In the aftermath of the World Trade Centre bombing, Bayoumi writes about his reception by airport customs officers... and the implications of immigration, movement and displacement.

I fear flying. The reason is simple, and it has nothing to do with a fear of the air or of being airborne. In a sense I was myself born, my parents both coming from Egypt, and me being born in Switzerland, then transplanted to Canada, now studying in the United States. My fear remains on the ground, neither sacred nor sublime. It rests on those points of departure, within those little private cities that spot the globe, on the outskirts of major centers. If you are suspected long enough of something, you will eventually believe yourself guilty of it. In a Western airport—those are the airports I know best—I am the invisible terrorist. I do not know exactly when this metamorphosis takes place, whether it occurs somewhere on the way, in the train or the car, or with my first step into the airport (after passing through walk-through devices of metal-detecting equipment). Or perhaps it occurred sometime earlier, during the 1970s, entering my body like a dormant and undetected virus, only to bloom with my facial hair. Regardless, it has arrived (and continues to arrive) at unscheduled times and with all the extra baggage that such an arrival portends.

by Moustafa Bayoumi
The radical quality of the event is evident at the time of its happening, before it becomes history, when it is still in a kind of premeditated, unmotivated state. Here, too, much information does not destroy meaning: rather, there are too many crucial points in the shell gafa; but giving way to the line the state tells us. Their profound disruption comes not so much from their violence as from their element of surprise. The producers of meaning are surprised and are caught with their pants down. The system will have to work overtime, producing meaning (memories, characters, histories) out of an event in order to compensate for their lack of presence and power. This little has to do with finewiki and even less to do with monthly, but it has everything to do with perspective. The royal machinery looks from top down, like the hundreds of thousands of stories flown over Iraq during the War, and this perspective becomes valorized. A way of viewing the world. For others, perspective is limited to those things besides ourself, in greater and greater circles but with no centering point. To look from top down or from bottom around—these are the options. To be a helicopter or a tail cab. To be a hack or a mule. This is not just about movement, not even about the speed of movement. It is about the simultaneity. This has little to do with finewiki and even less to do with monthly. This is the system of social control. This justice sys-

What then does it matter, say, what passport I have? Identification are even easier to counterfeit than passports. My passport marks me nationally (I am what they call a natural-ized citizen), but these silly security acts at airports know that nomenclature is far deeper than passports ever will be. And if the name finally blithely flies they too can be naturalized and neu-tralized. It is a good look at the face. I must admit, I don't often remember their faces, the whiteness usually only reflecting the garish airport lighting, and I can only speculate what they remember of mine. Their expressions, though, remain. It is a little drama that is played out every time, with varying degrees of melodrama (different countries, after all, produce different schools of acting), but repeated so often as to produce and reproduce its own absurd theatre of cruelty. The movement to suspicion is something I so often see now that I don't fall victim to it, I become suspicious.

February 20, 1983. An explosion tears into the concrete fabric of lower Manhattan. Unforeseen, unpremeditated, this event in the social fabric of corporate America threatens the media machine's ability to produce information and to monopolize the production of meaning. This event is itself charged with too much meaning, too lit information. Anyone could have done it, for too many reasons. Within minutes multiple meanings are thrown into circulation--Soilbays, Pakistanis, Bretonians--the lack of a single mean-

Armed forces, which at one time seemed almost obsolete with one-close nuclear missile technology have become today's travelers.

In the sedentary world, movement has become something almost purely existential. The travel, generally, is for the purpose: tourism for travel in memory of colonialism and in hopes of placing себя. The title that these people have been given is one of care. The Badouins on the other hand live apart from the community. They are alone in the country and remote from militaries They have no walls or gates Therefore they provide their own defense and do not enter into it or rely upon others for it They always carry weapons They watch carefully all sides of the road They take hummer pipes only when they are together in company or when they are in the saddle They pay attention to the most distant and noisy They go alone into the desert guided by their fortitude putting their trust in themselves Foritude has become a character quality of theirs and to give them they use this or that or rose to the occasion When sedentary people mix with them in the desert or associate with them in a journey their own they cannot do anything for themselves without them. This is an observed fact Their dependence extends even to knowledge of the country the directions water crossing maps, who is a man of the customs and the things he has become used to He is not the product of his natural disposition and temperament. The conditions to which he has been accustomed since he have become for him a quality of character and matters of habit and custom have replaced his natural disposition. If one studies this in human beings one will find much of it and it will be found to be a correct observation.
In the sedentary world, movement has become something almost purely symbolic. The world becomes three-dimensional—and on purpose. Travel, in memory of colonialism and in hopes of placing oneself on postcards.

Armies, which at one time seemed almost obsolete with one-fingered nuclear missile technology, have become today's travelers.

