

THE HERALD



SPRING ISSUE 2022

A close-up photograph of a person's hands writing on a red notebook. The person is holding a red pen and writing on a white sheet of paper that is placed on top of the red notebook. The background is dark and out of focus.

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EDITOR'S NOTE



The Herald is back. But it's not the same one we know. One could say the Herald is something different now, and that would partly be true. However, in actuality, it discovered and established an identity. An identity of self-expression through poetry, photography, comedy, giving, and writing. It is not only a collection of words like before but a culmination of the different aspects of our interests and activities. This semester, the Herald reestablished a piece of its former self, the Spectra series, which was once the exclusive poetry and literature section that eventually everyone forgot about; till today. Furthermore, what was a once-per-semester magazine is now a beacon of self-expression for all students, as it should have been. The herald throughout this semester was actively engaged in creating mediums of exchange between students, that is through the comedy and poetry events, the charity book drive, international language week etc.

We are excited to present you with the 2022 spring issue. We know it's not as long as other issues, but it's important to know Murphy's third law; everything takes longer than you think it will, and the problem with discovery is that you cannot discover everything at once. It takes time to know yourself, and by the Fall semester, we hope to offer you more. In the meantime, please enjoy the magazine listen to our selection of music (click/scan the QR codes), and see you next semester.

Andrea Khatchadourian
Chairman and Editor in Chief

Books, Humans, and Coffee: Your Uncommon Guide to the City



Life is a journey we are given to ride. Sometimes, it may get bumpy and chaotic necessitating a need to find a bit of tranquility to have some balance. This could change according to different people, but on some occasions getting lost in the presence of books may be the way to that balance. To taste the different flavors of the peace of books around Beirut, I visited the following public libraries to borrow some books and some bookshops to buy some others.

Beirut's Public libraries:

1.Assabil Libraries:

Assabil libraries are a bookish breath of air in Beirut. Assabil NGO was commissioned by the Municipality of Beirut to operate public libraries in the city. Accordingly, Assabil's three operating libraries in Bachoura, Monnot, and Geitawi provide free escapes for the community to gain knowledge and information. In fact, these libraries offer a collection of approximately 50,000 books to serve all tastes and needs along with a wide range of free resources. Users can apply for a free library membership that gives them access to an online account where they can create lists of available books they want to read or check their reading history. In the libraries, they can borrow up to 4 books for 4 weeks, enjoy the peaceful space to read or use a free computer and internet access. To ensure cultural exchange in an informative space, Assabil hosts cultural and children's activities, book clubs, sessions, and workshops for anyone to join.

Assabil created an identity for each of its libraries. In Bachoura, the library's design is modern and minimal. The natural light creeping from the windows gives one enough peace to delve into the depths of a book without any distractions. As for Monnot, it is located on one of the peaceful streets of Ashrafieh. Midst the quietness of the place, one can not but feel the warmth and coziness of the place that creates a comfortable ambiance as if one is at home. However, the Geitawi library stands out the most among the other two as it resembles a treehouse hidden in the city jungle. It is located in the Jesuit gardens in Geitawi which gorgeously conceals the library making finding it like a treasure hunt. It effortlessly combines two elements of life: nature and books. While one can feel the vibrant life of the garden, it is easy to find harmony with the winds of information found in the pages of a book. In a world invaded by chaos, Assabil is a haven for readers who want to find their peace.

2.U-turn Hamra:

A lot of time has been wasted before knowing about this place... It is relatively easy to find as it is located near AUMBC in Hamra making it accessible. The library's main goal is to provide for the community. Based on that, it provides books for borrowing and allocates the proceedings to help the orphans and those in need. The money is collected from their minimal registration fees or stationary sold inside their premises.

At first sight, one might think that this library only provides for children, yet further inspection shows that it also delivers books of fiction, novels, self-help, and spirituality to adults as well. The library is used on a self-service system based on the trust between it and the readers. This comes from the firm belief that a reader would appreciate the gift he has on hand and, therefore, would not steal it. After the user's first visit to the library to fill out a registration form, he can start choosing up to 5 books that can be borrowed up for a month upon filling out the provided card.



Books, Humans, and Coffee: Your Uncommon Guide to the City



1. Antoine Bookstores:

I heard from many friends that Antoine seems a bit formal and lacks some coziness. They would go there just to purchase the books they need but not to spend quality time. What most of them may forget is that Antoine was one of the first bookshops to open in the city back in **1933**. Since then, it has been working on enforcing an intellectual drive in a cultural experience for the community. Beyond providing books, Antoine has been offering space for the community to gather around their book-reading and discussion activities and for local authors to publish their work. Its care for the community is reflected in supporting its 250 employees, one of Antoine's top priorities, during this crisis whereas other businesses chose to lay them off. Remarkably, Antoine is one of the few bookshops that have several branches across the city. Each branch has its own identity and hosts a different atmosphere offering options to readers based on their personal liking. This approach accommodates everyone's taste which serves in building the loyal community of readers Antoine aspires to nurture and strengthen.



2. Halabi Bookshop:

Halabi hits home for me. I go way back with this place. Halabi's originally started in Kaskas as a grocery shop back in 1958 where Ammo Abdallah would help his father. He then used the shop to store his book collection in the early 1990s which completely filled the place by the early 2000s. His collection of books made the shop inaccessible except for the newspapers he hung between the trees in front of the shop. A few years back, these accumulated books were removed and the shop was open. Ammo Abdallah warmly welcomes visitors inside and offers candy like the ones grandma would hand in during the holidays. He sends a wave of nostalgia just while standing at the entrance. He explains to the visitors that Lana, his daughter, took the responsibility of renovating the family business and opening it back to the public. She took care of maintaining the shop's 1960s identity and bringing nostalgia from that golden era of the country. One might think that they have seen every corner of the bookshop until they take another look and lose themselves between the old and the new. If they find themselves a companion, they would spontaneously get immersed in one of the coziest corners of the library.

Today, despite the difficult circumstances and the unstable dollar rate, the bookshop is still working to provide readers with old, used, and new books from local publishers or from abroad to their readers in the three languages. They are hoping to continue the cultural activities that they host in the bookshop once the situation allows.



Books, Humans, and Coffee: Your Uncommon Guide to the City



3. Aaliya's Books:

I've heard about Aaliya's for a while without having a chance to visit it until recently. Aaliya's can be found in a quiet alleyway towards the end of Gemmayzeh street. It warms the heart to see every corner spread with the 2000s details, an era many may be familiar with. This book café provides both new and second-hand books in the English language serving a wide collection for every taste. Aaliya's system is unique as it has a website on which readers can choose the books they would like to reserve or offer their old books to be added to the collection. Besides that, there is a book exchange area found at the entrance which gives the opportunity for cultural exchange between readers and an exciting way to expand their palate.

In its efforts to bring readers together, Aaliya's host book club meetings* to read and discuss a selected book in an interactive atmosphere. Non-readers also have a chance to enjoy this book-café as it hosts events* ranging from jazz nights, open mic for poetry and songs, and discussions. This makes Aaliya's hosting space for everyone.

*Book club meetings and events hosted by Aaliya's are announced on their Instagram page.

4. Dar-Annahar:

This one is a hidden gem that even a sharp-eyed person may miss. Dar Annahar is located after Banque Du Liban in a small shop hidden under the trees and next to the traffic of Hamra Street. As the name suggests, it is mainly a publishing house with its own bookshop owned by Annahar specializing in books on history, politics, economics, and memoirs available in the three languages. What made it stand out among other bookshops is its dedication to spreading the gift of reading to all which is why it sells new books for an affordable price. The dollar rate in the shop, until May 2022 at least, is still 7,000 LBP per dollar catering to interested readers on a budget with their wide selection.



5. Barzakh Space:

I recall reading books that visit Hamra before the Lebanese civil war. Authors describe it as a center for intellectuals to meet and grow their ideas. Back then, passengers would pass by the smell of coffee and ideas being shared here and there. Barzakh above Rossa Café in Hamra is one of the few places that conserve this concept. Between books, coffee, and chats exchanged from every corner, one can only feel a transition back to the 1600s era with the traces of old posters, newspapers, wired phones, and antique couches and chairs. Besides the vintage atmosphere, Barzakh has a unique harvest of used books. It is easy to lose track of time indulging in the rich shelves they have. Even though some of the books are only for archive purposes, a wealth of other books is available for sale or reading. While many people seek the place as an escape to finish their work, many others seek this café to grow their thoughts with some of their friends. It is common to hear matters of politics, economy, society, and some stories circulating around. When silence starts invading the place, the space hosts events ranging between book launches, discussions, and musical and artistic nights to join people back together.

On a journey to taste some peace, I got the opportunity to dissociate from reality in the world of books while also meeting the resilient leaders behind each place. Different people, different backgrounds, and different ideas agreed on one thing: a physical book is magical as it speaks to each one from the shelf as a reminder of its presence as support whenever an escape is needed.

Dania Al Boukhari



Not so public anymore

We may not be aware of it, but public space is an important factor that affects the quality of our lives; it helps shape the communities and cities we live in. A well-designed and accommodating public space provides an attractive area for people to come together, engage, socialize, and communicate with one another. It helps people connect with the city they live in; engage in different activities, enjoy the streets and the architecture of the city, and create an intimate connection with the urban environment people call their ‘hometown’.

Badly designed public space in my opinion can be described as ‘abusive’. It compromises our wellbeing, as well as poses a real danger of death and injury to public safety. Our ability to move freely and uninterrupted from one area to another greatly impacts our physical and mental well-being in positive ways. If the space meant to be used to walk and/or move in-between areas are not smooth and easy, it may leave a negative imprint on our physical and mental health.

In Lebanon, public space is abhorrent. It is annoying at best and outright dangerous at worst. The lack of organized and cohesive urban planning in Beirut that safely and efficiently prioritizes public space only adds obstacles to the inhabitants of the city. Roadways and cars take up a big chunk of space, while illegally licensed buildings are regularly built on public space that blocks and prevents people from their ability and their right to make use and utilize their space in ways that serve the public.

The lack of respect for public space in Beirut makes the city less walkable and pleasurable. Ironically, even the sidewalk itself, which is supposed to be the safest space for pedestrians to walk on, is broken, inconsistent, and blocked by many different (and illegally placed) obstacles.

You could be walking on the sidewalk and an obstacle (car, motorbike, chairs, etc.) completely blocks your way, forcing you to circumvent the obstacle by walking on the road, which most of the time is packed with racing motorists with little to no regards to road and pedestrian safety. Moreover, it prevents people from enjoying their city optimally due to the difficulty in seeing new and different perspectives when it comes to looking around their city.





How much have we compromised or given up on our right to free and safe movement of vehicles and motorists? The car provides people with the easiest and most convenient way of transportation in Lebanon, yet this comes at the expense of a safe, well-designed, and attractive public space, with negative consequences to the public environment and space. It is important to remind ourselves that it is possible to change the toxic cultural aspects we have in our society and create the opportunity towards altering and redesigning our space and streets to one where it actually warrants calling it a ‘public’ space. It’s important to refer to cities around the world that have pioneered in creating an optimal public space, to learn from their failures and emulate their successes. Other cities have done it, we can too.

