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**A Moving Target is Harder to Hit: Border-Crossing as a Resistance Weapon in Jackie Kay's
The Smuggled Person's Tale
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Abstract

The sovereign State system relies on the idea that all the territory of the world is divided into separate spaces, which are controlled by distinct sovereign governments that make and enforce laws in those territories (Agnew and Corbridge 1995; Jones 2012). In this fashion, Reece Jones claims that those individuals who defy the national demarcations through cross-border movement can be approached as resistant subjects who "disrupt the clean, territorially based identity categories of the State by evading State surveillance systems and creating alternative networks of connection outside State territoriality" (Jones 689). In this article, I will analyse the short story "The Smuggled Person's Tale" (2017), written by Jackie Kay and included in the short story collection *Refugee Tales II* (2017). This narrative portrays a literary voice of a refugee who, in the need for leaving Afghanistan because of political and social conflicts, defies the sovereign State system by avoiding territorial entrapment through a constant border-crossing. His journey across nations allows him to break the national borders' dichotomies (in-out / native-immigrant / citizen-exile) (Bhabha 1994; Rojas 2006; Jones 2012; Konrad 2015), thus achieving a nomadic consciousness and reclaiming his right to redefine himself as a global citizen.

Keywords: Border-crossing; migrancy literature; nomadic consciousness

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"The Smuggled Person's Tale" written by Jackie Kay and included in the short story collection *Refugee Tales II* (2017), depicts the arrival of a Hazara refugee from Afghanistan to J's house in Manchester, along with some of the obstacles that he finds on his way to England. Indeed, the story portrays a literary voice who rebels against the sovereign State system by avoiding territorial entrapment through mobility and a constant border-crossing. Consequently, the protagonist in the story resists "the fixed essentialisms of fundamentalist or absolutist identity politics" imposed by the nation-state (Stanford Friedman 273) by means of "refusing to accept a binary framing of the state that attempts to create a world of us-them, here-there" (Jones 687) and "not accepting a binary division of space and identity" (696). Thus, he moves and thinks outside the State's binary nature and, by doing so, denies the State the right to define him (Jones 2012) because "the territorial and identity categories of State subjectivity are not the only option, despite maps and State discourses that attempt to foreclose other possibilities" (Jones 698).

Sovereignty as a bounded, territorially defined notion was institutionalised in Europe in the modern era and "spread throughout the world via colonization" (Jones 688). The sovereign State system relies on the idea that all the territory of the world is divided into separate spaces, which are controlled by distinct sovereign governments that make and enforce laws in those territories (Agnew and Corbridge 1995; Jones 2012). Academics such as Homi Bhabha (1994), Mitchell (1997), Stanford Friedman (2007) and Reece Jones (2012) have exposed the porosity of the State by looking at the physical borders between nations as essential pillars on which the nation is sustained. While Reece Jones understands borders as drawn "lines on the ground and in the popular imagination" (690), Homi Bhabha, in his essay "DissemiNation," points at national borders as an oppressive force for its citizens and makes emphasis on the need for a borderline negotiation (1994). Also, Mitchell establishes a strong link between borders and power relations, understanding borders as "the power to keep in or out" (101), the instruments through which nation-states can define the limits of the imagination.

In this context, Stanford Friedman approaches physical borders as "lines on a map backed by armies and law" (273), which regulate structures of exclusion and inclusion. In addition, she draws on the theory of Gloria Anzaldúa (1987) and Homi Bhabha (1994) to argue that, in the last two decades, border studies have evolved into "the exploration of the metaphoric and dimensions of borders and borderlands as tropes for regulative and transgressive patterns in the cultural and social order" (Stanford Friedman 273). Likewise, Stanford Friedman establishes a clear differentiation between border and borderland. On the one hand, she defines the former as a "fixed, fluid, impermeable and porous" structure, used to "exercise power over others" and that "insist[s] on purity, distinction, difference but facilitate[s] contamination, mixing, creolization" (273). On the other hand, she conceives of borders as "imaginary lines of separation with real effects, as in geographical boundary between nation-states" (273). As a matter of fact, Stanford Friedman relies on Gloria Anzaldúa's (1987) and Homi Bhabha's (1994) relevant studies about the borderland to approach it as "contact zones" "where fluid differences meet, where power is often structured asymmetrically but nonetheless circulates in complex and multidirectional ways, where agency exists on both sides of the shifting and permeable divide" (273). Despite their difference, she highlights that both borders and borderlands have been approached as "spatial metaphors for the liminal space in between" (273), while pointing at Homi Bhabha as "the

preeminent theorist of the interstitial, of the examination of culture in the moment of transit" (274).

