The Humanities in a World Upside-Down

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Edited by

Ignacio López-Calvo

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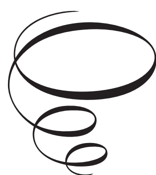

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To my friend Víctor López Pastor

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PREFACE

THE WORLD UPSIDE-DOWN

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I grew up in a country almost at the end of the world. It was an innocent country where all engaged in the mysteries of writing poetry and looking at the sky.

I too contemplated this vast sky—I had a notebook in which I wrote the names of constellations to memorize them all. I felt that our world was artificially divided into two very clear and distinctly positioned universes: the sky above and the earth below… Perhaps this is why I used to practice a kind of yoga as a child. At the end of our meals, I would stand upside down, supporting my body on the palms of my hands, for a long time looking at my perplexed parents look at me.

I had a talent for fabrication and for conjuring the enchanted lies that are a part of our imagination, and I was proud that I could stand upside down for minutes at a time, watching the world of grown-ups go by. Perhaps, from a young age I tried to understand the ambiguity of a world upside down. Perhaps the beloved Chilean sky became the earth? And the earth the sky?

Astronomers and physicists believe that earth and sky are portals to the same changing universe. When I became an adult, deeply fascinated by early Greek philosophy, I began to rethink this powerful concept of "a world upside down."

The early concepts of "a world upside down" came from the Greeks and their explorations into the underworld. This underworld is similar to ours but upside down with more darkness, fear, and monsters. Gilgamesh describes the underworld as analogous to ours but as a place of deeper darkness. Often we associate the "world upside down" with chaos and destruction. The World Upside Down is always a dialectic understanding of contrary elements, such as death and rebirth, darkness and light, the somberness of winter and the regeneration of spring.

Once again, let us return to the Greeks: The *rapto* (rape)—the abduction of Persephone—reveals this dialectic sense of the world upside down and the clash of opposites. We must also remember that from this act of violence and from Persephone's descent to the underworld, spring was born. Persephone returns for six months to her mother, causing spring to unfold. Basically, dialectics are essential for human transformation—from the violence of birth as well as the separation from life as we enter death. The "world upside down" evidences frailty and strength, death and rebirth, men and women.

Let us also think of Odin, a Celtic divinity, a figure from Greek Mythology to Mesopotamian myth, who gave us the gift of writing. He hung upside down from a giant ash tree, fasting there for nine days until the secret of the runes was revealed. Odin has similarities with the Man that hangs in the tarot cards, and he was also a magician in the art of choosing the letters that would define alphabets. His shift of perspective from right side up to upside down symbolizes an indefatigable quest for knowledge. Perhaps we can interpret the world upside down as a metaphor for radically changed perspectives.

So how do we move from the images of the ancient world, from the teachings of Odin, who waited upside down, hanging from a tree until the gift of words and writings were revealed to him, to modernity? What do these stories tell us about the world of possibilities?

Let us take a moment to enter the world of maps and cartographies: spaces and journeys that have fascinated us similarly to the way we are entranced by stories around a campfire. The maps tell us imaginary stories. They tell us, for example, that the majority of the earth is covered by water, while maps portray it as covered by earth.

Egyptian astronomer Ptolemy, in 90 A.D., established the notion that north should always be above south; perhaps it is because the world Ptolemy knew was located in his north that a convention of north above south prevailed. But what if maps were drawn from south to north?

It is an artificial premise that north is up and south is down. This convention, constructed centuries ago, has not changed. And yet there were those audacious cartographers like Nicolas Desliens, who in 1566 created an upside down map, which can be found in the National Library in Paris.

So the "world upside down" is not only a simple and rhetorical convention. It demonstrates that we can imagine change and will ourselves to be this change. Could the north be upside down?

And here comes Art... No other human possibility but art offers to heal, to understand ambiguity, to pursue the unexplainable in such a way. The

Uruguayan painter Joaquín Torres García desired for our continent to be special—for the ones in the south to find notoriety. As a result, he drew maps of the world in which the south was positioned above the north and created an important school of the arts called el Sur, represented by the symbol of the world upside down.

García allows us to understand that our south could be our north. The Californian poet and novelist Juan Felipe Herrera writes about a young boy named Juanito, who feels the world is upside down because no one understands his Spanish language.