Many cities around the world, especially in Europe, have been moving away from an urban design of their cities that privileges cars to one that provides a healthy balance between vehicular transportation, public transportation, and walkable pedestrian areas. Hypothetically speaking, popular commercial, cultural, and historic streets in Beirut could be completely pedestrianized. Popular streets like Armenia in Mar-Mikhael, Gouraud in Gemmayze, and backstreets of Hamra’s can be cordoned off for cars and pedestrianized. This would make it easier for people to walk around as well as to create an environment where people are less detached from one another and more probable to engage, bond, and socialize.

Armen Simonian



How is the War in Ukraine Affecting Lebanon in Terms of Trade?



With the current war between Russia and Ukraine, Lebanon is one of those countries that are significantly affected by this conflict.

The internal economic problems that Lebanon has been struggling with over the years complicate and further deepen the damages caused by this war especially when it comes to supply shortages in wheat, oil, and gas.

“In terms of wheat, Lebanon depends on importing wheat up to 60% from Ukraine. The current state of war in Ukraine has limited the supply of this commodity. This situation has pushed prices higher in Lebanon.” Said Mr. Garabed Boghossian, a professor in the Faculty of Business Administration and Economics at Haigazian University.

As for oil and gas, “Russia is seen as a key state in terms of exporting both oil and gas to countries all around the world. But the latest sanctions have caused a supply shock leading to rising prices of them for Europe and the whole world.” Said Mr. Boghossian.

Why is Lebanon's economic system so fragile?

By taking these circumstances into consideration, it's quite normal for us to witness the rise of fear among the Lebanese people about what might occur next in the future. In terms of its economic system, Lebanon is recognized as a competitive state with a laissez-faire policy approach when dealing with other countries. Its main sources of income have always relied on both banking and tourism. However, due to the lack of proper internal governance, Lebanon endured many drastic setbacks which damages its economic system tremendously.

“Unfortunately, the Lebanese state has not developed a precautionary and anticipatory plan or policy to overcome future adverse economic conditions, our attitude is just reactionary to these obstacles. For this reason, it is not ready to sustain the problems of the war in Ukraine.” Mr. Boghossian commented.

In fact, one of the reasons why foreign conflicts always tend to further damage Lebanon's internal status is due to the reason that Lebanon doesn't consume what it produces. According to Blom Invest Bank, Lebanon's total imported goods have been estimated to be around 20.6% in January 2021, which strongly explains the decay of Lebanon's purchasing power.

“Our biggest issue is that we consume what is imported, but given the increasing prices in foreign countries, due to this war, Lebanon must pay more in hard currencies for commodities that face higher demand, which is, of course, seen as a problem.” Said Mr. Boghossian.

Since these foreign conflicts usually affect countries like Lebanon economically, the question remains on what Lebanon can do, in this case, to strategically come up with new ways to enhance its economy.

“As long as we depend on others' production for our consumption, we will remain subject to adverse foreign conditions. Instead, the tendency towards self-sufficiency, as much as we can, is highly recommended.” Said Mr. Boghossian.

By being more self-sufficient, Lebanon can start taking more independent decisions for its own growth instead of being constantly at risk of dependency to the political agendas of foreign states.



How is the War in Ukraine Affecting Lebanon in Terms of Trade?



How can the Lebanese state adopt better strategies to strengthen its trade?

“One bold step is to have a temporary zero-balance of trade position where the state will allow imports to equal exports. Hard it might appear, but this will stop the outflow of hard currencies at the level of the balance of trade and encourage local industries to fill the supply gap. To note, here, the negativity of the balance of trade was one of the main factors to contribute to the negativity of the balance of payments of Lebanon.” Said Mr. Boghossian.

Furthermore, Mr. Boghossian indicated another strategic point which went like the following:

By increasing services within the field of infrastructure, Mr. Boghossian suggested that transforming both of the military airports located in Rayaq and Aakkar, into civil airports for, at least, regional aviation, would not only decrease pressure on the capital, Beirut, but it would simultaneously create both income and employment for the Lebanese society.

The net positive spillover effects of such a strategy will contribute to the development of the local economies of the two mentioned regions in terms of construction of residential, trading, and manufacturing areas leading to more employment opportunities, and increasing incomes. Lebanon would finally start the process of prospering internally.

“Why can’t the Lebanese government begin to build tunnels linking strategic areas on both sides of the western chain of mountains, for example, a tunnel which crosses through that geographic obstacle and links Hazmieh to Chtaura facilitating the reach to Beirut Seaport. Executing a project like this will save energy, time, and money for the flow of goods and passengers coming to or leaving Lebanon.” Said Mr. Boghossian.



How is the War in Ukraine Affecting Lebanon in Terms of Trade?



In this case, Armenia can be an interesting example to prove the efficiency of tunnels in terms of speeding up trade; where in order to increase their productivity the Armenian government built tunnels that facilitate the reach to Dilijan for passengers and the transport of goods.

“One of the most important elements that could be adopted for Lebanon’s recent economic situation is executing projects based on DBOT (Design, build, operate and transfer). If implemented, Lebanon can attract countries who are willing to invest in infrastructural projects and, thus, give a boost to the economy.” Mr. Boghossian revealed.

However, our society is still stuck in the past. Whereas regionally, for example, Arab Gulf countries evolved to modern and advanced stages in various aspects of their economies.

“Lebanon is urged to find a way to expand its GDP by executing such projects to create employment and increase income within the framework of reforms. Nowadays, Lebanon’s GDP has shrunk from \$51 billion to an estimate of \$18 billion.” Mr. Boghossian emphasized.

This strongly explains why the youth, amongst others, are leaving the country to seek work opportunities abroad consequently aggravating the brain drain.

“All of these obstacles can be heavily blamed on the incompetent and corrupt political class whose management of Lebanon’s resources was a failure. This fact explains the absence of trust of foreign governments in it.” Said Mr. Boghossian.

With all these factors mentioned, one could only speculate what could be a solution to help Lebanon overcome these internal gaps in order to brighten its path for a better future.

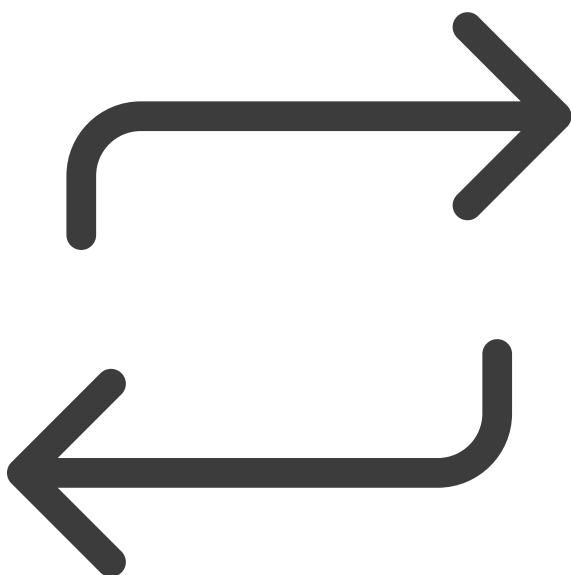
As a response to these complications, he provided three important elements in order to help Lebanon maintain a safer economic and political environment. First, Dr. Boghossian suggested that the Lebanese society should come forth with new and trustful candidates to run for the elections to push the country forward. In this case, the Lebanese youth is a strong possibility to help make that change take place.

Second, Dr. Boghossian stated the newly elected persons should come up with strategic plans for the revival effort and regain the trust in Lebanon. The aforementioned projects could be an example.

Finally, in terms of the banking system, Dr. Boghossian mentioned that the system should be restructured, possibly, through mergers and acquisitions. This step will regain the trust of the depositors in local banks.

It is only through these changes that Lebanon can internally make improvements and insulate Lebanon, up to a certain point, from the adverse repercussions of regional and international conflicts.

Jack Jizmejian





Different, yet similar. Look around. We are different, places around us are different, yet we seek to find similarities in various things. Opening our windows in the morning, to have that morning breeze touch our faces through our hair, to breathe the fresh air, to inhale, exhale, to get prepared for that day. We look at the streets, of how crowded they will get in just a matter of minutes, to think of those driving their cars, to create scenarios in our heads about them, of how different they are, yet similar. We go interact, we see people, diverse individuals, might all be at the same place, but wondering different thoughts. On the other side, you spot those two, making eye contact, smiling, hesitating to say a word, perhaps strolling through the same thoughts in their minds, but yet, hesitating to speak. At the same time, that old couple sitting in the coziest position, staring at each other with those sparkly eyes, those eyes where love lives, where everything stays as it is, where love does not grow old, where it only gets better, ages like a fine wine.



Similar, yet different. We view the same object and see different things, have different perspectives, we start wondering widely. Some come up with meaning to a piece and link it with joy and hope, while others click with the same piece from a different angle, linking it to a broken heart. Sometimes we express the same way, despite having words that can literally translate your thoughts in different ways, despite the huge variety of words in the dictionaries, we use the same words, we relate, sometimes with a twist, in one way or another, in a mesmerizing way. The beauty of expressing vividly, having an ear that listens, shares, with no judgments in return, the beauty of finding different human beings who are facing different circumstances, but finding correlations and turning those differences into similarities. Look at you, going through different challenges in life, having bright and colorful days, having dull and pale days, attracting different souls, different faces, different personalities, different stories, yet putting effort to find a thing in common. Look at you, embracing your differences as beauty in different forms, turning them into art, poetry, music, laughter, and tears. Look at you, at yourself, the human within you, the story your eyes tell, the jewelry you wear, every piece of you has a story. Are these differences even differences, or are they just some similarities in other forms?

We try to find common things, we declare beauty when we find them, yet nothing satisfies us, human beings, we figure out ways to be displeased. We find ways to let things go, and when differences are familiar to us, they confuse us, are we supposed to move on or accept and carry them with us? Move on, and every time you feel like you are losing hope, remember that there is so much to look forward to. Remember that love exists, that love will make an appearance from hidden places. Remember that there is goodness and kindness in this world, cause look at you. Look forward to getting lost, experiencing safety in new places, finding a home with people, loving, smiling, and feeling secure. Look at life, beauty is not rare, it is everywhere. Different, yet similar.

Alyag Momjian

4 Fantasy Book Series to Read This Summer



What's better than escaping reality for a couple of hours to enter a new world full of marvelous creatures and incredible adventures? This is what most of us feel when we watch a fantasy or Sci-Fi movie for the first time. The scenery, the amazing world-building, and the never-ending twists and turns keep us on edge and fill us with a sense of excitement whilst watching. I'm sure some of you have experienced this feeling. When the movie belongs to a movie franchise, this makes the experience even more enthralling because in this case, you get to binge-watch all the movies together.

