

# “The Sea Spits Out Corpses”: Peripherality, Genre, and Affect in the Cosmopolitan Mediterranean

Gretchen Head

## ABSTRACT

This essay brings together two genres—Mediterranean noir and the novel of clandestine migration—to suggest an alternative reading of both that considers the specific aesthetics of emotions that radically dissimilar subject positions across the Mediterranean might necessitate in a literary text. As the number of people desperate to cross the sea increases by the day as a result of ongoing conflicts in so many of the states on its Southern shores, the inequities that prevail between the various countries of the Mediterranean have perhaps never been more visible even if they are hardly new. This essay addresses how this unequal social, political, and economic reality has been textually transposed through a register of negative minor affect that marries the political to the aesthetic at the core of the Arabic novels written in those countries that line the Mediterranean’s Southern coast. The article focuses on Youssef Fadel’s novel *Hashish* (Yūsuf Faḍīl’s *Ḥashīsh*), published in Arabic in 2001, but Jean-Claude Izzo’s Marseilles trilogy reappears throughout as a counterpoint, a reminder of the disparate representations the Mediterranean yields depending on the author’s field of vision. Seen from the North, the sea’s ports offer cosmopolitan urban spaces with their own distinct brand of utopianism and nostalgia; from the South, we find an urban environment suffused with disgust, envy, paranoia, and abjection.

---

The languages of that giant on the Northern bank of the Mediterranean stretch like a wire probing the markets on the Southern shore. It hits the sea with its hand and drowns the boats carrying the hungry who have fled their country’s parties and sects that know nothing of justice.

—FADHILA CHABBI, *Justice* (Faḍīlah al-Shābbī, *al-ʿAdl*, 2005)<sup>1</sup>

Much of the fiction starts out with landscape in my head. First there's the scene, where is it laid. Then if I know the place, I know what can happen there, who can be in it and what the influence of the place is on the protagonists.

—PAUL BOWLES in *Let it Come Down: The Life of Paul Bowles* (2003)

"Everyone says without shame / *Ya babour ya mon amour*," declare the sixth and seventh lines of the popular Moroccan hip-hop group H-Kayne's song "Harragua," a track on their 2010 album *H-Kaynology*. The phrase "*Ya babour ya mon amour*" can be translated as "Oh my boat, oh my love," a widespread refrain with a decades long history in songs expressing the desire to reach the Mediterranean's Northern shores. Here the small makeshift boat used for illegal crossings occupies the poetic position normally held by the beloved, a new object of desire and longing. The title of the song itself, a word more commonly spelled *Harraga*, is an idiom common to the Arabic dialects of the Maghreb literally meaning 'those who burn.' In popular usage it is a synecdoche that refers to those who 'burned their immigration papers,' a metonymy signifying the migrants who would, as a precaution in case they were caught, set their identification papers alight before attempting to enter Europe illegally by sea. With its lyrics that describe the corrupt smugglers who profit from clandestine migrants, the deadly turbulence of the waters, the journey's high probability of death, and the hardships that await illegal immigrants in Europe should they succeed in getting there, the song is a plea to those thinking about crossing to stay in their home countries.

Whether coded as a warning or entreaty, the condemnation of the country of origin or the ardent yearning for an idealized elsewhere, the Mediterranean Sea and its potential crossing dominate much of the cultural production of the Maghreb. Yet the sea's effect on the imaginations of those who live on its coasts transcends North Africa: its Northern cities and towns produce their own cultural forms in which the Mediterranean is less a backdrop than a starting point. The particular brand of genre fiction known as Mediterranean noir, for instance, self-consciously positions the Mediterranean landscape as its catalyst. In his brief essay "The Blue and the Black," Jean-Claude Izzo, arguably Mediterranean noir's most notable author, writes:

In the beginning is the Book. And that moment in which Cain kills his brother Abel. In the blood of this fratricide, the Mediterranean gives us the first noir novel. There may well have been other murders before this, but this one is written down, and establishes forever the singular problem of mankind: that crime is the driving force that, over centuries, will govern relationships between people. Whoever they are. (43)

For Izzo, the Mediterranean region produces a primal type of originary violence marked by the fatalism of Greek tragedy. He casts his net wide and

reads *The Iliad*, *The Odyssey*, and *Oedipus Rex* as prototypes of the kind of crime fiction he himself will write in Marseilles centuries later. If there is something questionable in the appropriation of the literature of the ancient world for Mediterranean noir, there are nonetheless enough continuities in the work of modern writers like the Spaniard Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, the Catalan Andreu Martín, the Greek Petros Markaris, and Italians Massimo Carlotto, Carlo Lucarelli, Giancarlo De Cataldo, and Osvaldo Capraro to speak of a distinct genre in the twentieth century.

These examples, a hip-hop song and Izzo's characterization of one of noir's more notable subsets, represent two larger generalizations that in a sense cover the same ground but do not quite sit easily with one another. The question each raises, implicitly in the case of H-Kayne and explicitly in the case of Izzo, is what kind of representation the Mediterranean, as both a geographic and cultural category, generates. While Izzo's work—and the larger genre of which it is a part—depicts the typical Mediterranean city as a site of rampant crime, conspiracy, and violent localized struggles for power, it is also home to an archetypal cosmopolitanism. The novels of Izzo's Marseilles trilogy insist on a positive hybridization, a Mediterranean identity grounded in the specificities of Marseilles's cityscape that destabilizes the cultural dominance of Northern Europe. Literature from the sea's Southern shores written in French, such as the work of Algeria's Yasmina Khadra, is often included in discussions of Mediterranean noir as well, staking a claim for cultural continuities that transcend national and even civilizational borders and coalesce in the features of a distinct literary form. This vision of Mediterranean plurality and coexistence, hardboiled as it may be, runs parallel to a different generic category found in the music, film, and writing of port cities like Tangier, Algiers, and Tunis, which are thematically concerned with illegal migration. In the Moroccan context, Jonathan Smolin notes the structural similarities of plots found across a spectrum of media in this genre: a protagonist makes contact with a human trafficker, journeys to one of the beaches near Tangier, and finally sets off to sea in an ill-equipped boat crowded with other migrants only to drown before reaching the other shore ("Burning the Past" 76). He traces the dramatic increase of this type of fiction and film to the country's liberalization policies of the mid-1990s, which included a new focus on human rights and ultimately allowed writers and filmmakers considerably more room to criticize the government in their work (75).<sup>2</sup>

