

SOAS JOURNAL OF POSTGRADUATE RESEARCH

MOBILITIES  
Social Sciences and Humanities  
without Borders



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## A NOTE FROM THE EDITORS

Dear Readers,

This volume would not have been possible without the hard work and support of our team of Assistant Editors (AEs), who coordinated all stages of the review process. Kirstie Kwarteng, Yunzi Han, Anna Kensicki, and Corné Rijneveld have been invaluable to this volume and we thank them for their teamwork and commitment.

Likewise, we would like to thank our dedicated reviewers. Although they cannot be named here due to our double-blind review process, their thorough feedback for our authors have been invaluable.

Looking ahead, Iris and Florence would like to bid farewell to readers as they are now completing their work at the journal. Iris and Florence are leaving the guidance of the SOAS Journal of Postgraduate Research (SJPR) to their co-editors, Federica and Natalia.

Thank you for your readership. We hope that the SJPR continues to be a platform for the SOAS research students to showcase their projects and bring together our interdisciplinary community of budding scholars.

Your Editors,

Federica Gamberini

Florence Shahabi

Natalia Matveeva

Iris Lim

## A NOTE FROM THE CENTRE OF MIGRATION AND DIASPORA STUDIES (CMDS)

Dear All,

It is a great pleasure to be invited to introduce this issue of the SOAS Journal of Postgraduate Research. It embraces diverse mobilities - of refugees, artists, language, music, and film - drawing on a range of disciplinary, theoretical, and empirical approaches, exploring how difference is produced, bordered, negotiated, and transformed. At a time when human mobility is at once entirely normal and acutely politicised in many contexts around the world, it is refreshing to have a collection of articles that embraces fresh research on such diverse forms of mobility.

SOAS has built up a worldwide reputation for not only regional scholarship, but also research that is transnational in character. Since 2007, the Centre for Migration and Diaspora Studies has provided a network for research activities across the school and collaborative links with other institutions nationally and internationally. Across anthropology, development studies, languages, culture, arts, history, religion, area studies, politics, law, economics, finance, and management, the centre facilitates conversations and connections, fostering and promoting a supportive research and teaching community.

PhD researchers are a vital part of that community. In recognition of this, the centre was delighted to cooperate with the journal in hosting a small PhD conference on migration, mobility and borders in March 2019. The conference, supported by the ESRC's UBEL-Doctoral Training Partnership, aimed to bring together SOAS PhD researchers in a friendly environment to share their research findings. A series of themed, parallel conference sessions, tackled a wide range of fascinating themes (i.e., migrant identities, mobility of ideas and materials, migration and the arts, rethinking the frame, diaspora and transnational questions, and mobility and governance) showcasing the breadth and depth of doctoral research on mobility at SOAS, which cuts across typical disciplinary and regional categories. Following the conference, students were invited to outline their research projects in a short video, and also to submit papers to this special issue of the SOAS Journal of Postgraduate Research.

We would like to congratulate all of you who have contributed such engaging articles to the issue, as well as the editorial team for their vision and dedication, with special thanks to Iris Lim, who played a key role in sparking this process and providing the connection between the conference and the journal publication. It has been inspiring to witness the vision, creativity, rigour, critical power, and dedication of our PhD researchers. We wish you all a happy, productive, and healthy academic year in 2019/20.

Dr Anna Lindley, for the Centre on Migration and Diaspora Studies



## INTRODUCTION

Dear Readers,

Welcome to volume 12 of the SOAS Journal of Postgraduate Research!

We continue to build on the momentum that began three years ago with the professionalisation and relaunching of the journal. This volume is filled with rewarding interdisciplinary explorations and collaborations. Befitting this year's theme of mobilities, we reflected upon the movement of people and ideas throughout the world.

This effort has resulted in a collaboration with the SOAS Centre for Migration and Diaspora Studies, which has generously contributed part of the journal's publication expenses this year through funding from the UCL, Bloomsbury and East London Doctoral Training Partnership (Ubel dtp). This funding has also allowed us to hold a joint CMDS-SJPR postgraduate research conference on mobilities in March 2019.

Although people and ideas have always been on the move, in spite of any borders set by geopolitical maps, today's reasons and means behind people's migration or the travelling of ideas from one country to another have become much more complex. Therefore, the word mobility becomes a contemporary paradigm of our time and an urgent one to be thoroughly investigated. While the word mobility naturally invited reflections on migration, this volume welcomed a broader range of papers investigating the movement of people and ideas - be it geopolitical, social, artistic boundaries, or technological.

This volume offers six articles and a book review. In "The Mirror Effect," Albert Badosa Roldós examines the difference between minoritised communities and national minorities through two migrant communities in Catalonia. In doing so, he shows how these processes are affected by local dynamics and the framework of nation-states.

Harry D'Antonio Dry's article "A Plurality of Synthetic Sound Around the Aral Sea" explores music and culture as a part of negotiations of national identity in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, focusing on the role of electronic music in creating a Pan-Asian youth identity.

Valeria Bevilacqua's "Away/ A way" reflects on mobility as a contemporary paradigm by looking at the mobility of artists in art residency programmes. By asking who becomes an artist-in-residence and how, this paper addresses the power structures of application/selection processes that allow entry into these residencies.

Laurence Green's "The Rambling Guitarist" looks at colliding Eastern and Western influences in late-'50s and early-'60s Japanese films. Focusing on the concept of mukokuseki eiga (borderless or of no nationality) which typified a nine-part film series produced in 1959-1962, the article provides a close analysis of how these films straddled the borderline between East and West.

Miki Quddus's "The Rohingya's Suspension at the Border," examines populations inhabiting borderlands. Building a case study around the Rohingya migration from Myanmar to their stateless status in Bangladesh, this article seeks to demonstrate that borderlands are more than just a place of waiting and suspension. Quddus's second contribution examines the complexity of home.

Lastly, Caren Holmes's book review of Jasbir Puar's *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability* highlights crucial insights into the dynamics of biopolitics at borders, examining the use of violence against bodies in the contestation of borders in Palestine.

# THE MIRROR EFFECT IDENTITY AND MINORISATION AMONG THE QUECHUAS AND AMAZIGHS IN CATALONIA

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## ABSTRACT

The borders of minoritised communities and national minorities are different than the nation-state ones; they are affected by local dynamics, the nation-state framework, and the global English-dominant context. In this paper, I analyse the concepts of minorisation and identity in two minoritised migrant communities, the Quechua and the Amazigh, living in another minoritised community, Catalonia. I will evaluate double and triple minorisation and the mirror effect on these communities. Double or triple minorisation happens when a particular individual or population sector is affected by more than one type of discrimination (Parella, 2003). The mirror effect happens when a particular individual or community from a minoritised background establishes contact with another minoritised community, triggering a change of identity, and cultural and linguistic ideologies and representations (Cortès-Colomé, 2016). I will analyse a set of collected qualitative data, mainly semi-structured interviews with individuals from both communities residing in Barcelona. This is the first study to address these issues on minoritised communities in Catalonia.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Albert Badosa Roldós is a PhD student in Linguistics at the School of Languages, Cultures and Linguistics at SOAS. He completed the MA Language Documentation and Description programme also at SOAS, and a BA in Linguistics and Slavic Languages at the University of Barcelona. He is part of GLiDi (Grup de Lingüistes per la Diversitat) at this university. His interests include phonetics and phonology, sociolinguistics, minority languages, language revitalisation, language documentation, heritage languages, Vietic languages, and Slavic languages, among others.

## THE CATALAN CONTEXT AND HYPOTHESES

This paper is part of a wider study that looks at the language ideologies of the Quechua and Amazigh communities in Catalonia, together with the factors affecting them: minorisation and the mirror effect. In this paper, I only focus on these two factors that shape the identity and the cultural, linguistic, and social practices of these communities within a stateless nation or minoritised nation context - Catalonia.

Catalonia is a country with a national conflict latent for centuries. This conflict is present in many spheres of daily life; in fact, it cannot be easily avoided. All three local languages in Catalonia are minoritised and subordinated to Spanish: Catalan Sign Language, Occitan/Aranese, and Catalan.

Language use data can be useful to understand this conflict, which is also - and some would say primarily - linguistic. Data from the Institute of Statistics of Catalonia shows that in only 10 years, use of the Catalan language dropped from 46% estimated in 2003 to the 36.3% in 2013. Spanish remains the dominant language, with its use rising from 47.2% to 50.7% (EULC2003, 2005: EULP2013, 2015).

Nonetheless, the aforementioned languages are not the only languages spoken in Catalonia. Recent migration waves have changed substantially the demographics in Catalonia: between 2003 and 2013, alloglots - their first language (L1 onwards) is different from Occitan, Spanish or Catalan - have increased by 400,000 (DGPL, 2015:16). This means that 10.6% of the total Catalanian population has an initial language other than Catalan, Occitan or Spanish (EULP2013, 2015:30).

This numerous population increase has altered the sociolinguistic dynamics in Catalonia. From IDESCAT data, linguists have inferred that foreign populations integrate essentially in Spanish (DGPL, 2015:27,59). This has provoked an increase in mainly Spanish habitual speakers - 32.9% in 2003 to 35% in 2013 - and a decrease in mainly Catalan habitual speakers - 46.2% in 2003 to 41% in 2013 [1], (DGPL, 2015:39).

All these data account for an interesting situation, where there is a subordinated declining language, Catalan, which is related to the middle class [2] (Pujolar, 2009:91) and is present in domains normally reserved for dominant languages, such as mass media, high culture, or politics, and with an evident presence in the public space (DGPL, 2015:51).

In this scenario, the research focuses on what happens when communities who also come from a minoritised background move to Catalonia. Having evaluated the situation in Catalonia, I hypothesise that (1) a phenomenon called mirror effect is triggered from the contact between the local and the migrant communities, making the minoritised migrant communities reevaluate their sociolinguistic assumptions.

Secondly, (2) both migrant communities face double and triple minorisation or discrimination: one from the fact of being a minority community in their original nation-states, and the other from being a nonprivileged migrant community in Catalonia. I will explain both phenomena in the next section.

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[1] Data concerning population who has lived in Catalonia for at least 15 years.

[2] Spanish tends to be related to the working class but also the language of power.



## THE QUECHUA AND AMAZIGH COMMUNITIES IN CATALONIA

The Quechuas and the Amazighs are considered minoritised peoples in their countries of origin. Their own languages are widely spoken despite the situation: Quechua with around 12 million speakers (Fidalgo, 2015:95, Lamuela, 2005:1-2; see Boukous, 2011; El Aissati, 2001; Múrcia and Zenia, 2016 for the Amazigh sociolinguistic situation) and Amazigh with around 10 million people (Gràcia, 2010:1-2; see Kendall and Hornberger, 2004; Moseley, 2010 for the Quechua sociolinguistic situation).

Although nation-state policies make it difficult to number minority groups, there have been attempts to estimate the number of speakers of the community language. In Catalonia, there is a large number of both Amazighs and Quechuas, although it is very difficult to count people from allochthonous, minoritised backgrounds due to hiding, lack of prestige, and other issues problematised in Comellas et al. (2010).

The Moroccan nationality is the largest immigrant community in Catalonia (more than 240,000), representing more than 20% of the overall immigrant population. At first, the host country expected the Moroccan immigrants to speak only Arabic, but most of them speak Amazigh. Between 50% and 80% of the Moroccan population in Catalonia are L1 Amazigh speakers. There are also some Amazigh speakers among the Algerian community (around 9,000). Some authors presume that Amazigh is in fact the third-most spoken language in Catalonia (Barrieras, 2013:9-10).

Ecuador is the third-largest nationality in Catalonia, with around 50,000 people; Peru and Bolivia are the homeland of around 20,000 respectively (Barrieras, 2013:2). However, Latin Americans in Spain can obtain Spanish nationality with just two years of residence, so these numbers are likely to be much higher (Alarcón and Garzón, 2011:45). We can probably assume that there must be thousands of Quechua speakers in Catalonia.

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The mirror effect was first spotted and described by the Research Group on Endangered Languages (GELA-University of Barcelona) in Catalonia when surveying the no less than 300 different languages spoken across the country [3]. When interviewing some speakers of minority or less prestigious languages, they discovered that contact with a minority language - in this case Catalan - may act as a stimulus for some foreigners to reevaluate their own cultural and linguistic heritages or even to reinterpret their language origins (Cortès-Colomé et al.: 2016:276). In fact, previous studies have suggested that contact with Catalan sometimes prompted a shift in language ideologies (Junyent et al.: 2011; Barrieras and Monrós, 2005), which made them coin the term mirror effect.

In the case of speakers of minority languages, this effect can make speakers reevaluate the sociolinguistic situation of their languages and become cultural- and linguistic-engaged activists for the host minority language(s) and/or their heritage language(s) - in our case, Catalan Amazigh/Quechua.

The mirror effect projects the representation built in Catalonia onto their homeland and inspires a sense of solidarity among minoritised individuals. It is beneficial for heritage language maintenance and for having authentic social relationships in the local setting. Finally, the effect therefore triggers changes in linguistic representations, language attitudes, and behaviour (Cortès-Colomé et al.: 2016:275-281).

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[3] <http://www.gela.cat/doku.php?id=llengues> [accessed April 2019]

Although it is not the main focus of this paper, I recurrently use the term language ideologies in relation to the mirror effect. Kathryn Woolard, one of the main authorities on language ideologies in Catalonia and beyond, defines them as being “representations, whether explicit or implicit, that construe the intersection of language and human beings in a social world” (Woolard, 1998:20-21).

From her extensive sociolinguistic work in Catalonia, Woolard has coined two relevant concepts: authenticity and anonymity, used in the data analysis. According to her, “the ideology of authenticity credits a language variety with value insofar as it expresses the essential, distinctive nature of a community or a speaker, a view associated with Romantic particularism,” whereas “the ideology of anonymity holds that a language is valuable as a neutral, objective vehicle of expression equally available to all users, a view associated with enlightenment universalism” (Woolard, 2008:304-306).

Although these studies have language as the main focus, identity and sociocultural practices also change along with language, as we will see in the following sections.

Along with language, the main focus of the previous studies mentioned, migration also shapes identity and sociocultural features, having a greater effect on minorities and prompting new forms of discrimination. Double minorisation is a concept that, grosso modo, can be understood as the condition suffered by an individual or a group characteristic of having elements from more than one minority. This term has been used in multiple languages and studied in multiple disciplines. Pandya (2013), for instance, addresses the effects of double minority status on Stereotype Threat and Heart Rate Variability. The author defines the *double minority effect* as “the psychological state created when two devalued identities interact to influence the individual in a way that is greater than the sum of the independent effects of those identities.”

Kali’na language in the French Guiana is considered doubly minoritised not only for being subordinated to French and Creole languages, but also because their speakers are at the bottom of a socioracial stratification (Alby, 2005; Léglise and Alby, 2006). Mahele-Nyota (2010) considers double minorisation the case of migrant families with developmental handicaps. Gonzales et al. (2002), in turn, consider the combination of gender and ethnicity as a double minorisation condition, in this case regarding how Latino women do in task performance. This accumulation of minority traits is even called *triple minorisation* by authors such as Parella in her 2003 book *Mujer, inmigrante y clase trabajadora: la triple discriminación* [Woman, immigrant and working-class: the triple discrimination].

Finally, in a similar case to ours, Dabène and Moore (2013) talk about a double minorisation feeling experienced by migrant children of minority background: Panjabi children in the UK learning Urdu and Sicilian children in Zurich or Algerians in France exposed to classical Arabic. They hold that the lack of prestige of these minority languages, linked to socioeconomic and legal conditions, is worsened in such cases.

Therefore, the research questions are on one hand to (1) evaluate how the mirror effect applies to the aforementioned communities and analyse how it changes their identities and sociocultural practices. On the other hand, I will evaluate (2) the applicability of the double or triple minorisation concept on the two communities and analyse its main features.

## METHODOLOGY

This is a study grounded on quantitative and qualitative data taken in the summer of 2017 in the Metropolitan Area of Barcelona, Catalonia. In this paper, I will only present the qualitative data due to space constraints. Quantitative data was gathered through surveys asking for language ideologies using Likert scales, with 34 participants from the Quechua community and 48 from the Amazigh community.



The quantitative data is only supportive of the findings related to the first hypothesis on the mirror effect, as it does not tackle double minorisation issues. The author is aware of the little representativeness to make general claims about the double minorisation condition.

Two types of qualitative data were collected. The main data in which this study focuses are the 15 semistructured interviews to Amazigh and Quechua individuals, asking mainly about general profiles, backgrounds and language ideologies. Complementary data in the form of field notes from participatory observation were also collected, although it is not shown, again due to space constraints.

The participants of the interviews and participant observation sessions were contacted mainly through cultural Quechua/Amazigh associations, members of the University of Barcelona, journalists and researchers working with the communities, and Catalan language and culture associations. While a particular profile within the Amazigh community - cultural and political activists aware of their identity - was overrepresented in the qualitative data, the profiles of the Quechua participants were quite varied.

As a native Catalan speaker, I was aware of the influence of my presence on the data - the observer's paradox (Labov, 1972) or researcher's paradox (Sallabank, 2013). Before every interaction, I clarified my position, the basic goals of the study and tried to gain the confidence and trust of the interviewee.

One of the main issues was that, despite being born in Barcelona, I was otherised, especially by the Quechua community. I was seen as a nonracialised privileged man, sometimes as a sort of Catalan nationalist. This view affected my relationship with the participants and their responses, especially about Catalan, which was valued more positively when replying to direct questions. Related to otherisation was the choice of what language to speak to whom in every situation.

As reported in the introduction, language choice in Catalonia is sociopolitically loaded. After some hostile episodes towards Catalan, and despite my personal choice of always speaking in Catalan in Catalonia, I reached the conclusion that the most neutral language to speak with Quechuas was Spanish. I was able to use Catalan with Amazighs all the time; I perceived no special hostility and switched to Spanish only on a few occasions.

The tables below show the relation of the obtained qualitative data through interviews. The first table shows the naming convention for the semi-structured interviews, whereas the second one shows all the recorded interviews and their naming that will be quoted in the data analysis.

<b>Q/A</b>	<b>Quechua community/Amazigh community</b>
<b>1/2/3...</b>	<b>Number of the interview time-ordered.</b>
<b>H/D</b>	<b>Gender of the participant: H–man/D–woman.</b>
<b>30/35/40...</b>	<b>Approximate age of the participant</b>

Table 1: Naming convention for the semi-structured interviews.

A1H45	Q1D45(Bolivia)
A2H40	Q2H45(Peru)
A3D20	Q3D50(Peru)
A4H20	Q4H50(Ecuador)
A5D20 (A5D20S/A5D20H)	Q5D40(Peru)
A6H40	Q6H50(Peru)
A7D40	
A8D40	
A9H40	

Table 2: Semi-structured interviews.

### DATA ANALYSIS: MIRROR EFFECT

The mirror effect was found in several individuals. Two out of the six Quechua interviewees present discourses that fit into the mirror effect phenomenon. Eight of nine Amazigh interviewees also fit into the category.

There are two cases of mirror effect among the Quechuas. Q6H50 already had a Quechua identity and sensibility towards his mother tongue, especially as a Quechua musician. Already in Catalonia, he felt that the situation of Catalan was similar to the Quechua one and felt the need to learn Catalan, use it, and promote and defend it as the autochthonous language. He also fights to include Quechua-related curriculum into public education.

“[The Quechuas] feel identified, and then they make a comparison and say [...] “it’s our job/responsibility to rescue our tongue”, and they identify [with the Catalan case].”[4]

Interviewee Q5D40 had a different experience. She had denied her roots, but when she got to Catalonia she realised she had to recover her Quechua identity and culture, an endeavour she carries on today. Like Q6H50, she defends plurilingualism, although she does not feel especially committed to Catalan, a language she “had to learn to integrate.” However, she thanks Catalan society for triggering her mirror effect.

Q5D40: ‘But now I am recovering my language. Since I emigrated to Catalonia I was asking myself all the time. I was learning a language that everyone defends, because it is their identity and their language. And I was asking myself why I hadn’t done anything for my language and my identity.’

