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Everyday Geographies, Geographies Everyday: Mundane of Mobilities Made Tangible

Laura Bisailon

University of Toronto Scarborough
lbisailon@utsc.utoronto.ca

Leah Montange

University of Toronto
leah.montange@mail.utoronto.ca

Alberto Zambenedetti

University of Toronto
alberto.zambenedetti@utoronto.ca

Paolo Frascà

University of Toronto
paolo.frasca@mail.utoronto.ca

Lina El-Shamy

University of Toronto
lina.el.shamy@mail.utoronto.ca

Tamir Arviv

Technion-Israel Institute of Technology
tamir.arviv@campus.technion.ac.il



Abstract

In this photo essay, a group of six academics contributed to a cross-disciplinary conversation about immigration, mobility and circulation. We tasked ourselves with subverting crisis narratives attached to global migration by exploring the habitual, mundane, and everyday aspects of migration, as well bringing into focus the bodily, intimate and affective dimensions of mobility. Each co-author selected one or more photographs they had taken of an object or daily practice that illustrates the immediacy, tangibility, and materiality of global mobility, migration and circulation from their perspective as an academic or practitioner in their own discipline. We each also wrote mini-essays to contextualize and explicate these photographs. The result is part photo-essay and part collage. As the various pieces juxtapose with one another, themes of temporal stretching, melancholy, dis/orientation, and the rhythms and cycles of everyday life that are altered and interpenetrated by the mobilities and circulations of people and objects arose. This collective piece also registers the blurring boundaries between everyday life and research practice, individual and collective conversation, work and pleasure. The practice of producing this collective photo-essay was not only the result of the convening of an interdisciplinary study group on immigration, mobility and circulation, but also of a deliberate experiment with practicing promiscuous scholarship and slow scholarship.

Keywords

Circulation; everyday; immigration; intimacy; materiality; mobility

Introduction

This multi-authored photo essay stands as an expression of feminist praxis, pedagogy and interdisciplinary scholarship and partnership. It is the fruit of a dedicated process through which we put the “tools of social science, friendship, and the power of conversation” to use to produce a scholarly contribution greater than the sum of its parts (Mountz, 2016, 207). We are members of an interdisciplinary group called the (Im)migration, Mobilities and Circulation Collective. This scholarly group was co-chaired by University of Toronto faculty members Professors Laura Bisailon, Elizabeth Harney, and Rachel Silvey during the 2016-17 academic years. The rationale that brought us together was a shared curiosity in exploring how interdisciplinarity—as a scholarly commitment, deliberate intellectual approach, and set of accompanying practices—valuably enlivens and expands our substantive focus on human migrations, movements and mobilities.

Our photo essay traverses the multilocal and multilingual spaces connecting historic and contemporary Eastern and Western Europe, the Middle East, North and the East Africa, and North America. The living and working conditions of our lives, in our role as academics, but also as friends, family members and colleagues, likewise sentient, carnal and mobile human subjects, provide the empirical basis for our discussions and analyses. We unabashedly “practice intellectual promiscuity” (Bisailon, 2017, 28) by drawing from myriad intellectual resources from the social sciences and humanities. We seek to pique the interest of and stimulate dialogue with social geographers and social scientists of other stripes that share our penchant, proclivity and preference for imaginative scholarly promiscuousness. As the reader will discover, we deliberately deploy and exploit instances and interchanges of contradiction, tension and dissonance we have noted around us over time and across space and place as the massively vital analytic resources that they are, unquestionably. We set photographs and maps in dialogue with each other, inviting the reader to share and contemplate the sets

of embodied experiences and taken-for-granted or mundane new knowledge that we offer on the subject of mobilities, migrations and circulations of various kinds.

We have organized our photo essay into three parts. We first identify and discuss our scholarly project to provide the reader with grounding to understand our Collective and its work. Secondly, we present a series of six mini-photo essays through which we hear the voices of all authors. These pieces are at once each of our contributions and a collective photomontage produced in culmination of an iterative, shared process that we matured over one calendar year. Rather than argue for the significance of the bodily, intimate, and affective dimensions of human migrations, movements and mobilities, we took these as our analytic starting points. In doing so, we created a collage of analyses questioning representations of the body, intimacy and affect, while marshaling and extending our engagement with them. Lastly, we reflect on the endeavour of both the Collective and this photo essay. We hope our contribution encourages communities of scholars, students and practitioners variously located to understand the immense personal pleasure and professional productivity that come from transgressing and subverting disciplinary and other imposed boundaries. Doing so opens up possibilities to learn from each other, spark new friendships, build communities of practice, support each other's creativity, and birth robust scholarship.

PART 1: Mobility, Rhythm, Time: From Slow Scholarship to Promiscuous Scholarship

Our Collective's meetings took place during the moments in time of so-called refugee 'crises' and forced migrations from the Global South into the Global North, including into the country we all resided in, Canada. The overarching conceptual organizer of our group was to engage with the ideas of time, rhythm and pace that were our sponsor, the Jackson Humanities Institute's annual themes. We were also wedded to examining emergent visions and imagined spaces, which we had selected as our thematic subtitle. And so, from the beginning of our year together, we explored how these ideas might poke and probe, align with, invert or subvert the notion of human migration as de facto crisis or disaster.

In this pursuit, we brought forward and discussed contributions from contemporary visual arts, human geography, anthropology, music and ethnomusicology, and film and museum studies. In keeping with the desire to encounter emerging visions and imagined spaces, and the transformative politics these imply, at our first meeting we invited Alison Mountz to discuss with us her ongoing projects in global migration detention and also the concept and exercise of slow scholarship. We read the manifesto "For Slow Scholarship," in which she and a collective of fellow North American feminist geographers argued for the urgent need to approach and practice our scholarly work with slowness and with an orientation that values care, creativity and collaboration (Mountz et al., 2015). Up for discussion was how to bring to life intellectual space in an academic institution so as to enable creative, collective scholarship through commitments to sociability, support and stepping away from a world addicted to being busy (Safi, 2014). From the first meeting forward, we committed to operationalizing the guidance and commitment to practice mapped out in Mountz et al. (2015).

Our monthly meetings were structured with the theme of slow scholarship in mind: they were low-stakes encounters that involved a modest amount of preparation. We sought to deliberately push back and challenge "the unsustainable pace of work by changing engagements with [scholarly] time" (Mountz 2016, 216) while we also ventured into substantive questions connected with the field of migration studies. We convened over dinner at the end of the working week, and, following short presentations on our scholarship by guests and group members, we engaged in high-spirited, open-ended exchanges. These gatherings were interspersed with encounters such as public film screenings and panel discussions of our initiation or that we had a hand into organizing. Our twenty-eight members included women and men faculty members, Canadian and international postdoctoral fellows, undergraduate and



Figure 1: Some members of the Immigration, Mobilities, and Circulation Working Group.

graduate students from the University of Toronto and nearby academic institutions (such as Wilfred Laurier, York, and Ryerson Universities), as well as one faculty colleague who participated via Skype from University of California-Irvine. We met eight times between September 2016 and April 2017.