In the same spirit, Reece Jones claims that "the potential of cross-border movement to be a form of resistance to the nation-state has been a topic of keen interest for many scholars of transnationalism for a few decades" (693). As the power of nation-states and its borders comes from the ability to define the categories that order daily life and create the either (Jones 694), those individuals who defy the national demarcations through cross-border movement can be approached as resistant subjects to national and territorial entrapment. In fact, these individuals "disrupt the clean, territorially based identity categories of the State by evading State surveillance systems and creating alternative networks of connection outside State territoriality" (Jones 689). Following this argument, Peter Kabachnik claims that recent studies have shifted from an emphasis on place to the study of mobility and processes of deterritorialisation, and believes in the need for highlighting mobilities, and not only place, as a key aspect in identity formation (Kabachnik 211).

The story "The Smuggled Person's Tale" revolves around the experience of dislocation that the main character suffers because of his refugee condition. Jackie Kay and the other authors in the short story collection *Refugee Tales II* (2017) base their narrations on real stories they heard when talking "at length with the person or people whose tale it was," that is, "the tale had to be grounded in the reality of the experience that the person's original telling presented" (Herd 113). This literary project results from a walk in solidarity with refugees, asylum seekers and detainees, organised in 2014 and 2015 by the Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group, "as a response to the silence that surrounded indefinite immigration detention in the UK [and other countries around the world, such as the USA, Hungary or Turkey]" (Herd 113). The route was the North Downs Way, which largely emulates the Pilgrims' Way, being "the ancient track along which people once travelled from Hampshire ... to Canterbury" (Herd 133). Indeed, *Refugee Tales II* is the second part of a literary project that calls for an end to the UK's policy of indefinite detention, for "to detain a person indefinitely is to fundamentally breach their human rights" (Herd 114). On the 12th May 2016, the UK government's new Immigration Bill made its final appearance in the House of Commons. In the *Refugee Tales II*'s "Afterword," David Herd shows his special concern for the third and the fourth part of this new act. While the former part permits the immigration officers to "seize documents," that is, to retain documents for longer periods and without any warrant, the latter part backs the concept of deport first appeal later, which primarily means that the individual's prospects for success are significantly reduced.

Herd concludes that the effect of this legislation is "to criminalize the asylum process" as to make the commitment of a crime (for instance, trying to leave the country under false papers) so much more likely (117). In this light, the purpose of *Refugee Tales* is to help refugees and asylum seekers to achieve a space of recognition in which stories that are often discredited or ignored can instead be heard. Herd claims that there should not be "anything utopian about the demand that 'Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.' Imagine the alternative. Such a demand is basic" (122), and adds that "to detain a person indefinitely is to breach the principles that underpin due process, a principle that has its origin in Magna Carta and that achieves forceful expression in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights" (123). The story

"The Smuggled Person's Tale," as the rest of the tales in the book, is a collaboration between the author (in this case Jackie Kay) and the person whose tale was told along the journey. Drawing, structurally, on *The Canterbury Tales*, the project purposely shares some similarities with Chaucer's masterpiece: human movement as a fundamental theme, the relevance of space in the narration, the exchange of information through the act of storytelling, and the enhancement of individuality by dedicating a chapter to each individual (e.g. the student's tale, the lover's tale, the walker's tale).

As the purpose of the Hazara character's visit is to tell his story to J, it can be assumed that J stands for the author's name Jackie, and that Anna, the girl who comes along with him to the house, works as an aid worker who, as the narrator reveals at the end of the story, "was the one person who had helped smuggle his story into the world," and that "for months in the dark windowless detention center, ... had been his lifetime" (Kay 112). Significantly, the story revolves around the Hazara character's physical and metaphorical journey in search for his story of border-crossings and struggle, a story that he believes lost once he arrives in Manchester. He finally finds his own narration in J's dark basement, and its revelation to the world constitutes a liberating act, symbolised by the conversion of the story into a bird that flies into the sky.

