Alexander Schellow
David Goldblatt
Maxi Obexer
Jalal Toufic
Vincent Labaume
Jean-Luc Moulène
Nasrin Tabatabei & Babak Afrassiabi (Pages)
Sandra Boeschenstein
Fabrizio Gallanti
Gardar Eide Einarsson
They were neighbors.
They came here.
I lived there for a long time, until around 1979.
No, we didn’t know them very well. A lot of children.

Here.
They built the house, a shackle.
They kept the apartment.
They were constantly being evicted.
But they always stayed there.
They kept rebuilding.

(Fragments from an interview; Bolzano/Bozen, via Bari)
This monument commemorates the encampment here of Griqua leader, Adam Kok, and his people who, having abandoned their settlements and capital in the direction of what is now the Free State, trekked for two years across the Drakensburg and Drakensberg Mountains, arrived here in 1863 and established their new capital, Kokstad. They did this to escape systematically from the Bantu, their new home, Griqualand East, escape encroaching Boers and annexing British. Their new home, Griqualand East, and the capital there of Griqua leader, Adam Kok, was annexed by Britain in 1876. The monument, which later, in the course of some army's dour contemplation on a bridge, was leaning against the railing of the Margareten Bridge, she was placing her foot on the railing and stretching to pull herself erect on it. For an instant all around her seemed to stand still; the flow of the waters and reaches up to the bridge like the tip of a tongue. On the Elisabeth, Chain, Freedom, and Margareten Bridges just for the sake of doing so, and not because some true inhabitants, yet still I’d remain at least to be remembered, for recollection of some distant days, look back at home, stand a moment at the bridge, even if only for the most three months, but still couldn’t say that this is where I’ll have a daily routine, just like the city’s true inhabitants yet still I remain a tourist. I’ll make my way by turns across the Elisabeth, Chain, Freedom, and Margareten Bridges just for the sake of doing so, and not because some particular route was the shortest way home from work. That was when I noticed her. She was leaning against the railing of the Margareten Bridge, her shoulders shrugged up high, her neck hugged low, her face turned down, her gaze directed to the crowd. Then suddenly she came back to mind, and I instantly knew that she wanted to kill herself, and I could not understand how I had managed to be so stupid, as to only realize it now. As I once again approached the Margareten Bridge, she was placing her foot on the railing and stretching to pull herself erect on it. For an instant everything was frozen, everything around her seemed to stand still. The streamers, even as it kept on moving, the people, even while continuing on their way, the whole world was motionless and frozen, in spite of continuing to turn. She sneezed in her hand against her breast. “Ma tu, che fai?!” she said, speaking Italian and English all at once. “Io sono Giulia! Io sono Giulia!” She placed her hand on the tearful face. “Giulia, Io sono Giulia! And you? What’s your name?!” Giulia looked around at the crowd. “Excuse me! Are you Hungarian?” “No, sono d’Italia! ’And you? Are you Hungarian!” “Sorry? I’m French.” “Puhases, with her, she can’t understand me!” “Sorry, I’m from Scotland.” “You?” “Sorry, sono italiana anch’io!” “Madam! We’re all Italians! Nobody is from here!” We scurried in search of a local, but the locals were all in a rush and continued along their ways. Giulia pulled out her passport and held it up before the young woman’s face “Giulia! Io sono Giulia!” She tapped her index finger against her chest. “And you? Who are you?!” The tearful face even more so than it was. “Edith! ” The girl, having thick, horn-rimmed glasses, a light down was visible on her upper lip, her face was irregularly spotted with acne, her cheeks bright red. She was dressed in an old gym suit, which perhaps had come from the Caritas organization. Perhaps she was a slightly retarded person who was housed in some sort of institution, or perhaps she lived with her parents at home. She looked startled, in spite of being overweight, exhausted, like someone who never got love and affection, if not by begging for it, or perhaps by subterfuge. “Tell me your name! Who are you?!” Giulia continued to alternate between tapping herself on the breast, and showing the girl her passport. “For that first your name! Giulia continued to alternate between tapping herself on the breast, and showing the girl her passport. At last! She finally reached down into the pocket of her jeans, pulled out a card, perhaps a monthly pass for the subway. “Edith? It’s Edith!” Her name is Edith! Edith! Tu sei Edith! Che bel nome! What a nice name! Edith!” Giulia’s joy seemed boundless. Giulia showed Edith a subway pass to all the people—the French, the Scots, the Germans and Italians—who had formed a circle around them. Edith began to laugh. She laughed and stirred the tears from her eyes, then tenderly locked her arm with Giulia’s, and along with all the rest of us they left the bridge.
TO THINK OR NOT TO THINK