Cartographies, real or imaginary, are symbolic interpretations of our sense of place. Yet, we can also see that they are symbolic constructions that we can use to break with what is conventional and with constructed falsities. If you are an astronomer or an aficionado, the map of the stars will always reveal north in the inferior part of the map and the south in the superior. Some of us find it easy to navigate through the universe of cartographies when the routes of these maps are upside down.

And now, after all this serious inquiry, let us turn to what is so essential to our survival: humor. The incomparable Mafalda, a character in Argentine Joaquín Salvador Lavado's comic, asks, "Why are we below? And what if we could live in a world, upside down—what would happen? Would the ideas fall?" Ideas, Mafalda, do not fall. And if they do fall, this act is not one of failure, but instead of extraordinary creativity. In the world of Mafalda, it is said: "Who said the north was up?" No single map can give you the full picture of our amazing and bountiful planet.

The "world upside down" may be the most important idea of the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. Could it allow us to understand difference and diversity? Or could it offer ways to redeem what has been established? And again, to understand that what seems orderly is actually chaos and that we may not be recognized as individuals or as a part of the collective unless we look at the world from a perspective that interprets difference anew?

The world upside down allows us to understand the shifting representations of time, of space, of history, and of interpretation. A premier example of this is the work of Georg Baselitz, who inverted sculptures and paintings to confront the human and cultural tragedies of the Second World War. Often, the painter used to say that these paintings arose out of a need to confront our world in the form of what is fractured and that they present a new form of dislocation and abstraction.

"The Man on a Tree Downwards" is a deliberate painting of an image upside down. It is not merely a way of standing but a way of objectifying the world and moving it from pure abstraction. It is a way of allowing the

motif of what is upside down to predominate. For Baselitz and other artists alike, the visual as well as the world of language pose the power to heal, the power to construct and reconstruct, and finally the power to recreate not only a lost world but also worlds of possibility.

But there is a darker side to the world of inversion, and, as a poet, I would like to ask you to enter with me, into the world of poetic contemplation. Imagine, for example, trees uprooted, with leaves down below and foreshadowing a certain death of the spirit—the leaves turned away from the sun and nothing able to nourish them. The sun dries the leaves—a reversal of what the sun is supposed to do, which is to nourish the spirit, to heal, to make things grow. Imagine the world upside down in occupied Nazi Europe, and imagine Anne Frank from a secret annex in the darkness. Imagine the sun—her supreme, brilliant imagination, locked by the forces of destruction and evil.

The twentieth and twenty-first centuries have since often called a "world upside down" genocide and displacement. In this century, the concept of "home forever gone" as the "world upside down" offers not only uncertainty and impermanence but also a darkness that reminds us of a mythology based not on monsters but on evil. I believe a confrontation with the world of Nazis—one perfectly constructed machinery for killing—is also a form of the "world upside down," a world in which the survival of a person depends on the movement of a hand left or right.

The "world upside down" in this century means the acceptance of a new brutality in which technology and modernism merge with cruelty. And perhaps this may be a very ingenuous question, but I wonder if we care about others and their pain? The images of a man in Georgia hanging upside down as a result of racial terror in the early twenties becomes even more striking as we witness first-hand the decapitation of health workers by ISIS on YouTube. Has torture, decapitation become a past time? Has the humiliation of others become accepted? Is the beheading of others a diversion? If it is, then the world is indeed upside down… And if so, has the pain of others truly been recognized?

But what can the humanities offer? What can literature offer? What would García Lorca's *duende*, this intuitive, almost magical being who understands what is unseen and unspoken and who has the gift of clairvoyance and poetry, say?

I have been engaged with literature almost my entire life. When I was eight years old and barely knew the intricacies of Spanish grammar, I dictated my first feminist novella to my friend Elly. I have never been away from the world of literature since.

I believe that engagement with literature and the arts allows us to enter—and to understand—the depth of human knowledge and the depth of human behavior: cruelty and beauty. I also believe that literature can be our own Utopia and a fundamental place to nurture the idea of consciousness, the idea of what is good, what is truthful, and eventually what is beautiful.

