



IMAGINED IDENTITIES

Identity Formation in the Age of Globalization

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GÖNÜL PULTAR

FOREWORD BY
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Foreword

. . . *L'identité est une sorte de foyer virtuel auquel il nous est indispensable de nous référer pour expliquer un certain nombre de choses, mais sans qu'il n'ait jamais d'existence réelle.*

Identity is a sort of virtual home which we find indispensable as point of reference when explaining a certain number of things, without, however, it ever having any real existence.

—CLAUDE LÉVI-STRAUSS, *L'identité*

The difficulties in coming to terms with how “identity” is subjectively experienced were expressed eloquently by Claude Lévi-Strauss in almost Buddhist terms:

I never had, and still do not have, the perception of feeling my personal identity. I appear to myself as the place where something is going on, but there is no “I,” no “me.” Each of us is a kind of crossroads where things happen. The crossroads is purely passive; something happens there. A different thing, equally valid, happens elsewhere. There is no choice, it is just a matter of chance.¹

Generations of Buddhist thinkers had similarly struggled with the subtle and challenging concepts around what came to be known as the famous *anatta* (nonself) doctrine. In brief, *anatta* in the context of Buddhist thought raises the question of the malleability of the self and of the multiple consciousness of “identity.” Much turns around the problem of the contingency of such imagined consciousness. So Lévi-Strauss is not the first to draw our attention to the “imaginary” aspects of the sense of identity.

It turns out that such Buddhist speculations on the nature of the self have indeed a highly contemporary aspect to them. The nature of identity has certainly had a long and distinguished intellectual history in modern thought. It harks back to the work of major historians such as Eric Hobsbawm, political scientists, notably Benedict Anderson, anthropologists

such as Ernest Gellner, and many others. Their work is referred to by the different writers in this unusual volume. Among the anthropologists, it was Edmund Leach writing on *The Political Systems of Highland Burma* who drew attention to the surprising identity changes among the Karen/Kachin on the border with China, which later became the impetus for the much celebrated brief commentary on *Ethnic Boundaries* by Fredrik Barth.² More recently, there has been much philosophical speculation on the subject, in the work of Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, and the edited volume *Identities* by K. Anthony Appiah and Henry Louis Gates Jr., which indicates abiding interest in this subject.³

One can hardly overlook the intensity of the radical challenges posed by the myriad problems of identity in the highly controversial (and still very relevant) work of Frantz Fanon in his bitter outcry, *Les Damnés de la Terre*, translated into English as *The Wretched of the Earth*.⁴ This unusually insightful psychiatrist from Martinique first immersed himself fully in French culture, followed in the footsteps of Jean Paul Sartre (1905–1980) with immense devotion, became an enthusiast for African political resurgence, and died as a celebrated hero of the Algerian uprising against French colonial rule. His own life experience expresses, almost like a metaphor, the contingencies of the personal experience of identity. In his chapters on the practice of psychiatry under violent colonial conditions, he describes the effects of the desperate circumstances on the experience of identity.

Indeed, the social, political, and psychological features of personal identity are always intertwined in unexpected ways. One can distinguish two distinct aspects of the ambiguities that confront us: there is the “objective” regard of the public towards the individual, which places him or her in a “category”; and there is the “subjective” experience of the formation of identity. The first goes in the direction of public social experiences, language, and categories, and ultimately towards political formations; and the second involves all the subtleties of personal psychology. Byron J. Good has recently returned to these questions of postcolonial subjectivity in the context of the violence in Indonesia. In his Marett lecture at Oxford University in 2010, he examined the political and subjective domains of the self under such extreme circumstances.

Since the great controversies around the work of Fanon, the problems of colonial and postcolonial experiences of the self have received extensive attention. To the question of the politics of identity are added questions concerning the management and experience of multiple cultures in large

metropolitan countries such as the United Kingdom, France, Germany, and beyond. It is furthermore evident that the public media plays a critical role in defining the parameters of intercultural experience. It is deeply implicated in the new ways of fashioning identity among individuals and groups in relation to each other.

The present unusual and lively volume provides striking examples of many of these issues. It consists of studies based on the proceedings of a symposium on ethnic identity held in Istanbul by two organizations: the Society for Multi-Ethnic Studies: Europe and the Americas (MESEA), and the Cultural Studies Association of Turkey. There is a carefully argued and succinct introduction by Gönül Pultar that sets out the main themes of the conference. Indeed, appropriately enough for a volume on identity and transformations, Pultar dedicates the work to the memory of her maternal grandmother, who was born in Orenburg in the tsarist Russian empire and lived in Finland, Germany, and France—and died as a citizen of Turkey in Istanbul.