[...]

‘Catalan has awakened the need of learning my language and my customs again.’

[4] All quotations are translated from Catalan/Spanish.



Within the Amazigh community, there are also two major types of mirror effect: the ones who were already sensitive towards their minority heritage (A2H40, A6H40, A8D40 and A9H40) and the ones who developed this sensitivity once in Catalonia (A1H45, A3D20, A4H20 and A7D40). Interviewees from both groups point out that the first contact with Moroccan schooling, in Arabic, is a first shock and makes them question many issues.

A6H40: 'It is true that there are people who never thought of it before, and once here, in the host society... they recognise themselves, they value themselves, and this is a bit shocking.'

A4H20: '[School] is a big issue, and your Amazigh part, your history and cultural identity were not reflected in the educational system. Then you started questioning. Who am I?'

In the first case, the interviewees already started to identify themselves as Amazighs when they started to study in Moroccan universities and migrated from rural Amazigh areas to Arab-dominant cities. Their case shows how university, the Amazigh movement and Moroccan activism worked as a trigger to developing their engagement towards their minority language. Once in Catalonia, the mirror effect influences their identity and language practices, as they feel like Amazigh Catalans and use Catalan as their preferred language.

A2H40: 'But the strongest awareness started at university. There I found the Amazighist faction. [...] Then I realised that you are in your own country, your land, and they are denying what is yours and you have to give in to the dominant discourse!'

In the latter group, we find Amazighs who came to Catalonia as young children (A3D20, A4H20), and as they say, they could potentially have developed this sensibility had they grown up in Morocco. In Catalonia, and thanks to contact with other Amazighs and the Catalan situation, they have become defenders of the Amazigh language and culture and use Catalan as their preferred tongue. Interestingly, some of A4H20's siblings prefer Spanish and feel Spanish and Moroccan, whereas he and his older brother, due to the mirror effect feel Amazigh Catalan and use Catalan as their preferred language and identify with its situation.

A4H20: 'So the oldest [sibling] and I are the ones who speak more in Catalan, the ones who live in Catalan, and the others more in Spanish. With their friends... in Spanish. Ever since [we lived in] Sant Andreu, the difference already came about, because I studied in a high school with more Catalan people and they had studied in one with more Spanish speakers, and from the beginning you can already feel it.'

There is also the case of A1H45, an Amazigh who only had the chance to have primary education and strongly identifies with the working class. His first contact with Catalan was in a support association in his host town and then he changed his language ideologies and linguistic representations towards both Amazigh and Catalan. He is an engaged activist for many causes, including immigration and Amazigh heritage culture, and the mirror effect may be the trigger or just be a part of his militancy.

A1H45: 'I use Catalan in the Cornellà association. Some people use it. They are Catalan speakers. There is no Catalan-speaking working class, they all speak Spanish. The people with whom I speak Catalan are middle class: youths, students...'

Finally, there is the case of A7D40. She belongs to an upper-middle class, urban-Arabised Amazigh family who stopped transmitting Amazigh, and she is the only one in her family willing to recover her traditional identity and customs. Once in Barcelona, she started to identify herself as a Berber rather than a Moroccan. She is learning Catalan and has positive attitudes towards it as the autochthonous language of Catalonia.

A7D40: 'I have recently started. When they ask me, I reply, "my origins are Berber, but I am from Morocco". Very recently. In my family they think I am crazy.'

### DATA ANALYSIS: DOUBLE MINORISATION

From our fieldwork I found the following types of discrimination: (1) minorisation particular to migrant communities, (2) minorisation particular to minoritised communities, and (3) other universal minorisations, such as gender or religion. We can therefore talk about triple discrimination, using Parella's term (2003).

This cumulative minorisation affects differently both Amazigh and Quechua communities, and it is not perceived the same way by all interviewees. Some of them, mainly Quechuas, deny any kind of discrimination and claim to be comfortable in Catalonia. Some others like to denounce different kinds of discrimination suffered both in Catalonia and in their home countries. This is the case of Q5D40:

'Because they tell me I am whiter. But I am mestiza, I have an indigenous part. And I am proud of it and I don't like when they tell me I am whiter and less indigenous as a positive thing. It's true that when I was younger, I wanted to be whiter. The whiter the better. [...] I have suffered discrimination. They have called me 'sudaca [5]'.'

After the mirror effect took place and she changed linguistic representations, she claimed to be able to free herself from racial and cultural discrimination:

'There is discrimination in our country but also here, and it must be addressed in both places, a lot of Catalan Peruvians must work on this. It took me many years. In the beginning, I was changing my clothing, the accent, to pretend to be from here, but it was fake. Now I am what I am and I accept myself.'

While this interviewee talks openly about discrimination and denounces it, other Quechuas deny it. Amazigh interviewees don't feel especially discriminated against in Catalonia, and although all of them can point to a couple of examples of it at play, they tend to minimise these events, probably because they identify with Catalan society or because they want to stress their integration:

A5D20: 'Just today in the underground an old couple didn't want to sit next to us, even though there were free seats, and they preferred to stand. But it's a minority. But I think that to find a job it is a problem [because of the veil].'

Researcher: 'Is there racism in Catalonia?'

A5D20: 'Not racism, but they don't accept you the way you are.'

---

[5] A derogatory term for Latin Americans.

R: 'The episode in the underground wasn't racism?'

A5D20: 'Yes it was (they laugh).'

R: 'Have you felt discriminated for being Amazigh?'

A3D20: 'No. I think that in Catalonia they love Amazighs more than Arabs. I don't know if it's because we have the same situation of discrimination.'

When these discriminative factors combine, we can talk about double or triple minorisation. Another interesting case is this of an Amazigh-speaking Catalan:

Researcher: 'Have you suffered discrimination for speaking Catalan?'

A2H40: 'Yes. I went with a lad to the police station. When I arrived, I was speaking in Catalan to the policeman and he goes "but are you Catalan?". Like "you don't have the right to speak Catalan". I don't understand it. This idea that "you are a foreigner, you should speak Spanish, you don't have the right to speak Catalan". And yes, there are many cases and situations. And many people who say "don't worry, you can speak Spanish, it's not a problem". Or they immediately speak to you in Spanish when you speak Catalan. I don't know if it's paternalism, [...] but it is a kind of categorisation. Categorising a person or a collective means to exclude them. This leads to poverty, suffering...'

There are many more examples in the data of cumulative discrimination. Some of these discriminative factors - such as gender - are overtly identified and denounced by the interviewees, although most are difficult to accept and are therefore covert. The significantly diverse historical processes underwent in America and the Maghreb, respectively, can explain the differences between the two communities: Quechua historical minorisation effects tend to be covert, whereas the Amazigh community's tend to be more overt, although they claim to feel more comfortable than in Morocco, especially those with a tradition of activism:

Researcher: 'Do you reckon Quechua is discriminated in Catalonia?'

Q2H45: 'There is no discrimination between Peruvians, we are all equal. If they ask where we are from in Peru, I think they don't do in a discriminatory way. They don't care if you speak Quechua or not.'

R: 'Have you received bad reactions from people when you sing in Quechua?'

Q2H45: 'No, mostly good. Some mocking messages, unfortunately. You get hundreds and hundreds of emails, apart from Facebook messages... Some are bad, [...] from Peruvians or Ecuadorians. They probably feel inferior or bad when they talk about it.'

Researcher: ‘What reasons did you emigrate to Catalonia for?’

A6H40: ‘[...] Political [reasons] because I didn’t feel well with the Moroccan authorities. Also society, you don’t feel comfortable. For example, I do not practice Ramadan, and it’s difficult to eat in public.’

In both cases, these discriminations cross borders and are brought along to host countries when emigrating. This is also the case in Catalonia, where white Peruvians from the coast discriminate against Peruvians from the central highlands (Sierra), and where the Moroccan government pays for Arabic classes and not for Amazigh classes, or does not incorporate Amazigh (nor Catalan) in its consulate services. These examples can be considered inherent discriminations particular to Quechuas and inherent discriminations particular to Amazighs.

Q5D40 gives a hint as to why other Quechuas deny there is any discrimination:

‘They have told me about the discrimination of Coast Peruvians over Sierra Peruvians here in Catalonia. They don’t invite them to their events, for example.’

A2H40, corroborated by A8D40, talks about Arabic dominance over Amazighs and Moroccan discrimination over Amazighs in Catalonia:

A2H40: ‘Morocco pays and trains a workforce of teachers of Arabic for the children of the Moroccans of Catalonia. But no Amazigh teachers.[...] I don’t have anything against Arabic, but they are Arabising Amazighs here as well. [...] And this is an injustice. This happens at the education level, consulate, and other levels [...]’

As seen, the Amazigh community is affected by being subordinated to Arabic and Catalan/Spanish societies and at the same time being an immigrant community in Catalonia and a minoritised group in Morocco/Algeria. To this particular situation, issues like religious, migrant, social class, and racial and gender discrimination also arise. Muslim Amazigh women are an especially affected group, suffering from gender, religious, and racial discrimination.

On the other hand, the Quechua community is subordinated to both Spanish and Catalan societies, being a minority group in their countries of origin and an immigrant group in Catalonia. Intracommunity racism and discrimination from less racialised Latin Americans towards more racialised Quechuas play an important role in the Quechua minorisation, which is reproduced in the metropolitan colonial state, Spain, from which it was imported. Again, gender, migrant, and social class discriminations, though not religious, are also in play.

## DISCUSSION: DOUBLE MINORISATION

We have seen the interplay of the phenomena of the mirror effect and the double minorisation in both Quechua and Amazigh communities. The mirror effect may determine the identities and sociocultural practices of Amazighs and Quechuas in very different ways. At first glance, we can appreciate that there are more cases of mirror effect among the Amazighs than among the Quechuas. The next table represents the types of participants regarding the mirror effect. Data from the surveys and the participant observations not included due to space constraints is nevertheless taken into consideration in the following data analysis.



	<b>No mirror effect</b>	<b>Mirror effect</b>
<b>Amazighs</b>	A5D20	A1H45 A2H40 A3D20 A4H20 A6H40 A7D40 A8D40 A9H40
<b>Quechuas</b>	Q1D45 Q2H45 Q3D50 Q4H50	Q5D40 Q6H50

Table 3: Participants and the mirror effect.

Amazighs who have not experienced the mirror effect tend to have nation-state identities, Moroccan and/or Spanish, and sometimes an Islamic religious identity. They also tend to have neutral/indifferent attitudes towards minority cultures and languages, which are seen as not ‘useful.’

In comparison, Quechuas who have not undergone the mirror effect also tend to identify with the nation-state, and there are also cases of Latino and even Andean identities. Their indigenous identity and traits, if not rejected, tends to be folklorised and only present in private spheres and kept away from public spheres. There are many cases of self-hatred [6] and low self-esteem, intertwined with racialisation consequences.

The mirror effect prompts solidarity and shared identification between minorities, which can change one’s identity. Both Amazighs and Quechuas affected by the phenomenon tend to identify themselves as Amazigh-Catalans or Quechua-Catalans. They tend to have multilingualist ideologies.[7] There are important differences regarding the tangible consequences of this ideological change. While Amazighs tend to proudly promote both Catalan and Amazigh activism, Quechuas tend to focus only on Quechua cultural–more than linguistic–activism, in a rediscovery and revaluation of their indigenous condition, which may improve the self-esteem and minimise the self-hatred. In the next paragraphs I will outline some factors that may explain the similarities and differences of the different mirror effects according to each community.

**Social class** and **access to Catalan** are common factors that may prevent both communities from undergoing the mirror effect. As reported, Catalan language relates to the middle class and Spanish is linked to the working class - majorly conformed by Spanish immigration (reported by A1H45, described in Pujolar, 2009:91). Quechua and Amazigh immigration tends to establish in working-class areas, where contact with Catalan-related sociocultural elements is lower. Access to Catalan language is key to experimenting the mirror effect. In fact, the language the interview was carried out in was directly related to the mirror effect: If there was some Catalan in the interview, the mirror effect was found. In A4H20’s case, access to Catalan affected the different language and identity choices he and his siblings made.

[6] ‘Autodi’ concept coined by the Valencian sociolinguist Rafel Ninyoles (1969).

[7] A recurrently asserted by several participants: ‘all languages are equal’.

**Linguistic accommodation**, which was reported by many participants from both communities, is linked to the possibility of access to Catalan. Accommodation, which implies using the dominant language with individuals identified as outsiders, is majorly practiced by Catalans and is a common trait among linguistic minorities (Boix 1993; Vila and Galindo 2012). This practice creates a barrier and keeps Catalan as an intracommunity code difficult to be shared, and also otherises new speakers of Catalan and hinders their learning.

There are some factors that may explain the major proportion of mirror effect cases among the Amazighs, such as the proximity of the historico-political contexts. Catalans and Amazighs tend to perceive themselves as a stateless, occupied or minoritised nation versus the Quechua identification as an indigenous people. These common assumptions can generate synergies that are less evident to Quechuas.

Moreover, the recent Amazigh Spring movement has been raising awareness of the Amazigh identity, culture, and language in North Africa, spreading to the host countries to Amazigh diaspora, and has also raised awareness of the existence of the Amazigh people to many European societies, facilitating the mirror effect (reported by A8D40, described in Maddy-Weitzman, 2012).

On the contrary, nation-state homogenisation, Arabisation and Islamisation policies towards the Amazighs, which imply coercive changes in identity and sociocultural practices, conform a preventive factor to the mirror effect (reported by A6H40, described in El Aissati, 2001).

The factors found particular to the Quechua community are all preventive of the mirror effect. The historical colonial racialisation process, which has led to a racial complex[8] and low self-esteem, especially in front of nonracialised people, prevents Quechuas from experiencing solidarity towards Western/nonracialised minority groups. (Van Dijk, 2005, also reported by Q5D40).

Spain has been the metropolitan state for Latin American communities and also the nation-state homogenising agent for Catalonia. This common dominant matrix, rather than facilitating solidarity, puts Quechuas in a comfortable position in Catalonia, as already knowing Spanish makes learning Catalan an extra effort (argued by Q4H50). For the Amazighs, learning both Catalan and Spanish represents a similar effort (Comellas 2006:424).

Having discussed the mirror effect on each community and its common and particular factors, I will now outline the main characteristics of triple minorisation, which affects all the participants. These cumulative minorisation factors build complex forms of discrimination.

**Social class, gender, religion, racialisation, and nation-state homogenisation** represent universal factors that affect migrants and social sectors all over the world. Most Quechuas and Amazighs establish in Catalonia in the working class with all its implications, eminently related to economic difficulties. Women also suffer from discrimination and gender biases. Quechua women tend to work in the social care sector, whereas a big proportion of Amazigh women tend to be housewives. Amazigh women wearing the veil suffer from more overt discrimination (reported in A5D20, A3D20 and Q5D40).

Religion is a factor that strongly affects the Amazighs - mostly Muslims - practically avoiding the Quechuas. The Western conflict and discrimination towards Islam, which has been increasing the past years, is a source of their discrimination. There are also Amazighs with other beliefs - Atheism, Judaism, and Christianity - who at the same time may be discriminated against by Muslims (intracommunity minorisation, reported by A6H40).

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[8] Concept used by some interviewees.



Regarding the discrimination perpetrated by the nation-state, in this case it is performed by the original nation-state and the host nation-state at the same time. For example, not having an official census of the speakers of Amazigh and Quechua because they are regarded as Moroccans, Bolivians, Algerians or Peruvians from both Catalan and Spanish authorities but also from the authorities of their countries of origin (reported by A2H40).

Some of the minorisation factors are transported from the countries of origin. This intra-community minorisation is reproduced in the diaspora: for instance, the Moroccan government funds Arabic classes in Catalonia but not Amazigh classes (reported by A6H40), and Quechuas from the coast and urban areas discriminate Quechuas from the highlands in cultural events in Catalonia (explained by Q2H45).

Finally, the already elaborated linguistic accommodation phenomenon, performed by most of the Catalan-speaking community, can be seen also as a form of discrimination, in this case from the host minority group to the migrant minority group. Treating migrants as foreign elements to be kept away from Catalan society hinders access to the social elevator that Catalan language represents together with cohesive and integrative sociocultural practices (Boix 1993; Vila and Galindo 2012). A2H40's case with the Spanish police denying his right to speak Catalan is a clear example.

## CONCLUSION

In today's highly fluctuating world, with mobility playing a central role and continuously shaping identities and linguistic, social, and cultural practices, we have described and evaluated two understudied phenomena that are in interplay with this globalised and homogenisation-oriented contemporary context: the mirror effect and the double minorisation phenomenon.

The mirror effect can change linguistic and cultural practices, ideologies, attitudes, and behaviour and potentially raise solidarity and awareness among minority groups and reinforce declining and nonprestigious identities and help maintain and revitalise them. In the case of the Amazigh community, the mirror effect is more widespread than in the Quechua community, and it triggers activism towards both the community and the host-minoritised languages and cultures, whereas in the Quechua case, it triggers activism principally towards their own indigenous culture and identity.

On the other hand, the cumulative discrimination factors to migrants from minority origins hinder their mobility outcomes and lifestyle in today's globalised world. Both phenomena are interrelated, and I believe that fostering solidarity among minoritised groups and reinforcing traditional identities may reduce minorisation effects. This is exactly the point made by two participants: Perhaps the mirror effect and the double minorisation effect have moved beyond the sociolinguistic situation and the consequences of the discrimination respectively, and are more intertwined than may seem:

Researcher: 'What do you think we can do to reverse Catalan and Amazigh discrimination?'

A1H45: 'We must fight. It is up to us, we have to do something. For languages and for other things as well.'

Researcher: 'You said there is discrimination towards Latin-Americans.'

Q5D40: 'Not only Latin-Americans, but towards a lot of people! Towards Maghreb people even more! Especially because women are more covered, and because they have an accent. Racialised feminism is not the same as white feminism. It has all to do with discrimination. I am aware that a Black woman is more discriminated than I am. It is one of the things I have learned here.'

Following up from that, as a linguist, I have to be aware that, in order to address language loss, and since language death causes are exclusively extralinguistic, we firstly have to address the multiple discriminations and other issues that each community faces and not only revitalise languages, but also traditional cultures, identities, and ways of life, and open them to a modern, globalised world, where mobility should be an opportunity instead of a condition.

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# A PLURALITY OF SYNTHETIC SOUND AROUND THE ARAL SEA: HOW ELECTRONIC MUSIC TRANSCENDS THE BORDERS OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

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## ABSTRACT

Music and culture were key ways through which the Soviet Union maintained control in twentieth-century central Asia. Over time, the proliferation of foreign music through the audio cassette market eventually developed into online music streaming and Westernised forms of local popular music, though official state attitudes remained wary of their effects on national identity and traditional values. This wariness persists today, but is increasingly challenged by younger generations participating in the global digital economy, drawing influence from Western culture via the internet. This paper focuses on Uzbekistan and Tajikistan to better understand the role that electronic music, namely hip-hop and electronic dance music (EDM), plays in challenging the status quo. It discusses the recent festivals Stihia, near the Aral Sea, and the World Through Student Eyes, in Tashkent, as examples of a burgeoning Pan-central Asian youth identity. Electronic music embodies this changing identity in central Asia, spurred by economic growth, tourism, and the global music business. Against the scrim of conflicting generational views on identity, central Asian youth is creating a breakout identity through electronic music that reconciles patriotism with individual creative expression. The result? A plurality of musical and cultural worlds with which to create one's own narrative.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Harry D'Antonio Dry holds a BA in Asian Studies from Pitzer College, Claremont, California, and an MM magna cum laude in Music Production, Technology, and Innovation from Berklee College of Music in Valencia, Spain. He is a candidate for the MA in Global Creative and Cultural Industries from SOAS, where his dissertation discussed the professional and personal experiences of independent musicians in the twenty-first-century music industries whose musical identities and work have been shaped by technological developments. In addition to being multilingual, D'Antonio Dry is a professional musician experienced in sound design, recording engineering, and artist and label management. He aims to widen the appeal of music technology, production, and engineering for both younger generations and his less technologically savvy musical peers.



