Manifold Destiny

Karam, John Tofik

Published by Vanderbilt University Press

For additional information about this book
https://muse.jhu.edu/book/81970

For content related to this chapter
https://muse.jhu.edu/related_content?type=book&id=2786153
Acknowledgments

One’s destination may or may not be destiny. In Spanish and Portuguese, *destino* can mean destination and destiny. In Arabic, al-wijha is destination whereas al-qadr evokes a pre-determined destiny. Likewise, in English, destination is the end of a journey while destiny suggests one’s eventual fate. Notwithstanding the title, this book is neither a literal destination nor an actual destiny but rather a “history of the present” that I hope will soon take another, more progressive, direction that would make the story recounted in these pages the past of a future with greater equity, justice, and belonging. The research that resulted in this book began at a more optimistic time, in 2007 specifically. I completed most of the research by 2011, when it seemed that this hemisphere was headed for somewhere other than the conjunction where we now find ourselves. Over these years, I met and married my wife, and we welcomed into the world our daughter whose vibrant light gives me energy each and every day. I know not where we are bound for, but I am content that we are bound together.
I want to express my deepest gratitude to the entire community in Foz do Iguaçu and Ciudad del Este for making this research possible. Since most have been mentioned in the press, I decided to keep real names, except in cases of some private individuals for whom I use pseudonyms. I will be forever indebted to Mohamad Barakat and Fouad Fakih, who welcomed me at the border and introduced me to many of the protagonists in these pages. I also extend thanks to Mohamad Abu Ali, Adão Luiz Almeida, Amer A. S., Baina, Mihail Meskin Bazas, Rogério Bonato, Nasser Chamseddine, Nabil Chamseddine, Adnan El Sayed, Arielba Freire, Marcelle Ghies, Khaled Ghotme, Hector Guerin, Mhamad Mahmoud Ismail, Ricardo Jimenez, Sheik Taleb Jomha, Sheik Mohamad Khalil, Luiz Francisco Macchioratto, the late Juvencio Mazzarollo, Yusuf Nassar, Antônio Vanderli Moreira, Aluízio Palmar, Abdul Rahal, Ali Said Rahal, Hamad Rahal, Nadia Rahal, Fawaz Rahal, Ali Hussein Safadi, Faisal Saleh, Juan Carlos Salinas, Isam Saour, Antônio Sava­ris, Said Taigen, Fawez Tarabain, Wagner, Fatima Yahya, and Yahya. I want to express my sincere appreciation to countless others who I read about in the local border press. A special thanks to Alfredo Jalaf in Puerto Iguazú. In addition, I want to thank interlocutors in Asunción and Brasilia, including Talal AlDamasi, Coco Arce, Augusto Ocampos Caballero, Coronel Walter Felix Cardoso Junior, Bader Rachid Lichi, the late Dr. Luís Alfonso Resck Haидder, Daniel Nasta, Carlos Nuñez, Carlos Torres, Victor Torres, Reinaldo Penner, Armando Rivarola, and José Vidal.

The research that resulted in this work was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Fulbright Scholar Program, DePaul University, and the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. At DePaul University, I want to especially thank the Department of Latin American and Latino Studies, which provided institutional and moral support at the very start of this project. At the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, I express my gratitude to the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, the Humanities Research Institute, the Lemann Center for Brazilian Studies, and the Office of the Vice Chancellor for Research, which ensured the support that saw this project to the end. I am deeply grateful for the camaraderie and support of numerous colleagues and friends from both universities, especially...
Acknowledgments

Mary Arends-Kuenning, Raquel Castro Goebel, Camilla Fojas, Glen Goodman, Maria Gillombardo, Waïl Hassan, Marc Hertzman, Stephanie Hilger, Amor Kohli, Kalyani Menon, Chernoh Sesay Jr., and Lourdes Torres. I wish to extend heartfelt thanks to Luiz Loureiro and the entire Fulbright Commission in Brazil. At Vanderbilt University Press, I sincerely thank acquisitions editor Zachary Gresham and managing production editor Joell Smith-Borne for taking on this project and believing in this book. I want to extend my particular debt to the anonymous reviewers whose interventions improved the manuscript. I am especially indebted to Jerry Dávila and Jeff Lesser who read prior parts of this manuscript and who made critiques and gave reassurances without which I would have never persevered. Any shortcomings in the coming pages are of my own doing.

