the idea that geopolitical boundaries are zones of non-statutory issues—marginalized spaces, which are increasingly mobile. A stable ecological baseline on which to rely can only be part of a functioning fiction for border studies, is now untenable as a starting premise for either analysis or policy prescription; the earth system itself is changing so quickly that the dynamism of the earth system is now the appropriate context for thinking about governance. Planet-wide political decisions need not reflect both globalized and border practices and the rapid material transformation of the earth system makes time a key part of these deliberations too. In terms of climate policy it is in very short supply.

The converse of this is that discussions of governance, and novel versions of governance in the Anthropocene context in particular (Biermann & Lövbrand 2019), also need to think much more about the spatial categories in their analysis, and the jurisdictional questions that persist despite the necessity of trying to think in planetary terms. Globalization is a profoundly material process, and planetary political action depends on the political economy and practice in ways likely to be inequitable and violent.

While governance so frequently focuses on territories, sovereign states, and the political jurisdictional facts of the earth lies much more obviously in discussions about production than it does in traditional notions of protection which so frequently invoke geotechnological practices (Dimitrov 2020). Decisions as to whether to invest in fossil fuels or in the rapidly emerging new technologies of electric generation, or in the processes of draft environmental impact statements in shaping the new context of the earth system, regardless of the precise geographical location where these decisions are made. While the Paris Agreement operates on the premise that sovereign states making nationally determined contributions to the larger task of emissions reductions, it is noteworthy that this reassertion of the rights of territorial jurisdictions doesn’t include an explicit mention of fossil fuels as the primary cause of climate change. Grappling with production decisions, and the economic policy of fossil fuel investments in particular, can no longer be neglected in how planetary politics is considered and these matters cannot be effectively dealt with only by defensive local struggles that once again invoke a bounded community in need of protection from extractivist forces external to its borders (Routledge 2017). Traditional notions of sovereignty usually implicitly assume autonomy as a virtue, but Anthropocene insights, in common with contemporary border studies, render simplistic assumptions of separation ineffective as the premise for policy. In so far as exclusivist logics of self-determination presuppose separation, they are always in danger of occluding the key connections that make particular places.

Addressing some of the most pressing environmental issues, such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and the global energy transition, requires a rethinking of the traditional geopolitical boundaries that have largely shaped global governance. The concept of the Anthropocene seeks to challenge these boundaries by recognizing the interconnectedness of human actions and the natural world. Instead of focusing solely on national territories and their policies, the Anthropocene framework emphasizes the need to address global challenges through international cooperation and collective action. This approach recognizes that the solutions to environmental problems often transcend national borders, requiring a more inclusive and cooperative approach to governance.

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Daly, “Unsustainable Borders: Geopolitization in a Climate-Destroyed World”
Cross-border Life in an American Exclave: Point Roberts and the Canada-US Border

Pierre-Alexandre Beylier *

Introduction

Located in the periphery of countries, border towns were traditionally associated with remoteness and neglect, while assuming a significant military role in the defense of territories. This tendency went hand in hand with the use of borders as buffer zones (Sohn & Lara-Valencia 2013; Herzog 1991; Sparrow 2001, 73). However, borders and border towns have seen their role change in the last 60 years with the advent of globalization combined with the appeasement of territorial tensions, especially in Europe and North America. Border regions have gradually become more integrated in the world economy as a result of the forces that link Point Roberts and the Canadian city of Delta that lies across the Canada-US border. This paper highlights the specificities of this unique geographic configuration as well the challenges that the border represents.

By applying a theoretical framework based on different models proposed in border studies literature, this article analyzes the morphological, functional, and identity characteristics that make Point Roberts—an American exclave in the Pacific Northwest—a “cross-border town”. Using an online survey and face-to-face interviews, the author combines both quantitative and qualitative research methods in order to examine the forces that link Point Roberts and the Canadian city of Delta that lies across the Canada-US border. This paper highlights the specificities of this unique geographic configuration as well the challenges that the border represents.

Beylier, "Cross-border Life in an American Exclave: Point Roberts and the Canada-US Border"
of the international line, in terms of shopping, tourism, travel, and other cross-border activities. These links are the sign that the two urban units transcend the border to some extent and function together (Foucher 1991, 427; Herzog 1991, 328), or one "urban region" (Lunden & Zalman 2001, 41; Letinowitska 2002, 112) or a "cross-border networked space" (Vanneph 1995).

However, this criterion is just one among others, and growing academic interest in border towns has led scholars to propose theoretical models that highlight different criteria. Buursink was one of the first to define "border-crossing cities": "cities that make contact with each other in terms of (1) physical or built-up landscape, (2) institutional framework and (3) the city as a community" (Buursink 2001, 17). These criteria are similar to those put forward by Ehlers: (1) closeness, (1b) size, (2) institutional base and (3) residents (Ehlers 2001, 23, 25).

Adapting Buursink's model, Sparrow offered criteria that look into the dynamics of border territories in terms of integration: (1) physical integration, (2) organizational integration (NGOs and civil society), (26) political administrative integration, (3) behavioral integration (Sparrow 2001, 82). One can finally mention Gradus' criteria, which are proximity, function that encompasses binational structures and cooperation, and a feeling of closeness (Gradus 2001, 84).

Building on those criteria, Reitel proposes another model that aims at analyzing border towns through the processes that the town is the site of in terms of integration: morphological integration, which has to do with both proximity and the continuity of the urban fabric; functional integration, which concerns the flows of commuters; intentional integration, which is the formal integration; and institutional integration, which has to do with cross-border governance and the construction of cross-border institutions. All of these constructs provide us with a wide range of interactions or what he calls "the level of connectivity of the border" (Reitel 2013, 245).

This model is interesting because it implies some of the criteria put forward in the literature of border towns looking at the processes that shape and define them. The difference between intentional integration and institutional integration mirrors the distinction between "formal" and "informal" often highlighted (Ehler 2001, 28; Jaracz 2017, 487). However, a shortcoming of this model pertains to the fact that it does not take identity markers, a criterion highlighted by a number of researchers, into account.

To define border towns, the author will use four criteria, which sum up and combine these models. The first criterion is a (I) morphological one that covers both geographical proximity to the border and the continuity of the urban fabric, in the case of paired towns. The second criterion is (II) a functional one that has to do with the different flows that take place on both sides of the border and that link them whether in terms of trade, cross-border commuters, cross-border shopping and other cross-border activities. The third criterion is (III) cross-border governance and the construction of bilateral institutions, whether informal or formal in order to promote cooperation. Finally, the fourth criterion is more people-oriented and looks at the emergence of a specific (IV) cross-border identity, a sense of togetherness. This paper will apply these criteria to thecase of Point Roberts in order to question its cross-border dimension and its relationship to the border and to the other side.

This theoretical framework would be incomplete without adding the contextual framework, which adds to the specificity of this border community: that of the Canada-US border. Known for the most part of its existence as the longest undefended border in the world, this border was shaped by a long-standing tradition of openness, cooperation and cross-border interactions (Lybeckeber 2018, 533; Nicol 2012, 139). As a consequence, a number of border communities have developed side by side across the international boundary: with "cross-border families" living on both sides of the border (Lybeckeber 2018, 533; Poitras 2011; Hatelye & Mason 2018, 436), with services shared across the international line, especially in rural regions (Poitras 2011; Lasserre 2012) and, more generally, with a great deal of cooperation on common issues (Brunet-Joly 2008; Cappellino & Makonnen 2020). These many links have led to communities that are highly integrated across the border to the extent that the border becomes a mere "administrative inconvenience" (Drache 2004) or just a "ditch" (Baxter-Moore & Eagles 2018).

A number of authors have also shown that these interactions have nurtured a "community grid" on both sides of the border (Nicol 2012, 139). Studying Windsor at the beginning of the 20th century, Dimmel argued that the crossing of the border had been one of the main interactions or what he called "the level of connectivity of the border" (Reitel 2013, 245).

As mentioned before, border areas are traditionally on the periphery of countries, shaped by their being surrounded by the attacks led to a "hardening" or a "thickening" of the border (Lybeckeber 2018, 533; Andrea & Biensleiter 2000, 10; Alden 2008). The deployment of a myriad of security measures has made the Canada-US border less flexible and less open than it used to be, which has had an impact on cross-border trade (Globerman & Storer 2009) and cross-border travel (Baxter-More & Eagles 2016; Beyler 2016), while at the same time giving rise to a new "border culture" based on security (Konrad & Nicol 2008). In other words, it has impacted the cross-border linkages that had developed over decades across this peaceful border. More importantly, it has altered the borderland identity, giving primacy to security and hampering mobility and social interactions (Konrad 2014, 49).

Methodology

This study of Point Roberts is part of a broader project on processes of borderland transformation and "the place they live", which the author conducted in the wider Cascadia region in the fall of 2019. It combines two major research methods: an interview survey to study the responses of people that mentioned Point Roberts as the place they "go to when crossing the border" and a series of semi-directed interviews with some of Point Roberts' stakeholders. The survey was conducted in 2019 and included more than 1,200 respondents. The interview survey was posted on many community groups on social networks, using a grid-based survey tool that was piloted by the author in 2018. The interview survey was conducted by phone and face-to-face with over 100 people, among whom 60% were women and 40% were men, ranging in age as follows: 6% between 18 and 35, 7% between 35 and 50, 42% between 50 and 65 and 45% over 65, which mirrors the demographic profile of the community (Census Reporter 2019).

In addition to those responses, the author also took into account the responses that identified Point Roberts as the place they "spend time in" when crossing the border. "Being there" brings the responses of people that mentioned Point Roberts as their destination, as opposed to just the responses of those who are from there, offers a better understanding of the border town's cross-border links.

The survey consisted of fifteen closed-ended questions with choices involving gender, age, country of residence, distance from the border, frequency of border crossing, reasons for crossing the border, being a member (or not) of Trusted Traveler Programs, the presence of a cross-border identity and feelings of territorial attachment. It also included an open-ended question that pertained to the places they live, the places they go to when crossing the border, how they perceive the border, the manifestation of a cross-border identity and how they cross the border or if they do not cross the border or if they have been crossing it less frequently. As a result, the survey provided the author with both qualitative and quantitative data.

Finally, the author conducted nine interviews with different residents who play an important role in the community: members of different associations, two businessmen, a journalist, the current US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) Port Director and a fire-fighter, all identities confidential. These interviews were semi-guided: all of the interviewees were asked the same questions that had been prepared in advance pertaining to their perception of the border, the ways in which they interact with it and the role the border plays within the community. Some additional questions were asked after clarification was needed or when the author wanted more details on specific topics. These interviews complement the quantitative dimension of the research and give the author a more general idea of the perceptions of Point Roberts residents. In addition, they allow the author to share the point of view of some of the most important stakeholders in Point Roberts regarding cross-border life. For this research, the author also conducted in 2019 interviews with Vancouver Airport Director, Gerry Brunic; a spokesperson with the Washington State Department of Transportation; and historian Mark Swenson.
The third morphological element that is worth analyzing is the impact that the border has on the urban structure of the town. Studying Ciudad Juarez, a Mexican city at the Mexico-US border, Fuentes demonstrated how the transborder interurban relationship and local needs determine the intra-urban space by influencing the location of economic (and residential) activities (Fuentes 2000, 26). He stated that businesses and residential housing compete for locations close to the border, driven up prices and exacerbating inequalities (28). This border effect is even more present in smaller territories, where options are limited. Similarly, Point Roberts’ urban layout is determined by cross-border links. One can note a “specialization” of some districts located near the PoE with pick-up services Point to Point Parcel and In Our Parcel located respectively 0.2 and 0.3 miles away from the PoE on Tyee Street. The district situated at the crossroads between Tyee and Gulf Road and Tyee and Benson Road, one mile away from the PoE, concentrates the services that Canadian visitors cross the border to access, as will be discussed below, with four gas stations, a supermarket called The International Market Place, and two other pick-up services. Finally, down Gulf Road, one can find a bar, Kinslys Reef’s Tavern, and a café, Saltwater Café. Proximity to the border, as well as a very strict zoning code, defined the location of these businesses. In other words, to paraphrase Fuentes, the “urban structure of Point Roberts is deeply influenced by the border (2000, 32).

However, in addition to this positive “border effect”, the 49th parallel also has a negative “spatial effect”: if we stretch Fuentes’ theory a bit, in that the border inhibits some activities by the regulations it entails. The interviewees underscored four border-related problems. The first one has to do with the hiring of staff, as emphasized by six of the eight interviewees, among whom two business owners. Because of its small size and its demographics, Point Roberts does not have a significant workforce especially for restaurants and bars. On top of that, businesses cannot hire Canadians. There was a memorandum of understanding that allowed businesses to hire “seasonal temporary workers” from Canada but it was canceled after 9/11.

There was a provision that allowed seasonal workers to come across from Canada to work in Point Roberts and (because of) the tightening down on the border and the consolidation of the treat-everybody-the-same (…) they weren’t allowing seasonal workers [any more] (…). That shut down the ability of the restaurants to bring people in during the peak season (Interview resident 4, 2019).

Three residents directly blame the border for their labor challenges: “the border keeps us from hiring Canadians” (Interview resident 3, 2019); “the border is that impermeable barrier there” (Interview resident 4, 2019); “there are a lot of challenges running a business here. The border is one of them” (Interview resident 1, business owner, 2019). There is still the possibility to apply for a work visa but the process is long, up to six months, and lacks flexibility for businesses that cannot plan that far in advance (Interview resident 2, business owner, 2019). Even getting volunteers for associations such as the Food Co Op is a hassle, and people get stopped at the border (Interview resident 3, 2019).

The second border-related problem that the community faces is a lack of affordable housing. The border and the situation of Point Roberts as a small exclave induce competition for land use. This further impacts businesses in that, if they were to find someone from continental US to work in Point Roberts, they would not be able to find affordable housing in Point Roberts. Commuting from continental US is not an option as it is one and a half hours from Bellingham, the closest major American city, with two international borders to cross. It also impacts the attractiveness of the community, especially for families or single people in their 30s who cannot afford to move to Point Roberts (Interview resident 1, 2019; Interview resident 2, 2019; Interview resident 4, 2019).

This lack of staff combined with the lack of affordable housing has an impact on businesses: “part of the problem is like last year in the summer, I only opened five days a week. I didn’t open up five days a week because of lack of business. I opened up five days a week because of lack of employees” (Interview resident 2, 2019). The situation even forced two restaurants to close down: “And [if] the restaurants could stay open longer, there would be more restaurants—we’ve lost to two big ones—Boosters and TJ’s—because they couldn’t get help—and [there would be] more businesses in general tourism-related things” (Interview resident 4, 2019).
Because of zoning rules and the competition for space, another feature of Point Roberts is the lack of supermarkets, which further inhibits businesses and the development of the town. As pointed out by one of the interviewees, having even a small supermarket could add to the community in terms of tourism-related activities by stimulating other businesses. It would also have a snowball effect in terms of revenue because workers would pay the lodging tax, which would then be re-infused in the community and help it develop new infrastructure (Interview resident 2, 2019; Interview resident 5, 2018).

Finally, the presence of the border means that Point Roberts residents cannot get some services. Some companies such as Home Depot or Lowes do not deliver in Point Roberts, and bars and restaurants only get food and drinks twice a week in the summer and once a week in the winter (Interview resident 2, 2019). Some social services provided by Whatcom County, such as Home Care, are not available in Point Roberts (Interview resident 4, 2019; Interview resident 6, 2019). Children can only go to school in Point Roberts until third grade, when they are eight years old. When they are older they have to either enroll in a school in Canada or commute to the US mainland, to Blaine, the closest American city where they can go to school (Interview resident 7, 2019). Other services such as electrical work and medical aid are difficult to access as well. As one resident put it:

The border (…) is a challenge in ways that, I think, may be a little unexpected (…) because we’re so isolated, we don’t realize that we so we assume that if we were on the other side (Interview resident 4, 2019).

These are rather indirect moral problems that are entailed, some only partly, by the border combined with the fact that Point Roberts is an exclave. As noted, zoning rules are not the only problem, but the problems show that the border impacts the fabric and the shape of the community, the “urban function” of Point Roberts to point out from Beylier (2018). Some social services, some businesses are inhibited by border-related regulations that prevent the development of some border-related activities that would benefit the town’s economy. The border has thus a kind of “sterilizing” effect (Pradaeau, 1994, 227) for Point Roberts, which is, at the same time, heavily dependent on the border. This dual dimension of the border creates opportunities but also represents a source of vulnerability, placing the community in a paradoxical situation, as emphasized by Point Roberts’ historian: “Our border plays an important role in our economy, an urban function of Point Roberts, one can note a similar diversity as their destination in number of responses (out of 89). Source: online survey 2019. Figure 3: Reasons for Crossing the Border (Point Roberts Residents). Source: online survey 2019.

When analyzing cross-border flows, it is also helpful to look at the respondents in the Cascadia regional survey that identified Point Roberts as the “place they go to when crossing the border”. In the sample of 1,500 respondents, 98 people did so. In terms of number of responses, one would note some great diversity as summarized in Figure 4. 84% come from Canada, Delta being the number one origin (35%), followed by Vancouver (22.5%) and other cities in the Greater Vancouver area (9%), while 16% come from the US, 6% from Whatcom County and 5.6% coming from Seattle. This suggests that through crossing the border, it is an activity that is for local communities—namely 75% of people coming to Point Roberts live less than 25 miles from the border, among whom 20% are just 2 miles away. The border also exerts a huge power of attraction insofar as 25% of the people coming to Point Roberts are from distant places, over 25 miles away from the border and even Seattle, over 100 miles away. So, it shows that the border determines flows at different scales, local and regional, both in Canada and in the US mainland.

In terms of reasons for crossing the border at Point Roberts, one can note a similar diversity as their destination in number of responses (out of 89). Source: online survey 2019. Figure 3: Reasons for Crossing the Border (Point Roberts Residents). Source: online survey 2019.

reasons why people are coming to Point Roberts are either for vacation (47 responses) or for gasoline (40). Shopping (30 responses), religious activities (26 responses), and visiting friends and family (15 responses) constitute the other motivations for people to cross the border (Figure 5). As emphasized during the interviews, Point Roberts is known for attracting Canadians who own cabins in the exclave and stay there during the summer or who come to fill up on gas or pick up parcels, two activities that are not limited to Point Roberts and on which other border towns such as Blaine or Sumas thrive. More generally, it is estimated that 40% of border-crossers come to Point Roberts for fuel and 26% to pick up parcels (Swenson 2017, 419). These trends are a direct result of the border effect combined with the value of the Canadian dollar; because of the tax differences between the US and Canada, prices are cheaper in the US and Canadians take advantage of these differentials induced by the border. For groceries, for instance, the price differential is 30% (Swenson 2017, 338). This constitutes an underlying force that structures these cross-border flows, making the 49th parallel a “dynamic border”, business as a result, “every business has both US and Canadian currency” (Interview resident 5, 2018).
Since their reason for crossing is mostly utilitarian, the majority of respondents, the border constitutes an obstacle. This fact is reflected in the words that are used to describe the border. The most frequent were “security” (10 occurrences), “time” (9), “safety” (6), the idea of a “gated community” (5), “necessary” (5), “inconvenience” (5) and only in 7th position came the idea of “access” (4) being the only positive word (Figure 8).

This situation is especially acute for businesses as emphasized above. Some pointed out that the way people outside of the community were treated by border officers, who sometimes ask very intrusive questions. According to one interview respondent, several people who work in the restaurant sector have said that about half of the time they were asked what they considered “inappropriate questions” by border officers (interview respondent 1, 2019). To mitigate the negative impact that border controls can have on residents, some residents have put in place different strategies. First, 91% of them are Nexus members, a trusted-traveler program that was introduced in the wake of 9/11 within the framework of the “Smart Border Declaration” to expedite the crossing of the border for people who had been pre-approved after undergoing a background check (Beylier 2016, 121). Secondly, some residents highlighted the fact that the border constitutes a “time factor” (interview respondent 4, 2019) and that they “plan ahead” before crossing the border in order to avoid lines at some times of day (interview respondent 2, 2019; interview respondent 4, 2019). Finally, Point Roberts residents have tried to establish lines of communication with border agencies. Some inform the border agencies in advance when an event is going to take place so that CBP can adapt their staffing levels in order to accommodate these flows (interview respondent 2, 2019). An ad hoc Border Committee was also established a few years ago between members of the community and the CBP Port Director who meet quarterly to discuss some of the challenges that people can encounter at the border (interview resident 3, 2019; Interviewer’s CBP, 2019). The Taxpayers’ Association also set up an ad hoc Border Committee that was established a few years ago between members of the community and the CBP Port Director who meet quarterly to discuss some of the challenges that people can encounter at the border. CBP has also been working with Canadian volunteers for close to 30 years because the demographics of the community proves insufficient to provide people (interview respondent 6, 2019). One instance of cross-border cooperation is particularly worth analyzing. As a response to a project of building AM radio towers in 2012 in Point Roberts, the residents of both Point Roberts and Delta created the Crossing Cooperation, an associaton that launched a legal battle to prevent the construction of these towers. They eventually managed to prevail in March 2015 and the towers were never built (interview resident 4, 2019; Swenson 2017, 18, 30). The Point Roberts Marina has also developed relationships with 80-some marinas between the US and Canada, but the connections are more about communications and no working arrangement has ever been signed to deepen these relations (interview resident 5, 2019).

As a consequence, one can say that the functional relationship that links Point Roberts with Delta across the border, although very dynamic, has yet to lead to formalized cross-border cooperation. Contacts remain informal in shape and limited in numbers. One exception, however, is important to note: although Point Roberts does not have a sister city agreement with Delta, it does with Campbellbell, New Brunswick, a Canadian exclave on the far east of the border, one of the goals of this agreement being to lobby governments to create a policy provision for exceptions (Swenson 2017, 404).}

Finally, since borders can “define and produce a regional identity” (Giffinger & Hagedorn 2013, 207), the last criterion that is worth examining is the presence or the absence of some kind of cross-border identity that can be shared between Point Roberts and Delta. It is what Buirsink calls a “feeling of togetherness” or what Herzog describes as a “transboundary social system and a community of interests” (Herzog 1990). The last section of the survey had to do with this topic. People were asked if they felt they belonged to a cross-border region. As illustrated in Figure 9, proportions of the respondents from Point Roberts and Delta answered that they do belong to a cross-border region: between 82 and 86%. For many residents, proximity to the border is what makes it difficult to cross the border as a result of the economic dependence of the community on Canada define Point Roberts as a cross-border region. Likewise, Delta residents highlight similar reasons, pointing out the numerous cross-border trips that people make. However, this belonging does not necessarily translate into the presence of a cross-border identity on both sides of the border. For respondents in Point Roberts, it does 83% of them answered positively whereas only 61% of respondents in Delta gave a similar response (Figure 10).

