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[Slide Show]
Greetings from Australia**Vicki Karaminas**
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SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT BEFORE YOU EAT:

Over the slow water, skimming towards her, a stellated brightness, a cast jewel, and another and another fast behind. Was it from the ship? She strained her eyes, she tried to make a telescope of her retina, to track the quick flashes as they moved. When she was little, her father had taken her to the sea and made flat stones skip over the waves. Each one he had said, flew on to another country, rested at last at a shore beyond the sea. (Winterson, 1998)

Sail with me,
on barges of wooden planks.
Corroded nails pierce my naked feet.
Semiotic entombment,
Trapped by the spectre of culture.
Kingdom by kingdom
Province by province
Cities dispersed along the rim.
Alone I drift.
The double-edged journey of fragmented subjectivity.

Bela vigorously rubs her neck and pulls down the plastic aviator goggles over her eyes, leaving just enough space between the rubber thonging and her right ear to place her double corona cigar. *Cigar Aficionado*. Bela ignores the 'No Smoking' sign.

Bela is the recalcitrant. A unruly libertine.

Shifting slightly to adjust her seat, bela reaches for the dashboard controls and flicks on the engine switch.

BODY SPECIFICS

Designed as an economical one-seater micro lift for touring, the Mosquito M80 is manufactured in both kit form or fully assembled. It has a polyester and glass fibre fuselage, while its wing consists of a sail stretched over a composite/aluminium structure. It has an empty weight of 210kg and a maximum take-off weight of 430kg, boasting a payload (excluding fuel) of 173kg and an endurance of four hours.

Four hours is all bela needs.
Four hours and a bit of speed.

Bela is a leather-clad aviator. A wanderer with wings. She is the thrill seeker, the cyborg passenger in the bound space of licence and liminality.

Bela sits comfortably in the cockpit.
Viewing platforms,
vantage point
complete.

Bela's dilemma is double-edged. Most modern travellers prepare for their journeys by reading the accounts of other travellers and noting their recommendations in the array of guidebooks that are available on the market. Even though Bela thinks that people read too much *Lonely Planet*, and not enough Foucault, she prefers the *Eyewitness Travel Guides*, only because their maps are glossy and she can bend them and fold them any way she pleased, without them falling apart into fragments at the crease. She likes how the map holds the city still while she tries to sort out where she is.

Space is a layout of things, caught in a moment.
(Massey, 1997)

Bela always keeps a copy next to the control panel. Just in case. Just in case she needs to get out. Quick.

There are no travel books to guide her on this particular quest, no maps with keys to main symbols. No main roads. No landmarks. No blueprints of hotel floors. Bela has little need of an international airport nor a main shipping port. Bela switches off the twin engines. Dead silence. She begins to free-fall.

ENTER MEMORY

It began on a cruise ship. Not like the *Titanic* or the *QEII*. Not nearly as grand. Not nearly as flash. But just as big, if not bigger. The *Seven Seas* was a floating vessel. A sealed capsule on a rough sea. The Exotic, the Other, the Orient of interest that floated at sea. Transformed from an auxilliary aircraft carrier, *The Nellie* became an immigrant ship .

BODY SPECIFICS

Name: The Seven Seas
Built: 1941 by Sun Shipbuilding & Drydock Co.
Tonnage: 11086 gross
Dimensions: 492 x 69 ft (150x 21.2 m)
Service Speed: 16 knots
Propulsion: Busch – Sulzer diesel/single crew

The ship was insulated and self-contained with enough rations to last for three weeks. Three weeks at sea with 638 passengers battling the elements, homesickness and disease.

INCOMING PASSENGER LIST*

BIRTHS ON THE VOYAGE

NAME	SEX	NAME OF PARENTS	NATIONALITY
Nil			

The *Seven Seas* left Pireas, Greece to Fremantle and on to Melbourne, Australia via Port Said. At some point during the voyage, two bodies were buried at sea.

DEATHS ON VOYAGE

NAME	SEX	AGE	OCCUPATION	NATIONALITY	CAUSE OF DEATH
LAGOGIANIS, Panagiotis	Male	17	Rural Worker	Greek	Peritonis Post-operative
LAGGAS, Persefoni	Female	8 m	Child	Greek	Pneumonia

Two less migrants for Australia to feed.

By the time the vessel docked at Port Melbourne for Australian Quarantine and Customs to clear, there were only 636 immigrants on the Assisted Passage Scheme to be notched on Alien Registration lists.

Only 636 mouths left to feed.

SUMMARY OF PASSENGERS

MALES	FEMALES	CHILDREN	INFANTS	TOTAL
447	90	93	6	636

*Source: Commonwealth of Australia, 1955.

When the M.S *Seven Seas* was cleared, officials discovered the stores empty, ransacked of its contents that were estimated to last the return trip.

"Ungrateful sods" mumbled the First Crewman as he tallied the missing stock on his list. Butter, 3,500lb; 650 Lipton tea bags, 835 jars Cottees raspberry conserve, 924 loaves of Tip Top white bread, 220 cases of KB beer, 10 decks of playing cards, 325 ruled notebooks and 548 black biro pens.

The First Crewman shook his head in disbelief. "Bloody thieves, bloody idiots" he remarked. But rather than risk delaying the vessel's tight schedule, the Master signed all the necessary documents and the M.S *Seven Seas* set sail to collect more indentured labour waiting in Greece.