Some of the most popular fantasy movies are based on books, such as Twilight, Lord of the Rings, Harry Potter, etc. They are all equally popular book series that were adapted into movies. Reading fantasy books is just as exciting as watching the movie adaptations, if not even more! It will allow you to step into your imagination and forget all that occurs in the real world as you flip through the pages. With each page, you read words that transform into an entirely new magical world. If you're a fan of fantasy movies, here's a list of 4 astounding book series you should give a try:

1. Harry Potter (7 books)

There's no better way to start the list without including one of the most popular and amazing book series. Harry Potter paved the way for other fantasy books to shine because of how unique it is. This fantasy series consists of 7 books and it follows 11-year-old Harry Potter as he discovers he is a wizard. The magic begins from here. You enter a world full of spells, wizards, smart and powerful creatures, along with unbreakable friendship bonds.



2. An Ember in The Ashes (4 books)

In this young adult fantasy story, we follow Laia as she struggles to escape the reigning empire while trying to save her brother who has been captured. We meet Elias, a Martial soldier who also wants to defy his duties and escape the empire. Their stories unite and create one hell of an adventure.

This series is full of brave characters who know how to stand up for their beliefs. It'll show what it's like being rebellious and sticking to a cause that you believe in. The world-building is phenomenal and unique. Additionally, it is very relatable to real-life events. Before reading the first chapter in the last book, you'll notice "For every child of war, whose story will never be told" written by the author. I find that some of the incidents and events in this series are relatable to what we witness. Enslaved and marginalized children suffering from the actions of merciless rulers.



4 Fantasy Book Series to Read This Summer



3. Shadow and Bone (3 books)

Shadow and Bone are set in a Soviet-like kingdom called Ravka. It follows Alina Starkov who's an orphan with hidden powers that she has not even discovered yet. They remain hidden until she enters the dark Unsea, or what is known as the Fold when she faces a flesh-eating creature called Volcra. She realizes she has the ability to emit sunlight just as she's trying to protect her best friend Mal. She is later put in the company of the Grisha, who are elite warriors depending on their powers to survive. Throughout the course of these events, she meets Grisha's leader, The Darkling, and her life is turned upside down.

I believe this series is perfect for readers who are not usually interested in the fantasy genre. It contains several elements that are likable and enjoyable such as the magic system and the world. The character development in this series is evident and strong. The main character starts off as this lost girl who doesn't know anything and then turns into a very strong woman who knows how to act and fight. The plot is also very captivating and interesting



4. A Court of Thorns and Roses (4 books)

This series is a magical realm of fairies and mortals. We follow Feyre, a 19-year-old huntress, whose survival depends on her hunting skills and what food she brings back home to her and her family. When Feyre kills a wolf, she later discovers that he was a fae as she is dragged into the magical kingdom of Prythian by Tamlin, the High Fae of the Spring Court. All her life, she has been taught to hate the Fae, but as she tries to adjust to her new life in their home, she discovers the reality of the ancient tales that were told over the decades. She is pulled into a world full of politics, murder, torture, and love. As you can see, there are some aspects of Beauty and The Beast sprinkled here and there.

Everything about it just intrigued me and kept me in awe. I was hooked right from the beginning because the plot has a strong start that will grasp you immediately. As much as I love world-building and how the author paints every aspect of the world, what made me fall in love with this series are the characters. They're strong, determined, and loyal.

Liliane Mohamad



The Impact of Trans-Generational Trauma in Lebanon



Throughout its history, Lebanon has been viewed as a country that has been plagued by many tragic events which eventually transformed into what is known as trans-generational trauma. When it comes to trans-generational trauma, it's important to state that the whole definition of trauma itself at a personal level has been disputed, since while we know what PTSD is, the boundaries of trauma have been quite challenging.

“A strong factor of Trans-generational trauma is collective trauma, which would be any catastrophic event that has been deemed by the larger group as something that creates some form of rupture within a group and harms it.” Stated Lucy Tavitian, who has a master's degree in Psychology from AUB.

One can trace back some of the roots of Lebanon's traumatic experiences as far as the dark years of the Lebanese civil war (1975-1990), not to mention the current economic and political crisis that has brought the country to its knees. Moreover, aside from these circumstances, the Beirut blast that took place on (August 4, 2020), is also strongly part of the narrative of how scarred the mental health of the Lebanese people has become.

“In terms of the consequences of these tragic events, what is observed currently among the native people, is an increased rate of substance abuse, alcoholism, and depression which has been strongly associated with the transgenerational impact of trauma that they've experienced.” She strongly pointed out.

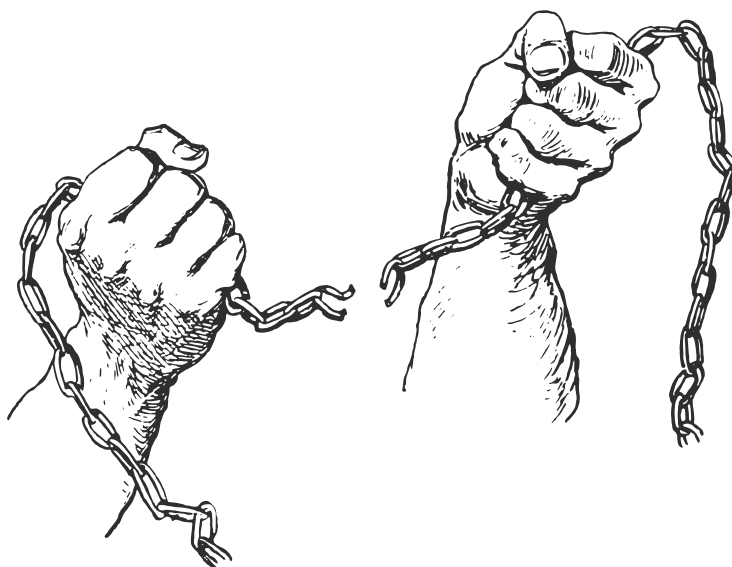
To this day, there is no clear research on what exactly is happening in Lebanon in terms of transgenerational trauma and as the days continue to pass the situation seems to undergo a darker path.

"What is very compelling in Lebanon is that the civil war can be qualified as the main trauma, but the interesting thing is that the narratives of civil war are not equal across the groups." She said.



This is mainly due to the reason that each political party has adopted its own narrative on what exactly happened with the intention of protecting its own political status for its own personal interests. For this reason, the source of the trauma is seen to be shifted within these groups.

“Currently these political parties are bringing back the images of the past and mobilizing people against it, in such a case it's a guarantee that emotions of fear, pain, and uncertainty will continue to rise, especially among the youth who feel lost on what the future holds for them.”



The Impact of Trans-Generational Trauma in Lebanon



With all of the current difficulties that the Lebanese society continues to endure, the strength needed to overcome the trauma of the past is strongly lacking.

“See, the problem is that there are layers of trauma that are inherited from generation to generation and interestingly we still seem to interpret almost every additional trauma through the lens of the trauma caused by the civil war.” She stated.

Communication in this sense can be seen as one of the important keys to overcoming these difficult challenges.

“it’s crucial for us to find the narrative in order to raise the awareness needed on how past collective trauma is creeping in on the way we interpret intergroup relations.” She said. Currently change within the political sphere is the main focus that Lebanon needs to invest its energy in order to help spark the possibility of change. “I really think recognizing how we interpret current situations and intergroup relations is a big step to healing our past wounds.” She said.

In order to further emphasize trans-generational trauma, Tavitian decided to use the case of the Armenian and Palestinian communities who have both encountered their own tragedies in the past.

“One of the major problems both of these communities have is not only their past trauma but the fact that their trauma continues to be unresolved, which brings in a lot of trust problems.” She said. “personally, I think that a healthy sense of exploration of your history and your mistakes is going to allow for an examination of your identity, rather than blindly following what you were indoctrinated into.” She later stated.



Constantly looking back into one’s past and perceiving events through the lens of victimhood isn’t going to allow us to move forward as a collective.

With the amount of trauma and complexity revolving around the Lebanese community, It’s quite uncertain whether there is a concrete solution to this matter or not. From Tavitian’s perspective, the future of Lebanon doesn’t look so bright.

“I wish I had an answer or a solution, but these are very frustrating times we are living in, and the more data and research we find, the clearer it will be to find a solution.” She stated.

Jack Jizmejian





I Decided to Draw my Path

A while back, I noticed that I wasn't myself anymore. Everything seemed unrecognizable. Things were trying to get back to the "normal" after 1.5 years of quarantine, but many things weren't familiar any longer. Getting out of a long time of isolation to find me in this situation made the situation too overwhelming that it got to me at one point. I hated being in a situation of falling into this loop of unfamiliarity. I had to find a solution to end this. I needed to hold a grip on some of the sanity I had left and let it come back. And so, I tried to draw a new path for myself...

All I knew was that I wanted a change, but I was clueless about where to start. I tried to find traces that would lead me to the start line of this blurry path. I began encountering fitness videos and advertisements, but these seemed hard to commit to especially after some previous fails. Though, the idea of physical activity started growing on me and opened my eyes to such opportunities. One day, I encountered an ad for a ladies' training program for five weeks to commit to running their first 10kms in the upcoming women's race which seemed very appealing. The program interested me so I chose to not allow any negative thoughts to grow and stop me. So I registered directly without giving it any second thought and having no expectations of how things will go. Again, I didn't want to think it too hard. My only goal was committing to the training to cross the finish line

On the first day of training, we ran 2km. I enjoyed it without finding it too difficult. At the end of this distance, I heard someone saying "If you ran 2kms today, then you're more than capable of running an extra 8kms to the finish line." I carried this with me throughout the training because I needed such a reminder when things get difficult.

The training plan increased the distance by 2kms every week. Sounds like nothing, right? But the actual run was brutal. It wasn't brutal because I couldn't run it, but rather because my thoughts needed further control than I anticipated. With every step, my thoughts would challenge me and question my purpose: Why are you doing this? Why do you need to run an extra kilometer this week? Why don't you stop already? Why, why, why...? And honestly? I didn't have any answers to these questions because I myself didn't know. I didn't know why I was doing this. I didn't know why I wanted to run an extra kilometer and cover more distance. I didn't know why my legs were moving and pushing me forward. My body was doing what it wanted, my thoughts were punishing me for it, and I was there with no control over either: it was a battle between the two as I stood as an observer. At some moments, I wanted my head to go on a snooze and be silent just until I finish. The weight of my thoughts was heavy to carry throughout the run. It was necessary to find a way to discard this weight temporarily until the run was over. I tried my best to think only about the steps I had to take to make it through. One after the other. One after the other. One after the other...



I Decided to Draw my Path



With this brief time of silence, I was able to tolerate my physical pain and carry it with me to the finish line. Ironically, all the injuries I got during these five weeks were on my knees. I could have allowed my thoughts to control me, but I didn't. I could have allowed my injuries to feed me with pain, but I chose to see them as insignificant obstacles. I could have allowed waking up so early in the morning to be unnecessary, but I chose the warmth of movement instead of the warmth of my bed. I could have allowed the storms to give me a chance to rest, but I decided to get wet under the rain. I took a decision and I was more than strict in being devoted to the goal even if I had no answer to the whys. I didn't want to quit because quitting is never an option. I went through it all until I reached the finish line. I arrived there having earned the entitlement to say "I did it despite it all."