According to the *World Directory of Minorities and Indigenous Peoples's* report, with the increasing presence of foreign Islamist groups, such as Islamic State in Iraq and Syria (ISIS) in Afghanistan, the Hazara community and other religious minorities have been a target of systematic discrimination, violence and resulting displacement. Being Shi'a and therefore a religious and visible ethnic minority, Hazaras are particularly vulnerable, and terrorist attacks, claimed by groups stating allegiance with ISIS and targeting Hazara public events, have taken place with increasing regularity:

These include, in July 2016, the killing of 85 people at a peaceful protest comprised of mostly Hazaras. (...) Other attacks include a December 2017 bombing that left at least 41 dead and another 80 injured in a Hazara neighbourhood of western Kabul and an assault in March 2018 that resulted in the deaths of at least nine people. ("Afghanistan Hazaras," n.d.)

Even though the refugee status is not always the result of state action, but might also be related to other questions like climate, the protagonist's displaced condition fits the the UN Refugee Agency's definition of a refugee as:

someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion. (The UN Refugee Agency 14)

Indeed, the persecution towards the Hazaras community and the violence they face in their homeland are the reasons why the main character in Kay's narrative is pushed to a constant flee across borders. In the first paragraph of "The Smuggled Person's Tale" (2017), the narrator mentions that the Hazara character:

had a bad time in Turkey, had caught a boat to Greece, crossed the border to Italy, spent months in Rome. He'd slept under bridges, in train stations, under berths of trains, in the back of lorries. Austria, France. Calais – Christmas 2009. Cold. Very cold. Big snow. (Kay 105)

This excerpt shows the conditions of uneasiness and struggle that the character has undergone as a result of displacement. His forced dislocation is made evident through the purposeful connection between the continuous border-crossing and the constant allusion to adverse situations causing his struggle like "he'd had a bad time," "he'd slept under bridges," "under berths of trains," or "cold. Very cold." In addition, his uneasiness is also highlighted in the second paragraph of the narrative, where his arrival to J's house in Manchester is narrated. Sentences such as "he'd been lost" (Kay 105) and "he was out of breath," (105) although referring to the difficulty of finding J's house, can also refer to the dislocation he suffers along the entire journey to England.

In this light, the narrative voice in "The Smuggled Person's Tale" (2017) reveals the conditions of mistreatment and abuse that the Afghan refugee lives in his very own country for the solely fact of being a Hazara:

the first layer of his skin had been ripped off in his own country. It is the worst thing in the world- when your own country suddenly doesn't feel like your own. When you are cast out from within. When you are made a foreigner on your very own soil. (Kay 110)

Indeed, due to a forced national border-crossing, the Hazara character is pushed to experience the traumatic separation from his homeland and a consequent sense of *placelessness*. There is a prevailing feeling of *uprootedness* in the story, evoked through sentences such as "he'd travelled for seven years and crossed countless borders," "he'd taken on different names" (105), and "one journey had blended with the other" (107). His continuous border-crossing, although causing him affliction, allows him to transcend territorial entrapment and, in this respect, his *uprootedness* in terms of place triggers the also *uprootedness* of his identity as a result of his exile.

In addition, his exile and migrant conditions result from a process of dislocation that evidences the ruling political State system and the national conflicts back in Afghanistan, his country of origin, as the sources of his suffering. In *Migrancy, culture, identity* (1994), Iain Chambers defines migrancy as "a movement in which neither the points of departure nor those of arrival are immutable and certain. It calls for a dwelling in language, in histories, in identities that are constantly subject to mutation" (5). Chambers also problematises the term "migrancy" when differentiating between literal and metaphorical migration, understanding the latter as a metaphor for the very process of dislocation and thus "granting the immigrant a status as a figure (of speech)" (Ahmed 333). In fact, the literary voice in this story is not only a physical but a metaphorical migrant, in the sense that I understand his migrancy as attached to his own process of territorial and spiritual dislocation.