I bring these two genres together—Mediterranean noir and the novel of clandestine migration—to move past a consideration of theme and plotting in favor of an analysis of a different sort. An alternative reading of some of the work produced in the South demonstrates that the disadvantages that often characterize life on this side of the Mediterranean generate literary texts with a distinct aesthetics of emotions. As the number of people desperate to cross

the sea increases by the day due to ongoing conflicts in so many of the states on its Southern shores, the inequities that prevail between the various countries of the Mediterranean have perhaps never been more visible. Yet these disparities are hardly new. This essay examines how this unequal social, political, and economic reality has been textually transposed through a strategy that marries the political to the aesthetic at the core of the Arabic novels written in those countries that line the Mediterranean's Southern coast. My primary focus is a case study of Youssef Fadel's 2001 novel *Hashish*, which I read as a new kind of Mediterranean noir that addresses the theme of clandestine migration by using emotions to show the desperate situations in which his characters live. Throughout the text, Fadel employs the minor (and ordinarily considered lower) affects of disgust, envy, paranoia, and abjection as a rhetorical strategy to highlight how, for many, a life on the less privileged side of the Mediterranean translates to obstructed agency and the closure of any effective path to action. In the novel these affects distort characters' relations both with each other and the geographies they inhabit. The sense of estrangement and disaffection achieved by foregrounding the negative emotions that define these relationships pushes the realization that these characters lack any political horizon to the forefront of the narrative.

Disgust works to demonstrate the alienation that permeates the characters' relationship with their lived environment. While the borders that separate Morocco and its European neighbors across the sea are shown to be impenetrable, the natural world aggressively infringes upon *Hashish's* characters, creating an existential discomfort from which they have no escape. If nature produces a suffocating sense of disgust in the novel by its refusal to stay within its proper boundaries, the relationships between characters are wrought by envy and paranoia. These emotions blur the lines between objective reality and subjective perception. Though the persons who envy are responding to what they understand to be an objective inequality, the transposition from social disenfranchisement to affect masks whatever real inequality may be at envy's root: instead, the emotion is generally interpreted as resulting from their own deficiency or individual failure to obtain what they desire in others. Thus Fadel uses affect to reveal his characters' confusion in regard to the systemic injustices they suffer. Their continual misplacement of their negative feelings and unawareness of the real sources of their frustrations not only make it impossible for them to act but also produce paranoia, reinforcing their inability to comprehend the forces behind their circumstances. In a climactic scene, these feelings are transformed into a form of abjection that represents the opposing senses of longing and fear that embody their relationship with their home country.

Fadel's characters' feelings do not originate within their interiority but should be understood as the result of the sense of enclosure that the socio-economic and political conditions of their location creates; they can neither

improve their lives at home nor leave the country. *Hashish* therefore undermines the Mediterranean cosmopolitanism constituted by Izzo and other authors of Mediterranean noir. I return to Izzo's trilogy throughout as a counterpoint and reminder of the disparate representations the Mediterranean yields depending on the author's field of vision. Seen from the North, the sea's ports offer cosmopolitan urban spaces with their own distinct brand of utopianism and nostalgia; from the South, we find an urban environment suffused with negative affects reflective of its residents' peripheral status.

### **Youssef Fadel's *Hashish*: A New Kind of Noir**

The poor and marginalized neighborhoods of Morocco's Northern coast have had a number of important twentieth century chroniclers: Mohamed Choukri, Mohammed Zafzaf, and more recently Youssef Fadel, the last of whom intersects most directly with Mediterranean noir. Though critics have only recently begun to associate genre fiction with Arabic literature, noir has a long, if understudied, history in the Arab world. From the start of the twentieth century, crime series ranging from the French Arsène Lupin to the British Sherlock Holmes to lesser known pulp mysteries and thrillers were translated or adapted into Arabic (Colla 433–34). Jonathan Guyer claims the seven decades from the 1890s through the 1960s as Cairo's golden age of illicit crime fiction, the novels' popularity partly attributable to their ability to satirize and highlight the controversial legal systems of British colonial rule. This is in keeping with one of genre fiction's greatest strengths—its overwhelming capacity to offer social and political critique. Noir, in particular, is known for its incisive exploration of the complex relationships between human beings and their environments. While the generic parameters of noir lack consensus, it tends to foreground a stylized urban landscape wrought by violence, corruption, transgression, social chaos, and moral and metaphysical ambivalence (Smyth 83). With characters plagued by dysphoric emotions and plots shaped by the entropic cityscapes in which they live, it traffics in humanity's dark side. This focus enables the genre, as one critic puts it in regard to Philip K. Dick's writing, to offer “unique insights into the tensions between individual autonomy and the economic and technological priorities of capitalist societies” (Fortin 127).

Due to the specific patterns of literary circulation within the Middle East and North Africa, where books and periodicals from Egypt are often widely distributed and find readerships throughout the Arabic speaking world, it is likely that at least some of this early genre fiction made its way west to Morocco to serve as an influence for its authors. Within Morocco itself the first experiments with noir can be traced to the 1960s periodical *Police Journal*, which regularly featured police procedurals written in the form of short fiction (Smolin, “Didactic” 696). It was only in the 1990s, however, that noir came into its own

in the country with a series of novels centered on a sympathetic crime-solving detective authored by Miludi and Abdelilah Hamduchi.<sup>3</sup> With *Hashish*, Fadel has created his own idiosyncratic genre, which incorporates a number of aspects of noir even as it simultaneously works to undo them. While the text differs in the way it handles noir from some of the genre's more traditional examples, like Dick's writing, it is the fraught relationship between people and place—the drives of the global economy and the individual who pushes back against the socioeconomic position into which he or she was born—that give the novel its shape. Many of the struggles of its characters can be traced to Morocco's neoliberal reorientation of its economy in the 1980s, a shift that has led to an ever-growing divide between those who benefit from globalization and those who find themselves increasingly socially excluded, effects felt more sharply along the Mediterranean coast than elsewhere (Zemni and Bogaert).<sup>4</sup>

Written in Arabic and still untranslated into English, the novel is three hundred pages and divided into eighty-three short chapters.<sup>5</sup> Fadel is a well-known playwright and his novels are informed by his keen sense for drama and the importance of maintaining his audience's attention. His fiction is always fast-paced and heavy with events and interlocking subplots. *Hashish* does not restrict itself to a single cityscape but takes place in a number of locations in Morocco's North, those spaces closest to the Strait of Gibraltar: the North's two biggest port cities, Tetouan and Tangier; Septa, the Spanish enclave on Moroccan soil through which all manner of goods are habitually smuggled in and out of Europe; and the border town of Fnideq eight kilometers from Septa known for selling the enclave's smuggled merchandise. The region is paradigmatic of the tensions embedded in Morocco's integration into the global economy. The Tangier Free Zone (TFZ), a neoliberal trade area of 500 hectares established in 1999 only 30 kilometers from Tangier's port, for example, is symbolic of the large scale urban development projects that benefit foreign companies and the Moroccan elite while exacerbating the marginalization of the poor (Zemni and Bogaert 407–08).<sup>6</sup> It is in the shadow of these internationally oriented development initiatives that *Hashish's* spaces can be located; they comprise the geography of Morocco's hashish trade, of clandestine migration, and of the underground economy in contraband. In conjunction with gambling, prostitution, and chronic unemployment, these are the forces that inform the novel's characters' lives.

