

Abbes Maazaoui, Editor. *Borders: Special Issue, The Lincoln Humanities Journal (LHJ):*  
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This is a very interesting issue of *LHJ* on “Borders,” a subject which has occupied me for a long time, on which I have written poetry and novels, and cogitated. I am happy to say that in his excellent introduction Abbes Maazaoui quotes some of my poems from *Echosmos*, as a writer who is opposed to borders and in favor of openness, “*sans frontières*,” the title of one of my poetry collections.

In his Introduction entitled “The Invention of Borders,” Maazaoui treats this theme “both literally and figuratively.” He also explains its implications, symbolic and geographical, especially in the context of modern globalization. Indeed, we are surrounded by so many “cameras, fences, minefields, barbed wires” (7). At the same time, we are witnessing the clandestine immigration of the boat people in Asia, and the Africans, Syrians, Iraqis crossing the Mediterranean Sea, fleeing to Europe.

Crossing the border legally or illegally comprises one of the major issues of the twenty-first century, and this issue of *LHJ* tackles the multiple implications for the ethno-cultural groups, as well as unfortunate political decisions, such as the Russian annexation of Crimea, or the Ukrainian rebellion backed by Russia. In other words, the ethno-cultural groups often create their own “niches” or ghettos.

Some of the articles contribute to the in-depth analysis of Borders in countries, such as “Vietnam’s Invasion of Cambodia”: the Pot Pol is still on our minds.

The symbolism attached to the conflict over Whaling in Eastern and Western oceans demonstrates that “Strong arguments have been made that Americans and Europeans are pushing their ideologies into the discourse” (44).

The very enlightening essay by Giuseepe Perri on the “Cross Identity and Metaphysics of Sensuality,” based on the work of the early twentieth-century Polish-Ukrainian intellectual Jaroslaw Iwaszkiewicz, demonstrates that the crossing of identities enables any reader to grasp “the root of the vital flow of existence” (69).

Then we have the study of “Border Crossing, Hidden in Plain Sight: From Urban Community to Urban Campus,” by Jamal Benin, who concludes that “border crossings across

ethnicities . . . enhance our understanding of Womanist leadership . . . and gives a new perspective on how civic activism may deepen university-community relationships” (95).

The last two essays of this issue are certainly the most interesting to me, since they are in a field with which I am familiar. Samaa Gamie, in an article on “Fantasy, Feminism, Islamism, and Sexuality in the Literature of El Saadawi, Rifaat, al-Shaykh, and Mernissi,” focuses on what is permitted and forbidden in the practice of Islam, especially with reference to the feminine condition. Hers is more of a literary analysis based on the Koran and religious discourse, primarily governed by patriarchal theocracy. These feminist authors criticize “the hypocrisy of religious institutions,” thereby revealing the strengths and the pitfalls of Muslim cultures.

Laura McKenzie’s essay on Henry James’s *The Turn of the Screw* views the governess (probably governesses in general) as an “outsider” at Bly who tries to transgress the boundaries between “the living and the dead” (13). This creates a zone of ambiguity which imparts to the work its Gothic dimension.

This issue treats numerous subjects: frontiers, borders, human beings, animals, geographical sites, genres, class, ethnicity, etc. It covers an impressive array of fields of knowledge, exploring the openness and closure of borders, war and peace. If transgressing borders can lead to discords, or wars, it can also open negotiations, and lead to dialogue and peace. We live in an age where globalization paradoxically has been accompanied by national aspirations: we may think of Québec and Scotland as examples. This “Borders” Special Issue of *LHJ* eloquently raises the question of how we mediate between all these apparently conflicting aspirations, and should create a dialogue among informed readers.

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