Importantly, Said's and Chambers' understanding of exiles and migrants as resistant individuals leads me to the claim that, despite the affliction that the narrative voice experiences as a result of his dislocation, he takes advantage of his forced movement, since:

the exile knows that in a secular and contingent world, homes are always provisional. Borders and barriers which enclose us within the safety of familiar territory can also become prisons and are often defended beyond reason or necessity. Exiles cross borders, break barriers of thought and experience. (Said 365)

In this sense, the Afghan character in Kay's narrative should not be victimised. Instead, I approach him as a resistant and empowered individual who escapes from the territorial prison that the nation-state imposes on subjects through his constant movement and a nomadic consciousness. As a result, he achieves the right of self-determination, that allows him for a more open and fluid identity since, as Chambers says, "thought wanders. It migrates, requires translation. Here reason runs the risk of opening out on the world, of finding itself in a passage without a reassuring foundation or finality: a passage opened to the changing skies of existence and terrestrial illumination" (4).

It is noteworthy that the character's displacement constitutes a consequence of being forced to the act of border-crossing. As I have previously mentioned, territorial dividing lines among nations can be translated into powerful devices for the restriction of individual agency (Stanford Friedman 2007; Jones 2012). In addition, "they not only *limit* movements of things, money, and people, but they also *limit* the exercise of intellect, imagination, and political will" (Agnew 176), and this limitation is even more pronounced when it comes to oppressive governments where freedom of expression is more restricted. Thus, the border-crossing accomplished by the Hazara character in "The Smuggled Person's Tale" (2017), that is, his continuous trespassing of physical borders as an illegal immigrant, constitutes a resistant act against the nation-state border system. Indeed, he resists despite sleeping under bridges, train stations, berths of trains, or the back of lorries in his journey to Manchester, and mocks border surveillance by travelling for seven years across Europe and crossing "countless borders" (Kay 105).

In the same spirit, the difficulties that this displaced character experiences when moving across the impermeable and inflexible territorial lines are symbolised by the explicit reference to closed doors in "The Smuggled Person's Tale" (2017). Doors act as powerful images that allude to their liminality and contribute to the portrayal of the firm obstacles he needs to overcome in the form of borders. As a matter of fact, Kay's story focuses on the opening of doors as a leading path to the Hazara character's personal success, in the sense that this aperture allows him to leave a traumatic journey behind. The narrator in "The Smuggled Person's Tale" (2017) highlights the look in the Hazara character's face when "he crossed the threshold into [J.] house" (Kay 105), understanding the house's entrance as a liminal space that he trespasses. Indeed, the opening of J's front door makes the narrator feel at home for the first time since he left his country:

His eyes first searched for kindness. It was the same thing he always looked for; he could

tell right away if people were kind or not. She opened the front door. It was a simple enough thing for her- to open the front door to her home. But to him it was quite something. Over these years of travelling, he'd not often been invited into many homes. Detention rooms, prison cells, hostels, on the floor of various churches, yes, but he'd not been invited into people's houses. (Kay 105-106)

The entrance to J's house constitutes a different act of border-crossing. The Hazara character breaks into a new space, which, opposite to other places where he has been in past years, he perceives as a peaceful place. The quietness in J's house contrasts with the hostility that the refugee has suffered in other spaces, such as detention rooms or prison cells. Depicting the opening of the front door as a simple act for J, and the immediate and unbiased sympathy that she shows to the Hazara man, evinces the selfishness and lack of solidarity that many people and States manifest towards refugees.

In the same way, the entrance into J's dark cellar in search for his lost story can be analysed as another transgression, as both the entrance in J's home and this quick journey to the cellar echo and epitomise his whole journey across national borders:

The story was in the bag, he could have sworn it! He couldn't believe what had happened after all the miles and the countries and the crossings, all the borders and hidings, all the smuggled nights and hidden mornings of hunger, thirst and fear, that now it should suddenly be lost ... And it was then that he heard something under the room that all three were sat in... Under the room was a cellar. It had no natural daylight, J said ... Alone, he crept down the steep stone steps and wove his way through piles of empty suitcases and brimming full plastic bags, old paint pots and brushes, step ladders, boxes of books and papers, and right in the corner, huddled under the fuse box, was his story. He had no idea how it had got there. (Kay 107-108)