A world without books and without readers represents something even more dangerous than the world upside down–it is indeed the end of our civilization. Literature is a communal enterprise. It crosses national boundaries, it allows for a universal citizenship and, more important, writers allow us to understand otherness, what is foreign, and what we so often fear.

Literature offers us the immense capacity to wander. It offers, even, a sense of disorientation—not really knowing if we are upside down or not. But this feeling of ambiguity allows us to understand the plurality and diversity of our world, a world with secular values. A world where innocence and sophistication intertwine; a world where we are able to formulate questions without fear; a world where we are able to engage in what is essential and where we may pay attention to the world we live in. This is our task as writers, as educators, and as students.

I have always lived with the "world upside down" and not only through the practice of yoga. I came of age and was exposed to this world through the destinies of my own family—my family caught in the tumultuous events of the twentieth century.

My grandparents in the Ukraine experienced a fierce anti-Semitism—their world of Chagall, like goats and melodies, was turned upside down. Their houses burned. All that they believed was their own, was made to disappear.

Refinement was the norm of every day life until the Nazis came to power. Frantic anti-Semitic actions took place. One of the most eerie actions was that every single Jewish person had to be called Sara or Israel, as if the ability to name one another was also robbed…

But while the world was upside down, an element of faith was always present. There was space for a leap of faith, the possibility of changing courses. For example, as my great grandmother and uncle were escaping the Nazis aboard a ship to South America, my uncle received an expensive camera from his German friend. He sold it and was able to change his fate in Chile, his adopted homeland. This precious gift allowed him to start a new life in Valparaíso, Chile, where the poor live above, in the North and the rich below, in the South.

Whereas the great civilization of the Austro-Hungarian Empire was, at the moment, entrenched in mere barbarism, the so-called barbaric South America offered refuge and love. In this world upside down, identities changed. The world below in which my family came into being gave them resilience and courage. There was always the understanding that darkness also contains light.

Free from the knocks on the door, they settled in the south of the world: in Chile—in a little community called Osorno, where they found themselves surrounded by former SS men. And where my mother, when she went to play with friends, found altars to Adolf Hitler.

This thread of a "world upside down" allowed them to understand that cruelty was something that would follow them but also something they could escape from. They were reminded that the hostility of the world was everywhere and yet, they chose to remain whole.

This world they arrived in while escaping another was a bit like the underworld, but then, they understood—and this was passed on to all of us in my family—that as humans, we all have consciences with the power to repudiate cruelty and that one should consolidate a sense of loyalty to a community of those with a conscience.

Decades later, it seems that we and many friends in the southern cone as well as in eastern Europe have heard those same knocks at the door, the same smell of books being burned in my grandparents' garage. The world of safety—of my sleepy city and country of Chile—did turn upside down.

The "world upside down," from a symbolic standpoint and a poetic one, is a world that drifts—a world where the landscapes of the mundane and the familiar shift. It is really a world that is fractured, a world as portrayed by Carlos Cerda in *Una casa vacía*: a house without furniture, broken. It is a world as portrayed in the play *El Desconcierto* by Diana Raznovich: a concert hall piano without sounds and yet full of spectators who clap. Finally, it is in *The Book of Words,* a work by East German author Jenny Erpenbeck—in a world envisioned by a young girl in an unnamed South American country. Her world is uprooted; the roots are up and not in the ground. All is upside down, all is opposite: father becomes mother, mother becomes father. The world becomes senseless and absurd, grounded in a metric of rationality disintegrated.

It is here that even the most essential instruments—like word and language—fail us, and the child narrator, instead of becoming fascinated by Light, becomes fascinated by Darkness.

These are some examples of the ways in which literature interprets a world upside down. It could be a world of possibilities as we venture to

new perspectives or a world that conjures somberness and fear, very much like the underworld of the Greeks, a world that mirrors our own.

These are some thoughts to ponder. Let us think of children's literature and young adult literature—the genre that is the most widely read in the US. Children understand a world upside down as one in which, perhaps, good triumphs over evil. They do not question ambiguity but enter into the imaginative components of such a world.

Perhaps the "world upside down" invites us to think about and to respond to change—to accept brutal transformations of our souls and our bodies as possible ways to transform each other. Or perhaps as a way to understand new encounters with the ways we have perceived our world. Maybe it offers a way to be less persistent in our own habits and to dare to defy this persistence?