"I HEREBY CERTIFY that, except as set out in health reports furnished under the Commonwealth Quarantine Act, the above mentioned passengers to be handed at this Port do not include any person who is insane, idiotic, deaf and dumb, blind, infirm, or destitute, or who is suffering from any infectious or contagious diseases of a loathsome or dangerous character, and that none of such passengers has, during the voyage, shown any signs of mental peculiarity or of helplessness.

Witness

.....Master

Date: February 20, 1955

Hinrich Oltmann

END OF MEMORY

Bela's father travels on the M.S *Seven Seas*.
 Passenger.
 Stranger.
 Foreigner.
 One amongst the Others' on the ship.

Waiting on the periphery of fear.
Peripheral inordinate fear.

Fear that the ship might never land; that 'delayed' might mean 'forever'. Elusive subtlety in waiting that recedes in spaces measured by speed.

Waiting to arrive. Waiting to enter the realm to be complete. [Note 1]

That place is not here,
but there.
There is anywhere,
but is never here.

Bela's father is familiar with the spaces of waiting. Accustomed to the vending machines of smoke-filled rooms.

Shipping ports.
Bus depots.
Train stations where the departure rooms are full.

He stands at the helm watching the movement of the sea. Strange colours of the deep.
Unaccustomed surroundings gripped by anxious longing.

This Timeless Land in the Pacific Sea.

He is the embodiment of rupture. That rupture from which longing begins. That melancholy, that nostalgic impulse fixing him in the border zones of ambiguity, between the third world and the first, between the traditional and the modern, the old and the new. Between worlds. Between times.

His eyes flicker towards the incoming swell.

VOICE:

"I have no history, no authenticity, no name. I have no roots, just migrations, trajectories and terminals where I arrive. Entry points and exits that mark my life. I am in a state of constant arrival, using artifice to avoid capture. Deceit to be allowed in."

He grips the iron rail with his hands. The coolness presses against his black skin.

**SPEAK
MEMORY
SPEAK.**

"What have I done coming to this strange land, this massive foreign space?" His fear succumbs to paranoia. Paranoia succumbs to fear. "I might be devoured, torn to pieces while I sleep. Am I not the stranger, the intruder here?"

The weather turns from hot to cold.
The M.S *Seven Seas* berths along the Melbourne quay.

Alien Certificate Number: 4340283
Nationality: Greek
Visa Particulars: Assisted Passage Scheme/Migrant Visa
Address in Australia: Bonegilla Training Centre.

Bela's father will be sent to Bonegilla to be trained in Australian etiquette. A process that will erase and delete anything that might offend the average Australian citizen and their ways.

**CUT
Station Pier, Port Melbourne**

Bela's father admires the train station with its vast complexities; the terminal for rural and interstate trains. Long steel chains of carriages curve and slither along the platforms.

The kiosk, the newsagency, now the Traveller's Aid.
A thousand functional trajectories that give Australia its name.

Limited.
Terminated.
Contained.

Now the toilets, now the showers. Lockers that permit the traveller to delay.
Access denied by a simple entryway.

An underground centre that acts as an extensive network of commercial trade. The ticket booth permits the transition from freehold landowner to indentured labour.

Bela's father is handed a token as he stands in a station queue. A round, disc-shaped, plastic, yellow button, which gives him access to the narrow passageway of entry. The 'New Australian' on a perpetual detour. [Note 2]

Bela's father is instructed to board a train; A train trip that will take him across the city. Sweep him into an emptiness of detours and returns; the length of an empty subject that can never come home.

Destination Bonegilla, or "*Hotel Bon-a-gilla*" [Note 3], as bela's father will always say.

Urban space gives way to desolate mountains. The entire city centre disappears under the smog of technological trajectories. From a series of old wooden carriages pulled by a steam engine, bela's father, dazed and weary, watches the unfamiliar landscape. He perceives the conjunction of a distance and a division, the juxtaposition of fields simultaneously discontinuous and open.

Infinite.
Limitless
Exotic.
Bizarre.

Bela's father wonders if the tracks will go on forever.

No Address

The streets of *Camp Bon-a-gilla* have no name. There is a written address, a postal value that refers to a plan containing twenty-eight separate geometric blocks spaced evenly between the Kiewa and the Mitta Mitta Rivers. Wood Street, Stock Route, Bonegilla Road and the Murray Valley Highway create a boundary between the camp and the neighbouring towns of Albury and Wodonga. The range of Bonegilla is practically unclassified; the spaces that compose it in detail are unnamed. Only a *bricolage* of blocks create a 'system' where one can determine where they are. [Note 4]

Bela's father creates a map, an impromptu drawing that he keeps folded in the back pocket of his government issued pants. A kind of geographical summary that he sketches on a scrap of paper to mark the key areas of the camp. The civic centre, a canteen, a general store, a barber, the administration area, a branch of the Wodonga Police Station, three banks and Block 10, his allocated home for the next two years.

All carefully marked on his map. Just in case he gets lost.

English/Greek
Symbols
Signs
Semiotic hybridity.

Bonegilla is a centre that is always full: a marked site. It is here that the values of Australian society are gathered and condensed: power (administration offices, Social Services, Commonwealth Employment Offices, etc), currency (banks), consumerism (general and central store), spirituality (three churches) language (theatre, library, primary school) and law (police station). To enter Bonegilla is to encounter a microcosm of cultural reproduction.

The sign at the front gate reads:

**WELCOME TO BONEGILLA RECEPTION CENTRE
WE HOPE YOUR STAY IS PLEASANT**

Bela's father steps in.