This contrast is even more telling when people were asked about which scale of community they feel the most attached to (Figure 11). In Point Roberts, 23% of the sample first identify with a cross-border region while a majority (41%) identify with their country. For Delta, only 6% identify with Cascadia while a huge majority (80%) predominantly identify to Canada first. A factor that could foster this emerging cross-border identity is the presence of a cross-border newspaper. Point Roberts’ All Point Bulletin, a local newspaper founded in 1985, Even...
while, at the same time, sharing, to some extent, a common binational identity with people across the border. As being said, when asked about the manifestation of this cross-border identity, the respondents gave reasons that were the same as those given for the manifestation of the cross-border region: similar language and common values, cross-border interactions and having friends and/or family in the other country. In other words, they did not necessarily distinguish the existence of a cross-border region from that of a cross-border identity and rather defined both as a result of the four links that bind both sides of the border. In addition, Americans felt a stronger cross-border identity—although not that prominent in that it rarely prevailed over the territorial identity of attraction exerted by the border. It still means that it is a key characteristic of border towns (Fuentes 2000).

Discussion

What the survey and the interviews have shown is that Point Roberts evinces a great “level of connectivity” to Delta, an expression borrowed from Reitel for whom connectivity is “an identity perspective, cross-border integration is much stronger on the American side than on the Canadian side. As often the case between Canada and the US, cooperation is rather informal and/or temporary. On the scale of federal governments, for instance, one can note that the agreements that dealt with the border—whether the Smart Border Declaration or the Beyond the Border Agreement—did not lead to the creation of any cross-border institutions. The Beyond the Border Agreement created a Beyond the Border Steering Committee that disbanded when governments changed (Interview G. Bruno, 2019).

All in all, three out of the four criteria that define a border town are significantly present, pointing to incomplete integration. Besides, from a functional perspective and an identity perspective, cross-border integration is much stronger on the American side than on the Canadian side. Because Point Roberts is an exclave, an interviewee can talk about almost anything (Interview resident 7, 2019). It makes it safe as a community, literally the safest community in North America (Interview resident 4, 2019).

Figure II. Answers to the question “To which of the following do you feel more attached?” Source: online survey 2019.

Conclusion

With its unique configuration as an exclave, Point Roberts is at the center of integralional forces, which make it a cross-border community. It is not only defined by its proximity to Delta but also by the links the town has developed with Delta and, to a certain extent, the Greater Vancouver area, particularly morphological, functional and cultural. The only type of cross-border connection not really present in the area is to do with institutional cooperation or cross-border governance. Point Roberts is therefore a part of a cross-border region, although asymmetric in nature and incomplete, shaped by cross-border links that entail interactions and interdependence between both sides, a key characteristic of border towns (Fuentes 2000).

Even if some authors argue that 9/11 has altered the “social fabric” of border regions (Koehn 2014, 49-50), the border remains a factor of connectivity in that local residents have adapted to the new security measures by enrolling in facilitation programs or by adapting their crossing behaviors. What is certain is that residents have noticed the difference and more specifically have noticed the “banalization” that the Canada-US border has undergone in the last 19 years as a result of the “one face at the border policy” (Beylier 2016, 294).

When the border got tighter after 9/11, the federal government (…) started treating all people the same, which means that nobody coming across the Point Roberts border is in theory treated exactly the way somebody’s trying to come through the Mexican border (Interview resident 4, 2019).

While being the community’s raison d’être, the border still represents an inescapable threat. In 2019, one resident underscored the feeling of isolation that derives from being an exclave: “We’re floating off from the US. We’re on our own.” (Interview resident 4, 2019) which Point Roberts frequently underscored. And the border no doubt contributes to this uniqueness and to the specificity of the community.

Discussion

What the survey and the interviews have shown is that Point Roberts evinces a great “level of connectivity” to Delta, an expression borrowed from Reitel for whom connectivity is “different area-bounded factors that


Teaching Borders: A Model Arising from Israeli Geography Education

Tal Yaar-Waisel *

Teaching the topic of a country's borders can be challenging. This is especially the case in Israel, where not all the state's borders are agreed; there are internal disagreements between parties on the ground and external disagreements between parties of the international community and the State of Israel. A border, the very symbol of stability and consistency, contains mixed and contradictory aspects; the borders are not always well defined and, for many people, sensitive and contentious subjects. Therefore, teachers often avoid or feel uncomfortable teaching the topic, even though they know well its importance. This study examines existing curricula and textbooks used to teach the topic in Israeli high schools, and develops a picture of teachers' perceptions of teaching the topic through qualitative research. On this basis, the paper proposes a training model that addresses both the social and emotional dimensions of teaching the borders and develops a picture of teachers' perceptions of teaching the topic through qualitative research. The purpose of this study is to raise the importance of teaching the subject and to examine the ways in which it is studied in the Israeli education system, focusing on the required curriculum and on teachers' perceptions of teaching it. Furthermore, it is hoped that a new model outlined in this paper will help better prepare teachers to teach the subject while reducing anxieties and adverse reactions.

Research Methods

This study examines the existing curricula and textbooks used to teach the topic in Israeli middle schools and high schools. The Israeli geography curriculum is nationwide for two sectors in Hebrew and Arabic. All curricula are published on the website of the Ministry of Education. Qualitative research conducted between 2018 and 2020 explores teachers' perceptions of teaching this topic through questionnaires and interviews with almost 50 geography teachers at more than 30 different middle and high schools, teaching students aged 9 through 18, grades 9 through 12. Seventy-five percent of the teachers who answered a questionnaire belonged to the Hebrew-Jewish state education system, and 25 percent are Arabic speaking schools (Muslim, Druze and Christian), which are also part of the state education system. Only ten percent of the teachers that answered the questionnaires teach at orthodox schools. These questionnaires and interviews were used for the purpose of examining what is really happening in classes, beyond the formal curricula. Drawing on this research as well as on many years of experience teaching the subject and training students to teach it, this paper outlines a new model for teaching the topic of borders.

Framing the Issue / Theoretical background

Much has been researched and written about the importance of relating the content to the learner (Michaël 2014, Naveh 2014). The teaching of geography at its best connects the study to current events and to the world experienced by the students (Ministry of Education). Political events taking place every day have a close connection with the geographical world. Teaching that connection is the heart of the profession. Current events are identified through geographical concepts and studied within the framework of the main ideas of geography, using specific methods of inquiry into this subject (Sineh 2004). There is an irony in the inverse relationship between the importance of the subject, as teachers believe, and their eagerness to talk about it in classrooms (Miles 2011). Teaching political issues encounters difficulties and barriers in various places around the world (Grayson 2015). For example, a study examining the knowledge and understanding of geopolitical teaching in the US at the beginning of this century shows that there is a lack of attention and awareness surrounding geopolitical issues (Holm & Farber 2002). The researchers found that although understanding geopolitical processes was significant for teachers, the subject was not well studied. A study was written one year after September 11, 2001, the knowledge they demonstrated was poor. The geopolitical issues examined relate to the international economy and international markets, the power of countries, cooperation between countries, multicultural cooperation (e.g., the Olympics reflects the need for cooperation among nations), as well as environmental issues such as climate change and environmental sustainability, human rights, migration, and population growth. The researchers found that the source from which the respondents gained most of their knowledge was not the education system but from the media (Holm & Farber 2002). In Europe, the contents of the study were examined, and it was found that the perception of “European integration” is derived from a national point of view in each country, and that the textbooks serve as “vehicles of nationalism” (Sakeli 2014). Professor O’Reilly from Dublin City University emphasizes the complexity of political geography in general, and the issue of borders in particular (O’Reilly 2019).

The importance of teaching the topic can be found in two main directions: the first concerns the importance of basic geographic knowledge for the behaviour of a functioning adult member of society while the second supposes that discussing real-world disputes improves the critical thinking of students (Sizarov et al 2014; Michaël 2014; Larm 1998; Rassm. & Diamant 2000). The complex teaching political geography in general, as reflected in this literature review and especially the topic of borders, has created a need for teacher training and teacher guidance for teaching the subject. Therefore, working with Israeli curriculum, this paper asks the following research questions:

- What are the contents that appear in the geography curriculum?
- What are the contents of the textbooks that appear in the educational system?
- What will we actually teach in middle and high school classes?
- How can teachers be trained to teach the subject?
Teaching Borders in Israel

Much has been published about the borders of the State of Israel, concerning their determination and establishment and their changes over more than a century (Braver 1988, 2014; Biger 2018; Newman 2020 among others). This research literature informs the teaching of the subject, but this article does not discuss border studies. Rather, this article delves into the subject of teaching about borders. The first part relates to existing curricula and textbooks, the continuation of this paper will present what is happening in the actual teaching the subject in secondary school's classrooms.

A study conducted in 2011 by William Miles on the topic of border teaching in Israel concluded that many teachers feel uncomfortable and avoid geopolitical issues. The researcher concluded that the textbooks on borders contain confusing and contradictory messages. It was also recommended that sophisticated and multi-layered typology was needed (Miles 2011).

The starting point for teaching the subject of borders is that in Israel it is impossible to accept the boundaries as a matter of course. They are a subject that is controversial, expresses conflict and requires negotiation both between Israel and its neighbours and within Israel. Teaching a subject that is uncertain and temporary is problematic for many teachers and textbooks, as Peled-Elhanan (2013) argues, are laced with a pro-Israel ideology.

In order to address geopolitical issues and understand the meaning of the curriculum, this research asked participants questions that have no unequivocal answers. For example: Is there any consensus on the delineation of the state? and what do we teach the younger generation? Paradoxically, something so important receives little attention in the geography class (Bar-Gal 1996; Miles 2011). Further complicating the teaching of borders in Israel, political perceptions that appear directly or indirectly in textbooks, as Peled-Elhanan (2015) argues, are laced with a pro-Israel ideology.

For example, the Green Line was the border between Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan from 1949 until 1967. Since then, according to international law, it has been the line between the sovereign state of Israel and the Palestinian territory known as the West Bank. For many Israelis, the West Bank is Judea and Samaria, with a history that goes back millennia to biblical times. In 2006, the Minister of Education, Yuli Tamir, removed the injunction on drawing the “Green line” on the maps of Israel (which are produced at the Israel Mapping Centre). Still, in most classrooms there are maps that do not contain the “Green Line”. Even in most of the atlases that are used in schools, there is no mention of this border. In the latest edition of Professor Moshe Braver’s University Atlas (2014), the marking of the Separation Fence appears clearly.

Existing Curricula and Textbooks

The geography textbook for the ninth grade, Israel: Man and Space (Fine et al 2007) was published by a private publisher, the Centre of Technological Education and received the Ministry of Education’s permission to be used in schools. It contains only three pages on borders. The subject is at the beginning, and this indicates its importance. On the first page are the basic concepts of borders: “The Land of Israel”, “The State of Israel”, “Agreed border”, “Temporary border”, “Armistice line”. On the second page, the historical processes of border formation in Israel are described: the borders of the British Mandate (1922), the borders of the Partition Plan (1947), borders following the War of Independence (1949), and finally the review of border changes following the Six Day War (1967). One column is devoted to “Israel’s borders today”, it contains the continuation of the historical review: the peace treaty with Egypt in 1979, the 1994 peace treaty with Jordan, and finally, the IDF withdrawal from Lebanon in 2000. Because textbooks are re-written once every five-to-ten years in Israel, teachers have to update the text and to add external sources.

The three-page textbook section includes six maps. Two of the maps are large in relation to the other four, the first of which is the Land of Israel, with its eastern border running along the Jordan River, the West Bank with areas marked “Palestinian Authority A”. The second large map

Figure 1 Two views of the separation wall. Photographed in east Jerusalem by the author, 2018.
is that of Israel with the occupied territories after the Six Day War (1967), including Sinai, Gaza, Judea, Samaria and the Golan Heights. Choosing the size of the maps, the elements included and those that are not included reflect a political statement and meaning (Collins-Kreiner et al. 2006).

It is particularly interesting to examine the question that summarizes the chapter:

Write briefly about the four major wars of the State of Israel since its establishment: when did they take place, which countries participated in them, and what were their effects on the borders of the country?

This question expresses the view that the border is a product of war and, as such, it constitutes a problem.

On the website following the textbook there is a video showing a lesson taught by Professor Gideon Bigger on the subject of Israel’s borders. The professor adapts his lecture to the target audience which is composed of religious youth. The introduction presents borders as a complex problem, and most of the lecture is a historical review of the formation of boundaries.

In 2009, the textbook for twelfth graders was published as preparation for the matriculation exam in Geography. The book Israel in the 21st Century: Selected topics in Geography for High Schools (Glatzner 2009) was published by the same private publisher as Israel: Man and Space, the Centre of Technological Education. Some of the writers participated in writing both books.

The introduction to the 2009 book deals with the borders of Israel. This book devotes fourteen pages to the subject. Half of them are historical descriptions of the formation of Israel’s permanent sovereign boundaries: Israel-Egypt, Israel-Jordan, Israel-Syria, and Israel-Lebanon, plus special attention to the disputed separation line between the state of Israel and the Palestinian Authority. In this book there is a specific reference to the question of the future permanent borders between Israel and the Palestinian Authority; students are requested to present their own geopolitical point of view. This topic, “Approaches to determining the permanent borders of the State of Israel” is a political, courageous discussion that presents and invites a range of positions on the complex problem, as geopolitical teaching should do.

The students are set the following tasks at the conclusion of the chapter:

1a. Define an agreed boundary and a temporary border.
1b. Give one example of a temporary border that Israel shares with one of its neighbouring states, and one example of an agreed border.
1c. Detail the history of the borders from the days of the British Mandate until the present day.

2. Describe the advantages, difficulties, and problems involved in each of the three approaches to establishing permanent borders between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. Determine your position and justify it.
3. What are the implications of the absence of peace, and consequently the lack of regulated borders, on our region?
4. Discuss the following subjects: security, law enforcement, settlement, social ethics, economics, education and welfare, touch the political discussion, and planning and development, foreign investments, and Israel’s international standing (2009, 19).

These questions provide a structure for engaging with specific and contentious issues of Israel’s borders that leads students to acquaintance with other opinions and higher order thinking. Students are required to base their answers on knowledge of the concepts, knowledge of historical realities, and on their own position. This is the teaching of political geography at its best.

Teaching the Subject in Practice

The teaching of Political Geography in general, and within it the teaching of borders specifically, is complicated and challenging. In recent years, there has been an increase in the degree of concern that teachers feel about the issues with political implications (Michaeli 2014). 9th-grade teachers devote two hours to the subject at the beginning of the year using textbooks and very often presentations that are available on the Internet.

In order to get a picture of the actual teaching in the schools, questionnaires were given and interviews were conducted with teachers of geography in high school and middle school. They testify that they teach “Israel: Man and Space” book “Israel Man and Space” (2007), 75% using videos and other visual presentations, and all show maps during their lessons. Many try to hold class discussions.

Teachers claim that the few hours in which they can teach the “Geography of the Land of Israel” require them to choose from the vast amount of subjects included in the field. It should be reiterated that even in the curriculum of the Ministry of Education, the instruction is given to teach the subject of borders for only two hours. Thus, the actual subject matter focuses on a few basic concepts: usually a distinction between a “natural border” and an “artificial border” and less a distinction between an “agreed border” and a “temporary border”. Teachers note that they use the term “Armintrite line” in class. In addition, teachers require that their students be familiar with the historical processes of boundary formation. Who set the limit and when was it done? Because the material presented in the textbook is readable students are able to read both pages in the book on their own. Teachers often leave little time for discussion of political and controversial issues; it may be a sign of disappointment because teachers often feel that students lack a sufficient knowledge base of the subject to engage in significant class discussion.

Teachers emphasize the “added value” of teaching the topic when they succeed in conducting a class discussion:

Learning about the subject of borders also allows us to experience the arguments that each person tends to hold in his position, teaches them to listen to other opinions and hold a respectful discussion.

And:

It’s a subject I love to teach because it results in a very volatile and very emotional discussion when I manage to conduct an intelligent, reasoned and important discussion with the students.

Teaching the “Green Line”

As mentioned earlier, the “Green Line” served as the border between the State of Israel and the Kingdom of Jordan between 1949 and 1967; it now serves as an administrative border between various districts of the Ministry of Interior in the sovereign State of Israel and Israel’s government in Judea and Samaria (Soffer & Yaar-Waisel 1999). The Green Line is not an agreed border, and there are disagreements over its future (Khamasi 2008). A “security fence” or a “separation wall” has been built along large sections of the line, sometimes near it and sometimes further.

There is confusion and inconsistency in teaching the Green Line. Those who say that they teach the subject use a wide variety of expressions and nicknames, sometimes alternating back and forth: “Security Fence”, “Separation Wall”, “Green Line”, “cease-Fire line”. This follows from attempts to explain “what is separated by this border?” “The Territories”, “Occupied Territories”, “settlements”, “Judea and Samaria” and “The West Bank” all hinge on the Green Line (Figure 2). This issue receives more attention since the route of the separation fence was added to the atlas, while most of the maps presented in the classrooms do not contain it. When the students see the line on the map, they ask about it.

Despite the difficulty, many teachers expressed interest in teaching this topic. They were asked the question: “Is teaching this topic different from teaching other topics in the geography curriculum?” For example:

The subject is loaded with meaning and causes quite a few arguments.

Teaching this topic differs from teaching other subjects due to the fact that there are points that touch the political boundary within the State of Israel that involve the students.

Because there are students who oppose discussing politics in school.

There is an emotional aspect to the subject. It is a national emotional issue.

The teaching of this topic is very different from teaching other subjects, because it touches on many educational questions, such as politics and worldview, and these reflect the lack of knowledge of many of the students.

The teaching of the topic is very different because it involves a whole lot of other subjects.

The students find this topic interesting.

The “interest” and “political complexity” teachers mention is different from the way in which they choose to examine their students. Questions that students were asked in exams and work exercises focus mostly on the historical aspects of the formation of boundaries, that is to say: there is little that could lead to disagreement.

A Model for teaching the subject of borders

The findings stemming from the teachers’ remarks and the difficulty they expressed in teaching the subject suggest a way to help teachers approach the subject and prepare lessons more effectively. Borders are important, and teachers want to succeed in teaching the subject.

At the base of the model is the question whether the teacher is interested and understands the subject or feels uncomfortable teaching it and therefore avoids it. A teacher must understand the totality of the subject: both the emotional aspects and the prerequisite knowledge. Learning should include both levels, since geopolitical subjects are not disconnected from the world and from the life experiences of the teachers and students.
The experience of boundaries can be a result of visiting a border area or living near it, of watching news or films about the stories that pass through family. The teacher and students should be open to the full range of emotions to teach the subject. Although the emphasis is usually on the history of the borders, the process of establishing them and the conflicts associated with them, it is also appropriate to extend the learning to the political and national contexts of the border conceptions and different views regarding the status and political implications of policy makers. For example, reference to land uses in the border area and the possibilities of cooperation across both sides of the border.

In teaching according to the model, special importance is assigned to drawing conclusions and evaluation (“Higher order thinking”), for example, regarding future possibilities for environmental planning and developing the border region for the benefit of all residents on both sides of the border.

The recommended teaching methods in this study are content student learning, and classroom discussions, dealing with the meaning of what has been learned. This means that students will research themselves, ask questions and search for information on the internet and try to answer the questions themselves, without the teacher providing all the answers. This learning model prepares students for civic involvement and critical observation, as appropriate for a citizen in a democratic state.

After several years of experience in developing teaching according to the model, in teaching in an academic classroom, it seems that it is possible to open a discussion around complex and value-related questions related to this topic, and to develop collaborative learning that engages students.

Discussion, Summary and Conclusions

In the geography curricula, both in grade 9 of middle school and in grade 12 of high school, the subject of “Israel’s borders” appears as an introduction. The topic appears at the beginning of the curriculum and in the opening of the textbooks, a value statement that expresses the importance of the subject. The geography textbook for the ninth grade contains three pages on borders. Three pages are too few and inadequate for such a subject. Teachers claim that they cannot expand it, although the question of time may be an “excuse” for their concern about dealing with a subject of political controversy.

The 12th grade textbook ends with the chapter entitled “Approaches to determining the permanent borders of the State of Israel”, a courageous, political discussion that presents a wide spectrum of opinions and raises the complexity of the problems. The subject becomes important and relevant.

Much of what is required for teaching is based on the history of the boundaries and their processes of formation. The historical part is clearer than the political questions related to the borders of the country. Regarding the processes of determining the boundaries, there is agreement in the curriculum and in the textbooks; there is no disagreement regarding the question of the decision to delimit the various border lines or for significant disagreements that existed at the time of their establishment. In the textbooks, which should correspond to the curriculum, a similar division is made: most of the text deals with the history of the delimitation of the border line, to some extent, the border reality today.

The curriculum and the textbook intended for ninth graders (middle school) and for 12th graders (high school), which officially deal with the subjects supposed to study, are not aimed at political thinking, or drawing conclusions and formulating personal positions. The topic allows for the study of factual knowledge only. There is no discussion or encouragement in the textbook for the ninth graders to discuss questions such as “What challenges do the residents of the border area or those of the state of Israel face when an open border?” There is little to think about for the students as regards border crossings and related topics. The student is not asked to draw any conclusions from the historical processes of boundary formation, and there is no assessment that stimulates the student to think seriously about the future of borders.

On the other hand, the material for twelfth graders (high school) includes encouraging the student to think: the questions at the end of the chapter lead the students to higher thinking, and he or she is required to base his or her conclusions on personal points of view related to the issue. Geographic knowledge is required to be promoted students' abilities while teaching the lesson. Geography teachers want to relate to the current reality of the classroom, in addition to teaching historical information.