What makes the present work so engaging is the fact that identity is approached from different kinds of evidence—fiction, theme parks, the analysis of daily news, field work, and so on—as well as the experiences of people from many different countries.

In the section on identity in works of fiction, Pramod Nayar has an engaging discussion of the Indian novel in English. He provides detailed readings of the works of Kiran Desai, Amitav Ghosh, Salman Rushdie, Kushwant Singh, and other brilliant Indian writers. Identity is formed through unusual experiences. This, from the celebrated Booker Prize-winner Kiran Desai: Biju (one of the main characters) learned about how the world treated Indians. Indians were hated in Tanzania, Uganda, Nigeria, Fiji, Madagascar, Hong Kong, Germany, Italy, Japan, Guam, Singapore, Burma, South Africa, China.⁵ All these different refractions of “Indian-ness” in turn affected the self-image of Biju. Tanja Stampfl’s chapter is a sensitively handled account of Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*⁶—the dilemmas of American identity in the Afghan context. Andrea Rosso Efthymiou writes on *Pascali’s Island*⁷—a novel by Barry Unsworth—an account of identity anxieties in the waning days of the Ottoman Empire with the rise of nationalism on a Greek island.

In the second, nonfiction, section, Gönül Pultar writes about Takuhi Tovmasyan on the ethnic aspects of memories of food cultures. It is about cultural nostalgia and revival in the formation of identity. Anna Roosvall works on “foreign news” as an element of “nationalism” in a detailed analysis

of the press, with examples from Sweden. Her subject is media globalization and the reinforcement of the "nation." Dawn Morais discusses Malaysia's tourism advertisements and representation of the self.

Section 3 is on identity as performance: Dorothea Fischer-Hornung discusses ethnic humor between Germans and Turks in Germany. Cathy Waegner analyzes the performance of "race," "slavery," "otherness," African-Americans' role in minstrelsy, and nineteenth-century theatrical performances. Yiorgos Kalogeras has a chapter on "ethnicity from fiction to film" in the work of Albert I. Bezzerides (1908–2007). It provides an informative account of a transition from an Armenian American (originally from Turkey) to a Greek American in his work in films in Hollywood. Simona Sangiorgi's chapter 10 is on national identity as seen in theme parks.

Then comes section 4, an extraordinary set of chapters on the problems of identity formation in the lands of the former Soviets. Abel Polese describes the subtlety of Ukrainian/Russian relations in Odessa: siblings in one family veering in opposite directions and similar thought-provoking matters. The chapter on Kazakhstan by Timur Kozyrev is also of great interest. It concerns the Kazakhs' "sense of inferiority" vis-à-vis the Russians. It goes into a challenging—and highly charged—discussion of the "advantages" for the peoples of Central Asia (and the Republic of Turkey) of "Turkishness." How to remythologize the glorious history of the Turks on the world stage? The reimagination of the grand themes of received Turkish history—from China, to India, to Egypt, to the Balkans—is to act as a counterweight to the Russian past. The chapter revives, without a trace of self-consciousness, the old debates concerning the sensitive topic of pan-Turkism in their brand new geopolitical context. The piece on Kyrgyzstan and globalized markets is based on useful fieldwork by Emil Nasritdinov and Kevin O'Connor.

In sections 5 and 6, there are equally challenging and fascinating chapters: on Egypt and India by Samaa Gamie; on Lebanon by Samer Abboud; and on Egyptian Copts in the United States by Fouad and Barbara Ibrahim.

Chapters 17 and 18 bring up the concluding section, "Positions." American (or "Gringo") identity in connection with Latin America is discussed in chapter 17 by Luís C. V. G. Santos. Grigol Ubiria brings these themes together in chapter 18, a discussion of the nation-state in the context of globalization.

This is an ambitious volume on momentous contemporary subjects that will interest many readers in academia and beyond. Each piece is on a subject of real immediate interest, and each writer is obviously deeply engaged. It makes for compelling reading. The subject of identity, as the Buddhist

thinkers found out for themselves a long time ago, is not easily exhausted, but this collection provides a highly relevant analysis of a phenomenon with many sparkling facets that continue to present a challenge to our understanding of the world around us.

Nur Yalman

Cambridge, September 20, 2011

Preface

This volume originated from a symposium titled “Ethnic Identity? (Trans) National and (Bi/Multi/Poly)Cultural Aspects,” organized in Istanbul, Turkey, by the Cultural Studies Association of Turkey and the Society for Multi-Ethnic Studies: Europe and the Americas (MESEA). The chapters that make up this collection were selected from papers delivered at the symposium and subsequently reworked, and from essays submitted for a call for papers to interested scholars following the symposium.