Pushing these thoughts to the side opened some space to see beyond their limitations. I was able to enjoy the experience as a whole, especially the inspiring women I came across. They may not be achievers to the world, but they undoubtedly were for me. They had everything under control despite the difficulties and the responsibilities they had. They taught me what I needed to learn at the right time. The most important lesson they passed down to me was "slow and steady wins the race, fast runners lose the pace." This idea was foreign to me at first as I was hearing it after losing two years to quarantine. The race against the clock to finish "everything" before time runs out became a priority. It was a reminder that even though I am young, passionate, and excited, I should be cautious with my time while pausing some moments to enjoy the process as it goes. Billy Joel did not miss when he said "Slow down, you're doing fine. You can't be everything you want to be before your time."

So after the race, what's next? In the same way I didn't have the answers to why I was running, I don't have guarantees of what the future holds. Yet, whatever challenge is thrown at me, I shall train my thoughts to rest assured that I am capable of going through it, achieving it, and enjoying the process as I go.

In retrospect, I realize that the training was far more mental than physical. Discipline and commitment aren't only for physical training, but it is also for mental control. It is a strong reminder to train our thoughts to become the motivators that raise us up. To draw a path on which we run with ease, we should train ourselves to face our challenges and prioritize which ones can be pushed to the side of the road

Dania Al Boukhari



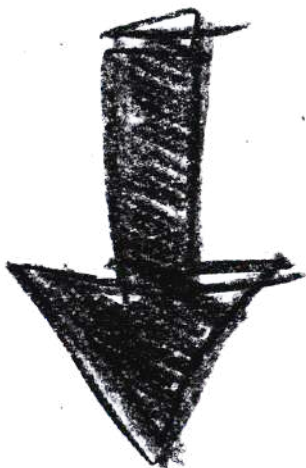
Every Student Needs Their Pandemic



The start of this year brought changes to the unpredictable and rapidly growing evolution the world has been witnessing in this era. Whether bringing positive possibilities such as the rise of the multiverse and cryptocurrencies or tense outcomes like the Ukrainian-Russian war nowadays, they all provide the table with a bargain. This, of course, introduces sacrifice in return varying in all types, forms, and states (dead or alive). Yet, this remains a topic for another discussion.

As Ernest Hemingway quotes: “Never write about a place until you’re away from it because that gives you perspective”. Each individual has a background and every situation has its origin(s). Digging through intangible elements can be as tricky as a search underground or through ancient ruins. You can never be certain if you’ll be met with gold, fossils, guidelines for enlightenment, or your own casket. One thing can be ensured, however: no matter how low the chances may be, there is always a possibility. It all depends on the place, the time, and the manner it is perceived, analyzed, then interpreted.

If we look back at the pandemic over the past 2 years, there are various experiences and points of view on it and its effects. It brought up discoveries, (more) conspiracies, debates, protests, tragedies, and the truth about the world we so claim to know and own. However, little did the masters know, or rather admit, that even rulers on the top of the hierarchy have an inner hierarchy within it. We can all fight on the basis of being in control of ourselves, being whom we want to be, or “doing what needs to be done” to fit into this society.



The answer, if one, relies partially on what you think of yourself and mostly on how you act based on such thoughts. If you find it easy to determine your strengths and needs, then I dare you to plan and apply a plan with a goal and objectives to work on improvement. There’s always a chance to learn as they say. Still, as lovely the idea may be, it isn’t quite the case when it comes to the practical part. Learning is difficult, a struggle. Is it only pain? Not really. Did you already know that? I’d be surprised if you didn’t. Is the reached outcome worth it? That is up to you to answer. And based on this, you would have indirectly opened the first reflective door.

It might be a bit difficult to determine what is exactly insinuated by such a topic, especially with the peculiar title that, hopefully, was the first thing you laid eyes on. Linking being a student to the introduction to an identity crisis before reaching mid-age isn’t farfetched. It can easily be relatable and even an unpleasant topic to the ones questioning themselves or who didn’t yet before reading this piece of writing. Yet, it remains a one-to-self discussion of utmost importance to maintain the statistical bar’s ability to defy gravity’s direction (from crashing down). The question remains: what progress is there to analyze? And what for?

Reflection and self-realization are fancy vocabulary words relating to both philosophy and psychology, but their application isn’t as easy as reading about them. The proper environment isn’t unique as it depends on each person. The only way to know the right environment(s) for oneself is by trying and experimenting till reaching self-doubt. Indeed, it isn’t a term commonly referred to with positive connotations but it can be, depending on how you use it. When mentioning self-doubt, I don’t mean insecurity nor constant worry or anxiety about others judgments.



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Allow me to portray this through my own experiences, in the hope I won't be getting verbal or physical comments in my way. Back to the pandemic scenario, same background, 4 walls, electronic devices, food, and whatever people keep near them, and same situation, lockdown and online learning.

Pretty sure we're all familiar with the linking of that experience as a heavenly one to introverted individuals and the opposite for extroverted ones. I used to be quite the introvert when I started my HU journey. Not many can remember my existence before Covid, even though I had always been a full-time, punctual, and studious student. However, I couldn't blame them for I wasn't social nor talkative. I would actually try to find the most deserted corners in the university and make my way like a rat, an educated one, through this "sewage system" respectfully.



Most people knowing me nowadays share an overall similar surprised reaction when hearing this story. The reason behind my case may or may not relate to prayers and/or a push from the medical field, depending on your personal beliefs. Yet, jokes aside, I used to suffer from severe mental health problems, among which I shall disclose social anxiety. Sparing you from a list of symptoms and my very interesting feelings on the matter, we can all agree it isn't a pretty case nor a simple fear of people's "discrete" looks and comments about attending a gala dinner event in the beach clothes. The imagery is for a specific purpose, not your opinion on the idea of fashion and occasions.

Now, how would someone go from pulling a Batman to a Mickey Mouse by staying at home with no social interactions?

See, in education, there's an approach called UDL (Universal Design for Learning) which is based on the belief that anyone can learn the same material if the barriers of learning are removed. In this case, it is the way and/or the location where things are taught, learned, and assessed. In my case, it was literally people present around me wherever I go outside. Getting through my courses and semesters behind a computer screen in a place I felt comfortable, changed my attitude. I participated frequently in class, shared my opinion, dared to disagree with someone's idea, and my performance in my academic work showed a huge difference. I became more self-aware of my abilities as well as my strengths, which motivated me to participate in extracurricular activities. It started with online work or out-of-university courses related to and unrelated to my career path, followed by volunteering experiences and getting into clubs and other initiatives coming my way. A storm had awoken with a curious outlook and a bolder structure.



Every Student Needs Their Pandemic

This energy and impulse are rooted in each individual and can be projected in different forms that portray the person's profile and what they can offer. Yet, such beauty doesn't come shipping free (don't pull out your credit cards). The key is to find oneself and by that, I mean one's own value and worth. There is no act or contribution that is too small or superior to another. Learning to appreciate what we do and comparing it to our younger/past selves instead of other people is the healthiest way to be what we aim to be

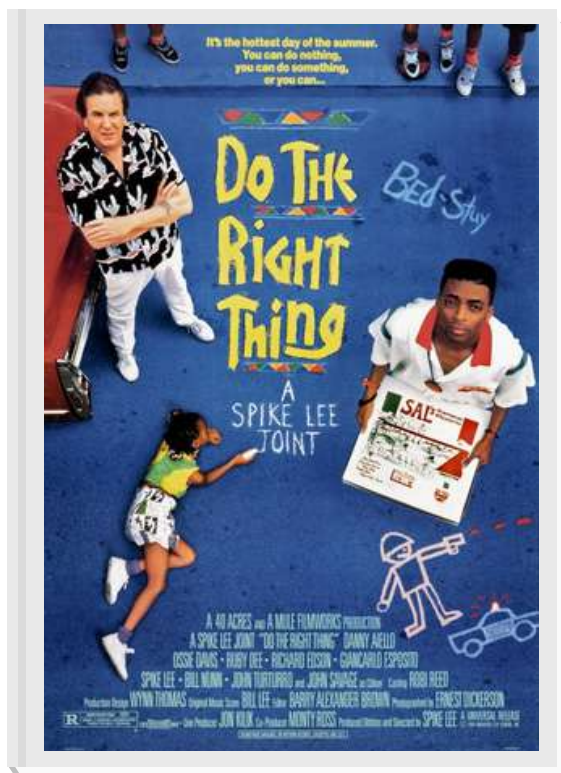
"We are who we are" is a representation of oneself in a way that invites new insights, challenging one's borders without crossing the stress zone, and being proud of where we reached so far since we started. I was even shocked yet glad to know that this "spiritual" experience wasn't foreign to others. As I mentioned my story to my social groups, I got testimonies with similar outcomes from our fellow peers Rama Mehanna and Issa Yassine, who encouraged me to write about this topic. The pandemic was, without a doubt, a horrible time in human history, especially in a developed country like Lebanon. But it is by looking at both positive and negative aspects, in different lenses that we outgrow such incidents and continue to improve as individuals.

There are different fences/challenges to face and they all lay behind one barrier, yourself. If you choose to remove it i.e reflect, admit, and criticize, you'd be ready to plan out for the next steps: finding yourself and keep on growing in your own preferred way and the environment with goals extending to a lifetime. Keep in mind that it isn't a process for a visa application. The road will be hard and exhausting at times, but the closer you get to each goal, the more you see what's truly behind the curtains of your stage. Be the director of your play and never fear asking for help. There's a line between dependency and seeking guidance.

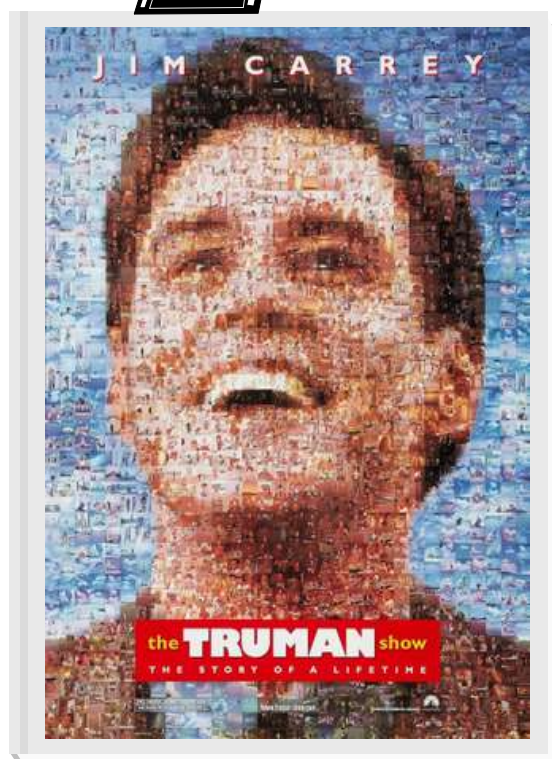
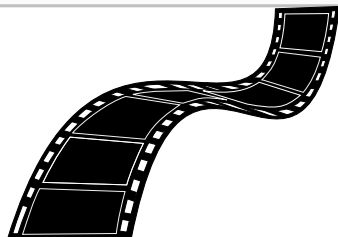
Lastly, I believe it is important to note that I did not reach my complete potential. It might seem like my experiences in this context had a positive result but it doesn't mean an ending to the journey. You can never fully shape yourself. We keep changing as we grow and it is where the beauty lies. I invite you to try knowing yourself and if you believe you already do, try something you don't see yourself trying out; preferably with no threats to your life. I'm sure you'll find at least one small thing to focus on within yourself. It's about the mindset.