In opened-questions included in the surveys, teachers wrote:

- The subject involves the use of important geographic skills such as map reading and comparison of maps, spatial geographic thinking and dealing with current geographic and political problems. That is why I think the issue is important and interesting.
- The subject interests the students very much. It is always topical. There are many teaching aids that make the subject accessible and clear (videos and other visual presentations). Maps are used throughout the entire subject.
- The subject involves the use of important geographic skills such as map reading and comparison of maps, spatial geographic thinking and dealing with current geographic and political problems. That is why I think the issue is important and interesting.
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Discussion, Summary and Conclusions

The study found that teachers want to lead their students to higher order thinking. Teachers want to engage students and feel that they are promoting their students' abilities while teaching the lesson. Geography teachers want to relate to the current reality of the classroom, in addition to teaching historical information.

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then allow the students to formulate their own positions. Personal attitudes are based on factual information. It is
hope that all these activities will encourage the students to be thoughtful and become involved in what is happening around them as befits citizens in a democratic state.

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Introduction

L’historienne Anne Rasmussen dans son article sur la frontière disait : “Quels sont donc les barrières de protection contre les importations pathogènes, front pionnier de civilisation hygiénique, ou dispositif mondial de surveillance de la santé publique, la frontière a été, depuis deux siècles, un pivot du gouvernement de la circulation des hommes, des maladies et des germes ?” Si nous suivons cette logique selon laquelle la frontière est la voie de circulation des virus, un dispositif sanitaire efficace au niveau des frontières reviendrait donc à éviter ou à diminuer les risques d’importation des virus dans un pays. Ce qui veut dire que si le virus a fini par infiltrer les territoires des États, c’est sans doute parce qu’il y avait une certaine insuffisance au niveau des dispositifs de filtrage au niveau des frontières. Ce sont les États qui ont les seuls responsables de la politique de santé publique, et qui sont tenus de prendre les mesures adaptées à l’état de leur population, en fonction de leur spécificité sanitaire et de leur organisation institutionnelle.

En effet, dans le contexte du Covid-19 et afin de contenir et de détruire très rapidement ces cas suspects, les États ont adopté des mesures différentes voire opposées. Certains ont préféré fermer leurs frontières pour ne pas prendre de risques. D’autres comme le Maroc, ont procédé graduelllement à un renforcement des dispositifs de filtrage qui existent au niveau des frontières et ont décrété l’état d’urgence tout en fermentant les frontières. Ces mesures préventives ont apporté des modifications sur le système de gestion des frontières. Quels sont donc ces changements et quelles sont les conclusions qu’on en peut tirer ?


Les frontières marocaines à l’épreuve de la pandémie Covid-19

Saida Latmani*

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Dans la pratique, la gestion des frontières au niveau des postes d’entrée est partagée entre l’État et les différents organismes.

a. Construction des postes de contrôle des frontières

Le Maroc a des frontières maritimes avec l’Espagne (13 km) et avec la France (37 km) à travers ses différents ministères à savoir le ministère de l’Intérieur, des Affaires étrangères, des Finances, de la police sanitaire aux frontières. Ces différents ministères jouent un rôle important dans le contrôle des points de passage autorisés et la surveillance des frontières.

b. Division des tâches entre l’État et les différents organismes

Les acteurs de gestion des frontières au Maroc sont nombreux. D’une manière générale on peut les classer en deux catégories. La première catégorie concerne l’État à travers ses divers ministères. La deuxième catégorie concerne le sens du ministère de l’Intérieur. La surveillance et le contrôle des frontières sont l’appui d’un dispositif de filtrage contre les traversées clandestines des frontières est du ressort des forces auxiliaires du Royaume.

D’autres organismes participent aussi à la gestion des frontières. L’Agence Nationale des Ports (ANP) et la Société d’Exploitation des Ports (SODEP), ainsi que la Fondation Mohammed V pour la solidarité, disposent des structures d’accueil et d’assistance aux différents ports et points d’entrée du Royaume et participent à la gestion des frontières.

2. Les insuffisances du dispositif de filtrage avant le Covid-19

Le Maroc qui se trouve dans un espace de menace est amené à renforcer son dispositif de filtrage au niveau des frontières pour garantir la sécurité à sa population. Or, celles-ci ont enregistré une certaine perméabilité avant l’apparition du Coronavirus en raison de la facilité du trafic des mouvements transfrontaliers et à l’emergence de plusieurs menaces (b).

a. Contrôle difficile des mouvements transfrontaliers

De nombreux obstacles compliquent la fonction du contrôle des frontières marocaines. Deux éléments justifient cette difficulté. D’une part, le trafic illicite des marchandises et d’autre part, la permanence de l’immigration illégale. Concernant le trafic illicite des marchandises, il faut dire que les agents de sécurité ont souvent intercepté d’importantes quantités de produits prohibés. Le plus inquiétant, c’est que ce trafic va de pair avec le trafic illicite hommes et femmes et une acceleration de la circulation des armes légères, lourdes et un fort développement des activités criminelles. Cette situation témoigne de la porosité des frontières du Royaume au regard de ces différents phénomènes et menaces qui s’y développent et échappent à tout contrôle.

b. La persistance des menaces multiformes


Concernant Ebola, la pandémie est apparue en Afrique tropicale en 2014, avant de connaître une nouvelle flambée entre 2014 et 2016. En Afrique de l’Ouest, de nombreuses personnes ont été atteintes par la maladie. Comme il se trouve à proximité des espaces où le virus a sévi, le Maroc a mis en place un dispositif de veille et de prévention à la frontière de la maladie à virus Ebola de 2014. Ce dernier s’articule autour des mesures visant à prévenir la propagation de l’Ebola du virus dans le territoire national. Elle est met en place des dispositifs de contrôle sanitaire de déclaration préventive du virus au niveau des points d’entrée et au niveau communautaire, de préparation d’un dispositif de transport sécurisé, de diagnostic et de prise en charge ; de communication sur le risque ; de Gouvernance et coordination.

À travers ces mesures, le Maroc a su s’assurer la population le sa santé. Depuis, en l’apparition de la Covid-19, force est de constater que le pays a rencontré de nouveaux défis. Cette situation alarment à sans doute poussé les autorités marocaines à renforcer le dispositif existant.

3. Le renforcement du dispositif existant pendant la période de Covid-19

Le renforcement des frontières marocaines dans le contexte pandémique Covid-19 a été une nécessité pour le gouvernement afin de limiter la propagation du virus, en adoptant des mesures préventives notamment reliant à la santé du pays. Cette démarche a été soutenue par le renforcement du dispositif existant.

a. Le renforcement des contrôles sanitaires

Devant la situation pandémique du Covid-19, le Maroc a mis en place rapidement et efficacement des mesures de prévention qui ont permis de limiter la propagation du virus, en adoptant des mesures préventives notamment reliant à la santé du pays. Cette démarche a été soutenu par le renforcement du dispositif existant.

b. L’amélioration des procédures de contrôle sanitaire


Les passages sont soumis à un contrôle de sécurité corporelle et documentaire. Si la température excède les 38°C, les suspects sont dirigés vers le poste médical où des points d’entrée pour un deuxième contrôle de température via la caméra thermique. Un médecin interroge le suspect et lui soumet également un questionnaire afin de vérifier s’il est le suspect de symptômes de Covid-19 ou s’il s’agit d’autres causes qui peuvent expliquer cette hausse de température.

Le Maroc a soumis également les voyageurs à un remplissage de la « fiche sanitaire » avant de débarquer sur le sol du Royaume. Ce document est disponible à bord de tous les avions et bateaux à destination du Maroc. Cette fiche permet aux autorités de recueillir plusieurs informations concernant les voyageurs, leur nom et prénom, sa date de naissance, sa date d’arrivée au Maroc, son numéro de siège à l’intérieur de l’avion, sa nationalité, les pays qu’il a traversés, etc.

Les agents de contrôle des frontières du Maroc ont également vérifié le remplissage de la « fiche sanitaire » avant de débarquer sur le sol du Royaume. Si un cas est suspecté à bord d’un moyen de transport aérien, le responsable du Contrôle Sanitaire aux Frontières (CSF) ou la police sanitaire, exige le remplissage du document de la part des voyageurs aux questions sanitaires de la Déclaration Générale de l’Aéroport ou la Déclaration Maritime de Santé.

D’autres mesures sont venues renforcer ce dispositif, notamment celles concernant les agents de contrôle.

b. Le renforcement des agents de contrôle au niveau des frontières

Soucieux de faire des frontières un instrument de lutte contre la propagation du virus Covid-19, le gouvernement marocain a accordé une attention particulière aux agents de contrôle. La Sûreté nationale, les militaires, la Gendarmerie Royale, etc. ont été appelés en renfort pour assurer la sécurité des points d’entrée et sur le territoire national.


Toutefois, en vue de limiter la contagion la décision la plus radicale a été de fermer les frontières avec certains pays.
Le renforcement des frontières marocaines s’est traduit par la fermeture des frontières à travers la restriction des voyages. Il est d’ailleurs démontré que les frontières commerciales sont restées ouvertes (b).

a. Le restriction des voyages


b. La survie de la trajectoire des produits de première nécessité

La fermeture des frontières n’a pas concerné les produits de première nécessité, en raison notamment de la nécessité de maintenir le trafic des produits primaires.

Ces mesures ont permis de garantir l’approvisionnement du pays en produits essentiels, tels que les marchandises alimentaires, les médicaments et les produits pharmaceutiques. Elles ont également permis de maintenir le trafic des produits de première nécessité, en particulier pour les pays européens du sud où vit une importante diaspora marocaine.

Premièrement, la fermeture des frontières a permis de maintenir le trafic des produits alimentaires, en permettant le transport des marchandises alimentaires à travers les différents points de passage sauf à l’entrée dans le territoire national. Cette mesure a permis de maintenir le flux des vivres dans le pays, en particulier pour les zones rurales et les zones péri-urbaines.

Deuxièmement, les produits pharmaceutiques et médicaux ont été maintenus en circulation, en permettant le transport des médicaments et des produits pharmaceutiques à travers les différents points de passage. Cette mesure a permis de maintenir le flux des médicaments et des produits pharmaceutiques dans le pays, en particulier pour les zones rurales et les zones péri-urbaines.


En conclusion, la fermeture des frontières a permis de maintenir le trafic des produits alimentaires et des médicaments, en permettant le transport de ces marchandises à travers les différents points de passage.

Notes


11. Le 11 mars, le gouvernement marocain a validé un projet de loi permettant la fermeture des frontières à tous les postes-frontières. Ce projet de loi, qui a été adopté par l’Assemblée nationale, a été souligné que la pandémie Covid-19, leur retour s’éclaircira et s’effacera avec le concept de la mondialisation.


15. Ce titre, plusieurs mouvements ont été démarrés par les services de renseignements locaux. Le360, " Nouveau démantèlement d’une cellule terroriste au Maroc,"


Natasha Sardzoska and Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly

With an Introduction by the Editors


About the Editors

Natasha Sardzoska, poet, writer, polyglot translator, holds a PhD in anthropology from the Eberhard Karls University of Tübingen, Sorbonne Nouvelle in Paris and University of Bergamo. She has published poetry books, short stories, essays, literary translations, columns, and selected poems in distinguished literary reviews worldwide. She attends international poetry festivals, performing at the Academy of Arts in Berlin and at the Yaffa Theatre in Tel Aviv, among others. Learn more at her Versopolis Poetry profile and her WordPress site.

Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly is a professor in the School of Public Administration and in the European Studies Program. He is also the Director of the European Union Centre for Excellence at the University of Victoria, where is also Director of the Jean Monnet Centre, and holds a Jean Monnet Chair in European Union Border and Region Policy. He leads the Borders in Globalization research program and is Chief Editor of BIG_Review.
Introduction to A World Anthology of Border Poetry: Blurred & Political

Natasha Sardzoska
Emmanuel Brunet-Jailly

This special section focuses on poetry and borders. Borders in Globalization Review invited Natasha Sardzoska, the journal’s poetry editor, to curate the collection, because, contrary to popular assumptions that poetry is limited to the literary world and literary criticism, poets play a vital role in shaping cultural life around borders, and in politics, poets have been fundamental to criticism and dissent. For instance, poet without rival, Percy Beshe Shelley’s famous verse affirms, “Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world” (Shelley 2009). The following pages demonstrate the importance of poetry for borders, borderlands, and the people who live there, and the role poets play in reshaping the way we understand our world. Poets play a vital role in shaping cultural life around borders, and in politics, poets have been fundamental to criticism and dissent. For instance, poet without rival, Percy Beshe Shelley’s famous verse affirms, “Poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world” (Shelley 2009). The following pages demonstrate the importance of poetry for borders, borderlands, and the people who live there, and the role poets play in reshaping the way we understand our world.

Natasha Sardzoska curates works of poets from around the world that illustrate the state of the art and open our eyes, beyond social sciences and humanities, on the contributions of poetry to literary criticism and dissent, and points to the importance of poetry to the field of inquiries on the intersectionality and cosmopolitanism of human activities in borderlands and frontiers. This collection of poems invites the reader to explore innovative and inventive approaches to reading and writing borders, those that transcend language within their conventional semiotics of borders crossing.

For instance, in 2012, The Paris Review published an interview of James Fenton, famed professor of poetry at Oxford. There, Fenton discussed his works in wars and children in exile. Borders are an omnipresent voice in his works; yet as noted by Saamun Haneey, Fenton’s verse “re-established the borders of a civil kingdom of letters with history and literature and the intimate affections would be allowed their say”. More recently, The Paris Review has published ‘From Border Districts’ by Gerald Murnane (2016) about the gendered crossing of an aisle in a church, Marcelo Hernandez Castillo’s (2020) short essay “Going Blind at the Border”, and the works of Troy Mitchel (2020), which illustrate the complexity of growing up multicultural along the U.S.-Mexican border.

Similarly, in 2017, Poetry International published a ‘Forum: on Poets and Borders’. With texts from Nylsa Martinez, Ming Di, Jorge Ortega, Sandra Alcosser, and a few others, this issue posed the question ‘what is border life’ and delved into the meaning of living on the border (Poetry 2017). Collectively, they reflect on being a borderlander, a Chicano not a Mexican, living and dying building walls in Orange County, on what a life straddling a boundary does to a person. Sandra Alcosser writes, ‘the purpose of poetry is to remind us how difficult it is to remain just one person, for our house is open, there are no keys in the doors, a invisible guests come in and out at will’ (Poetry 2017).

Poetry, despite pervasive associations with merely romantic ideas, has a long tradition in criticism, much more political than often recognized. Indeed, for instance, in the post-9/11 era, U.S. poet laureate Frank Bidart published ‘Curse’ in the spring 2002 issue of Three Penny Review. He wrote: ‘May the listening ears of your victims their eyes their breath, enter you, and eat like acid, the bubble of rectitude “re-established the borders of a civil kingdom of letters with history and literature and the intimate affections would be allowed their say”’. More recently, the Paris Review has published ‘From Border Districts’ by Gerald Murnane (2016) about the gendered crossing of an aisle in a church, a novel by the people, the poor, the Protestant, the Muslim, the Jew, the native, the immigrant, the black, the brown, the blind, the brave, the undocumented and more. “Tyrants fear the poet” (Gorman 2017). Clearly, border poetry has a long history of illustrious voices echoing Gorman’s argument ‘to all the above and more.’ From the Roman Horace (65-8 BC) to contemporary Americas, Jesse Ed Davis (2018), whose work illustrates a trend of First Nation poets, including Paula Gunn Allen, and Leslie Silko, who wrote lyrics and melodies relating the hardships of their communities (Allen 1986; Silko 1977). Similarly, Salvadoran Poet Mary DeShazer (1994) and American poet Zoe Angelou (1877) express First Nations’ outrage about racism and colonialism in their work. In Mexico, during the border war with the United States of 1846-08, poets including Guadalupe Calderon, Josefa Letchicha de Gonzalez, Josefa Heracilia Badillo, and Carolina Coronado all published poems about the war, their losses, heroism, and Mexican identity (Conway 2012). Similarly, in the post-Mao era, poetry became a voice of protest in China (Yu 1983). This means, in Adam Zagajewski’s (2008) words, “poetry is not only about poet’s inner life”. Rather, the poet has to nominate and denominate the world to reflect on the world (Culture PI 2021). As such, poetry is potentially political in part because of its shifting and blurred nature. A poem may often be interpreted from various standpoints and contexts, hence possible shifts from the emotional to the political. This collection curates these multifaceted meanings.

Poets are important voices on borders, frontiers, and border-regions and their crossings by strangers, migrants, and ideas. We need to read them and to listen to them. Indeed, it is important to read, re-read, and reflect on such voices because they continually explore the intersectionality of spaces, borders, boundaries, frontiers and cultural borderlands. They challenge our ontologies of identity, race, and place. They open possibilities, giving rise to new experiments into new emotions. Indeed, poetry is an experiment of language. In this experiment—often detached from reality or linked to reality through an analogical nexus of awkward liminal meanings, odd abstract details migrating through a web of significations, cut and refined and nonsense—the word becomes the body of motion and the world becomes a space of solitude and alienation: a non-space.

In poetry everything migrates in the space of invisible borders. Every element, every word, every concept migrates. Meanings migrate. Images migrate. In poetry every boundary is crossed, breached, reinvented, reversed, abolished, or established. The boundary of the transcendental sense, the boundary of selfhood. Through often ungraspable abstractions and analogies, the poetic image breaks through with a kind of violence. The semantically dissociated word reveals unprecedented experiences, feelings, and motions and reduces the form to its purity, to its light, to its abstract. The hermetic detachment from the conventionally accepted context or meaning. Poetry raises mental maps. Poetry establishes emotional cartographies. Poetry blurs paradigms of borders, raises boundaries and destroys them at the same time revealing their reverse sides. Poetry touches the untouchable zone, tells the unnameable.

The tectonic shifts caused of the multifaceted layers of texture of the poetic body go far beyond the subjective poetry of the isolated lyrical voice, running through the nomenclature of an outside world where humanity is more and more tormented and tormented, a world where the only visible boundary is the strict and cruel
meaning, symbols, and rhythm. The reverse order of notions
language. A metaphysical art per se, poetry does not belong
Roberto Juarroz distinguishes poetry as art apart for its
boundaries of language to produce newborn meanings.

We invite you therefore to discover with innocent eyes
this anthology and to investigate artistically and critically
the new poetry border-order which transcends and
transports, because we believe that precisely because of
such uniqueness and freedom, poetry can offer a
vivid field of border interpretation, border intersection,
border dissection, and border (de)colonization—a poetic
occupation and liberation of space; a space which is blurred
and yet clear because this is what poetry does to borders:
abolishes them and then reinvents new spaces, spaces
of freedom in endless self-invention.

The poets of this collection have had different experiences
with borders and have, through their subtle poetic creation
of bordering, brought to this collection fertile creative
taste. Their backgrounds span diverse bordering zones,
including along the contours of the former Soviet world,
Latin America, the Middle East, and the Balkans. They have
brought together universes of the empirical and strongly
metaphorical dialogues and disclosures with spaces. In
these poems, borders are depicted as spaces of loss,
spaces of fear, spaces of anomaly, spaces of nonce, spaces
of non-affiliation and non-belonging, and even spaces of
dualing poetic dialogue between conflicted contiguous
countries.

In this anthology, we present 30 distinguished international
poets: Agi Mishol, Joao Luis Barreto Guimareas, Maram
in its radically broken limits.

The poetic reinvocation of borders and boundaries circulates
among countries.

Works Cited

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What is Border Life?" Forum Poets and Borders. Available:


**Row Your Boat**

You’re not Noah
and maybe it’s awkward
but you can always
sail in me
like an ark from Ararat
to Ararat
with five showers on deck
a bed to stretch out on
and shades on the porthole,
even a kickbox cabin
and a dovecote,
because I’m a good ark,
made of field rafters,
durable in a deluge,
fabulous at floating,
rising and falling on sea waves
and all my sailors dream on Ritalin.

**Distances**

There’s a tree by the name of Bauhinia
and there are places named Cricklewood
or Connecticut,
where someone is out running now,
steamy in the morning chill,
and someone else rolls over
to the other side of her dream.
I incline to the east,
the end of the west is far for me,
my wings are no longer wings of flight
and if I do venture out,
most certainly the sign
“Road Narrows” will pop up
the one that makes you swing the steering wheel back
to American Comfort,
where the heart is nothing much
and there is no band-aid for sorrow.

**Testimony**

Even the wheat weatherglass
shows it’s been months,
that now you can pluck
the stalk from the sheath,
pinch it at the edges
and blow the trumpet
all the way to America –

Translated by Joanna Chen
João Luís Barreto Guimarães was born in Porto, Portugal, in June 1967. He is a poet and a plastic reconstructive surgeon. His first seven books of poetry were collected in Poesia Reunida (Quetzal, 2011), followed by Vocil Estã Aqui (Quetzal, 2013) and Mediterrâneo (Quetzal, 2016).

False vida

Não me lembro em que naufrágio disseste que vinhas. VÍTOR SOUSA

A areia que trazes da praia não faz de ti um ladrão – soube que te vais embora do país que não te quis (separados pelo presente) que te vais embora do país que não te quis (separados pelo presente). O vento que sopra lá fora infuses things with a false life (it’s hard to keep yourself alive in a marsh of dead hours) if the beer you’ll be drowning your senses in this afternoon already has more medals than you. If by the end of the day you ask where has the whole day gone it is time to leave (and not get stuck in the shipwreck waiting on the beach for a miracle crying for each boat by name).

On the wall of the school’s playground

The word freedom was written in white chalk

By small children’s fingertips

The word freedom was written in white chalk by small children’s fingertips.

The sand you track in from the beach doesn’t make you a thief – I knew you’d fled the country that didn’t want you (separated by the present you wanted to talk about the future). The wind blowing outside infuses things with a false life (it’s hard to keep yourself alive in a marsh of dead hours) if the beer you’ll be drowning your senses in this afternoon already has more medals than you. If by the end of the day you ask where has the whole day gone it is time to leave (and not get stuck in the shipwreck waiting on the beach for a miracle crying for each boat by name).