I would like to thank all the contributors, not only for their insightful and erudite work spanning a wide variety of themes and viewpoints, but for the patience and understanding they have shown throughout the editing process. I also wish to thank Professor Nur Yalman of Harvard University for having graciously accepted to write a foreword.

I would like moreover to thank each and every one of the Syracuse University Press staff for all the work they put into the production of the book.

I dedicate this book to the memory of my maternal grandmother Kamile Rameeva Maksudi Aarsal (1892–1973), who was born in Orenburg during the tsarist regime in Russia and died in Istanbul as a citizen of the Republic of Turkey after having lived in Finland, Germany, and France. More than anyone else, she would have understood how identities are imagined.

Gönül Pultar
Istanbul, September 2012

Introduction

From Empire to the “Irresistible Shift”

GÖNÜL PULTAR

The chapters in the present volume are authored by scholars from various fields and various regions of the world who discuss both the construction and deconstruction of identity in its engagement with culture, ethnicity, and nationhood. The authors investigate from sociological, literary, postcolonial, and cultural studies frameworks the difficulty of conjugating the complex and pluralistic sense of belonging that individuals and groups in the post-Cold War, post-9/11 period have been experiencing. They acknowledge in their chapters the tension resulting from the wish to create a new cultural space for identities that are at once national, regional, linguistic, and religious, yet attempt to encompass a political and geographic whole within designated areas. The collection contributes new insight to the tired debate over what identity signifies in societies where the existence of minorities, be they indigenous or immigrant, challenges the supremacy of the dominant group.

A Novel Approach to Identity

As we leave the first decade of the twenty-first century behind and grope our way into the new millenium, forces of globalization increasingly loom as agents intent on reshaping the world we live in. While some have been rejoicing at the prospect, with groups among them accused by the likes of Naomi Klein, with her *No Logo* and *Shock Doctrine*,¹ of unfairly acquiring huge gains from the process, others have seen the impending homogeneity and attendant development(s) in a negative light to say the least, and been disturbed by it. This latter stance has led, among others, to the emergence, in the last couple of decades, of a novel approach to the time-honored concept

of *identity*² and a fresh yet intense scrutiny and questioning of its significance. As Stuart Hall aptly put it, already in 1996, "There has been a veritable discursive explosion in recent years around the concept of 'identity,' at the same moment as it has been subjected to a searching critique. . . . The deconstruction has been conducted within a variety of disciplinary areas, all of them, in one way or another critical of the notion of an integral, originary and unified identity."³

The deconstruction Hall alludes to also paved the way for controversy and disputes over what were thought to be received identities. To give just one example, as U.S. sovereignty, consolidated by the fall of the Berlin Wall (1989) and the subsequent collapse of the Soviet Union (1991), engendered the emergence of a new world order in which it was supreme, appearing as it did to reign as an "empire" (see Hardt and Negri),⁴ the term *America* as a synonym for the United States became a source of conflict: Central and South Americans reminded one and all of the existence of "the Americas" in the plural and reclaimed the appellation *American* for themselves as well. As Luís Cláudio Villafañe G. Santos points out in the chapter titled "American, United Statian, Usamerican, or Gringo?" in this volume, "The fact that the citizens of the United States of America (USA) call themselves 'Americans' causes discomfort for many Latin Americans, who see the appropriation by the United States citizens of the collective identity of all peoples and countries of the continent as a clear act of cultural imperialism." For Santos, the thirty-four other countries of the hemisphere can claim to be as "American" as the United States. He discusses in the chapter the various related terms and what they represent, making comparisons between their connotations through a historical survey that entails the "invention" in the hemisphere of various national identities including that of what he calls U.S. (which some would read "American") national identity.

In the prologue to his groundbreaking *Information Age* trilogy, Manuel Castells, after remarking that recent sociopolitical events and technological advances have brought about dramatic transformations, finds that "in such a world of uncontrolled, confusing change, people tend to regroup around . . . identities." For Castells, in "a world of global flows of wealth, power, and images, the search for identity, collective or individual, ascribed or constructed, becomes the fundamental source of social meaning." Identity, which he defines as "the process by which a social actor recognizes itself and constructs meaning primarily on the basis of a given cultural Attribute or set of Attributes," in his eyes is "becoming the main, and sometimes the

only, source of meaning in an historical period characterized by widespread destructuring of organizations, delegitimation of institutions, fading away of major social movements, and ephemeral cultural expressions.” Not surprisingly, he titled the second volume of his trilogy *The Power of Identity*. The rise of network society and the rising power of identity, he believes, are intertwined processes that have been shaping globalization in the early twenty-first century.⁵