CUT

Walk with me. Hand in hand through the nightmare of this narrative. Walk the plank. I fear that I will trip on the splinters and slip into the emptiness, the space, the gap between the others and I.

Look at me. Speak to me. Hear my voice. Say my name.

"Hristos Karaminas" the Camp Superintendent calls out. Bela's father steps out of the line.

CUT

Bela is running low on petrol.
The propeller begins to splutter.
The engine begins to choke.

MISSING PRESUMED DEAD

A light twin-engine aircraft was last sighted off the coast of the Aegean Sea. Eye-witness accounts revealed that the aircraft was in distress and emitted a vaporous smoke screen before spiralling off-course towards the Caspian Sea. At 17:00 hours the aircraft disappeared off the radar monitor.

It is presumed that the aircraft could be lying at the bottom of the sea.

STOP

Bela chews on the butt end of her unlit corona cigar in contemplation. Reaching out for her box of matches, she realises that they are all wet. Staining the silk lining of her black leather jacket bright red. Pomegranate red, infused with the colours of the ocean. She looks about her in the darkness, but cannot see ahead.

No sun.
No light.
Nothing.
Just the hollow echo of the deep cool darkness.

Silence.

Bela cannot hear herself breathe.
Cannot feel her heart beat.

Bela is dead. Buried alive in the Aegean Sea. A Venus de Milo without limbs. A stone antiquity. Wedged amongst the coral bed and the barnacle covered rocks of the sea floor for archaeologists to find. Raised from the deep, by a team of divers with digging machines. Bela is the rare antiquarian treasure placed in a vacuum-sealed display unit for everybody to see. Itemised, inventoried, interpreted and re-interpreted according to changing hypotheses.

Museums.
Art Houses.
Galleries.
A travelling exhibition.
The Rare Artefact.
The Consumer Commodity.

DEAD
GONE
EXTINCT

'For ethnology to live, its object must die.' (Baudrillard, 1983).

Buried under the weight of Western narratives.

Write me. Read me. Letter me, so that I can be yet another chapter, another period, in Western history.

Erase me. Colour me in.
European, Balkan, or Oriental?
Neither West nor East. [note 5]
I am the Barbarian, the Heathen, and the Uncivilised Modern Greek. [Note 6] The bastardised Hellene robbed of my heritage.

YOU
Western philosophy,
Western art,
Western science,
Western literature,

You claim my ancestors as your own. Pillaged me from my history and left me with myths on the side of the road.

I am the erotic podium dancer that performs for you alone.

Signs, wonders, discoveries.

What you see is not what you think you see.

CUT
Return to Camp Bon-a-gilla

Bela's father looks across the steel wire fence. The barbed wire fence. Enclosing. Separating him from the rest.

Bon-a-gilla.
Australia.
Lesvos
Greece.

He saw a group of people watching. Pointing, staring from beyond the fence.

'Bloody Refo'.
'Wog'.
'Dago'.

"Speak English or go back to your own country", they say.
Hristos bows his head and politely grinned.

"Welcome to Bonegilla, and remember to always say "Thank you" and "Please"

SHIFT REGISTER

Bela's history has begun in Bonegilla, long before she is born.
Just an/other atom,
an/other
molecule.
DNA particles,
a genetic mass floating about the earth.
Biological Cells.
Molecular Cells.
Electronic Cells.
Jail Cells.

The biological black box where all the answers gather and ferment.

Such are the patterns, rhythms, multiplicities, paradoxes, shifts, currents, cross-currents that works overtime, to find the lines of thought that transmit bela through the clean boxes of history and geography, the discourses that cut across culture, cut across the Equator, cut across the boundaries of time.

GMT 16.00hrs.

Energy precedes matter. Thought precedes the speed of light.

CUT

QUANTUM TIME LINE

GMT: 16.00hrs

Bonegilla Migrant Reception Centre
Geographical Location: Albury Wodonga, Victoria.

Bela's father Hristos places his allocated linen and woollen blankets in a neatly folded pile on the mattress of his cot. He carefully puts his crockery and cutlery in the top drawer of the bedside cabinet, but not before running his thumb and forefinger along the blade of the butter knife. Dull. "What use is this?" He thinks. Knives are supposed to be sharp in order to skin animal carcasses and cut down figs. How is he supposed to cut his meat, his bread into bite-sized pieces to eat? He has never seen a knife such as this, round and blunt at the tip. He holds it up to the light for a better look. He places the butter knife next to the fork in the drawer and thinks of all the other possibilities he could use the utensil for during his stay. With the images playing on his mind, he lifts his wooden suitcase, the one that he made, onto the bed and begins unpacking.

The taxonomy of belonging.
The taxonomy of place
2 white cotton singlets
2 pairs of woollen pants
4 pairs of woollen socks
3 cotton shirts (one short sleeved)
1 woollen jumper
1 black polyester suit
an extra pair of leather shoes.

Compiling.
Stock Taking
Memorising everything.

Bela's father takes a deep breath and lifts the garments towards his face. He begins to rub and caress the fibres along his skin. He thinks for a minute, a brief instant, that he can smell the pastures and the sheep, the winter rains that pelt against the valley, the aroma of tobacco freshly threshed.

Drifting in and out of memory.
Breathe
Blood rushing
Heart beat.

Breathe the coal crackling in the stone furnace.
Breathe the burning coffee beans.
Roasting chestnuts.
Baking feta cheese.
Now the soft, wet seeds of cotton plants escape with the autumn winds.