Our monthly gatherings were milieus of scholarly sociability. We had common interest in approaching substantive research areas through interdisciplinary experimentation and boundary transgressing. This buoyed our individual and collective spirits, and enhanced our efforts. In the way that the collective that wrote “For Slow Scholarship” reported feeling fatigued and strained when they met for the first time, many of our group members attended meetings rather subdued and ‘low energy’: we arrived face-to-face at the conclusion of working weeks filled by research, teaching, service, family, and commuting, among other roles and responsibilities. Out of respect for the various demands that we knew to be placed on each other outside our monthly haven, we put effort into ensuring that our meetings offered at once vibrant, and low-stakes, low-demand commitments for thinking, feeling, listening and communing.

Our work together was anchored by an angle of analysis that saw migration, mobility and human circulation not as crisis or something out of the ordinary, but as a mundane and everyday occurrence. *What happens when we refuse to consider migration, mobilities and circulation as crises, but rather, as situated within a genealogy of habitual and historically patterned human flow?* In our focus on the mundane, we contemplated how individuals perform and create spaces of meaning, representation, and home for themselves in, for example, Asian seniors’ residences and within various diasporic LGBTQ communities in Toronto. We learned about contemporary forms of adversity and trauma experienced by nationals from Iran, Italy, and Iraq and people of their diasporas. We were confronted with forms of immobility and people’s quiet resistance within a totalitarian regime in Eritrea. By focusing on these cases, our members were able to construct wider imaginaries and generate insights about the meanings of mobility and displacement. Through this lens, the politics of fear, security and the management of “flows” were supplanted by a different set of concerns: intimacy, melancholy, loss, nostalgia, memory, trauma, and the everyday practices through which people mediate and cope with their cross-border mobility. We argue that the methodological and substantive cross-fertilizations and insights that we made would not have taken root, sprouted or flourished as richly as they did, had we not deliberately engaged

in slow scholarship. But such an approach also promulgated in our work a promiscuous scholarship, one where the blurring of boundaries, cross-fertilization, sociability, and a gaze towards the everyday, intimate and personal deeply reverberates through our tone and the themes we take up.

In the six mini-essays below, the results of this experimental exercise are manifest. From the larger membership of the Collective, a small group of us were able to commit to taking July and August 2017 to explore themes that had emerged during our year together. We tasked each other with contributing a small set of photographs of objects or practices that evoked emerging temporalities and spatialities relating to the three words in our Collective's name: (im)migration, mobilities and circulation. We each provided the photos of objects: a door, a flag, a keyboard, a bag, an avocado, a document. We wrote explications of these photographs that also engaged our own personal narratives. We intentionally focused on objects in order to focus our attention on the everyday rather than on crises and spectacles, but this ultimately meant we would all introduce themes that were personal, and even intimate: what we came across during a family trip, in our correspondence, or when on a retreat; or, the personal reflections that came up while at a conference, or while producing field work or creative works. The emphasis on everyday rhythms imbued our work, as the photo selections and their attendant reflections all blurred the boundaries between our individual fields of study and our lives outside our scholarship. During this time, we read each other's work, discussed, and provided each other with collegial guidance, commentary and suggestions for change. Speaking across disciplinary boundaries, and working slowly, we deliberately directed our attention to what was personal both in substance and in tone. The six of us took up this challenge, and in so doing, troubled the waters of dominant framings of mobile people and their circumstances.



Figure 2: Keyboard with two alphabets.

Part 2: Six Photo Essays

El Immigrant: Linguistic Terrorism and the Materiality of Being In-Between

photo and essay by Lina El-Shamy

This is a photograph of my keyboard (Fig. 2), where the Arabic alphabet stickers that I purchased on eBay are slowly peeling away from my monolingual Latin alphabet keyboard. It is also a photograph I used in my documentary film *El Immigrant* (2015) to symbolize the struggle of not losing a mother tongue and being tied between two languages and cultures. I still remember what triggered me to look at my keyboard—something that now seems so apparent. Having decided to start a project on the immigrant experience, I felt confused as to where I should look first. Researching the immigrant experience entails engaging with many different ideas about identity and assimilation, a lot of abstracted theory on the ‘in-between’ and diasporic living, and difficult stories of border-crossing and survival. But, where was I to begin?

My teacher, Patricio Davila, encouraged me to look at the *material* world around me, and to go from there. Immediately, that is what I did. My laptop was right there and I did not need to go far in order to find a story. I followed the same strategy throughout the film, featuring the people I found when I searched more closely around me, not beyond me: family members, a university classmate, a local entrepreneur, a local dry cleaning worker, friends, a friend’s father, a local taxi driver, a high school

teacher, and a friend's elementary school teacher, among many others. They all came from completely different worlds that I imagined could never intersect, but the forced juxtaposition of their stories (through the power of montage) revealed compelling frictions. For instance, in one shot I interview an elementary school teacher from Iran who is struggling to enter the Canadian education system, followed by a shot of a current elementary school teacher (whose interview with me had nothing to do with immigration) advising everybody to never give up on their dreams, that "you have to do what you want to do, or you won't be happy."

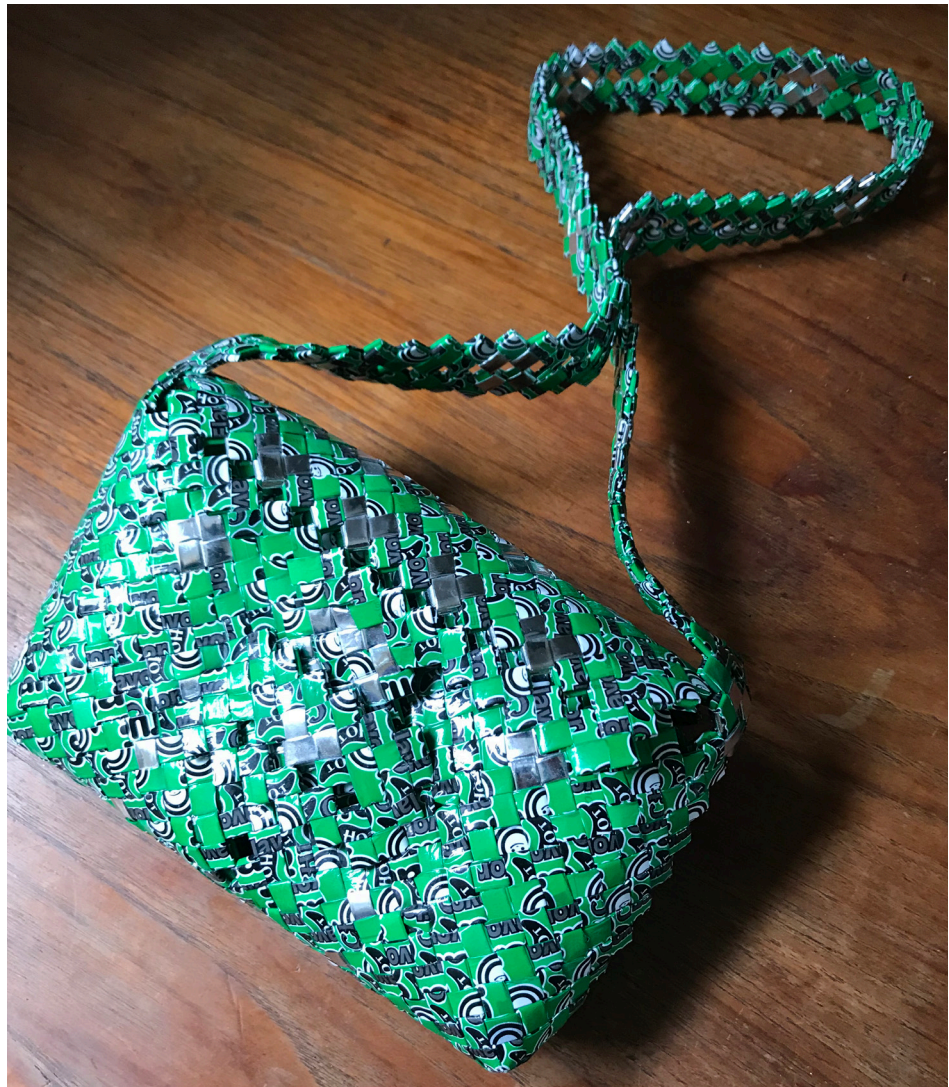
The title, *El Immigrant*, is a linguistic hybrid that reflects the hybridized language that all immigrants everywhere begin to speak upon arriving. 'El' means 'the' in both Arabic and Spanish. In the slow process of losing their mother tongue, immigrants hold on to simple words and phrases such as the article 'el' as a way to reaffirm their identities and histories. Identity is not just an abstract, internalized feeling; it is a lived, material reality: the languages our tongues (are allowed to) speak, the professions we (are allowed to) practice, and the alienation resulting from the physical and linguistic distances created between generations. This is why, in my film, I decided to conduct all interviews not in the interviewees' mother tongue. I found that communicating in English, which is sometimes their second or third language, might tell a more realistic story—might indeed better demonstrate the problem of linguistic barriers. Does a story change in any way if it is communicated in a language that is not the speaker's first language?

