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28. Migration, Food, Memory, and Home-Building

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Everything which is eaten is the food of power.

Elias Canetti, *Crowds and Power*

The relation between home and food is an essential one. Its ideological power is constantly exhibited in various items of everyday life such as the status of the “homemade” on the food market. That a quiche, for example, is labeled “homemade” at one’s local delicatessen distinguishes it from the mass-produced. It makes it ooze that specifically homely goodness: intimations of sound nutrition, careful choice of ingredients, and careful labor (of love). That is, it becomes a bit of “mother’s cooking”—which, at an important level, is, of course, a continuation of breast-feeding, the most homely of the homely yearnings and fantasies. In much the same vein, the myth of being handed a “mother’s mouthful,” *lu’mit ’umm*,¹ is among the most powerful gendered structuring themes of the yearning for *lib-blehd* or *blehdna*, “the national home,” “our national home,” or “back home,” among the Lebanese in general, and certainly among Lebanese migrants in Sydney. The yearning for a “mother’s mouthful” is one and the same as the yearning for “back home.” Both yearnings involve a specific form of remembering of an imaginary state of well-being.

This essay aims to emphasize that diasporic nostalgia as a memory of “back home” should not be always treated as a form of homesickness. Homesickness is, as its name suggests, a sickness: a state where one’s memory of back home plays a debilitating function and produces a state of passivity, where the subject is unable to “deploy” himself or herself in the environment in which he or she is operating. This is why nostalgia should not be conceptually collapsed with home-sickness as it can readily be conceived in a far more positive light as an enabling memory.

Far too often, the collapsing of all migrant yearning for home into a single “painful” sentiment is guided by a “miserabilist” tendency in the study of migration that wants to make migrants passive pained people at all costs.

Of course, that nostalgia can take the form of homesickness is clearly the case. This is especially so since diasporic nostalgia is often grounded in an experience of disempowerment, in the sense of an experience of an *inability* to do certain things: inability to speak properly, inability to direct oneself, inability to socialize, and so forth. This is made clear in the introduction to Hamid Naficy’s well-known work, *The Making of Exile Cultures*, in which he associates his nostalgic memories of separation from the homeland with “the separation from the native language and the control one has in using it—a control that is gradually diminishing.”² It is useful to interpret this state of homesickness, from a Bourdieuan perspective, as a state emanating from a dysfunctional habitus, that is, a habitus that finds itself unable to strategize and improvise in the face of a radical newness. Homesickness, in this sense, inserts itself in the unbridgeable fissure opened between the self and the environment when a person finds themselves unable to act. One takes refuge in the memories of the past from the potentially traumatizing encounter with the present. This is perhaps the difference between having memories and inhabiting them. Homesickness is a case of the latter. Nostalgia on the other hand, as will be emphasized here, is an active insertion of memory in the construction of the present and the future.

This essay is based primarily on interviews conducted with Lebanese migrants, mostly living in suburbs around the city of Parramatta (west of Sydney), on the role of nostalgic memories of food in Lebanon in their attempts to make themselves feel at home in Australia. I will begin by analyzing the general process of migrant home-building. I will then examine more specifically the practices of home-building associated with food. Finally, I will move to an examination of the nature of food centered intercultural transactions between the dominant culture and migrants.

On the Nature of Homes and Home-Building

Émile Benveniste, in his seminal work *Indo-European Language and Society*, gives a documented historical substantiation of the common saying “a house is not a home.” He differentiates between the linguistic roots of the conceptions of “home as family,” that is, as an affective social unit, and “home as construction,” or what we refer to as house.³ In this sense, home-building is not necessarily the equivalent of house building or domestic space building, but can be. House building does not necessarily include the attempt to build oneself a familial, comforting, and “homely” space and home-building does not necessarily involve house construction. It is on such a basis that I would like to suggest a definition of home-building as *the building of the feeling of being “at home.”* It is in this

sense that I am considering the home as an affective construct, an affective edifice constructed out of affective building blocks (blocks of homely feeling). I would like to suggest that for it to come into being, to be successfully erected as it were, this homely affective structure has to be built with affective blocks that provide either in themselves or in combination with others four key feelings: security, familiarity, community, and a sense of possibility or hope.⁴ These are the feelings that it is the aim of home-building to foster and maximize, to put together into a livable affective structure.