Today, identity is one of the main themes of postmodernist theory and criticism. In fact, it may be said that identity is to postmodernist vision what nation or nation building/community imagining (after Benedict Anderson) was to modernist vision. Anderson explained forcefully and convincingly in his *Imagined Communities*⁶ how “print-capitalism” achieved, through the publication of fictional works as well as the press, to imagine a nation. However, it is identity that becomes a crucial issue for the protagonist of Afghan-American author Khaled Hosseini’s *The Kite Runner*,⁷ as Tanja Stampfl in the chapter “Capturing a Nation: The Elusiveness of Cultural Identity in *The Kite Runner*” in this volume demonstrates. During a period of time in human history when it has become relatively easy both to acquire a different nationality and to travel back and forth between continents, U.S. citizen Amir, an established member of the Afghan diaspora in the United States, has to navigate between cultural and national identities once back in his native Afghanistan. Is he, can he be an American pure and simple, carrying within him a perspective insulating him from the worries of those who are merely his former compatriots? Or is he an ethnic Pashtun before all else, confronting the past through the sins of his father and the present through a dramatic encounter with a childhood playmate become since a Taliban? The issues raised in the novel allow Stampfl to contribute a welcome insight into the enigma that Afghanistan remains.

The dual cultural identity that is the predicament of *The Kite Runner* protagonist becomes even more problematic for the protagonist of Barry Unsworth’s *Pascali’s Island*,⁸ which Andrea Rosso Efthymiou discusses in this volume in the chapter “Lost in Transition, or A Life in Between: The Move from Empire to Nation in *Pascali’s Island*.” Efthymiou contributes an original, state-of-the-art analysis by turning her gaze on a novel depicting an epoch left far behind: the “moment” when the Ottoman Empire is on the brink of collapse but the Republic of Turkey is nowhere in sight. Identities are perforce both nonexistent and heavily hybridized, with the problematic acquiring even vaster dimensions.⁹

Redefinition of Ethnicity

The end of the Cold War witnessed other phenomena as well. Pacts of forgetting and other silent alliances that had been established since the end of World War II, and post- and neocolonial paradigms developed alongside them, started being questioned. One outcome has been a redefinition of *ethnicity*. As the term *race* was banished from any and all discourse purporting to be politically correct, the concept of ethnicity took over some of its functions while at the same time assuming a number of new ones. When Werner Sollors published in 1986 his *Beyond Ethnicity: Consent and Descent in American Culture*, he famously ended on the “sense of Americanness” that the literature he surveys throughout the volume conveyed: “the language of consent and descent has been flexibly adapted to the most diverse kinds of ends and has amazingly helped to create a sense of Americanness among the heterogeneous inhabitants of this country.”¹⁰ However, the multiculturalists who were to prevail in the American intellectual scene would dominate with their paradigm,¹¹ and bring to the fore not the sense of connectedness among ethnic groups but rather divergences and boundaries that became more and more blatant. Fredrik Barth’s *Ethnic Groups and Boundaries: The Social Organization of Culture Difference*,¹² published presciently in 1969, was the new Bible, so to speak, the theoretical treatise that was fashionable to quote from.¹³ Sollors himself would publish, as editor, in 1996, *Theories of Ethnicity: A Classical Reader*¹⁴ in which he included a passage from Barth’s introduction to *Ethnic Groups*. Sollors ended the collection with an essay by Philip Gleason, titled “Identifying Identity: A Semantic History,” in which the author states that “today we could hardly do without the word *identity* in talking about immigration and ethnicity” (emphasis in the original).¹⁵

Identity, immigration, and ethnicity have been intertwined as the same period witnessed also the deconstruction of ethnicity and ethnic identity. Yiorgos Kalogeras touches upon an interesting case of ethnic identity following a particular trajectory, in the chapter titled “Albert Isaac Bezzerides: Translating Ethnicity from Fiction to Film,” the life and work of the novelist and scriptwriter of, among others, the classic film noir *Kiss Me Deadly* (1955). Bezzerides was born in 1908 as an Ottoman subject, in the town of Samsun on the Black Sea coast, of an Armenian mother and a Greek father and taken to the United States as a child. Kalogeras advances that Bezzerides, “the ethnic artist in the movie business,” initially made a name for himself in Hollywood as a Greek. In other words, he had to obliterate

the Armenianness that was dominant in him in favor of Greekness, more in fashion at the time when he was pursuing a career in the movie industry. Kalegoras recalls the concluding scene of Bezzerides' contemporary and fellow Ottoman Elia Kazan's *America, America* (1963) in which one character, the Ottoman Greek Stavros Topouzoglou, on disembarking on Ellis Island, assumes an Ottoman Armenian identity, that of the character Hohannes Gardashian, "in order to become an American."