Chicana cultural theorist, Gloria E. Anzaldúa, explored the idea of linguistic terrorism in her semi-autobiographical book, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1999). She freely switches between English and Spanish as a way to express her ties to a multitude of cultures. In her essay "How to Tame a Wild Tongue," she labels the critique of and hostility towards a person's accent or language as 'linguistic terrorism', since linguistic identity and ethnic identity are intertwined. Linguistic terrorism is found in the imperialist imposition of the English language, the universal language that everyone should speak if they are to understand and be understood—an imperialism I myself demonstrate in the film by deciding to conduct all interviews in English, only.

My experience with such an imposition happened to me as a child growing up in the Arab world. I attended an international school that taught an American curriculum, with all the subjects (except 'Arabic') taught in English. Outside the classroom and at home was where Arabic would be used—or, where we were allowed to use it. English was the language of professionalism and academia (and 'coolness', of course), whereas Arabic was the language of domesticity and emotions. Our textbooks spoke a completely different language than the one we spoke at home. It was quite a task to reconcile what the textbook said with what our parents said. Our math textbooks used dollars, dimes and nickels; our science textbooks described seasons we had never heard of—we were so behind. When we finally moved to Canada, I remember thinking how the snow was a miracle, as though my old science textbooks came to life.

Using my own story as an immigrant was an afterthought for my film; I was originally resistant to do so. I deemed my contribution to be not as original as other people's stories. Then I realized that this is exactly why I should include it in my film. This story is *not* original; it is every immigrant's story. As I type these paragraphs, the Arabic alphabet stickers that were once on my keyboard have completely peeled off. Maybe I will order another set, and maybe not.

Figure 3: My purse, made by a man detained by Immigration Customs Enforcement in the US.



Immigration Detention: Circuits of Waste/ Value, Abject/Human

photos and essay by Leah Montange

A man detained at one of the largest immigration prisons in the US made the bag in this photo (Fig. 3) for me out of folded green and silver soup wrappers, woven and sewn together with thread made out of garbage bags. We had been pen pals for about six months, emailing each other weekly through an email system that allows family and friends (for a fee) to stay in touch with people incarcerated in prisons and detention centers that subscribe to the service. I wrote with this man not for research purposes, but simply as a way to maintain a practice of solidarity with those affected by violent and neoliberal state systems back home in the US while I embarked upon graduate studies in Canada. Over the course of our exchange, my pen pal was taught by other men in his unit how to “make stuff” out of wrappers and other superfluous materials. I began to understand the objects he made within the context of political economies of migration and detention and the politics of contestation in detention centers.

According to data published by the National Immigration Justice Center in 2018, the US immigration detention system is massive and complex: on an average night in 2017, 44,442 migrants, asylum seekers, and non-citizens who lost status were detained in a combination of contracted beds in

local jails and dedicated detention centers that are either federally run or privately operated. In 2017, about 70% of all immigration detention beds in the US were privately owned and managed, and these include the beds at the facility where my pen pal resided. Food served by the for-profit detention center is of low quantity and quality. Still hungry after an unappetizing meal, detainees will often buy supplemental food, such as soup packets and a variety of snacks, at the overpriced commissary. This has been the focal point of ongoing hunger strikes and struggle at various detention center; for example, shortly before we composed this photo-essay, in June 2017, 35 women went on hunger strike at the Northwest Detention Center in Tacoma, WA. Among their demands were improved meal plans that include fruit, and a lowering of commissary prices. But this situation also yields a variety of practices beyond such ruptures and outward signs of resistance. Some detained people will collect the remnants from commissary food—the various coloured wrappers—and fold them into a variety of objects: picture frames, decorations, and handbags. These can be sent to family members or relatives as gifts or can be sold in order to make more money to spend on phone calls and at the commissary. The economies of detention, and the bodily experience of these economies, resonate through my bag, in a process akin to what Hiemstra and Conlon (2016) have called “the intimate economies of detention,” or the up close and personal circulations of material objects, money, exchange and profit that are implicated in immigration detention.

The pen pal who made my bag has presented his creations in two different art exhibitions with themes of border control and immigration enforcement. Their inclusion in these shows (Fig. 4) urged me to begin to consider and interpret my bag differently. The temporalities of detention are expressed here. From one of my pen pal’s artist statements: “It is sad that there is not much we can do here. When i was in prison i made metal art, wood art, leatherwork, Native American beadwork and so much more. In [detention] it feels like my hands are tight.” In prisons, time is cumulative – one can count down the days until one is released. Depending on the facility, one can participate in programs and earn degrees and certificates. But in detention, time is not cumulative. The experience of detention is often characterized by indefinite or indeterminate periods of waiting. Daily schedules, timetables, and mobilities within the detention center are highly regulated, but at the same time, detained people won’t know and cannot plan for when their detention will end or where and when they will be transferred. Scholars such as Papadopoulos, Tsianos and Stephenson (2008) and Andrijacic (2010) have emphasized how detention



Figure 4 (a,b): Crafts made by detained artist on display at art gallery.

and deportation decelerate migration processes, regulating the temporality of migration by forcing people to pause, temporarily immobilizing them or redirecting their mobility. The creations of detained people are an intervention into these temporalities, a way for people to structure their own time and body, to invest themselves into something, and create. Crafting and making is one strategy for dealing with this temporal regulation, with the stretching and wasting of time, with the waiting for decisions, for court dates, for deportation dates.