The feeling of security is of course one of the most basic feelings we aim to foster in our homely space. This feeling derives from the availability of what we consider necessary to the satisfaction of basic needs and from the absence of harmful threatening otherness. But this is not enough. For one can be in such a space without being in one's own homely space. A deeper sense of security and homeliness emanates from the space where we not only have but *feel empowered to seek* the satisfaction of our needs and to remove or exclude threatening otherness. That is, home is a place governed by what we consider to be "our law." We can feel secure where the law of the other rules, but we cannot feel at home. To be at home one has to feel, to a certain degree, a willful subject in one's home. This, for example, is the difference between a servant's and a housewife's belonging to a home. While both the servant and the housewife are subjected to relations of power and domination, under class and patriarchal relations, respectively, nevertheless, the housewife derives a sense of belonging and empowerment within the home that the servant cannot usually achieve.

The feeling of familiarity is generated by a space where the deployment of our bodily dispositions can be maximized, where we feel in possession of what Bourdieu would call a well-fitted habitus. Bourdieu defines habitus as embodied history but, to a certain extent, it is also embodied memory. Clearly, not every habitus operates in the spaces in which it has historically evolved and where it is most at home. It is because each habitus is endowed with what Bourdieu, following Spinoza, calls a *conatus*, a tendency to persevere in its own being, that a habitus will aim at home-building: the creation of the space in which its strategic dispositions can be maximized. This involves the creation of a space where one possesses a maximal practical know-how: knowing what everything is for and when it ought to be used. It also involves the creation of a space where one possesses a maximal spatial knowledge: knowing almost unthinkingly where one is, where one needs to go for specific purposes, and how to get there.⁵ This sense of implicit familiar knowledge implies spatial and practical control that in turn implicates the sense of security examined above. One need only consider the traumatic event of losing one's house keys to see how the event brings to the fore the anxiety associated with losing the capacity of spatial and practical control over the home.

The feeling of community is also crucial for feeling at home. Above all, it involves living in a space where one recognizes people as "one's own" and where one feels recognized by them as such. It is crucially a feeling of shared symbolic forms, shared morality,

shared values, and most importantly perhaps, shared language. A home is imagined as a space where one possesses maximal communicative power, in Bourdieu's sense—that is, the capacity to speak appropriately in a variety of recognizable specific situations. It is a space where one knows that at least some people—family or friends—can be morally relied on for help.⁶

Finally, and this is something often forgotten in theorizations of the home, a home has to be a space open for opportunities and hope. Most theorizations of the home emphasize it as a shelter, but, like a mother's lap, it is only a shelter that we use for rest before springing into action and then return to, to spring into action again. A space that is only a shelter becomes, like the lap of the possessive mother, a claustrophobic space. It loses its homely character.⁷ A home has to be an existential launching pad for the self. We must feel propelled by it. As such, a homely space is a space where we feel we are “going places.” It has to be open enough that one can perceive opportunities of “a better life”: the opportunity to develop certain capacities and skills, the opportunity of personal growth, and, more generally, the availability of opportunities for “advancement” whether as upward social mobility or emotional growth or in the form of accumulation of symbolic or monetary capital.

This notion of possibility is crucial in understanding all of these homely feelings. This is because homely structures are more an aspiration, an ideal goal guiding practices of home-building, than an existing reality; what propels people into home-building is precisely the recognition of a future possibility of more security, familiarity, and so forth. People experience homeliness to the extent that they live in an *approximation* of their ideal home. But their homes are never secure, familiar, or communal enough and never allow for as many opportunities as one yearns for. Homes are homely because they provide intimations of homeliness, hints of those feelings, and the possibility for more.

In what follows, I want to develop this notion of intimation as a definition of all those fragments that trigger a migrant's memory in the form of nostalgia and offer possibilities for homely feelings. I will provide examples of different kinds of intimations that are present in the social life of migrants. But unlike many theorists of diaspora, I will stress that not all intimations of homeliness are memories of lost homelands. From the moment of arrival into host nations, migrants encounter many intimations of new possibilities. I want to stress that, contrary to what is often believed, intimations of lost homelands, as well as, more obviously, intimations of “new homelands,” should be seen as affective building blocks used by migrants to make themselves feel at home where they actually are. They are part of the migrant's settlement strategies rather than an attempt to escape the realities of the host country. For migrants, that is, memory belongs to the construction of the future. It is only in certain pathological situations that memory becomes a form of entrenchment in the past.