As we commemorate the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz, we imagine so many, especially children, traveling to meet their death. We also imagine rabbis in those same boxcars praying. In order to mend an upside down world, we perhaps must believe that in those boxcars, the whole universe was also traveling there.

Ellie Wiesel said that hate is not the opposite of love but indifference. So let us try to hold in our imagination a "world upside down." We must try to change it—to hold it—so that it is a world of solidarity and possibilities. After the fire comes solidarity.

This topic keeps on appearing in my sleep and when I am awake—the "world upside down" addresses the polarity within us. An enormous capacity for cruelty and an enormous capacity for beauty are part of our essential humanity. Our task is to maintain an equilibrium: a sense of passionate moderation as we encounter our place in History and our place in the world.

We are a part of a cataclysmic century. But how do we travel through this chaos? I once again return to the arts, because artistic expression gives us the possibility of building new mythologies for our lives—new mythologies for which we must rethink how to live. How we write is how we dream.

Think of the work of Marc Chagall. He painted ravaged villages but also depicted birds flying over the roofs. Chagall's imagination saved him from the savage world he wished to escape, it allowed him to dream and keep a sense of identity related to the world he had inhabited before the war.

Finally, the World Upside Down allows us to question how far we can imagine, to what extent we can let go of fear, how far we can allow the privilege of a boundless imagination to take us. In order to better understand

the “world upside down,” I invite you to enter the world of poetic thinking—where you imagine what you want to be and, within this act of imagination, find that there is empowerment and transformation.

My coming of age is framed by the Pinochet dictatorship. In the world I come from, I have witnessed friends tortured and incarcerated—tortured even more severely if they were Jewish. However, I also witnessed a world of courage. A world with women, who, like ancient Philomena—raped and with her tongue cut off—wove her story so that modern Philomenas in Chile could know this lesson: that when the world is besieged by political violence, there are possibilities of recreating the world. The art of the *arpilleras* shows us that we can rebuild stories through shreds—through the clothing of the deceased—and that the world can be restored. It can be reconstructed. One of the leading principles of Judaism is this very mending of the world.

The word arpillera in English is “verlap.” Arpilleras use verlap as a backing cloth and are made out of small pieces of scraps of cloth similar to a patchwork quilt. The arpilleras are small, similar to the size of a *mola* or a scarf. What is extraordinary about this art form is what they reveal. The arpilleras were made by the mothers of the disappeared in Chile during the dark times of General Augusto Pinochet’s dictatorship that overthrew the freely elected government of Salvador Allende. The mothers of the disappeared, who were familiar with the art of sewing, decided to tell the stories of their missing children through cloth. Thus the *arpillera* became a story cloth. It spoke about their children’s lives before they were taken away and then the *arpilleras* became ways to chronicle life in Chile under a dictatorship. The art of the *arpillera* became known internationally and these small patchwork tapestries traveled abroad and made the story of life in Chile known. Workshops developed throughout Santiago and this work lasted for almost seventeen years. In democratic times, only a few *arpillera* workshops survived and the themes shifted to those of poverty and the lack of social justice. The *arpilleras* today are the most vivid testimony of a group of women who defied a military dictatorship by speaking the truth.

The “world upside down” allows us to think how we want to live. Do we choose destruction or creation? Do we choose both? Or do we choose to recover what is forgotten and begin anew?

INTRODUCTION

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Several recent publications, including my forthcoming *Humanities and Post-Truth in the Information Age* (co-edited with Christina Lux; Northwestern UP), have addressed the importance of the humanities and the arts for the goal of having both a dynamic economy and functioning, diverse democratic societies with socially conscious and well informed citizens: Doris Sommer's *The Work of Art in the World*, Hilary Jewett's *The Humanities and Public Life*, Ian Bogost's *MOOCs and the Future of the Humanities: A Roundtable* (Part 1), David Palumbo-Liu's *The Academy In Peril: A Symposium*, Peter Brooks's *The Humanities and Public Life,* Martha C. Nussbaum's *Not for Profit: Why Democracy Needs Humanities*, George Anders's *You Can Do Anything: The Surprising Power of a "Useless" Liberal Arts Education*, and Randall Stross's *A Practical Education: Why Liberal Arts Majors Make Great Employees*, among many others. Indeed, the critical and methodological tools provided by humanities disciplines and approaches (including health humanities, environmental humanities, community-engaged humanities, digital humanities, public humanities) must complement the sciences in problem solving, in the search for answers for the most pressing challenges of our time, such as climate change, armed conflict, nuclear proliferation, human trafficking, social harmony through intercultural understanding, racial justice, genocide, transnational migration, the persistent refugee crisis, and the preservation of our cultural heritage, which is constantly jeopardized by wars and religious or ethnic fanaticism, among many other world problems.