On the walls of history

Freedom has penned their names

With blood

I am a human being

Not an animal

Shouted citizen

Ahmad Abdul Wahab

He filled television screens

With his broken voice

Like a captive who has escaped his jail

He escapes

Having broken the chains of fear and silence

The veins in his neck bulge

His eyes drown in anger

In his lifetime he never read Balzac or Victor Hugo

He knows not Lenin or Karl Marx

In that moment

The ordinary citizen became Extraordinary.

Selmiel ……………. selmiel

They came out in the street while singing for peace

With open chest and clean hands

They sung peace

Freedom …….. Freedom

They came out shouting …….. freedom

With nude chest and hand carrying roses

They sung freedom

Yes, it is the singing that makes the depth heart of fear shivers and the craw’s mask fell down.

Falsa vida

Não me lembro em que naufrágio disseste que vinhas. VÍTOR SOUSA

The word freedom was written in white chalk by small children’s fingertips.

I don’t recall in which shipwreck you said you were coming. VÍTOR SOUSA

On the wall of the school’s playground

The word freedom was written in white chalk by small children’s fingertips.

On the walls of history

Freedom has penned their names

With blood

I am a human being

Not an animal

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A World Anthology of Border Poetry: Blurred and Political

Maram Al Masri, born 1962, is a Syrian writer living in Paris, considered “one of the most renowned and captivating feminine voices of her generation” in Arabic (Banipal). She has received several prizes, like the “Adonis Prize” of the Lebanese Cultural Forum, the “Premio Citta di Calopizzati”, the “Prix d’Automne, 2007” of the Société des gens de lettres, and the Cyphers Award, 2021. She has taken a firm stand against the Assad regime in Syria and considers that “every decent person is with the Revolution”. Her poetry book Elle va rue à liberté (Freedom, she comes naked, 2014) is based on social media images of the civil war.
The children of Syria are shrouded in their coffin
Like sugar candy in its wrapping
But they are not made of sugar
They are flesh, love and a dream

The roads await you
The gardens await you
The schools and the festive Squares
Await you

Children of Syria

It is so early for you to become birds of heaven
And to play in the sky

Where you from?
— From Syria.
— From which city in Syria?
— I was born in Daraa and I was brought up in Homs
— I spend my youth in Lattakia
— I blossomed in Baniyas
— I bloomed in Dier AlZoor and I burned in Hama and flared up in Edlib
— Blazed in Qameshli
— Slaughtered in Dariya

Who are you?
— I am who fear it.
— Who will lock it up
— who will stock it up
— Who will burn it up

I am the one who leaves the trees of the heart for its passage
Mountains kneels to her grandiose
History turns upside down for her
The earth colors for its sun
I am the one
Who yells and outcry in the face of the dictator

I am the one who will not abide except only in the head of the nobles
And do not know except only the hearts of the heroes
I am the one who never compromise and not for sale
I am the bread of life and its milk
My name is
Freedom.

Grażyna Wojcieszko was born in Poland in 1957, is a poet, translator and active culture manager, graduate of Literary-Artistic Studies at the Jagiellonian University in Cracow (2005). She has published six collections of poetry and is the recipient of several Polish poetry awards. Her poetry has been widely anthologized and translated into several languages. Two collections of her work have been made available to French readers by Editions Caractères. Her recent work lies at the intersection of poetry, music and film.

Meeting I
i came across you in the thick forest
who are you i wanted to ask your name
i don't feel what kind of plant you are your perianth
develops not only at the top of the stalk

when i speak will you have to
kill me and maybe you have only
hallucinogenic properties i don't know in which language
to ask i am frightened i will turn out to be your enemy

my face is smiling and i can pretend
to be any kind of butterfly i do not blame you for your lack
of scent i am not going to analyse the colour of your penis
just please do not mistake me for a praying mantis
Meeting II

i came across you in the thick forest
the green of our pupils loses itself
loses itself in the yellow wedding ring
and yet
let's aim at each other from the depths of our pupils
when i speak are you going to have
to kill me so many shoot here and they all
fall in the rhythm of blunt music and they all
are as similar to each other as their collars
your pupil is getting ever darker
do you still see the green in my eye
who are you i just wanted to ask you
your name i wanted to ask you the colour of your head
i don't blame you for not remembering the shade
of weightlessness but when i remind you of its scent
will i be able to pretend i am a butterfly that you
dry out in your soldier's survival

Spotkanie II

natrafilam na ciebie w gęstym lesie
zieleń naszych tęczówek zatraca się
zatraca tak samo żółtawą obrączkę
a jednak
celujemy do siebie z czeluści źrenic
kiedyś się odezwę czy będziesz musiał
mnie zabić tytuł tutaj strzela a wszyscy
padają w rytm tepej muzyki a wszyscy
są do siebie podobni jak ich kołnierze
twoja źrenica robi się coraz czarniejsza
czy widzisz jeszcze zielien w moim oku
kim jesteś chciałam cię tylko zapytać o
imię chciałam cię zapytać o kolor serca
nie mam ci za zle że nie pamiętasz odcieni
lekkości ale kiedy przypomnę ci jej zapach
czy będę mogła udawać motyla którego ty
zasuszyłeś w swoim niezbędniu żołnierza

Translated from Polish by Sarah Luczaj
The Promised Wasteland

I’m pulling you out of the water
as if out of your own sorrow.
We don’t trust being saved
is worthwhile,
even before we know,
it will take you away from water
for most of your life.
The second time you encounter it
you’ll have to break the water.
The desert is wide, wild, wasted, Moses,
a landscape so widely open that its inaccessible,
no nooks for havens of rest
for hiding,
for intimacy.
The embrace of curvaceous swarthy dunes
is abrasive.
If sand gets in your eyes
you tear.
Their tongues bring the opposite of saturation.
And penetrate determinedly
the land that already had so little to offer.
This is when you realize promises better kept unfulfilled
and you do not enter.

Arrival

Will be hard to fall for this one.
Does gratitude measure up to happiness?
I land in Mexico City.
After a long flight,
a long-life spouse, children, my shortcomings and short-lived travels.
This arrival is long.
And so is my becoming.
Will this one break me
in order to sustain longer in my body?
The ability, or disability, to split into different fractures of life.
I’m on the lookout for a moon within reach.
Compromising on the one of Mexico City
that when I turn my back to
switches from orange to silver.

Gili Haimovich

Daniel Calabrese

Escritura en un ladrillo

Es de día en un día cualquiera
y nos preguntamos:
¿qué hemos escrito que lo cambie todo?
La gente avanza sobre el invierno
y cruza un puente oxidado en la avenida.
Por debajo pasa un río de metales
grises, rojos, blancos.
Dice un graffiti:
“si no tuvieras miedo, ¿qué harías?”
Vivimos en una tarde azul.
Alguien se queda afuera y la humedad
de las baldosas le disuelve los pies
como a una figura de arena.
Porque hay cuerpos apretados y gruesos
que forman un muro de espaldas, cerrado.
Cuerpos que no dejan salir una gota de sombra.
Cuerpos que pelean y atesoran
la verdad, la maldición.
A mi hija le gustan los graffitis,
one time she rayed in the wall of her school:
“más amor, por favor”,
y otros hicieron lo mismo después en la calle
y en ese muro de espaldas, cerrado.

Writing on a Brick

It’s daytime on any old day
and we wonder:
what have we written that can change it all?
People move along winter,
cross a rusty bridge on the avenue.
Below the metal river flows
gray, red, white.
Some graffiti says:
“If you weren’t afraid, what would you do?”
We live in a blue afternoon.
Someone stays outside, the tile dampness dissolves their feet
like a figure made of sand.
There are bodies tight and thick
shaping a wall of backs, closed-off.
Bodies powerless to let out a drop of shadow.
Bodies fighting and amassing
the truth, the curse.
My daughter likes graffiti,
life time she scribbled:
“more love, please” on some high school wall,
others did the same thing, afterwards, on the street
and on that wall of closed-off backs.
Prisca Agustoni is a poet and translator of Swiss origin. She currently lives between Switzerland and Brazil, where she teaches comparative literature at Federal University of Juiz de Fora (BR). She writes (and translates herself) in Italian, French and Portuguese. Her poems have also been translated into German, Rumanian, Macedonian, Croatian, English, Spanish, French and Swedish. Some of her recent publications include Un ciel provisoire (Geneva, Samizdat, 2015), Animal extremo (São Paulo, Patuá, 2017), Casa dos ossos (Juiz de Fora, Macondo, 2017), L’ora zero (Como, 2020) and O mundo mutilado (São Paulo, Quelônio, 2020). Email: prisca.agustoni@yahoo.fr.

Es una frontera en ruinas, construida alrededor del tiempo. Adentro quizás qué, sus caras de mármol, un aire prisionero, los brazos reunidos sobre el cuello del demonio y esas venas oscuras que tienen cuando la carne es de piedra.

Las naves tiemblan sobre el horizonte, el sol es una piedra con metal.

Apojando contra el muro bebe ahora un capitán la espuma silenciosa de las horas, y llega tarde al sueño cada noche.

La dársena escondía una sirena entre los fierros carcomidos por la sal.

Pensamos en el frío, en la luna desgarrada por las grúas, y soñamos con fantasmas de humedad en la pared.

Es cierto, el cielo ha sido brutal este año con los ciegos y ambulantes, pero ¿qué hemos escrito que lo cambie todo?

Translated by Katherine Hedeen

Nao sabem que são anjos os anjos que vivem conosco no campo: acostumados a remexer no lixo sabem do estômago a fome, do músculo as câimbras.

Reviram as línguas como frutos caídos cariados no chão, na torre dessa babel horizontal aqui, onde o latim eslavo estala suas sementes que florescem tardias e no fígado do dia destilamos nosso álcool *

Os anjos vagam esquivos nos arredores de Idomeni:
caregam consigo outros espectros, o rosto dos caídos deitados na memória juntos dão voltas no limbo, no campo onde prófugos perpetuos rondam em terra de pêndulos

They don't know they're angels, those angels living with us in the camp: used to digging through garbage, in their stomachs they know hunger; in their muscles, a cramping pain.

They scan tongues like fallen fruit rotting on the ground, in a tower of babel made horizontal here, where Slavic Latin snaps open its seeds slow to flower and in the day’s liver we distill our alcohol

* The angels, elusive, wander the outskirts of Idomeni:

they carry with them other specters, faces of the fallen lying in their memory together they go round and round in limbo, in the camp where perpetual fugitives occupy the land of pendulums

Translated by Katherine Hedeen
waiting in single file
for the return
of the human age.

The tongue has
no barbed wire,
no denial of entry:

our refuge is nothing
but ourselves

and the enduring borders
between words,

doors on which
we knock waiting
for the living,

barges taking us
from one shore
to the other

Sui ponti delle navi, i bambini salvati dal mare
hanno coperte d’argento per il freddo e assomigliano
a piccole uova di Pasqua, pronte per essere aperte.
“Possiamo aprirle, è ora?”, chiedono altri bambini,
che non sanno che lo statuto dei bambini,
in Occidente, è cambiato. Dei morti in mare
– centocinquanta, oggi – scrivono in molti,
tra cui Annarita, che dichiara di sé un discreto
umanitarismo, e dice: Buon appetito ai pesci.
Il mare oggi è limpido, non sembra che intenda ribellarsi
né che voglia ristabilire una giustizia qualsiasi.
Mia figlia gioca in acqua con altri bambini,
one di loro potrebbe essere morto oggi,
mi stupisco, mentre esco dall’acqua,
di non vedere cadaveri in mezzo all’acqua limpida.
Di chi sono questi bambini, quanti sono
i figli del mare, tutti infine torneranno al mare.

On the decks of ships, the children saved from the sea
have silver blankets for the cold and they look
like little Easter eggs, ready to be opened.
“Can we open them, it is time?”, other children ask,
who do not know that the statute of the child,
in the West, has changed. Of the dead in the sea,
—one-hundred-fifty, today— many write,
among them Annarita, who declares for herself a discreet
humanitarianism, and says: Buon appetito to you, fish.
The sea today is clear, it doesn’t seem like it plans to rebel
nor that it wishes to set straight any kind of justice.
My daughter plays in the water with other children,
one of them could be dead today,
I am amazed, while I get out of the water,
not to see cadavers in the middle of the clear water.
Whose children are these, how many
sons and daughters of the sea, in the end everyone will return to the sea.

Translated by Johnny Lorenz
Giselle Lucia Navarro (born in Cuba, 1995) is a poet, writer, designer and cultural manager. She holds a Bachelor in Industrial Design from Havana University and is a Professor in the Ethnographic Academy of the Canary Association of Cuba. She has also obtained diverse literary awards: Jose Viera y Clavijo, Benito Pérez Galdós, Edad de Oro, Pinos Nuevos and David 2019, such as some Mentions in the international awards: Angel Gavinet (Finland), Poemas al Mar (Puerto Rico) and Nosside (Italia). She has published the books Contrapeso, El circo de los asombros and ¿Qué nombre tiene tu casa? Her texts have been translated into English, French, Italian and Turkish, and published in anthologies in various countries. Visit http://www.gisellelucia.com/.

CONTRAPESO

Congelar el cuerpo de un hombre es una tarea difícil.
Congelar el corpo de una mujer, una tarea imposible.
Congelar el cuerpo de un país es tener miedo a todo lo que crece.

COUNTERWEIGHT

Freezing the body of a man is a hard task.
Freezing the body of a woman is an impossible task.
Freezing the body of a country is being afraid of everything that grows up.

OTRA VEZ EN EL PRINCIPIO

En el Malecón

Alguien supo que las aguas no serían mansas y el muro difícil de olvidar.
Ningún golpe de suerte lo desterraría.
Las piedras de las otras orillas son inciertas como los rostros de las barcas que se asoman a la costa, como los planes de los ojos que se van sin mirar atrás.

AGAIN IN THE BEGINNING

In the Sea Wall

Somebody knew that the waters would not be meek and the wall difficult to forget.
No stroke of luck would banish it.
The stones of the other shore are uncertain as the faces of the boats that lean out to the coast as the plans of the eyes that leave without looking back.

Sobre los muros breves nunca hay espacio libre.
Todos saben que la noche es fría y deben cuidarse de las aguas indóciles, por eso están espaciados sobre la piedra.

Hay música
ojos
bocas
idiomas
y preguntas.
El muro es lo suficientemente grande para cubrir la orilla y protegernos de todo, pero aquel que se sienta en el muro solo ve la distancia.

There is music
eyes
mouths
languages
and questions.
The wall is sufficiently large to cover the shore and to protect us of everything but for anybody that sits down in the wall only sees the distance.

Translated by Osmany Echevarría

Translated by Noel Alonso
Gjoko Zdraveski (born in 1985 in Skopje, Macedonia) writes poetry, short prose and essays. He has published four books of poetry: Palindrome with Double ‘N’ (2010), House for migratory birds (2013), bellove (2016), daedicarus icaral (2017), and one book of short-short stories: Reality: cut-outs (2019). His poetry has been translated into several European languages, and he has taken part in poetry festivals in Europe. Since 2015 he is part of the Versopolis project.

1. my grandad enclosed his courtyard with a fence and thus won a plot of land, though he lost the world. and then he started to partition that plot of land and name the gardens. I was a child and I loved most the little connecting doors.

2. we stake in poles – bounds, we draw maps with some boundaries and place people there that scan through our bags asking us where we are going as though it really mattered to them.

3. we are centuries away from freedom. for we still set ourselves free from other people’s chains, and we do not feel in the guts the key from the cell in which we are locked.

Translated by Lazar Popov
MIGRANTS’ POINT

Europe –
To understand each other better
I’ve learnt a couple of your languages,
but you haven’t even tried to pronounce my surname correctly.

On our first date
I guffawed – as my people used to do,
then howled of pain – as I used to,
but you warned
that after 10 PM any sound is considered to be a noise.

Europe –
You’ve surprised me as I did myself
by becoming much paler and blonder than you,
by feeling in my waters screaming at your protests
against those not chosen by me.

In the nights of your blue-eyed, blue-blooded, red-passport men
I’ve seen your dream,
but your mornings have never belonged to me, Europe.
You’ve made love with me, but never asked for my hand.

Europe –
You’ve expected the tales of thousand and one nights,
but I couldn’t recall any from my childhood darkness
full of bombings and screams of war . . .

All the children inside me have grown up . . .
All the soldiers inside me are tired . . .
All the wanderers inside are wholly lost . . .
I’ve come to sit on your laps and to be nothinglike, to calm down for a while . . .

Europe –
My heart is heavier than this 56 kilos you see –
But if you don’t care of my hearts,
then also connive my body . . .

Translated by Tatev Chakhian
THAT WINTER . . .

I had no passport that winter.
Mening i existed
neither for the tax service,
nor the police,
nor the local bodies,
just like any other body, except for the one
whose heart I still lived in.

That winter that one was rushed to hospital
with a heart attack.

That winter my name was inflicted in a thousand unfamiliar ways-
Take, Tatyana, Tanya, Tinah...
I silently succumbed to all,
like one accepts the height and the weight of a stranger
at the first meeting.

I hit the gym that winter not to lose the last connection with the one,
who articulates words through my mouth...
And when I asked my trainer: Where do my lost kilos go?
he pleaded to save a simple guy like him from tough questions
and joked to the best of his humour: Aren’t you happy to disappear?

Translated by Ruzan Amiraghyan

Punctuation in the rift

I find no respite in the machine
monologues tracing my desires
not even the hook of a comma
to suspend me to infinity
yet upon the walls
on the fringes of darkness
a void dowser taps
feverish nurse
restlessly searching
for a final vein to puncture
in a body burnt by delights

Translated from Polish by Iris Colomb
**Indrė Valantinaitė** (born in 1984, in Kaunas) is a Lithuanian poet. After graduating from the Kaunas Jesuit Gymnasium, she studied arts management at Vilnius University and at the Vilnius Academy of Arts. Her first book, *Of Fish and Lilies*, earned her the first prize in the poetry category of the 2006 First Book Contest of the Lithuanian Union of Writers. Her second book, *Tales about Love and Other Animals* (2011) has won the Young Yotvingian Prize in 2012. In addition to writing poems, Indrė is a singer, a winner of several singing festivals and also she is a TV journalist and producer.

**Laisvės alėja**

Senamiestyje, name, kuriame tarpukariu gyveno mano močiutė ir gimė tėvas, po palėpe, kuriuje je badavo, įrengtas madingas restoranas, kurio atidaryme aš, su įmantriausiu maistu burnoje ir keistos kaltės pilve, tik lubomis teatskirta nuo erdvės, kurioje ji paliko raštelį, žieduota ranka kelius taurę prie lūpų ir švenčiu gyvenimą už mus abį.

**Freedom Boulevard**

In the Old Town house where my grandmother lived between the wars and my father was born – under the loft in which they starved, a trendy restaurant has set up. I attend the opening, standing with pretentiously prepared food in my mouth and a strange feeling of guilt in my belly.

For only the ceiling separates this space from the one in which she left her note. Lifting a glass with a ringed hand, I celebrate life for both of us.

**Viešbučio kambarys**


**Hotel Room**

He travels a lot. Every night it seems that the rented room urges him to take all seven roads. There is, though, a Bible and a mini bar: Two ways to grasp at tomorrow.

Translated by Rimas Uzgiris
Luca Benassi was born in 1976 in Rome. He is poet, writer, essayist, journalist and translator. He has published five poetry collections, including anthologies of his poetry in Japan (with the poet Maki Starfield, 2016), in Serbia and Macedonia in 2019, and he translated and published *The Path* (2002) by the Dutch poet Germain Droogenbroodt. As journalist and critic, Luca has published a book of essays *Throttled Streams – Italian poets in the third millennium* (2010).

*(crossing the boundary of the river mouth)*

Salmon are to be waylaid at the bottleneck of the river mouth, when they are scared, cramming the water; you have to let the net down where the surface ripples with fins, gills fumbling the desire that doubles the passage of new generations. That is the moment to shoot the net, to stretch tight the noose to the throat, the sharp spear. At the metro exit we are oblivious salmon to the slaughter.

*(building borders)*

Do not ask us we know just this: who we are and what we want for the rest there must be a reason a way based on a norm a firm law not to be interpreted. If things are like this, it is because they had met, brought in papers, charts, objectives around a table late at night made a deal and signed the truce. There must have been tea cups assurance to be given, flights to catch. If things were like that, there must be a reason you will see: a book will pop out stationery floating on a yellow river a Court sentence, bibliographies. Someone will have made a decision.
Nurduran Duman is a Turkish poet, playwright, and editor based in Istanbul. Her books include Yenilgi Oyunu (2005 Cemal Sureya Poetry Award), İstanbul’la Bakmak and Mi Bemol. Other works: Semi Circle (2016, US), Selected Poems (2017, Macedonia), Selected Poems (2019, Belgium), and Steps of Istanbul (2019, China, Poetry Collection of the Year, 2nd Boao International Poetry Award). Her poems have been translated into Finnish, Spanish, Azerbaijan Turkish, Bulgarian, Romanian, Slovak, French, German, Occitan, and Italian. She is featured in the #internationalwomensday2018 (IWD18) list of ten international female poets in translation in 2018. She is a member of Turkish PEN.

**Doves’ Coo**

—for bird-watchers who cannot look at the children flying through the immigration sky—

go on beating emptiness your wings will happen somehow

you’ll be an angel after three wishes after three stages what can your hands do now But Because And After Yet look how beautiful these conjunctions walk on their wide runway young life rings walk through peppery air do your feet see them Or is also a conjunction, in our basket a tricycle for our neighbour country border in connecting lands and seas this lame circle will also turn this age overturn and turn you’re always with white perched quenched either or Is a conjunction quenched and perched you’re snow white standing by white besides you didn’t see didn’t hear if it befalls you have in mind Or is also a conjunction if it contracts your throat you’re human after all don’t expect to bury children’s red shoes no colour no song, don’t expect a lullaby go on beating emptiness your wings will happen somehow sometime

Translated by Grace Wessels
Stéphane Chaumet (born 1971 in Dunkerque) has lived in Europe, Latin America, the Middle East, Asia and the United States. He is the author of the novels: Même pour ne pas vaincre (Even for not winning), Au bonheur des voiles (The veils' Paradise, chronicles of Syria), Les Marionnettes (The Puppets), L'île impasse (Dead-end island); of the books of poetry: Dans la nudité du temps (In the nudity of time), Urbaines miniatures (Urban miniatures), La traversée de l'errance (The crossing of the wandering), Les cimetières engloutis (The sunken cemeteries), Fentes (Cracks), Le hasard et la perte (Chance and loss), Insomnia (Insomnia), Cellules (Cells); and a book of photographs: L'hôte, l'autre (The host, the other), photos of Syria before the war. He has translated many contemporary Latin American and Spanish poets, as well as the German poet Hilde Domin and the Iranian Forough Farrokhzad.