If homely feelings are based on such intimations as I have described, home-building can then be seen as the practice of fostering these intimations and seeking more of them.

I will provide a more concrete example of the way this practice of fostering homely intimations is lived by Lebanese migrants in Australia, first in a general sense and then, more particularly, in the practices centered around food production and consumption.

Migrant Home-Building: The Fostering of Positive Intimations

In cultural studies, the analysis of migrant nostalgia has been concerned largely with its manifestations or absences in literature.⁸ This has led to an excessively intellectualist conception of the phenomenon.⁹ Not many works in cultural studies have aimed at examining the everyday-life discourse of nostalgia that accompanies the settlement of “non-intellectual” migrants in Australia or elsewhere, let alone perceived the implication of such nostalgia as an active or positive (in the sense of optimistic) form of home-building. Writings on migrant homes appear as if there are no migrants living in them.¹⁰ Commentators more often associate migrants with a nostalgia equated to homesickness.¹¹ In this sense, nostalgia is assumed to be the exact opposite of home-building: a refusal to engage with the present, and a seeking of an imaginary homely past as a hiding place from the present time and space. Migrants apparently are an essentially depressed mob.

My aim, then, is not to theorize migrant home-building by opposing it to memory and nostalgia or by displacing the latter’s importance in migrant daily life. Rather, I want to argue that nostalgic feelings are sought as a mode of feeling to do with the home where one is in the present. That is, nostalgic feelings are affective building blocks in the sense I have suggested. They are used by migrants to engage in home-building in the here and now.

Nostalgia is nothing more than a memory of a past experience imagined from the standpoint of the present to be homely. Clearly, nostalgic feelings abound not only in migrant life but in everybody’s life. They guide home-building in the present because one seeks to foster the kind of homely feeling one knows. And nostalgic feelings are invariably those homely feelings one remembers having experienced in the past. Thus, when one yearns for a communal life, one’s understanding of such a life is guided by the kind of communal feelings one remembers having had in specific situations in the past. This is why this yearning for homely communality translates into an attempt to build the past conditions of its production.

Such nostalgic homely feelings can be sought or triggered accidentally, but, far from being an escape, they are more often deployments actively fostered to confront a new place and a new time and to try to secure oneself a homely life within them. Consequently, the fostering of nostalgic feelings is one of the main aspects of home-building. It is only when faced with the impossibility of home-building that nostalgia can degenerate into a debilitating homesickness. This is why such a homesickness decreases the longer migrants reside in a new country. The length of stay translates into a more developed ability to

engage in home building, that is, among other things, to recognize and exploit new possibilities and opportunities for fostering nostalgic feelings.

Nostalgic feelings are experientially triggered. They can be triggered by an absence, what I will call a negative intimation, or by a presence, a positive intimation. Here is an example of a negative intimation that came up during an interview with a Lebanese man telling of his early days in Australia:

I had been here for around six months, and I was driving back home to Punchbowl from Liverpool, where I had gone to see the owner of a petrol station who had advertised for a job. I can't remember exactly where now, but it was pretty deserted. And I got this flat tire and I had no spare. I couldn't speak English . . . not that there were many people driving by. I started walking. Then it got dark and, as I was walking, I started to think of myself heading to the village. Sometimes when I returned late to the village from Tripoli, I used to have to take a bus that stopped a fair distance out of the way. So I had to walk the rest of the way home. But invariably I meet someone I know driving up and they give me a ride. And that's how I began to think of home. I started thinking that soon someone I know was going to turn up. I started remembering all the people with whom I took rides. I could even remember the details of their car, the sound of the horn, what they said to me. I got so engrossed by my thoughts that I really thought I was home. And when I heard a car coming I turned around hoping it will be . . . for some reason I just thought it was my brother. But it wasn't. . . . [He has a tear in his eye. The story he was telling happened ten years ago.] I had to walk all the way home. I arrived home around three o'clock. I couldn't speak to anyone the next morning. [He sighs] . . . *Su'bi el'hijra* [migration is a difficult thing].¹²

Here, nostalgia is triggered by a direct experience of lack of homely feeling of familiarity (lack of practical and spatial knowledge) and lack of communality (lack of recognition and the non-availability of help). As such, the nostalgic experience and the remembering triggered by it are both essentially depressive. It is the accumulation of this kind of nostalgia that produces states of homesickness.