In this sense, we scholars ourselves, often concerned with declining enrollment numbers, shrinking state and university funding for the humanities and the purported crisis in the humanities, must advocate for our disciplines and explain their importance to the administration, our colleagues in the sciences and, more generally, to the wider public through op-eds in newspapers, thus translating our research for a non-academic audience, or through public humanities activities that interact with local

communities and truly engage them into working together, rather than doing research about them or for them. Community-engaged humanities research is, of course, another practical way of demonstrating the valuable social function of our research, methodologies and resources, even if our disciplines are valuable per se, as they create new knowledge. The potential for collective digitation of community archives, research on indigenous communities (conducted with members of those communities) that ends up being of benefit to them, the study of the languages and cultural production of native or immigrant local groups, among many other projects, often make public and community-engaged communities more worldly, attractive and seem more, for lack of a better word, "useful" for funding agencies as well as private donors.

There is no doubt that the humanities are an integral part of a complete higher education, as they provide a global perspective and improve our capacity to think critically and to communicate effectively. As they explore human emotions, structures of feelings, and experiences throughout time, the humanities, along with the sciences, can become valuable tools to solve sociopolitical, environmental, and economic dilemmas, such as massive incarceration of minorities in the United States, the acceptance of economic immigrants and political refugees from war-torn countries, the choice between homeland security and individual freedoms, or between unrestrained, economic growth without government regulations and environmental protection and sustainability. The ideological, ethical, philosophical, and moral frameworks surrounding these transcendental issues and decisions are better addressed with methodological approaches typically employed by the humanities. In all these cases, I believe, posing the right questions (often the job of the humanities) can ben relevant as answering them (often the role of the sciences).

In this context, Mariët Westermann, in her forthcoming chapter "The Humanities in the World," offers examples of how humanities training is already being deployed for the common good, particularly in refugee, immigrant, and museums studies. The training of anthropologists and archeologists, for example, can be mobilized to study the objects left behind by unauthorized immigrants in the Sonora Desert of Arizona, tracing the inhumane conditions they have to withstand as a result of increased policing in border cities, such as El Paso and San Diego. Similarly, Syrian immigrants can regain hope by seeing in German museums how Germany quickly recovered from complete devastation after World War II. They can also connect with their past by visiting the artifacts, walls, gates, among others, brought from their countries to

Europe by colonial authorities, and initiate a conversation about why they were stolen by Europeans or if, after all, thanks to these unjust measures they have ended up being preserved from the devastation of constant wars in the Middle East. Or they can connect these wars with a history of European colonialism in the region, as well. In any case, this type of worldly, civic engagement of our disciplines, according to Westermann, can inject new life to the humanities and increase public interest and financial support.

In addition, not only is technology providing new approaches to our disciplines, such as computer-assisted data mining in historical and literary research that helps represent text documents in computational forms, but recent publications about intersections between the humanities and technology also argue that the tech sector is increasingly recruiting graduates with a humanities or liberal arts training that is useful for the emerging "rapport sector": "project management, recruitment, human relations, branding, data analysis, market research, design, fund-raising and sourcing, to name a few" (Aubry n.p.). The skills developed through a humanities education, including flexibility and adaptability, are instrumental for these types of jobs: effective communication to make persuasive and compelling arguments, and critical ability to interpret information and social cues, as well as to foresee problems or prospects. Moreover, these professions tend to yield higher salaries than pre-professional degrees.