Hamza Damerji

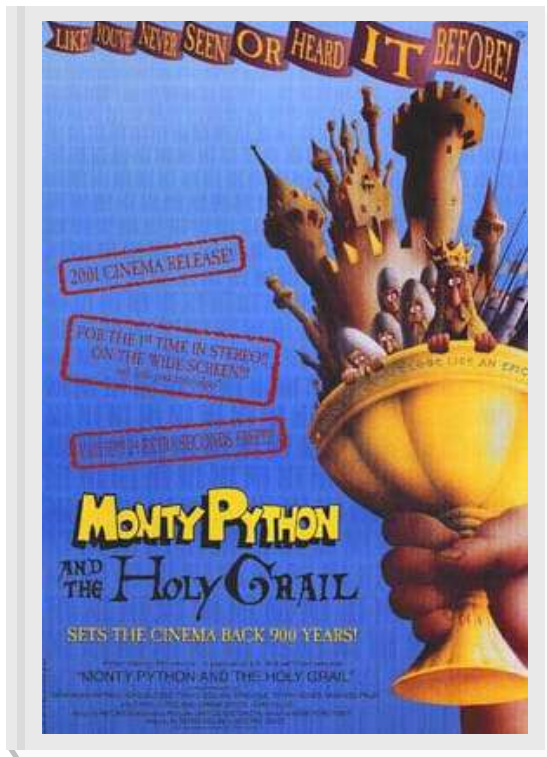




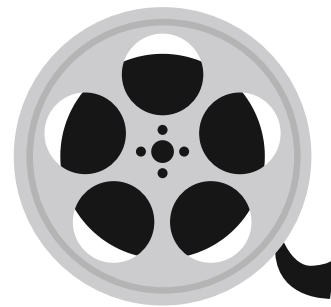
Do the Right Thing directed by Spike Lee, is a prime example of the power of humor in films. Lee uses it to give a strong commentary on society and race in America. He pushes us into a world that's full of heat and constant social dynamics. Released in 1989. This film provides a snapshot of the lives of a predominantly black community in the neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York. It truly captures how racism has spread throughout society and is a stark reminder that systematic structures still create this. Do The Right Thing may not be everyone's cup of tea with humor. However, Lee has masterfully created a captivating film, which accurately depicts the lives of a community that has the world pressed up against them.



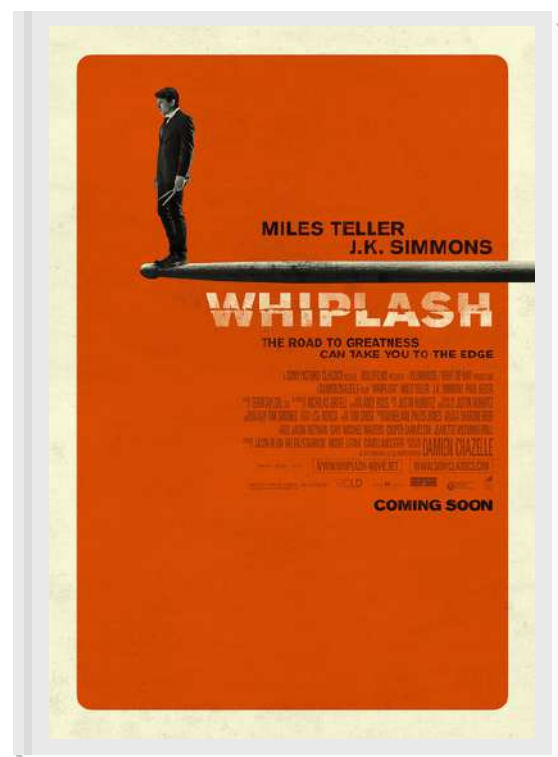
Directed by Peter Weir the Truman show is a science fiction comedy-drama film starring Jim Carrey as Truman Burbank, who's adopted and raised by a corporation inside a simulated television show revolving around his life. Burbank seems to be living the American Dream. Like the proverbial man who has everything. Till he realises he lives in a plastic world. Carrey delivers an incredible performance as he steps out of his comfort zone of slapstick comedy and humor and does so with finesse and style. This intricate satire on the subject of media saturation should be seen by eyes untainted by previews, television advertisements, or even the opinions of critics for its smart, teasing story to work its full magic.

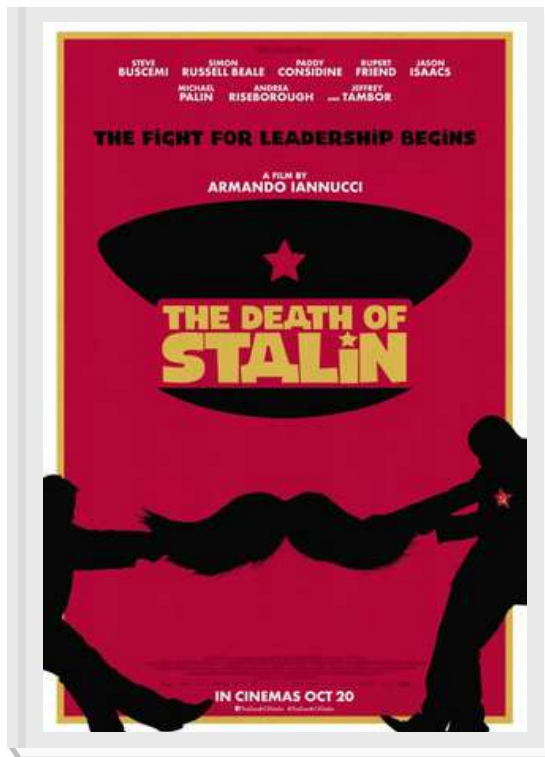


A comedic send-up of the grim circumstances of the Middle Ages as told through the story of King Arthur and framed by a modern-day murder investigation. When the mythical king of the Britons leads his knights on a quest for the Holy Grail, they face a wide array of horrors, including a persistent Black Knight, a three-headed giant, a cadre of shrubbery-challenged knights, the perilous Castle Anthrax, a killer rabbit, a house of virgins, and a handful of rude Frenchmen.



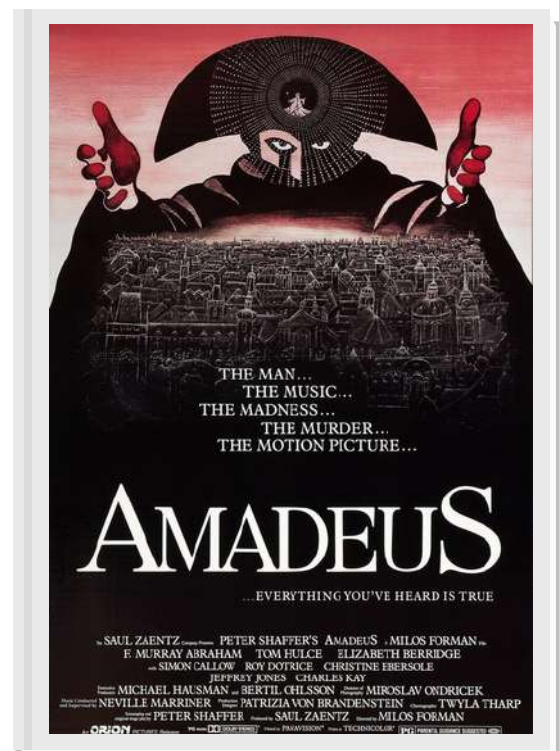
Whiplash is cinematic adrenalin. Damien Chazelle has taken a relatively straightforward subject like the relationship between a music student and his teacher and turned it into a thriller built on a brilliant undercurrent of social commentary about what it takes to make it in an increasingly competitive and cutthroat world. How far are you willing to push yourself to succeed? How far are you willing to push someone else to force them on the path to success? Carried by two electric performances, and a daring screenplay that writes itself into a corner and then somehow finds an unexpected way out, "Whiplash" is as breathless as a drum solo, rising and falling just as the hopes and dreams of its protagonist climb and crash.

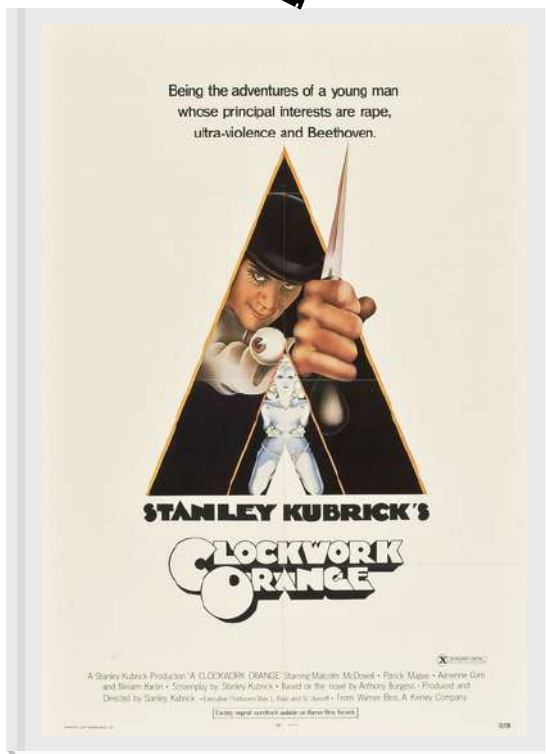




The pinnacle of parody, satire, and moral exuberance. The death of Stalin is a comedic masterpiece that transcends our understanding of totalitarian dictators. Director Armando Iannucci known for his critique of US politicians takes a jab at one of history's most secretive boy clubs. The film alludes to the power vacuum left after; you guessed it, the death of Stalin. Russia has never been more absurd and hilarious. After his death, Stalin's inner circle attempts to seize power over the country. These amateurish acolytes attempt every slippery maneuver and scheme known to man to secure a seat at the highest position of power; with Stalin's upcoming funeral, who will be the next supreme leader of the USSR, and just how can these people run a country?

Amadeus, a fictional and biographical depiction of the life of Mozart stands uniquely in its portrayal. A beautiful story that portrays the unbridgeable gap between a human genius and mediocrity. The actors give a superb performance, that only elevates the magnanimity of Mozart and the mean-spiritedness of Salieri. The Film is marked by magnificent music, most of which is from Mozart's compositions. Milos Forman's "Amadeus" is not about the genius of Mozart but about the envy of his rival Salieri, whose curse was to have the talent of a third-rate composer but the ear of a first-rate music listener, that was he knew how bad he was, and how good Mozart was. Having concluded that Mozart receives divine assistance in his compositions, Salieri turns against God.