Breathe lungs,
Breathe noxious memory.

Bela's father places his suitcase under the iron bed, wipes the palms of his hands along his hair then turns towards the wooden door.

Ten steps. Ten long strides out the door.

SHIFT REGISTER

Bela remembers the suitcases under the beds. Suitcases that once lined the floors of every bedroom of every house that bela and her family ever slept in.

Suitcases filled with blankets and sheets.
Vestiges of travel filled with things.

Trunks marked with foreign lettering.
Cardboard tickets.
Abbreviated destinations hanging by a string.

Bela believes that suitcases are places to store things in, under the beds where they cannot be seen. In the tiny brick veneer houses that bela lived in there was never enough space to fit things comfortably.

Every so often, in fact every few years, bela's mother would drag the suitcases from under the bed and bela's family would pack up and leave.

Back and forth from Australia to Greece.

When bela was old enough to move out and live on her own she placed all her belongings in green plastic garbage bags and tied them with a knot. "No suitcases for me". She thought, and rented a room in a city apartment block with built in wardrobes that ran from wall to wall. And a box bed with no room between the mattress and the floor.

"Home Sweet Home". So bela thought.

There is something familiar about the sound of suitcases, their wheels grinding against the pavement of concrete roads. Something familiar about the way suitcase compartments zip open and close.

Backpacks
Rucksacks
Knap sacks

The ideal caravan home on the road.

EXCESS LUGGAGE

Where does this journey end? When does the motion of writing cease?

Bela wriggles free from her leather jacket and allows her body to float to the surface of the sea. Dead weight. Dead mass.

North
West East
South

Authenticity is the bed of nails that I must lie on for you to sleep.

Air
Fire
Water
Earth

Bela is caught between the planets, between the earths, between the universes. The violence of history marks her skin. The violence of displacement traps her body. There is no escape. No eluding history in this wonderland where 'trips' are for free.

Ride with me. Board the fair ground train. Tickets are for free.

Oxford Street, Sydney.

Bela has a fantasy. One of many wet dreams. A porno star on cable TV. A Bedouin that pitches her tent on the outer limits. At the edge of the metropolitan.

Map me. Draw me. I am your cartography. Gathering speed and skimming across surfaces. Covering amnesia. Gathering momentum. Discarding real time memory.

Bela goes searching for Greece in the populated spaces of Australia. In the immensity of the city skyline, surrounded by neon logos and consumer commodities.

Nation dreaming.
Great Southern Land.

Bela is high. High on the smell of the city zones of alterity. Gliding down Oxford Street in an automatic sedan with the ambient sounds of rave music and the numbness of an anaesthetic trance, spinning tunes out of the radio. The one way ride out of the ghetto. Crunching gears against tarmac. Pink dollars stuffed in the dashboard next to the first aid kit. Kits of all kinds. Safety kits. Repair kits. Drug kits. Sex kits.

Urban scapes condense into scattered metropolitan locales.

Asphyxiation.
Chemical intoxication.

There is no siesta in the Australian dream. No more milk bars. No more fish 'n' chips. Fast food outlets service the traveller cruising at high speed.

Rent a car
Hire a bike
Or maybe lease a holiday house by the South Sea.
Australian rental is cheap. The Australian Dream is Euro free.

Bela revs the ignition, lifts the clutch and pulls down the sun visor to block the glare of high beams from oncoming cars. "Rude Bastards". Inconsiderate shits!" she mutters, as she lights her corona cigar and flicks the match out of the open window and onto the street. She slams her foot down hard on the accelerator and Oxford Street pulls Sydney and Athens together, eating up the distances between them as shouts, traffic signs and blaring music get blurred into a proliferation of tongues, pulled apart by fast cars accelerating into the wind. Things happen to words in the speed of movement. Hot becomes cold.

In the cold climates you lose your ability to speak and you find that your frozen mouth spits out inaudible sounds. Incoherent nuances jam the traffic lights and leave you waiting in the same

spot.

Oxford Street is a complex website of exchange. A subtext in a Queer reading of the city of Sydney.

Bela pulls up to the kerb. Corner of Oxford and Crown Streets. Checks her lipstick in the side view mirror.

Caution: Objects in this mirror may be closer than they appear.
(Baudrillard, 1996a)

She steps out of the car and slams the door. Crosses the street, hands tucked deep into her pockets.

Bela is a flaneur, a cross-dressed dandy roaming the city's sidewalks. The aesthetic terrorist botanising against the asphalt. Participating. Observing the city streets. Bela is the deviant, the voyeur amongst the maddening crowds of alternative pleasure seekers pushing against the grain of conformity.

Negotiating fluid borders of subjectivity.

Bela stops in front of the shiny enamelled sign of the Empire Lifestyle Store and peers into the shop window. There is an 8'x6' silver plaque suspended from the ceiling with hooks and fishing line. Bela leans closer squinting her eyes, her breath fogs the glass pane and melts into tiny droplets of water. She can barely see it, but there it is, smack in the middle of the plaque, size 36, in Bold Impact font.

The word

Perfect

Bela stares at the bold text. She repeats the word out loud. She tilts her head to the right. "Perfect". Perfect what?" Intrigued and curious, bela takes a few steps to the left, steps over the 'Welcome' mat and pushes open the glass entry doors inside.