In this context, the following humanities essays dealing with the broad topic of the world upside-down complement the aforementioned books by providing practical examples of how societies throughout the world have historically coped with unexpected and distressing changes in government, core values, axiomatic systems, assumptions, beliefs, ideology, or cultural constructions. The structure of feeling of topsy-turvy consternation as a result of sudden, harrowing change, as will be seen, is not new; rather, it has simply evolved throughout time and space. Sociopolitical changes such as revolutions, coups d'état and wars, the end of the century or millennium, or even less negative factors, such as generational gaps, the advent of modernity, or even progress itself can also contribute to a similar sentiment of societal shock and distress. On the other hand, the world upside-down can sometimes be a desired outcome. For instance, upside-down maps where South America appears on top of North America constitute a different approach through which people actually envision cartographic changes for a number of reasons, including symbolic capital, as is the case of many upside-down maps. Some of the following essays revisit historical cases in which drastic changes in religious or national

affiliation have brought about overwhelming feelings of anxiety to society or to the groups in power that controlled them.

This interdisciplinary essay collection explores how the humanities can help us imagine a more just society amidst the ontological and epistemological uncertainties constantly produced in our fast-changing world. Knowledge and familiarity with different cultures may help increase human empathy, which facilitates the understanding of the commonalities between different human groups and, as a result, achieving a more peaceful and just world. Drawing from disciplines such as literature, art, philosophy, ethnic studies, and history, with topics that span the globe as well as the centuries, this project emerges out of more than two years of sponsored research at the University of California, Merced on the topic of "The World Upside-Down," including a bi-weekly seminar, a conference, and the Distinguished Lecture in the Humanities series. Some of the essays, such as the one by Martín Camps, consider the conceptual inversion of hierarchical geographic imaginaries, for example developed North and underdeveloped South, or core and periphery. Other essays provide concrete examples, through the world upside-down metaphor, of the social function of the humanities in our contemporary world, as well as of the application of border, literary, cultural, and historical studies to the interpretation of our increasingly globalized and complex world.

In these times of post-truth, post-factual politics, and over-reliance in big data research, humanities research, rather than a luxury, can prove to be more useful than ever before, as it may train our students to navigate information (often fake news) in social media. On the other hand, understanding a social group's self-image, self-identification, social memory, and historical (or perceived historical) marginalization is fundamental to analyze religious or social conflict and societal malaise, beyond quantifiable data and statistics. In addition, the critical analysis provided by the humanities can also be invaluable to empower silenced, marginalized, oppressed, or persecuted communities, as these disciplines often embrace civil discourse and constructive activism.

The Book and Its Organization

In the preface, Chilean author and critic Marjorie Agosín opens with a memoir-essay on how her family's world was turned upside-down, first during the pogroms in Europe and then as a result of Augusto Pinochet's coup d'état in Chile. Agosín conceives of the humanities, art, and writing as healing tools, as well as devices to understand human knowledge and behavior, along with the ineffable: beauty, good, evil, cruelty, genocide,

and displacement. She also considers the conceptual inversion of hierarchical, core-periphery geographic imaginaries.

Georg B. Michels's chapter opens the essay section with an exploration of historiographical discourse within the field of border studies. We learn that after large parts of Hungary fell to the Ottoman Turks in the middle of the sixteenth century, Hungarian law, that is, the law of Habsburg-Hungary, developed a new category that has no parallels in other European law codes: the accusation of associating with the Turks and becoming Turkish—described in shorthand with the Latin, German, and Hungarian epithets Turcismus, Türkenthum, or Törökösség (which might be loosely translated in English with Turkishness). Michels examines the historical realities captured by Turcismus accusations

The historical evidence Michels has examined reveals a dramatic but little-known historical reality: the Habsburg Empire was losing control over the Antemurale Christianitatis (Bulwark of Christendom), that is, the Hungarian buffer state, which was of tantamount importance for protecting the heartlands of Christian Europe against Ottoman invasion. As Ottoman strongmen such as the pashas of Eger, Ersekujvar, and Varad expanded their influence inside Hungary, large parts of the local population began to switch their allegiances from the Habsburg Emperor to the Turkish Sultan. Nobles dispatched emissaries to Istanbul offering to make Hungary an Ottoman vassal state, Protestant pastors gave rousing sermons praising Ottoman military victories, soldiers defected to the Ottoman army, townsmen asked for letters of protection from Ottoman military commanders, and peasants voluntarily migrated into Ottoman-held territory (where some converted to Islam).