## INTRODUCTION

Nation and culture are intimately intertwined for historically nomadic groups in central Asia, where music became, and remains, one of the main vehicles of regulating and maintaining social thought and behaviour. Electronic music is the current inspiration for many younger local musicians and, spearheaded by global cultural exchange through the internet, hip-hop in particular has become a critical means of disseminating foreign values in central Asia. Although hip-hop is not generally classified as electronic music, for the purposes of this paper, the genre includes the spectrum ranging from hip-hop to the myriad forms of EDM because they utilize repetitive, programmed beats at constant tempos. Clearly, a new form of national identity is emerging throughout central Asia. Young artists and listeners are finding a home in a genre wherein they view themselves as unrestrained by the Soviet dogma of decades past and seek to redefine themselves in a rapidly globalising world. But while differing ideals of national identity and traditional culture remain problematic for older generations, the young simply see it as a facet of everyday life.

Stefan Kirmse, who writes about Kyrgyzstan and post-Soviet central Asia, sees this new identity as representative of the youth inhabiting “‘plural worlds’ (Nilan and Feixa 2006) in that they deploy a range of local, regional and global identity discourses” (Kirmse 2010, 390–93). These worlds are further strengthened by a sense of community which, for our purposes, is also found in electronic music and festivals. Kirmse suggests that globalisation should be seen as a marketplace for styles and identities, a framework which lends profound insight into the reactions by political powers to new and/or Western cultural trends. This framework can explain the forward-thinking World Through Student Eyes (WTSE), a hip-hop festival in Tashkent, Uzbekistan; and Stihia, a government-supported electronic music festival near the Aral Sea. These two festivals should be regarded as turning points in the struggle against artistic control between the individual and the state that came to define the collective Communist ethos. Electronic music then represents a totemic shift towards individual expression and can be construed as the contemporary vehicle for changing constructs of national identity.

## HIP-HOP AND HIGH CULTURE

As cultural theorist Raymond Williams asserts in *Culture*, “no full account of a particular formation or kind of formation can be given without extending description and analysis into general history” (Williams 1981, 85). It is commonplace that music has been instrumental in shaping national culture and cultural policy throughout the twentieth century; ethnomusicologist Jean During argues that similarities in language and culture aside, the “promotion of collective expression and the silencing of individual expression has been the most spectacular effect of musical policy in the Soviet world” (During 2005, 148). A crucial part of Stalin’s nation building aimed at creating distinct regional identities from the feudal peoples of the Soviet Union and elevating them to a more refined level of national culture. By promoting a nation-first mindset that implied the fraternity of Socialist peoples, Soviet Russia managed to fundamentally alter the individualistic [1] role of traditional music and ensure that future art would be heavily regulated (Spinetti 2005, 191; Levin and Qureshi 2002, 191; During 2005, 144). This attitude persists today, but has been slowly changing. A solo performer, even though they may be playing a traditional instrument, does not embody the same attributes of nation and culture in the eyes of the government as a group ensemble or orchestra playing nationalist music does, and thus may not be officially endorsed or even allowed to perform as the artist does not sufficiently represent the country.

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[1] ‘Traditional music’ in this context refers to music derived from a number of Soviet Central Asian ethnic minority groups that is normally performed with and created by one’s community and kin, and uses lyrics and/or rhythms that tell stories of local traditions, culture, and history through local language. This music can also be ‘individual’ in the sense that it highlights the skills of particular musicians or the life experiences of certain community figures, but overall, is clearly from a particular group.



Eventually, the public's continual exposure to Western popular music such as jazz, hip-hop, and techno caused the Soviet notion of high culture to give way to a more plural culture shared between "newer and older means of production, with the market dominant in the new reproductive technologies and subsidy most evident in the older 'live' forms" (Adams 2008, 623; Spinetti 2005, 194–95). Market shifts towards reproductive technologies are readily apparent today with digital streaming and YouTube, where Kirmse's consumers of globalised identities in central Asia are regional cultural marketplaces instead of individuals. While radio, TV, and cassette tapes were among the first methods of bringing foreign music and culture into the home, these mediums, subject to restriction and censorship, have since had to contend with new arrivals like the internet and digital music streaming. Compared to TV and radio, the effects of music streaming are compounded and the reachable audience expanded due to the near-instant communication and ease of dissemination the internet facilitates.

Like TV and radio, the internet is also subject to governmental regulation. But the nature of the internet provides individuals with more ways around censorship than a TV or radio broadcast did, like using a virtual private network (VPN). This access has given rise to new musical expression that in many ways has been formed in this online wrinkle - and one might argue that today, national community can be found in this uniquely individual expression as seen in Stihia and WTSE, and in central Asian electronic music in general. But the effect of Soviet nationalism on musical and cultural output can still be heard and felt in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, no matter the degree of talent or popularity of the artist. A DJ set or a hip-hop festival directly contradicts the controlled and unified face the state puts on for outsiders, mirroring Soviet attempts to adapt or eliminate individualistic music deemed of no use to a new society.

Today, central Asian rappers, producers, and DJs often face scrutiny, condemnation, or blacklisting for just this reason. Electronic music has been a crucial method of expression in contemporary Uzbek and Tajik societies thanks to the emergence of Kirmse's marketplace of influences that globalisation has created. Though the question of censorship in the region still lingers, particularly in Tajikistan, as of 2016 the new and more open Uzbek government has shown remarkable progress with regard to media independence as well as to addressing past misdeeds. In the era of digital streaming services, electronic music in Uzbekistan's cultural marketplace is finding new space to breathe not only in the form of festivals, but in the loosened regulation of nightclubs and television.

## ELECTRONIC MUSIC IN THE DESERT

The Dance Music Fest in Tashkent, for example, held its second iteration last year, an event not thought possible just a decade earlier given that pulsing rhythms are tricky to justify as promoting positive national values. And in September 2018, the government approved the Aral Sea electronic music festival Stihia despite setting the bar high for such ambitious events in Uzbekistan. The brainchild of Otabek Suleimanov - Uzbek lawyer by day, DJ by night (Telekom 2018, 3) - it aimed to capitalize on the recent governmental commitment to tourism and reform by merging electronic music, community, and environmental awareness with tourism. Government approval was critical to host an event that otherwise would have been an Uzbek Burning Man [2] or mere "abstract electronic music in the desert" in a remote part of Uzbekistan (Davies 2018, 3).

[2] Burning Man is an annual arts, culture, and music festival held in the desert in Nevada that is all about freedom, self-expression, love, and acceptance through music, counterculture, art, community, and alternative lifestyles. Commonly written off and stereotyped as merely a large hippie gathering, it's become more mainstream in recent years by including famous musicians in their lineup and receiving increased political support and societal acceptance.

To reap the economic benefits of tourism, the organisers created a host of events around the festival that included tours of ship graveyards and salt quarries led by locals in the nearby town of Moynaq. And the government was fully supportive, with the prime minister personally overseeing the plans and arranging a police convoy to accompany the shuttle busses (Davies 2018, 5; Telekom 2018, 3). Experimental electronic musicians, audiovisual artists, and DJs from across central Asia who for years had been part of the underground in-crowd in Almaty or Bishkek flocked to Stihia (Premiyak 2018). Artists included the Uzbek Orgatanatos,[3] Kazakh Nazira,[4] Tajik Maria Breslavets, Russian Dasha Redkina, and Georgian HVL, among many others. These festivals - WTSE, Dance Music Fest, and Stihia - were deeply meaningful to both attendees and musicians because decades long cultural policies had created a generation of bedroom producers and DJs who couldn't perform much, if at all, in public (Yellepeddi 2015).

Like Stihia, the 2017 World Through Student Eyes festival, organized by Uzbek art student Abbos Tamatov, aimed to capitalize on the appeal of hip-hop among young people. It was only possible after the ending of an unofficial ban imposed in 2011 (Eurasianet 2017, 1). Just a half-decade earlier, the government had broadcast a documentary called Melody and Calamity which assailed Western music - in particular hip-hop - because official sentiment was that rappers like Shoxrux, Shaxriyor, and Timsi had become too critical (Eurasianet 2017, 2). This ban was followed by a similar one in 2014 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, where hip-hop was deemed "alien to national and universal values" (Sodiqov 2014, 1).

### BARKING LIKE A DOG OR COLLECTIVE PRAYER?

Inevitably, hip-hop would come under fire for promoting a lifestyle that embraces self-expression, political and societal criticism, sexism, consumption, and money. (Sodiqov 2014; Von Rüdiger 2014, 116). How do BMWs and bling, or repeated, pulsating rhythms respect and promote national values? In the era of digital streaming, ideological dominance through cultural diplomacy is crucial for social cohesion. The rise in young artists making electronic music or rapping threatens pervasive ideas about the role music plays in nationhood and the way the nation is perceived abroad. The newfound communal and hybrid identities in electronic music, along with a general governmental wariness of public assembly, are fundamentally at odds with state attitude in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan because they threaten the Soviet ideals of nation-first that has been the status quo for decades. Yet in some places such as Uzbekistan, we see a willingness to open up to new forms of expression, even though the number of electronic producers remains few and rappers still face a hostile environment.

Rappers like S.O.R., Dorob YAN, Shon MC, and Ummon have been blacklisted in and from travelling to their countries, criticised, or outright banned for not being acceptably patriotic or just generally "meaningless" (Peleschuk 2013, 1). Others like M.One and Boron[5] have begun releasing songs with more patriotic lyrics instead of scathing political commentary due to harassment (Sodiqov 2014, 3-4; Bland 2016, 6). Thanks to globalisation, central Asian electronic music is often interspersed with samples of traditional instruments and vocals, and provides social commentary whilst maintaining a national flavour. A dual, hybrid identity is widespread in the music of rappers and DJs in the twenty-first century, reflecting the upbringing of its creators in lyric and theme, but drawing influence from the West via electronic beats (Bland 2016, para. 12; Sodiqov 2014, para. 3).

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[3] [www.orgatanatos.net](http://www.orgatanatos.net)

[4] [www.soundcloud.com/naziranazira](http://www.soundcloud.com/naziranazira)

[5] His 2016 single "Dear Motherland" was the first Hip-Hop video to be featured on Tajik state TV in two years.



Official opinion is still divided between supporting and resisting a changing culture like it is between the traditional and the modern. Even though states like Uzbekistan have taken steps to the left, the head of the local administration in Moynaq, for example, decided to pull the plug on Stihia once he saw it descend into a giant party. And to those present, that was “all the more frustrating since it came at a moment when the divide between the locals and guests appeared to finally dissipate” (Telekom 2018, 6). Some Tajiks like Shon MC’s critics see him “barking like a dog,” hoping that hip-hop isn’t the future for popular music, and then there are the villagers of Moynaq who are “all having lots of fun, even though for us this is very strange... it sure feels like one big collective prayer” (Telekom 2018, 5). In response to the criticisms of Shon MC, the arguments of Kirmse, and sociologists Vincent Mosco and Laura Adams are useful, where Adams argues that “while Central Asian young people consume American rap music...they also produce their own rap music where Hip-Hop is understood as a universal cultural form” (Adams 2008, 635).

## CONCLUSION

The greater struggle between the state and youth and between the past and present aligns with Mosco in that cyberspace and the digital age invoke both a “desire to retain our individuality and yet participate fully in a collective community” and “the wish to control our circumstances, even as we also desire to give up some control to bring about a more democratic society” (Mosco 2004, 28). Creative freedom has emerged in central Asia today as a reaction to political control through art and electronic music, where the young, influenced by Western culture and the internet, have found a way to achieve emancipatory expression through critiquing policy and life.[6] Kirmse’s theory of plural worlds is playing out in the cultural and musical marketplaces of central Asia, further highlighting the continual nature of globalisation manifesting itself as a platter of styles and identities.

Over time, changing norms, growing economies, and the collective power of internet assembly will inevitably drive local interpretations of foreign music and art (Wang 2004, 12). In the post-cassette era, ideological dominance through cultural diplomacy is still crucial as young electronic artists can threaten constructs about the nation without using lyrics (Davies 2018, 7). And while resistance to change is always strong at first, electronic music is evidence that national identity is becoming flexible, individualised, and globalised through younger generations in central Asia. Festivals like Stihia and WTSE remind us how effectively Westernisation has forced the hand of former Soviet states in cultural diplomacy as the footfalls of globalisation lumber toward the finish line.

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[6] See Usama Kahf in (Von Rüdiger 2014, 1)

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## AWAY / A WAY: ARTISTIC MOBILITY AND THE POLITICS OF INCLUSION IN THE ART RESIDENCY CULTURE

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### ABSTRACT

This paper critically reflects on mobility as a contemporary paradigm by looking at the artistic mobility and the politics of inclusion/exclusion within art residency culture. In recent years, art residencies have gained momentum as a core stage in the development of many young practitioners, and they take place in a plethora of places, practices and models. The official institutional discourse portrays art residency culture as an open field accessible to a globalised supercommunity and as a way to internationalise contemporary art by connecting the local with the global art world. After presenting an overview of art residency culture, its role and relevance within the contemporary art world and for artistic careers, the paper employs two case studies. The first, a review of an ethnography of an alternative residency in São Paulo, Brazil, complexifies notions of *centre* and *periphery* within the art residency network. The second presents an emblematic example of the creation of an online skills market to access residencies. The two cases are linked by an overview of EU policy documents and frameworks, and open calls and regulations of institutions hosting international residencies through which issues affecting artistic mobility are explored. Even though the paper makes the point that there is no such thing as a completely peripheral residency, it also highlights that the whole art residency culture seems to sustain an institutional model that may exacerbate the already precarious working conditions of artists.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Valeria Bevilacqua trained as an anthropologist, earning a BA degree in Anthropology and Philosophy at the University of Siena and an MA in Medical Anthropology at SOAS, University of London. Following her call to the East, Bevilacqua moved to India where she worked as a researcher for the Public Health Evidence South Asia (PHESA) centre of Manipal University. She's co-founder of Resina, a nonprofit cultural organisation which runs and curates a yearly international residency programme in Ferrara, Italy. In the attempt to insert her work in a broader research framework, she returned to SOAS in 2018-2019 for an MPhil with a research project investigating the relevance of art residencies and mobility in the global contemporary art world. She recently joined the Master in Arts Management and Administration (MAMA) at Bocconi University in Milan and wishes to continue nourishing her passion for the arts by merging research, project management, curating, and consulting.



## INTRODUCTION

I would like to open up this paper by challenging the idea that “mobility has become the paradigm of our times.”[1] In fact, has it for artists?



Figure 1. Gilbert Spencer, *An Artist's Progress*, 1959  
© Royal Academy of Arts. Photo: John Hammond

I introduce this first section by quoting the curator and art educator Miwon Kwon, whom in her evocative book *One Place after Another: Site-Specific Art and Locational Identity*, provocatively brings us to reflect on the multiple frictions of mobility, the intrinsic value that “the logic of nomadism,” as she calls it, acquires for artists and art practitioners and how it collides powerfully with an affective dimension:

[t]he success and viability of one's work are now measured by the accumulation of frequent flyer miles. The more we travel for work, the more we are called upon to provide institutions in other parts of the country and the world with our presence and services, the more we give in to the logic of nomadism, one could say, the more we are made to feel wanted, needed, validated, and relevant (Kwon 2002:156-57).

Artistic practice has historically been linked with mobility, travel, and tourism, and is well documented in history and art history[2] (Vasari 1988[1568]; Avcioglu and Flood 2010; Elfving et al. 2019; Horowitz 2014; Kim 2014). Since the late Middle Ages, “it has been a prerequisite for artists and craftspeople to travel for a number of years before earning their master status” (Zyman 2018:33). Throughout history, art centres, travel, and pilgrimage routes may have changed, but “themes such as mobility, travels, and the quest for inspiration, learning and unlearning through exchange,” and “the utilitarianism that accompanies being on the move” remain fundamental underpinnings of the artistic practice (ibid.). Long before we found a terminology for what we now call an art residency, artists were already taking part in immersive cultural experiences in different contexts away from home. For example, as Rio de Janeiro-based residency curator and producer Helmut Batista narrates,

[1] This paper critically responds to the leading statement of the SOAS Doctoral Conference on Mobility, Migration and Borders held in March 2019, which it was originally written for.

[2] At least, from a Euro-centric perspective.



The Villa Medici is more than 400 years old and is probably the oldest art residency on the globe. When Da Vinci created his beautiful machines in some French castle, by invitation, he was probably in an art residency, as artists are today. He was earning his living and building his CV (Batista 2019:78).

Nowadays, the Villa Medici is home to the French Academy in Rome and continues to offer residency programmes open to all fields of literary and artistic creation, history of art as well as works of art and monuments restoration to “fellows known as ‘pensionnaires’” (Transartist, Villa Medici). Since “the XVIIth century, it has hosted artists and scholars among whom Fragonard, Ingres, Berlioz, Carpeaux, Bizet, Debussy, Garnier” [ibid.].

The mobility entailed by art residencies is both physical/geographical, as well as emotionally and value charged. Residencies abroad are temporary time-outs away from one’s everyday life; they also mark a metaphoric journey to find a way within one’s self and one’s practice.

## ROLE AND RELEVANCE OF ART RESIDENCIES IN THE CONTEMPORARY ART WORLD

Institutional patterns of art residencies as we know them today began to develop “in the post-war period and then spread rapidly from the 1990s on and in this process, they have become a legitimate pillar of cultural promotion in many countries” (Glauser 2018:43). Western centres of contemporary art - such as London, Paris, New York - set the model for the art residencies to come, which have then begun to spring from the so-called peripheries (Vogel 2018:135) - megacities of the Global South, rural settings, secluded areas immersed in nature. Art residency can, perhaps, be seen as an umbrella term for a constellation of places, a plethora of models and heterogeneous practices as well as a multitude of actors, both human (artists, curators, programme organisers, patrons, hosting community) and nonhuman (institutions, money flows, buildings, artworks, visas, value), revolving around a common mission: cultural promotion, exchange, international networking, as well as “understanding of and insight into local culture, engage[ment] with the local art scene” (OTM 2019). Moreover, art residencies appear to be increasingly in the target of cultural policy initiatives, as a key instrument in urban development and community planning (Elfving et al. 2019; Lithgow and Wall 2018).

Although the European Commission’s Policy Handbook on Artists’ Residencies (EU OMC, 2014) identifies “clear barriers causing imbalance” (ibid.:59) and calls for “more easily accessible information on practical, mobility related issues [...] across Europe and beyond” (ibid.:63), the official institutional discourse still portrays art residency culture as an open field accessible to a globalised supercommunity and as a way to internationalise contemporary art by connecting art worlds, the local with the global, in a sort of “pluralism through connections” whereby “the specificity of an art world is based on its locally normative debates in combination with how it is stretching out to international discourses” (Fillitz 2018:101).

What needs to be singled out as a peculiar feature of the art residency is its capacity to act as a microcosm with a geographic and ethnographic specificity - with a life of its own, one that encapsulates, condenses, appropriates, and redefines art and the global at local level. And, simultaneously, each art residency exists as a hyperdependent, minuscule tile of that very nuanced, stratified, complex global art mosaic. A mode that not only survives but thrives in the global art world, the art residency model has succeeded in carving out for itself a strategic space and function. A juncture where the global is injected in the local, and the local acquires global reach, for instance “[f]rom within the post-industrial warehouses of the London East End” (Acme Studios 2012:18). A node where “‘periphery’ and ‘centre’ converge in a global perspective” (Vogel 2018:135) and are woven together in the liminal time-space of hospitality and host-guest exchange and reciprocity, as well as through mobility and network creation.



I propose that what lies beneath and contributes to the fortune of art residency culture is precisely the fact that it encompasses a heterogeneity of models, forms, and practices. This fluidity allows the residency to occupy a multiplicity of spaces within the global contemporary art worlds: from reinforcing neoliberal dynamics and structural imbalances between centres and peripheries, to infiltrating and disrupting gaps and cracks between the institutional and noninstitutional, and opening up the possibility for radical experimental affordances of existence, of living together - for those who organise and host, those who participate, and - in certain cases - the surrounding/hosting community. However, as scholars have warned, art residencies could in fact “isolat[e] practitioners while aiming to bring them together” (Elfving and Kokko 2019:23). They are surely, in part, also feeding competition - from one open call to the next - even when “encouraging sharing and critical reflection” (ibid.).