The retail space is exposed: structural trusses, brick walls and mechanical systems. Bela notices the floor of old salvaged wood planks. The foyer of cracked glass. The oval fountain of cracked tiles and notices the fixtures made of bark covered tree trunks. Individual vignettes display bedroom and dining furnishings. Across the floor is a cash and wrap desk made of galvanised metal and copper wire.

"Can I help you?"

Bela turns to see a man in a white shirt peering over her shoulder.

"Is there anything in particular that you are looking for?" His voice is drowned by the sound of the cash register. "No, I'm fine. I'm just looking". Bela smiles, the kind of half smile that can be read as unwelcome intrusion. She walks away towards the central bookshelf units, passing a sign in 3 ply coated grain-wood paper with 'Stimulate the Way you Live' in Bold Copperplate Gothic.

Bela stands in front of the industrial scaffolding frame of steel tubing that supports the adjustable bookshelves. Functional. Economical. Aesthetic. Not that bela really gives a hoot but it does give the place an air of banal congeniality. Crooked steel windows and colourfully stained plywood panels permeate the space. Bela casually browses through the bookstands, running her index finger absent mindedly along the vinyl coating of antiquarian book spines. Words pressed through the sieve of the text.

The Book of Historical Events.
The Book of Extreme Phenomenon.
Maps and Figures.
Cool Memories II.

Bela stops. Hesitates, then pulls the last hard cover book out of the shelf. Then quickly turns its sepia pages. One by one.

"You cannot have your cake and eat it too.
You cannot eat your wife and fuck her too.
You cannot fuck your life and save it too."
(Baudrillard, 1996b: 43)

She smiles and turns the page.

"If in the economy of the body, blood is a resource [*une richesse*], space is a luxury." (Baudrillard, 1996b: 56)

Bela looks up to see if anybody is watching. She discreetly tilts her head towards the corner of the ceiling, cautiously scanning for any security cameras. Any sign of being watched.

Surveillance systems monitoring her every move.

An infinitesimal second passes and bela imagines how long it would take for someone to react, to get anxious, to search for her, to raise the security alarm. She could see the newspaper headlines "Thief of Ethnic Appearance Steals Rare Book" or "Ethnic Crime Soars". The temptation of slipping the book into the folds of her leather jacket has now become a means to

a desired end. She imagines herself somewhere beyond this department store, somewhere beyond Sydney, in the depths of some boutique motel room, in some inner city suburb. Bela with Baudrillard as her hostage snorting grams of cocaine, watching porn and eating chocolate biscuits.

Visions and illuminations.
Paranoia,
ego and excess.

Without any more thought, bela slips the book into her jacket, turns and walks towards the double glass doors.

EXIT THIS WAY

Sirens.
Alarms.
Flashing lights.

Bela has been caught.
Judged.
Sentenced.
Expelled.
Abandoned at the exit.

Bela finds herself back on the street, roaming amongst the crowd of typological dummies, tourists in search of the authentic in the labyrinth of the newcomer.

On Oxford Street, the sublime and the decadent can eat you alive. The dissidents. The Lesbians. The Poofers. The Trannies. The Whores. Queer Zone. Pink Zone. Mecca of alternative sex/glamour/drugs/excess.

Dollars can buy you anything you want and in case you're short, trade is always welcome. This is "Anti-Ark where the mad and the fetishists have been set free". (Baudrillard, 1996b)

Admittedly, bela chose her destination before she came to Sydney. Searching for her kind in the debris of a deserted city.

No fables
No narratives
No compositions.

Culture as mirage gone horribly wrong.

ENTER

Walk with me,
along this asphalt where the breadth of the pavements signal the illusion of the city's immense incommensurability.

Follow me,
through the back door of this concrete space of spatio-temporal tricks.

Hear me as I speak,
the command of language/the language of command.
I am the Sadistic Mistress of your wet Slave dreams.

EXIT

You can leave in any direction you like.

Bela hates the smell of the inner city. It reeks of dry vomit and stale piss. The destitute and the repressed manifest themselves in the alleyways and doorways; blocking entries. You cannot escape the stench of this metropolis; it circulates and traverses beneath the obscenity of speech.

VOICE

Bela speaks in several voices. She speaks the language of hybrid English that collapses into a pigeon Turkish and resonates into broken Greek.

Classification systems that cross and code her subjectivity.

First Generation Australian Immigrant.
Greek-Australian Citizen.
Butch.
Femme.
Working Class Elite.
The assimilated Other on the Australian scene.

Bela speaks the language of places, boundaries, border crossings and strategies. The paths, the channels of multiple trajectories, that transform into noise, fracturing contours of movement, entering the realm of knowledge, order and discourse.

The crowd push past bela, disperse and rush around like a torrent without shape. She is immersed in the noise of the tongues. Mute. Encased in a tomb.

Bela looks at her reflection in a shop window. She sees an island, a mountain. She sees an

archipelago scattered in the midst of the clamorous sea. She imagines a place, a clump of soil, pieces of land, sections of space, immersed in the confused murmur of tongues. Bela remembers the slapping of the waters at Lapsarna Beach. The beach on the island. The island of Lesbos. The island in the Aegean Sea. She remembers how in that remote retreat of a place there was an entire area populated by bottles floating on the water's surface. Each message was trying to raise its voice above the aquatic noise of the rising swell, piercing and cacophonous with the fluctuating sound of glass colliding.

Bela stares at the shop-front window, her reflection blurred by the light beams of passing traffic and wonders where she is. Where she was. Where she will be going. She stands in a location-less location, the nameless author in a crowd facing the mirror of madness. Bela is the protagonist of history re-inscribing, re-writing the space of signs that leave behind a volcanic blaze, igniting the superhighway of codes and signifiers.