The narrative includes an epically large cast of characters but the two central plot lines revolve around Moulay Mubarek's family, particularly his three sons, and the head of the gendarmerie. All of the novel's characters and events are ultimately held together by a woman named Miriam, who, in a style reminiscent of classic noir, arrives as an inscrutable stranger and inexplicably captures everyone's attention (Izzo, *Garlic* 43). A woman of twenty, she has come to the North to emigrate to Spain in one of the small fishing boats that H-Kayne's lyrics warn against. Her only goal is to cross to the other side, only seven and

a half miles from Morocco's closest point to Europe; apart from this no one knows anything about her. The mystery at the heart of *Hashish*, she creates a new story of origins for everyone she meets. First she is from El Gara, a small impoverished town in the country's center, her whole family drowned in their own attempts to cross the sea; then she is the victim of an abusive husband who left her to emigrate to Spain where he subsequently married a Spanish woman; later she is an orphan raised in a state orphanage; still later she is the daughter of a military officer whose family was ruined after he participated in the second failed coup attempt on King Hassan II. For the reader, that she has no past makes it possible for her to represent a collective experience of poverty and oppression. Within the text, it allows her to function as a cipher upon whom the novel's other characters can project their desires.

In place of the quintessential crime-solving detective along the lines of Fabio Montale, the hero of Izzo's Marseilles trilogy, *Hashish* features the unnamed head of the gendarmerie, whose infatuation with Miriam echoes that of the novel's other characters. He is said to think, for example, that "He saw his salvation in beginning his life anew with this girl named Miriam" (120). His utter inability to reach a resolution with this woman who will remain indecipherable until the end aligns Miriam's character with the genre's conventions. As for all of the novel's characters, the policeman's relationship with his surroundings is highly ambivalent. Rather than seeking to navigate the slick, often futuristic cityscapes of noir, he is continually held hostage by primeval elements of the natural world. To gain access to the brothel where Miriam temporarily resides, for example, he is forced to provide regular bribes of meat to the dog outside. At the same time, his own home has been completely overtaken by goats he cannot control. Fadel further manipulates the genre by destabilizing the conventional trope of a detective in pursuit of a criminal or murderer. In place of a human agent whose apprehension is possible, he positions another feature of the environment—the sea—as the killer that local law enforcement has little hope of restraining. He is repeatedly called to sites that show the toll taken by its turbulent waters, where he is left to gaze helplessly at the bodies washed to shore.

These distinctive textual features of *Hashish* are in keeping with Smyth's argument that the evolution of noir is the literary history of changing responses to "fears about social fracture and criminality" (83). Fadel's transformation of many of the standard features we find in Mediterranean noir are necessary because social fissures and their causes are hardly the same on the Mediterranean's Northern and Southern shores (Smyth 83). The latter requires a different rhetoric than that found in the European paradigm of Mediterranean noir, a rhetoric that expresses the economic inequities and contradictory impulses of desire and

repulsion that have accompanied Morocco's continuing unequal integration into the larger global economy. By fusing elements of noir with those of the novel of clandestine migration Fadel creates a profound new vehicle of social critique.

## Disgust

One of the presumed unifying features of Mediterranean noir is its figuration of the Mediterranean city as a utopic site. Fadel counters this representation by using disgust to mark off his characters' Mediterranean environment as the cause of intense discomfort and anxiety. By transforming Morocco's Northern coast into a site of alienation and stigmatization for his characters, he creates a powerful antithesis to dominant images of an idealized Mediterranean, such as that seen in Izzo's depiction of Marseilles. In *Total Chaos* (titled *Total Khéops* in the original French), the first volume of Izzo's Marseilles trilogy published in 1995, iconic criminal-turned-cop protagonist Fabio Montale often turns his thoughts to reflect on his native city. While he imagines the poverty in which successive waves of immigrants have lived before assimilating, the city is inevitably figured as a positive welcoming space: "That was the history of Marseilles, and always had been. A utopia. The only utopia in the world. A place where anyone, of any color, could get off a boat or a train with his suitcase in hand and not a cent in his pocket, and melt into the crowd. A city where, as soon as he'd set foot on its soil, this man could say, 'This is it. I'm home'" (Izzo, *Total Chaos* 205). Izzo's use of the word utopia—the French reads, "*Une utopie. L'unique utopie du monde*"—produces an excess of meaning that points to the underlying tension in the portrait of Marseilles it precedes (Izzo, *Total Khéops* 107). Thomas More coined the now commonplace neologism in the sixteenth century from two Greek words: *ouk*, reduced to *u*, meaning 'not' and *topos*, meaning 'place.' According to its etymological origins, 'utopia' carries the signification of a non-place, even as it has come to include the meaning of the second term created by More which is indistinguishable from the first in its pronunciation—'eutopia,' or, the 'good place' (Vieria 4–5). The result is that 'utopia' is always semantically torn, a word subject to this unavoidable duality, an exemplary place and one that cannot exist. The unreality of Izzo's Marseilles is perhaps never better exemplified than by his rendering of the city as effectively borderless, a place in which those barriers of access that characterize most European cities for refugees coming from the South are absent.

In contrast, Fadel's text shows Morocco's Mediterranean coast as a space defined by its borders, lines of demarcation that are at once both dangerously porous and stubbornly intractable. The manmade restrictions placed upon the novel's characters are ever-present, but the boundaries that most profoundly act upon them are figured through the intrusion of elements from the natural world that alternately compel and terrify. By creating an image of the Northern



landscape where the features of its environment evoke a sense of disgust in its residents, he effectively writes an inverse image of Izzo's Marseilles. Much as Fadel's head of the gendarmerie must focus less on probing social networks to discover criminals than on (hopelessly) attempting to prevent deaths at sea, communities are vulnerable less to the deceits and manipulations typically seen in noir than to a material environment unsuited to human habitation. This relationship of disaffection between characters and their geographic space is realized by Fadel's attention to the potential of the organic to elicit disgust, and the potential of disgust to stigmatize and determine the boundaries separating different groups or communities from one another. The scenes that follow demonstrate that while Izzo's Marseilles easily becomes home to anyone who finds themselves within city limits, in *Hashish*, Morocco's North continually challenges, alienates, and threatens those who live there.