Positive nostalgia, by contrast, is not necessarily induced by a direct experience of lack. It is triggered by a positive presence that comes to fill a passively and only potentially existing lack. That is, the person does not necessarily go around feeling that they lack something; rather, they encounter an object that creates both a yearning for a past homely experience associated with it and, in that very process, a feeling that the object was lacking. Thus, it is the positive encounter with a person, a sound, a smell, or a situation that offers an intimation of an imagined homely experience in the past, an experience of "back home." These intimations operate like "imagined metonymies" in that they are fragments

that are imagined to be traces of an equally imagined homely whole, the imagined past “home” of another time and another space.¹³

Below is a classical nostalgic passage published in the Lebanese Australian newspaper *El-Telegraph*. It is a populist poem written to invoke the experience of listening to the Lebanese singer Wadih El-Safi. No other male singer has ever reached the national superstar status of El-Safi. His songs and his voice have become part of Lebanese folklore. Because of constant broadcasting, as well as use in schools and on virtually any private or public occasion, Wadih El-Safi has become rightly known as the “Voice of Lebanon.” This makes listening to El-Safi a particularly suitable trigger of nostalgic feelings among Lebanese migrants in Sydney, and indeed across the world. What better “reminder” of the nation than the voice of the nation itself?

Sing O Voice of Lebanon and take us back through your voice to our homes.
Pull us out of here and deliver us from the tortured life of exile.

Sing to us of Lebanon, sing to us your hymns that make us adoringly kneel in
the shadows of the cedar tree. Sing to us our traditions, our forefathers . . . sweating
under the olive tree, and take us back to where we’ve known peace just as today we
know war.

Sing oh Wadih, return with us and let your music weave the web of memories
and hope, so that we remember the smell of early morning coffee as it brews, and the
sight of blessed grapes as they hang heavily from the vines on our homes’ roof-
tops . . .¹⁴

Like a taped message from relatives passed along by a recent arrival to Sydney, the voice operates as a conduit to the imaginary world of the homeland—as “back-home.” Song and music, in particular, with their sub-symbolic meaningful qualities,¹⁵ are often most appropriate in facilitating the voyage to this imaginary space of feelings. It is in this sense that they operate as *intimations* of the imagined homely nation left behind. The voice operates as an imagined metonym, in the sense that it stands in for a totality that does not and never has existed but is imagined as a homely totality from afar.

In the poem, it is important to stress that despite the rhetorical “Pull us out of here and deliver us from the tortured life of exile,” voyage is not invoked out of a desire to be home. Rather, this mode of delivery is a ritualistic “moaning” familiar in exilic cultures. Those who truly experience a tortured life of exile, like the man I interviewed, are unable even to “speak to anyone the next morning,” let alone sing about the need to be delivered from the life of exile. Positively experienced nostalgia does not necessarily involve a desire to “go back”; more often than not, the “Pull us out of here and deliver us from the tortured life of exile” is a desire to promote the feeling of being there *here*. One tries to foster intimations of homely feelings, of situations such as they are imagined to have been experienced in Lebanon: upholding familial law as one’s own law, surrounding oneself

with socially and culturally recognizable and pleasing objects, smells and sounds to promote specifically “Lebanese” feelings of security, owning one’s home, ensuring that one is surrounded by Arabic-speaking people, having family around, having familiar house decoration to promote Lebanese feelings of familiarity, creating Lebanese “neighborhoods” and Lebanese shopping centers, holding Lebanese parties to promote feelings of Lebanese communality—all of these are modes of fostering homely intimations.

It can be noticed ethnographically that some migrants show more interest in remembering than others. For some, what is at stake is not just specific memories but in the very practices of remembering “back-home.” In many migrant communities, one can note specific individuals who are “good at remembering back-home.” They become “priests” or “virtuosos” of memory and remembering who are asked on such occasions as community events and parties, to deploy their skills and publicly remember stories and events that happened back-home for the benefit of the collective.

But, let us stress one more time, the aim of all this remembering, whether by oneself or by others, is not to go back. By fostering these homely intimations, migrants provide themselves with a better base for confronting and launching themselves into life in Australia: by them, they build a shelter from “social and cultural crisis,” and also find a base from which to perceive and grasp Australian opportunities. It is in this sense that nostalgic feelings are used in the process of home-building in Australia. I will show this more clearly by examining practices of home-building centered on nostalgic feelings triggered in the production and consumption of Lebanese food.