Dead languages and grammars.

No more Object.
No more Subject in the simulacrum of Western thought.

This is
'The desert of the real itself'.
(Baudrillard, 1983)

CUT EDIT FRAME

Bela looks at her wristwatch. She is running out of time. Turning away from the window she spots a flashing neon sign. On the other side of the road. On the other side of the traffic. She moves towards the edge of the curb: the cemented artifice that separates the pavement from the road that warns her of possible dismemberment if she hastens to cross the line. Into the ordered traffic zone. Into the automated images and blaring horns. She looks down at her feet. This is literally impossible, she thinks and stares at the thin yellow line on the edge of the asphalt.

STOP DO NOT WALK

Bela imagines her body sprawled dead on the street. *Rigor mortis* setting in. Limbs scattered along the roadway. More refuse dispersed alongside the city's debris. The cars stop. Silenced. Shocked. The Other has been severed, amputated in the surgical theatre of destiny. The crowd gathers in disbelief. In this hysterical configuration, the throng of people imagine itself as the figure of bela.

The illusion of Self. The mirror of each other.

The dream of belonging has disappeared. Flattened under the weight of the machinery of technology. The nameless faces in the crowd recognise each other.

The absent Other.
The fetishised Other.
The woman Object.
The Constructed Eve.

THE ECHO OF DISTANT VOICES.

"Call an ambulance."
"Someone get the police."
"Give the woman space to breathe."

Bela is drifting between subconsciousness and consciousness. Between eternal time and live time. She feels a multitude of hands pressing against her body, searching for any form of identity, some sort of clue to find out where she came from.

THE BLUR OF SOUNDS

"Who is she?"
"Does anyone know her?"
"Did anyone witness the scene?"
"Does she have any papers, any ID?"

Bela has manufactured her death. The artificial ideal. The perfect crime. The complete revenge. She has murdered the object, the woman-object, the ethnic-object, by severing the Other from the Self. No more distance. No more absence.

The opposition will no longer exist.

This is the perfect blueprint for treason of the most vicious kind.

No motive
No perpetrator.
No weapon.
Not even a gun.

The actual crime can never be pinned down. An accident scene was what it was.

The artifice of a triumphant destiny.
This is the revenge of the woman in the mirror.

"Fuck it. What have I got to lose?" Bela thinks to herself while bending and rolling the corners of her Baudrillard book. Vacant. Withdrawn. She takes a deep breath and leaps onto the road and into the oncoming traffic. Into the void of another reality. Another space. Another time. Moving away from the process of evolution into immortality.

PAN OUT

No more umbilical cord.

CUT REWIND

Barmera 1955

Geographical Location: Barossa Valley, The Riverlands. Border of New South Wales and South Australia.

After two weeks at Bonegilla, Bela's father Hristos is issued with papers instructing him to board a train. A night train, a train without stops that will take him across the border of New South Wales and onto the South Australian Riverlands. [note 7]

Confined to a moving space.
The walls of the asylum.

No cities.
No people.
No towns.

The train rolls along the track for what seems like days, or one day multiplied by the rising sun and rivers whose tides rise and fall according to the phase of the moon.

The train pulls into each station along the track and then gathers momentum as it speeds out again. Never stopping. No supplies to pick up. No passengers to disembark. Arrival and departure fused into one.

Hristos keep a register of every stop by carving a single notch with his knife on the armrest of his seat. This is his inventory of landscape markers that fix the limits of where he was, where he is going.

This is the key in defining his map of Australia.

Bonegilla
Echuca
Kerang
Piangil
Bannerton

He writes letters home to lull away the time and to keep the madness at a distance.

**Αγαπητη μου Μανα και Αδελφες,
Ευχομαι το γραμμα μου να σας βρη σε καλι υγια. Ωσ για εμενα προ στο παρον ειμαι
καλα δοξα τον Θεο . Η Αυστραλεια δεν ειταναι οτι μου ειπαναι, ουτε τη περιμενα. Περνω
μαβρη ξενουχτεια εδω στην ερειμνεια. Μασ εχουνε βαλη επανω ενα τραινο και δεν εχω
ηδεια που μασ πυγεινουνε, ελπιζω για δουλεια.
Σας αγαπω και σας σκεπτομαι παντοτε
ο γιο σου και αδελφω Χριστο.**

Thuria
Werrimull
Yarrara

The train grinds to a halt. Bela's father looks out of the window. Nothing but rolling fields of grass. Not even a station.

Empty.
Vacant.
Bare.

"Righto you blokes, git yer gear and shove off the bloody train. C'mon hurry up now. I want youse [note 8] all to line up, sensible like in a single file line and no foolin' 'round or youse all cop an earful. Do youse undastand? Now do as yer told."

Bela's father does not understand but knows this is the language of command. He reaches under his seat and drags out his wooden suitcase. He sits up and follows the rest of the men down the steps of the carriage and out into the wind-whipped paddock.

He takes his place in the line amongst the other men.

Greek.
Polish.
Italian.
A cacophony of voices.

Languages.
Sounds.
Tongues.

Narratives and histories sprawled in the horizon of disappearance.

He stands in a field, feeling completely alone and isolated, opposite the crowd of Australian farmers and imagines himself in a firing line, executed by a single bullet and left to rot in a shallow unmarked grave, in a piece of foreign soil.