Yet another case of ethnicity within ethnicity is that examined by Fouad N. Ibrahim and Barbara Ibrahim in the chapter "Building a Diaspora Adopting a New Nationality: Egyptian Copts in the United States." The Ibrahims discuss the predicament of an ethnic group in the United States whose members are aliens in their native land and who find themselves having to adopt a second alien identity on U.S. soil, coming as they do from a culture so different from the New World one. The Copts see themselves as "the indigenous people of Egypt," tracing their history all the way back to the pharaohs and their religious tradition to the Christianity of the earliest eras. Building a diaspora in the United States turns out to be an arduous task for them, contend the Ibrahims. Their religious diasporic leaders expect from their community strict obedience to the instructions of their Orthodox Christian Church, and believe this is possible in the United States in a manner it was not in Egypt where they were persecuted and discriminated against. Ordinary diasporans and especially members of the young generation, however, are in a hurry to leave that behind and become fully Americanized. It falls on secular diasporists to overcome the conflict, making conscious efforts to build the diaspora and maintain their identity. The chapter provides a penetrating discussion on diasporic formations and their significance.

Armenian ethnicity within what is Turkey today, Bezzerides' native land, is discussed in its own right in the chapter by Gönül Pultar, "Creating Ethnic Memory: Takuhi Tovmasyan's 'Enjoy Your Meal.'" Pultar finds that Tovmasyan, an Armenian of Turkey, uses a cookbook both to construct collective memory for her community, a matter that constitutes a sensitive issue, and to pass on to future generations the culture of her *yayas* (grannies) threatened with extinction, nowadays due more to such factors as technical innovation, immigration, and globalization than hazards such as deportation or genocide. Pultar situates Tovmasyan's efforts with those of cookbook writers of other ethnicities in the country and finds a similar motivation: their works serve to create collective memory as much as they function to construct identities that will help consolidate the place of the communities in question in the mainstream of the country. Their publication, which is a

relatively novel development, appears to be due on the one hand to the ongoing negotiations concerning Turkey's entry into the European Union, and on the other to that country's position in the post-9/11 world as an emerging market economy.

Not all construction or deconstruction of ethnicity needs to reflect a predicament with dramatic consequences. The treatment of ethnicity may also be fun, according to Dorothea Fischer-Hornung who discusses in "Was guckst Du?/Whaddaya Lookin' At?: De/Constructing Germanness in Prime Time Ethnic Turkish-German Humor" how a German prime-time TV show deconstructs Germanness through the lens of an immigrant Turk. Started in 2000, the show pokes fun of not only Germans and Turks but other ethnic communities now become part of the German population, with the satire sparing no group. It is through the prism of comedy that Kaya Yanar depicts the new reality of a fundamentally changed German society, finds Fischer-Hornung.

Another chapter on show business that discusses ethnic identity is "Blackface Minstrelsy and Ethnic Identity as Globalized Market Commodities" by Cathy Waegner, who examines the practice of blackface minstrelsy in various instances: white posing as black, black posing as white posing as black, and so on in a succession of theater performances as well as market-places that Waegner considers to be powerful metaphors of postmodernist action. The chapter ends with a discussion of a work of fiction published in the 2000s that includes "a sadly grotesque market scene with minstrel performance [that] takes place" on an American army base, illustrating that the "phenomenon of minstrelsy," as Waegner puts it, and the issues raised by its existence persist to this day.

Homo Sovieticus Acquires a New Identity and a New Culture

As befits the globalizing impulse, the shaping and reshaping of identities is prevalent not only in the United States and throughout the Western world but has extended to what during the Cold War was its antagonist. Emil Nasritdinov and Kevin O'Connor examine in the chapter "Globalization as Fuel, Ethnicity as Engine: How Markets Reactivate Local Culture" another identity that is undergoing a process of deconstruction, that of *Homo Sovieticus*. Starting from the premise that the "collapse of the Soviet Union was not only the collapse of the Soviet economy but the collapse of Soviet culture and ideology" and taking as "setting" the Central Republic of Kyrgyzstan, become independent as a result of that collapse, they discuss the role ethnicity plays

in the restructuring of the post-Soviet economy. Nasritdinov and O'Connor select a locus that is unusual for the Western reader, the local markets, that are somewhat different from the markets Waegner has in mind. Discussing the ethnic "clustering" at work at these trade centers, they analyze how different ethnic groups play out their different cultures. To illustrate their point, Nasritdinov and O'Connor describe an imaginary market day in the lives of three fictitious vendors from three different groups: a Kyrgyz young man, an elderly Uzbek, and a Russian woman. The tales they spin around each have a ring of truth almost as authentic as that of the true-life immigration story recounted by the Ibrahims.