The novel opens with a chapter of three pages that initially seem to have little to do with the interconnected story lines that will follow. Their function, however, is to position the antagonism between the novel's characters and the spaces they inhabit as the story's overarching frame. The first lines read:

Spring came suddenly and even the garbage blossomed. Small white flowers in which no one took interest grew between the cracks in the walls and under the wheels of broken down cars. . . . Swallows flew high at first. Black dots crossing a pure blue, their shrill cries doubled by the vastness of the sky. Their delicate wings trembled which, through the reflection of the sun's rays, sent forth intermittent silver beams of light. Then in a crazed flight they descended, licking people's heads while emitting their exuberant shrieks. (5)<sup>7</sup>

These initial lines introduce the specific affect of disgust that the coastal environment stimulates in its residents. As William Ian Miller has shown in his seminal inquiry into disgust, the emotion has an extraordinary capacity to stigmatize and mark off groups and persons as immoral or impure; it always contains some degree of menace as a result of its risk of contagion (194). The structure of disgust is comprised of a number of oppositions, such as inorganic vs. organic, plant vs. animal, human vs. animal, and at the core of each is the principle that the inorganic or synthetic rarely evokes disgust (Miller 38–39). Even within the organic world not all things hold an equivalent ability to upset those with whom they come in contact. Plants do not disgust as easily as animals, except perhaps when they bring to mind the primordial stuff of life, the overly fertile or fecund, or a special type of excess that contains both decay and the power of regeneration. It is this connection between death, decay, and the engendering of life that causes us a fundamental discomfort.

In the scene above, flowers bloom in the garbage producing an image of precisely that “generative rot” Miller describes. This particular quality of the

organic whereby life can spring from decomposition is only one of several of the categories of disgust upon which the passage touches. Equally at issue here is another of Miller's categories, moderation vs. surfeit or one vs. many. Just as one cockroach's potential to disgust is exponentially less than an assemblage of ten million, a single bird is rarely an object of aversion while the frightening potential of an unnaturally large flock, particularly if it breaks the conventional rules by which it should abide, is widely recognized (Miller 39).<sup>8</sup> The things that elicit disgust in Miller's terms and in the passage above bear an unmistakable affinity to the abject, which also transgresses the boundaries between states. The abject, like the disgusting, violates the firm lines we prefer to place between categories such as form/formlessness and life/death, causing an existential disruption. In Julia Kristeva's words, the abject "does not respect borders, positions, rules"; it "disturbs identity, system, order" (4).

The unnerving tone of the environment in *Hashish's* opening paragraph is achieved through its depiction of the breakdown of the boundaries between man and nature. The small flowers that infiltrate the cracks in people's homes and the industrial refuse of their abandoned vehicles could be innocuous but for the fact that they infringe upon territory where they do not belong, on the products of the industrial world, claiming them for nature like the frequent images of post-apocalyptic dystopian cities that have returned to the wild. The swallows then gain a potency as a horde that they could hardly possess individually. The disquieting aspect of the many—whether it be the proverbial angry mob, a swarm of insects, or a thick mass of overgrown weeds—is grounded in its status as "a large assembly of the low that has not been authorized by the high"; the low is most dangerous when it does not behave as it should (Miller 42). The swallows leave their proper domain in the sky to swoop down shrieking, grazing the heads of those on the ground. They are a literal threat here but also a sign of the compromised boundaries between the natural world and human civilization.

That crucial borders have been breached becomes more explicit as the passage continues to describe the strangest sign of the early spring: the shift in the behavior of a stray female dog who had been the neighborhood children's constant companion through the duration of the winter:

This sudden peculiar spring took other forms . . . the strangest of which: a black female dog who spent most of the winter in the company of the children . . . with no forewarning, she fell into a sitting position and wouldn't move despite the children petting her on the back for a long time and repeatedly pulling her up by the fur. As soon as they left her, she went back to the same pose, head between her legs, looking at them with dim pleading eyes, shattered like one bereaved, sad like a widow. That morning, she changed. The spring changed her. Her spring came in the form of a filthy male dog . . . (6)

Fadel's description relies on a rhetoric of anthropomorphic personification. A dog in heat is a normal enough occurrence, yet comparing this figure to a widow devastated by grief ventures onto troubling ground. Most psychological theories of disgust agree on the deeply rooted need human beings feel to repress any reminders of the vulnerabilities they share with animals, especially the certainty of death that exists for human and non-human alike (Rozin 761). Civilizations tend to suppress the baser origins shared by all of humanity, and those people who behave like animals are regularly a cause of disgust; animals too can unsettle if they blur the distinction between human and non-human too much or in ways whereby humans fare poorly in comparison.<sup>9</sup>

The female dog's depression lifts once the male dog arrives and at the outset the neighborhood is delighted by the pair as they trot through the quarter like horses. The mood changes, however, when the male dog mounts her in front of the children:

The young children became angry and cast all the stones of the alleys upon them. The dogs disappeared and the spring disappeared with them—the spring that had lasted for only a few days in which the dogs had crossed the alleyways spreading their small but extraordinary crazy joy. Days of blazing heat without precedent followed, its flames penetrating skin, coursing through veins, something portioned out of hell. (5–7)<sup>10</sup>

Reacting viscerally to the copulating dogs, the children intuitively recognize that they represent the collapse of the difference between nature and human civilization, and between the human and non-human as well, a distinction already diminished in the text through the strength of Fadel's figurative analogical connections. In the dogs' public fornication is a confrontational reminder not just of the untenability of human delusions regarding the "transcendence of the sex act" but additionally of all the banal bodily processes, including deterioration and death, that we share with other species and which disgust us first and foremost in ourselves (Miller 49). The violation of the taboo—the primal act in which the dogs engage without shame is shifted from the private spaces where it would be unremarkable to the public space of the alley—transgresses the elaborate system of social codes constructed around sexual practices that hold them separate from the instinctual acts crudely performed by species we consider of a lower order. This exposure of humanity's root animal nature threatens the children's sense of self, causing them to cast stones in an effort to banish the dogs and restore stability. Although the dogs leave, nature is not to be expelled so easily; with the dogs, goes the spring, replaced by an infernal heat.

These different ways that nature creates a response of disgust in the collective population of Morocco's Mediterranean coast establishes the discord that structures how they experience their environment. The work performed by this

three-page prologue is taken up in the chapters that follow, where Fadel moves to a strategy that is primarily relational. The hostility that defines his characters' interactions with their geography is transferred to the way his protagonists respond to each other, composed primarily of a series of misdirected acts of aggression catalyzed by envy and paranoia.