We can also peel back the economic relations congealed in my bag to find multiple iterations of a waste-value relation at work here: migrants are racialized through their border-crossing, and exposure to policing, racial profiling and exclusion; they are figured through that racialization as disposable people who can be exposed to dangerous, precarious, and risky forms of employment and economic marginalization (De Genova, 2010). But, that which was de-valored and made into waste can be re-valored. Those who are figured as disposable are re-valored in their detention, where other actors produce value by sorting, warehousing and disposing of (deporting) them. Furthermore, the detention center where my pen pal made my bag is located within a superfund site—a 12 square mile area of land and shallow water that the US Environmental Protection Agency has identified as contaminated with hazardous waste. In 2004, a portion of this wasteland found its “highest and best use” in the warehousing of deportable, disposable subjects. Encompassed in my wrapper purse, we find remnants of surplus bodies being warehoused and sorted on contaminated land by a private corporation seeking to revalorize all this waste. But, we also find resonances of people who are diligently refusing to become waste, who are using this wasted time in their lives, to make things out of discarded wrappers. It is such a sharp illustration of the relation between waste and value, and also between the abject and the human. Indeed, though writing of a different context, Vicki Squire (2014) came to a similar conclusion, that “struggles to transform ‘desert/ed trash’ into objects of value are nothing less than contestations over the very category of ‘the human’ itself” (p. 20). That is, considering the wrapper purse in its imbrication in detained peoples’ temporalities and the circuits of waste/value in detention reveals something different about detention and the process of objectifying a human: that process involves a relation between the sovereign power and the detained subject that, though asymmetrical, is not unidirectional, and the tension between the abject and the human is therefore unresolved.

On Being ‘Young and Defiant’ in Asmara

photos and essay by Laura Bisaillon

Though I have a fifteen-year history with the Horn of Africa region, that is Djibouti, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan, I had never been to Eritrea (Fig.5). This changed in July 2016 when I travelled there to attend a family wedding and take part in the Second International Conference on Eritrean Studies. Committing to slowing down and *being* rather than *doing* in a place opens up wonderful opportunities to see, hear, smell, touch and taste the features of a place and all that happens there (Mountz et al., 2015). The unhurried pace and my insider-outsider position (Contreras, 2015) meant that I had much time and opportunity to observe in ways that were particularly informative and interesting. I was an outsider in this social milieu because of my inability to fluently speak and understand the languages in most frequent usage in Eritrea. Yet, I have also been accepted as a member of my husband’s family, people of both Ethiopian and Eritrean lineage, and, as such, I felt myself belonging to a community in



Figure 5: Eritrea faces the Red Sea in the Horn of Africa region.

Eritrea because of collectivist understandings of family and kinship relations.

I took the four photos in this essay, during our month stay in Eritrea. During my time in there, I interacted with resident (as opposed to diaspora) people of various ages, histories, and social classes, all of whom were urbanites. I learned about the events and circumstances of their lives, both past and present. They mused to each other and me about their futures. I conceived of my interlocutors as expert knowers of the events of their lives and local worlds, since “only the experiencer can speak of her or his experience,” including that which the person experiences as enabling and disabling (Smith, 2006).

In recent years, television sets across the world, including those in Eritrea, have broadcast the sites and sounds of human suffering and death, as well as people’s relief and safe passage in various land and water spaces connecting Africa with Europe. Eritrea has a small population estimated to be five million inhabitants. This means that the uprooting and fleeing work that Eritreans who leave the country do cannot *but* be felt in the country. Their absence does not go unnoticed. Eritreans are overrepresented in deaths in the intercontinental crossings I refer to above (Médecins sans Frontières,



Figure 6:
Disappearing
friends.

2017). The material scarcity and variety of oppressions that my friends and family in Eritrea endure are, in a word, troubling. These arrangements have serious effects on people’s wellbeing. As I watched, learned and listened to the people I met, I began to contemplate and, in dialogue with them, explore answers to the following questions: What sort of politics and social commitments do people that do not, cannot, or choose not to leave Eritrea express and enact? Specifically, how does it feel to be socially young, that is, either unmarried or without children (Clark-Kazak, 2011), and held back in a state that does not permit young people to exit, lawfully, except under exceptional circumstances (Riggan, 2014)? Immediately below, I explore the contours of answers and analysis I proffered from these encounters through two vignettes that emphasize people’s practices.

‘Saloning’ as practice

There is a long-standing coffee drinking and coffee house culture in Eritrea. In the evenings, it is common to see young people strolling leisurely along the streets and gathering to chat in cafés in Asmara. In the photo above, six men, five of whom are long-standing friends, share a drink and a meal (Fig. 6). They meet daily, when possible. They are close. On the occasion pictured here, I am invited to join, and conversations take place in both Tigrinya and English. During their ‘salon’, the men



Figures 7 & 8:
Being erased.

explore topics personal and social. They use humour, irony and parody in equal measure. Talking about domestic politics, they actively avoid naming specific public figures. They practice deliberate exclusion of the latter. Our evening is lively. When I am not present, I am told that updates are shared about whom, among the people they know, has left the country, and who was caught and/or jailed for attempting to do so. While naturally each of these men has aspirations about the future, if one were preparing to leave, I am told that he is unlikely to divulge. In the year that preceded my taking of this photo, twelve buddies gathered around the table regularly. The bodies of friends unseen here, those who were successful in their “illegal” emigration, (Khosravi, 2010) are conspicuous in their absence. This night, the men talk about them. In doing so, they deliberately remember their friends. The il/legality of crossing Eritrea’s national borders is the reason I concealed the men’s faces in this photograph. As I took it, and also as I reflect on it, this photo “whispers to a future” (Tippett, 2017): since I captured this scene, one of the friends seated escaped from the country, making it into Ethiopia through Eritrea’s southern border. Another of these men, after four years of gathering hard-to-get official documents, was granted an exit visa to pursue graduate studies abroad.

‘Social autopsy’ as practice

I talked with and listened to family and friends while enjoying coffee ceremonies during our month in Eritrea. At one of these services, a group of young women and men talked about their position, as youth, in their country. They talked about the human exodus from Eritrea and its consequences for their families and society. They also spoke about their erasure as a matter of social fact: that they were being actively erased was as evident to them as the faceless woman and man depicted in this pair of photographs (Fig. 7 & 8). These are photos of two washroom doors in an Asmara café. The paint is visibly worn and tired. The padlock that fastens the women’s door can be used to keep people in or out. According to these youth, in the eyes of the country’s administrative leaders, they are more potentially disruptive and harmful *inside* the country than outside. From their understanding of how their *society* is organized, exodus serves and satisfies the status quo. Using their “sociological imagination” (Mills, 1959, 2000), this group of urban youth makes sophisticated and empirically traceable connections between personal struggles, family biographies, and social problems. Through such “social autopsy” or analysis, (Klinenberg, 1999) they elucidate lineaments of ruling relations governing them. For example, all families of people I met with are almost entirely dependent on financial remittances from relatives

outside of Eritrea. Some families have no other income. Families whose elders have had professional licences forcibly revoked by the state live very precariously. I was told that these arrangements are limiting, not liberating. We see that youth are being positioned to feel strain in an ongoing way over time and across space.

‘Saloning’ and ‘social autopsy’ as discussed here are practices of quiet contest through which the people I met are dealing with the pain of being resident Eritreans. While not necessarily audible, personal loss, sorrow, and melancholy are indeed manifest in what we do. Victoria Bernal (2014, 2017) and I both focus attention on silence and talk to uncover subtle and obvious ways that chronic loss, material deprivation, and social and structural violence shape the lives of Eritrean inside and outside the country. The urban youth I met dispute, if not fully reject, the state’s idea that they need to continue to suffer for the country. Their imagined futures involve supporting families from outside the country. They live and work to ‘illegally’ exit, while imagining tomorrow’s lived elsewhere, anywhere elsewhere.