It must be pointed out of course that in the Soviet case, pacts of forgetting and silent alliances were not so much "established" as they were imposed from above, by the authorities. The post- and neocolonial paradigms developed alongside were those devised by the founders of the Soviet Union in the early 1920s. These were, in the eyes of many, time-old Russian imperialist "benchmarks" that had been reinvigorated by communism and the Soviet system. After 1991, they bore the stigma of belonging to the old regime, and rather than being questioned and challenged, they fell totally out of use. A new task was waiting: as Abel Polese puts it in the chapter "Patterns of Identity Formation in the Post-Soviet Space: Odessa as a Case Study," the "creation of new states in the post-Soviet . . . space has challenged scholars engaged in the theory of nation building, as they found themselves compelled to devise ways of matching the state with the nation in those newly independent countries hosting a high number of ethnic communities." Put in another way, for the post-Soviet space, nation building in the modern sense of the word is a new development and Polese wonders if the post-Soviet nation building of the last decade of the twentieth century and beyond will be "ethnic" or "civic." Listing the difficulties encountered in the formation of a civic nation, he discusses the issue in relation to the city of Odessa in present-day Ukraine where the ongoing "Ukrainization" finds itself rivaled by the residual Russification that was operative during the Soviet period, as well as by the overarching Soviet identity, which has turned out to be more tenacious than expected. Overpowering all of these dynamics, however, is the sense of being "Odessan," he finds. Thus, the ambivalence connected with being either Russian, Ukrainian, or Odessan is far from being resolved, and the "identitarian shift" may have yet to take place.

Timur Kozyrev turns to another newly independent post-Soviet country, Kazakhstan, in the chapter titled "The Role of the Turkic Component in Current Kazakhstani Identity Formation."¹⁶ While Polese emphasizes the

issue of identity, Kozyrev discusses the nation-building efforts deployed by the oil-rich Central Asian republic of Kazakhstan. For Kozyrev, the appropriation of a “supra-Kazakhstani Turkic identity” would solve the problems created by the almost chaotic cultural situation that is the legacy of the Soviet policy of nationalities in this country. As in Ukraine, Russian cultural identity is still powerful, with a considerable number of Russians (making up roughly one-fourth of the population in the country) still calling the land their own. Forceful measures such as reclaiming the historical heritage of the Turks need to be adopted if this new nation-state is to acquire cultural unity, maintains Kozyrev. The significance of Kozyrev’s chapter goes beyond the case of Kazakhstan, as the other four post-Soviet republics with a majority population of Turks, namely Azerbaijan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan, find themselves in a similar quandary, and would benefit equally from such an orientation. The cultural heritage Kozyrev puts forward is even more cogent—and could prove more indispensable—for those Turks living at present within the Russian Federation in a state of disunion, divided as they are into various “autonomous” republics or smaller administrative units, or dispersed within the country. The territory of the Kazan Khanate (also called “Volga-Ural” or “Idil-Ural,” roughly what is geographically “inner Russia” nowadays), overrun and occupied in 1552 by the principedom of Muscovy, remains to this day under Russian tutelage, divided into five units and peopled by other ethnic groups as well.¹⁷ Reclaiming such a cultural heritage would only enhance any political agenda geared to nationhood for those Turks, especially when questions such as “Can Russia Survive Through 2020?”¹⁸ are being asked.

The “Will to Nationhood”

The interplay between *nation* and *identity* is examined by Anna Roosvall in the chapter “Foreign News: A Flagship of the Nation in an Age of Globalization.” Roosvall demonstrates how “foreign news” is but another tool used for nationalist purposes even in the “democracy heaven” that Sweden is. Basing her argument on the “will to nationhood” (after Homi Bhabha), she focuses on the relationship(s) between media, globalization, and nationhood as reflected in Swedish foreign news, and explores “the tension inherent between this will and (what is conceptualized as) globalization” with examples from Swedish dailies.

Simona Sangiorgi explores the relationship between national identity and leisure in a chapter titled “National Identities at Leisure: The Case of

Theme Parks.” Widespread throughout the Western world since the opening in the United States of the original Disneyland, theme parks are more than just amusement parks; they are loaded with national, historical, and cultural significance, contends Sangiorgi. She believes that the “hyperreality” of the theme parks allows for ideological articulation, and that the “manipulation” thus achieved is apt to lead to the reshaping of identities. In other words, theme parks are far from being innocuous venues, and Sangiorgi concludes that they “need to be analyzed and studied further, to foster discernment and critical awareness, through which the multiple mechanisms of ‘social engineering’” may be “better identified and interpreted.”