Translated by Natasha Sardzoska

Hay caminos que no tienen regreso
ai-je lu au service d'immigration mexicain.

Chemin
combien en ai-je pris, abandonnés
combien m'ont enchanté, déçu
combien où je me suis perdu
perdu et ouvert, perdu et rencontré
où j'ai trouvé l'autre.

Qu'ont tracé mes semelles ? Qu'ai-je emporté ?
Ces chemins toujours le même ? Le mien ?
Il y a des chemins qui n'ont pas de retour
d'autres qui ne mènent nulle part.
Mais le retour est un leurre
et nulle part s'appelle la quête.
Ton chemin n'est que le réseau
que tisse et qui tisse ta vie.

you have hit the road
your family does not know if you are alive or dead
perhaps they prefer to believe in your abandonment
or that your are hidden in shame and silence
nobody here knows who you are and where you come from
nobody does not even care
they have given to your cadaver the last trace of humanity
and engraved with a piece of wood
two letters in a layer of cement
N.N.

may in the middle of the night a mother or a sister would is calling you
maybe you are one of those that after their death
nobody will name
Colonizing

One body of water – but every shore
names its sea:
A sea of graved fog at midnight’s North Cape
can scrape your throat bloody as a child’s knees
and drive you to drink
A sea of wilted cardboard prayers
6 a.m. in the Canaries along the resort fronts
pushes a melancholy history into your lounge
A sea of watermelon taunts you in Stavanger’s harbor
when the algae melt in spring
though no watermelons grow
- or have ever grown there –
but because a story stormed through immigration
speaking its own language
dropping consonants in the tide pools
and in the landlocked waters
like fish eggs
And another story will slip between porous membranes
during a deep kiss between strangers at an airport somewhere
and they will stake a new claim.

Ren (Katherine) Powell is a poet and teaching artist/mentor. She is a native Californian, now a Norwegian citizen settled on the west coast of Norway. Her poetry collections have been purchased by the Norwegian Arts Council for national library distribution, and her poems have been translated and published in eight languages in chapbooks and anthologies.

Tomica Bajić was born in 1968 in Zagreb, Croatia. A poet, artist, and literary travel writer, he studied at the Academy of Fine Arts in Zagreb and has published five poetry books, two prose books, and two picture books. He has been the recipient of numerous national awards for poetry and recently showed two photography exhibitions in Zagreb: Amazon Breathes and Brazilian Rainforest. His most recent poetry collection with drawings, Nevidljivo more / Invisible Sea, was awarded the Croatian Ministry of Culture’s highest literary merit in 2019. He serves as president of the Croatian PEN Center and coordinator of Lyrikline, a multilingual poetry platform in Croatia.

LEPTIR LUTALICA

Iza koralnih grebena
pustog mora i priteh sjvjeta
gdje povjetarac i ptica u zraku
navještaju željeno kopno
gdje vlada scuba
diving harmonija
gdje spavlji od bambusa iz Vijetnama
prelaze ocean u potrazi za kruhom
i kada vide leptira pamte
zauvijek svaku njegovu poru
koja diše u naviru
i da se ne uropiti ili umrijeti od žedni.
Tamo iza podmorja
okamenjene lave
leži Australija.

THE WANDERER BUTTERFLY

Beyond coral reefs
a deserted sea where a light breeze and a bird in the sky announce the longed-for land of scuba diving harmony.

It is where Vietnamese bamboo rafts cross the ocean in search of bread
and when they see a butterfly they remember for ever each of its pores
breathing in spouting colours because that means the land is near and they are not going to drown or die of thirst.

There beyond the seabed
of petrified lava
lies Australia.

Translated by Damir Šodan
POSTCOLONIAL POEM

The lions at Trafalgar Square in London, in quartier Montparnasse and all over Paris, lions at the tomb of King Richard in the Rouen Cathedral, the Tiergarten park and the Museum Island in Berlin. They guard the Chain Bridge in Budapest, the entrance to the Royal Palace of Brussels; slumber at the foot of the Columbus monument in Barcelona, daydream at the Marquise Pombala square in Lisbon. Long ago their gaze of stone escorted the grand ships of East – India Company out of Port of Amsterdam. We have more of them here than in Africa and India. The capitals of the former European Empires are not adorned with dolphins or birds, but lions, whose strength is in their loneliness.

One harsh winter as a twelve year old I went ice skating in park near our ZOO. On the frozen lake no one but me. Sliding under one of the bridges I felt the presence of a lion. Through the snow frosted trees I could barely see the winter's den but the lion's roar frightened me and made me return to where I started. But when it seems that they see you, you're wrong, lions are actually looking straight through your bones, through the walls, bars and trees, across the lake where I skated and all the way over the Roman Colosseum towards the wilderness carved deeply into their memory, their gaze steadfastly rooted to the grasslands of Africa before the colonies.

con passi che vorrebbero piantare sassi e semi in cadenza vado a rendere alle foglie l'albero che hanno perso, alle piume cadute l'animale. Poi incrocio le braccia e il cuore torna in gabbia.

with footsteps that would like to plant stone and seeds in a cadence I'm going to give back to the leaves the tree they have lost, to the fallen feathers the bird. Then I cross my arms and my heart returns to its cage.

Franca Mancinelli (born in Fano, 1981) is the author of four books of poetry, which have won several prizes in Italy, where she is considered to be one of the most compelling new poetic voices. In John Taylor’s translations, The Bitter Oleander Press has published At an Hour’s Sleep from Here: Poems (2007-2019) and The Little Book of Passage— a translation of her book of prose poems, Libretto di transito (2018). Her most recent book is Tutti gli occhi che ho aperto [All the Eyes that I have Opened] issued by Marcos y Marcos in 2020. Her work has been published in several foreign magazines and anthologies.


Translatred by John Taylor
Tiago Alves Costa (born in Vila Nova Famalicão, 1980) is a Portuguese poet, essayist and translator. He published Zizek Vai ao Ginásio (2019), Mecanismo de Emergência (2016) and Morgenhorizont (2012), with editions in Portugal, Galicia and Brazil. Collaboratively, he participated in the “Current Ibero-American Poetry Anthology” (2018). He received Honorable Mentions in the Glória de Sant'Anna International Poetry Award 2020 and 2018, and the Manuel Murguía for Short Stories Prize 2019. He is the editor-in-chief of the digital cultural magazine Palavra Comum. He is a member of the Association of Writers in Galician Language (AELG). He holds a Degree in Advertising (ISCET, PT) and a postgraduate in Creativity and Innovation (TC3, USA).

IT’S THE NIGHT DOCTOR, THAT HURTS

It’s the night doctor, it’s the night that hurts
Yes, you can examine the distance
that goes from my existence to the doubts that lie within me
You can examine as I have nothing else to hide,
I don’t even carry a wallet anymore, neither my instinct,
permanently carried over my shoulder in timeless days,
neither my other wretched self
who ran away,
as soon as he realized that the X-ray proved he was also guilty.
If it hurts when I breathe?
It hurts when my inside feels inhabited, doctor
when my dreams feel like those airports on a Monday night
where we arrive and leave but never hold ourselves
to contemplate the airplanes
So many airplanes, doctor... so many airplanes
Ah, doctor, of course it hurts!
Yes, there! Next to that spot, where one day someone will ask whom it was
from,
Right after the place only accessed by my mother
during my childhood
Please don’t insist, doctor,
You need to understand once and for all
that one thing, is the pain hurting from the inside, and another, to the outside
You need to understand ... that one thing is the scientific method
and another, to get here with it won’t be anything serious
and leave with a that’s the way Life is
I will calm down, I will calm down, doctor
But please, don’t press The Night that way
as if you were searching for a heart in the garbage,
as if we’ve known each other forever
as if I was already dead!

Am I dead, doctor?
I’m not dead
my body is still in charge  look! (he moved the image)
my body was the one dragging me here today
it is the one that continues paying the bills from a premature sleepwalking
it is the one that restores the order,
when I want to go beyond the orbits of the dawn
Look doctor, brooding augments everything the body respects
don’t say now it is my imagination
when I well know what is written there:
THIS LIFE AND SIX MONTHS LEFT
But I take notes of all meanings ... here, in the palm of my hand,
just in case I get home alive,
and forget my consciousness outside
in the rain, scheduled for the end of this year.
Ah, Doctor, please hear me at once
It’s the night, doctor, it’s the night that hurts.

É A NOITE QUE DÓI DOUTOR (portuguese version)

É a noite doutor é a noite que dói
sim, pode revistar a distância que vai do meu interior ao benefício da dúvida
pode revistar que já nada tenho a esconder,
já nem a carteira levo
nem o instinto, que sempre carreguei ao ombro
em dias sem tempo
nem o taful do meu outro eu
que fugiu,
assim que viu a radiografia a provar
que ele também era culpado
Se dói quando inspiro?
Dói quando isto está desabatido por dentro, doutor
quando o sonho se parece aqueles aeroportos a uma segunda à noite
onde chegamos e partimos mas nunca ficamos
para contemplar os aviões
tanto avião doutor tanto avião
Ai ai doutor, claro que dói!
Aí, mesmo ao lado de onde um dia alguém irá perguntar: de quem era?
logo acima de onde em pequeno
só a minha Mãe chegava
Por favor não insista doutor,
entenda de uma vez por todas
que uma coisa é a dor doer para dentro
e outra é doer para fora
entenda... que uma é o método científico
e outra é chegar aqui com um Isso Não Deve Ser Nada
e sair com um É Assim a Vida
Eu acalmo-me eu acalmo-me doutor
mas não me pressione assim na noite dessa forma
como se estivesse à procura de um coração no caixote do lixo,
como se nos conhecêssemos desde pequeninos
como se eu já estivesse morto!
Eu estou morto, doutor? Ah?
Eu não estou morto
aqui quem manda ainda é o meu corpo veja! (mexeu na imagem)
foi ele quem hoje me arrastou até aqui
é ele quem continua a pagar as contas do sonambulismo precoce
e é ele quem repõe a ordem,
quando eu quero ir para lá das órbitas da madrugada
Olhe que a cisma doutor
faz aumentar tudo ao que o corpo respeita
não venha agora dizer que é impressão minha
quando eu sei bem o que ai está escrito:
ESTA VIDA É MAIS SEIS MESES
Mas eu aponto... aqui, na mão de todos os significados
não vá eu chegar a casa ainda vivo
e esquecer a razão do lado de fora da chuva
que está prevista para o final do ano
Aí doutor dê-me ouvidos de uma vez
é a noite é a noite que dói

Translated by Joanna Magalhães

Emna Louzyr is a Tunisian poet and journalist. She is a producer of cultural programs for Tunis International Radio. She was also laureate of the Zubeida Bchir Poetry price in 2009 and attended several international poetry festivals in Lodève (France), Bari (Italy) and Skopje (Macedonia). Her poetry has been translated into Italian, French and English and was scheduled in the modern Arabic literature program at Brighton University (UK). She has published five poetry collections: Raneen (2003); Volcanos silence (2006); Sabra (2009) and The wind talked home (2017). One translated collection has been published in France « Le silence des volcans » (2015).

Illusioned

على قيد وهم

سنحب غاربة
تهدل أحلاما
نحن على قيد وهم
نتأتقنا عن الحياة
منذ أمد
ننفس مرغمون
سنحب غاربة
نلاحثنا
فلا تجد غير مضال شاردة
الله يريح في الغدير
لا سحيبة ماء

Angry clouds

Threaten our dreams

We are illusioned

We gave up on life

We breathe against our will

We are chasing after us

Finding nothing but stray shadows

Nothing is left in the stream

Except for a minute cloud of water
Escape

I left my tent
On this seaside

I entrusted it with what I own
Unwritten poems
My forgotten dreams
A bit of myself
Or what's left on it
Drops of dew
Moments of melancholy
And the eternal cactus flower
That my grandfather presented me

The curtain has come down
On a smile of a woman
Whose sent almost brought me back to life

I left my tent
On the sand dune
And retired my memory in it
Summer will certainly come back
Yet I will not find my tent

Written by Dragar Jovanović Danilović.
Translated by Ghassan Al Khuneizi.

СОБА НОШЕНА КРИЛИМА
Ето, путовао сам и ја!
Сеоба са тече у згради у углу, а данас
сам испод паукове мреже, на супротној
страни собе – мачка ми је уснула на крлу
јер зна да нема разлога у било шта
се уплитати.

Ова соба из које нема излаза
учинио је слободе.
О осами зборећи, од осаме се и ограђуем.
Не преиспитујем границе празнине
ни могућности песничког језика;
не занима ме искричава замршеност епова,
ни подвизи козачких атамана; немам
на интернету свој сајт, сама је у страшној,
подивљалој одаји моја сенка.

Нежан као табан детета, оставио сам себе
у некаквом граалу на обали, да ноћ сиђе
на моје тело и покрије га неизмерност
неког ко је смирен и ко је свуда.

Топла тампо-држава са нејасно одређеном
спољашњом политиком - тако видим своју
чедру собу, у којој је потопљена Атлантида.

Домовино, ја сам твој сиромашни дечак;
ја сам папир на коме куца срце.

Море неко давно снађено шира мирис
у моје расуло, гледа ме очима слепца,
каже да сам највећи путник тамо где се
не померам с места.

Ето, путовао сам и ја.

Written by Dragar Jovanović Danilović.
Translated by Charles Simic.

ROOM CARRIED ON WINGS

I, too, had my travels.
Last night I read in the armchair in the corner,
and today I’m under the spider web
on the other side of the room – a cat asleep in my lap
since she knows there’s no reason to get involved.

Speaking of solitude, I distance myself from it.
I’m not reexamining the frontiers of the void
nor the possibilities of the poetic language;
I’ve no interest in the shrill intricacies of the epic,
the feats of Kazakh chieftain; I don’t have
my own website on the internet; my wild shadow
is alone in a room gone wild and terrifying.

Tender like a foot sole of a child, I left myself
in some seaside town for the night
to descend and cover my body with the immensity
of someone who is calm and who is everywhere.

Motherland, I’m your poor child,
I’m a piece of paper on which a heart beats.
The smell of the sea dreamed of long ago
wafts into my chaos, it watches me with eyes of a blind man,
tells me that I’m the great traveler
who doesn’t budge from his home.

There, too, I had my travels.

Written by Dragar Jovanović Danilović.
Translated by Charles Simic.
Violette Abou Jalad is Lebanese poet. She studied philosophy and theology and participated in several cultural meetings and conventions in Arab countries, including Amman, Baghdad, Tunis, Algeria and European countries such as France and Spain. She has published several collections of poems: Sayyad El Naoum, Banahj Aχhr, Awan El Nas, Awan El Jasa, Duratik El Mannin la ououlshem (Ed. Fadat, Amman), La ahla jala haz el labaik sabay (Ed. Ell). A new collection in French will soon be published by the publishing house Lanskine: Alone on this Planet.

How shall we write about love
We who lost our members in trivial wars?
We who let the ghosts caper in our dark rooms?
And made of sleep a meeting for tepsters of absence?
How shall we go to love on our little feet?
We Who sat long behind the windows,
Then we got confused like the roads on closed doors.
How shall we taste steadily the honey of all those poets?
We, son’s of the bitter language,
With the deep scars
Until the very end of death.

Ghosts are back to their wanderings
People to their homes
The gloom suspended in the void,
A swing between life and death.
God has thrown a dice in the air,
And it was this living metaphor
The poet has thrown a dice in the water,
And we all drowned in the illusions of the leave.

We, the complicit beings, flow in the prayer’s processions to repent our Joys.
Then, we align behind our guns to defend our prayers
In an old myth, I was thrown as a dice into language
So, I wrote so much about ghosts
Yet they returned back to their wanderings
And, here I am, in a house haunted by humans
Where winds don’t caper
Nor do loss and delusion wander in a scene that stumbles on affinity and boredom.
In a weather that needs a pair of gloves and a hat,
A long kiss in the backyard,
God’s promised paradise,
Or his virtual Hell
Tiziano Fratus (born in Bergamo, 1975) grew up in north Italian landscapes, the great plain at the foot of the mountains. When his natural family was dissolved he began to travel, crossing and touching conifer woods in California, Japan and around the Alps where he coined the concepts of Rootman (Homo Radix), Wandering Forest (Bosco itinerante) and Primordial Root (Radice primordiale). He practices an everyday zen meditation in nature and the discipline of Dendrosophy (Dendrosophia). Along twenty years of writing he has published a wide forest of words—travelogues, meditation books, novels, collections of poems—some by leading Italian publishing houses, some by independent ones. His poems have been translated into ten languages and published in many countries while his photography has shown in solo exhibitions. Visit Studiodomoradix.com.

**BOSCO ITINERANTE**

C’è un bosco che mi abita dentro,
un silenzio cantato e interminabile,
ruscelli che sgorgano e animali che corrono.
Io non so chi sono, ripete la voce, non so chi sono.
Ma sento che c’è questo mondo di fine trama
che abita un luogo senza confini, qui,
nel petto, nel cuore, nella mente.
Popola le ore del sonno e
nutre le ore di pensiero.
Ecco perché quando
faccio ritorno nel
bosco reale mi
viene voglia
di urmare,
di amare
come ama
una madre che
non distingue un
figlio da un altro figlio.
Sono un bosco che cammina,
un bosco che radica
e si sradica

**WANDERING FOREST**

There is a forest,
living inside me,
a sung and endless silence,
streams flowing and animals that run.
I don’t know who I am, the voice is repeating,
I don’t know who I am. Yet I feel there is this world of
downward fine weaving living in a place without any border,
here, in my chest, in my heart, in my mind.
It settles in my hours of sleep and feeds
my hours of thought. This is why
when I go back to a real forest
I feel like I want to scream,
to love as a mother who
doesn’t discern a son
from another son
would do.
I am a forest
who walks, a forest who
roots in and roots
out

Translated by Eleonora Matarrese

Francesca Cricelli is a poet and literary translator. She holds a PhD in Literary Translations (University of São Paulo), is the author of Repatria (Selo Demônio Negro 2015), 116 poemas + 1 (Sagarana 2017) and Errância (Macondo Edições 2019). She has translated into Portuguese Elena Ferrante, Igiaba Scego, Jhumpa Lahiri and other authors. Francesca currently lives in Reykjavík, where she studies Icelandic Language and Literature.

**É UMA LONGA ESTRADA REPATRIAR A ALMA**

Há que se fazer o silêncio
para ouvir os dedos
sobre o velho piano da ferrovia
é uma longa estrada repatriar a alma
a rota é na medula
descida ingreme
ou subida sem estanque —

demolir para construir
-e não fugir do terror sem nome
de não ser contido
apanhado, compreendido
-got to carry on forward
breathless, on fire
and if pain persists
-got to be fearless
to reflect your face
in other eyes
-distant like in a mirror.
Minha língua aqui
é muda
ou quase
só existe no silêncio
diálogo íntimo assoprado
desenlace da tradução.

Minha língua, flor inversa,
palavra que é corpo e é linguagem
e não posso transpor.

* Adent rar o figo
sua polpa-essência
é adentrar um jardim de vespas mortas
a língua a saborear a planta
o bojo doce um dia à espera da fecundação.

* Que gesto é esse que se repete há 34 milhões de anos?

* Adentrar essa língua
sua milenar essência
é adentar minha memória de pedra
a língua antes dos dentes
o bojo sem contornos da existência primordial.

* Não só na queda se perdem as asas
(há de se deixá-las do lado de fora)
também ao percorrer o corredor afunilado
à procura de alimento e perpetuação.
Ao penetrar o figo, abandonamos o voo.

My tongue here
is mute
or almost
it is only in silence
an intimate whisper
the outcome of translation.
My tongue is an inverted flower
a word that means body but also language
and I can’t bridge it.

* When you bite a fig
its flesh and essence
it’s like entering a garden of dead wasps
the tongue tasting the plant
its sweet bulge, once waiting to be fertilized.

* What is this gesture that repeats itself even after 34 million years?

* When I enter into this language
its ancient essence
I bite into the stone memory inside me
of language before the teeth
the borderless bulge of my primitive existence.

* It’s not just when falling that we lose wings
(one must leave them on the outside)
it happens as we slither in through the funneled corridor
searching for food and perpetuation.
As we penetrate the fig, we give up on flying.

Para cavar uma saída da uma silente
severn mandíbulas fortes
dentes ferozes e olhos minúsculos
- saber se orientar na escuridão.

* A muda de hortelã não morreu ao ser arrancada do solo
- sobrevive num vaso –
inventou raízes e uma nova folhagem.

* Na minha cidade aguardamos o degelo do solo
como a língua espera pela dentição –
roçar as coroas que apontam das gengivas
preparar a mordida –
- o que sobrevive sob o manto branco?
Nossos corpos estranhos se preparam
(como a vespa-mãe depõe seus ovos no figo)
raízes de hortelã
em busca do chão.

In order to dig an exit from the silent vessel
one must have strong jaws
fierce teeth and minute eyes
- one must know how to get around in the darkness.

* The mint sprout didn’t die from being removed from the ground
- it has been living in a vase –
it has invented roots and new leaves.

* In my city we wait for the frost to undo itself
as tongues wait for teething –
to rub the crowns as they stick out from the gum
be ready to bite –
what lives through under the white cloak?
Our foreign bodies get ready
(as the wasp mother lays her eggs in the fig)
mint roots
searching for soil.