In his illuminating ethnography entitled *Young and Defiant in Tehran* (2008), Shahram Khosravi explores the work of urban youth in Tehran, Iran’s capital city. As I write these words, being “young and defiant” in Eritrea involves subtle practices of defiance. Recognizing such subtleties means paying analytic attention to the spoken and unspoken. It also means problematizing people’s taken-for-granted practices, and prioritizing “views from below” (Haraway, 1988). From these vantage points, we can identify and explore how young people are asserting their personhood in practice. Here, we see that the young featured here are raising questions for their present. They are also engaging in acts of “community citizenship”, where civic responsibilities are expressed through acts of solidarity with people close to them and of their choosing, with whom they have affective relations, rather than with the state or another amorphous or distal actor (Mamdani, 1996).



Figure 9: The Freesa application form.

Notes on (the Absence of) Paths

photos and essay by Alberto Zambenedetti

“The Absence of Paths,” Tunisia’s national pavilion at the 57th Venice Biennale, is a piece of performance art staged in three points across the island for the duration of the massive 2017 art exhibition. On a hot early summer day, I queue up with other visitors at the Arsenale booth, where a clerk hands out applications for a “Freesa,” a Universal Travel Document—the portmanteau combines “free” and “visa” into a provocative bureaucratic impossibility. The blue box at the top of the application form recalls that of a US customs form, but the latter’s set of questions is replaced with affective reflections such as “Where do you belong?” The Freesa form also invites the applicant to “Circle Home” on a small image of a stylized Pangea (the original supercontinent)—the online version using a conventional world map and physical address (Fig. 9).

With its purposefully incongruous pairing of dry, bureaucratic boxes and colour scheme and its personal, even emotional line of questioning, the form succeeds in disorienting me. I don’t know how to reconcile those things, so I trace a circle around the entirety of Pangea, smugly attempting to circumvent the issue. The clerk, brushing off my embarrassed sarcasm with disarming sincerity, says that it is, in fact, the only right answer. At first, we cross languages: I speak to him in Italian, and he responds in English—the suffocating tourism industry in Venice prompts most operators to default to it.

Then I switch to English while he politely moves to Italian. We generate unnecessary confusion in our brief interaction: true to form, the bureaucracy of borders is never straightforward, not even as performance art. He inks my right thumb and presses it on a piece of paper, a procedure I am all too familiar with because of my own mobility. He finally issues me a blue Freesa that is very similar to another one I used to have, a US Re-entry Permit—Form I-327, a document that allows permanent residents to leave the US for extended periods of time without abandoning residency. The Freesa is rubber stamped with the seal “Only Human.” My status: “Migrant.” The clerk directs a blue light onto the Freesa, revealing the watermarked and filigreed paper they used to make it look as “official” as possible (Fig. 10).

With the Freesa in my pocket, I continue to wander through the Biennale. A recent experience comes to mind. One month earlier, I attended the “Space and Culture” 20th Anniversary Conference: The Idea of Place, in Edmonton, Alberta. At this point, Canada had been my new place of residence for less than a year. The conference was a professional gathering of sociologists, so I was very much out of my element, but so were some of the geographers, urban planners, and other media scholars in the room. The crowd was eclectic, and I had been assigned to chair the first session of the day, in which I was also presenting my own work—something to do with photography, space, and temporality. Taking an active approach, the first panelist, a local artist named Brittney Roy, invited the international (and sleep-deprived) audience to think about place by charting their own mobility. She handed out Sharpies and standard-sized flashcards, and people began to draw. Here is my drawing (Fig. 11).

After I was done, I realized that I represented Europe and North America as a nine-box grid, the different squares standing in for the countries where I have been employed, in some capacity, over the last twenty years. My mind rushed to the places, the jobs, the friends, the streets, the paycheques, the phone cards, but mostly to the immigration documents. The black



Figure 10: My Freesa, with the “Only Human” stamp and my thumbprint.

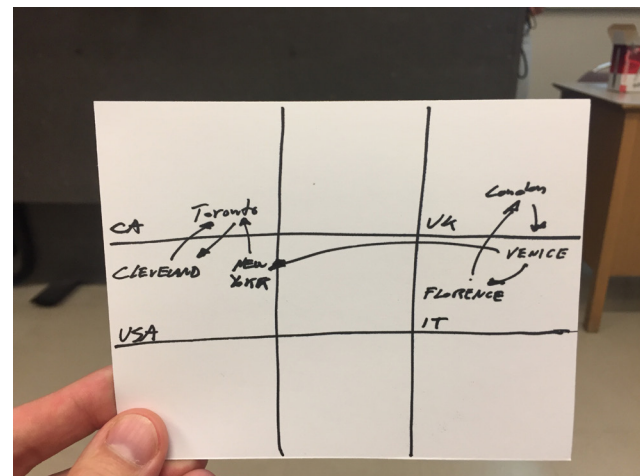


Figure 11: My mobility map.

lines separating the locations, arbitrary obstacles for the arrows to overcome, reminded me of the hours spent filling out forms, queuing at consulates, signing waivers to surrender my privacy, being photographed, quizzed, fingerprinted. As I recall this in a sweltering Venice afternoon, my hand clutches my freshly-inked Freesa.

In 1999, the same year I became a so-called mobile subject, Ahiwa Ong published *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality*. In that pre-9/11 world, Ong described a form of privileged mobility that “refers to the cultural logics of capitalist accumulation, travel, and displacement that induce subjects to respond fluidly and opportunistically to changing political-economic conditions” (6). In her view, these relations were “shaped within the mutually reinforcing dynamics of discipline and escape” (19), and they dealt with the problematic nature of identity in late modernity, in which “flexibility, migration, and relocations, instead of being coerced or resisted, have become practices to strive for rather than stability” (19). Looking back at those words, in the midst of the largest surge of human mobility since the Second World War, we realize that the paradigm has shifted, and that the Freesa exposes its absurd new logic: “In crisis, nation-states pit protection of their own citizens against a broader commitment to protect human rights. Contradictory projects are carried out daily in the name of vague security agendas” (17), observes Alison Mountz (2010), whose work examines borders and human smuggling across them. Two decades later, the black lines on the flashcard look much thicker.

Also in 2017, the website *Migrants of the Mediterranean* launched (Kerpius, 2017). It is a project led by my friend Pamela Kerpius, who first travelled to Italy in July 2005 to visit me as I was staying with my family. She has returned to Italy many times since then, exploring every corner of the country. Once she reached Lampedusa in 2016, she was struck by the apparent divide between the different forms of mobilities that meet on the small island: tourism and migration. Since then, she has been travelling regularly from New York to Lampedusa, spending long stretches of time talking to migrants who crossed the Mediterranean on overcrowded boats and rubber dinghies. She documents their conversations on the website and through its various social media offshoots on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter. These projects help migrants to gain an Internet footprint, and to counter official media accounts that depict them as a horde of indistinguishable people moving through Italy. *Migrants of the Mediterranean* focuses primarily on their harrowing journeys to reach Lampedusa.