The Matrix is a visually dazzling cyber adventure, full of kinetic excitement. The film begins by redefining the nature of reality and ends with a shoot-out. The plot involves Neo (Keanu Reeves), a mild-mannered software author by day, and a feared hacker by night. He's recruited by a cell of cyber-rebels, led by the profound Morpheus (Laurence Fishburne) and the leather-clad warrior Trinity (Carrie-Anne Moss). They've made a fundamental discovery about the world: It doesn't exist. It's a form of Virtual Reality, designed to lull us into lives of blind obedience to the "system." We obediently go to our crummy jobs every day, little realizing, as Morpheus tells Neo, that "Matrix is the wool that has been pulled over your eyes--that you are a slave."

A Clockwork Orange is Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of Anthony Burgess's perversely moral and essentially Christian novel about the value of free will. Even if the choice exercised is to tear through the night by robbing, raping, and battering the citizens until they lie helpless, covered with what Alex describes happily as "the real red vino". A clockwork orange is a great deal more than merely a horror show; it is brilliant, a tour de force of extraordinary images, music, words, and feelings, a much more original achievement for commercial films.

Andrea Khatchadourian

Lebanese National Library

As I was preparing for my article on Beirut's libraries, I thought that including the Lebanese National Library would be an integral part of the article. However, I found that this library needs recognition in a separate article.

My journey to the library started back in 2019 when there was some official news about the opening of the library to the public. During my break between classes, I knew that investing by visiting the library was crucial. My long-awaited curiosity and excitement soon turned into agony when I was bombarded with "sorry, we're closed today and not accepting visitors in the building." Soon afterward, the October 17th revolution followed by the pandemic reinforced the "no visitors" policy. I lost hope of visiting that library until February when P.M Najib Mikati announced the library's reopening to the public. This time, I had to guard myself and be cautious in case of any surprises (there are a lot of these when living in Lebanon). I wanted to protect myself from another disappointment by going there having prepared the worst-case scenarios in mind and the lowest expectations possible.

I was surprised to see the outer gates open so I continued stepping in anticipating being told to leave. Unexpectedly, I made it into the building and entered the reading hall. To say that I was blown away is an understatement. It was too good to be true. The reading hall was designed to be very modern while preserving the beauty of the heritage building it is included in. The library combined the best of the Ottoman and modern architecture which is something very unusual for governmental buildings that usually lack proper basic structure. The building was also built with an anti-shock structure, as I knew, later on, that would be able to protect it from any form of natural disaster which explains how it stood firmly after the Beirut blast. In the vicinity of such an attractive space, I easily lost myself for a few hours there roaming back and forth. Some of the empty shelves holding a few books on Lebanon's history and culture seemed to reflect the void one can feel despite their knowledge. Every corner of that library is willing to tell you a story only for those who want to listen.

Apparently, my luck was working for me that day as I got the chance to interview Dr. Hassan Akar, the chairman and general director of the Library, without any prior planning. We sat together as he corrected many of the misconceptions about the library.



Lebanese National Library

Many of us think that a national library would be a place any intellect will find refuge to stay at and borrow books from as needed. However, saying that means we're thinking of a public library, not the national library. According to Dr. Akar, the Lebanese National Library, like any other national library, is a governmental library with the purpose of preserving and guaranteeing the continuity of all forms of the Lebanese heritage which is the reason it is categorized as "national." Accordingly, the library should own a minimum of two copies of any publication may it be a book, a magazine, or a newspaper, that shows the product of the Lebanese intellect. Thus, the library collects any publication that fits the following criteria:

1. Any newspaper that talks about Lebanon in any aspect as written journalism form a key element in keeping track of the country's events
2. Any publication of any language, gifted or purchased, that has been written by any Lebanese person or descendent in order to build a connection between the library and the Lebanese people and diaspora who e the country's pride with their literary work
3. Any publication that discusses the history of the middle east and particularly Lebanon
4. Any publication that receives global recognition and helps in changing the course of the globe's thoughts such as William Shakespeare, Friedrich Nietzsche, Gibran Khalil Gibran, Leo Tolstoy, etc...

Given the abundance of publications and their importance in conserving the heritage, it is difficult to allow readers to take the books outside of the library preventing a "borrow and return system" yet users are more than welcome to spend time in the breadth of the library while respecting its regulations.

The library also gives access to anyone who needs to use any of its documents after contacting the library via email for this purpose. This may limit the library users to researchers who need access to such documents. In fact, researchers form 70% of the library's users, and the internal system of giving them access forms only 2% of the library's functions. Dr. Akar said that collecting and organizing the resources takes a lot of time and forms the majority of the library's work, especially with the limitation they might face to find resources and the partial opening of the library after its long years of closure.

Speaking of limitations, Dr. Akar pointed out that the library is facing many obstacles rendering it dysfunctional so far. In today's situation, it is challenging to open a governmental library in a time of political instability and the closure of many other government facilities such as hospitals. This means that the library is fighting against many odds to be open to the public. Not to mention that it's opening this year after its suspension in 1979 makes it a fairly new institution that lacks an appropriate internal structure to function. The library also demands proper media coverage that allows the public to understand its function and purpose and clear the misconceptions around it.

While the library stands as a public place that allows the public to access it, being public means that everyone should also participate in the conservation of its facility and resources to be optimally functional with minimal damage.

My curiosity about this place has been fulfilled and it allowed me to learn things I was mistaken for. It's very admirable that a governmental institution in Lebanon is striving to fulfill a very demanding and tedious work for the sake of the public during these times. I can't but think of the difficult task of reaching out to the Lebanese diaspora and asking them to spare a copy of a part of their achievements. This forms a responsibility upon the Lebanese professionals and youth to maintain a relationship with the homeland to ensure watering it with streams of knowledge that will grow ahead.

Dania Al Boukhari





أَتَظَنَّكَ وَجَدْتَ؟

ما هي بوصتك؟ ما هي هويتك؟ ما المعنى الذي تزيده على عالم انسلب من المعاني؟ كيف تعالج أزمته الوجودية؟ سل نفسك هذه الأسئلة وستلقاها في جوفك.

هي كوفية تحضن كتفيك. هو لحن أغنية يأخذك إلى الأرض التي تحلم أن تشم رائحة ترابها. هو كتاب مقدس تحمله بين يديك. هي لوحة فنية ترسمها بدمك. هي لغة تتمسك بها، فتكتب وتغني وتخطب بها. لم التراجع؟ لم الحيرة والارتباك؟ لقد قلت لك سابقاً بأن القرارات الصعبة يا عزيزي تحتاج إلى حزم وحزم. الحياة معركة، فلا تستسلم برفعك الراية البيضاء. لا تدعهم يهيئوا كفنك، فما مئت بعد، لم يزل في أضلعك رعد وبرق. لم يزل في قلبك حرقه للدفاع عن المظلومين ومقاتلة الظالمين. فهو مكتوب في السماء أن الصبر على هذه الدنيا مجبول بالآلام، فلا تنتظر وردً وندي من بستان اللثام.

إعرف أن أزمته الوجودية مرتبطة بقضية سامية أكبر من أي صراع آخر. دع هذا الأمر في ذهنك فهذا سيساعدك على تخفيف بعض من ألمك. و تذكر أن الإنسان في نهاية الأمر قضية، فتمسك بها، ولا تمنت قبل أن تكون نداءً

في عالم امتزج فيه الحق بالباطل وما عاد الوجود يُفصل عن العدم. في عالم تشاهد فيه الشيء وترى ضده، فتضيع وتتخبط، ما القرار؟ ما قرارك؟ لديك خياران فقط ولا مفر. والقرارات الصعبة يا عزيزي تحتاج إلى حزم وحزم. فهل ستتراجع إلى الوراء وتدع عالم الأضداد والتناقضات يسيطر على اختياراتك، أم ستستحق قراراتك وتدفع ثمنها؟ ليس الأمر بالسهل. عليك التركيز والتسديد. الهدف واضح.

لا، لا، اصبر. أظن أن الهدف ليس واضحاً، فهو معاكس لما يظنه الكثير. لا أظن أن بوسعك تفكيك هذه الشيفرة، شيفرة نفسك. الأمر يتطلب الدهر كله. لا أظن أن بوسعك المواجهة والقتال. الأمر لا يستحق كل هذا العناء، لا بأس. اخلد إلى النوم، أو إلى كأس الخمر، أو إلى تلك السجائر، أو إلى تلك الفتاة أو الفتى. فأظن أن هذا سوف يذهب بأسك وألمك. لا عليك، فهذه الحياة مجرّد وهم وغم. لماذا وُجدت على هذه الأرض أصلاً؟ لا أظن أن للإجابة من وجود. لذا، أظن الأفضل لك أن تعيش من دونها، عش مُحذراً. ولكن...

حذار أن يأخذك الظن بالأشياء. حذار من اتباع الظن. فهو لن يغنيك عن الحق شيئاً. ولكن...

أنت لا تعرف شيئاً. هذه الحياة ساحقة. أصبح الحق ممتزجاً بالباطل.. لا يمكن.. لا يمكن. هناك العديد من الأفكار التي تراودك. هنالك العديد من الأسئلة. ولكن...

اسمع هذا الكلام، وإياك أن تغفل عن ذكره. إن أردت معرفة الحق فاتبع سيهام عدوك سترشدك إليه.

كن على وعي، وتذكر أن الوعي ليس بمقدار القراءة والكتابة وحفظ المعلومات بقدر ما هو الالتزام بالمسؤولية الفردية في الانحياز المطلق للحق والأفكار النبيلة والالتزام بقضايا وحقوق البشر والدفاع عنها.



Jana Itani



To the Hidden Gems at HU

When I was at school, I felt I was trapped inside a black hole. I couldn't believe that I would still have opportunities to meet bright-minded people with whom I could connect on a deeper level. It was like a dead end. Now that I am looking back to the past, I'm starting to realize how my mind was descending into the depths of depression without me even being mindful of it. There was actually only one person at school who helped me keep going but there was no hope for me to build a healthy community. I couldn't imagine myself outside the invisible prison walls I was in. When I graduated from school, I honestly underestimated Haigazian because my friends, unfortunately, had never heard of it and that was making me feel ashamed of it. I had applied to another university but I felt no emotional connection towards it; I felt empty and things didn't work out as planned. That's why I entered one semester late to Haigazian in Spring 2019. But, honestly, that was one of the greatest decisions I've made throughout my entire life and I came to find out that this overhyped quotation that people use is actually true: everything does happen for a reason. It's also true that we shouldn't be judging a book by its cover because it's what's inside that matters according to the American writer Michael Green.

When my journey started at Haigazian, I discovered that there is a whole universe out there, filled with many precious souls with whom I got emotionally connected. The flame within me started to become much brighter when I began to find my voice within this right community. The love, energy, care, thoughtfulness, and kindness of many of my friends motivated me to journey onward, despite the obstacles blocking the trail of life. The values some friends have taught me will always serve as my guiding light to become a better version of myself.