Jalal Toufic
Istanbul
Turkey

Dedicated to Riad-al-Turk and the Charlie Meadows of Joel and Ethan Coen's Barton Fink

A

though ‘whatever way you turn you have not even started thinking’

thought-provoking. ‘What I shall do if I am called to think, I do not know. I do not

Goes on; that, as Artaud and Heldeuze tell us, we are not still

not think in a diamonanced manner!’ At Turk continues: ‘I don’t recall the second factor—oh, yes: it is time. When you are in prison, career, time soon longs for that natural… In

prison, you are in a still life, a world where you see daily only two or three moments in

your cell. The morning movement: they knock at your door, open it, give you the food. The second movement: they take you to the toilet, and then bring you back (to your cell).

This is what happens in the morning. At noon you see the same two movements and in the evening you have the same two movements. That’s all! Calk! it goes to

your toilet, taking the food and eating it, washing the plate and going back to the cell. All

takes two minute(s): plus ten minute(s); plus ten minute(s). That’s about thirty minutes.

This is your life. What is that, you are going to lie down and sleep? Any
depression amount to a contact with the outside world. Any degradation brings

to your obsession with, and the necessity of getting out… I didn’t allow myself to
depress—even of course as much as I could; I began to search here and there. I looked in the

comp and found tiny stone. I recalled the time in school, when I was inclined to do so; I was lucky to have a double short; I found in it another solitary confinement cell: a week

A day was not enough to draw this large picture… At that time, I used to hope that they

wouldn’t bring the lunch, because that meant that I had no excuse to have space for food. I had to construct everything again: ‘it’s like this guy with the neck—Sophocles’

not? You know; in that situation, I finally arrived to that point.

I was called by Riad-al-Turk: deliberately not thinking (not thinking at all)
doing up to now, such as I had for a journalist who made this documentary, who continued

not thinking, not thinking… a monk asked him, ‘What are you thinking of, sitting there so fixedly?’ Turke replied, ‘If you think, I shall think…’ I shall not think too much, I shall

not think too much, not thinking… or not thinking at all. I think thinking, our task is to think… or to assume fully and deliberately not thinking. The Syrian

A

provoking.”2 Given that, as both Artaud and Heidegger tell us, we are still not

Thinking is ‘what leads to thought [Jeunesse];… [thought is] ’what leads to thought

in a normal manner); it is all the more fitting for an Arab as well as for someone who hails from other

Arabs as well as others who belong to “Underdeveloped” regions should undo this division of labor. Set against

fail to think what is thought-provoking, leaving it others in the “Developed” regions of the world to think it.


In the last 100 years, the concept of “social thought” has been increasingly

in the 1996-1999, and 2002, I am interested in series of objects that appear

in the last section of Joana Hadjithomas and Khalil Joreige’s documentary

Dead Weight of a Quarrel Hangs

The Gateless Gate

except if we are forced to do so (thus the many Zen examples of this forcing not to “think.”

Among the dead”? Drawing on Proust and others, Deleuze indicated in his rectification

I would rather be a political prisoner and be in a two square meters dark solitary

confinement (as well as with my untimely collaborators among past and future thinkers).

With rare exceptions, the Lebanese in Arabic and general don’t even know how

to think in an unconscious manner); a clear, conscious attempt of a man not to think is

happens to be living, i.e. about what gives food for thought, about what is thought-provoking, is itself

Arts: Poetry, Philosophy, Human Rights

to think or not to think

jury, “I do not have time to think” answered with Marguerite Duras’ written response in Godard’s

Slow Motion

in 1996-1999, and

Jalal Toufic,

Cousin

Miraculous Beginnings

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How is it that I’m still standing on this earth? Where is the brevity of life that poets have written about with such regret? All I’ve ever seen is a long unending tunnel of perpetually repeating things like cars in traffic despite the threat of gas shortages. Maybe all that changes in this petrified world are the dates of life appearance that recede as researchers advance in the belly of austral rocks. Dumb pretentious stromatolites! When our own individual trace of life happily disappears once we’ve crossed the threshold of the house, they pointlessly retain the memory of their birth two billion years ago. They resemble in this regard the vast traffic that is our absurd cosmos. This prospect of memorable stones leaves me cold. What interest is all this nonsense that’s supposed to keep us spellbound, if the sequence of our lives is entirely contained in the fossil we’ll leave behind? Why do we insist on wanting to be appealing or on wanting to learn?