Hungarians' readiness to accept Ottoman overlords was completely contrary to the virulent Turcophobia and Islamophobia of early modern Christian Europe. But many Hungarians perceived the Catholic Habsburgs as their principal enemies, because they were suffering harsh military occupation and persecution of their Protestant faith. By comparison with the brutal Habsburgs, the Ottomans were seen as "the more gentle masters;" the Ottomans were also considered the clear winners in the conflict of empires and seeking their protection against Habsburg rule was only a logical conclusion. Thus, the Turcismus accusations were a desperate but futile attempt by the Habsburg authorities to prevent Christian Hungarians from joining the world's principal Islamic empire.

Michels' essay is a good humanities research example of a worldview turned upside-down. Common knowledge in the Western world assumes that, during the seventeenth century, the Ottoman Turks were the biggest enemy of Christianity and of Europe. They were supposedly seen as the

ferocious infidels who threatened to become the overlords of the European subcontinent: their territorial conquests reached the doors of Vienna, in the heart of central Europe, as well as the doors of today's Morocco, in Northern Africa. History textbooks teach us that the Ottomans were stopped from conquering the entire Mediterranean and perhaps continental Europe in the battle of Lepanto, off western Greece, on October 7, 1571. This turning point in history had occurred thanks to the leadership of Don Juan de Austria (the illegitimate son of the Spanish King Charles V), who led the Holy League forces, a coalition of Catholic states that included Venice, with thousands of brave soldiers, including one named Miguel de Cervantes.

Yet, turning our assumed knowledge upside-down, Michels demonstrates that, in the seventeenth century, not all Europeans perceived the Turks as their natural enemy, a fact that undoubtedly facilitated some of the Ottoman Empire's territorial conquests in what is today modern Hungary. The study also reveals the porous nature of international borders at the time and explores the historical shifting loyalties and alliances of border people. We learn that the Habsburgs accused numerous Hungarians of Turkification, that is, of "becoming Turkish." The choice of language is revealing: according to Michels, in several cases documents from court cases and letters claimed that Hungarians "have become Turks" through continued contact with the Ottomans. In the eyes of Habsburg officials, therefore, becoming Turkish had less to do with bloodlines or religious affiliation than with geopolitical loyalties. While it may seem safe to assume that there would be more affinity, at least in cultural terms, between Catholics and Protestants than between Protestants and Muslims, that was not always the case during this period of Hungarian history. Overall, the use of anti-Turcismus laws to secure Hungarians' loyalty and border security not only failed, but also backfired. Ultimately, according to Michels, had it not been "for the dramatic reversal of Ottoman fortunes after the siege of Vienna in 1683 Habsburg Hungary would have been integrated into the Ottoman Empire as a vassal state."

As happened in the border territories of the Iberian Peninsula, such as Castile, during the *Reconquista*, which lasted from 711 through 1492, loyalties strategically shifted across the border back and forth according to the sociopolitical and economic circumstances. Historical national heroes in Spain, such as El Cid Campeador, were, in reality, mercenaries who fought on several occasions for both Christian kings and Moorish caliphs. And as it happened in seventeenth-century Hungary with the Turks, medieval Spanish Christian literature reflects an explicit admiration for the Moorish enemies. Interestingly, today's Turkish politicians trying to

justify their "historical right" to join the European Union could very well make strategic use of studies such as this one, given that Christianity itself has been conceived as one of the strongest historical common bonds among Europeans. This essay reveals a different face of quotidian friendly relationships between Europeans (in this case, Hungarians) of all walks of life and the Ottoman Empire, the foremost military enemy of Europe and the Christendom for centuries. This peculiar historical chapter could help the controversial European Union membership bid officially recognized on 12 December, 1999 at the Helsinki summit of the European council.