Critical awareness is a trait that all the chapters in the volume demonstrate. In the chapter “‘Malaysia: Truly Asia’: Double Consciousness in Malaysia’s Tourism Advertising or the Double Jeopardy of Being Malaysian,” Dawn Morais critiques the manner Malaysia promoted itself through its tourism advertising by rehearsing colonial practices in the 2000–2007 “Malaysia: Truly Asia” campaign. It is not only that “the singular message of the advertising”—putting to the forefront as the “exotic object of another’s gaze” women wearing “ethnic” dresses and appearing “ready to serve”—willingly reenacted old colonial relationships. The advertisement also contrasted “with the polyphonic manner Malaysians,” both immigrant and indigenous, “define themselves” since independence in the late 1950s. For Morais, there is a brazen “dissonance” between what was advertised and what was lived, as the advertisement exposes “the jeopardy of both proclaiming ethnicity and subsuming it in nationality.”

Challenges to and Tribulations of the Nation-State

A different sort of critical awareness is that displayed by Grigol Ubiria in the chapter entitled “Nation-State, National Identity, and National Culture in the Era of Globalization,” which critiques *postnationalism* and other such terms and the developments they denote. Ubiria revisits current heated debates such as whether or not globalization is to signify the demise of nation-states, challenged as they are from above by supranational organizations seemingly ready to assume their role and function, and from below by separatist and regional movements that would bring about their disintegration. In the latter case, remarks Ubiria, the nation-state as institution is not under threat as most separatists are not at all against the nation-state; on the contrary, they wish to form their own. Ubiria points out the long queue of nations/ethnic groups aspiring to gain *de jure* independence.

This proves to be no simple task to achieve, and no light burden to shoulder, find Samaa Gamie and Samer Abboud in two chapters titled respectively “‘The Nation and Its Fragments’: Examining the Indian and the Egyptian Nationalist Models,” and “The Politics of Identity in Lebanon: The Case of Hizballah.” The chapters discuss the present-day woes of nation-states in India, Egypt, and Lebanon, three countries having, like Malaysia, gained independence in mid-twentieth century.

Gamie discusses the difficulty for faith-based Eastern societies to adopt the Western type of secular nationhood by comparing the Indian and Egyptian cases. She finds fault with Partha Chatterjee’s contention of the “postcolonial secular nature of the Indian state.” For Gamie, the Indian nation-state was founded by nationalists whose main aim was indeed to create a modern state, but in doing so they also sought to preserve the Indian cultural heritage and traditions, and put thus Hinduism at the basis of the state. Such an imbrication, for Gamie, obliterates any claim to sheer secularity, “due to the influence that this faith exerts on the material and spiritual domains of culture.” The clean-cut chasm between modernity and tradition in the West is not operative in India and in the East in general. For Gamie, “Indian nationalism, although it may allow for the performance of several religious identities, takes *one* religion as the basis of its identity”; however, the Indian nationalist narrative “vehemently denies” any “centrality” to that religion. Gamie then examines the Egyptian nation-state and finds, if not a parallel, at least a similar situation whereby faith played a distinct role in the foundation of the nation-state as a modern republic and still maintains its hold on society. Gamie concludes, however, that the difference is greater: “the Egyptian narrative . . . underscores the centrality of the spiritual sphere, that is, Arabism and Islamism, in the legitimation of the pre- and post-nation-state ideology, whereupon religious and, at times, ethnic identity become integral elements of Egyptian (national) culture.” While India as a BRIC nation has been gaining weight in the balance of power in the world, Egypt has occupied the forefront of world news ever since the beginning of the “Arab spring”; the insight Gamie brings to the recent history of these countries by, for instance, following developments such as the Muslim Brotherhood, renders her chapter invaluable.

The same complexity that is prevalent in an amalgam of faith and modern politics is treated by Abboud, who “focuses on the shaping of the political identity of the Shi’ite community as articulated through the resistance movement Hizballah.” Abboud painstakingly traces the history of the movement and discusses the dynamics behind its existence, as well as

debating its current position in a post-Saddam Middle East where Shi'ite power has gained ascendancy. The reader gains insight into the social structure of Lebanon, a country in a region where events in our day have global resonances: the consequences of the war in Iraq, started in 2003 by the "Coalition Forces" (viz. the United States and the United Kingdom) and ostensibly over, are still reverberating as these lines are written. Abboud explains that "the Lebanese are a people who share very little in the way of a collective identity, relying instead on identity markers drawn from particular confessional groups," and adds that "there are eighteen officially recognized religious communities in Lebanon." However, he points out, "these differentiate one another based on not theological but social grounds. Religious communities in Lebanon act as social reference groups rather than (purely) religious ones." Abboud contends that it is from this angle that the genesis, development, and present position of Hizballah, which means "the party of God" in Arabic, has to be interpreted.