Another reason that perhaps contributes to the “thriving phenomenon” of art residency culture (EU OMC 2014:23) is its role as a control mechanism, a disciplining bottleneck, which establishes who and how, especially artists but curators too, can progress from MFAs to the higher echelons of the art world. It has been pointed out that “as most artists will only very rarely be able to actively participate in biennials,” the logic underlying global circuits is “arguably much more fully represented by the culture of residencies” than by that of biennials (Hodge and Yousefi 2015:4).

### ART RESIDENCIES’ INSTITUTIONAL LANDSCAPE: CENTRES AND PERIPHERIES

The complexity of the institutional landscape of the art residency culture is decisively related on the one hand to where and which studios are offered for artists, and on the other hand from which places and for whom they are accessible at all. As clearly visible in the figure below - an attempt of ResArtis [3] to map residencies worldwide (468 organisations and related networks and collaborations wherever available) - there are considerable differences with regard to the distribution and density of programmes.

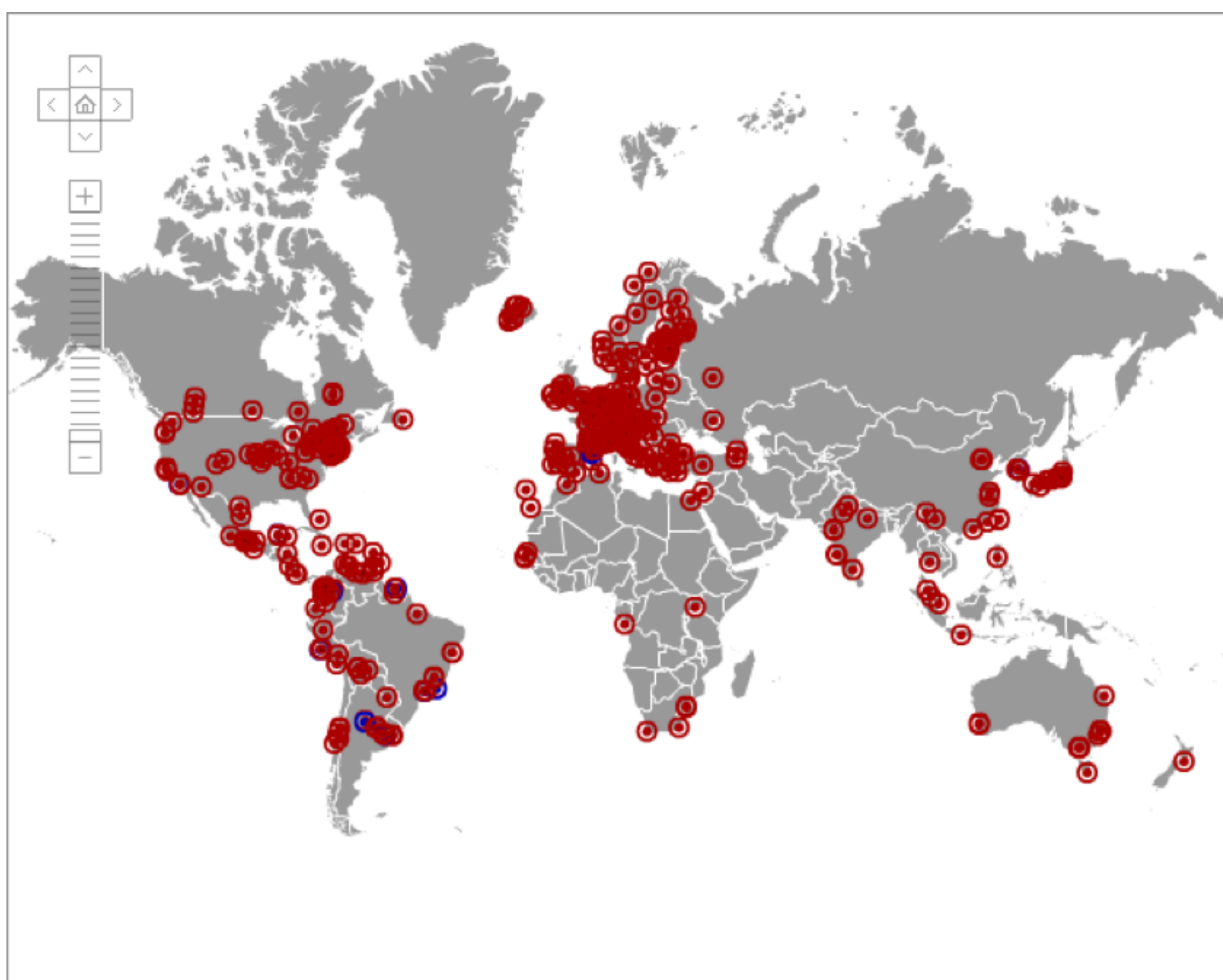


Figure 2. ResArtis Mapping  
© ResArtis [http://www.resartis.org/resartis\\_mapping/map/](http://www.resartis.org/resartis_mapping/map/)

[3] Res Artis is active since 1993 and is “the largest network of its kind” bringing together over 650 centers, organisations, and individuals in over 70 countries with the aim of “promoting the role of residential art programs as a vital part of the contemporary arts world, stimulating the creative development and mobility of artists, and furthering intercultural understanding”. Available at <http://www.resartis.org/en/about/> [accessed 24 July 2019].

This distribution, although ever-changing, shows existing imbalances and a predominance of residency opportunities in the West/Global North, followed by postcolonial countries included in the art market, i.e., the Global South, Eastern Europe, and Asia.

The European Union's Operational Study Mobility Scheme for Artists and Culture Professionals in Creative Europe countries (EU OTM 2019) also points to existing imbalances across Europe, which reinforce existing social, economic, and cultural asymmetries and mobility-related practices. Even though the document looks at the European context, the structural imbalances identified: "access to information and knowledge, including language barriers; access to funding and different costs of living; policy priorities regarding mobility (including the relevance given to the notion of 'reciprocity') [...] and the different impact of budget cuts" (ibid.:23) speak to the global context more at large. These asymmetries - embedded in more comprehensive patterns of Western hegemony - have been addressed again and again not only in cultural policy and artistic practice, but also in cultural and social science studies on art and globalisation. However, it is important to maintain that "the borders between [...] centres and peripheries have become less certain" also due to "digitalization" (Elfving and Kokko 2019:24).

Through the example of Alex Flynn's ethnography of an alternative, noninstitutional art residency in an occupation in São Paulo, Brazil (Flynn 2018), I further the argument that there is no such thing as a completely peripheral residency because art residencies are located at the crossing of various axes. There may be cases, such as the following, to which I refer to as peripheral centres or central peripheries. Flynn's is an example of a (questionably) anti-institutional residency, located in the Global South, but nonetheless very much central in terms of re-signification of places and practices, knowledge production, host-guest participation, and visibility - and let's not forget that its ethnography is now circulating among an academic readership, most likely in the Global North.

Whereas the point has been made that "it is especially crucial that art residencies situate themselves" (Elfving and Kokko 2019:21), I maintain that it is equally important that researchers are able to do so, as these are located at interesting "intersections of axes" (Flynn 2018:180, 187, 195) - local and global, Global North and Global South; aesthetics and politics; artistic and activist intervention; the ephemeral, the utopian and the mercantile; the horizontal and the vertical; between reinforcing neoliberal dynamics and resisting/subverting them.

### CASE STUDY 1: RESIDÊNCIA ARTÍSTICA CAMBRIDGE, SÃO PAULO

In 2016-2017, the anthropologist Alex Flynn co-curated, alongside other local collaborators, the Residência Artística Cambridge where a group of artists were invited for a period of three months, with a focus on noncommercial, ephemeral art. The residency was hosted in the Occupation Hotel Cambridge, a formerly luxury hotel, which since 2012 had been occupied by the Movimento dos Sem Teto do Centro (Movement of Homeless in the Centre), itself part of a wider collective, the Frente de Luta por Moradia (FLM, Front for Just Housing). This collective articulates the struggle for a right to a home within "a very specific and hostile context: São Paulo is one of the most unequal cities in the world, characterized as a series of fortified enclaves" (Flynn 2018:187). A community and a politically entangled space which the artists- and curators-in-residence cohabited and coexisted with, the residency "responded to, and articulated, a very different understanding of contemporary art practice" (ibid.).





Figure 3. Front, Occupation Hotel Cambridge ©Alex Flynn  
PLURAL, Revista do Programa de Pós-Graduação em Sociologia da USP, São Paulo, v.25.2, 2018, p.20-45



Figure 4. Rooftop, Occupation Hotel Cambridge  
©Alex Flynn <https://www.alexflynn.net/Residencia-Artistica-Cambridge>





Figure 5. Occupants, Occupation Hotel Cambridge  
 ©Alex Flynn <https://www.alexflynn.net/Residencia-Artistica-Cambridge>

Independent, experimental, and entirely unfunded, the Residência followed the urge of its organisers and participants to “explicitly position itself against more commercial contemporary art enterprises” (Flynn 2018:187) and was conceived as an artistic (not activist) act of “epistemic disobedience” (Mignolo 2011:122-23 in *ibid.*:180). Flynn points to the rising importance of “contemporary art practitioners’ and participants’ particular role as theorizing agents” (*ibid.*:181) in the Global South. This calls into debate a notion of participation and collaboration at border zones of art world and non-art world spaces which operate in activating relations and hierarchies from concrete everyday life. What the Residência managed to do, even if unintendedly, was to create a transit of ideas within and without the perimeters of the hotel which contributed to the reappropriation and re-signification of what occupation could be. In the period when the Residência was active, the mayor of São Paulo gave a campaign speech in the library; the occupation applied for formal recognition as a cultural space; a Brazilian cinema actress gave a talk at the cine club; and a whole series of relationships between residents and project participants were forged, “a process that would never have occurred if the project had taken place over a shorter period of time” (*ibid.*:194). Responding to the problems “inherent in reconciling the specificity of the local with the problems of representation of the global [...] the curators resisted the idea that the project could continue beyond its designated time-frame” (*ibid.*:194-195).

The case of the Residência presents a problematic and questionable relationship vis-à-vis institutional and power dynamics. Existing without financial sponsorship was allowed by the fact that “all the artist within the Residência were contracted to powerful commercial galleries” (Flynn 2018:188); in other words, the sustainability of the Residência was possible by virtue of the dependency on the very institutional dynamics that it aimed to criticise.

### ROLE AND RELEVANCE OF RESIDENCIES FOR EMERGING ARTISTS

As shown so far, and more specifically through the map and the first case study, art residency can be seen as an umbrella term for a constellation of places, a plethora of models, configurations, and practices as well as a multitude of actors, both human and nonhuman, some of which move more easily or more rapidly than others.

For practitioners in the arts, collecting residency experiences is considered evidence of a successful career, presented as a key section in biographies and CVs, and seems to act as a currency for young, emerging artists to acquire status and value by virtue of being mobile, of circulating, of being nomadic.



The art residency positions itself as both a physical and a conceptual place: whereby the locally situated studio is indeed immersed in a vivid, thick, Other everyday life, it also appears as a flashing node in a much-aspired global network. The art residency culture produces concrete networks and “networks on imaginary maps” (Vogel 2018:137), also defined as “cosmopolitan imagination” (Roesler 2015:471) and “cosmopolitics” (Elfving 2018:6). The aim of these “temporary re-locations into new contexts” is “not necessarily the production of new works, but primarily the broadening of experiences and horizons” (Vogel 2018:137). One may wonder whether this makes a residency essentially a retreat, and artists-in-residence tourists. According to art historian and curator Daniela Zyman, an artist-in-residence “simultaneously assumes an ‘outside’ position while being required to work from within” (Zyman 2018:35). Her position “complicates different forms of localities: her own with the one present at the residency site and possibly that of other migrant localities of the artistic diaspora” (ibid.).

A resident, in the truest sense of the word, is an occupant, an inhabitant indeed. Hence, “an artist in residence cannot be viewed as a traveller nor as a tourist en route for pleasure” (ibid). It becomes crucial to qualify the mobility entailed by art residencies in times when the art world is accelerating its global circulation at a dizzying pace, and mass tourism, carbon footprint, massive migrant and refugee flows, and environmental and geopolitical urgencies are deeply affecting the world we live in. As clearly pointed out by Taru Elfving and Irmeli Kokko, co-authors and editors of *Contemporary Artist Residencies: Reclaiming Time and Space*, one of the most recent publications on the topic, the role of residencies

is to counter this very acceleration as support structures for artistic development, offering time-space for creative processes and momentary retreats for critical reflection. Their role is thus to recognize and nurture diverse temporalities rather than succumb to the productivist ethos of homogeneous linear time (Elfing and Kokko 2019:21).

Whereas participating in a residency can be seen as a privilege, in the following paragraphs, I will explore how demanding the path to get a place in a residency reveals to be, as well as the hardships of being in residence.

## THE ARTIST’S JOURNEY TO BECOME ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

The residency’s journey begins at home [4], much before the actual residency abroad. The artist first needs to find a call for which she is eligible. Being eligible means, essentially, to comply with all the requirements. These span from age limit, to nationality and proficiency in the working language (usually English), to level of education and years of work experience, to specific types of artistic practice, and - most importantly - the availability (and not only temporal) to participate in the programme. Striking, in this respect, is the very last point in the call for applications’ guidelines of the Arts and Culture Division of the Federal Chancellery of Austria: “Neither the community studios nor the apartments are equipped for the needs of disabled” (Federal Chancellery of Austria 2019).

In practical terms, as also recognised by the EU policy documents, the aspiration to participate in a residency is usually grounded in an already “precarious employment and related financial situation” (EU OTM 2019:31). Artists and culture professionals

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[4] Or, remotely, anywhere with an internet connection.

often don't have the means to take part in long mobility experiences. Even when funding is available, they have other professional and private considerations, such as part-time jobs, employer-employee relationships, temporary contracts, other co-productions as well as private life that cannot be relocated on a temporary basis (ibid.).

Another issue is that not all residencies come with a grant that covers all the expenses and provide a stipend; on the contrary, many ask hefty fees. This means that the applicant will have to either cover those costs (ranging from travel and living expenses to accommodation and production costs) from her pockets or find a public or private sponsor at home - more applications, more unpaid labour.

Once the financial aspects are settled, next comes the residency application. CV, portfolio, reference/invitation letters, and a coherent project that will be developed on-site are usually required. The unpaid intellectual, immaterial, affective labour involved in application processes is an inescapable part of an early career artist, researcher, and cultural worker. Even the international policy framework now acknowledges that these "long 'research and development' phases [...] remain unremunerated" (EU OTM 2019:23). This speaks to a larger trend in cultural studies on precarity and artistic-cultural work, whereby the artist is identified with the post-Fordist worker par excellence (Boltanski and Chiappello 2005; Gill and Pratt 2008; Power 2015), always flexible and ready to put her soul constantly at work (Berardi 2009).

The institution or organisation offering a residency programme publishes or advertises calls for applications mostly on their website, often on online platforms/databases with residency listings, such as ResArtis and TransArtist [5], but also via social media (e.g., Instagram is becoming more and more popular in these terms). Sending and receiving institutions internationally often partner to mobilise artists' flows as well as financial flows, and to even out or facilitate the legal and bureaucratic aspects of travel and border crossing. Each receiving institution's regulations, requirements, and restrictions are made clear and contribute to set the institution's positionality and discourse.

The selection procedure involves the "subjective evaluation" of a panel of experts (Stecher 2018:111) who use "the quality of artistic work (or the 'potential' of the artist) as a key award criterion while it does not take into account the criterion of economic indigence" and hence "identifies the beneficiaries as producers worthy of support" (ibid.). This raises two fundamental questions of what is considered legitimate art worthy of support and who is a legitimate beneficiary. In other words, it is a matter of identifying who better fits the discourse of the hosting institution.

Whereas being selected may be conducive to "self-esteem and other psychological benefits, through the recognition of one's work that is embodied in the reception of a grant" (EU OTM 2019:20) and more, "is tantamount to a consecration" (Glauser 2018:111), many are deemed unfit and left behind. A relevant question here is: How many applications one has to fail before getting officially recognised?

Last but not least, obtaining the documents to travel abroad is another issue that may often create complications, especially when there are not already established agreements between the sending country (or patron or institution) and the hosting or receiving institution.

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[5] TransArtists.org is a platform for artist-in-residence information, resources and knowledge, part of DutchCulture, Centre for International Cooperation <https://www.transartists.org> [accessed 24 July 2019].



## “CASE STUDY 2: THE INTERNATIONAL ARTIST™”

The good news is there are people out there to help emerging artists get a place in a residency. For example, the Australian ceramic artist and multi-residency participant Amy Kennedy offers through her website The International Artist™, a six weeks customised programme “to land the international artist residency of your dreams” (Kennedy 2019). Her online course and tailored Skype counselling is available only to five selected participants for the “modest” sum of 997 Australian dollars (approximately 556.50 £)[6]. Mind, though, that this programme is for artists who: “are fully committed to their Art; have some experience (though it doesn’t need to be a lot); have a unique artistic voice” (ibid.). Again, we see the usual tropes of commitment, engagement, experience, and “uniqueness” popping up. Once more, I ask: can these be measured? If so, how? And by whom?

Amy doesn’t take risks and states that her programme “cannot guarantee success in being selected for an International Artist Residency.” However, she “will do all [she] can to put you in the best position possible for potential success” (ibid.). And, should you not land the residency of your dreams, “payment is non-refundable” (ibid.).

## NETWORK AND NETWORKING

In the art residency discourse of recent years, a central element is the topos of “removing boundaries” (Glauser 2018:45). The so-called “institutional ‘trans’ ideology” poses “the borders of nation states [as] the entities to be transcended” (ibid.). This is possible through a relatively rapid flow and assemblage of infrastructures that create the conditions for a residency to happen and unfold, where localities, identities, routes, roots, relationships, economic flows, aesthetics, value, aspirations, power structure, and affect converge and are played out in manifold ways.

Understood in a general sense, “a network is simply a collection of interconnected systems. When these systems are associated organisations that pursue the same goal, a network is capable of creating synergies that strengthen its components and boost innovation capacity” (Cámara and Velasco 2015:5). Expanding the notion of socialising as a compulsory means of securing future work (McRobbie 2002; Gill and Pratt 2008) propose a more articulate notion where “‘networking’ is less about ‘schmoozing’ the powerful than ‘chilling’ with friends, co-workers and people who share similar interests and enthusiasms” (Gill and Pratt 2008:26). In other words, sometimes networking may be seen as compulsory sociality (Gregg 2011 in ibid. :) required to survive in a field; at other times it may be pleasurable hanging out (Pratt, 2006 in ibid.). Often, it is both. For other researchers, the word network is “most productively read in relation to the career-building strategy of ‘networking’” (Hodge and Yousefi 2015:4).

The ambivalent character of networking is reflected by the accounts of a broad range of international artists and curators contributing to “Network,” the second issue of Mapping Residencies magazine (Cámara and Velasco 2015). Here, networking is defined as key for every artist’s career and identified with the skills of building personal contacts; finding the right people, platforms, contexts, and trends; and constructing networks that can lead to collaboration, production of new work, and funding opportunities. Networking is said to be important to put one’s work in perspective and not to work in isolation. Attending conferences and events related to one’s area of practice and research are important networking platforms. However, networking is a matter of investing time, money, and resources. For artists who live in cultural centres such as London or Berlin, there are many networking opportunities, but the cost of living and producing work in those places is high; for those outside of these hubs, the expense and difficulty of travel can be high too.

[6] Currency conversion retrieved from <https://transferwise.com/gb/currency-converter/aud-to-gbp-rate?amount=1> [accessed 27 July 2019].