Like rats, everything about this cost of characters was dark, hidden, and, like the bomb explosion, underground. At least since the Gulf War, we know that this underground quality marks it as separate from the royal machinery. This has little to do with fineweight and even less to do with morality, but it has everything to do with perspective. The royal machinery looks from top down. Like the hundreds of thousands of stories flown over Iraq during the War, and this perspective becomes vulnerable. A way of viewing the world. For others, perspective is limited to those things beside oneself, less greater and greater circles but with no centering point. To look from top down or from bottom up—these are the options. To be a helicopter or a tail car, to be a hawk or a mole.

This is not just about movement, not even about the speed of movement. It is about the perspective. This has little to do with weighty and even less with importance, but it has everything to do with movement, as the royal machinery looks from top down.
In the sedentary world, movement has become something almost purely symbolic or purely trifling: politicians travel for no real purpose, tourists travel in memory of colonialism and in hopes of placing themselves on postcards. Armies, which at one time seemed almost obsessed with longrange missile technology, have become today's travelers. Opposite those movements are the movements of immigrants, refugees, exiles. Nor wonder they drive you round and around the city. They show how to move a life.

I am looking at a picture of my mother, dated June 23, 1956. A significant date. Significant not only because it was exactly one month before Gamal Abdel Nasser nationalized the Suez Canal. (War would come later, and my mother told me how she and her classmates in this school of pharmacology wanted to do something to help and worked as voluntary nurses in the hospitals around Cairo—working for the new nation, caring for the wounded.) In this picture, my mother is a scant twenty years old. Younger than I am now. There is another woman in the photograph, behind my mother, waiting her turn, cradled in widow's black. My mother, at the table, in dark glasses and rolled up sleeves, is writing on a piece of paper. She tells me, "This small photo documents the first time women had the vote in Egypt." My mother, in Upper Egypt, voting on a forgotten referendum in the constitution. Eight, nine, some of these suits and ties, most wearing the more traditional gubayyaa, are watching the two women.

Egypt is the fiction, a popular chose d'etat looking for legitimacy in the ballot box. The men in the suits are most likely outsiders to the region, government officials overseeing the election. Everything is cooked in this picture. A consensus between traditional and Western ways. Some observers may want to see the juxtaposition between my mother and the widow as that between the West and Islam; just take a look at the clothes. Yet each of these women is doing nothing but reifying herself to all the codes around, both new and old. A society in transition, everything in Egypt of this moment is being contested. But this is hardly unique to new nations. All societies are in a constant state of flux, the constellations between codes and values a daily phenomenon.

Structures of authority exist in order to lay order, to produce the codes by which things make sense. The state, visited religions, as well as university semantics all rationalize their orthodoxy. I can well believe that a certain kind of brain can produce, as can all orientations, a rational code in order to produce what is in effect an irrational event. And after the fact? More rational, refining of codes and definitions. What a refrain of living! Don't do anything for me after you have read this. You won't find me. I will be saying on those dangerous trains with the brilliant sight of an age; I will be growing with the voice of a lion at the border gate; I will be biding injuries of the wounded with my rough and salty tongue. I will be growing against your codes, and will jump without any warning.

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A symposium featuring Cathy Busby, Bridget Brown and Thyrza Nichols Goodve.

THYRZA NICHOLS GOODVE

"Memories—light the corners of my mind, misty water colour memories—of the way we were"

Barry Steenkamp

If one's memory of any given situation is multiform and its many forms are situated in place and time from the perspective of the present... memory has a history, or more precisely histories. The claim that memory is historical is itself subject to shifting historical boundaries.

Nathalie Zemon Davis

The truth is, memory is a loaded concept to engage, framed as it is from the residue of wounded time. As such, the memory which any storey of memory has to wrestle with is that of slipper, elliptical, quite fragile susceptibility of memory to time and experience. While infinitely retrospec
tive—memory, the sense of a self—often reinvests its identity and style from its life in the pre
sent, a present understood to exist only because of its ability to be read within the horizon of this undivided past. Rather than a handy container we have going back, but it is what makes memory such a compelling category for cultural analysis. I've begun to be interested in the per
cussion of it as a sacred form (memory as redemptive, capable of saving the individual or the culture) the manner in which it has become profound, nearly a probability or blasphematic threat (memory as suspect, sickening, uncreative because of its vulnerability to interpretation).

At the end of the 18th and beginning of the 20th century, memory was the major dimension of literary modernism (Joyce, Woolf, Proust), and cul
tures (Bergson, Freud), yet in Fredric Jameson's depiction of the present, it is one of the very relics of the past whose loss marks the passing into post
madernism. As he puts it, it is the "wearing of the great high modernist thematic of time and temporality, the elegiac mysteries of distance and memory"