The Cultural Parasite and the Global Shift of Power

Abboud's exposé from within the Shi'ite movement in Lebanon is important also because it sheds light on international developments of global significance: Saddam Hussein (1937–2006, president of Iraq 1979–2003), toppled by the coalition forces after the invasion and occupation of Iraq, had contained the Shi'ites within his polity—deemed dictatorship by outside observers. He himself was a Sunni Muslim. In dismantling Saddam Hussein's regime, the coalition forces destroyed the status quo and paved the way for a non-unitary Iraq, thereby, inadvertently or not, allowing the Shi'ites of the country to have a say and "hook up" with the Shi'ites of both Lebanon and the country with an all-Shi'ite population, Iran, as they were not able to during Saddam Hussein's iron rule. In a region of the world where faith and the social are enmeshed, this privileging of religious allegiance over the defunct national one seems to have created a Shi'ite coalition, so to speak, with Iran as the driving force become all the more powerful in consequence. The threat posed by its nuclear program has made things worse and led to a UN Security Council resolution (on 9 June 2010) imposing sanctions on it. The "Arab spring" that has spilled over to Syria, generating a Western-backed insurgency against President Bashar Assaad, only exacerbated matters, as Shi'ite Syrians seem to be lured into the Iranian sphere.¹⁹

Iran has now become a matter of concern for the American and the Westerner in general,²⁰ and facets of its identity have taken center stage in debates

in the United States and the world community at large—however much the preoccupation with Iran must look a far cry from Santos's discussion of identity in connection with the "gringo" and other such appellations. This may be reflecting an occurrence of a wider scope: in his controversial *The New Asian Hemisphere: The Irresistible Shift of Global Power to the East*, Kishore Mahbubani, a former ambassador of Singapore to the UN become an academic, presages that global power will shift over time from the West to the "Rest," this taking place as a result of the adoption of Western values and criteria by the Rest, or the "Asians" as he summarily calls non-Westerners.²¹ Much that Mahbubani writes in that book, and especially his critique of Western dominance in international organizations, has been contested by various critics, but the present-day position China holds economically and otherwise appears to support his prognosis. After all, even a pro-Western apologist such as Niall Ferguson, author of *Civilization: The West and the Rest*,²² cannot but register the decline of the West.

How non-Westerners will eventually fare in their lands can only be conjecture for the moment. What is certain is the presence today in the West of non-Westerners who have appropriated Western values and criteria. Pramod Nayar touches upon this phenomenon of the postcolonial scene in the chapter "The Transnational Indian Novel in English: Cultural Parasites and Postcolonial Praxis." Nayar discusses what he calls "transnational" novels written in the English language and published in the West by authors of Indian origin who are "careful to avoid essentializing the 'original' home/culture." He sees "the Third World resident in the First World," as he terms them, "and the concomitant First World's intersection with the Third," as exemplified in the novels he examines, as an illustration of what he calls the cultural or transnational "parasite." The cultural parasite is "not necessarily the mere presence of an Indian or a Bangladeshi in London or New York. I see the cultural parasite as an event during which Third World cultural artifacts—Bollywood films would be an excellent example—interrupt the cultural narrative of London or New York and generate change" he writes. "The cultural parasite is therefore a process of mutually transformative exchange."

Could the non-Western parasite present in the West be representative of the author or scholar living and working in Europe or the United States, and requiring and appropriating space other than that acquired by his/her diaspora, in fact, the position in which most of the authors of this collection find themselves in?

Conclusion

This collection, international in both scope and authorship, brings to the fore, within a scholarly forum and from a novel perspective, subjects and themes—Afghanistan, state building in the post-Soviet space, Hizballah in Lebanon and the Middle East, the situation in countries such as Egypt and India, the transnational English-language novel (more than ever spearheaded by awards such as IMPAC Dublin and Baileys Women's Prize for Fiction)²³ that are of topical interest. It does so, moreover, with the imaginative possibilities of non-Western epistemologies. Although the authors use a rigorous Western scholarly idiom, at the cutting edge of their disciplines, they move beyond Western points of view and approaches to set up conversation from within a non-Western premise/geography. It is a shift that takes the reader on an alternate trajectory, providing background information conducive to awareness and much-needed comprehension of issues confronting the world presently, be they in the United States, Europe, the Middle East, or Asia. Does this shift presage a shift of a much larger proportion, advanced by Mahbubani and many others?