Translated by the author
Rafael Soler was born in 1947 in Spain, is a poet, an award-winning novelist, university professor, and Spanish Writers Association (ACE) Vice President. He has published five books of poetry, and he has been invited to read his poems in more than fifteen countries. Some of his books have been translated into English, French, Italian, Japanese, Hungarian, Chinese, Macedonian and Romanian.

De todos los recuentos

De la ambigua relación entre el poeta y sus fronteras

Of all recounts

A biographical evaluation of inner poet’s borders

Back then I was writing false and emphatic verses and in the darkest hours of thick liquor the city was another skin to wrap myself in there were years that were barely a few months that went from palate to palate and mouth to mouth whispering the mystery a stick and sombrero were enough to travel all day and the dust from my boots oozed the forbidden juice of some place in Africa so close to the cards that my clover tongue did not sleep and attentive to the capriciousness of an undone heart in my notebook fell stolen scents and dates a bowl of salt was my home and a pigeon my only neighbor

translated by Gwen Osterwald

Memory does not stop

The ambiguous relationship between the poet and his borders.

De ocasiones perdidas los bolsillos llenos a componer tu hacienda vienes con la calma suicida del que tiene un pacto de honor con su verdugo las manos por el tiempo de escarcha tatuadas en blanco tu cuaderno donde anotabas todo curtido el corazón en la intemperie y sabes que la vuelta a cuanto fue es imposible que ahora la lluvia se viste de ceniza y que el bastón de mando antaño bienvenido es hoy el palo con que ahuyentas a los gatos que tus entrañas crian monarca de lo poco y señor de lo que queda en nada.

translated by Gwen Osterwald

No se detiene la memoria

De la ambigua relación entre el poeta y sus fronteras

Of all recounts

A biographical evaluation of inner poet’s borders

Back then I was writing false and emphatic verses and in the darkest hours of thick liquor the city was another skin to wrap myself in there were years that were barely a few months that went from palate to palate and mouth to mouth whispering the mystery a stick and sombrero were enough to travel all day and the dust from my boots oozed the forbidden juice of some place in Africa so close to the cards that my clover tongue did not sleep and attentive to the capriciousness of an undone heart in my notebook fell stolen scents and dates a bowl of salt was my home and a pigeon my only neighbor

translated by Gwen Osterwald
Lali TiSpi Michaeli is an Israeli independent universal poet. Born in Georgia in 1964, she immigrated to Israel at the age of seven. She has published six poetry books so far, attended international poetry festivals, and was part of a residency program for talented writers in New York in 2018. Her books have been translated into foreign languages in New York, India, France, Italy, Georgia, Ukraine, Russia, Romania and Iran. Lali was defined by Professor Gabriel Moked in his book as “Erotico-Urban Poet” and was highly regarded by critics, who describe her as innovative and combative.

In 2011 Lali conducted an anthology for protest: Resistance, in which she presents her personal poetic manifesto, claiming that “poetry as a whole is a revolt…The poem is not purely individual. It is common ground and should be heard in a great voice”. Lali teaches Hebrew at Ben Gurion University. She has one son and lives in Tel Aviv by the sea.

My secret lover, you
An anarchist who corrects me
His language into my language
The one who will not see me on his land
The one that I will not see on my land
But our voices are floating
Like bombardments in the world
Your history is written
In ink that was produced
In the factory of my love.

Blues of the night
Tonight
The wall separates
between us
All day long we healed the wounds we had created
Last night
Memory will wilt with fangs
Chews us and emits
The Chapters of My History at Nights
Without love
I want to get rid of the book
The words of darkness are enough for me
Days of Darkness
We are impatient twins
The enemies of peace
Our belonging cries out to each other about
shore line
Passion collapses into an illusion
The wrinkles are filled with tears
And the hands
The hands as always are disappointed
Most of the time, the road is erased
return.

Anachoritic interpreter
I am your interpreter
He sees and corrects me
His language into my language
The one that I will not see on my land
The one who will not see me on his land
But our voices are floating
Like bombardments in the world
Your history is written
In ink that was produced
In the factory of my love.

אוהב המופרד, אתה
אמיך ספרתי, אני
את ספרתי בשפתך
הוא רואה והתהדר
הוא רואית ת額 צורפה
אלב הקולנוע שלן פריפItemList
כוס מים בបשל
החותם של כל חגב
בדי ישירה במכפלת המקראה של י"ש.

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מִבְּלוּז הַלַּיְלָה
הַלַּיְלָה
הַחוֹמָה מַפְרִידָה
בֵּינֵינוּ
כָּל הַיּוֹם רִיפֵּאנוּ אֶת הַפְּצָעִים שֶׁיָּצַרְנוּ
בְּלֵיל אֶמֶשׁ
זִיכָרָה תֵּאַבְתָּן עִם נִיבִים
לְפָרוּשִׁים יָרְאֶנָּה
אֲבָל אַסְבָּה
יֵגְשֶׁה לְלַתְלָשׁ מִסֵּפֶר
יִרְאֶה לְפִירֵקֵי הַהִיסְטוֹרְיָה
לְבַל יָסְרָה
יִצָּה
אֶתָרִית מִימּוֹן בֶּלֶטְנָה
אַכֶּרֶס מְקַלָּה
נָפְלִים יָדְוִי
חָשְׁוֵנָה לְקֶרֶם אֱבֶלְהָה
עמִמְשָׁר וַסְמוֹנִים
رؤִיתם גִּמְלִי
מוֹקִיד בּוֹמֵי מֵזֶכֶר
חוֹרָה.
Tareq al Karmy, born in 1975, is a Palestinian poet from the city of Tulkarm who plays a Nay flute. He has published 11 poetry collections so far. His poems have been translated into various languages and he has participated in local and international poetry festivals. Al Karmy’s poems attempt to write poems without ending, in a way that creates a deliberate interruption in the poem, leaving space for the reader to engage in writing the ending of the poem and leaving space for imagination. This is a unique and unusual act in the landscape of Palestinian poetry that makes al Karmy one of the most interesting young voices in contemporary Palestinian poetry.

My heart is a bell of your secret love
Here you are, under my skin, a sleeping tremor
You milked the dawn in your perfume bottle
Behold, I love you my heart
My fingers blindly penetrate through a fence
To pick you up
Your fingers dip it in the new Berlin Wall
To pick me the coal flower
Did I change the flute between my glowing fingers?
Your fingers are all beaks
Under these fingers I’m
Never tired piano
And from the clash of our fingers we are born...
You are a bell and I am a bell
We knock on each other in all silence...
* Evening / Tulkarem

I have never been in a country without having the desire to go see the other side of its borders. Borders are always stimulating for the imagination and full of promises—they are suggestive of the edge of another world. A world that is sometimes very familiar, and at other times, often for reasons of geopolitics, very distant. Occasionally, this other world is almost inaccessible.

To me, some of the more memorable borders, crossing by train, include for instance going between Turkey and Iran across the mountains of Kurdistan, or more recently, from Tbilisi in Georgia and Baku in Azerbaijan. Less recently, I remember the first time that I crossed the extreme south-east of Morocco at Figuig; the few kilometers of desert that separate the Moroccan and Algerian border posts are forever etched in my memory…

François Cayol

François Cayol (b. 1954) spent his teen years in The Netherlands and studied etching in Aix-en-Provence in 1974 and at the Louis Calvaert-Brum Studio (Paris, France) from 1976. He lived months at a time alternatively between The Netherlands, Aix-en-Provence and Paris (France), and Morocco until the 1990s. All those years, he also travelled to Africa, the Middle East, and North America. From 1990, he spent winter months in Mali. In 1992-94, he was a resident at the Spanish Academy Fine Arts, Casa Velazquez in Madrid. Thanks to the non-profit “Pour Que L’Esprit Vive”, he was resident-artist at the La Pré Abbey, France (2000-2005). More recently, his journeys included the Caucasus, India, Morocco, Oman Sultanate, Provence and Auvergne regions (France), Turkey, Yemen. His first book Dessins Nomades (Itinerant Drawings) was published in 2011. A second book “Dessins Nomades II” came out in 2019. Today, he is working on a third book. All are available at https://dessinoriginal.com/fr and https://www.francois-cayol.com.
Conversely, there are natural borders that are symbols of natural beauty. I have followed with much happiness such borderlands, as the various rivers that separate Spain from Portugal from north to south: Rio Duero, Rio Tajo, or Rio Guadiana. One can cross those rivers at will, passing by old abandoned customs turrets watched only by vultures perched on cliffs. History is everywhere present. From one village to the next, whether Portuguese or Spanish, one finds high-up fortified castles that for centuries where alternatively Moorish or Christian, Spanish or Portuguese...
In Spain as well, Baelo Claudia on the Strait of Gibraltar remains one of my favorite scenes: without ever getting tired I can draw these ruins on the shore within the horizon the Moroccan coast; the Djbel Moussa, the northern cape of Africa at the point of my pencil. On a single sheet of paper, I can bring together two continents! …

… A similar feeling of standing on the edge of two worlds inhabited me when I was drawing the Bosporus in Istanbul. This is such a fabulous border, a magnificent symbol to this day because the two shores belong to the same nation, but remain mythical of two world regions: the Middle East and Europe. On the other end of Turkey, I drew once on the site of Ani, the former capital of the great Armenia, now Turkish territory, while on vacation with my family. At the time, a sign forbade the visitor to turn her/his gaze to the other side of a tiny stream that separates two irreconcilable countries and was once a border between the Western and Soviet worlds. Then, Turkish soldiers, a little indolent and at first suspicious, came to check on what this little silhouette was doing—sitting nearly motionless among the ruins for hours. When they saw, my back turned to the forbidden border, that I was drawing the church of Saint Gregory ruined by time and earthquakes, they sat quiet near me to smoke cigarettes and watch me draw …
Another time in Georgia, alone, far from any habitation, I was drawing a watchtower perched on a rocky ridge. This was the border with Azerbaijan, very close. I did not know then that I was being watched. I had heard barking in the distance, a little worried, thinking that they were sheepdogs. But soon after, I saw across the steppe two border guards descend at full speed. They approached, faces closed. One of them came to see over my shoulder what I was doing. Suddenly, he understood that I was drawing. I was an artist, or a painter; he showed me by gestures that he understood... "ok, ok," he said and raised his thumb, smiling to his colleague. All of us relaxed. But it was clear that I was in a strictly forbidden area, that I was free to finish my drawing on condition that I did not move from where I drew until I was ready to go back to the trail that passed a little further back ...

Another border, strategic because just a few nautical miles from the Strait of Hormuz and the sea channel through which the world’s largest oil traffic passes, is a peaceful little seaport of Khasab, an isolated enclave in the mountainous Sultanate of Oman. I drew on the breakwater of the port all day while speedboats left towards Iran trafficking electronic equipment, and large men came to unload flocks of Iranian sheep destined for the rotisseries of the Emirates ...

Once in Algeria, at the Moroccan border, it was more difficult: Surprised by an army patrol who accused me of drawing a military building—when in reality I was drawing a small Acacia with large thorns—I was taken back to the border in a Land Rover and spent the afternoon alone with scrutineers and suspicious custom officers. I was only released in the middle of the night on the express condition that I take a taxi to the first town, Bechar, one hundred kilometers away.

Also, on the Iranian border, in Kurdistan, after inspecting all my luggage, leafing through my notebooks, examining my pastels, and pencils, a custom official concluded that I was not a journalist, and relaxed. He looked at my sketches of coffee shops and asked me to draw him! Thanks to the whistle of the train that was about to leave, I escaped ...


The port of Khasab in Musandam, Strait of Hormuz, enclave of the Sultanate of Oman, between Iran and the UAE. 2006 pencil drawing.
Cayol, "Bucolic Borders from the Mediterranean to Central Asia, 2000-2017"

The Tess river, in the north of Mongolia, near the Russian border (Siberia and the former republic of Tuva). Pencil drawing 2008.

... I believe that my status as an artist, after arousing mistrust and suspicion from customs officers, soldiers and other uniforms in general, in the end often saves me many more serious troubles, inspiring a form of respect or deferential sympathy.

Borderlanders of Lebanon: People from the In-between Spaces

Daniel Meier and Hussein Baydoun

This portfolio stems from a research project focusing on the many ways the residents of the border regions of Lebanon, or “borderlanders”, live and perceive the international borders. Funded by the Heinrich Böll Stiftung (Berlin-Beyrouth) and the Institut Convergences Migrations (Paris), this original research was conducted by photographer Hussein Baydoun and researcher Daniel Meier with the aim of visualizing a category of unseen people: borderlanders. The men and women we met are privileged observers of the border and their lives shed a new light on it. Their daily experiences stand in stark contrast with most people’s experience of borders, encountered only when travelling abroad. Borderlander perspectives can enrich our understanding of what a border is due to the deep meaning and impact it has on their lives.

This fieldwork, conducted in various locations in Lebanon, aims to understand what it means to live in a borderland region for each of the observers. Through their personal life experiences, they all brought to light how “their” border—the one they know and experience on a daily basis—provides them with opportunities and/or creates constraints. Each of them showed that a border is not an abstract phenomenon but rather an entity that conditions their lives. In turn, all of them, Lebanese or refugees, like a “line of sovereignty” but rather an entity that conditions them showed that a border is not an abstract phenomenon but rather an entity that conditions them. It is telling of identity and belonging. The border itself slowly appears as a dotted line which is fragmented, cut, sometimes isolated but also ideologized. Among the borderland relationships, there is a specific one stemming from the presence of refugees: on the one hand, Syrians who fled the war and may expect to return home soon; on the other hand the Palestinians that appear far from any possible return to Palestine. Through years or decades, both are slowly becoming different from who they were before exile. Beyond the status of refugees or displaced persons, some of them developed a blurred or mixed identity, evidencing what borders can do to people’s sense of self.

Our investigation shows that it is not sufficient to say that Lebanon has two very different border dyads: one with Syria and the other one with Israel. The country has far more borders because of the many and various relationships that exist along each segment of the international border, with their own local history and dynamics.

The portraits all define distinct relationships with the border. The border itself slowly appears as a dotted line which is fragmented, cut, sometimes isolated but also ideologized. The border is a location that reveals concerns, tensions and the stakes for local life. It is telling of identity and belonging. For these reasons, borders speak to all of us.

Biographies

Daniel Meier, Political Scientist, is Lecturer at the Global Studies Institute – University of Geneva, and associate researcher at the CNRS PACTE Grenoble. He also teaches regularly in Beirut, Venice and Turin. Member of the Association of Borderland Studies, his researches are focusing on borders and boundaries in the Middle East with a special dedication for interstitial spaces and people. His most recent edited book is titled In-Between Border Spaces in the Levant (Routledge 2021). Email: Daniel.meier@graduateinstitute.ch Website: https://www.pacte-grenoble.fr/membres/daniel-meier

Hussein Baydoun is a Lebanese photojournalist with 14 years’ experience and has worked for several local news websites and international agencies. He participated in exhibitions with ICRC, UNDP and the International festival “Viva pour l’image” as well as other projects. He is currently working as photojournalist at Al-Arabia al-Jadid newspaper and website. Email: husseinbaydoun.photography@gmail.com Instagram: husseinbaydoun.photography Twitter: @photography_48

He used to be called Abu Ahmad. He is 29 years old and a Syrian worker since a decade or more. Abu Ahmad used to work in Lebanon before the war in his country. We met him on the shores of the border river Nahr el-Kibr on the northern flank of Lebanon, riding his motorbike, registered in Syria. That day, he was discreetly helping another Syrian man to cross the river under the eyes of local inhabitants who came to fish.

Hamad Ribeijh is in its 50s. He is a mason and lives in Abdoulifah (North Lebanon) near the river Nahr el-kibr for more than 30 years. At first sight, the place is a little strange, an abandoned village along a large road that abruptly stops at the river. He explains: “After the end of the war, I came here to take profit of the new project of the Arab Highway; I decided to build a house and have a garage nearby but everything stopped with the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafic Hariri (in 2005)”. Therefore, he remained in the farm-tractor business with his cousin who was living in Syria and they undertook various trafficking across the border: “We used to smuggle a lot of things from Syria. Aside of Diesel petrol, tobacco, cleaning products, wheat, chickpeas, clothes, fabric, earthenware (for mural decoration). We also brought some stuff in Syria like porcelain and bananas. But since 2011, the border became a dangerous place.”

Fouad is a wedding musician in his fifties. He lives in this Syrian refugee camp near Abboudiyeh (North Lebanon) with his wife. He warmly welcomed us in his tent to show us his musical ability but also to surprise us: “In fact, I am Lebanese” while showing us his ID card. “I used to live in a Syrian town not far from here until 2011. I met my wife there and we used to live there. Because of the war, I had to sell the lands and houses I possessed and move to Lebanon”. He chose to live under a tent instead of buying a proper flat: “It was too expensive and moreover I had to choose between having a house and marrying my children. It’s expensive to marry your children, you know!”

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Ahmad Hussein Ezzeddine (previous page, top) is an energetic personage in his fifties. He is a shepherd from father to son in Wadi Khaled. “I was born here and I inherited this piece of land where we are standing. It goes up to the houses over there, near the border. Aside the flock, I also grow wheat, potatoes, corn and salads. Nothing is sent abroad, all the products stay here”. For him, the border has a clear commercial function: “Before the war, we used to see Syrians coming here with goods that we were buying. But since then, it is over. Before, I used to go in Syria to find spare parts for my tractor; now it is not possible anymore and I found it annoying.”

Naji Nasrallah, 61 years old, is from al-Qaa where he lives. He is a Christian businessman in agricultural products in Ras Baalbek. Like his father, he is a farmer in this area, a region where he values the territorial depth on the Eastern flank. “We only once had a problem with Syrian soldiers because they were occupying our lands, it was in 1980. Before 2011, the border did not exist, Syrian policemen where on both sides of the border. Now, the Lebanese army took control of every inches of the national territory! In 2017, the Lebanese army came back to these borderlands for the first time, once they were successful against the Jihadist in the Juroud of Arsal. “For the first time, our soldiers re-opened the border road, cleared the fields from any bombs and took control of the border. Without border, no country”. 

On the eastern flanks of the former no man’s land (previous page, bottom), between the village of al-Qaa and the Syrian border post, 30,000 Syrian refugees sought refuge in the al-Qaa borderlands, most of them working in the fields of this fertile land.
Mohammed Khaled Seeba, 56 years old, is a businessman in the construction field. He is a Syrian from Yabroud, a border town on the Syrian side of Anti-Liban mountains. "I left Yabroud in March 2014, the weather was cold. I left by car and I entered Lebanon illegally when the Lebanese Army arrested me and threw me in jail in Baalbeck. The general security freed me after paying 600 US$. Then I came here to Arsal ... For me the border is a hajez (roadblock) between us and our neighbors. But to cross it and going back home to Syria, we demand international security to protect us".
Claudia is a mother in her 40s. She lives in the Christian village of Qla'yat. She lived there without interruption since she was born in the early 1970s. She remembers the Israeli occupation in the southern region and says: “Our tragedy for the people here is that we were not humans either for Israel or for Lebanon. That’s the dominant feeling we experienced here between 1982 and 2000. After the withdrawal, we were capable of moving freely, the Lahad border and then the check-point to enter Saida at Kfar Tebnine were removed! We became Lebanese again.” When talking about the Israeli wall that embodied the border and which was observable from the window of the dining room, she comments: “Israel built it for its own security. In my point of view, it is a good thing: it renders the conflict less dangerous and volatile because before that, it was possible to walk along the fence and shout at the Israeli soldiers or throw rubbish at them.”

Between Lebanon and Israel stands the fence of the Blue Line, delineated by the United Nations and marked on the ground in the aftermath of the July War in 2006 with blue barrels. While most of the 118 km long has been marked, Lebanon stated 13 reservations (plus the contentious issue of Shebaa Farms) during the process of delineation in May-June 2000 after the unilateral withdrawal. In 2012, Israel started to build a wall along the blue line in Kfar Kila and continued the walling of the border in 2018.

On February 18, 2021, Elisa Ganivet interviewed the photographer Emeric Lhuisset, known for his immersion in conflict zones. Discussing his art projects, the conversation cross-examined the concepts of border and territory in visual art. Portions of the interview are reproduced here, in English translation from the original French, alongside photos of the artist’s work. (The French-language version will be published in the next issue of BIG Review.)

Biographies

Emeric Lhuisset, born in 1983, grew up in Paris suburbs. He graduated from the Beaux-Arts de Paris and in geopolitics from University Panthéon-Sorbonne and Ecole Normale Superieure Ulm. His works have been shown in numerous exhibitions around the world (Tate Modern, Museum Folkwang, Institut du monde arabe, Stedelijk Museum, Rencontres d’Arles, Sursock Museum, Musée du Louvre Lens…). In addition to his art practice, he teaches at Sciences Po about contemporary art & geopolitics. www.emericlhuisset.com

Elisa Ganivet, born in 1982, is a doctor of philosophy, art historian and curator. Her research in aesthetics explores the mechanisms of utopian practices and border concepts, especially geopolitical walls. She has been published by Columbia University Press, Transcript Verlag, Presses de l’Université du Québec, Presses du Riel, and BIG Review. She has been guest Researcher at La Sorbonne and Casa de Velázquez. She works as a consultant for international public and private cultural organizations. Beginning in fall 2021, she will be Visual Art Editor for BIG Review. www.elisaganivet.com
EG: Emeric, you are an internationally recognized artist for your fieldwork in conflict zones, mainly in the Middle East, as well as in Ukraine, Colombia... Photography is your favorite tool and we discover others over the years. When we first talked about the notion of the border, your first remark was to underline the fact that war and borders were inextricably linked. In your body of work, are there any explicit references to this idea, to this feeling of the border? I'm thinking in particular of your film When the clouds speak where at the end you follow you, on a hand-held camera, in one of your clandestine crossings, one of the many you made between Syria and Turkey is this video part of a spontaneous practice or is it part of a vision to regroup them later?