I will always cherish how we used to have long deep conversations, how we used to actively listen to each other's stories, and how we were able to read the energy behind our words and feel when our hearts were unsettled. We shared a connection that rises above what is visible. That was one of the reasons why I used to wake up really happy and excited about going to university every morning. The energy they used to spread around on campus was so radiant and contagious. I will extremely miss some of my friends' hugs which were like a warm blanket that used to envelop the very essence of my being. The warmth of their embrace, the calmness between our souls, the feeling of time just begging to sit still for a few seconds longer, and the unspoken mutual words used to cheer me up and boost my energy to keep moving forward and conquer life's daily challenges. It's true that Haigazian feels like home but, of course, life is not a rainbow and I have had my fair share of challenges along the way. However, I was trying to always practice mindfulness daily and set boundaries as much as I can. I have failed many times at setting boundaries, but I have succeeded many times as well.

A "HUGE" thanks to you, my friends. Your love kept me going. Your love kept me alive. You have left an irreversible mark on my life. I will forever treasure the memories we have made together and the warmth you have made me feel. Now let's play this word search puzzle game! I have picked only 35 names of only students. If you find your name in this puzzle, it means you have had a positive impact on me at least once throughout my HU journey.

Ani Sarraf



Generation of Hope

I love the internet.
It's my favorite place in the world. I spend hours and hours on it, jumping from website to website, opening countless tabs not wanting to miss a thing. I can go anywhere. Russia? Click. Japan? Double click, now take a look at that blossom tree! Dang, I wonder what Mexico is up to...

And the next thing I know, I end up on the Google Trends page. I enter their recap, 'Year in Search 2020' and scroll down, brushing through people's hopes, fears, likes, and dreads.

It felt so intimate I got goosebumps.
What a year.
I saw so much ugliness, so much sorrow.
I saw names like 'Georges Floyd' and 'Beirut', searches containing words like 'asymptomatic', 'insomnia' and 'coronavirus'.
And amidst the sadness, I saw light.
The light of humanity shining through.

A chill ran in my bones reading the search terms 'Fire Fight Australia concert', 'Among Us', 'meditation', and 'Dalgona coffee'.

Feel proud. I am happy to be living in a time where the word 'coronavirus' is fought with 'Dalgona coffee'. Where you find the words 'fire' and 'concert' in the same search. Where a small, invisible city, Beirut, is being asked about and donated to.

I am hopeful because as the world is more chaotic than ever before, people look for ways to 'support small businesses, and search far and wide to help the fires in Australia, to help the Black Lives Matter cause, to donate to the COVID-19 research and treatment process and to help Beirut.

I am glad that I belong to this generation: according to Google Trends, 'how to change the world' was searched twice as much this year as 'how to go back to normal.

This is the generation I belong to: one that strives, looks forward, and aims to progress, and I am so honored to be living in the present.

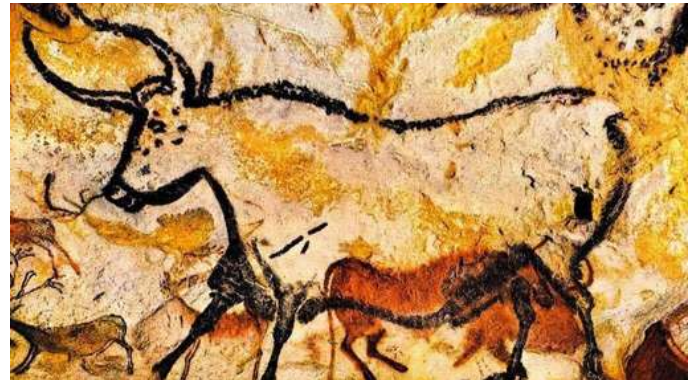
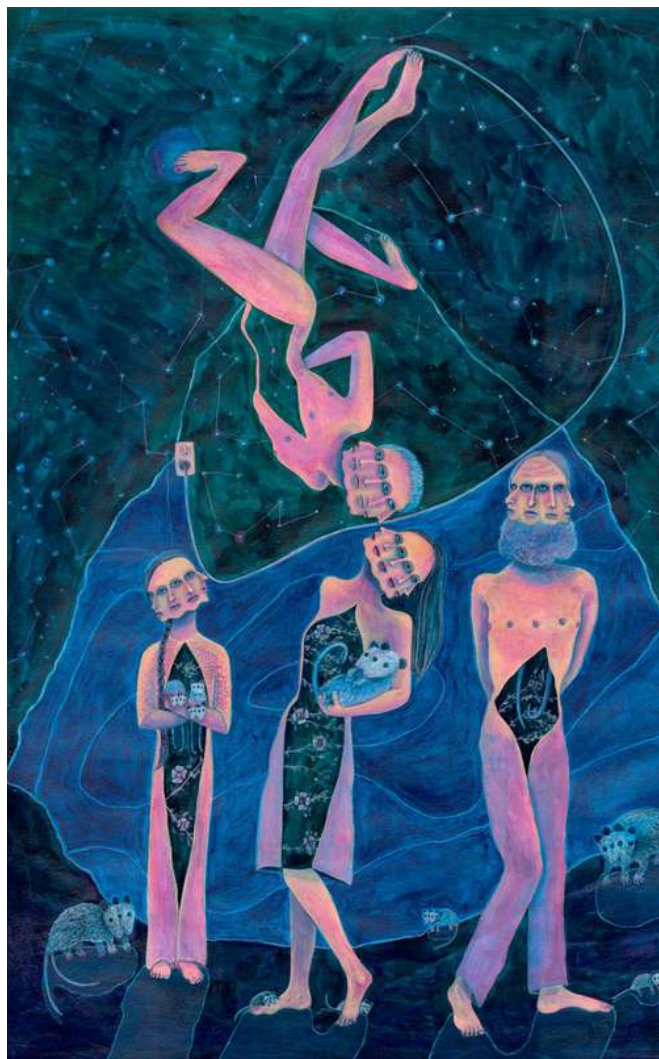
I am happy to be living in the now. Not because now is 2022, but because now is the culmination of 2021, 2020, 2019, and all the years that came before it.
What a year!

Joyce Al Hayek

The Human Experience

What is the human experience? It is something the world has very quickly forgotten as the age of technology and fast-paced lives followed the Industrial revolution. Humans are oh so simple and yet one of Mother Nature's greatest creations. We invented the unimaginable out of the basic elements of life and went places no living being has gone, but the most wondrous instinct of all is the inner drive to create art.

For as long as humanity has existed, we have tried to create, and let our minds run free with imagination. Our behavior could very well be boiled down to our desire to be artistic. From the cave paintings that were recently discovered to be the earliest forms of moving imagery, to the countless stories and epics passed down from each generation to the folklore that makes each of our cultures unique. God, what a wonderful thing it is to be human.



We have seen over time, that humanity is inherently sinful, evil, greedy, and dark. But that could never be further away from the truth. What about the parent, whose first thought is to protect a child even though it is not theirs? What of the youngsters who made senseless, reckless, and hilarious graffiti over the walls of caves and buildings just because they could? The many pet names we have come up with that refer to our lovers? The countless stories told over gatherings, and the smiles spread due to a burst of contagious laughter? Humanity was never cruel, nor was existence. We have spent so much of recent history hating our kind due to exploitation, meaningless ideologies, and false senses of superiority, that we have strayed far away from what was truly intended for us. As evil as it may be, one can truly stand to admire how the social elite fought tooth and nail ever since the Industrial Revolution to propagate ideologies on how greed has been a driving force for humanity. This tactic has worked for centuries, and to this day many people downgrade the true meaning of human interaction as nothing but a means to make profitable connections. Have we forgotten that literal revolutions were kickstarted merely by the fact that a group of people sat down to talk together? Or the fact that the great philosophers of humankind passed on their teachings simply through conversation. Every day, I sit with my friends, and with every passing conversation, I come out wiser, better, and dare I say more hopeful towards this world. Good God how I love the mundane of humanity.

Oliver Mooney



Spectra

Darkness to Be Twisted

It's easy...

It's easy to collect bricks and build a castle that no one can access

It's easy to dissociate and fade away into the comfortable loneliness of this castle

It's easy to become one with this place and bothered by any other space

This castle has been customized to fit the pain within what can not be seen

The bricks to build this castle may be heavy to lift, but they remain lighter than being around others.

It is more enjoyable to be here in solitude. It's not others' place to be anyway. It has been made to be isolated from them in their presence.

The more distance made from them, the more comfortable this place becomes. But they wouldn't notice because those who ignore the obvious wouldn't delve into the hidden. It's fine if they don't notice though. How can the heart see what the eye is blind to?

The castle grows so tall it blocks all light coming from the outside.

It becomes cold and dark without allowing unfamiliarity from the other side to find its way in.

So there is the stay: lonely and away. Linger in that comfort and pain makes it a part of the getaway.

Staying inside the castle tints the surroundings with white and grey eliminating colors from the display.

Until one day, a small shaft of light falls astray between the walls of this castle. How could that be?

This warm light crawls into the castle boldly and slowly. It allows itself to dance in the space it reaches. This is too new and unfamiliar, how long is this visit?

Little by little, more of this sparkle is invited in to teach this castle how to be welcoming.

More and more, this light takes over and breaks the castle into ruins.

But this light remains as tender as it entered and doesn't allow this damage to remain. It rather directs the destruction to build itself again.

This time, instead of building walls that separate, it draws a path that elevates.

It is time...

It is time for the darkness that weighed down to be replaced with some direction to rise up.

It is time to let go of the silence, walk down the chaos, and find calm in between.

It is time to embrace what's hidden and enjoy what is to come.

Dania Al Boukhari



Never-Ending Turmoil of Identity Construction

I started to think deeply about my Armenian identity after an incident that happened last February.

An Armenian Catholic priest raised a question mockingly “Is your father Italian or Spanish?”

I was asked this after I told him that my name is “Melissa”.

This event triggered drastic changes in the nature of my identity as an Armenian.

I started to over-think the construct of my identity.

Many authors, lecturers, and journalists have been asked “What is it like to be an Armenian to you?”

To answer that:

Being a regular 21-year-old undergraduate student, this question has so many answers for me. Because my identity has so many definitions for me.

I am in an endless loop of reconstructing my Armenian identity and recreating the meanings of my identity.

To me,

Being Armenian is to resist assimilation.

To me,

Being Armenian is to experience the fear of totally losing our Artsakh and Yerevan.

To me,

Being Armenian is to experience the fear of losing our language.

To me,

Being Armenian is to wake up every day and see pictures of Monte Melkonian on the walls of our living room.

To me,

Being Armenian is constantly overdoing things to show and prove my Armenian identity.

Because there is always this worry that “you’re not Armenian enough”.

To me,

Being Armenian is to struggle with dual identities.



To me,

Being Armenian is to be overwhelmed when questioned “Are you more Armenian or Lebanese?”

To me,

Being Armenian is to feel a sense of security while meeting another Armenian person in a circle of total strangers.