### Envy and Paranoia

As Sara Ahmed has demonstrated in a different context, emotions are often a political condition rather than a personal state, the result of the affective encounter between the singularity of the subject and the specificity of his or her political and cultural context.<sup>11</sup> This logic is central to *Hashish*, in which emotional responses do not ultimately originate in the characters' personal subjective feelings but are rooted in their marginalization from the system of combined interests that link the global economy and the Moroccan elite. Fadel foregrounds the less intentional and object-directed minor affects that Sianne Ngai analyzes in *Ugly Feelings*—envy, paranoia, and I would add abjection—to produce a set of aesthetic ambiguities that ultimately signify how the agency of the novel's characters is obstructed by global political and economic forces outside both their control and comprehension (20–1). As Ngai explains, these feelings lack the cathartic quality of the great “aesthetic emotions,” such as the interplay of fear and pity at the heart of Aristotle's discussion of tragedy in the *Poetics* (6). Not only will minor affects fail, by their very nature, to be followed by the restorative release of catharsis, but they also mislead as to their causes, often directing questions not outward toward the social world but rather toward the feeling subject. Like paranoia, which is necessarily linked to the question of whether it is a subjective delusion or an objective reality, envy—despite being the response to a “perceived inequality in the external world . . . —has been reduced to signifying a static subjective trait: the ‘lack’ or ‘deficiency’ of the person who envies” (Ngai 20–21). Consequently, envy seems unjustified even if the inequality on which it is based has a real and verifiable existence, carrying the same slippage between objective tangibility and subjective feeling as paranoia (Ngai 21). In *Hashish*, these affects are continually misdirected, creating a general sense of confusion and disorientation in the text.

At the center of the many instances of envy in *Hashish* is Miriam, herself first and foremost an object of misdirected desire, pointing to the confused emotional states of the novels' characters and the invisibility of the systemic forces responsible for their unhappiness. Her introduction in chapter two marks the beginning of the story proper. The three brothers of the Mubarek family—al-Hajj, Hasan, and the Philosopher—all desire her and perform subtle competitive acts of violence upon each other as a result throughout the text, their many betrayals comprising much of the novel's action. In *Hashish* human

ties are fragile, with few bonds remaining between the individual and country, the individual and family, or even the individual and the self. Just as the novel's frequent scenes of its characters' interactions with their lived environment are written in a register that mixes disgust with a discomfort bordering on fear, the relationships between characters, and in particular the three brothers, move uncomfortably between the flat and continuous emotional states of envy and paranoia. Hasan is the first to meet Miriam when he offers her his hand after she slips and falls in the street. He convinces her to come stay at his family's house by promising to help her emigrate to Spain, hoping that once he brings her to his family's home, she will forget her plans to leave the country and remain with him: "A woman is like a sparrow, all she needs is to come upon an appropriate nest and she'll settle there" (Fadel 13). While Hasan's aim is marriage, his brothers al-Hajj and the Philosopher become equally fixated, viewing Miriam as an object to be sexually exploited or saved respectively. Archetypal noir is structured around the figure of the femme fatale, a stock character defined by her independence and resistance to the confines of marriage and family. True to form, Miriam will not allow herself to be possessed or controlled by the men who desire her, preferring to risk her own destruction for the sake of potential autonomy. Without a word of explanation to anyone, she leaves suddenly after three days.

What follows Miriam's disappearance deviates from the genre's standard narrative structure. Generally, the detective's search for the missing femme fatale would occupy the storyline's central frame. In *Hashish*, though all of the novel's characters are affected by Miriam's absence, she is less the focus than a device to show the way in which they are alienated from each other. This is particularly true in regard to the three brothers. Hasan is struck by the ardent desire to find her and implore her to return, despite his conviction that she has stolen a large sum of illegally acquired money that he had planned to use to provide for their life together. Al-Hajj and the Philosopher are equally distraught by her absence though they, unlike Hasan, admit their obsessive thoughts to no one. Yet Miriam is far less important here than the emotions her absence causes the brothers to develop toward one another, emotions that point to their inability to locate the real source of their oppression.

The Philosopher's and al-Hajj's projections of desire for Miriam lead them to be both envious and suspicious of Hasan, feelings that Hasan returns in kind. Their mutual respective suspicions escalate into a paranoia consistent to some degree with Fredric Jameson's reading of conspiracy in *The Geopolitical Aesthetic*. In an interrogation of the conspiracy film genre, Jameson argues that characters' attempts to grasp conspiratorial plots serve as allegories for the invisible yet infinite networks of contemporary life (9). The essential difference here is that the three brothers who serve as protagonists in *Hashish*, rather than misread the nature of the totalizing system that controls their fate, fail to recognize the

possibility of a larger system at all, sublimating their paranoia onto each other instead. Each becomes the object of the other's suspicion as they begin to look for the agents of the numerous wrongs committed against them, real or imagined. Hasan, for instance, speculates that al-Hajj is responsible for the theft of the money he first thought Miriam had stolen: "I'm beginning to doubt al-Hajj . . . Could it be him? What do you think?" (143). Al-Hajj is no less paranoid in regard to Hasan. He compulsively fantasizes about Miriam as he lies in bed with a prostitute he uses as her substitute (171-5). While trying to remember Miriam's likeness, he cannot stop himself from suspecting that Hasan is hiding threateningly outside his room: "The idea that Hasan was about to appear behind the door again to try and confuse his plans pressed on him. Maybe he was dreaming. Even he could no longer distinguish" (174).

The brothers' continually misplaced feelings of envy and paranoia carry a range of significations. Weaker affects such as these are far less likely to lead to action than stronger emotions (Ngai 6-7). Anger often results in an act of retaliation in order to right a perceived wrong, but a lesser affective state like irritation, for example, rarely leads to a similar cause and effect; the rhetorical power of Fadel's reliance on these affects in *Hashish* is that the same qualities that disconnect them from vehement action are "precisely what amplifies their power to diagnose situations, and situations marked by blocked or thwarted action in particular" (Ngai 27). In this case it is the reader, rather than the characters themselves, who gains the ability to recognize the systemic forces behind their suspended agency. The characters' powerlessness in front of both local forms of poor governance and a larger global political and economic system that works to limit their individual mobility and stall their country's development for all but the elite is best articulated for the novel's audience by these feelings that indicate a continuous inaction and sense of "being withheld from doing" (Ngai 26). The brothers not only fail to confront any of the local or global systems responsible for their frustrations, they do not even properly concentrate their attention on the women in whom they are all interested. Instead, these affects repeatedly direct their focus back onto each other, enforcing stasis and insularity.