Bela's father is merely an extra in another narrative of Australian history. The cultural engine which has no meaning in itself, but is the accumulation of signs, images and texts, histories and narratives, that form the dominant sets of truths in the imaginary of this nation.

The farmers make their selection of workers by checking each man's molars and palms, then they pull them out of the line and direct them to trucks and tractors that are stationed nearby. By mid afternoon, only Hristos and another young Greek boy from the island of Kithera are left waiting, sweltering in the outback sun.

"What will become of me?"

"What crime have I done?"

"Am I to be abandoned here to die?"

Anxiety.

The arbitrariness of chance.

An array of images enters his mind. He begins to cry for fear of his destiny and for the home he has left behind.

"Oi youse two blokes, I said, git ya gear and git over here. Whatcha names? Can't speak ya foreign lingo mates but as long as youse both know I'm the Bossman then we'll git along just fine. Got meself a nice piece of land with a few grapes that youse two blokes will be workin' on. Don't make much dough but I score meself a few bob on a beaut drop of wine, which gits me by. Any of youse two blokes 'l-ties'? Well don't make much diff anyways, cause you lot all look like the same mob. Too right. S'true. Got it? Now ya know I can't pay youse much but I'm willing to throw in ya feed and gives youse a humpy to sleep in. Righto, now listen up, I don't want any complainin', ya hear? Cause ya both lucky to be 'ere, as long as youse both know it we'll be right. Yeh, and keep away from the Missus, cause I knows plenty about youse foreign types. Righto, now we've got that settled, so follow me to me truck and we'll hit the road, got heaps to do before dusk and the Missus gets real cranky if I'm late for me tucker."

That night bela's father dreams in a linear fashion. Images move in loops, tropes and inversions of meaning. Black heavy lights cast white shadows. Constant restlessness. Slumber dispatches Hristos to Hades. The murmur passes through the wall. Sleep becomes the equivalent of a silent battle zone and by the early morning he has become completely estranged. Wounded by the onslaught of his memory's cruel images.

"Righto, you blokes git outta the sack. Orright? Got no room for bludgers round ere' mates. We're all battlers in this country and we're fair dinkum proud of it. Now if youse two don git yer Refo arses outta there, I'm gonna call the Gov'ment to come and get yers and they can send yers back to where the bloody hell youse come from."

The stroke is rapid. The razor sharp.

"Crikes, git goin youse bloody Wogs."

The Name performs. It does what it says.

"Γαϊδουρι, Donkey", mumbles bela's father, and spits in his left hand.

This morning, Hristos was given a pair of clippers and a sandwich, which he eats straight away. By the early afternoon there isn't anything to eat and he is growing weak and agitated from hunger. His fingers are stained purple from the grape pulp and his palms bleed were he missed the vines with the clippers. He imagines that this small plot of land covered with vineyards was his own. He imagined a bottle of white retsina wine, dry like the Grecian earth, a handful of black olives, cheese and bread wrapped in cloth and placed by the stone hedge that divides his acreage. He imagines the air thick with the aroma of burning cypress logs and the saline scent of octopus strung up to dry.

Arresting Images.
Extopic articulations. [note 9]
Trilectic dreams.

He looks up at the sky, bathed by the sunset's vermilion afterglow. A black Jesus-Man crucified on the Southern Cross. A cipher. Alone.

The wild cartography of history shifts. The mapping is linear and horizontal, placing past and future neatly on its axis.

Days fuse into nights and nights became the chimera of a removed locality, a translucent space that passes from one epoch to another, crosses oceans and borders to rest in the paradox of a half-remembered dream.

Accidents of translation.
Tricks of memory.

Not so many days pass since the end of the grape harvest where Hristos is told to hand over his personal belongings and his Greek passport.

The book that Names is no more. Nulled. Erased. Void. The Exit is blocked. The escape can no longer be engineered.

**Quit
Restart.**

Geographic Location: Oodnadatta, Alice Springs, Northern Territory.

It takes one full day travelling on a slow steam engine cattle train to reach Alice. Bela's father goes through Port Augusta, passing through a cartography of small towns littered along the wooden train tracks until he arrives at Oodnadatta, where he is contracted to work on the rail line laying tracks in the desert. A route to the territory of the real and the imagined.

At night the wind howls, seizing the sand and dispersing its fine particles across the desolate territory, rushing and pouring in all directions, as though spun out by some centrifugal force. In the morning, the freshly laid tracks are gone, buried under the weight of the grains.

At dawn Hristos awakes to a vast expanse of emptiness, fields of sediment exposed to the erosion of immortality's gaze. He gently slides his palms into the pleats of the sand mounds searching with his fingers for any sign of the tracks, till his skin feels the sting of the timber's sharp splinters. He then begins to scoop each layer of sediment, brushing, sifting, stroking, till his palms reached the surface of the hardwood, stripped naked in the beams of the desert's luminous light.

This is Hristos' task, to lay the tracks for the train to pass. The anarchic mapmaker, reconfiguring the maps. Imagining the desert as a phantasmagoria dream space; lush and green beyond the pale white hills.

His eyes become swollen from the dust and the flies hover in swarms penetrating every orifice of his body until he can no longer breathe from their incessant clamour.