While his struggle is evoked in his walking through "steep stone steps" and the darkness in his way to the cellar, the multiple obstacles that he overcomes during his journey are symbolised by "piles of empty suitcases and brimming full plastic bags," (108) ladders and boxes that he needs to avoid on the way. Indeed, he is somehow walking in someone else's space by coming into J's house and cellar, as a reverberation of what he had done when travelling across national borders. Thus, the house may be working as a symbol of a country, in the sense that it is limited by rigid walls that separate it from the outside and limit a specific territorial space. However, this time differs from others in the sense that he is welcomed in the house and in the cellar, since "over these years of travelling, he'd not often been invited into many homes" (105). Contrary to what the Hazara character experiences in his journey, J welcomes the refugee to her house and makes him feel good by letting him have a shower and providing him with clean clothes.

J's generosity allows him to find his story and, because of this metaphorical act, he finds himself again and embraces an identity freed from national conflicts and entrapping borders. He empowers himself by "refusing to accept a binary framing of the State that attempts to create a

world of us-them, here-there" (Jones 687) and "not accepting a binary division of space and identity" (696). In this sense, Victor Konrad asserts that:

dichotomies create borders and they are created by borders. Difference, others, opposites and extrinsicality all are constructed both as polarities between people, institutions and places... Different energies are evident: the separation and division of space through dichotomization and the dialectic surrounding the spatial differentiation. As people construct boundaries they are engaged in the practice of drawing lines and erecting barriers just as they constantly evaluate and rationalize the meaning of the constructs. (5)

In this context, Mitchell also establishes a strong link between borders and power relations, understanding borders as "the power to keep in or out" (101) and to enclose the limits of the imagination. In this regard, the Hazara character defies the dichotomisation imposed by national demarcations and overcomes borders through his constant trespassing, for he crosses "countless borders" (Kay 105) before arriving in Manchester. Therefore, his entrance into J's house and his warm welcoming challenge a binary division of space, in the sense that he is treated as an insider despite being an illegal immigrant.

Nevertheless, despite the struggle of his exile, the narrator also highlights that it was when fleeing from Afghanistan when "it started to flow. One journey blended with the other" (110) and, consequently, the national rules that apply to border-crossing are mocked:

Like he'd found the power to be invisible. Like he was his own card trick. A human card. Somebody called him that one day. You're a card. It made him laugh. A lot of the things that had happened to him, to be honest, were funny. Laugh out loud and roar in equal measure. They said to him, you really did that? They were astonished. That time with the canisters, it seems he was even able to hide from himself. The man had been in there with a flashlight and had just not seen him. He was excited, thinking back to this, how he'd just got away with it that time, how he'd managed to vanish. Or maybe the man had seen him and decided to let him go. Just him. Like a single fish. Back to the water. (Kay 110)

Thus, the narrator tells how the power to be invisible (that is, the ability to avoid national surveillance) is acquired by the Hazara character after his need for dwelling on borderlands rather than within limited national territories. The character's continuous mobility provides him with the necessary "fluidity" and "invisibility" to challenge the nation-state. In this light, he manages "to vanish" from the mainstream national map and leads towards a freer status. To portray the character's new situation, the narrator makes use of a powerful metaphor that compares the Afghan refugee to a fish back to the water, where water works as a symbol of freedom, and to a "card trick," which highlights the character's capacity of *appearing* and *disappearing*, of trespassing various political borders as if by magic. Both metaphors seem to emphasise that, despite all the difficulties, the refugee manages to mock the rigid national boundaries and escape from the imposition of a national identity. Indeed, his trip across borders

and the hard conditions along the way reinforce the character and allow him to shake off the national constraints that attach his identity to cards and documents. The narrator mentions that, when he arrives in J's house and feels that he is welcomed for the first time in years, he gets out the "letter and the certificates, the pieces of paper that had once caused him utter shame and embarrassment" (111) and leaves them on the table for J. His arrival to J's house triggers an act of liberation, as he can shake off the documentation that had been hindering his walking, and leave "his bag beautifully light after months and years of carrying the weight around with him" (111). He is not a "human card" (110) anymore and this allows him to acquire a freer status as an individual.