In the 2018 Italian general election, Italy’s politics moved decidedly to the right. The current government is openly hostile to migrants, with Matteo Salvini leading the charge against new arrivals. After a summer spent shutting down ports (Borrelli, 2018), the newly-minted Minister of the Interior is, at the time of writing, occupied with drafting a law that seeks to restructure Italy’s immigration system. As the particularities of the law, which seeks to eliminate refugee claims and retract residency permits already granted, begin to emerge in the national press, Salvini’s Twitter feed is adorned with the banner “Italians First”—a campaign slogan that parrots the 2016 presidential election in the United States. In this climate, I return to *Migrants of the Mediterranean* with an urgency I had not experienced before, reminding myself that in my Edmonton chart, the migrants’ stories were the blank square below Italy, their voyages an arrow hopping over the bottom line. In Pamela’s project, they are given a chance to resist the flattening logic of the mediated image, and thus to respond to the politics that aim to exclude them from the national discourse. Allowing migrants to draw their own online flashcard, or at least giving them a metaphorical Sharpie is a necessary, albeit desperate, act of resistance, until their Freesa acquires legal status.



Figure 12: At the Al-Quds Day Rally.

The Al-Quds Rally in Toronto—Breaking Boundaries

photos and essay by Tamir Arviv

I took this picture (Fig. 12) on a sunny Saturday afternoon in late July 2014 during the Al-Quds Day rally held outside the Ontario Legislative Building in downtown Toronto. The Al-Quds Day (*Al-Quds* is the Arabic name for the city of Jerusalem) is an annual, international event initiated by the Islamic Republic of Iran following its 1979 Revolution. It was created as an expression of solidarity with the Palestinian people and exists in opposition to *Yom Yerushalayim* (Jerusalem Day in Hebrew), an Israeli national holiday commemorating the establishment of Israeli control over the “Old City” District in the aftermath of the June 1967 war. Al-Quds Day rallies are held across the Muslim world, as well as in various cities in North America and Western Europe. In recent years, the Al-Quds Day rally in Toronto has become a site of affective clashes between local pro-Palestinian groups calling for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions (BDS) against the State of Israel, and local pro-Zionist groups whose members are, for the most part, Jewish-Israeli immigrants to Canada.

The polarization is very visual and evident in the photograph, as is the ‘neutrality’ of the Canadian police force and Canadian state standing in between the two poles. The emotionless expressions on the police officers’ faces (center) dramatically contrast the overt expressions of anger of the pro-Palestine protesters (left) and the pro-Israeli protesters (right) against each other. The picture also captures the ways in which material objects, in this case national flags, are appropriated as symbols that gather people

at two different ideological ends of this conflict: members of the pro-Zionist group are holding Israeli and Canadian flags, while pro-Palestine/BDS protesters are holding Palestinian flags. During the rally, the pro-Zionist/Israel protesters chanted slogans such as “Israel’s values are Canadian values”; “Israel: where freedom and tolerance live”; and, “Support for Israel is support for Canada.” This group also accused the pro-Palestine/BDS protesters of being sympathizers of radical Islamic terrorism. Dividing the global political terrain along Orientalist cultural ‘civilizational’ lines (Said, 1978), between the so-called ‘liberal West’ and the so-called ‘fundamental Islamic world’ (Huntington, 1996), the pro-Israeli activists were able to stake their claims of belonging to both Israeli *and* Canadian societies, thus assuming a role of defenders of ‘Western civilization’ in Canada. In contrast, member of the Pro-Palestine/BDS groups chanted slogans that equated the State of Israel to ‘an Apartheid State’ and *all* Israeli Jews to (white) settlers in the Middle East. These slogans, in turn, have allowed pro-Palestine/BDS protesters to assume the role of anti-racist and anti-colonial human rights advocates.

As I watched this scene and captured it with my camera, I felt caught between these two positions. On the one hand, the Orientalist logic of the Pro-Zionist protesters did not fit with my hybrid identity and racialized embodied experience in Israel and in Canada. On the other hand, the messages circulating among members of the BDS group during the rally, which were framing the conflict in Israel/Palestine as an instance of colonization by fundamentally alien white (European) settlers, did not resonate with me, either.

My diaspora identity and sense of belonging in Toronto is tied to my personal and familial journey of migration. My family journey starts in Tripoli, Libya. Both of my parents were born there during Italian occupation. Their families had lived there for countless generations; they moved to Israel as part of the mass migration or displacement of Jews that took place in the Arab world between the 1940s and 1970s. They were young when Mussolini’s Fascists brought Nazi-inspired anti-Semitic laws to Libya under the 1938 *Manifesto della razza* (Charter of Race). Following the liberation of Libya from Italian and German influence in 1942, my parents and their extended families found themselves at the heart of a country and region in intense flux. As a new and exclusively Arab national identity gained traction, the Jews of Libya found themselves subjected to violence and attacks orchestrated by members of nationalist groups. Like many Jews living in newly independent Arab countries including Libya, Libyan Jews responded favourably to the solicitations of Zionist emissaries who promised a better future in the newly formed State of Israel, and thus accepted to relocate.

My father arrived in Israel with an Aliya or immigrant movement of Libyan youth shortly after World War II, and my mother arrived with her family in 1949. Most Jews of Middle Eastern and North African origin know as Arab Jews or *Mizrahim*, including my parents and families, lost property, passports, and their social standing within their societies of origin, arriving in Israel impoverished and



Figure 13: My personal and familial journey of migration.

destitute. From their emic perspectives, their arrival and resettlement in the “Land of Israel” was a movement within a singular, familiar Middle Eastern space in which they were already unquestionably indigenous (Shenhav, 2006).

In their first decades in Israel, they were dependent on the *Ashkenazi*-dominated (Jewish European) Labour Zionist state’s institutions and policies relating to welfare, housing, and settlement. Furthermore, in the new, European-oriented State of Israel, they were also forced to reject key elements of their *Mizrahi* cultures and identities. Certainly, as Israeli citizens and Jews in a Jewish state, *Mizrahim* have enjoyed significant privileges vis-à-vis Palestinians. Yet, they found themselves systematically channeled to the socio-cultural, economic, and political margins of Israeli Jewish society (Shohat, 1988; Shenhav, 2006; Chetrit, 2009).

I was born in Israel in 1979, and grew up in Or Yehuda, a small, working-class town, where most of the population, like myself, was *Mizrahi* Jews. Consistent with many members of *Mizrahi* second and third generation people, my experience of racialization - within the context of persistent social and cultural oppression and marginalization of *Mizrahi* Jews in Israeli society—comes to combine with a cross-generational transfer of loss of culture, language, identity, property, passports, and standings in the community (Yosef, 2011, 74). At the same time, ‘Middle Eastern’ and Arabic influences were always present during my upbringing in Or- Yehuda—more than the Western or European ones that are normalized in *Ashkenazi*-dominated spaces, including elite Israeli university campuses, where, because of my background, I often felt out of place. While my parents stopped speaking to me and my brothers and sister in Arabic at home, they spoke Arabic with my grandparents. They maintained other aspects of a distinctly Jewish-Libyan identity and culture at home, and in particular with respect to Libyan cuisine and Jewish-Libyan religious rituals.

At the age of 30, I left Israel for Toronto in September 2009. During my encounters with non-Israeli Jews and non-Jewish Canadians alike, I found myself facing curious questions about my ethnicity and religion. I soon learned that as a dark-skinned, *Mizrahi*, Jewish, Israeli man living in Toronto, I was expected to explain the ‘contradictions’ in my identity. To those who are curious, I explain that the Arab and *Mizrahi*-hybrid cultures are inseparable parts of my Israeli diasporic identity in Toronto, and of my Jewish identity. Israel is my homeland - but is intimately connected to my parent’s homeland in Libya, and my presence in Canada.