Set in the 1990s, the novels' events take place against the backdrop of a program of rapid modernization that excluded most of the country's population; they are also implicitly set against the enforcement of new European visa restrictions, responsible for the exponential increase in clandestine migration across the Strait. This context is signified not just by Miriam's determined search for an illegal trafficker but by the unending series of anonymous bodies washed to shore throughout *Hashish*.<sup>12</sup> Further references to the consequences of these broader shifts appear in the novel's background as asides or in the guise of minor characters; these moments and figures need to be read as signs that point to the source of *Hashish*'s protagonists' frustrations but which they,

themselves, inevitably miss. Hasan and the Philosopher are both unemployed, and Al-Hajj is a lawyer who has never been paid by the senior attorney for whom he works. Collectively they point to the same narrative of exclusion mobilized by the longstanding, if technically illegal, protest group, the "unemployed graduates movement," active since the early 1990s.<sup>13</sup> The state's ongoing failure to halt the continuing employment crisis is considered one of the primary ways it neglects its people. In *Hashish*, this acute socioeconomic problem is shown through the specificities of its consequences along the Mediterranean coast. Despite a university education, the brothers have no prospects outside of the illegal trade in hashish centered in the North with its traffic directed toward European markets across the sea. The city scenes encountered by the novel's characters reveal women sitting on the ground selling their goods smuggled from the Spanish enclave of Septa—cheese, butter, fabric, radios—then running to hide whenever the police drive by. Passersby clamor to see the bodies that have been washed to shore after failed attempts to cross to Spain: "corpses, corpses. They argue over the number: eleven. Sixteen . . ." (179-80). Once the summer tourists have left, the city is "an arena without fighters or spectators"; all that remains are the vendors hawking used clothes, half-asleep fishermen, shuttered kiosks and coffee shops, and beaches invaded by stray dogs—images of the generalized economic deprivation that comes from an economy that prioritizes tourism over the interests of its own citizens (180).

Minor characters who remain unnamed in the novel also work as clear references to the hard economic inequities that defined the lives of so many in Morocco in the 1990s and beyond. In one instance, al-Hajj finds an old illiterate man waiting for help at the law office where he works. His hands are covered in bandages, destroyed by his work processing phosphate: "his hands would be wrapped permanently, after the sulfuric acid in which they had been continually immersed gushed over them" (Fadel 59). Rather than seek recompense, he wants a certificate of disability, unable to understand that he needs a doctor rather than a lawyer. Though this character occupies little space in the text, he signifies a reality clear to any reader with a working knowledge of Morocco's economic landscape. The country owns half of the world's reserves of this nonrenewable resource and Morocco's economy is fueled by phosphate.<sup>14</sup> In what may seem a minor moment embedded within *Hashish's* larger plot, Fadel raises the specter of the often dramatically uneducated labor pools that support the mines in underdeveloped towns like Khouribga, among the most vulnerable and exploited people in the country. By addressing these issues through scenes that are peripheral to the story's main events, Fadel replicates his major characters' inability to focus their attention on the greater forces that govern their lives within the narrative's structure. These tangible reminders of socioeconomic change complement the accumulation of affective states characterized by lack of agency. That so many of these feelings then get their proper

objects wrong means that we have to look elsewhere for the real sources of the protagonists' envy, paranoia, and alienation. This is nowhere more the case than with the brother called the Philosopher, to whom the feelings with the most consistent misdirection—and those most unsure of their target—belong. In the following scene featuring this character, the affects discussed up to this point work together to produce a cogent picture of a society in which productive action is impossible, illustrating Fadel's strategic choices more clearly than any other single moment in the novel.

### **A Key Scene Culminating in Abjection**

After Miriam disappears, Hasan conquers the resistance of a reluctant shop owner and buys the man's beloved parrot as a kind of compensation for her absence. While the three brothers walk home, Hasan swings the bird's cage triumphantly "as if he's returning from battle" (49). The parrot is swept along with the cage's rises and falls. Echoing his personification of the dogs in the novel's introductory chapter, Fadel once again destabilizes the boundaries between human and non-human animal by including the parrot's perspective: "[the bird] didn't know if a storm or an earthquake had struck the cage, his eyes were frightened, his curved beak half open" (49). Watching Hasan, the Philosopher thinks to himself that their family does not care for parrots, cats, or dogs, considering them animals that pollute whatever home they enter. He concludes, "Hasan bought the parrot because he doesn't like it, like someone buying something very bitter or rat poison" (49-50). These feelings of aversion are more reflective of the Philosopher's sentiments than Hasan's, however, as becomes evident one morning when the Philosopher is woken by the parrot's voice. From his bed he hears the parrot on the house's roof repeating Miriam's name. He ascends to the top of the house twice but each time the bird falls silent upon his arrival, chanting her name again once he withdraws. Finally there is the following confrontation:

For a moment they looked like two adversaries staring each other down. The philosopher said that he didn't want the bird to utter her name in front of him. The parrot shook his head like a *faqih*<sup>[15]</sup> who had mixed up his Qur'anic verses. The philosopher bet that he could shut the animal's mouth before he uttered it again. He was struck by the fever of winning the bet, the greed for control, and in minutes the parrot's mouth was muzzled. He beat his wings against the bars of the cage, turned in all four directions, and let out a scream that no one could hear. The philosopher stepped back, his enthusiasm ignited: "Now talk, now open your mouth." He attacked the bird again, took him out of his cage and plucked his feathers while shouting in his face: "Now scream, scream if you can." Feather by feather until all that remained was the crest on its head. He was naked, more naked than when his mother



bore him. His size had diminished and he had become hideous, like something sickly, like a piece of boiled meat with eyes and claws. The more he looked at his ridiculous appearance, the more his contempt for him grew. (78)

This act of aggression is several layers removed from a legitimate recipient. The parrot is a substitute for Hasan, yet even the Philosopher's feelings toward his brother are already off the mark. Mirroring these substitutions are the likely misreadings of the initial envy itself. Like most of *Hashish's* characters, the Philosopher's envy would first seem to be grounded in his lack of what Hasan has. Hasan's displays of proprietary behavior toward Miriam provoke his brother despite the fact that they are essentially groundless; it is also the Philosopher who stole Hasan's money, adding another more material aspect to his desire for what he imagines to be his brother's possessions. While Ngai's discussion of envy is in relation to cases where its misinterpretation is closer to the surface—most notably in her close reading of the movement from admiration to antagonism in Barbet Schroeder's *Single White Female*—her broader claims have implications for how we read this moment in *Hashish*. For her, while it is the most manifestly political of the minor affects, its political function is inevitably obscured: “Moralized and uglified to such an extent that it becomes shameful to the subject who experiences it, envy also becomes stripped of its potential critical agency—as an ability to recognize, and antagonistically respond to, potentially real and institutionalized forms of inequality” (Ngai 129).

While envy generally conceals the real disparities that are its cause, here it is not just the outside observer who would fail to recognize the actual injustices at the core of the Philosopher's feelings of envy; the Philosopher himself fails to recognize them. He does not know why he despises the parrot or why he finds its utterance of Miriam's name intolerable; nor does he know why he has stolen Hasan's money, which he offhandedly claims he will return once Hasan, who has gradually become unhinged, has regained his reason (Fadel 185). The more accurate causes of the brothers' continual frustration and poorly defined feelings of longing for what they think others have can either be located in the symbolic function of Miriam's character—representative of the many seeking passage as a result of their marginality within their home country—or are positioned in the background of the central storylines. Like the phosphate worker and descriptions of material neglect characteristic of Morocco's Northern cities focused exclusively on tourism mentioned above, or the elided large-scale urban renewal projects that loom large over *Hashish's* geography, Fadel's references to the most severe of Morocco's socioeconomic problems are immediately legible to a reader familiar with the country.