In fact, drawing upon the idea that mobility affects identity formation (Kabachnik 211), the character's identity is portrayed as shifting and mutable in the narrative resulting from the character's physical and metaphorical movement. In "The Smuggled Person's Tale" (2017), in order to cross countless borders, the Hazara refugee needs to get rid of a rigid national identity as mentioned at the beginning of the narrative: "he'd travelled from seven years and crossed countless borders. He'd taken on different names and had often said he was born in Pakistan" (Kay 105). In this sense, the narrator highlights the mutability of the refugee's identity as a result of his journey across nations. This mutability is evoked when the narrator mentions that the Hazara character adopts various names along his journey, or when he is arrested, goes to the bathroom in the police station, and does not recognise his own face:

He was another man in the mirror. The soot covered everything. His face, his hands, black. Totally black. It made him gasp. It startled him, his own strange reflection. There was already something of himself that he did not recognize because parts seemed to be falling off. Perhaps they were left on the road too ... When he came out of the toilet they let him have a shower. They said don't worry everyone that comes here from under the lorries is that colour. (Kay 107)

This excerpt evinces the character's metamorphosis, supporting Chamber's ideas that migrancy is "a movement in which neither the points of departure nor those of arrival are immutable or certain" (5), and that physical and metaphorical migrancy allows for a mutation of the identity (5). The sentences "he was another man in the mirror" and "parts seemed to be falling off" are connected with other sentences in the narrative that also address to a skin moult process, such as "the first layer of his skin had been ripped off in his own country" (Kay 110). Also, the soot that covers him is presented as the main cause of his transformation, and it can be understood as a metonymy of the whole journey. Interestingly, the narrative itself works as a depiction of migrancy in that neither the point of departure nor that of arrival is certain. The Hazara migrant moves across "countless borders" (105) and territories, being subject to a continuous identity change, and not even Manchester and J's house, where he is eventually welcomed, are depicted as final destinations. They are rather depicted as one more stop in the Hazara's never-ending journey, and this is symbolised by the bird, which the protagonist sees flying through J's open door and making it "to the slate roof across the back of the terraced houses, and then to a shared chimney" (111) to finally take the sky.

To portray the protagonist's freedom, I suggest that the author employs the image of the

bird. The story of border-crossing and struggle that the Afghan character in "The Smuggled Person's Tale" (2017) carries in his bag takes eventually the form of the injured bird with a broken wing that he finds in J's cellar:

He picked it up. It was an injured bird. Its heart beating like its wings used to beat. He held it gently and cooed to it, stroking the feathers in the same direction. He didn't want to frighten it. He was full of wonder. How did you get out of my bag and change into a bird he asked the story? He was shaking. But it wasn't the same shaking that he'd felt in the prison, or in the detention room, or in the back of the police car, or hidden under the sleeping berth of a train (...) He found to his complete surprise that he was trembling with joy. (Kay 108)

In this excerpt, the character stares at his own story with astonishment because of its conversion into an injured bird. The animal may be symbolising the character himself in the sense that, both birds and illegal immigrants, cross borders without documentation, and both the Hazara refugee and this bird, have been wounded in the journey. However, instead of the fear that he has experienced in prison or in detention rooms, the character is eventually invaded with joy. In words of the narrator, this joy results from having found his story "after the freezing snow on the journey from Calais, after all the rains and ice and frost, crazily cold in the wring clothes ... which had changed into a bird with a broken wing" (109). The discovery of his story in J's cellar is presented as a relevant fact in the narrative, as it enhances the character to share his experience of border-crossing with J. He tells her about "the big snow he had been through, the slow traffic in the lorries from Calais," "the borders he had crossed" (109) and "the places he had hidden" (109). Significantly, the fact that his story is still alive despite the difficulties along the journey means a victory for the refugee. After telling everything to J he feels himself lighten, "he was embarrassed by everything he had lost in life ... But a smile kept breaking like the early light in the sky, and something actually shifted. It was a mysterious thing. Life (110-111).