This morning I heard a voice on the radio that I used to know. It could have issued from a stone or a bone, because its words were addressed as much to researcher thousands of years hence as to me. The particular tone of the voice reminded me of the aimless conversations that we used to have in the twilight of our adolescence. We didn’t have as many words at the time and we could even do without them for certain exchanges when mere murmuring sufficed to nurture our dialogue. By and large, we scarcely used more than a tenth of our vocabulary, and what we did use was basically limited to prepositions and conjunctions, flying and skimming like flat stones across the surface of our deep ignorance, much to our great delight. I remember a whole night spent going from with to in, then from in to to, then from to of, amongst others, to end with a thunderous with. This dialogue was endlessly repetitive and in infinite volumes of air… If I can still faithfully recall the prepositions of those days, on the other hand, I hardly remember any of the objects, verbs, or subject that cluttered my days in later years when my ambition to learn and to appeal, precisely recklessly propelled my speech and thought.

In those days, I was out to enrich my vocabulary and make my language scintillate like a shimmering pendant, brandished to attract the naive and the lost. My brain thought it was connected to the crowds by words. Between vacancy and clairvoyancy, I bombarded viewers dazzled by my light effects with stanzas of chaos, I slashed riffs bleeding darkness, and I belched out storms in mad pipes… Scandinavian saga! After the mayhem, the masters lashed back with the inevitable backlash! And I was hardly beaten! Will the true story of this new century be the story, as always, of hidden masters?

Old words with epileptic overtones now slip though my fingers like sand. There is no more of the crowds by words. Between vacancy and clairvoyancy, I bombarde viewers dazzled by my light effects with a status of chaos. I darkened with bleeding darkness, and I belched out storms in mad pipes… Scandinavian saga! After the mayhem, the masters lashed back with the inevitable backlash! And I was hardly beaten! Will the true story of this new century be the story, as always, of hidden masters?

To be continued…

A conversation with Fatemeh Valiani* by Babak Afrassiabi and Nasrin Tabatabai

The first part of this conversation was published in Issue 03 of the Museion Journal.

P: In the last ten years we have witnessed a great increase in the number of new words introduced into Farsi. Certain translation has had something to do with this. The translation and introduction of new terminologies also brings about the introduction of new concepts. Concepts are not always applicable to new and different contexts, and may undergo or be interpreted when transplanted into other circumstances, and this in itself is another process of translation. How does all of this affect the Farsi language, the intellectual discourse that takes place in it, and the work of the translator in Iran?

FV: Creating new words and introducing them into the Persian language has been going on for more than the last decade. Of course, the absence of correct and suitable terminology is profoundly experienced during the act of translation. And it is the task of translation to reveal this absence and to try to do something with it by coining new terms. I think this is what distinguishes translation, properly speaking, from just repeating the content of a discourse in another language. With respect to scientific and intellectual terminology the Persian language is in fact quite disadvantaged. And I am not sure that the introduction of new terms can offer tools that present themselves as indispensable for the production of intellectual discourse. It also greatly facilitates the work of the translator. Words are not just a combination of tropological translation: it is a signifier that reveals a perspective, a point of view, a manner of perceiving and understanding the world. In effect, words, there is always a concept behind a word or syntactical structure. For example, in English or in Persian, you express regret for a past action by saying, “I am sorry.” In French, however, “you become the regretter” (I am sorry), and “I am sorry” is a predicate in French, which literally means “the other” in French. You might refer to a friend with the word “l’ami,” in the sense of a friend, but in the sense of a friend whom you love. You might refer to your father as “le papa,” and again by the verb “declare” (to say), but you might refer to a father as “the other” (you might say “the other is the father,” which I do not like at all) for the term “discourse,” what will we do for the derivative term “discursive”? It is as if the word “discourse” in English is equivalent to “logic.” Another interesting example is the word “hypothesis.” In the ancient period, we see that they didn’t always refer to creating new words, and concentrated instead on introducing and appropriating the terms. For example, (1) the Greek word philosophos was modeled by *hypothes* (an Arab adaptation of the original Greek) and (2) the Greek word *logos* and the Latin word *ratio* (which here is the philosophy of Descartes) might be instructive for Iranian readers, and philosophers who’re notorious for their critique of metaphysics and classical Western philosophy at the same time appreciate it, and recognize it as the source of their major disappointment. I think it is not only the rich tradition of the Greek word “philosophos” but also the French philosophy of René Descartes which is the source of this terminology. I found it interesting to see how another French philosopher criticizes it, and how the French philosophers who’re notorious for their critique of metaphysics and classical Western philosophy at the same time appreciate it, and recognize it as the source of their major disappointment.