If the parrot is an inappropriate target for the Philosopher's antipathy, it is hardly a randomly chosen substitute; it disturbs for the same reason the fornicating dogs discussed earlier cause discomfort. With its ability to mimic the

human voice, the parrot easily crosses the threshold between the animal and human. It shows how readily assimilable the human is to the animal realm, recalling the ultimately threatening quality of the natural world that recurs throughout the novel. During the confrontation, the Philosopher deliberately transforms the bird into an unmistakable object of disgust, as the more animals physically remind us of the vulnerability of human bodies, the more likely we are to find them disgusting: “worms, mole rats, pigs, plucked chickens” are far worse than tigers or gazelles (Miller 49). Once the parrot has been plucked, reduced to “a piece of boiled meat with eyes and claws,” the greater the Philosopher’s contempt grows. Moments later he snaps its neck and removes its heart from its breast, which he proceeds to keep in his pocket for the rest of the novel like a talisman. When he momentarily loses it, he attributes his poor luck to the loss: “He put his hand in his pants’ pocket to find that the parrot’s heart that he had put there had disappeared. So, things hadn’t been going as they should because the heart was lost” (Fadel 144). He is panic stricken until he finds it again. The parrot, or more precisely the parrot’s heart, embodies the abjection at the center of *Hashish’s* protagonists’ interactions with their home country. The abject, according to Kristeva, is that which is both rejected and “from which one does not part” (4). It is a disruptive force that is at its most powerful when experienced as a foundational loss within the self. For *Hashish’s* characters, a sense of integration and belonging in their homeland is a deeply rooted lack or need that cannot be fulfilled. The philosopher’s feelings toward the parrot—and its heart in particular, with all the connotations that that particular organ implies—reveal the dual nature of the relationship that all of *Hashish’s* characters have with Morocco, a “composite of . . . condemnation and yearning” (Kristeva 10). The philosopher is repelled by the parrot and wants to destroy it but refuses, or is unable, to rid himself of it completely. Its perpetual remainder, its heart left to dry in the sun until it shrinks to the size of a raisin, is carefully preserved and protected, kept on his body at all times, a palpable reminder of a fundamental loss, the breakdown of all the bonds most basic to human life.

## Conclusion

In Izzo’s trilogy, Marseilles’ middle classes see the Mediterranean Sea as “dirty, the source of vice, and plague,” which means, in a move typical of the novels’ underlying idealism, that it is happily “left to the poor,” with the harbor standing in as the immigrant children’s playground (*Total Chaos* 193-94). This vision, positive despite its dark undertones, defines the series to the end. By the conclusion of *Total Chaos*, Montale has lost his two closest childhood friends and girlfriend to the violence and corruption that plague the city. His substantial personal losses notwithstanding, the novel ends by reaffirming the city’s mythologized status through a synopsis of its founding:

At last Marseilles was revealed. From the sea. The way the Phocian must have seen it for the first time, one morning many centuries ago. With the same sense of wonder. The port of Massilia. I know its happy lovers, a Marseilles Homer might have written about Gyptis and Protis. The traveler and the princess. . . . It was time for the city to burst into flame. White at first, then ocher and pink. A city after our own hearts. (248)

The story Izzo invokes here claims that in 600 BC sailors from the Greek city of Phokaia cast anchor near Marseilles' then desolate ground. They asked permission to settle the land from the area's ruler. When the king's daughter, Gyptis, saw the Greek crew's leader, Protis, she immediately chose him for a husband, and the Greeks were given the right to found the city, which would be known as Massilia in the ancient world. This vision of Marseilles that closes the narrative secures the city's pedigree through the unequivocal assertion of its classical heritage. Whatever its cosmopolitanism, it must remain Western at heart. *Hashbish's* end takes a different tack. The sea is no less a character for Fadel than it is in Izzo's trilogy. In *Hashbish*, however, it is dark, menacing, and unceasingly "spits out corpses" from places like Beni Mellal in Morocco's center, Oujda and Berkane in the North East, and places left unknown (Fadel 122). By the novel's end Miriam will suffer the same fate, the victim of an especially brutal failed crossing. Her thoughts before she embarks provide an effective contrast to Izzo's image above, an encapsulation of the different aesthetic responses the Mediterranean demands: "As for that spot of land to which she was bidding farewell, it would remain there, folded in on itself, crushing its people, all of them together, devouring the old and the young, taking both its strong and weak as its prey" (292).

## Notes

1. 42, my translation from the Arabic.
2. Smolin credits Nur al-Din Binsalih Zarfawi's *al-'Asafir tubajir lakay ta'ish* [Birds Migrate to Live] (Qurtuba, 1995) as the first novel of the genre and notes that "there are at least thirteen Arabic and eighteen Francophone novels—in addition to dozens of short stories—devoted to the theme" ("Burning the Past" 76).
3. See, for example, Hamdouchi's *The Final Bet*.
4. Zemni and Bogaert refer specifically to the implementation of an International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank initiated Structural Adjustment Plan, a market-oriented reform that led to a "geography of uneven development": they explain, "Neoliberal reform, whether in Morocco or elsewhere, entails the increase of capitalist class power over subaltern classes and their social interests" (404). In Morocco, this translated to a symbiotic relationship between neoliberal restructuring and domestic economic exploitation at the hands of those connected to the monarchy. For a detailed analysis of the social, economic, and political effects of this shift, see Zemni and Bogaert, as well as Catusse.