Migrant Home-Building and Food

Part of the history of early Lebanese migration to Australia, like many early migration histories, is one of deprivation of familiar fruits, vegetables, and other ingredients. One of the interesting elements of this deprivation is the emergence of creative practices of substitution. Thus, even negative nostalgia does not necessarily lead to passive depression. One Lebanese who lived in Bathurst in the 1940s told this story:

Although some tahini arrived by boat every now and then, we used to go through long periods without it. Sometimes we used to really crave for tahini dishes. Finally, we improvised: either Mum or Dad, I can’t remember, probably inspired by the similarity between the texture of peanut butter and that of tahini, decided to grind some of it with garlic and oil and we used it as a substitute for tahini sauce with a grilled fish. Long after, when tahini became always available I used to sometimes crave for the peanut sauce!

In this climate, the very encounter with yearned-for fruits and vegetables triggered strong intimations of “home.” Home food not only provides intimations of security in filling a

basic need for nutrition in a culturally determined way, it also intimates familiarity in that one must know what to do with it, how to cook it, how to present it, and how to eat it. It thus promotes a multitude of homely practices for those who might otherwise face the unknowable (one thinks, for instance, of Salman Rushdie's description of an Indian migrant facing an English kipper in *The Satanic Verses*). Furthermore, food also provides a focus for practices of communality, especially in collective eating, whether in private or public spaces. In the interview that follows, a Lebanese woman tells an exceptionally graphic story of the homely intimations triggered when she encountered Lebanese cucumbers, of which the Australian Lebanese, except for some who managed to successfully grow them in their gardens, were deprived until the late seventies:

Nayla: It was incredible. I was visiting my sister who lived on the other side of the station. On the way back, I stopped to get some beans for dinner and here they were . . . I touched them . . . I held them in my hands. They were firm. It was like touching my mother [who lived in Lebanon]. Shawki, the shopkeeper, saw me, smiled, and nodded. "Yes . . . there's Lebanese farmers growing them down near Liverpool. No more mushy stuff." That's how we refer to the Australian cucumbers. I bought two kilos, although we were poor then, and they were very expensive. I ate one on the spot in the shop. Adel [her husband] used to say, almost everyday, how much he missed the taste of Lebanese cucumbers. When Adel came back from work that day, I made a tomato and cucumber salad with garlic and lemon because that's what I really felt like, and brought it to the table and said to him "close your eyes," and I put the plate in front of him. When he opened his eyes, he looked at the plate and it took him a little while to realize what I was making such a fuss about. And then . . . [she laughs]

Adel (laughing and interrupting): No don't tell him . . . it's very embarrassing.

Nayla: Yes . . .

Interviewer: Come on, you must tell me, what did he do?

Nayla (laughing): He got up, he kissed me and he started dancing and singing something like "*Ya 'ayn 'al khyar!*" [roughly: "Oh I love you cucumbers"]. [Everyone laughs.] It all sounds so silly now. But the cucumbers really made us happy. It was like reuniting with a close relative.

In this homely scene generated by the cucumbers, we see the nostalgic elements triggered by the cucumbers, but we also see how the practices of fostering intimations of being in Lebanon (represented here in the making of a salad by which the cucumbers yield their potential homeliness) are at the same time practices of home-building in the here and now. As with all practices of fostering intimations, these migrant practices of home-building are about providing a stable homely structure from which to access "a better life" in

Australia. This can be seen in a mild form in this short extract from an interview with a man whose use of Lebanese coffee after a period of deprivation made him not only more at home, but also better able to face his day:

I started making coffee in the morning like we used to have it in Lebanon. You know, *subhiyyeh* [early morning]. Whenever I have time to just sit down and drink it, I am immediately transported to our apartment in Beirut. . . . Initially, when I started having the coffee in the morning, I was noticeably different and happier at work, so much so that one of my workmates asked me, “How come you’re so enthusiastic these days John?” I said to him, “I’ve been drinking Lebanese coffee in the morning.” He looked at me, shook his head and said, “Bloody wogs . . . I don’t know . . .”