The tone adopted in the final part of the narrative is more colourful and hopeful. Indeed, the author makes use of another natural element, the light, to evoke the character's liberation by means of sentences such as "he could feel himself lighten" and "a smile kept breaking like the early light in the sky." In this excerpt, the Afghan refugee empowers himself when remembering all the odds he has overcome, and this final strength is translated into a smile directed to the world: he is not a victim anymore but a powerful and free individual. His victory is ultimately symbolised once the one-winged bird flies away and he watches it taking the sky, imagining him crossing:

other rivers, many rivers to cross, before it landed, perhaps back home. Or maybe it was on a day trip somewhere to Blackpool, or the Lake District, or further north to Scotland or further again to Shetland. He didn't know where it would travel to anymore. It wasn't his anymore. (Kay 111)

As mentioned before, the bird represents the Hazara character in his desire to fly away to

achieve his freedom. Like the bird, hope has given him the necessary strength to beat the odds and, in the sentence "it wasn't his anymore," not only can we recognise the bird and his story but the character himself since, having released from the entrapment of a nation where he was mistreated and having mocked countless borders, he has achieved to give away the constricting feeling of belonging. Rather, he has flown away, crossing dividing lines, mocking surveillance, finding "the power to be invisible" (110), that is, to live apart from the fixity of national parameters. In addition, like it also happens to the bird, whose flight is encouraged by an open door, his conversion into a citizen of the world is unleashed when J opens her front door. This constitutes a kind act of welcoming and an opportunity for him to speak up and share his story.

Paradoxically, the displacement condition that the main character in "The Smuggled Person's Tale" (2017) allows him to own his own space, a "third space" (a term coined by Homi Bhabha), in which the Afghan refugee can redefine his identity as a consequence of a continuous national border-crossing and a sense of dislocation. In this respect, Peter Kabachnik points at the lack of place that derives from mobility as integral when it comes to identity formation (210–211). In a similar manner, Germann Molz highlights the possibility of exploring mobility as home for the nomad identity and the consequence of "making [oneself] at home on the road" (Molz 330). In the same spirit, the refugee in this story takes advantage of his displacement to mock the national entrapment and to construct an alternative space from where he can challenge the physical and mental paralysis to which national demarcations confine their citizens.

Thus, in Kay's narrative, mobility is somehow home, since the character ends up embracing his movement, accepting that, although moving across nations has brought him suffering, it is also what fuels his freedom. Indeed, the author's final sentences in the narration seem to work as a call for fraternity across nations:

My heart expanded, he'd said. And now, it was something, wasn't it something, to be able to walk together, out of the house and up the street, the street with the red brick houses and the slate roofs, the terraced street with shared chimneys, the birds lined along the rooftops, to walk with Anna along this quiet street, side by side. (Kay 112)

In this closing excerpt, the image of the bird as a symbol of freedom is used one more time to evoke the character's liberation. The metaphor "my heart expanded" functions as an epiphany, since by saying these words out loud, the character is finally aware of his conversion into a global citizen beyond national limitations. Also, the fact of "being able to walk together" and "side by side" with Anna, or the depiction of "shared chimneys" and "birds lined along the rooftops," all symbolise a transnational fraternity, transmit an atmosphere of peacefulness, and may allude to the need for a more human and emphatic way of treating refugees and exiles.

To sum up, the short story "The Smuggled Person's Tale" (2017) revolves around a refugee who defies the national border system and its physical and ideological entrapment. In the need for leaving his native land because of the tyranny of governments, war, and conflict, this exile undergoes a process of dislocation in which his identity suffers as a result of the disassociation between him and his original land. Nevertheless, drawing myself on some of the studies that have placed mobility as a central element of analysis and as a political statement itself (Said 1990;

Chambers 1994; Ahmed 1999; Kabachnik 2012), I claim that he takes advantage of this dislocation to resist the impositions of the nation-state by his continuous movement aside the physical and mental paralysis to which national territories force citizens. Consequently, he defies the dichotomy created by national borders (in-out/native-immigrant/citizen-exile) (Bhabha 1994; Rojas 2006; Jones 2012; Konrad 2015) and constructs an alternative space where he can achieve a transnational identity. In this respect, I have argued that the author employs natural images to portray the ways in which the literary voice challenges the rigidity of nations, finds alternative ways of seeing, being, and knowing, and acquires a nomadic consciousness where he benefits from his *uprootedness*. Ultimately, by avoiding national entrapment, the Afghan character in Kay's narrative reclaims the right to redefine his identity as a global citizen, his self-autonomy, and his individual empowerment.

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