EL: Not especially, but I've always been interested in this idea of borders, both state borders and borders within a state. For example, on the Israeli territory (without even mentioning the Palestinian one), there are places that are completely divided. You enter a hangar to take a bus and you are controlled as if you were in an airport, where you will go through portals, scanners, etc. At the entrance of a market, there are barriers and your bags are searched before entering. In France, this is now almost normal but it was not at all normal at the time (2010). When I worked in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Turkey or even Colombia, I passed through many checkpoints which is always quite heavy, complicated. You never know if you'll make it through, sometimes you don't have the authorization to access certain parts of the territory, you have to try to trick them. It can be very oppressive. In Pakistan, it's the same, there are checkpoints to go to the tribal areas where normally a classic visa is not enough. In Iraq, I had to go through checkpoints to enter the Arab zones, whereas I only had a visa for the Kurdish zones. So it is not necessarily a question of purely state borders but of a fragmentation of spaces. This feeling has always impacted me. There is also the case of borders that we do not really see. It is the case in the Amazonian forest for example where one crosses from Colombia to Brazil without noticing it. This caused me some troubles.

These videos made between Syria and Turkey are personal archives. I regularly document my projects, but these archives were not intended to be shown. I finally decided to include this sequence of the passage from Syria to Turkey in a more global project (2010-2018) on refugees. I was interested in the precise moment when people fleeing the war in Syria cross the barbed wire that separates these two states, the precise moment when they physically become refugees. It is an instant. A few centimeters before, they are not yet, a few centimeters after, they are.

It was interesting to include this sequence in this project, because I speak first of all about the time before “being a refugee”, about the destiny of people who have become or could have become refugees. I also talk about the crossing, the crossing of the sea, the crossing of Europe, then the arrival to a territory where they will settle. With the project L’autre Rivière (The other shore), what interests me is to talk about these friends I met in Iraq or Syria, whom I found again eight years later in Europe and who have become refugees. But this is not the first time that I reuse personal archives. I had already done so in my book entitled Souvenirs de Syrie (Souvenirs from Syria).

While I was living with Syrian rebel fighters, hidden in a cave in the mountains, I had taken some photographs of this very strange daily life. A daily life made of bombings, shootings but also of waiting and tension. I wanted to document it for my own archives. It was a year later when I was looking at these images again, because one of my friends had been killed and I wanted to see him again, that I said to myself that I had to show them because they were important, they testified to a reality ignored by many. But the question was how to show them. They were not works that I had thought of as such. Moreover, these images were sometimes very hard, quite violent with tortured people, houses just Wer a bombing, with the atrocities that go with it... For me, hanging these images on a wall doesn't make sense, it would be obscene. So I thought at one point of giving them to the press.

EG: But this goes against your artistic approach.

EL: The idea was to make these images visible, this daily life. It seemed important to me to bear witness. If the press got hold of them, I had to know how to choose the modalities. But these images were a year old, they were already too old, which made me wonder about the obsolescence of the journalistic image. Even an image from a week ago seems outdated. This dimension is a bit absurd because a man shooting from his window in a city in Syria, whether it was taken two days ago or five years ago, is still the same thing to illustrate an article. It's a bit absurd to want the freshest, most instantaneous photograph possible. So since it was impossible for me to use these “archives” with the media, the question was what I could do with them. Can we talk about a memory of a war when it is still going on? This did not seem appropriate to me either. I finally decided to make a black book without text, like a black box, a family album: Memories of Syria. These photographs exist only in this book.

EG: What you question in the daily life of conflict zones is also the moments of waiting, of boredom, of anguish. You transcribe these wars by erasing any sensational effect, of sensationalism, in this dynamic of understanding the mechanism of the war, of its staging, its construction, of being in front, behind, around, the environment, the territory. You manage to define the mechanisms and to bring out a respect as well. One
EL: I chose to put this video clip at the end of this film because it makes particular sense with the issue of the border crossing. When one lives the territory, one realizes this. Of course, I think I can say that it is what separates. These are populations, communities, which through the creation of a state and borders, have decided not to live with others who are next door. Basically, the idea of the frontier is hyper-violent, if we analyze it from that point of view.

EG: Raffestin also says that the border is a seam, when we consider the social, societal and economic flows and interdependencies.

EL: Yes, that’s right. I remember anecdotes about this when I was going to Germany with my grandmother. Once, on the train, she told me not to worry about the French customs officers. And indeed, they were nice and let us pass, with their visors raised a bit coolly. But she had told me that the Germans were less friendly. And I remember German customs officers who didn’t smile at all and wore their uniforms in a very strict mode. I don’t know if it was a flashback to World War II or for the fact that we had to show our papers, but she was very stressed about crossing the border. Today it seems so far away, even absurd. Thanks to the near erasure of borders in the European Union, we have arrived at something very pleasant. But during my work in 2016 on refugees, while passing from Germany to Denmark, I was shocked by the Danes who had set up a checkpoint at the border. So, in order to document this, I took photographs with them, pretending to be an idiot tourist so that they wouldn’t be suspicious.

EL: When the clouds speak

EG: Yes, of course. In this regard, the geographer Claude Raffestin describes the border as a cut, one that constrains the individual because of controls, the security measures and the reinforcement of the infrastructure. We think of a cut, like a breach between two worlds.

EL: Yes, I think we can say that it is what separates. These are populations, communities, which through the creation of a state and borders, have decided not to live with others who are next door. Basically, the idea of the frontier is hyper-violent, if we analyze it from that point of view.

EL: A seam, or rather I see it as a suture, because it is two elements that have been together and then torn apart. We create bridges from this.

EG: It’s that we are currently living with the withdrawal of the border because of Covid.

EL: Yes, we are on what I hope is a parenthesis.

EG: On the other hand, you refer to a methodology, that of the usefulness of playing the idiot tourist in order to document these particular situations. But can you explain your approach when you travel to territories such as Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan…

EL: In this case, I make very few images. My approach is completely different in conflict zones. First, I meet people and talk to them about my work. It can take years to get these kinds of images because they are based on relationships of trust. It took me three years to make the series Theater of War which includes fourteen images. Over time, you can’t lie to people. They realize who you are. I didn’t try to lie to them. I just told them what I was doing, what interested me, what I wanted to say. We talked, we built the project together. And it is really this approach that interests me in the sense that when I arrive, it is with my culture, my baggage, with all this personal mythology as Roland Barthes would say. The people I am going to meet also have others, so we are going to confront these views, not in a confrontation but in an exchange. We will reflect and build the project together. My ideas, my culture do not necessarily make sense to them. When I make a work it is not there or here. This work must be as relevant there as it is here. For me it is essential. That’s why I also exhibit a lot in the Middle East. I try to show my work.
EG: But this is in France.

EL: No, but it is finally usual in my work. For example, when you are with a guerrilla group in a cave in Syria, your life is not worth much, or on the contrary, it is. You have to build mutual trust. When the fighters let me make images, they give themselves to me too. It's very important to understand the people you are giving yourself to. Within the group, within the community, knowing who you can trust more or less. To understand all the mechanisms both for the project, for my own security, but also simply for human interest. I often try to understand people whose ideology is the opposite of mine. I try to understand the mechanisms of their thinking with which I personally do not agree, and by grasping them, how I can deconstruct them. In particular with regard to the way refugees are looked at, people can have prejudices that seem hateful towards them. If you look deeper, you will see that it is rarely hate. In fact, hate is such a very rare. It is more about misunderstanding and fear. Misunderstanding leads to fear, which in turn leads to a very violent discourse. So, if we stop at the first glance that looks like hate, the rest of the approach will be wrong and we will not succeed in deconstructing the looks.

EG: Why do you want to deconstruct this type of look?

EL: Because I believe that some of them are unjust, that they create violence, a danger both for the people against whom they stand and for society as a whole. Many people with this a priori hateful look will share it, will set up leaders who will decide according to that. In this way, we arrive at totalitarian societies, at abun-
dances that man has been able to create, at massacres, at genocides, etc. This is essentially based on this type of mechanism, so for me it is essential to deconstruct this type of look.

EG: How do you perceive this tension, this rise of populism and nationalism? I'm thinking in particular of the AFD in Germany, which is the last straw in the sense that we didn't think it could happen in that country.

EL: It is very worrying. That is why we must try to decon-struct the views. We must try to stand up against it. But not as a wall, that is not the solution. Because people will end up hating it and breaking it. So rather, you have to insinuate yourself and try not to convince them, but rather to invite them to ask themselves questions. For example, I put my work on refugees in parallel with that of the Kurdish fighters. There is a gap of eight years between the two. What interests me is that on the one hand, these fighters are like heroes by almost everyone in the West, regardless of their political affiliation. People who reject refugees also idealize these Kurdish fighters; they are the ones who fought Daesh. Except on the contrary, it is. You have to make images, they give themselves to me too. It's very important to understand the people you are giving yourself to. Within the group, within the community, knowing who you can trust more or less. To understand all the mechanisms both for the project, for my own security, but also simply for human interest. I often try to understand people whose ideology is the opposite of mine. I try to understand the mechanisms of their thinking with which I personally do not agree, and by grasping them, how I can deconstruct them. In particular with regard to the way refugees are looked at, people can have prejudices that seem hateful towards them. If you look deeper, you will see that it is rarely hate. In fact, hate is such a very rare. It is more about misunderstanding and fear. Misunderstanding leads to fear, which in turn leads to a very violent discourse. So, if we stop at the first glance that looks like hate, the rest of the approach will be wrong and we will not succeed in deconstructing the looks.

EG: You also have to find common psycho-
logical traits between each fighter. On both sides your approach to under-
standing the person is the same...

EL: Yes, to better understand the profile of the fighters I will work with is a funda-
mental step. We surrender to each other, which in war zones is not without risk. My life is somewhat in their hands. When you are with a guerrilla group in a cave in Syria, your life is not worth much, or on the contrary, it is. You have to build mutual trust. When the fighters let me make images, they give themselves to me too. It's very important to understand the people you are giving yourself to. Within the group, within the community, knowing who you can trust more or less. To understand all the mechanisms both for the project, for my own security, but also simply for human interest. I often try to understand people whose ideology is the opposite of mine. I try to understand the mechanisms of their thinking with which I personally do not agree, and by grasping them, how I can deconstruct them. In particular with regard to the way refugees are looked at, people can have prejudices that seem hateful towards them. If you look deeper, you will see that it is rarely hate. In fact, hate is such a very rare. It is more about misunderstanding and fear. Misunderstanding leads to fear, which in turn leads to a very violent discourse. So, if we stop at the first glance that looks like hate, the rest of the approach will be wrong and we will not succeed in deconstructing the looks.

EG: My work with refugees took place in Germany and Denmark, and for the second generation, in France with friends who had a refugee parent. I worked with Ines whose father had left Algeria, with Sarah whose father had left Saddam Hussein’s Iraq, just like my cousin’s father, my uncle. I was in the family [laughs]. I work a lot in and with intimacy. I like to understand people. The approach is anthropological, even psychoanalytical. It’s about the people themselves, about what they think. I became aware of this dimension late in life. Throughout my schooling at the Beaux-Arts, I took courses in art psychoanalysis with Christian Gallard, I studied Jung, Freud etc. which certainly influenced me because instinctively I asked people if such and such a thing did not refer them to such and such. In the field, I proceed in the same way. At the beginning, when you work with guerrilla groups, they will give you the propaganda speach of the group. There is nothing negative about that, it’s just the image they want to give. To get beyond that, the psychoanalytical dimension is welcome. It is a question of understanding the individual, the reasons that brought him to this situation, and where he wants to go. Apart from any discourse, what is it that really interests him? And we come back to: “Oh yes, but when I was a kid...” It’s fascinating because it’s often linked
While these fighters are heroic, when they arrive on a Ganivet, “Borders & Personal Mythologies: An Interview with Emeric Lhuisset” in *Borders in Globalization Review* (Spring/Summer 2021: 149-153) EP: While confronting them with this, doubts, cracks in their rhetoric, their ideology, will be created. It is a question of cracking these ideologies in order to make them collapse. At least that’s the way I try to do it. This is obvious during public presentations of my work. At Parsi-Photo, for example, when I announced that I was going to talk about refugees, I could feel in the eyes of some people that they didn’t really want to listen, that they didn’t care. That wasn’t their problem. But as I told the individual stories of the refugees, I could see that the eyes of the audience brightened up a bit that something was happening. When the visit was over, they would end up discussing the subject among themselves, coming back to see certain images, etc. These same people who at first thought they were going to follow the tour of posters, it’s in those moments that you tell yourself that it works. People won’t necessarily change their ideology but they will start to ask questions. That’s what’s essential, to invite people to question. 

EG: What is frightening is the relay taken by the new technologies where we end up staying in our own clan, without possibilities of crossing. There are fewer bridges between knowledges.

EG: The framework remains between us, our communities.

EL: In my opinion, it is a fear that has been created by politicians. There is a play on ignorance, on ignorance, in order to support their power. We always arrive at this search for a scapegoat. From time immemorial this search appears. It has been the Jew, the Protestant, the gypsy... the one we don’t know or at least know badly. I have worked a lot on Turkey, where the power is based on the very idea of an internal enemy. It is the Armenians, the Assyrians, the Pontic Greeks, the Alevites, the Kurds. You always have to build an enemy from within.

EL: But the framework remains between us, our communities.

EG: But the framework remains between us, our communities.

EG: While these fighters are heroic, when they arrive on a territory in the West, in this case here in France, it is precisely the question of the other, the relationship to Others that arises. We have seen the repercussions of the “migratory crisis” in 2015 and again today, those that have led to a retreat of the borders. What to do with this disturbing Other. As you point out, fear and misunderstanding guides, while we need the other. The excuse is often the demographic term, but the need goes far beyond.

EL: Yes, but wasn’t that already the case before? For example, I found a book published in France in the 1920s: “The Jewish-German Conspiracy”. This kind of book was circulating, being exchanged. Conspiracies have always existed, even before technology. The new technologies just make it possible to accelerate information, as the invention of the printing press did. The real problem, in my opinion, is that in the end those who could work on deconstructing conspiracies do not do so efficiently enough. The recognized media gather accessible information, but very soon there was the alternative of the internet and social networks. This was very quickly taken over by those whose information could not go through the mainstream media. Their web served them to spread their ideas, which was not necessarily the case for the majority of the traditional media, which did not need it because they already had their own distribution channels. As a result, they arrived later on a field that had already been taken over by the conspiracists. Of course, raising doubts is quite healthy, but the problem is how, how do you question yourself? What is your knowledge of the subject? Who is telling the story? Some conspiracies are extremely complex to unravel because they are solidly constructed, mixing true and false information. Moreover, the conspiracy has something of seducing in the sense that it brings answer to everything whereas sometimes it is also necessary to know how to accept not to know, one cannot have answer to everything.
intended to prevent the creation of undesirable push and pull factors. Due to differences in the measures taken by the various countries, anyone who could no longer go to their own ‘domestic’ hairdresser but could still get a haircut nearby but across the border, the mayor could be tempted to closed per month. A special case in need of coordination concerned the outbreak of COVID-19 in supermarkets in the Netherlands and in which the virus in supermarkets in the world after the USA; Germany is a border destination. Shortages—much more than just the hoarding of toilet paper—could lead to unrest.

Both in the Netherlands and Germany, the policy was and is aimed at curbing the spread of the COVID-19 virus by limiting the number of contact moments between people. For this reason, both the German and the Dutch side of the border have been asked to refrain from unnecessary travel across the border. Without this being precisely defined, travel to work or transport of goods were generally considered necessary. Examples of non-necessary travel were daily groceries, visits to friends and family or refuelling on the other side of the border.

This call to voluntarily refrain from unnecessary travel across the border was also supported by local and regional administrators especially in the northern part of the border region. One of the actions was a bilingual campaign on social media with the message ‘Good neighbours keep their distance’ and do not visit each other now.

What was also considered necessary in such a situation is to coordinate German and Dutch (and Belgian) policies. In March 2020, primarily structured along the lines of the regular (extensive) cross-border cooperation between the Netherlands and North Rhine-Westphalia, a joint task force (Cross-border Taskforce Corona) was set up to exchange information between Germany, the Netherlands and Belgium. Policy coordination was also
tended to an obligation to carry a ‘Pendlerbescheinigung’, a strong advice. Cross-border professional traffic is subject aged. However, this is not really enforced; it remains a government indicating that it is important that the handling of the crisis.

Netherlands implements Code Orange for the whole of Germany. Only essential travelling is allowed, and a corona test is required upon return.

November 20: The North Rhine Westphalia decided that the quarantine measures are suspended for people who travel to or from the Netherlands. It remains required to report oneself and to be able to show a negative PCR-test. This is not the case for visits that last less than 24 hours. Local border traffic is thus possible.

January 23, 2021: All travellers from Germany must quarantine themselves when entering the Netherlands. However, there still are exceptions such as travel for work or family reasons.

March 1: People who travel into Germany receive a ‘Corona-SMS’ from providers on behalf of the German government with the text to adhere to the test and quarantine instructions.

April 6: Germany declares the Netherlands as a high-risk country. Dutch citizens must be able to show an official negative corona test from a virus in the blood 48 hours before crossing the border into Germany. Until then it was only required to do this in the first 48 hours of a stay in Germany. Small border traffic is now also affected.

Timeline of corona measures related to the Gelderland-North Rhine-Westphalian border

March 16, 2020: The borders of Germany with Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, France, and Luxembourg are closed for non-professional traffic. Border between the Netherlands and Germany (Belgium) remains open.

Mid-March: Kreis Borken (a district in the northern part of Germany) sends a letter to the German government indicating that it is important that the rules on both sides of the border should be made more equal to keep the border open in a safe way.

March 18: The Netherlands introduces Code Orange for travelling to Germany. This means that only necessary trips are allowed, holiday travel/day tourism is discouraged. This is not really enforced, it remains a strong advice. Cross-border professional traffic is subject to an obligation to carry a ‘Pendlerbescheinigung’, a declarative stating that the person is working across the border. This, too, is rarely or not enforced.

March 21: Cross-border Corona Task Force is established. This is to support the cooperation between the Netherlands, Germany, and Belgium to better coordinate the handling of the crisis.

April 2: The Dutch government urges Germans (and Belgians) to stay away from the Netherlands over the Easter weekend.

April 10 - Mid May: Quarantine measures are in place in Germany, requiring those travelling from or going to another country to spend two weeks in home quarantine. Workers, goods and international transit are exempt.

June 15: The German borders with Austria, Switzerland, Denmark, France and Luxembourg are reopened for all traffic. Non-essential traffic between Germany and the Netherlands is again with voluntary border control (which in practice was never really enforced).

August 8: Corona test is required for everyone traveling (back) to Germany. Local border traffic remains possible, without test. Cross-border commuters and people who want to visit family must report themselves once to the local health department.

September: A second wave of corona infections emerges in the Netherlands.

October: Germany experiences also the start of a second wave.

October 13: The Netherlands in partial lockdown with again the advice to travel as little as possible.

October 15: The whole of the Netherlands is classified as a risk area for Germany. Non-essential traffic for German citizens towards the Netherlands is discouraged and an official travel warning applies for Dutch citizens. All Dutch citizens must undergo quarantine measures and test before entering the country. Local border traffic to North Rhine-Westphalia remains possible.

October 28: The Netherlands designate ten larger cities in Germany as Code Orange (only necessary travel), including the North Rhine Westphalian cities of Köln, Düsseldorf, and Essen.

November 3: The Netherlands implements Code Orange for the whole of Germany. Only essential travelling is allowed, and a corona test is required upon return.

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...)
Cross-border mobility

With regard to cross-border mobility, the corona measures were especially meant to curb non-essential trips. In this respect many Germans travel to the Netherlands, for example, on the weekends to shop. Visiting the Dutch weekly markets is especially popular. Closing these markets (e.g. in Winterswijk) has therefore contributed to reducing cross-border traffic. Many Dutch people travel in the opposite direction, to shop for goods that are only available or considerably cheaper in the neighbouring country. In Germany many more shops were forced to close, compared to the Netherlands, and this also had an impact on need to cross the border.

The province of Gelderland monitors the traffic on the provincial roads and has also made an overview of the differences between the time just before the corona crisis and the weeks after. For the provincial roads this gives the following picture (Figure 2):

In March 2020 traffic initially drops sharply (especially at weekends when there is less commuting), but the situation returns to “normal” after mid-June. Another sharp decline occurred at the start of the second partial lockdown in October to about 60 to 80 percent of the pre-COVID-19 levels. It dropped even further when a stricter lockdown was announced mid-December. Early 2021 cross-border traffic rose gradually again.

Differences have been observed between five provincial border crossing roads where the province counts the number of cars (Figures 3 and 4). It is striking that the decline in non-essential traffic in Winterswijk in the north-eastern part of this border region seemed to be much greater than in other parts. Among other reasons this may have been because municipalities in this part of the region communicated more actively about the desirability of not going abroad.

Changing perception of the border and the “other”?

At the time of the corona crisis, the Euregion Rhine-Waal (Joint INTERREG Secretariat), carried out a “flash” study on the influence of the corona crisis on the perception of borders (especially as a barrier) and the “other” (as an expression of identity) amongst a sample of 84 Dutch and 31 German citizens in the border region. The survey was conducted in April and May 2020, when the “lockdown” was at its height. Respondents did not often think that the Dutch-German border should have been closed (approximately 30 percent thought so). Not surprisingly many respondents indicated that they perceived the border more as a barrier in April and May 2020. In the case of economic cross-border interaction 45 percent indicated a larger perceived barrier effect. For socio-cultural interaction this was a little higher with 51 percent. It seems feasible to state that the corona crisis has increased the perception of the border as a barrier.

Respondents who took the coronavirus more seriously generally felt a stronger national identity compared to respondents who thought of the coronavirus as less worrying. This could hint at the fact that the corona crisis has made the feelings of national identity stronger. People seem to have generally developed a stronger national identity because of the corona crisis. When asked directly, by presenting a proposition on the relation between the perception of coronavirus and identity-feelings, however, this did not surface. Only 13 percent of the respondents stated explicitly that they felt more Dutch or German because of the corona crisis and only 3 percent indicated that they preferred to deal only with fellow countrymen during the corona crisis.