5. The novel has, however, been translated into French *Hashish*) by Huguette Devalière and Francis Gouin; this version is published by Afrique Orient (Casablanca, 2011).
6. The TFZ has over 475 foreign and domestic companies working within its borders and is one of many such large urban development projects. It is joined to the Tangier Med Project, a new international seaport designed to be a redistribution center for international trade and connected to the TFZ. According to Zemni and Bogaert, it is “the flagship project and symbol of Morocco’s commitment to global market integration”: these projects demonstrate Morocco’s current priorities of real estate development, international trade and investments, offshore activities, and tourism (407).
7. All translations of *Hashish* from the Arabic are mine.
8. All the more so after the release of Hitchcock’s classic film in 1963, which exploited precisely the tension between two controlled lovebirds and vast flocks of mixing species.
9. This is theorized in some detail by Miller: “For all the concern to claim ourselves superior to animals and our horror that we are assimilable to them, there is a countervailing admiration and envy of them, a desire to live *up* to them. Their bodies do anything ours can do better and they do it ‘clothed.’ We have patches of hair; they have fur and feathers; if they aren’t clothed we are more likely to find them disgusting, they are more likely to remind us of us. Thus it is often easier to compare ourselves to worms, mole rats, pigs, and plucked chickens than to tigers. Human bodies are doubly damned. We disgust as (bad) animal bodies and as human bodies. No one is disgusted to think his or her body gazellelike or tigerlike” (49).
10. There is another complementary line of interpretation that could be offered here. The affective register with which Fadel works also evokes the early apocalyptic surahs of the Qur’an that depict the day of judgment as something marked by a series of inversions within the natural world. For example, Q 101/al-Qāri’ah (The Calamity): 4-5 states that the apocalypse will arrive with “A day humankind are like moths scattered / and mountains are like fluffs of wool” (Sells 112). These are resonances that would be easily recognizable to an Arabic reader.
11. This is the overarching theme of both *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* and *The Promise of Happiness*.
12. After the tightening of European visa restrictions in 1991, clandestine crossings increased dramatically; by 2002, as many as one hundred thousand were attempting to cross the Strait illegally each year (Smolin, “Burning the Past” 74).
13. One of the results of Morocco’s implementation of the Structural Adjustment Program in 1983 was a radical reduction in public sector jobs (Badimon 179-80).
14. The *Office Chérifien des Phosphates* (OCP) is still Morocco’s most important company. It has more than 300,000 employees, produces 3 percent of the nation’s GDP, and is responsible for almost 30 percent of its total exports (Catusse 2).
15. A *faqih* is a professional reciter of the Qur’an.

## Works Cited

- Ahmed, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York: Routledge, 2004. Print.
- . *The Promise of Happiness*. Durham: Duke UP, 2010. Print. al-Shābbi, Faḍīlah. *al-ʿAdl*. Tūnis, 2005. Print.
- Badimon, Monserrat Emperador and Koenraad Bogaert. “‘The State owes us a future’: The Framing of ‘Exclusion’ by Protest Movements of the Unemployed in Morocco.” *From Silence to Protest: International Perspectives on Weakly Resourced Groups*. Ed. Didier
- Chabanet and Frédéric Royall. Surry: Ashgate, 2014. 175–92. Print.
- Catusse, Myriam. “Morocco’s Political Economy: Ambiguous Privatization and the Emerging Social Question.” *The Arab State and Neo-Liberal Globalization: The Restructuring of State Power in the Middle East*. Ed. Laura Guazzone and Daniela Pioppi. Ithaca: Ithaca P, 2009. 185–216. Print.

- Colla, Elliott. "Anxious Advocacy: The Novel, the Law, and Extrajudicial Appeals in Egypt." *Public Culture* 17.3 (2005): 417–43. Print.
- Fāḍil, Yūsuf. *Ḥashish*. al-Dār al-Bayḍā': Nashr al-Fanak, 2000. Print.
- Ferri, Sandro. "Towards a History of Mediterranean Noir." *The Europa World Noir Reader: A Tribute to International Crime Fiction*. New York: Europa, 2012. 17–29. PDF e-book.
- Fortin, David T. "Philip K. Dick's Urbanism: Towards Psychospacial Readings of Science Fiction." *Writing the Modern City: Literature, Architecture, Modernity*. Ed. Sarah Edwards and Jonathan Charley. London: Routledge, 2012. 127–45. Print.
- Guyer, Jonathan. "The Case of the Arabic Noirs." *The Paris Review: The Daily*. The Paris Review, 20 April 2014. Web. 7 July 2015.
- Hamdouchi, Abdelilah. *The Final Bet*. Trans. Jonathan Smolin. New York and Cairo: American U in Cairo P, 2008. Print.
- Izzo, Jean-Claude. *Garlic, Mint, & Sweet Basil: Essays on Marseilles, Mediterranean Cuisine, and Noir Fiction*. Trans. Howard Curtis. New York: Europa, 2013. Print.
- . *Total Chaos*. Trans. Howard Curtis. New York: Europa, 2005. Print.
- . *Total Khéops*. Paris: Gallimard, 1995. Print.
- Jameson, Fredric R. *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1995. Print.
- Kristeva, Julia. *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*. Trans. Leon S. Roudiez. New York: Columbia UP, 1982. Print.
- Let it Come Down: The Life of Paul Bowles*. Dir. Jennifer Baichwal. Perf. William S. Burroughs, Cherifa, Mohammed Choukri, Allen Ginsberg. Zeitgeist Films, 2003. DVD.
- Miller, William Ian. *The Anatomy of Disgust*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1997. Print.
- Ngai, Sianne. *Ugly Feelings*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 2005. Print.
- Rozin, Paul, Jonathan Haidt, and Clark R. McCauley. "Disgust." *Handbook of Emotions*. Ed. Michael Lewis, Jeannette M. Haviland, and Lisa Feldman Barrett. New York: Guilford, 2008. 757–76. Print.
- Sells, Michael. *Approaching the Qur'an: The Early Revelations*. Ashland: White Cloud P, 1999. Print.
- Smolin, Jonathan. "Burning the Past: Moroccan Cinema of Illegal Immigration." *South Central Review* 28.1 (2011): 74–89. Print.
- Smolin, Jonathan. "Didactic Entertainment: The Moroccan *Police Journal* and the Origins of the Arabic Police Procedural." *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45.4 (2013): 695–714. Print.
- Smyth, Edmund. "Noir Cityscapes: An Introduction." *Romance Studies* 25.2 (2007): 83–84. Print.
- Vieira, Fátima. "The Concept of Utopia." *The Cambridge Companion to Utopian Literature*. Ed. Gregory Claeys. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2010. 3–27. Print.
- Zemni, Sami and Koenraad Bogaert. "Urban Renewal and Social Development in Morocco in an Age of Neoliberal Government." *Review of African Political Economy* 38.129 (2011): 403–17. Print.

**Gretchen Head**, gretchen.head@yale-nus.edu.sg and <https://gretchenhead.com>, holds a PhD in Arabic literature from the University of Pennsylvania. She has been a Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow in the Department of Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley, and is currently an Assistant Professor of Literature in the Humanities Division at Yale-NUS College in Singapore. She has a longstanding interest in space and representation, particularly in the relationship between aesthetics and marginalized geographies. She has published related articles in the *Journal of Arabic Literature*, *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, and *Portal 9: Stories and Critical Writing about the City*. She is coeditor (with Nizar F. Hermes) of the forthcoming *The City*

*in Arabic Literature: Classical and Modern Perspectives* (Edinburgh University Press) and is working on a monograph that addresses the intersection of space, identity, and genre in Moroccan literature in Arabic (fourteenth to twentieth centuries).