My familial and personal journey of migration crosses racial, cultural, and political boundaries that were represented by both pro-Zionist and pro-Palestinian protesters during the Al-Quds Day rally. Obviously, the current situation for *Mizrahi* Jews and Palestinians are not comparable. The *depth* of racial and colonial violence against the Palestinians prevalent in Israel/Palestine, as well as the agency and complicity of *Mizrahi* Jews relating to the subjugation of the Palestinians in Israel/Palestine, is undeniable (Shenhav, 2006). Yet, the historical circumstances of *Mizrahi* Jews, who have also lived through colonialist, nationalist, as well as Zionist upheavals in the Middle East, complicate the dualisms and binaries of native versus immigrant/settler. Indeed, the hybrid identities of these Jews considerably challenge the Jew versus Arab dichotomy (Shohat, 2003). The tendency among Zionist and anti-Zionist scholars and activists in North America to represent the politics in Israel/Palestine as cohesive, and fundamentally a matter of religious, racial, and ethno-national bloc differences, as per the *Al-Quds* Rally in Toronto, erases *Mizrahi* and Arab Jewish historical-geographies and elides features of their ongoing struggles. A truly inclusive anti-colonial and anti-racist activism about Israel/Palestine and in Canada must embrace historical-geographies, the specificities of *Mizrahi* concerns, and the contexts of Palestinians and other marginalized groups in contemporary Israeli and Palestinian societies.



Figure 14: July 2017 in Mattawan, Ontario.

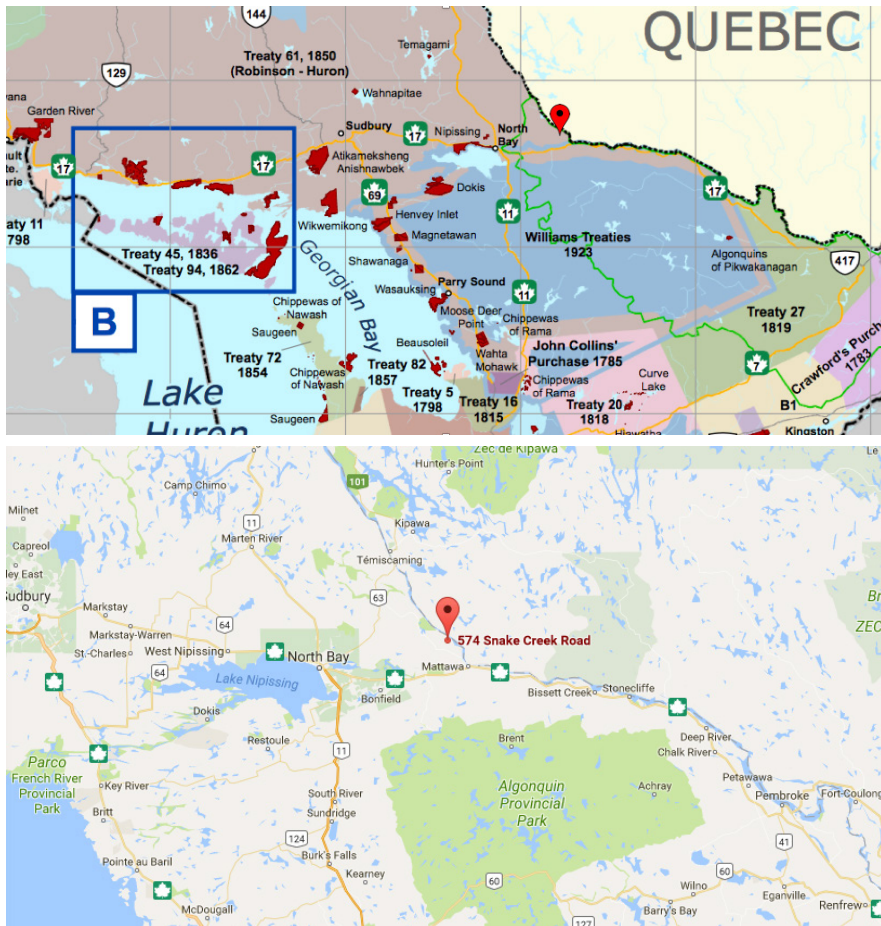
Contemplations on Mobility and (A)Political Existence: An Attempt to Escape to Nature

photos and essay by Paolo Frascà

“The body must be regarded as a site of social, political, cultural, and geographical inscriptions, production, or constitution. The body is not opposed to culture, a resistant throwback to a natural past: it is itself a cultural, *the* cultural product.” (Grosz, 1994, 23, emphasis in original)

Grosz’s insight here lays the foundation for my reflection on human mobility and the impossibility of shedding political and material histories from one’s subjectivity. The critical meditations in this piece explore the desire to “escape” from the city to a more natural landscape, as well as the disillusion that such an escape can occasion the return to what Giorgio Agamben (1998) describes as “natural life” (105), a life free of political existence.

In July of 2017, I wanted to escape the city of Toronto and from a few people in it. I booked a “Mongolian-style yurt” in Mattawan, Ontario on the popular AirBnB website, rented a car from Enterprise, grabbed some clothes, books, food, and my phone, and went. I brought Louis, a Chihuahua, with me. While I did escape Toronto, I became tangled in networks of movement and exchange different than those in the city. Renting property and a vehicle from multinational, multi-billion-dollar companies, bringing items produced in different countries with me, and having my animal friend come along on the trip all complicated my “escape” to “nature.” My own identities as a scholar, a gay man, an immigrant to and citizen of Canada deeply shaped my four-hour overland trip, which was to be a “simple” and



Figures 15 and 16: Pin location of Mongolian-style Yurt and Ontario First Nations Territories.

therapeutic venture into the woods. These complications condensed around three main issues: the (im) possibility of a true escape from the social and political self; the implications of carrying objects and animals originating in different parts of the world; the possibility of accepting and functioning amid the troubled networks of modernity.

My personal and professional experiences with migration and marginalization have tuned me in to issues of colonialism; I was curious to find out more about the specific place I visited. I learned that the territory of Mattawan is situated on the colonized land of the Nipissing First Nation (Treaties: Robinson-Huron #61, 1850 and Williams, 1923). The red pins on the maps below show where the Mongolian-style yurt I rented is located (Fig. 15), with reference to the different Indigenous territories of the region (Fig. 16). It was interesting and important to be aware of the political and geographical history of Mattawan, but this meant that I could no longer see it as the bucolic destination I originally envisioned. The land and resources all around me were imbued with a history, sometimes painful. My presence in these landscapes was, as I reflected, an extension of settler colonialism, and I experienced this as problematic. Here, I was not numbed by the overstimulation and confusion of the city—also settled territory—and these reflections could take up more space in my thinking.

The structure my small animal-friend and I would call “home” for the next few days had no electricity, no cellular signal, no Internet, no running water. Perhaps, *this* would allow for an escape. I hoped that being technologically disconnected would grant me a sense of freedom. I wondered whether or not I could simply feel gratitude for this experience, without concentrating on the fact that this place, in the middle of nowhere, was actually a node of history, and its silence, unlike the cacophony of the

city, was waiting to be asked questions about all it had witnessed.