Time emerges powerfully as problematic and difficult in many respects. Time dedicated to creative work may exert heavy costs on, or even prohibit, relationships outside of work with friends, partners, and children (Gill and Pratt, 2008). Moreover, “the absurd circle [of] not having enough time (and personal or institutional resources) to research, travel, do studio visits” may undermine the artist’s professional practice and their possibilities to find a better job in the field (Alampi, 2018). In respect to residencies, “maintaining the balance between networking and art-making during residencies” is perceived as crucial, but “easier said than done” (Cámara and Velasco 2015:33).

## CONCLUSIVE REMARKS

As this paper has shown, art residency culture remains a privileged arena permeated by structural inequalities and typical features of post-Fordist work: competition, self-exploitation, and precarity. Moreover, it is not anymore a question of whether an application is successful, but of who gets to be mobile.

Networking is very much based on informal, face-to-face contacts: in this context “the physical proximity to other players of this field is an absolute must for an international career or the inclusion in relevant network” (Glauser, 2018:47). For artists from countries which hardly have such instruments, this means a restriction of artistic practice to local contexts (ibid.). Hereby, the support from local governmental and nongovernmental cultural promotion institutions to the ability of artists to globalise is of vital importance.

For young artists from the Global South, participation in relevant art residency programme frequently is the only opportunity for (lawfully) staying in arts centres in the Global North for a longer period [...]. And even if you have an art scholarship, you are not immune to border-crossing problems – and without such an institutional framework, participation remains very difficult indeed (Glauser 2018:47).

While few are deemed fit, worthy, or deserving to enter and circulate through the art residency network, many others - deemed, more or less explicitly, unfit, unworthy, undeserving - remain behind/outside of it.

Hospitality and reciprocity can be seen in other main tropes around art residencies. Hosting institutions and organisations usually provide and cater for accommodation and studio space and encourage opportunities to network with the local artistic and cultural scene. As the focus is shifting more and more to the process, and less and less on a final product, work on site-specific projects which engage with the host context becomes crucial. Residencies, even when defined as nonprescriptive<sup>[7]</sup> in terms of producing a final exhibition, tend to expect participants to contribute with something (e.g., an open studio, a presentation, a workshop) and encourage interaction and dialogue with local audiences.

As explored by this paper, the affective dimension encompasses the residency journey: making it through the application and selection processes, then the physical journey itself, the extenuating process of finding one’s bearings within - and adapting to - the ever-new residency environments which may differ greatly from those at home. As it has been pointed out, “an artist in residence is required to be sensitive, schooled in critical theory, have her perception sharpened by experience, and be able to navigate the nomadic settings that have become her stage” (Zyman: 2018:35), which include maintaining an enhanced performativity.

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[7] Gasworks, About Residencies <https://www.gasworks.org.uk/residencies/about>.

Primarily structured as “an agonistic competition between individualised agents” (Hodge and Yousefi 2019:3), the solitude and isolation felt by artists-in-residence could be other nuances of the affective dimensions at play, to be researched in the field. Maintaining both the transnational bonds and the professional relationships emerged in residence with the temporary cluster of fellow participants - whose life trajectories after the shared residency experience may take clear-cut, opposite geographic directions - residency-goers are made to bear a heavier emotional toll than anyone else involved in the residency network. This raises questions about the impact of a high-intensity residency on personal and professional life, well-being, and mental health. Furthermore, residencies’ inevitably temporariness is said to “militate against the formation of lasting collective bonds” (ibid.:4) which “undermin[e] the formation of collective solidarities” (ibid.:3).

The scholarly tendency to focus on “artists who are internationally acclaimed figures, artists with a capital A whose work has been exhibited in major sites, had significant market-place value, were part of major private and public collections, and had attracted extensive critical commentary” (Grimshaw and Ravetz 2015:424) is widespread (Belting et al. 2013; García Canclini 2014; Osborne 2013; Schneider 1993; Thornton 2014, 2009). This, however, does not seem an acceptable research framework, both on ethical grounds and of academic rigour. By focusing on artists who have become known and control the market - and the literature, as it seems - we in turn remove, neglect, and make invisible all of those artists who do not wish to be or never will be known, who may be marginalised or liminal, and exist in other peripheral centres or central peripheries. Researching the young generation of artists across the globe in their everyday, unfancy residency stories of rejection and pain, and perhaps even boredom, a zoom on precarious artistic work through an affect framework is a zoom on the contemporary, its contradictions, failures, and fissures. In this respect, unpleasant affective experiences need to be theorised to furnish a full understanding of the experience of artistic-cultural work.



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# THE RAMBLING GUITARIST: GENDER, GENRE, AND ARCHETYPES IN NIKKATSU ACTION'S MUKOKUSEKI EIGA

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## ABSTRACT

For Japan's oldest film studio Nikkatsu, the late-'50s and early-'60s represented a rapidly evolving, cosmopolitan playground in which Eastern and Western influences could be collided together in an explosive mix that ultimately resulted in movies that felt quite apart from either. These were the *mukokuseki eiga* (borderless or of no nationality), typified by Nikkatsu's nine-part *wataridori* (wanderer) series produced from 1959-1962. The first film in the series, *The Rambling Guitarist* (*Gitaa o motta wataridori*), stands as a prime candidate through which to better understand the precise appeal of these films as well as the way their settings and characters captured a new, worldly aesthetic. Through a close analysis of *The Rambling Guitarist*, and more specifically, the way it presents and challenges various gender archetypes, this essay will look to present a snapshot of what Nikkatsu Action represented, straddling the borderline between two camps; East and West, old and new, tradition and modernity.

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## INTRODUCTION

Nikkatsu Action - a new, exciting cinematic genre to cater to a new, exciting generation of Japanese youth who were quickly developing an appetite for the blend of Eastern and Western influences that characterised Japan in the 1950s and '60s. Film critic and scholar Mark Schilling details in his book *No Borders No Limits*, “To young audiences growing to adulthood in post-war Japan, that mix was not just fantasy: it reflected the Western influences all around them”.[1] And yet, while this mix was “not just fantasy,” it retained an element of the imaginary; namely that these notions of East and West existed purely as tropes; abstract concepts created purely through mediums such as cinema itself, or via popular products and marketing. The very appeal of this fantasy was that it situated Japanese cinema as part of a wider global (i.e., predominantly Western) cinema, allowing it to draw on a cinematic language and aesthetic symbolism developed abroad whilst pairing it with uniquely Japanese content.[2]

Schilling's book represents one of the few in-depth studies to date on the subject of Nikkatsu's action movie output, with these films typically glossed over in wider studies of Japanese cinema due to their disposability as populist B-movie content. Little individual auteurist input is attributed to them, and more famed, artistically inclined directors such as Seijun Suzuki are typically prioritised in histories of this era. As such, the opportunity to glean valuable insights in terms of the kinds of representations of gender stereotypes, aesthetics, and ideals that Japanese audiences of the time valued have been largely missed so far.[3]

Released in 1959, *The Rambling Guitarist* (*Gitaa o motta wataridori*) is the first in the nine-film *wataridori* (wanderer) series produced by Nikkatsu from 1959-1962. Directed by Buichi Saito and starring Akira Kobayashi in the leading role of the titular wanderer Shinji Taki, the film plays out in the northern port town of Hakodate as Taki finds himself embroiled with the local yakuza. Mob boss Akitsu (Nobuo Kaneko) tasks Taki with evicting a family-run fishery, and it is within this context that Taki must also contend with a romantic entanglement with Akitsu's daughter (Ruriko Asaoka), as well as a recurring foe from the past in the form of pistol-wielding hitman George (Joe Shishido).

January 2016 saw *The Rambling Guitarist* released on home video for the first time in the UK via a new high-definition Blu-ray transfer on Arrow Video's Nikkatsu Diamond Guys compilation set [4]; directly referencing the film's position within the wider context of Nikkatsu's powerful star system of the time, in which their lineup of Diamond Guys would slot interchangeably into their latest action movies.[5] With this powerful stable of big-name, male talent at their disposal, Nikkatsu was able to efficiently crank out an immense volume of highly populist material. While often referred to as belonging to pulp movie culture[6], it is precisely for this reason that the Nikkatsu Action films make for such an intriguing case study. Working within the medium of bold character types and off-the-hanger genre tropes, there is a marked standard by which to measure the way these films present themselves to their audience.

As Tom Mes writes in the booklet that accompanies the Arrow Video release of the film: “The Rambling Guitarist is as archetypal a genre film as can be. But it is also jauntily playful with those archetypes, making it an exuberant reminder of the timeless, and borderless, appeal of popular cinema.”[7]

[1] Schilling, Mark (2007) *No Borders No Limits*. Godalming: FAB Press, p.5.

[2] Russell, Catherine (2010) *Japanese cinema in the global system: an Asian classical cinema in China Review*, pp.15-36.

[3] Field, Simon (1994) *Branded to thrill: the delirious cinema of Suzuki Seijun*. London: British Film Inst.

[4] (2016) *Nikkatsu Diamond Guys* Volume 1. Shenley: Arrow Video.

[5] Powers, Richard, Hidetoshi Katō, Bruce Stronach (eds.) (1989) *Handbook of Japanese Popular Culture*. Santa Barbara: Greenwood Press, p.119.

[6] Miller, Adam Lee (2018) 'Color and Chaos: Unpacking the mise-en-scène of Tokyo Drifter's reshot finale. *Mise-en-scène*'. *The Journal of Film & Visual Narration*, 3(2).

[7] Mes, Tom (2016) 'North By Northwest: The timeless adventures of a rambling guitarist' in *Nikkatsu Diamond Guys* Volume 1. Shenley: Arrow Video, p.34.



The question of well-known tropes such as tradition and modernity, or the dynamic between East and West, is an important one to consider in relation to the film's status as a populist work; namely, works produced within a systematic construct of familiar stars, directors, studios, and genres in thousands of theatres across Japan.[8] Here, audience reception could be courted and standardised; appetites for particular kinds of characters and tropes smoothed into a formulaic equation that built on what came before, informed by a built-in audience awareness of what they were consuming. Thus, a reading of a film like *The Rambling Guitarist* is one inherently linked to its open engagement (to an almost obsessive degree) with tropes, and the cultural mixing this allows it to engage with.

### A MAN'S WORLD - MASCULINE POWER AND HONOUR

As part of Nikkatsu Action's production-line output of Diamond Guys films, *The Rambling Guitarist* is by definition a star-vehicle movie, precision designed to present male lead Akira Kobayashi in the most attractive way possible. From his dress sense (T-shirt and leather jacket) to his ability to handle himself in a fight, his every move within the film is a calculated effort to evoke a clear sense of cool. While his persona as a kind of Japanese Elvis,[9] who sings and charms his way through Hakodate is arguably riddled with cliché and excess (the theme song that Kobayashi sings in the movie is repeated no fewer than six times), it is these same elements that shape the character of Taki into something embodying just as much of the mukokuseki aesthetic as the film's East-meets-West setting. His titular guitar might ooze Western style and stand as the most overt signifier of an old-school cowboy feel, but crucially, the song he's singing is in Japanese. What's more, the pop tune feel of the song openly amplifies the film's already populist aesthetic; in essence replicating auditorily what the film attempts to do visually. Indeed, the fact the film's theme song is essentially sung in character by Taki within the film itself almost adds a kind of knowingly meta quality to the way the film is aware of its own engagements with cinematic clichés.

Taki's initial guise as a lonely wanderer morphs once he enters Hakodate and signs up as hired muscle for gang boss Akitsu. His initial reservations make him out as a man of morals: "I hate bullying the weak," he tells Akitsu, setting the stage for a classic exploration of the themes of *giri* and *ninjo*. Hiroshi Kitamura lays the groundwork for the theme's significance in his essay "Shoot-Out In Hokkaido: The 'Wanderer' (*Wataridori*) Series and the Politics of Transnationality." "In his autobiography, [Akira] Kobayashi wrote that the protagonist's motivation to help society in the Wanderer series stems from his sense of 'duty' (*giri*) and 'compassion' (*ninjo*)."[10]

By agreeing to work for Akitsu, Taki ties himself into the *giri* system; one of complete obedience to his superior. But this obedience clearly stands at odds with his inner moral compass; while Taki might enjoy knocking back drinks, chatting up pretty girls and taking on odd jobs for the yakuza, the film makes it clear he is a fundamentally good man at heart. This is best symbolised in an early scene where Taki meets a young boy who has lost his balloon; Taki immediately steps in and offers to buy him a new one, with some candy thrown in to boot. The message is plain: what kind of hardened criminal would buy a balloon for a kid? While the lovable rogue archetype is a common one within Western cinema,[11] its adaptation and reflection within Japanese cinematic tradition is given additional depth by the audience's assumed knowledge of the symbolic weight at play in Taki's attempts to balance himself between the pull of *giri* and *ninjo*. In essence, just as the film itself exudes a strong sense of transnationality, the character of Taki himself exists as a blurred melange of Western archetype as viewed through a distinctly Japanese sense of morality.

[8] Russell, Catherine (2011) *Classical Japanese cinema revisited*. New York: Bloomsbury Publishing USA, pp.1-3.

[9] Desser, David (2017) 'Crazed Heat: Nakahira Ko And The Transnational Self-Remake' in *Transnational Film Remakes*, p.164.

[10] Kitamura, Hiroshi (2012) 'Shoot-Out In Hokkaido: The "Wanderer" (*Wataridori*) series and the politics of transnationality' in *Transnational Asian Identities in Pan-Pacific Cinemas: The Reel Asian Exchange*. New York & London: Routledge, p.38.

[11] Spicer, Andrew (2003) *Typical men: The representation of masculinity in popular British cinema*. London: IB Tauris, p.4.



All this ties into a deep-rooted system of signs and symbolism, fundamental to the successful workings of a genre film. Steve Neale defines this aspect as iconography [12], and details how, by applying this concept to cinema, we are able to glean far more from an individual movie by placing it in context with our knowledge of other movies of that type. It is this approach that, crucially, allows us to view *The Rambling Guitarist* as more than simply a piece of disposable, populist cinema as seen in isolation, but instead representative of a broader reflection of values, trends, and tropes. In essence, the film becomes indicative of a system of visual conventions or patterns of imagery, which McArthur illustrates as:

“those surrounding the physical presence, attitudes and dress of the actors and the characters they play; those emanating from the milieu within which the characters operate; and those connected with the technology at the characters’ disposal” [13]

An understanding of this system of visual conventions is important because it allows us to place the fundamentally good character of Taki in stark contrast to his key rival in the film; the hired hitman George, memorably played by the puffy-cheeked Joe Shishido. Arriving thirty-three minutes into the film’s run time, George (whose Western name only furthers the mukokuseki feel of the movie) is immediately marked as a bad character by the prominent scar on his cheek (physical presence), his disparaging comments about women and the fact he cheats at a dice game with Taki (attitudes), as well as the fact he is most frequently shown cradling a pistol (technology at his disposal) and shoots seagulls for target practice. Indeed, we might go as far as to read the gun and George’s foreign name in combination as an implicit nod to his foreign nature. While both he and Taki represent a blending of East and West in different ways, it is worth noting that the hero (Taki) is the one to bear the Japanese name, while George is prefigured far more in the guise of an other. With the film’s 1959 release subsequent to the end of the American occupation of Japan in 1952,[14] this could even be read with a kind of nationalist subtext; a trumping of the foreigner by a reempowered Japanese masculinity (one which has crucially absorbed and learnt from the West).

On a simpler level however, with good and bad set in clear opposition to each other, the film’s fundamental nature as a genre work is allowed to fully click into motion. The conventions of populist action cinema tell us that a showdown between Taki and George is inevitable, and so our anticipation for this is formulaically increased through a series of almost encounters such as the aforementioned dice game. This is further emphasised by the fact that Joe Shishido had form for playing these types of characters, as Mark Schilling comments: “Joe Shishido became a Nikkatsu star by portraying characters who often begin as hitmen, conmen and other disreputable types, but end up on the side of the hero, if not always the angels.”[15]

Here, we return to the notion of *giri* and *ninjo*, which like the opposition of good and bad, achieve so much of their dynamic narrative drive from the fact (as a convention) the audience knows the film must move inexorably toward a point where the characters must make a fundamental choice between the two. Both Taki and George are forced to decide between continuing to blindly obey Akitsu (*giri*) or to do what they feel is morally right (*ninjo*). While to a certain degree it is obvious that Taki, as the hero of the film, will make the right decision, things are left more open-ended with George; which all helps to arguably make him the most morally complex (and interesting) character in the film.

[12] Neale, Steve (2000) *Genre and Hollywood*. New York & London: Routledge, p.12.

[13] McArthur, Colin (1972) *Underworld USA*. New York: Viking Adult, p.24.

[14] Bailey, Paul John (1996) *Postwar Japan: 1945 to the present*. Oxford: Blackwell, p.43.

[15] Schilling, Mark (2007), p.75.

As the film progresses, we begin to see that George, while outwardly cruel, has hidden depths. Via a flashback, we are shown how he and Taki (during his previous role as a policeman) previously met in Kobe; with Taki gunning down George's friend. George longs for retribution, telling Taki: "He was my only partner. I'll take revenge for his death. I won't be a coward like you." And yet, in the very next scene - when the standoff between George and Taki is interrupted by the arrival of a marine patrol, George quips: "We'll put our duel on hold. I play fair."

Here, we see the purest distillation of the codes of gentlemanly honour and chivalry George holds himself to account to. At numerous points in the film he could have ostensibly finished Taki off, and yet he feels compelled to constantly frame their showdowns in the context of a game. This reaches its natural conclusion in a surreal sequence near the film's finale where Taki and George both stand, Western shoot-out style, with two pool tables between them. In their hands they each hold a pool ball, which at the count of three they will drop and then quickly pick up their guns from the pool tables and fire one shot at each other. Taki, inevitably, wins this contest; and George, once again seemingly compelled by his own personal honour, chooses to give himself up to the police and is arrested.

Isolde Standish frames this kind of honour code as specifically masculine, and belonging to another traditional Japanese concept, *jingi*, which she describes as governing "male-male relations and is in fact synonymous with the more commonly accepted moral code of *giri ninjo*... both of which can be rendered in English as 'justice and humanity.'" [16] This reflection of a traditional, Japanese moral backing adds a further dynamic to the East-West fusion of the film, adding to and subverting the more arbitrary cinematic trope of good versus evil and ensuring that while the film rests within the cinematic scope of this arguably crude binary opposition, it comes with a built-in further resonance for Japanese audiences.

In addition, the specificity of male-male relations in regard to the idea of *jingi* is important because it places both George and Taki's actions in a sphere of reference which is inherently competitive. As a man, who is strongest? Who can drink the most? Who can romance the prettiest girls? Who is the most honourable? Who is the most manly? If we consider *The Rambling Guitarist* as a kind of male power fantasy, with Taki as an aspirational self-insert character for the audience, these notions of masculinity must inherently be measured against other men to be fully realised, either within the film itself, with other films of its type, or within society at large. Standish's framing of the concept builds on the theories of Ikegami, who places these masculine ideas of honour within the long-standing tradition of the samurai:

"When a samurai regulates his own behaviour based upon considerations of what is deemed 'honourable', he has an imagined community, or a symbolic reference group, in his mind that carries his reputation and social dignity." [17]

It is this same self-regulation that we see time and time again in the character of George, whose notion of honour is evidently formed from his measuring of his own masculinity against others, such as Taki. For George, when he says "I'm not a coward" or "I play fair," he reinforces a wider societal (or at the very least, a cinematic ideal) of what masculinity stands for, and to do otherwise would be to utterly destroy the self-conceived social dignity he sees himself operating within, despite his role in the lawless criminal underworld. As Standish further notes: "The principle difference between practitioners of the code of *jingi* and those of *giri ninjo*, is that they exist in a community which operates on the margins of 'legitimate' social institutions," [18] just as George and Taki do, within Akitsu's murky yakuza world.

[16] Standish, Isolde (2013) *Myth and Masculinity in the Japanese Cinema: Towards a Political Reading of the Tragic Hero*. London: Routledge, p.162.

[17] Ikegami, Eiko (1995) *The Taming of the Samurai: Honorific Individualism and the Making of Modern Japan*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, p.38.