Other debts I owe to friends and colleagues in Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Lebanon, Paraguay, the US, and elsewhere. I thank Christine Folch, Lorenzo Macagno, Silvia Montenegro, Paulo Pinto, Fernando Rabossi, and Caroline Schuster for their camaraderie and support at the border. I thank the staff at the Biblioteca Pública Elfrida Engel Nunes Rios, the Câmara Municipal de Foz do Iguaçu, and the newspaper A Gazeta do Iguaçu in Foz do Iguaçu, as well as the staff at the Centro de Documentación y Estudios in Ciudad del Este. I thank Aluízio Palmar for permission to use numerous photographs of the Arab community from the newspaper Nosso Tempo. In Brasília, I thank Antonio Carlos Lessa and the Instituto de Relações Internacionais at the Universidade de Brasília for welcoming me in 2019 for the final leg of research. I want to also extend thanks to Rogério de Souza Farias in Itamaraty, Brazil’s Ministry of Foreign Relations, for welcoming me into the archive. In Asunción, I am grateful to Rose Palau at the Centro de Documentación y Archivo para la Defensa de los Derechos Humanos (CDyA, better known as the Archivo del Terror), Zayda Caballero Rodríguez at the Biblioteca Nacional del Paraguay, and Adelina Pusineri and Raquel Zalazar at the Museo Andrés Barbero. I express thanks to David Sheinin for showing me the ropes in Buenos Aires and to the Biblioteca Nacional de Argentina. I also want to extend my gratitude to Roberto Khatlab and the Center for Latin American Studies and Cultures at USEK in Lebanon.
I am also grateful for many colleagues who invited me to present parts and synopses of this book. Their engaged comments made this a better work. I thank Martin Slama, Johann Heiss, and participants in the Comparing Arab Diasporas workshop at the Austrian Academy of Sciences. I am indebted to Jeff Lesser, Raanan Rein, the Tam Institute for Jewish Studies, and participants in the Together Yet Apart symposium at Emory University. I thank Tobias Boos, Anton Escher, Paul Tabar, and participants in the conference on Palestinian, Lebanese, and Syrian communities in the World, held at the Institute of Geography at Johannes Gutenberg University. I thank Dwight McBride and the Race and Ethnicity Study Group in Chicago. I am indebted to Akram Khater, Andrew Arsan, the Mashriq & Mahjar journal, and the Moise A. Khayrallah Center for Lebanese Diaspora Studies at North Carolina State University. I am indebted to Ellen McLarney, the Brazil Initiative, and participants in the Middle East in Latin America symposium at Duke University. I thank Ignácio Corona, Abril Trigo, Jeffrey Cohen, and the Center for Latin American Studies at Ohio State University. I am grateful to Jim Green and the Middle East Studies / Brazil Initiative at Brown University. I am indebted to Amal Ghazal and the Center for Comparative Muslim Studies at Simon Fraser University.

In the nearly decade and a half that it took for this book to come to fruition, family meant everything. I thank my mother, Amelia Karam, and my late father, Maron Karam, my sister Mary Karam Mckey and my brother Joseph Karam, my brother-in-law, John McKey, and my sister-in-law, Marianne Skau, and my nephew, Matthew, and nieces, Tamar, Katherine, and Alia. I owe my cousins—especially Antônio and Nazaré Bichara, Claudine Bichara and the late Rony Oliveira, Bichara Abidão Neto and Ana Paula, Jeff and Isabella Hooker, and Felipe Bichara and Alê. I too owe close friends in São Paulo, Eduardo Chaalan Bitar, Helô Machado, Felipe Machado, Fernando Machado, and Natália, and many others. Words are not enough to express my gratitude to my wife, Josephine Karkafi, who endured years of me writing and rewriting this book. I began to pen these acknowledgments on the day of our daughter’s sixth birthday, our destination and destiny in this world. Decades from now, when
our daughter flips through the pages of the dusty hardcover or used paperback, or perhaps more likely glances at a digital copy of this book, I hope that the world that she and her generation inhabit will be a better one.

_Urbana-Champaign, September 2, 2020_
Figure 0.1. The border where Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina meet in hemispheric perspective. © OpenStreetMap contributors
Figure 0.2. A map of the border where Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina meet. On the right is the Brazilian city of Foz do Iguaçu. On the left is the Paraguayan city of Ciudad del Este. At the bottom of the map is the Argentine town of Puerto Iguazú. © OpenStreetMap contributors