To me,

Being Armenian is to commemorate my forefathers every April 24 in my own ways.

To me,

Being Armenian is to feel Lebanon as my home.

Anjar to be exact.

But at the same time to feel guilty that I don’t have the same emotions towards Armenia.

To me,

Being Armenian is to feel ashamed of opening a dictionary while reading an Armenian book.

To me,

Being Armenian is to fight for the Armenian cause.

In any way that I’m capable of.

To me,

Being Armenian is to have a humanitarian purpose.

To me,

Being Armenian is to truly be myself when I speak Armenian.

Կ’արտահայտուիմ Հայերէնով:

Կը սիրեմ Հայերէնով:

Then, what is it like to be an Armenian to you?

Melissa Mardigian

On the banks of the river,
I take my seat,
Feeling the shimmering rays of the
setting sun,
I am engulfed by golden heat,

Tired yet peaceful eyes look upwards,
Towards the soaring heights of sky-
embracing mountains,
The river cuts paths through the heights,
Moving southwards,
Its rushing flow, its thundering might,
Almost as if in flight..
Overflowing my senses,
Rapidly it approaches towards me, as if
in attack,
But careless of my presence, it passes me,
without looking back,
A spectacular yet eerie and unsettling
sight,

Such a scene so natural yet so obscene,
I had grown used to such a scenic
regularity,
The flowing river, so natural, almost a
boring banality,
But a look deeper,
Reveals what has been hidden in plain
sight,
Concealed under the apparent serenity,

Uncovering simplicity, and embracing
the trapped complexity,
What was assumed to be solid,
What was thought to be rigid,
In both concepts and solids,
Melts into thin air,
A matter so heavy, and so
revolutionary to bear,

Upheavals occur in thought,
Throwing away all that has been
accepted and caught,
Like the sand that flows from the
hand whose fingers, for holding the
escaping grains, desperately fought,
For now in awe I see,
That the river is so common,
Not a unique and separate
phenomenon,

The flow is in all,
Not only in the river that winds and
takes a southwards fall,
Solidity is in nothing,
Yet movement is in everything,
All thought is to be re-thought,
The forest,
The mountain,
The sun,
All the rest,
None are in still and unmoving rest,

In their eternal movement,
They intertwine and enter into
entanglements,
Changing their selves as they mold their
surroundings,
Their elements and constituents, due to
movement, rearranging,
Transformation, moving from a state to
the other,
From a station to a station,

Metamorphosis and variations,
Two fundamental realizations,
Seeping through my body,
Intertwining with the heat,
Violently shaking me out of my seat,
As I fully understand their roaring
might,
For I, as well, who has pondered
through sight, the flow of all,
See that the eyes that perceive,
And the body through which, heat, is
received,

Are no external spectators...
..To a melodious theatrical act, with
evolving actors,
For I, in my aspects and dimensions,
am as well, in perpetual
transformation.

Leaving the river,
As a stream, myself,
Knowing that I won't sit next to the
same river again,
For neither I nor the river would be,
once more, the same.

Having shattered the previous frame,
I have absorbed as mine,
that
Death is in uniformity,
And change is the life of time

Boghos Boghosian

Hanging Flags

We stand up strong
With might, among people to whom we belong
The skies are clear
When missiles aren't striking fear
The land is ours, ours alone.
Yet man is killed for some stone
Hopes and dreams to do what is right,
Fades when devastation is in sight
Death and abomination, as all falls apart
Not only killing men but scarring a nation's heart
When all is lost and death is nigh
All you want is to breathe a sigh
Yet all you hear is a cry
As more than missiles fall from the sky.

Place it up, don't let it go
For it, a friend is turned into a foe
Wave it in the sky as strength to show
Hold it to your heart and with it grow.
To the flag, you salute
Then "others" you shoot
A piece of fabric, a piece of land
A piece of mind lost to sand
As all fade away
Yet to foolish claims you stay
And the truth you fail to see
That in a hundred years you'll cease to be
What harm you've done, you won't flee
So why fight for a flag that hangs not free
Many hang more than flags on trees.



Land that's not ours and a world that passes by
Still, we die for a flag to hang high
Still, we fail to live and rest in peace
All we want is for "us" to be better
Yet who is "us" if we are all together
Who is "them" if we are all of tether
We rain hell on those who are "other"
We made so many sections and I lost my brother
When is death enough in this devilish weather
We could have reached new heights with each other
But no, all we care about is grooming our feathers.

Hear me not, yet I wish not for tyrants to go
unpunished,
So is it a child's fault that they were raised by the devil?
A child is pure, we drag them to hell with this evil,
I care not for land or wealth
I care not for fame or strength
I care not, for all this is beyond humanity's health.
Who am I to change the future, yet hope is near
As to see flags go down, as man knows that war is
death and tears
I call not to abandon thy nation, but to place man
before land
As He told us that none is better than the other except
by virtue
And only He knows of virtue.
So treat all with respect and care
As we are all brethren and goodness we share
Except for those who deal with harm and despair
Deal them with justice, that is only fair.

Shall a foe fear those who are might
Standing strong with hope and light
As they kneel to no man, from that they sight
Only then are they mighty as one unite.

Mohamad Chehab

To Hope for Home

Home is where we roam,
We settle down and rest, it's our own
It welcomed us, and in it, we've grown
Our mind, our body, and every bone
All grew and shaped what we have known
To some, it's made of land and stone
To us it's hope, it endured, and stood its own
It showed strength and patience, even after being
blown
In it, we rose only to fall alone,
As others come to take our throne
For home is precious, yet it is engulfed in loan.
What may it become, if it stayed without a sun
In the darkness, in despair, as people run
Away from a place like none,
As people flee, our foe has won
Taking more than land and son
Taking hope, as truth is gone,
And fear has just begun
With weapons of friend and foe, we are done.

Lebanon, seemed so beautiful and fair
With potential beyond compare,
As people fought for its air
Placed in the center of the square
So perfect, so elegant and rare
Yet, devils sit on their chair
Ruling like sloths and without care
Its people, apart they tear
With wars of endless despair
People dying for what faith they bare
Into death, this home did stare
Looking within it, knowing that death is fair
As it takes all, no matter what power you declare,
With all the might they can attain, they won't
prepare,
As greed and pride, they all share
Their doom will come, beware.

She was stunning, she's called Beirut
An amazing city, so sweet like fruit
In it, people walk and commute
In it, you'll find our root
A place that has seen much, and went mute,
As no tears, nor words can compute
The pain dealt when criminals dispute
Trying to take this land, so everyone they shoot
Taking down men, women, and children like brutes,
Senseless to humanity's pursuit,
Barging into our home, as filth that pollutes
Old and weak has become of Beirut.
What may come will come to pass
As time goes on, and through dirt grows grass,
If nurtured, can be abundant as gas,
Yet to nurture, is to have hope that it will grow brass,
For hope is priceless, and with it we surpass
With hope, we are rid of what made us alas.

Grief and destruction were brought upon this land,
Still days of prosperity it did stand
With happiness and laughter so grand
So why lose sight of what we had once in our hand
Indeed, I've grown with little hope, yet we try and
withstand
We grow, and at times all seem bland
With little light to see beyond the sand
Hills of green and luscious grass, that we amass.
Hope seems foolish, but isn't it foolish not to be alive
To choose to lay down, not wanting to survive,
Hope made us thrive
As it moves us to strive
We are humans, we want to arrive
To where is safe, to where is home
As home is safe when we know He watches over our
own.

Mohamad Chehab



You Put your Heart in a Clutch

You put your heart in a clutch
Hugging thyself, this little you hiding inside
"We have each other" you whisper
To that fragile, you conceal deep down
The rough roads you're walking on give you
blisters
Yet you choose to hug the little you even
quicker
Calming those indescribable shivers
Shivers so tough that it feels like winter
Winter initiating its raging wars inside
Devastating the fragile thyself, thus becoming
a drifter
Why are you drifting away, dear self?
"Because it's too harsh to stay wide awake in
this twister"
But who is going to stay when thyself does
not?
What is a self without its deepened roots to
its inside?



What is a self if it keeps sabotaging the
delicacy inside?
Hug thyself, for no other being, will stay this
much with your twistings
Hug thyself, it's too harsh to let yourself all
what is to be figured
Hug thyself, for no one but you will be your
healing elixir
Embrace thyself, who is the most to rejoice
your victor
Embrace thyself, Embrace thyself, Embrace
thyself.
For when You hook your heart in a knot
You're afraid you cannot make it
But then you wish not
Because little do you know with this heart
you are blessed
With glory, sacrifice, and selflessness it is
dressed
So why not consider the little you, your
guest?
And embrace it with all your best?

Malak Abboud

What Have They Done



What have they done?

Her cheeks were red, red as the roses I lay on her mossy grave
Her hair was black, black as the skin-tight dress she was in

What have I done what have I done?

I still feel my hands glued to her waist
My mind now consists of magic madness and macabre sin

What have I done what have I done?

Her blood still drips when the sheets are cleaned
The way I plunged the knife into her, a physical fatality

What have I done what have I done?

We were comforting and concrete

How did love to become so incomplete

What have they done what have they done?

Abd El Karim Al Amin

A Wanderer and Her Shadow

Home. What home? Is it inside of her or is it around her? She doesn't know.
She ran and ran without looking back. Seeking a place of comfort, only to realize she
was in it in the past.

Pause, Look back.

How did she not know, how did she not see, it was there all along. But no, she
couldn't see it then, maybe it wasn't there. Maybe it was just a shadow from her past
following her around. Maybe her long desire of searching for a home was something
that exists only when the sun is up.

She continues running, running after a feeling that ceases to exist. A feeling that leaves
her with nothing but emptiness. How can something that is empty in itself search for
void around, she asked. How?

Always contradicts herself. yes, she's back to you again, her shadow. back to
contemplating her thoughts around you. back to this field of confusion. How can she
approach you? How can she tell you what it is that she is searching for? How, if she
herself does not know what it is?

How can she ask you to walk on that path with her when you disappear when the
sunsets. How can she ask you to walk with her without knowing where this quest
might take you. Perhaps that's hard, perhaps existing next to a body that is full of lust
is.

A Wanderer, that's what she decided to call herself. With all the lust she holds inside,
she decided to turn it to the light.

She took a look back, in search of what she had, maybe it lies there.
In search of a place, she used to call home.

A wanderer she began, began roaming the paths of her past.

In her past, she saw her room. Left as it was since she was a fourteen-year-old girl.

She contemplated why it was still the same, why she hadn't changed the image of her
room if she herself has changed with time.

The truth is, she chose to keep that image of her room still.
Longing to come back to it again.

She remembered. She smiled. She grieved.

and that's when she decided to let go.

Let go of that shadow, let go of that memory.

But she failed to notice that even in letting go, there's a kind of beauty.

For what is meant for her to hold, will remain.





A special thanks to the writers of the Herald, who continue to show their resolve in these hard times. To the readers, thank you for continuing to be our inspiration and for trusting us with The Herald.



Suggestions



Join the team

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