[18] Standish, Isolde (2013), p.162.



This notion of marginal communities returns us once again to the borderless, elusive quality of the Nikkatsu Action films. By definition, the titular wanderer of the wataridori series is a man who never wholly exists within a community; his existence there is purely transitory. Taki, as wanderer, is seen as a figure in isolation, cast against the inherent group of the yakuza; he must make his own decisions, but crucially must figure them against preexisting honour codes and constructs within the urban environment that exists apart from the individuality of his transient wanderer lifestyle. In a world where the rules of legitimate society never really quite apply to Taki, it is instead against the film's other key players and the character archetypes they represent that we must measure him (and that Taki, too, must measure himself). And just as the film's Eastern qualities must inherently contrast with its Western overtones, so too must its depiction of femininity contrast with its masculinity.

### THE GIRL NEXT DOOR - EVOLVING WITH THE TIMES

For every Diamond Guy outing, it was typical for Nikkatsu Action to pair the male lead with an equally attractive female; again, from a stable of regular talent who would appear time and time again. In the wataridori series, this came in the form of actress Ruriko Asaoka. The original trailer for the film even pairs her and Kobayashi together as “The pride of Nikkatsu, the charming duo,” referencing their previous appearance together earlier that year in *Farewell to Southern Tosa (Nangoku Tosa o ato ni shite)*, also directed by Buichi Saito. The duo had form, and Nikkatsu was ready to milk their on-screen dynamic for all it was worth.

Mark Schilling begins his mini-biography of Asaoka in *No Borders No Limits* in largely aesthetic terms: ‘[her] on-screen image was slightly exotic, excitingly modern. With her slim, petite figure, she may not have been a Hollywood glamour queen, but her big eyes, small face, full lips and slender, perfectly proportioned legs made her an Audrey Hepburn-like stand-out.’ [19] Evidently, Asaoka's core role within *The Rambling Guitarist* is to act as visual allure, and this is important to consider because for all that her character Yuki plays the epitome of the modern girl, dressing in fancy Western clothes, playing Chopin on the piano, and driving a flashy car, the foundations of her character, like Taki, are built on far more traditionally Japanese roots.

In late 1950s Japan, models of Japanese femininity were still heavily influenced by traditional ideals of the woman as a selfless, subservient paragon of domesticity.[20] This ideal was one rooted in obedience, ultimately in service to an established patriarchy. With this in mind, it is useful to observe how cinematic depictions of Japanese women might capture their failing to perform the new, Western modernity. Their aesthetic aspiration for the West is nuanced by the intermixing with traditionalist Eastern models of correct behaviour. The character of Yuki embodies this perfectly; the majority of her actions within *The Rambling Guitarist* are with either Taki (the love interest) or her father Akitsu (patriarchy). When Akitsu says to Taki: “When did I give you permission to take out my daughter?” we see Yuki's status as an individual succinctly negated; within the context of the film, she is allowed to exist only as an adjunct to a man; so much so that she is in effect, blinded to everything else going on around her.

As the film draws towards its climax, Yuki finally confronts her father about his shady line of work, and the naïve, black-and-white way she has envisioned the world up until now is made clear:

YUKI: “You were a perfect father to me, but a demon to the rest of the world.”

AKITSU: “Everything I do is for your happiness.”

YUKI: “I don't need that kind of happiness, as long as I can be proud of you.”

[19] Schilling, Mark (2007), p.65.

[20] Schooler, Carmi, and Karen C. Smith (1978) “... and a Japanese wife.” Social structural antecedents of women's role values in Japan. *Sex Roles*, 4(1), pp.23-41.

The implication being, of course, that even now, her happiness is still symbiotically linked to the pride she desires to feel for her father, rather than any kind of individually defined happiness for herself. Kelsky sees this kind of relationship as a deprivation of the independent subjectivity of women, in which an internationalist modernity is seen as giving them an exit route towards unfettered freedom, but which a feudalistic male establishment ultimately denies them.[21] Against this backdrop, there also remains a friction between our present-day viewing of the film, bringing with us our own ideals for feminine individuality, and the figure of Yuki, who seems to us unfairly shackled to an older model of how a woman should be.

In contrast to the patriarchally dominated Yuki, we are given a powerful symbol of new femininity and the changing societal roles of women in Sumiko (played by Sanae Nakahara), the wife of the fishery-owner, and more significantly, Akitsu's sister. When Taki and his lackeys first visit the fishery, we are immediately shown that the owner is reserved and cowardly while Sumiko herself is far more outspoken and bold than her husband. This is reaffirmed later as Akitsu explains: "She refused the marriage I arranged for her and married that coward instead. She ignored my wishes. I'll never forget that." His possessiveness is inflamed by his sister's blatant flouting of his authority, and in one of the film's most powerful scenes, we see Sumiko confront Akitsu while Yuki, the perfect kept daughter, sings a song downstairs, all dolled up in a fancy Western dress. Sumiko, notably, is wearing a sharp business suit in this scene; her clothing delineating a woman of purpose and societal drive, whereas in contrast Yuki is reduced to a pretty ornament.

This juxtaposition is crucial, as in the following dialogue, Akitsu directly contrasts the situations of Sumiko, his sister, and Yuki, his daughter. "If you hadn't gone there you could have lived the good life, like Yuki," he tells Sumiko, damning her marriage to the cowardly fishery owner again. "Don't you feel envious? Is hardship fun? Don't you understand how I feel? How much I care for you? You're going to defy me?" Akitsu's interrogatory questions highlight just how ingrained his ideas of masculine dominance are; he simply cannot comprehend Sumiko's reasoning for pursuing her own life choices instead of meekly following what he had envisioned for her. As Jennifer Coates discusses in *Making Icons: Repetition and the Female Image in Japanese Cinema, 1945–1964*: "Young working women... presented a potential threat to the patriarchal social order in their adoption of new roles in the public rather than domestic sphere, challenging pre-war and wartime ideals." [22]

The changing roles of women is not the only theme; we see *The Rambling Guitarist* handling a mix of old and new archetypes. In 1956, Nikkatsu had seen massive success with its zeitgeist capturing *taiyozoku* (sun tribe) films such as *Season of the Sun (Taiyō no kisetsu)* and *Crazed Fruit (Kurutta kajitsu)*. Sexually charged and depicting a powerful cocktail of youthful excess, the films sparked public outcry for the example they might have been setting for impressionistic young audiences of the time "forced Nikkatsu to soften its edges" [23], laying the framework for the more muted manner in which *The Rambling Guitarist* handles the topic of sex.

The *taiyozoku* films engaged powerful symbolism to portray their deep-rooted sexuality, from the gentle lapping of seaweed in the ocean waves (*Crazed Fruit*) to the stark implication of a man thrusting his erect penis through a traditional Japanese shoji paper screen (*Season of the Sun*) [24]. The closest *The Rambling Guitarist* gets to this kind of sensuality between its young couple comes in a scene where Yuki comes to wake Taki up, asking him out on a date. Taki unabashedly begins to pull off his nightwear, and Yuki quickly turns round, visibly embarrassed. Here we see the perfect echo of the virginal ambience [25] of the Japanese girl-next-door archetype, paired with Taki's status as the chaste warrior.

[21] Kelsky, Karen (2001) *Women on the verge: Japanese women, Western dreams*. Durham: Duke University Press, p.4.

[22] Coates, Jennifer (2016) *Making Icons: Repetition and the Female Image in Japanese Cinema, 1945–1964*. Hong Kong: Kong Kong University Press, p.136.

[23] Kitamura, Hiroshi (2012), p.34.

[24] Sherif, Ann (2009) *Japan's Cold War: Media, Literature, and the Law*. New York: Columbia University Press, p.184.

[25] Barrett, Gregory (1989), p.201.



As Barrett puts it: “All ideal Japanese warriors then become chaste in their single-minded devotion to battle”[26]. Taki might entertain an interest in pretty girls (there was even a former lover in the past), but crucially his romance within the film itself is never consummated. To do so would be to weaken his more primary role as a masculine brawler; the connotation being that his status as a hard, muscular fighter remains cinematically (and bodily) incompatible with that of a tender lover, emotionally sensitive to a woman’s desires.

Reaching the film’s finale, we see Taki board a ferry and depart Hakodate for new horizons while Yuki sees him off. While on one hand there is poignancy to this wistful, melodramatic final farewell, it also brings with it a bitter irony as Yuki scathingly admonishes herself for turning a blind eye to her father’s criminal activities: “I was a bad daughter,” she says. “The next time we meet, I promise I’ll be a better daughter.”

Returning to Barrett’s *Archetypes In Japanese Film*, we are given a neat summary of the kind of girl Yuki ultimately represents: “The inactive existence of suffering beauties in films is often predicated on the fact that they are wrenched from a sheltered life with their parents and cannot live in the cruel world without the protection or at least support of a man.”[27]

In this damning indictment of Yuki’s character (as well as, perhaps, the trope she represents) as the perpetual suffering beauty, the film’s ending takes on an almost mean-spirited nature. While Taki, in all his powerful, unfettered masculinity, is free to move on as he wills to begin another adventure, Yuki, the bad daughter, is now left completely disenfranchised and powerless; still chained to the town itself. Her father is dead, and her apparent saviour, Taki, has left. With the two most significant men in her life now absent, there is a pitiful desperation in her final lines: “He’s never coming back. I know.”

In this, we see a stark contrast with the kind of tough, earthy woman that would emerge in subsequent years, typified by the heroine of Shohei Imamura’s 1961 film *Pigs and Battleships* (*Buta to gunkan*). There, in an inversion of the ending to *The Rambling Guitarist*, it is the heroine who finally achieves freedom at the end of the film; with her male love interest dead, she neatly swerves the expected route of continuing to service the American GIs, and instead leaves town for good.[28] Donald Richie neatly sums the dilemma up: “the Japanese woman is a fitting symbol of a problem which many face: how to learn to be yourself in a society that doesn’t want you.”[29]

In the blended East-meets-West world of Nikkatsu’s mukokuseki films, a girl like Yuki is only as real as the cinematic archetypes she stands for; the visual appeal of the flashy, modern West paired with the staid traditionalism of the East. Torn between the two, she ultimately becomes as plastic and intangible as the film itself, in plain opposition to the kind of gritty, realistic femininity Shohei Imamura would populate his films with. Yuki, in essence, is merely a fantasy - a dream woman that tries to combine East and West in service to populist entertainment (or, we might argue, is produced systematically as part and parcel of this self-same populist aesthetic itself). She is, in essence, an attempt to encapsulate a pure, made-to-order characterisation of femininity; a pureness dictated by the mores of box office supply-and-demand. It is to this concept of pure entertainment that we must turn next.

## NEITHER HERE NOR THERE - BORDERLESS SPACES AND THE FREEDOM OF POPULIST JOY

In describing the unique hybrid settings of the Nikkatsu Action films, Mark Schilling employs the phrase *internationalised spaces*,[30] epitomised in the aesthetic of the Eastern Westerns of which *The Rambling Guitarist* is an obvious example.

[26] Barrett, Gregory (1989), p.44.

[27] Barrett, Gregory (1989), p.195.

[28] Quandt, James (ed.) (1999) *Shohei Imamura*. Toronto: Cinematheque Ontario, p.173.

[29] Richie, Donald (2001) *A Hundred Years of Japanese Film*. Tokyo: Kodansha International, p.193.

[30] Schilling, Mark (2007), p.154.



The notion of internationalised space is symbolised in a striking visual reference within the opening minutes of the film; a brief preamble shows Taki travelling on the back of a horse-drawn cart through the dusty wilds of Hokkaido. Pure Western, evoking classic John Ford vistas.[31] But in the very next scene, we are shown a city street at nighttime, full of neon-lit signs in Japanese script. Taki has suddenly arrived at one of the town's many drinking dens; we are never shown how he entered the town, and the transition point between the wild and the urban remains elusive.[32] What remains is the continual notion of a fantastical playground - one in which further opportunities for freedom are enabled.

It is this notion of freedom that forms the core of Gregory Barrett's discussion of mukokuseki eiga, as he outlines how Akira Kobayashi's hero in the wataridori series is just as elusive as the abstract *No Nation Land* the films are set in: "Entering the new No Nation Land like a phantom from out of nowhere and in the end vanishing, he becomes an invincible, abstract figure, since he had neither past memories to weaken him nor future concerns to restrict his conduct." [33] *The Rambling Guitarist* outlines this notion precisely in the way it handles the elusive question of Taki's past. When Yuki enquires about Taki's former lover, who we are told has passed away, Taki replies mysteriously: "You shouldn't hang around someone like me. I come from a different world than you." Here, we get a sense of how the artificial, borderless world in which Taki operates has started to seep into his very persona; that he has perhaps almost become a bodily manifestation of his shadowy former deeds.

The Taki of the present, freed from the chains of his past, achieves a kind of invincibility (both emotionally and physically) that allows him to navigate this borderless world unfettered by either social or practical constraints. Indeed, it is telling that despite how frequently Taki gets into fights in the film, it is only as we reach the final showdown, an hour into proceedings, that we see him bleed. This superhuman quality is even referenced in an earlier scene where Taki is embroiled in a punch-up with one of the fishery workers. The worker, believing Taki is responsible for the fishery owner's death, proclaims angrily: "Are you even human?" When Yuki runs over and intervenes, she asks Taki: "Why were you letting him hit you?" implying that here, any physical weakness displayed by Taki was purely self-imposed, and that he could have easily fought off the fishery worker if he had wanted to.

Here again, we return to the idea of male power fantasies and ideas around the self-regulatory masculinity of jingi. With Standish and Ikegami drawing a link between contemporary jingi and that of the samurai, it is rather apt that the film that Buichi Saito is perhaps best remembered for in the West is 1972's *Lone Wolf and Cub: Baby Cart in Peril*, the fourth in a six-part *chanbara* (swordplay) series featuring a disgraced samurai wandering the country as a for-hire ronin. With this in mind, we can interpret *The Rambling Guitarist's* Taki in much the same light: a modern-day samurai treading a morally grey area between good and bad, using fists and pistols instead of a sword, a theme that would be continued to its logical extent in Kinji Fukasaku's immensely popular yakuza series of the early '70s, *Battles Without Honour and Humanity* (Jingi Naki Tatakai).[34]

This continuing trend of the same traditional character archetypes within multi-installment, populist cinema is worth examining in detail. In *Genre and Hollywood*, Steve Neale talks of two parallels of film discourse, on one hand actively hostile to populist cinema and its "values of entertainment and fantasy rather than realism, art or serious aesthetic stylisation." [35] On the other hand, a new strain of discourse looking to popular culture to debate and reassess its value. With the identification of the latter, Neale offers a corrective to this dichotomy of high versus low.

[31] Hunt, Leon (2011) *The Good, the Bad, and the Culturally Inauthentic: The Strange Case of the "Asian Western"*. *Asian Cinema*, 22(1), pp.99-109

[32] Treglia, Laura (2018) *Mondo-ing Urban Girl Tribes: The Boom of 1960s-70s Erotic Cinema and the Policing of Young Female Subjects in Japanese sukeban Films*. *Film Studies*, 18(1), pp.52-69

[33] Barrett, Gregory (1989), p.193.

[34] Varese, Federico (2006) *The secret history of Japanese cinema: The Yakuza movies*. *Global Crime*, 7(1), pp.105-124

[35] Neale, Steve (2000), p.8.

*The Rambling Guitarist*, a film that wears its populist, genre status openly on its sleeve, reveals the inadequacies of discourses hostile to this form of cinema. As a piece of mass-market entertainment operating within the fantastical world of the mukokuseki genre, to what extent does it craft its own individual merit as a piece of cinematic art beyond the formulaic archetypes in which it exists? If we are to subscribe to Neale's two parallels of film discourse, it is the latter in which we seek to situate *The Rambling Guitarist*, albeit with some difficulty, given its status as the first in a series of many films; does one discuss *The Rambling Guitarist* in isolation, or as only one part of the wider wataridori film series (or merely one of many similar Nikkatsu films)?

Mark Schilling's *No Borders No Limits* references how landmark critical studies of Japanese cinema such as Donald Richie and Joseph Anderson's *The Japanese Film: Art and Industry* makes little or no reference to Nikkatsu Action or the wataridori series,[36] in many ways confirming Neale's ideas about film discourse, that as a purely populist piece, it was somehow less worthy of analysis or depth. Even within Schilling's book, while other Nikkatsu directors like Toshio Masuda and Seijun Suzuki are given their own chapters, Buichi Saito is not. This seemingly validates the sense of his directorial input as un-auteur-like and he is instead relegated to the status of a kind of workmanlike figure (where the stamp of authorial intent is anonymised and subsumed), merely a product and part of the system itself as opposed to a recognisable talent with individual agency - where that same authorial intent is attributable to a singular point of creative genesis.

In his essay included in the booklet accompanying Arrow Video's release of *The Rambling Guitarist*, Tom Mes discusses this exact issue: "The very breadth and diversity of Buichi Saito's output make him an unlikely candidate for auteurist rediscovery, but his rich filmography and the number of titles still fondly remembered by Japanese audiences demonstrate how skewed and limited our officially sanctioned version of Japanese film history is - and how much pure joy is left to discover." [37] Here, the essence of a genre director like Saito is equated with the breadth of his output (i.e., quantity versus quality), but also the notion of whether that same work, by definition, might offer a pure joy that goes beyond the more refined viewing experience of officially sanctioned Japanese cinema classics. Is a mechanised, formulaic means of evoking cinematic joy any less valid than a method dubbed more auteuristically superior (and thus more individualistic) by critics? It is perhaps this systemisation of the pleasure-creation process that Mulvey hints at when she states how "the fascination of film is reinforced by pre-existing patterns of fascination already at work," [38] with received archetypes of gender central to this narrative of recycling a purer kind of packaged joy, albeit one that panders to audience desires and fascinations as opposed to critical acclaim.

## CONCLUSION

Much like the plastic, fast-food accessibility of its characters, much of the depth that can be found in *The Rambling Guitarist* can only be seen in context with the component genre codes and gendered archetypes that the film dresses itself in. In regards to masculinity, the film eclipses its muscular face-value Nikkatsu Action trappings to offer a deeper statement on the traditional values of both giri-ninjo and jingi. Likewise, the film holds up two parallel ideals of femininity; one modern and business-minded, the other outwardly Westernised, but held back by a deep-rooted Japanese traditionalism.

In both its male and female characters, *The Rambling Guitarist* examines a kind of slippery middle ground, not quite one thing, but equally, not quite the other. Just like its borderless mukokuseki setting, the film's men and women are caught between two divides; elusive, transitory, evolving. And at its heart, Akira Kobayashi's Shinji Taki, the most elusive of all, the character that stands as the very personification of the film's borderless nature; bodily Japanese, but aesthetically Western. A system of filmmaking that succeeds precisely because it bases every part of itself on a series of contrasts.

[36] Schilling, Mark (2007), p.9.

[37] Mes, Tom (2016), p.37.

[38] Mulvey, Laura (1989) 'Visual pleasure and narrative cinema' in *Visual and other pleasures*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp.14-26.



What the wataridori series, Nikkatsu Action, and its star-system of Diamond Guys all signify is the very point of the populist genre model of filmmaking, a distinct awareness of tropes and archetypes; and by extension, how to play both with and against them to maximum effect to keep audiences coming back for nine installments in a single series. While the framework of these films may have been formulaic, this in many ways only served to heighten their core appeal; the attitude they gave off. A reinvented cinema for a reinvented nation.

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## THE ROHINGYA'S SUSPENSION AT THE BORDER: BORDER/LANDS ARE CONVENTIONALLY CONCEIVED AS SPACES OF WAITHOOD AND SUSPENSION. HOW DO PEOPLE ON THE MOVE INHABIT AND POLITICISE THE BORDER?