Conclusion

This essay has offered some insights in the developments of cross-border mobility and feelings in the Dutch-German border region in times of crisis. It comes as no surprise that in the early stages the crisis had a big impact on physical mobility. But mobility seems also to be quite resilient, witnessing the return to the levels of mobility before the crisis. It also seems that the relative lenient policy measures have not really affected the spread of the virus either in a positive or negative way. Policy measures are confined by the border, but the virus is not. Of course, restricting border traffic reduces the number of contacts especially in the border region. This might help to curb the spread of the virus regionally, but it remains a question to what extent this also has a major effect on the development of the virus within the country. We do not know what would have happened had more (or less) drastic measures been taken. But it is safe to say that coordination and cooperation is especially important. Between the Netherlands and Germany, the base for cooperation, trust in each other, is already in place and the additional steps that had to be taken in the current crisis flowed naturally from it.

Editors’ Note: This essay was prepared for the previous special issue but was not included at the time due to editorial issues. The data and timeline have been updated.
The Brazilian film Bacurau (2020), a mixed-genre dystopia set in the near future (written and directed by Kleber Mendonça Filho and Juliano Dornelles), intends to nullify any lack of representation of the social margins and prioritize more than one of the so-called social minorities. This film is not about the Brazil of the favelas, nor the world of prisons, or Rio de Janeiro's beaches, but it employs a well-known national geographic trope: the backlands of German and Italian colonies. We are more like you.” This is about the “You versus Us”, where color is not necessarily the dividing line that allows them to side with those who have the power to kill and spare lives. “Why are you doing this? asks the town’s new female leader, a strong-willed doctor whom everyone respects, named Domingas (played by Sônia Braga), when confronting the head of superiors—“We are from southern Brazil. A rich region, with German and Italian colonies. We are more like you.”

The church serves as a repository, but there is no religion, and whites, prostitutes and criminals, children and elderly citizens, and they all live in apparent harmony. The scene of the funeral collation is a window on that social democracy. The church serves as a repository, but there is no religion, and to ensure every citizen never forgets the proud history of their town, a sacred museum displays, as trophies, the weapons used by their ancestors during a revolt. These weapons will be resuscitated to defend themselves from the new invaders. Echoes of Quilombo dos Palmares, Canudos, resonate here. History repeats itself.

In a post-modern Western makeup, this dystopia, which fits with sci-fi, attempts to create a multi-layered temporal universe. The historical past is reiterated in the present and projected into a future that will surely repeat, albeit with variations, apast of violence, colonial submission, stagnation, indifference from the rulers, and geographic, economic and social isolation. There are two types of violence in the film: one internal, the other external. But only one is presented as a threat. The internal violence is inherited, it is a violence of a historical and national nature. It is the violence of everyday life, naturalized and accepted as the ‘way of life’. Only in the face of external violence do the inhabitants of Bacarau react as a unit, as a community. But it is an intentional and temporary unit to defend themselves against the external otherness. There is a constant invisible border separating Bacarau from the rest of the world, whether past or future, fiction or real life: there are communities that were and will continue to be invisible.

Perhaps there is, in this political allegory, an intention to contrast the existential emptiness of these foreign sociocultures with the identity of ‘authenticity’ of the rural community, a community that finds peace in its apparent stagnation. A community that seems to sleep over its violent past but can erupt if threatened.

In one of the scenes, when an American kills a kid, he justifies the shooting by thinking that the child was armed, when in fact he was carrying a flashlight. In the United States, cases in which black people have been killed by the police or who died in their custody sparked protests at the national and international level. In July 2020 there were also demonstrations in Brazil against the type of racial violence in a country like Brazil, which is systematically and historically racist, and where exhibiting European genealogy represents superiority over African and native ancestry, where prestigious professions and positions of power are in the hands of whites, and where the great majority of inmates are black, the film’s criticism is timely, despite its future setting.

Bacurau appears to be an inclusive democracy. The leadership is in the hands of women, and the deceased matriarch has been replaced by another well-respected woman. There are transcendental characters, gays, blacks and whites, prostitutes and criminals, children and elderly citizens, and they all live in apparent harmony. The scene of the funeral collation is a window on that social democracy. The church serves as a repository, but there is no religion, and to ensure every citizen never forgets the proud history of their town, a sacred museum displays, as trophies, the weapons used by their ancestors during a revolt. These weapons will be resuscitated to defend themselves from the new invaders. Echoes of Quilombo dos Palmares, Canudos, resonate here. History repeats itself.

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**Leila: Exposing the Borders Within**

Dhananjay Tripathi *

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**The research literature on borders (Border Studies) revolutionizes the way we study and engage with borders. The border commonly denotes a line of division marking the territorial limits of a nation-state. Inside the borders, theoretically, is a nation. The nation, according to Anderson, is an “imagined community” (1983). In legal terms, a nation-state implies homogeneity of social, cultural and political spaces. Such theoretical and legal interpretations of nation-states are misleading and far from the objective ground reality. It is difficult to identify a country in the world that doesn’t have citizens of a different faith, belief and cultural practices. Albeit, there are political parties committed to converting the imagined community into a reality. These are generally right-wing ultra-nationalist parties that purposely ignore or erase the presence of different communities within a country. The political agenda amounts to depriving minorities of constitutional rights and rendering them second-class citizens or worse. The world has seen numerous atrocities along these lines countless times, including against Jews in Germany under the rule of Nazis and more recently under the brutality of the Taliban in Afghanistan, to name just two examples.**

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**Today, Netflix is a primary source of entertainment, and there are numerous shows on this online platform that involve compelling socio-political issues. One such series that is liable to draw the attention of Border Studies is Leila, a Hindi-language series directed by Deepa Mehta, Shanker Raman and Pawan Kumar. The series is based on Prayaag Akriti’s English-language dystopian novel and began streaming online in June 2019. It is a story of a struggling mother in search of her daughter Leila.**

The political plot of Leila is about a future authoritarian regime where people of other faiths are outlawed. The progressive citizens of society have been put in different camps/reform centres for ‘purification’. This is where Leila’s mother Shalini is kept after being arrested from her house on the pretext of wasting water. The real reason for her arrest was different. Shalini, an upper-caste Hindu, married a Muslim, and interfaith marriages are immoral in the land of Aryavarta, which was established on the principle of racial purity. Moreover water is regarded as a rare resource in Aryavarta and the supply of pure water is controlled by the dominant political group consisting of upper caste Hindus.

Shalini’s desperation to escape the purification camp to meet her daughter is shown in the first episode. She is asked to prove her loyalty by killing two prisoners of the purification camp. However, she refuses to push the button to kill and consequently is sent to a labour camp. There Shalini meets a guard named Bhanu who is actually a rebel. With the help of Bhanu, Shalini finally reaches the house of the top leadership of Aryavarta, Mr. Rao, where she starts working as a housemaid. Bhanu asks her to collect more information on operation Skydome—a dream project for the privileged few of Aryavarta. Skydome is basically a giant air conditioner that refines and cools the climate within its perimeter while expelling hot air to surrounding areas, so communities not covered by the system bear the environmental costs. Shalini helps Bhanu learn more about the sinister project. Finally, Shalini, along with Mr. Rao, arrive at the core project Skydome, where she meets her daughter. To the shock of Shalini, her daughter Leila refuses to recognize her and instead calls Aryavarta her mother.

This series shows how a fundamentalist political group creates borders amongst humans based on caste and religion. The government and people legally sanction these borders and no one can cross them without state’s permission. The internal borders are even stricter, more impermissible, secularised and authoritarian than the international borders. Every border has a specific function, “separates the wanted from unwanted, the imagined barbarians from the civilized, and the global rich from global poor” (Hountum 2012, 405). Borders in this regard are “fabricated truth” (Hountum 2012, 405). This is precisely illustrated in Leila–internal borders with particular exclusionary political functions. The series also portrays a society under extremist rule. There is a suspension of human rights, and everything is determined by race/religion. The first season of Leila left an impact on viewers particularly of India which recently saw a rise of religious fundamentalism. There is a strong socio-political message in the series that has six episodes in this season. It is about discrimination, deprivation, and patriarchy. All the top positions of Aryavarta are filled by male leaders, and women are to serve as loyal companions both in family life and the political arena. Thus, there are borders within borders. One salient border is the wall that separates the dominant political section from people of other religions and beliefs. Inside this powerful section, women are depicted in subordinate political positions. In this regard, the fight of Shalini becomes more profound, as a progressive, secular and strong woman fights against a range of political barriers. The first season ends with a question about how Shalini will react to the situation where she is standing with a powerful weapon, given to her by the rebel Bhanu, to detonate and eradicate the leadership of Aryavarta—with her daughter among them. Needless to say, viewers eagerly await the second season of the series, which has not yet been confirmed.**

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**Works Cited**


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Review of Klaus Dodds’ *Border Wars: The Conflicts that will Define our Future*

By Klaus Dodds


Hardback, 304 pages

ISBN 9781529102598

Ebook available

https://www.penguin.co.uk/books/1116981/border-wars/9781529015980.html

For more than a decade Klaus Dodds, Professor of Geopolitics at Royal Holloway, University of London, has been writing a short column on geopolitical hotspots for *The Geographical Magazine* focusing on contentious places, boundary disputes, regional rivalries and conflicts all around the world. Now he has pulled a decade’s worth of thinking and writing about such issues into an easy-to-read volume which is effectively a fascinating compendium of historical but mostly contemporary border controversies.

In a world of border walls, pandemic travel restrictions, Brexit and reassortments of territorial sovereignty in the face of globalization and increasing human migration, this is a very timely survey. A brief introduction is followed by nine substantive chapters. After a discussion to sneak in numerous theoretical insights about borders, other chapters are wanting to follow up the themes of each chapter. Given the fascinating details of numerous borders that are presented in this volume, there will undoubtedly be readers who want to do just that. Not least because, in writing about these cases, Klaus Dodds has managed to sneak in numerous theoretical insights about borders, sovereignty, jurisdiction and cartography to what the appetite for further investigation. As such, although written as a trade book for a popular audience, *Border Wars* might serve very well as an introductory text book for courses in border studies and political geography. It is also probably a valid generalization that flows from the cases discussed in this volume that good fences do indeed make good neighbours. Which is why settling disputes on borders remains a key matter for international institutions interested in making a more peaceful world. Borders are not the only cause of conflict but they are in many cases an irritant that, while maybe useful for justifying military and surveillance budgets for nationalist politicians, would be much better dealt with by diplomatic agreement to resolve contentious issues.

The final section of this book provides a guide to key source materials and to further reading for those readers wanting to follow up the themes of each chapter. Given the fascinating details of numerous borders that are presented in this volume, there will undoubtedly be readers who want to do just that. Not least because, in writing about these cases, Klaus Dodds has managed to sneak in numerous theoretical insights about borders, sovereignty, jurisdiction and cartography to what the appetite for further investigation. As such, although written as a trade book for a popular audience, *Border Wars* might serve very well as an introductory text book for courses in border studies and political geography. It is also probably a valid generalization that flows from the cases discussed in this volume that good fences do indeed make good neighbours. Which is why settling disputes on borders remains a key matter for international institutions interested in making a more peaceful world. Borders are not the only cause of conflict but they are in many cases an irritant that, while maybe useful for justifying military and surveillance budgets for nationalist politicians, would be much better dealt with by diplomatic agreement to resolve contentious issues.

Well before Elon Musk set about acting on his desire to colonize Mars, and in the process revived speculation about space travel, borders in outer space were a matter increasingly being discussed. Renewed moon and Mars exploration has reignited discussion of issues of sovereignty, law and jurisdiction there too. Finally, and now alas as the COVID-19 pandemic continues, unavoidably Klaus Dodds turns his attention to vital borders and the lessons that attempts to use border controls as a mode of limiting disease spread may teach us. Here the results are obviously not yet in, but here too matters of sovereignty and national pride are intertwined with both attempts to limit travel as well as supply vaccines. Vaccine nationalism is now a phrase used widely and the question of who gets vaccinated where underlines the key point that borders are very important despite the interconnections in the global economy and the supply chains that cross so many frontiers. We may live in a global economy but these chapters remind us clearly that territorial jurisdictions continue to matter in numerous practical ways despite the rhetoric of interconnections, one world and a supposedly common humanity.

One might question the title of this volume. After all, despite the numerous fascinating vignettes that are the substance of this very easy-to-read global survey of borders and bordering practices, few of them relatively speaking, have in the past or are likely to in the future, involve full-scale war. But that is a quibble; conflicts of lesser scope persist in numerous places, not just the unlikely demarcation disputes about high-altitude glaciers. It is also probably a valid generalization that

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New Border Studies On Israel/Palestine: Review of Two Books

Daniel Meier*

Border studies have investigated the Israeli-Palestinian space as fruitful for conceptualization given the matrix of contradictions and technical geographies over the whole territory over the last decades. The two recent books selected here are part of an attempt to conceptualize Israel and Palestine beyond the classical notion of borders. The first book, The Politics of Maps: Cartographic Constructions of Israel/Palestine, by Christine Leuenberger and Izhak Schnell, published by Oxford University Press, in Hardback, presents a refined study of cartographic research and an in-depth discussion of the cartographic representation of the region. The book is divided into two parts: the first part focuses on the political and social aspects of cartography, while the second part examines the cartographic construction of the region from a more technical perspective. The book provides a comprehensive analysis of the cartographic representations of the region, with a particular focus on the role of cartography in the shaping of the region's identity.

The second book, Penser la Palestine en Réseaux, edited by Véronique Bontemps, Nicolas Dot-Pouillard, Jalal al-Husseini & Abaher al-Sakka, published by Diacritiques Editions & Presses de l’Ifpo, offers a cross-border reflection on the question of cartography and its role in representing the region. The book is divided into five chapters, each focusing on a different aspect of cartography and its role in the region. The first chapter, "Cartographic Constructions of Israel/Palestine", by Christine Leuenberger and Izhak Schnell, provides an in-depth analysis of the cartographic representation of the region, with a particular focus on the role of cartography in the shaping of the region's identity.

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Borders in Globalization homepage: https://bigglobalization.org/

The fourth chapter deals with the key role played by the Jewish National Fund in the aftermath of Israeli independence as a socializing agent into notions of territory with the dissemination of the “blue boxes” used to collect donations and buy land in the “Holy Land”. The authors remind that the “re-naming territory is a pre-condition for the transfer of territorial control” (p17). That is also the duty of the Names Committee that established a Hebrew toponomy of the land. An atlas soon helped to shape the representation of Israel’s national story, Zionist achievements and national consciousness. The next two chapters focus on the period after the 1967 war, when Israel more than tripled the territories under its control. While chapter five highlights the spreading of the maps throughout the society and more particularly from right-wing movements, embodying three different expansionist visions of the land of Israel, be it secular, religious or linked to the settlers, chapter six shows how the left-wing and human rights organizations also deployed maps to tell their geopolitical vision including proposals for territorial compromises, even retreating alternative Arab topography of hundreds of erased villages in the search for historical justice, like the NGO Zochrot, relying on the work of Palestinian historians and some critical Israeli historians.

Chapter seven deals with the significance of international borders with neighboring states and the Green Line with the Palestinian territories. The boundary-making of Israel shows the limits of the capacity of any government to try to re-unite a territorial expansionist ideology with the technocratic expansion delineating borders. This very important chapter probably lacks some visual illustrations and maps which may have shown the applied Zionist ideology on the neighboring states’ sovereign territories (the Syrian Golan Heights, the West Bank which had been under Jordanian control, the Egyptian Sinai Peninsula, the south of Lebanon). Chapter 8 comes back to the dire Palestinian situation and restrictions of access to resources after the Oslo Accord (1995) due to Israeli occupation of the territory. The authors underscore the key aspe...
al-Husseini and Abaher al-Sakkia, all three well-known political scientists, explain in introduction the ambivalent relation of the notion of network, straddling social science analysis tools and practices of social mobilization. This last aspect brings to light a double critique, that of democratic centralism and that of partisan structures as the exclusive mode of practicing politics. Consequently, the work consists in “thinking the networks which think themselves in networks” (p.143) (present translations by D. Meier) thus showing the exchanges which occur between the theoretical and the political. Faced with this practical and disciplinary polymorphysy, the introduction sets out a minimum definition: networks are seen as “the expression of social relations which go beyond codified political, institutional and economic relations” (p.315). A liminal concept, the network is therefore considered here as both a model of action and a category of analysis. Equipped with this double-focal lens, the contributions then unfold a fine series of field surveys giving pride of place to ordinary practices in virtual or economic or religious fields of Palestinian society. In doing so, the network concept intends to link what borders separate and isolate: The Occupied Palestinian Territories, the State of Israel, the refugee camps in neighboring countries and of course the Palestinian diaspora which spans all continents.

The book, elegantly presented by the young publishing house Diacritiques Editions, is divided into two parts, each of n investigative articles written mainly by young researchers. In the first section dedicated to militant networks, Elsa Grugeon opens the volume with a catchy installation showing a cosmonaut planting the Palestinian flag on the moon, one could conclude, with Appadurai, that such border studies on Israel/Palestine are today embodied by young Palestinians, around the world, though not always visibly. This is documenting a shift in the logic of borders from spatial to functional and aterritorial. This means that borders are increasingly detached from territory, operating as mobile and relational nodes in increasingly complex regulatory frameworks. For example, border screening often happens far from the border, and goods and people are increasingly borderless “on the go” with the help of new technologies and biometrics. Simultaneously, global processes challenge the territorial boundaries of borders. The journal is especially interested in advancing the study of the borders of globalization. New research is documenting a shift in the logic of borders from spatial and territorial to functional and aterritorial. This means that borders are increasingly detached from territory, operating as mobile and relational nodes in increasingly complex regulatory frameworks. For example, border screening often happens far from the border, and goods and people are increasingly borderless “on the go” with the help of new technologies and biometrics. Simultaneously, global processes challenge the territorial foundations of borders, including subnational and transnational pressures, the virtual flows of global finance and big data, the spread of infectious disease, and the effects of climate change. These developments impact culture and politics, including understandings and contestations of identity, citizenship, law, nationalism, gender, and indigeneity.

The mobilization potential of networks is also measured with non-Palestinians labeled “international” living in Palestine by Cléo Chaveneau’s survey. Internationally, Nicolas Dot-Poulland investigates the case of the networks mobilized for Palestinian rights in France. He thus shows how this “French passion” that is Palestine has been largely dominated over the long term by “the left of the left” in a “horizontal, flexible, informal, grafted or connected” mode of mobilization (p.119) and whose transnational dimension deserves to be linked on a global scale which would make it possible to testify to a political, aesthetic and international appropriation of the Palestinian cause by multiple leftist groups far beyond the borders of Palestine.

Other chapters detail the social aspects of networks such as that of Minas Ouchaklian on the networks of Fatah militants as resources in power struggles, or of Mariangela Gasparotto on the networks of new arrivals in Ramallah who bring to light the spatialization of photography, postcards and statutory inequalities. The more transnational angle devoted to the second part is well embodied by the articles of Jalal al-Husseini, Marion Slišne and Haja Naelin-Cerruti, respectively centered on the Palestinian diaspora, on the networks of contemporary art and theatrical practices in Gaza. All three illustrate the ways of reinventing a national imagination that is deployed beyond territorial borders by using the means available in the global sphere. If the decline in the capacity to mobilize for the right of return or against the recent American decisions to transfer the US embassy to Jerusalem seems obvious, this disenchantment, Jalal al-Husseini tells us, does not signal the disappearance of the Palestinian diaspora but rather its withdrawal into “networks woven across borders by refugee families” (p.205). For her part, Marion Slišne shows that the strong localism which continues to mark the practices of contemporary Palestinian art must be understood as a form of resistance against new forms and new media form a resource for overcoming borders and territorial constraints as well as for mobilizing” (p.27). She then shows how young Palestinians living in East Jerusalem promote a commitment, understood as an intermediation mission but also as a militant act, around the Al-Aqsa mosque as an icon of Palestinian territoriality in Jerusalem and as an observation of the logics of closures / openings to its access. In addition to the notorious importance taken by the networks in recent years, she recalls that the role of the internet is to establish links between those who live near this holy place and those who are distant from it, beyond local and international borders. Amusingly, she notes that the Arabic lexical field of the word “link” refers to the Islamic term ḥabīl which designated the ascetic and worldly path of the defenders of Islamic territory on its fringes in the early days of Islam. These border guards or muraltaxīn are today embodied by young Palestinians, guardian of the links of the Al-Aqsa site with the rest of the world.

Our starting point is that borders offer metaphorical-conceptual tools for the study of differentiation and integration. This perspective mandats a wide range of artistic, theoretical, and empirical explorations of borders. The journal is especially interested in advancing the study of the borders of globalization. New research is documenting a shift in the logic of borders from spatial and territorial to functional and aterritorial. This means that borders are increasingly detached from territory, operating as mobile and relational nodes in increasingly complex regulatory frameworks. For example, border screening often happens far from the border, and goods and people are increasingly borderless “on the go” with the help of new technologies and biometrics. Simultaneously, global processes challenge the territorial foundations of borders, including subnational and transnational pressures, the virtual flows of global finance and big data, the spread of infectious disease, and the effects of climate change. These developments impact culture and politics, including understandings and contestations of identity, citizenship, law, nationalism, gender, and indigeneity.

The borders of globalization are being established in a variety of spaces—not just in borderlands. Like a shifting puzzle, their infrastructures and institutions interlock in kaleidoscopic geographies and modalities across world, though not always visibly. BIG_Review offers a platform to visualize, problematize, and discuss how these borders are changing and how they affect all other borders, physically, of the mind, of social groups, and across cyberspace.

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Essays (including literature reviews, persuasive writing, opinion pieces) should be between 1000 and 4000 words, using few references (fewer than a dozen, except for literature reviews, which may include more).

Research notes (engaging with single concepts, terms, or debates pertaining to border studies) should be between 750-1200 words, using few references (no more than five).

Book reviews (summarizing and analyzing academic monographs relating to borders) should be between 500 and 1000 words.

Film reviews (summarizing and analyzing film and television relating to borders) should be between 500 and 1000 words.

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By Shibashis Chatterjee, Surya Sankar Sen, and Mayuri Banerjee

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By Simon Dalby

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By Pierre-Alexandre Beylier

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By Tal Yaar-Waisel

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By Saida Latmani

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ARTWORK

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By François Cayol

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By Daniel Meier and Hussein Baydoun

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By Elisa Ganivet

ESSAY

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By Aileen El-Kadi, Dhananjay Tripathi, Simon Dalby, and Daniel Meier

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