F: When one appropriates something foreign, one does more than to integrate it into one’s vocabulary: one expands the space of the point of one’s life. We can say the same thing about translation. That is, it introduces into the new space. In the case of Iran, we have seen that many things that cannot be said openly are said through translated texts, and especially by way of critical or political texts. At this level one can say that translation is a space of creativity and productivity. Through someone else’s tongue.

FV: Yes, there are ways in which translation is indeed a space of creativity. It is interesting that foreign language always permit a kind of transgression. You can pronounce words in a foreign tongue that you would never permit yourself to say in your own language. Perhaps by the same logic, through translation—or through someone else’s tongue, as you yourself have put it—you can talk about subjects which your own culture repress. I think we can say that translation is a space of liberation. From historical constraints (and history is more than a question of current politics). I believe that in the case of societies like Iran, translation can be positive and productive, paradoxically, by virtue of its negative aspect. More than presenting itself as a space of dialogue, negotiation and understanding, it points out absurdities, gaps, guilt and alysses. And that is what makes it potentially—and both subversive and productive.

F: What are you working on at the moment? Maybe you can tell us why you have chosen to translate a particular text, what interests you about it, and why you think it may useful to Iranian readers.

FV: I’ve just finished the translation of Jacques Derrida’s long essay, “Cogito et aliter de la folie” which deals, as the title indicates, with the famous work by Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization*. This article will appear in a book that also includes the translation of Foucault’s reply, which was published some years later as an appendix to his book. As I had already translated *Histoire de la folie,* I found it interesting to see how another French philosopher criticizes it, and how these philosophers who’re notorious for their critique of metaphysics and classical Western philosophy at the same time appreciate it, and recognize it as the source of their major disappointment. So, I think the critical slant of the work, along with its negativity, are particularly attractive to a Persian audience, and especially for younger people.

There is also the English language of philosophers such as Derrida can be said somehow to hold a condensation of the whole modern philosophical movement, and human readers might use it as a kind of means by which he sees the gap has already mentioned. Of course, this aspect of each work also makes them extremely difficult to translate, and at times almost untranslatable. But that can also be another important motivation for a translator: to experience the limits of his or her work. In any case, you can see my work precisely within the field that I criticize so rigorously.

This conversation took place via email in January 2008.

*Fatemeh Valiani is a translator based in Tehran. Her Persian translations of texts in the fields of philosophy and intellectual discourse that take place in it, and the work of the translator in Iran?"
Since when have there been ways back
all ways back before cinema
are there ways back in the life of a back

Since when have there been ways to
all snow lines

Visiting the White House means following a series of procedures that differ according to the visit’s nationality. The rules for entering the building are part of the various security measures which were put into place after September 11, 2001, and which have visibly reprogrammed the urban space of Washington, D.C.

For U.S. citizens, tours must be booked up to six months in advance, and requests must be made by way of a Member of Congress (a Representative or Senator) who acts as intermediary, and it’s generally a question of the Representatives of the visitor’s electoral district. For those who are not U.S. citizens, requests must be made through their nation’s embassy in Washington, and there’s no particular requirement on just how far in advance. Visitors can also be screened through electronic channels, connected to numerous international organisations that have their headquarters in Washington. Our appointment is only three days away, and our group consists of these foreigners and one U.S. citizen.

We were scheduled to present ourselves at 7:45 in the morning at one of the entrances to the park that surrounds the White House. The instructions were generic, the south-west gate, which has no street address, no street name. Walking in the direction of the White House through one of the parking areas, which is circled by portable barriers in such a way that no one can enter or leave the zone, a accredited badge, a wristband bearing the name, but you know you’ve reached your destination when you find a green-and-white tent that houses the Visitor Center Building, which is a structure added on to the ground floor of the White House. A small number of visitors are standing with U.S. passports in their hands. The folders were supplied by the front range of the gate, and they explain the history and contents of each of the rooms, or at least of the areas which are open to the public, eight in all, and all on the ground floor and the second floor. There are also quite a few people standing around at final positions, all of them armed in uniforms and with a cable descending from one of their ears. None of the rooms on the ground floor (the Library, the Vermeil Room, the China Room) can be entered, all you can do is to view their interior from behind the velvet rope that hangs across their doorways.

I had looked in for a composition of all the presidential objects. This miscellaneous collection constitutes the contents of what’s known as the Visitor Center Building, which is a structure added on to the ground floor of the White House. A small number of visitors are standing with U.S. passports in their hands. The folders were supplied by the front range of the gate, and they explain the history and contents of each of the rooms, or at least of the areas which are open to the public, eight in all, and all on the ground floor and the second floor. There are also quite a few people standing around at final positions, all of them armed in uniforms and with a cable descending from one of their ears. None of the rooms on the ground floor (the Library, the Vermeil Room, the China Room) can be entered, all you can do is to view their interior from behind the velvet rope that hangs across their doorways.