I took the photo (Fig. 14) above soon after my arrival. The photo makes palpable the intersections of history and movement in which I was immersed. In the image, Louis the Chihuahua, is standing in front of the property he had already marked as his. He shares the deck with two avocados (“*ahuacatl*”, the original name of the fruit, means “testicle” in the Nahuatl language of the dog’s and fruit’s native México) that I had rested there to ripen. Louis’ own *ahuacatls* are right above them—a coincidental homage to the fruit’s etymology—as he safely guarded this Mongolian-style lodging. The photo was taken with an Apple iPhone designed in California and assembled in China. I took the photo: a Southern Italian whose not-so-pale skin reminds me that my genes have a diverse history, one that my citizenships fail to represent.

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While immersed in the woods of Mattawan, I knew that my presence there was part of a movement that unsettled dusts of political identities, hierarchies, histories, and privileges. But, all I had wanted was to stop moving my body and moving things, and to be peacefully surrounded by quiet and nature. Instead, what I wore, what I ate, what I touched, what and where I was all carried an important history of movement, even in the stillness of the forest. These contemplations in the middle-of-nowhere-now-middle-of-everywhere made me wonder if different types of movements can be considered gentle, healthy, and natural and others violent, unhealthy, and unnatural. Was it ok to be where I was, and to bring all I brought with me? Which of the strings in the network of movement that I was entangling myself in were more painful or harmful than others, and painful to whom? What violent, unnatural movements have contributed to my existence and my being there, and what violent movements have I contributed to? Who is to judge all of this?

Escaping the everything of the city, and entering the everything of the forest was utterly frustrating because it was no escape at all. In fact, being in the forest, alone with Louis and my things, made the network of mobilities I was caught up in more discernible. Not even in the off-grid yurt could the Chihuahua and I find ourselves free of attachments to the global threads that connect, puppeteer, and define us all; not even there in the places where it seems like time does not exist can one return to “natural life,” because that possibility “was taken from us forever” (Agamben, 1998, 105).

Should we accept the loss of our natural lives, and should we learn, instead, to “stay with the trouble,” as Donna Haraway (2016) words it? Today, we cannot hope for purity, for true liberation from modernity, technology, and the law, so we may wish to learn to live with the trouble of the unreachable authenticity of *beingness*. Haraway explains that we must learn to be “truly present, not as a vanishing pivot between awful or Edenic pasts and apocalyptic or salvific futures, but as mortal critters entwined

in myriad unfinished configurations of places, times, matters, meaning” (2).

Born and raised in a 3,000-population town in Southern Italy, and citizen of Canada, I was temporarily living in a Mongolian-style yurt on colonized Indigenous territory, with a dog and fruits native to Mexico, reading a book printed in the UK, documenting it all with a phone made in China, amongst other things. To be able to be there, I had given money to two multinational companies and I had needlessly polluted the environment. Participating in movements that I believe cause harm to others and the planet felt disquieting, and the silence of the forest was making the trouble heard. Those were certainly not the feelings I had sought by going, though I soon realized I had no other choice but to welcome them. A pithy observation by Alexis Shotwell (2016) reminds us “*if* we want a world with less suffering and more flourishing, it would be useful to perceive complexity and complicity as the constitutive situation of our lives, rather than as things we should avoid” (8, emphasis in original). While seeking stillness, I found myself in the midst of a storm of irregular movement, I was enveloped in stories of journeys told by every being and object around me, as well as by my own body and existence. My presence there, in nature, with my things, was anything but natural; it was political.

Part 3: Discussion and Conclusion

Through this photo essay, we have done two things. Firstly, we explored the mundane of mobility—the material, affective, and everyday elements of migration and transnational movement—through cross-disciplinary slices of life and fieldwork. Rather than construct an argument about the significance of the bodily and intimate dimensions of migration and cross-border mobility, we took such significance as our starting point. From there, we created an evocative photomontage of representations and experiences. We grounded our analyses in visual media to forefront and tether our inquiries to the tangible practices that people do. To do this, we attended to language, ideas, our bodies, the objects we use, and activities we do, daily.

We drew together things, people, places and practices that, in various ways, spoke to contradictions and frictions arising from migrations, mobilities and circulations of various sorts. From the worn away letters on a keyboard to the fading sign on a bathroom door, and from the scene of a tense political demonstration to the scene of a peaceful remote retreat, the traces of cross-border mobility wore and wove their way into our lives. We see these traces represented in the high art at the Venice Biennale, and in the folk art and crafts made by a person captive in immigration detention. We behold, feel, and embody these traces in our scholarly work and in situations of daily living that are unconnected to what we do to earn a living and support our families.

Our contributions walk the line between research and life. We troubled the boundary between ‘the field’ and our everyday lives. Proceeding in this way opened valuable windows into the temporal and qualitative textures of mobility: the indeterminate time in a detention center; the time it takes for words in our mother tongue to slip away from memory; the “work of waiting” for an anticipated emigration of immigration (Kwon, 2015, 495); the subtle practices engaged to resist authoritarianism; and, the active deploying of the five senses in feeling overwhelmed, curious, desirous and melancholy.

In contemporary times, mobilities across borders have become, somehow, ordinary for many. At the same time, this freedom to move is not evenly or equitably experienced. As ambulatory, academic subjects, we encounter mobilities in our everyday lives. In preparing our essays, we explored how our role in the academy, social class, life histories, sexuality, age, and citizenship statuses, among others, informed and enlivened our interpretations of mobility. We were acutely aware that as academic labourers, we strive to educate and mentor students; we travel to discuss ideas at workshops and conferences; we journey to and immerse in faraway field sites; and, we attend universities outside our home country. Thus, in bringing our subject positions to bear in our photo essays, we blurred the boundaries between sites of inquiry ‘out there’ and those people, places, politics, as well as nagging problems, that are parts of who we are as people in our private and professional realms.

Secondly, through this photo essay, we enacted and embraced slow scholarship as a practice for our own well-being, and one that allowed for cross-disciplinarity. We did this by collaborating in mutually agreed upon and purposeful ways, which pooled our disciplinary and experiential knowledge, and allowed it to intermingle. Creating this photo essay was interesting, restorative and gave us pleasure. We hope that our commitment to practicing slow scholarship will be understood as a challenge to the dominant paradigm in Canadian academia, and in places beyond that are similarly organized within relations of competition, of thinking and writing accomplished in isolation, and of narcissism. We were very aware of collaborating in a moment in time where professional life has colonized personal life to an extent that there are both noted patterns of mental illness in the academy (Peake and Mullings, 2016) and there is seemingly endemic and endless depletion and anxiety (Mountz, 2016) (experienced more seriously for some subjects more than others: [Ahmed, 2013]). Through this essay, we talked back to this troubling and harmful situation, and we did so by disrupting through our collective process.

In this broader context, then, we desired to “make connections across lines and barriers, refusing to be tied down” Said (1993, 76). Collective, creative academic work that enriches as it transgresses and subverts norms through relations of “care and affection” (Said, 1993, 82), is something we do *because we want to and because we must*. Over one year, we did just that: staking out space in our personal and professional lives for each other, as situated within scholarly work that sustained, produced community, enriched rather than impoverished, and which, ultimately, birthed this photo essay.

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