One night, as bela's father lies restless in his bungalow, he is plagued by arresting images, fragmented allegories of home and the reminder of places that he has encountered in his daily roaming and reveries. He imagines a city wrapped in stillness, the violent eruption of past and present and of odd fragments of first impressions; scripts of imagined alterity. He imagines leaving this place, but there is no transport apart from a cattle train that departs once a week filled with livestock. He is frightened of dying in the desert and disappearing under the sand. Buried in a shallow grave. No tombstone to mark his resting place. No Orthodox priest to bless his journey. Nobody to light his candle on his Name Day. He realised that he could easily rot in this desolate landscape.

This inviting emptiness, this groundlessness of a timeless space.

THIS WAY OUT

Bela's father decides to sell his clothes, mattress, sheets and blankets and anything else he has, including his pocketknife. The blankets, sheets and mattress are the property of the Australian Government, issued to Hristos but not yet paid for. He sells the lot for thirty-five pounds, and then goes back to his bungalow to plan his escape.

Methods
Strategies
Tactics

The moon shifts on its axis illuminating the desert sky and casting chimeras of white light against the spectre of the night. Zero noise. Silence. Hristos sits crouched by the railway tracks, listening for the sound of the cattle train as it ploughs through the desolate wasteland. The hours shift like molten lead through an opaque hourglass stretching the passing of time to what seems like a night, or one night multiplied by the cycle of the moon. He begins to think that the train has derailed somewhere along the track, somewhere between Port Augusta and Oodnadatta, or that for some unknown reason the timetable has been changed. Or worse still, that the train had been cancelled. Destined never to arrive. Hristos finally hears the sound of steel pounding against the metal plates. A rush of wind stampeding wildly behind. He stands up, makes the sign of the cross against his chest and begins to run. He runs so fast that he feels his chest might split from the pounding of his heart, ferociously leaping with each carriage that passes. This is his last chance, and he reaches for the rail that protrudes from the wagon till he feels its cold grasp. With one gigantic step Hristos leaps onto to the train leaving the desert behind. A vacant lot in the quarry of his mind.

CUT

WRAP

PRINT

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Notes

1. In 'Of Other Spaces', Foucault (1986) describes the principles that distinguish heterotopic spaces from all others. Whilst all cultures manifest heterotopias, some as sacred places such as cemeteries, others are more profane such as ships. Heterotopias are linked to slices in time that presuppose an entry and exit that both isolates them and makes them impenetrable. Foucault argues that the ship is a floating piece of space, a place without a place, which exists by itself and is closed off at the same time to the infinity of the sea. The ship functions as a colonising space transporting labour to the colony, what Foucault calls the great instrument of economic development.

2. Australian post-war immigrants were given coloured buttons to indicate their destination. Blue meant that family or friends would be waiting, pink was for South Australia, purple for Tasmania, single women received white buttons and yellow buttons denoted Bonegilla (Albury Regional Museum (2000).

3. From the stage production of Tess Lysiotis, 'Hotel Bon-a-gilla' (1979) . Bonegilla was incorporated into the assimilation era of immigration history, so the effect on those who had passed through its gates has either been ignored or forgotten. The dual pronunciation of the name itself; 'Bonegilla' for the Anglo-Australians and 'Bon-a-gilla' for the migrants, hints that Bonegilla represents a complex series of histories.

4. At Bonegilla, migrants were stratified into social and occupational classifications as 'New Australians', as labourer or domestic, that would set the trend for their future lives in Australia. The boundaries of Bonegilla reinforced the parameters of the dominant Anglo-Australian culture, providing clear and convenient points of demarcation according to what that culture could define as its official reality. (Robins, 2000)

5. In many travelogues the Greeks were conceived as dwelling '...in a twilight zone illuminated neither by the radiance of the West nor by the exotic glow of the East'. (Augustino (1994: 385). Often the framework within which such categories as 'Asia' or 'Europe' were deployed was articulated by travellers. Richard Claverhouse Jebb, Professor of Classics at Glasgow and later Regius Professor of Greek at Cambridge University, had sought to distinguish between two types of Greeks: the hybrid Greeks of Asia, and the Greeks of Europe (Jebb, 1889) At the same time, the shifting stereotypes of the familiar and the exotic employed to describe Greece troubled the security of those same stereotypes.

6. In 'Fair Greece, Sad Relic', Terence Spencer argues that from the sixteenth century onwards, a "Greek" had the meaning of a "crook" an implication that was widespread for three centuries. "The Modern Greek" is thought of "not possessing all the attributes of the ancient one [he is] namely cunning" (Spencer, 1954: 39). Such mistrust persists today in the derogatory saying of 'never trust a Greek bearing gifts'.

7. At the early post-war migration camps, the conditions of employment found for the men virtually amounted to forced labour. Loudspeakers at the migrant camps called the migrants to the employment office with the insensitive 'Achtung! Achtung! where men were classified as 'labourers' and women as 'domestics'. Men were employed on government schemes such as Tasmania's Hydro-Electric Scheme, cane-cutting in Queensland, steel works in Wollongong and Newcastle and road and railway construction across the country. Employment conditions were further curtailed in that government approval was required to change one's occupation (while migrant workers also had to register a change of address with the police), there were additional legal and bureaucratic restrictions, and the professions sought to exclude immigrants. (See Bottomley, 1992)

8. Youse: Australian Vernacular for 'you two' or many (plural).

9. Extopic: The act of naming and contextualising translated from Bakhtin's Russian coinage 'vnenakhodimost', literally 'finding oneself outside', which produces not objective distance but an excess of vision and comprehension. The duality of experience which the subject is both inside-experiencing-and outside of-describing, beginning to attempt to articulate even as it occurs (Bakhtin, 1986: 55).

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