We pass beneath an Ionian archway and a composition of all the presidential objects. This miscellaneous collection constitutes the contents of what’s known as the Visitor Center Building, which is a structure added on to the ground floor of the White House. A small number of visitors are standing with U.S. passports in their hands. The folders were supplied by the front range of the gate, and they explain the history and contents of each of the rooms, or at least of the areas which are open to the public, eight in all, and all on the ground floor and the second floor. There are also quite a few people standing around at final positions, all of them armed in uniforms and with a cable descending from one of their ears. None of the rooms on the ground floor (the Library, the Vermeil Room, the China Room) can be entered, all you can do is to view their interior from behind the velvet rope that hangs across their doorways.

There are various areas of rooms where special electronic devices create a disturbance in any signals for security reasons. (In the vicinity, for example, of the focussed-areas of rooms which house the residence of the Vice President, and which belongs to the U.S. Navy.) Even you’ve just past the forest ranger (and he might, in fact, have been an ex-finance for the Secret Service or for the FBI), he’s also an ex-cop, once you come over the iron fence holds a sign that shows a signal. There are various areas of rooms where special electronic devices create a disturbance in any signals for security reasons. (In the vicinity, for example, of the focussed-areas of rooms which house the residence of the Vice President, and which belongs to the U.S. Navy.) Even you’ve just past the forest ranger (and he might, in fact, have been an ex-finance for the Secret Service or for the FBI), he’s also an ex-cop, once you come over the iron fence holds a sign that shows a signal. There are various areas of rooms where special electronic devices create a disturbance in any signals for security reasons. (In the vicinity, for example, of the focussed-areas of rooms which house the residence of the Vice President, and which belongs to the U.S. Navy.) Even you’ve just past the forest ranger (and he might, in fact, have been an ex-finance for the Secret Service or for the FBI), he’s also an ex-cop, once you come over the iron fence holds a sign that shows a signal. There are various areas of rooms where special electronic devices create a disturbance in any signals for security reasons. (In the vicinity, for example, of the focussed-areas of rooms which house the residence of the Vice President, and which belongs to the U.S. Navy.) Even you’ve just past the forest ranger (and he might, in fact, have been an ex-finance for the Secret Service or for the FBI), he’s also an ex-cop, once you come over the iron fence holds a sign that shows a signal. There are various areas of rooms where special electronic devices create a disturbance in any signals for security reasons. (In the vicinity, for example, of the focussed-areas of rooms which house the residence of the Vice President, and which belongs to the U.S. Navy.) Even you’ve just past the forest ranger (and he might, in fact, have been an ex-finance for the Secret Service or for the FBI), he’s also an ex-cop, once you come over the iron fence holds a sign that shows a signal. There are various areas of rooms where special electronic devices create a disturbance in any signals for security reasons. (In the vicinity, for example, of the focussed-areas of rooms which house the residence of the Vice President, and which belongs to the U.S. Navy.) Even you’ve just past the forest ranger (and he might, in fact, have been an ex-finance for the Secret Service or for the FBI), he’s also an ex-cop, once you come over the iron fence holds a sign that shows a signal. There are various areas of rooms where special electronic devices create a disturbance in any signals for security reasons. (In the vicinity, for example, of the focussed-areas of rooms which house the residence of the Vice President, and which belongs to the U.S. Navy.) Even you’ve just past the forest ranger (and he might, in fact, have been an ex-finance for the Secret Service or for the FBI), he’s also an ex-cop, once you come over the iron fence holds a sign that shows a signal. There are various areas of rooms where special electronic devices create a disturbance in any signals for security reasons. (In the vicinity, for example, of the focussed-areas of rooms which house the residence of the Vice President, and which belongs to the U.S. Navy.) Even you’ve just past the forest ranger (and he might, in fact, have been an ex-finance for the Secret Service or for the FBI), he’s also an ex-cop, once you come over the iron fence holds a sign that shows a signal. There are various areas of rooms where special electronic devices create a disturbance in any signals for security reasons. (In the vicinity, for example, of the focussed-areas of rooms which house the residence of the Vice President, and which belongs to the U.S. Navy.) Even you’ve just past the forest ranger (and he might, in fact, have been an ex-finance for the Secret Service or for the FBI).
When Communicating to Constituents

Be clear, direct and honest. If possible, be reassuring.
Remember that you may be dealing with people who are very anxious and afraid.