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### ABSTRACT

This essay aims to respond to the question of how people inhabit and politicise the border through the case study of the Rohingya refugee crisis. It considers borderlands through Navaro-Yashin's notion of the no-man's land, where people are stuck in a limbo, and Jones's work on how people inhabit borders through their everyday lives. It will first look at how the lack of documentation restricts people, and is one way in which they are trapped within an abstract border imposed by the nation-state. The Rohingya defy this border in different ways, from creating verification cards to marrying into Bangladeshi families. As borders are places of waithood too, this paper moves onto investigating how Rohingya refugees traverse the temporal borders and changing rhythms between everyday life and sudden removal of it. The essay will lastly recognise the vast reality of the situation: many of the refugees die while passing borders and it is their dead corpses that are entrapped in the no-man's land. This paper will also compare the Rohingya refugee crisis to other migration case studies to give an ample understanding of what it means to be in a state of waithood within borders, and also because there has been a lack of investigation of this ongoing situation.

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Miki Quddus is a Postcolonial Studies master's graduate from SOAS with focused research in literary studies and a special interest in Bangladeshi literature. After finishing a BA in English Literature and completing a dissertation on Anglophone postcolonial texts, she dived into completing a master exploring as many literatures as possible as well anthropology modules. She presented a paper at the Asixoxe African Philosophy conference, tackling corruption in Nigeria as explored by the magical realist mode of Ben Okri's novel *The Famished Road*. She is currently working on the MULOSIGE project as a researcher.



## INTRODUCTION

The space of waithood and suspension can be seen as an unhomey in-between state, a limbo or vacuum that exists, but simultaneously does not, what Navaro-Yashin describes as the no-man's land (Navaro-Yashin 2003). Although he is referring to spaces without a recognised state authority, borderlands can be equally seen as no-man's land for people on the move, as this is where the state imposes its power while trapping people in between, a limbo of being outside and inside the border. Through this notion, I will be exploring the ways in which people on the move inhabit and politicise the border not in their state of waithood and suspension, but rather by breaking free from being trapped in this no-man's land vacuum. Using Jones's work, I will explore how this is done not through political resistance, but rather in the ways that people on the move inhabit their daily lives and the ways that they do not fit binary ideas of border dwellers (Jones 2011). Jones incorporates Navaro-Yashin's notion of no-man's land to explore the way people inhabit these spaces. I will draw on case studies around the Rohingya's move between Myanmar, becoming stateless and their entering Bangladesh; it has been reported to be one of the worst-refugee crises in the world (UN 2018). I will also draw upon other case studies of people in borderlands to see similarities and differences.

It is first key to recognise how borders are assigned to understand how people inhabit and politicise them. Borders are imposed by the state and confine people by defining their legality and identity as being part of one state. They can be asserted through physical barriers or legal documentation (Anzaldua, 1987: preface, Agamben, 1995). They are an expression and measure of state power on one hand, but on the other, they are a mechanism of selective human mobility, in order to choose who can enter the border (Giddens, 1985: 49). Borders are also time imposed in accordance to the issuing of visas and the person's migration status as well as the making and unmaking of nations (Scoot 2009: 7). They are, therefore, susceptible to change according to the sovereign state's decision, as seen through the nationalisation of Yugoslavian countries and Hungary (Denich, 1994). For Jones, borders are not only physical but "also [represent] the division of one identity category from another" (Jones 2011: 694). By enforcing borders, therefore, the state includes certain people within it by excluding others, who are then subjected to the vacuum of no-man's land. It is through everyday actions that people on the move try to escape this land, by asserting their identity and challenging our concept of what we consider the norm.

## THE ROHINGYA CASE

Since the independence of Myanmar, the Rohingya have been living in a marginalised state near the border of Bangladesh as they became trapped in between the stabling of the borders of Myanmar. The statelessness of the Rohingya and their subsequent escape to other countries, especially Bangladesh, was caused firstly by the Myanmar Citizenship Law of 1982, which conferred the right of citizenship of 135 nationalities listed by the government of Myanmar, excluding the Rohingya population (Parnini et al., 2013; Uddin, 2015). This drew an invisible line between Myanmar and the Rohingya, leaving a spatial and temporal vacuum as the Muslim minority waited to be recognised as citizens, with documentation. Furthermore, to this date, the Rohingya are not recognised as a separate ethnic group, but rather as Bengali who immigrated illegally to Myanmar during the creation and independence of the state in the transition between British colonial rule and the postcolonial era.[1]

[1] "Erasing the Rohingya: Myanmar's Moves Could Mean Refugees Never Return." Reuters. Accessed December 19, 2018. <https://www.reuters.com/investigates/special-report/myanmar-rohingya-return/>.

Since 1982, the government of Myanmar has imposed “oppression, discrimination, and forced labor” which compelled 550,000 Rohingya to seek refuge outside of Myanmar, while, more recently, it was reported that “security forces destroyed the homes of the Rohingyas, which led to the latter’s flight,” making half of the Rohingya population flee outside the borders of Myanmar (Uddin, 2015; Human Rights Watch, 2012).

## DOCUMENTATION, IDENTITY, AND CHALLENGING THE BORDER

If being stationary is seen as the norm, just the act of moving across borders can be read as a way of disagreeing with the government. As discussed earlier, borderlands are no-man’s land, placed in a limbo; Jones argues that it is also where the “performance of sovereignty is often the most visible,” and it is where people who inhabit the border and do not conform to the state-sanctioned categories create a “space of refusal” (Jones 2011: 695). This space of refusal can also be seen as a “grey space” where people are “concurrently tolerated and condemned, perpetually waiting “to be corrected”” (Yiftachal 2009: 251). Just by not conforming to the sovereign established categories, people on the move find themselves in this grey space. In the case of the Rohingya refugees, the state claims its sovereignty by positioning a border excluding this particular ethnic group which locates the Rohingya in the grey space, waiting to be “corrected” into citizens of the country. In this way, they inhabit a state of refusal, not by choice, and wait in suspension, resisting to go back and be subjected to the violence of the Burmese state. Shimul, a Rohingya refugee in Bangladesh, said in an interview with Al-Jazeera that he would not go back to Myanmar until the government provides him and his family with “citizenship, security and the same rights as other citizens.” [2] He, like many other refugees, chooses to remain a refugee and live in the space of refusal to not conform to the violence and unjust ways the state treated him.

Leaving the Rohingya in Myanmar without citizenship is one of the ways in which they are forced to disappear into the limbo of the border, and proving their identity becomes a way of inhabiting the border in order to be recognised as people. To verify their identities, the Rohingya who travel across borders carry a verification card issued by the Myanmar’s government; however, this card is also a reminder that they ultimately cannot assimilate as Burmese citizens as it mentions that “this is not proof of citizenship” (Dhaka Tribune: 2018).[3] Nevertheless, Mr Islam, a Rohingya refugee in Bangladesh, says that he carries his documents everywhere as they are a way of proving that he was a Burmese citizen until he was rendered stateless (Reuters: 2014). The documents that are used to confine him in the limbo between states can also be used as proof of identity and belonging instead through the subject’s agency. Proving one’s existence in a documented form is key to leaving the limbo in between borders. Noor, a Rohingya residing in Kuala Lumpur, is in the process of creating a digital database using blockchains to record her own and other Rohingya’s IDs (Thayer 2018). This becomes a way of challenging the state and its power of constructing borders in relation to ethnicity and nationality; through documentation, self-owning one’s identity.

Another way in which the Rohingya challenge the border is through marrying into Bangladeshi families and assimilating with Bengali culture. Uddin documents a Rohingya girl who married into a Bengali family and now lives with her in-laws away from the refugee camps (Uddin 2015: 73). Marriage becomes a tool of agency to move away from the waithood of the border and inhabit a space on the other side of the borderland. Similarly, Harper and Zubida document cases of Filipina temporary workers who married into Israeli families, which gave them the possibility to extend their stay in Israel (Harper & Zubida 2017).

[2] “Bangladesh: UNSC Team to Visit Rohingya Refugee Camps.” Al-Jazeera, (2018). Accessed December 3, 2018. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SHhDi-7yo7s>.

[3] In a similar situation, Tawil-Souri describes how the Israeli state issue different coloured IDs for Palestinians which undermines their existence as, because of the colour of their documents, they are treated as stateless in their own country and considered subordinate to Israeli citizens (Tawil-Souri, 2012).



In this case, like for the Rohingya-Bengali marriages, marriage is a form of agency used to break the barrier in between the border of being a temporary migrant into being part of the culture and a resident of Israel. In both cases, the women claim that marriage facilitated their lives, so they are not left in the limbo of statelessness, and it further eased the future of their children (Uddin 2015; Harper & Zubida 2017). Assimilation with another culture and society reintegrates them into another nation through which they cease to live in the vacuum of between borders.

## TIME PERCEPTION AND DESTABILISATION

The move from being a refugee or temporary worker into a resident/citizen of a country through marriage depicts a temporal shift as well as a physical crossing of borders. Borderlands are not just a place of waitness and suspension, as people move across them physically and also in a temporal sense. They diverge from normal linear time and inhabit a sense of time that is layered, living in between the past of the home they left and “the new rhythms of the receiving state” (Harper & Zubida 2017: 102). For refugees, this time border is broken when they enter the host country and/or the camps, and they are forced into a new culture and place “with the understanding that there is no return to times gone by and places abandoned” (Harper & Zubida 2017: 102). This inability to move back into the past and the insecurity of the future makes refugees trapped in permanent temporariness (Bailey et al., 2002; Simmelink, 2011). The inhabiting of this space in time, between the past and present, traps refugees in a vacuum, where they are subjected to a paused history rather than a continuous flow of time. Homi Bhabha describes this living beyond the border of time as a space where the present is “no longer a synchronic presence” (Bhabha 2012: 4). People on the move travel across these layers of time although the notion of the present and future to them is skewed. They have to adjust to different understandings of time depending on where they move. The Rohingya traversed the temporal border, becoming stateless the moment Myanmar passed the law excluding them from being citizens. They were thrown into inhabiting another layer of time that differs from the rest of the Burmese citizens. Refugees further traverse the temporal border by adjusting to the timetables and rhythms of the states and refugee camps they inhabit. They rework their lives according to the demands and customs of the new state.

Waiting is seen as normal for irregular migrants and a virtue, thus being stuck between borderlands in suspension and waitness seems to be the only way to be “good” migrants” (Hage 2009; Nyer 2018). While refugees are told to wait in the camps, many break this cycle by moving away from the permanent temporariness of the in-between land of the segregated camps and use this as a form of agency to be part of society. Uddin and others report that many Rohingya escape the refugee camps to work and avoid repatriation to Myanmar (Uddin, 2015; Petersen & Rahman, 2018); they break from the physical border of the camps and the temporal one of waitness. Waiting is seen as a virtue for good citizens, but refugees and migrants often become frustrated with the inability to do nothing and engage in work as “[e]xcessive time can be associated with ‘waiting’, but equally it may be an unproductive, pointless stasis.” (Griffiths, Rogers, Anderson, 2013: 22). Ripon Abrar Hossain, who has volunteered in the refugee camps in Cox Bazar, reports that “many refugees are prompted to work[outside of the camps] to get extra money in order to buy food of their desire. They are not happy with the same bland food they get in the camps everyday.” [4] Having the choice of what they want to eat becomes an agency of reestablishing a sense of identity in the camps. However, the danger of leaving the borders of the refugee camps is that they are more susceptible to exploitation. The only way of finding employment as a Rohingya refugee in Bangladesh is by offering cheap labour and engaging in clandestine works (Uddin 2015: 74). This is a common occurrence between borders; as Jones suggests, the difference in monetary systems and increase in undocumented people makes it easier for “new economic connections through smuggling networks” (Jones 2011: 689).

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[4] Hossain, A. Ripon, Interviewed by Miki Quddus, (December 20, 2018).



The body is the only form of agency that the refugee is left with, and Uddin reports that many Rohingya refugees exchange their bodies, through cheap labour, for money (Uddin 2015: 74). Furthermore, their movement in search of employment unsettles the economic situation of the region: Employers prefer the cheap labour, angering the local people and making the Rohingya more excluded from Bangladeshi society.

This destabilization of society has found a similar reaction towards Rohingya refugees in Indonesia, as “[s]ome Rohingya had started to sell their care packages to villagers to raise some cash to buy phone credit, cigarettes, and betel nuts” (Missbach 2017: 52). The refugees make use of the care packages and other resources they receive from NGOs to set up clandestine transactions; it asserts their presence in the borderland. Phiri, working for the UNHCR, indicates that it is their position at the border in between countries and their statelessness that pushes Rohingya into clandestine and illegal activities (Phiri 2008). Living outside of the borders of the state and the border of the camps. This in-between borderline to work and deal clandestine transactions in order to survive. As a result, clandestine activities become part of inhabiting the border; as refugees are associated with living in between borders without forms of documentation, human trafficking, prostitution, and drug trafficking become an easy way to make money to sustain life (Uddin 2015). Illegal work is not just specific to refugees; this is actively pursued by migrants when they are dissatisfied with their working conditions (Harper & Zabida: 105; Nyer, 2018).

### HUMAN BODIES: A GAME OF PREY AND PREDATORS

It is key to recognise that a lot of people on the move die in the borderland. The harsh conditions and violence of border control produce many dead corpses entrapping migrants in the land in limbo of the border. The life and death situation is depicted by Andersson through the imagery of hunter and prey, where migrants inhabit the borderland as prey (Andersson, 2014). Like the irregular migrants from sub-Saharan African discussed by Andersson, the Rohingya are seen as prey by the military forces of Myanmar as soon as they cease to be citizens. The images on the New York Times (which reconstructs the Rohingya’s journey across the border to Bangladesh) and Andersson’s case study shows that people on the move can inhabit borders through their bodies only, with no agency as they are ultimately subject to the violence of the border.[5] The dead bodies in the pictures are a reflection of this. Left to their bare life, like Agamben’s Homo Sacer, these bodies are under no state’s responsibility, inhabiting an empty vacuum land with no agency to move away from it. De Leon portrays a similar picture of migrants from Mexico to the United States where the remains of Mexican migrants are a testament of the violence of borders (De Leon 2015). People are prey not just to the state’s implementation of borders, but to the geographical border itself. The empty bodies foreshadow what will inevitably happen to the prey that lingers at the borderland.

Anthropologists also observed how many people on the move are portrayed as being weak and prey, victims of the stronger enforcement of state laws (Tickin, 2006; Fassin; Haour-Knipe et al, 1996). Tickin discusses how this happened in France in the 1990s, where irregular migrants were granted resident permits if they were suffering from serious medical conditions and were not able to be treated in their home countries (Tickin 2006). As a result, the number of migrants decreased, but the number of migrants who were unwell increased, giving rise to the idea of the “diseased migrant,” as many people exploited their medical conditions or made up conditions in order to gain documentation (Fassin 2011: 221). This shows how people at the border of legality can present their bodies in order to avoid statelessness and irregular status. Although, as Jones argues, it is the state that has the power to “operate outside the legal system if it perceives a threat to its authority” (Jones 2011: 686; Agamben 1998, 2005). In the case of France, the government manipulated the legal system to get rid of any migrant whom they perceived as

[5] “How the Rohingya Escaped.” *The New York Times*, (2017). Accessed December 17, 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2017/12/21/world/asia/how-the-rohingya-escaped.html>.

a threat (with only the “diseased” ones remaining). Migrants, on the other hand, used this policy as a way to remain in the country.

## CONCLUSION

Through these various examples I hope to have demonstrated that borderlands are not just simply places of waitness and suspension; they are places that are hidden from the normality of life, in between the control of the state, but at the same time outside of its reach. Situated in the vacuum, people on the move disappear within the border, becoming what Agamben coined as Homo Sacer. In the particular case of the Rohingya, they become outside of the border, being left in the in-between vacuum where they cannot be part of the one or the other. The sovereignty of the state is what prompted the Rohingya to flee the state, as they did not fit with the government-made Burmese identity. Jones’s work has been insightful to investigate how the Rohingya inhabit the border following Myanmar’s imposed laws, as he looks into the way people on the move inhabit and rework, rather than dispute, borders. Rohingya dwell in the border not by actively resisting the politics of it, but through the daily acts of inhabiting it and establishing their identities in order to resist the force of the borderland. Ultimately, for many, dead bodies, left in between in the limbo of the borderland, become the only way that they can inhabit the border; becoming a reminder of the violence of the border. However, more research needs to be done to understand the case of the Rohingya. Whilst I tackled this through studies of border and state sovereignty, it would be useful to investigate more the identity politics and, perhaps, the way the international organisations and countries are contributing to the state of waitness and suspension of the Rohingya.



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## A MOVEMENT BACK TO HOME: HOW IS THE HOME PRESENTED IN TAMIM AL-BARGHOUTI'S IN JERUSALEM?

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### ABSTRACT

Postcolonial and literary scholars have discussed colonialism as the invasion of the home. This notion is something that resonates within the Israel and Palestine context, especially with a large Palestinian population being exiled outside the country. This essay will use the notion of the home to explore how the poem “In Jerusalem” is a reaction of the poet Tamim al-Barghouti in seeing his father’s hometown for the first time. It will investigate how the poet navigates within the Arab literary traditions as a way to claim back the home from where his father was previously exiled. The discussion is led by the poem’s close reading which considers the poem itself as a reconstruction of the home (Jerusalem) in absence of the poet’s contact with it.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

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Gerhard Stilz (1999: 9) describes the home in the postcolonial framework as "[t]he “central” mode on which “our” personal identity has been nurtured, the place to which one “belongs” and returns". In his essay “The Home and the World,” Bhabha (1992) suggests that colonialism unsettles the borders of the home through the invasion of land as well as the quest of “civilisation.” The invasion of the home resonates in the recent Israeli settlements in the Palestinian side of East Jerusalem [1] driven by the Zionist ideology of rightful claim of the land in order to "expand the Jewish sovereignty" (Levac, Levy 2019). The Israeli invasion and unsettling of the Palestinian home territory results in homelessness or more forceful exile. Many Palestinians, in fact, have been forced to leave the city of Jerusalem or give up their houses to Israeli settlers. Edward Said (2001:173), being himself a forcefully displaced Palestinian, describes exile as the "unhealable rift [...] between the self and its true home." Rendered homeless by the colonial regime, the exiled person is always longing for the true home.

The work of Egyptian Palestinian poet Tamim al-Barghouti (1977) is an outcome of the Palestinian exile; his father, who was studying in Egypt, was prevented from returning to Palestine during the 1967 war which displaced many Palestinians. Al-Barghouti’s poem *In Jerusalem* (2015)[2] is a reaction to his first visit to his father’s home city. Performed in front of a wider Arab audience, al-Barghouti’s poem functions as a way for Palestinians living in Jerusalem and those exiled to recognise a city familiar and close to their identities. Despite the history and current occupation by the Israeli forces, this poem marks a claim to the poet’s ancestral home, prompting a sense of familiarity and understanding by other Palestinians. Thus, it is critical to visit the poem in its depiction of loss and longing for the home as similar themes emerged in many Palestinian bodies of literature, especially in resistance poetry.

Focusing on the cultural production in the reclaiming of the home from the colonial power, it is key to recognise that al-Barghouti’s poem is written as an ode, in the traditional Arabic form of the *qasidah*. Hussein Khadim (1997:179) suggests that “Arab poets utilized the traditional Arabic qasidah form to interrogate what critics have called “the textuality of Empire,” and to mobilize a collective response to colonialism.” Khadim writes in the context of the poet Ahmad Shawqi, who became an important literary figure in the establishing of Egyptian identity between colonial rule and independence. In a similar fashion, al-Barghouti, using the form of the qasidah, is recognising his positionality in the broader Arabic literary tradition. As a large part of the Palestinian population lives in the diaspora, using classical genres and writing about the ancestral home becomes a way of maintaining ties with the Palestinian identity.