Just as food provided the basis for homely practices within the private sphere, it also provided the basis for practices of home-building in the public sphere, in particular, fostering intimations of homely communality. This is how an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, whose coverage of the food scene in Sydney dates from the immediate postwar era, describes the process: “As each wave of immigrants to Australia settled in, little knots of eateries, evocative of the old world, served as meeting places where lonely groups of migrants chatted in their native tongue and recreated the tastes of home.”¹⁶ An article in the same newspaper some twenty years earlier describes a more specific process involving the Ceylonese Tea Centre in the early seventies:

It isn’t surrounded by the neat green slopes of tea bushes—only the roar of Castlereagh Street Traffic—but it’s the nearest thing to home for the 5,000 or so Ceylonese who live in Sydney. . . .

At night, if there is a special occasion, the Ceylonese gather to eat food characteristic of their spice-rich island. . . . The Tea Centre invites Ceylonese wives to cook their favorite dishes for the celebration held at the restaurant.¹⁷

Although the tradition of public eateries has never been dominant among Lebanese migrants, village clubs have always provided an alternative and continue to do so: on weekends and special occasions, someone’s house or a hall is transformed into a “village party.” Men and women sit around large barbecues of grilled meats, chicken, and garlic. Often the party ends with a *dabkeh*, danced to the sound of traditional mountain shepherds’ music.¹⁸

Despite all the homeliness fostered by such private and public culinary practices of home-building, there was one expression of homely communality that, according to many older Lebanese migrants, remained minimal until the mid-seventies: culinary recognition by the dominant culture. Such appreciation of their food and other cultural forms by members of the dominant culture was, for migrants, a source of pride in social settings

where “Australians” had shown little recognition of “ethnic value.” Before the multicultural era, many culinary practices of home-building happened away from the “Anglo gaze”—the gaze of those positioned in the space of the dominant Anglo culture. There is an abundance of stories, told by the older interviewees, of eating secretly to avoid being seen by white Australians. One is of a Lebanese family’s backyard party for their son’s first communion in 1962:

Our neighbor, who had been quite friendly, looked from above the fence and was talking to my husband. Nagibeh was taking out a plate of *kebbeh nayyeh* [raw meat with crushed wheat pounded into a paste] and when she saw him, turned around straight back to the kitchen. She said she didn’t want the neighbor to think we were cannibals! My young sister, who’s always been a bit of a troublemaker [*mal’unekh*] took the plate from her hand and said, “Let him think what he wants.” She went out straight to him and said, “Would you like to try our raw meat?” Nagibeh hid her face with her apron! The neighbor looked at my sister and said, “Raw meat! I am going to call the police!” And he left. Nagibeh ran to my sister and said, “See, I told you! All you ever do is put us in trouble!” We all started talking at once, each proposing what we were going to tell the police, when suddenly the neighbor reappeared on the fence with a plate and said, “Well are you going to give me some of this meat or what?!”

Despite the specificity of this neighbor’s reaction, it is clear that the whole story is structured by an implicit fear of the Anglo gaze and its imagined rejection of the migrants’ food. It is this imagined gaze that was to be increasingly transformed by the advent of multiculturalism.

Of course, multiculturalism did not constitute a magical clean break with such a reality, and the official discourse of a move from monocultural assimilation to multicultural plurality exaggerates the before and after of this historical transition. Clearly, there were cross-cultural culinary interactions before multiculturalism. At the same time, the negative Anglo gaze has not totally disappeared—even today, as a number of interviewees indicated, kids in some schools are taunted about their “ethnic lunches.”

Conclusion: Diasporic Memory and Spatial Haunting

In this chapter I have emphasized the articulation of migrant memory of “back-home” through the active process of home-building that migrants engage in when they settle in a new country. I have pointed out that, in this sense, migrant memory is no different from any other memory to the extent that we all invest in memories of an imagined

pleasurable past to produce and construct a pleasurable present and the future. The specificity of migrant memory is that this attempt to construct the present is located in a space that marks a radical discontinuity with the remembered past. A fuller treatment of such memory would need to go into the effect of this spatial discontinuity. While all memories are relational and are fantasies of other times and other spaces, it can be argued that migrant memories articulate the relation between space and time in a unique way. It is well known that many migrants imagine their homeland to have remained exactly as they remember it being the day they left: to them, the past still exists in the present, but elsewhere. This “presently existing space of the past” skirts and sometimes even infiltrates everyday experiences as a “spatial haunting” specific to the diasporic condition. Diasporic memory, then, is more than something produced in the specific practice of remembering: it is a permanent spatial accompaniment to all experiences of the present.