There is a similar tendency of using traditional poetic forms in broader resistance literature as a way of recognising an assimilation with the homeland (Harlow 1987). However, in al-Barghouti’s case, the poem is not a way of mobilising a response, as argued by Khadim, but rather a way for him to reclaim his, or rather, his father’s homeland. In fact, written as a response to the poet’s first visit to the city, *In Jerusalem* becomes a way of recognising how al-Barghouti’s “own sense of national identity has been nourished in the exile milieu” (Said 1993: 178). Al-Barghouti follows the theme of the qasidah, to “recall what is lost” (Abadah 1989: 3). The poem opens with “[w]e passed by the home of the beloved” (1), which positions the city of Jerusalem as home and sets a nostalgic tone. This nostalgia and attachment for home is nourished outside of the physical homeland, as Said suggests, the exile milieu, a result and strike against the colonial settlements of Israel in East Jerusalem. Nonetheless, al-Barghouti reveals that “the city has two timelines” (45), a recognition of the divided nature of the city, broken between Israeli and Palestinians. However, the references to other nationalities throughout the poem, the green grocer from Georgia, the Polish boys, the Ethiopian policeman, among others, portrays the city to be home to many other groups. Jerusalem is thus constructed by different identities; his use of the qasidah reconciles the traditions ingrained in him in his Palestinian identity and suggesting a sense of nostalgia, while depicting an image of a city that is changing.

[1] Jerusalem is divided into East, West, and the no-man’s land. Both Israel and Palestine are claiming Jerusalem as their capital.

[2] Originally performed in 2005 in Abu Dhabi for the competition “The Prince of Poets”. Originally written and performed in Arabic, the version discussed in this paper is translated by Ahdaf Soueif and Radwa Ashour



The narrative of the poem, furthermore, follows a journey into the city which resembles the classical narrative of the Bedouin hero with his camel, mourning the loss of his beloved (Kurpershoek et al. 1996). The camel and the beloved, usually a woman, symbolise ‘the two modes of Bedouin life, settling down [in terms of family] and travelling’ (Jacobi 1958: 31). The Bedouin’s nomadic tradition complicates the notion of the home as it positions it as a mobile space rather than a fixed place. From this point of view, the poem can be read through this travelling narrative; the speaker’s journey through Jerusalem, like the Bedouin hero who travels through the desert, constructs the narrative of his travels by associating with the historicity of the city. He comes across evidence of the Mameluke, Moghul and Indian pasts all within the walls of Jerusalem. Furthermore, the architecture and mention of the Torah, Bible and the Quran, reminds the reader that the city is home to three major monotheist religions. Religious ideologies are used as a discourse of ownership of the city – in the regime of Israeli settlers – and become a way of estranging the Palestinians, who are in majority Muslim or Christian. Zionist ideologies make use of the narrative of having claims to the “promised land”, which complicates the idea of the home or homeland in the poem. It further makes the reader or listener question the Israeli settlers reasons to undermine and/or exile the other group who also made the Jerusalem their home.

Ashrawi (1978: 78) compares contemporary Palestinian poetry to Ulysses’s exile and journey to return home, but the journey in *In Jerusalem* ends with the leaving of the city, portraying the reality of Palestinian displacement caused by the Israeli colonial regime. Furthermore, it questions what it means to give the city of Jerusalem one single identity. In his work on *The Poetics Of Space*, Bachelard argues that “[a]n entire past comes to dwell in a new house” (Bachelard 1958: 5). In a similar way, al-Barghouti’s depiction of history indicates that the city has been home to previous civilisation and has a past to be recognised. By exiling Palestinians, the Israeli neocolonial settlements deny the Palestinian presence in their home [3], in a similar way previous empires erased indigenous and native people in their colonies. The exiled, diasporic and transnational Palestinians are keeping their home alive: through producing literature outside of the Israeli governance, they are transporting their culture with them.

The Zionist ideology of being entitled to Jerusalem as the promised land for the Jews is reflected in the architecture of the city. Even before entering the city, the speaker in the poem is encountered with the “enemy’s wall” (2), referring to the Western Wall in the city, a physical and metaphorical manifestation of the Israeli neocolonial regime. The Palestinians, even when on their side of the city, are slowly erased away from their home. Eyal Weizman (2012), in his research and art projects, explores the architectural ways Jerusalem has been reconstructed after the recognition of Israel in 1948 through colonial regionalism. He further discusses a continual move of the Israeli settlers to gain land in the East Jerusalem side, slowly chasing Palestinians out of their physical homes, to the West Bank or abroad. Martha Wegner also reports of the Israeli state controlling water pipelines as well as electric and gas resources supplying the houses in East Jerusalem (Wegner 1993). This controlling and remapping of the city is depicted in the metaphor of text and marginality in the poem:

‘the main text while you’re a footnote and a margin.  
You thought a visit could draw from the face of the city, my son,  
the thick veil of her present’ (33/34/35)

The text, seen as an allegory of the city of Jerusalem, pushes the speaker to the footnote and a margin, mirroring the Israeli settlement regime and invasion of East Jerusalem. The Zionist ideology is what is pushed as the main text, and the Palestinians, who do not conform to it, are driven out of the boundaries of their home city. Many, like al-Barghouti and his parents, are either forced to leave the country or give up their homes to Israeli settlers.

[3] I recognise that not all Palestinians are exiled but for the purpose of this essay I will limit my discussion to the experience of the exiled Palestinian. As per the ones who still live in the city, they are subjected to follow Israeli laws and do not have full rights or control over their own homes.

In his work, Said argues that the Orient is a construction of the West in the colonial discourse, created as a “style for dominating, reconstructing, and having authority over the Orient” (Said 1978: 3). The thick veil that covers the city can be seen as an allegory of Orientalism; the veil invades and covers what is underneath it, like the Israeli settlements and architecture that redefines the dynamics of the city. Nonetheless, the face underneath the veil is still present, like the past dwelling in the house, Bachelard argues. The poet, like other exiled Palestinians not living in Jerusalem, is the face and a footnote and a margin of the city. On the other hand, the allegory of the text also places the Palestinians at the centre of the city. In a literal sense, the main purpose of the footnote is to further explain or digress from the text. There is a sense of retrieving the space of the home within the city, reflecting that Palestinians are not completely rewritten by the Zionist main text.

Going back to Said’s notion of Orientalism, where colonialism is a result of cultural hegemony and the Orient is always defined by the coloniser, this notion is contrasted by the city of Jerusalem having its own voice. The city speaks for itself through the silence of its surroundings as “[e]verything in the city/has a tongue” (49/50) and “you’ll find etched on your palm a poem” (99). This personification of the city juxtaposes with the architectural reconstruction of it by the Israeli colonial regime, an attempt of cultural hegemony. Al-Barghouti seems to suggest that Jerusalem’s rich history and culture is what gives everything in the city a voice (tongue). The mention of poetry, furthermore, can be seen as a way of reclaiming the home through literature, a nod to the numerous resistance poetry maintaining a collective Palestinian identity. The “rows of graves” are metaphors for the “lines of the city’s history” (105/6); the systematic alignment of the graves suggests the linearity through which the city has been aligned to follow one history and ideology - in this case, Zionism.

Many Palestinians living in the diaspora are longing for their home after having been exiled through the building of colonial settlements” (Schulz & Hammer 2003). This can be seen in the vivid description of the city in the poem. Even though it is the first time al-Barghouti visits Jerusalem, the experience is portrayed in a familiar tone, almost as if the city was inscribed in his memory, as if he had seen it before. Seeing the Israeli colonial regime as “an absolute intrusion of a nation into another’s collective life and imagery” (Lambert 2013: 29), each painted image in the poem is a careful recollection of Jerusalem’s “life and imagery,” almost like a blueprint. The enemy’s wall (2) of the Israeli settlers is juxtaposed with “the beauty of the octagonal and blue” (55), the golden dome (56), and the dark marble columns (68). For instance, there is an expectation from the start of the poem that “[f]or once your eyes have seen Jerusalem/you’ll see nothing else” (11/12). The bright colours of the architecture and the richness of the material leaves the speaker and the reader in awe, creating an imagery that is contrasted to the violent architecture of the settlers (ibid. 2013: 9). The poem ultimately ends with a sorrowful moment, with the mention of crying and the uncertainty of whether the speaker will be able to ever go back to the home of Jerusalem.

Al-Barghouti questions how Palestinians will assimilate to the notion of the home when their physical space is being taken over by the Israeli settlers. The only solution and hopeful note he leaves the reader with is “I see no-one in Jerusalem-except you” (133). This hints at how the home found in Jerusalem is not a physical concept, it is a tangible memory retained through you, the reader. The depiction of the city in the poem counteracts the settlement regime of the Israeli state by reconstructing a Jerusalem through the lines, imageries, and form of the poem. The sense of longing discussed throughout this essay is a result of displacement and erasure of Palestinian homes in Jerusalem.[4] Al-Barghouti’s travel through Jerusalem resonates in the poem as a travel through a homeland that is rich with history and different groups of people, as seen through the graves, the city’s current inhabitants, and the ancient monuments. The form of the qasidah ties everything together, becoming a familiar Arabic genre that is recognised by all Palestinians. While al-Barghouti cannot stay in Jerusalem, his poem has captured a sense of home that is ingrained within his Palestinian identity even when in exile.

[4] This is more recently seen through forced evictions of Palestinians homes in Jerusalem: <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/palestinians-battle-home-evictions-east-jerusalem-silwan-181206052617178.html> Accessed 10 January 2019.



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## BOOK REVIEW

### THE RIGHT TO MAIM: DEBILITY, CAPACITY AND DISABILITY BY JASBIR PUAR

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During the 2018 March of Return protests, Palestinians in Gaza demonstrated at the Israeli military border fence demanding visibility in the ongoing occupation and siege upon their land movement. The Israeli government responded to the largely peaceful and symbolic demonstrations with appalling violence, killing at least 180 and injuring more than 24,000 over the duration of the weekly protest movement.[1] Global media painted the demonstrations as clashes between the Israeli military and the demonstrators,[2] a strategically neutral term which does not account for the disproportionate violence as Israeli forces sustained only a single minor injury.[3] How is it that 24,000 Palestinians become injured during the March of Return protests? What is the military and colonial strategy which facilitates such targeted debilitation? In her 2018 book *The Right to Maim*, Jasbir Puar argues that policies of injuring and maiming are explicit aims of colonial and imperialist governments. Focusing on the Israeli occupation, she argues that the Israeli Defense Force (IDF) has codified objectives to “debilitate Palestinian bodies and environments as a form of biopolitical control and as central to a scientifically authorized humanitarian economy.”[4]

Puar problematises liberal notions of disability politics, suggesting that the conception of disability as a personal identity ignores that “the production of most of the world’s disability happens through colonial violence, developmentalism, war, occupation, and the disparity of resources.”[5] Throughout the text, Puar foregrounds conceptions of debility rather than disability, the notion that bodily injury is predetermined not only by social and economic factors, but by the subjection of certain categories of bodies to slow suffocation, starvation diets, violence, waithood, and an arbitrary scarcity of public resources. She explores these notions through the expansion of her theory of homonationalism, developing an exploration of cripnationalism,[6] an analysis of “slow death” and Foucauldian notions of biopolitics, and finally[7] an examination of “humanitarian aid” and the profitability of producing disability.

[1] Maureen Murphy, “Israel has injured 24,000 Gaza protesters,” *Electronic Intifada*, November 25, 2018, <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/maureen-clare-murphy/israel-has-injured-24000-gaza-protesters>

[2] Zachary Keyser, “Clashes Ensure During Protests Along Gaza Border,” *The Jerusalem Post*, November 16, 2018.

[3] Oliver Holmes and Hazem Balousha. “Israel faces outcry over Gaza killings during Jerusalem embassy protests.” *The Guardian*, May 14, 2018.

[4] Jasbir Puar, *The Right to Maim: Debility, Capacity, Disability*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2017, 286.

[5] Puar, *The Right to Maim* 21.

[6] Puar, *The Right to Maim*, 2.

[7] Puar, *The Right to Maim*, 3.

## EXPANSION OF HOMONATIONALISM TO CRIP NATIONALISM

In *The Right to Maim*, Puar expands upon her theory of homonationalism, laid out in her 2007 text *Terrorist Assemblages*, in which she considers “how ‘acceptance’ and ‘tolerance’ for gay and lesbian subjects have become a barometer by which the right to and capacity for national sovereignty is evaluated.”[8] This includes the cooption of LGBT liberation politics to justify modes of Western imperialism and far-right nationalisms, highlighting the hypocrisy of states which trumpet inclusion while simultaneously investing in machinery of state violence to punish racialized Others.

In *The Right to Maim*, Puar aims to problematise the posturing of Western nations as leaders in disability rights and empowerment discourse while simultaneously producing the greatest amount of global disability through imperialist violence and consumption. Like concepts of homonationalism or pink-washing, cloaking tools of state violence in the aesthetics of feminism and LGBT liberation, cripnationalism explores how Western imperialist states leverage their own track record on humanitarian aid and domestic disability rights in order to undermine the legitimacy of other states, based on their alleged inability to conform to these liberal discourses and practices. The protection of the debilitated subject becomes the barometer by which imperialist governments determine the political legitimacy of their foreign intervention. Simultaneously demonizing and victimizing the debilitated colonial subject allows the West to position itself as the saviour in the midst of humanitarian disasters while ignoring that the systemic roots of these crises can be linked to Western warfare and consumption.

While concepts of debility and disability do not always map on clearly or cohesively to this extended homonationalism, it is a useful framework to consider the paradoxes of humanitarian aid and military intervention. These contradictions are perhaps most apparent when considering justifications for the Israeli siege of Gaza and the occupation of the Palestinian West Bank. It is useful also, to consider the debilitated and colonised subject as a site of imperialist politicisation.

## ABLE NATIONALISM AND THE POLITICS OF EXCLUSION

In Israel and the United States, disability imagery or inspiration porn is used to paradoxically highlight the cost of war while simultaneously validating calls to escalate violence. The disabled body is used as propaganda and spectacle only when its debilitation foregrounds patriot sacrifice. Cripnationalism explores bodies elevated to political martyrdom through the systematic exclusion of othered, debilitated bodies explaining that “the promoting and lauding of certain people with disabilities as markers of acceptance and progress ultimately serves to further marginalize and exclude most people with disabilities and serves also to sustain and create networks of debilitation in relation to these privileged disabled bodies.”[9]

The production of disability in the colonized subject is complicated by warfare discourse which recognizes injury as a humanitarian alternative to death. Puar outlines the policy of *shoot to cripple*,[10] where the Israeli Defense Forces mutilate the colonized subject. This policy ultimately serves two purposes: to prevent surmounting global sympathy and solidarity with Palestinian people while actively debilitating the organizational strength of the next intifada. The avoidance of civilian casualties however, cannot be considered humanitarian compromise, but rather the calculated production of torture and depoliticisation.

[8] Puar, *Rethinking Homonationalism*, 1.

[9] Puar, *The Right to Maim*, 82.

[10] Puar, *The Right to Maim*, 189.



## STATE-SANCTIONED SLOW DEATH AND MAIMING, BIOPOLITICS

Debilitating the colonized subject is not simply an act of shooting at her kneecaps but also engineering the circumstances which produce slow death. Slow death is administered upon “populations marked for wearing out” [11] through the requirement that the subject continues to reproduce life. Slow death does not occur within the timescale of a single disaster, but rather within “a zone of temporality ... of ongoingness, getting by, and living on.”[12] Certain populations, even while physically able-bodied, are considered predisabled as their bodies are state sanctioned as sites of violence. Can the colonial subject, whose body has become the site of conflict and who exists in perpetual slow death ever make a claim to being truly able-bodied?

While slow death is conceptualized as a practice of “[letting] die” (but slowly), maiming and mutilating function to “not let die,” preserving life only within the confines of debilitation. Both serve as methods of Foucauldian biopolitics, controlling and governing the possibilities for the body to navigate functions of life and death.

Deleuze and Guattari provide a framework to critique the notion that disability or debility results from accidental occurrences. In their text *A Thousand Plateaus* they explain, “It is an optical illusion to attribute these mutilations to accidents ... accidents are the result of mutilations that took place long ago.”[13] The geology of disability production in Gaza or Afghanistan for instance, cannot be addressed through the passive selection of innocent victims, but rather through the calculated strategy of civilian mutilation which is not the cost of war but central to its ontology.

This characterization of accident was addressed this summer when the UN called for investigations into the use of force by the IDF targeting Palestinian protesters along the Gaza border. In a tweet which was later deleted, an IDF spokesperson explained, “nothing was carried out uncontrolled; everything was accurate and measured, and we know where every bullet landed.” [14] While the claim that the military knew “where every bullet landed”[15] is manifestly false, it also represents a certain truth. The bullets and military equipment which injured more than 15,000 were not accidental, but measured to hit bodies which were already “expected to yield themselves to bodily debilitation, deterioration, and outright harm.”

## STATE-SANCTIONED SLOW DEATH AND MAIMING, BIOPOLITICS

Puar’s book asks us to reconsider the aims of settler and exploitation colonialisms both as measured forms of value extraction from the colonized population predisposed to premature death. She uses Naomi Klein’s conception of disaster capitalism, concluding that temporary crises ultimately normalise crisis politics, entrenching escalated forms of violence, human rights abuses, and cuts to humanitarian aid. While initially qualified as protectionist policies, the economic and political sacrifices of the crisis ultimately become profitable. Consider, as Puar does, that the “Post-onslaught donor conferences [in Israel] raise[d] billions of dollars for rebuilding infrastructure in Gaza—capitalist accumulation that ultimately feeds back into Israel’s regime—despite the inevitability that Israel will destroy Gaza again.”[16] Despite donor fatigue towards the need to constantly rebuild civilian infrastructure devastated in Gaza, rebuilding nevertheless becomes politically easier than dealing with systemic violence and occupation of the territory. Many countries, including the United States, simultaneously fund the destruction and the rebuilding of infrastructure in the city.

[11] Lauren Berlant cited in Puar, *The Right to Maim*, 60.

[12] Lauren Berlant cited in Puar, *The Right to Maim*, 61.

[13] Ernst Junger cited in Deleuze and Guattari *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, (London: Continuum, 2011), 456.

[14] Hazem Balousha, “The Gaza Strip Mourns Its Dead After Protest is Met With Bullets” *The Guardian*, March 31, 2018,

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2018/mar/31/weary-angry-gazans-bury-dead-after-deadly-border-conflict>

[15] Ali Abunimah, “Israel admits, then deletes, responsibility for Gaza killings.” *Electronic Intifada*, March 31, 2018. <https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/israel-admits-then-deletes-responsibility-gaza-killings>

[16] Puar, *The Right to Maim*, 291.

The Israeli government is ultimately able to position itself as the arbitrator of humanitarian aid. Functioning as a valve, the government can create crisis and relief at its convenience, turning on or off, at its own will, what it considers the “humanitarian lifeline.” The humanitarian aid that floods into the country after every military onslaught ultimately goes to serve the financial interests of the Israeli state. Puar explains that Gazans are only profitable and productive through debilitation, explaining that “the debilitation of Gazans is not only capitalized upon in a neoliberal economic order that thrives on the profitability of debility, as is the case elsewhere, but that Gazans must be debilitated in order to make [their lives] productive.”[17] The Palestinian body is always debilitated, considering its limitless potential in serving the neoliberal and biomedical aims of the occupation.[18]

## CONCLUSION

In a 2015 article published in the online magazine *Memo*, a journalist interviews a young 21-year Palestinian man living with disability in Gaza. The article explains that the largest obstacle to his broader participation in society is that Palestinian authorities had not acknowledged or implemented the United Nations International Convention for People with Disability. However, the potential for his physical rehabilitation and mobility is controlled not only by his debilitation, but by the checkpoints, the fences and the walls that govern his society. What are disability rights to a person whose freedom of movement may never be restored? Puar argues that a true disability rights approach must be “unequivocally antiwar, pro-labor, antiracist, prison abolitionist, and anti-imperialist.”[19] Disability rights and justice can never exist under occupation.

Cripnationalism ultimately serves to explain the preservation and posturing of white innocence in colonial and imperialist projects. It centers the biopolitical predeterminism producing slow and premature death and maiming of the colonial subject. If only the colonial subject would learn to parrot the neoliberal discourse surrounding disabled populations, maybe then we could stop mutilating them.

[17] Puar, *The Right to Maim*, 220.

[18] Puar, *The Right to Maim*, 67.

[19] Puar, *The Right to Maim*, 155.

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