To continue in the field of Border Studies, but this time from a literary perspective, Martín Camps sees the international border between Mexico and the United States as an anchor for the representation of a world upside-down in Chilean Roberto Bolaño's fiction. Camps posits that this border space ultimately becomes a stage for the struggle between North and South, English and Spanish, the United States and Latin America, legality and illegality, drug consumers and drug traffickers. According to Camps, Bolaño's groundbreaking novel *2666* offers precisely this view: a border whose magnetism disorients the compass, making people "lose their north." Also focusing on gender, Camps sees the representation of Ciudad Juárez's femicides through the use of forensic language in Bolaño's posthumous novel as a way to give the victims' bodies a second chance to rise from the underworld to the world of the living, the ultimate upside-down trajectory.

Still approaching to topic of a world upside-down in the realm of Latin American literature, Juan de Castro reflects on drastic changes in the approach to sociopolitical engagement in the contemporary Latin American novel. As he explains, for many Latin American literature is synonymous with political engagement: Nobel Prize winners Pablo Neruda and Gabriel García Márquez, both unabashed leftists, and their fellow laureate Mario Vargas Llosa, a member of the elite neoliberal Mont Pelerin group, can serve as examples of this weaving of literary excellence and political commitment that seems characteristic of the region's writing at its best. However, in contrast with the unquestionable political commitment of Latin American Boom writers, younger writers today are no longer as interested in politics of any stripe; in fact, for many, politics is necessarily unethical and the role of literature, if it is to deal with politics, is one of necessarily of opposition. De Castro sees this surprising change as a reaction to the failures of the Latin American Left and, perhaps, to the unsatisfactory results of the neoliberal policies implemented in the 1980s. He argues that ethical criticism has replaced political advocacy and that, underlying this ethical turn in Latin American narrative, there is a hidden

acceptance of the repercussion of neoliberalist policies in Latin American societies.

Switching from literary studies to Latin American stand-up comedy, Raquel García investigates the sociocultural and political effects of transgressive humor in the context of Mexican stand-up comedy—that is, humor characterized by absurdity that reveals an upside-down yet functional world. She examines, as Diana Taylor terms it, the cultural *scenarios* that are not only performed but also ethnographically constructed by the stand-up comedian and validated by audiences in Mexico City. Specifically, García analyzes the live performances and routines of comedians Luis Jacobo (Jurgan Jacobo), who raises sociopolitical awareness regarding the cultural institutionalization of corruption and terrorizing violence, and Manuel Nava (Manu NNa), who challenges audiences to evaluate their genuine sense of compassion by highlighting society's prejudices and phantom acceptances, or a superficial acceptance contingent on social distance. Despite their differences in context and comedic approach, argues García, the routines of these performances provide Mexican society with a subversively conscious representation of itself. In García's view, it is this representation that effectively enables a pedagogical dialogue between performers and audiences regarding this community's social and psychological fears, complicit silence and astounding resiliency.

In turn, Susanne Sreedhar takes two sets of power relations, sovereign/subject and man/woman, and considers the different effects of their disruption in the writings of the two most important political theorists of the day: Thomas Hobbes and John Locke. As Sreedhar points out, marked by political and social disruption, instability, insecurity, and revolution, seventeenth-century England was a "world upside-down." Wars, famine, plague, and religious persecution meant that people worried–and reasonably so–about their very survival. And those who could be relatively sure that they would reach the next day or the next week found themselves in a context that was increasingly alien to them. This "upside-down-ness" can be seen clearly with regard to social and political ideology. Ultimately, Hobbes and Locke were concerned with the justification of public political authority and the threat of revolution, and Sreedhar argues that it is merely in service of their claims about revolution that women are, *or are not*, brought up. Feminist readers of these authors—critics and defenders alike—focus on what Hobbes and Locke did or did not say about women, how those claims should or should not be taken, and whether these claims do or do not either conditionally or necessarily subordinate women. These kinds of treatments focus on women as *literal* subjects of discussion in Hobbes and Locke. What these

readers fail to notice, and what Sreedhar emphasizes, are the ways in which women are also treated as *rhetorical* subjects of discussion. This includes the role that discussions of women (and women-related topics such as the family) play in the overall argument of the texts. She demonstrates that for both Hobbes and Locke, women play a particular rhetorical role in their arguments: discussions of women provide evidence or allow for illustrations of broader political points, that is, points about the state. Sreedhar reveals that what she calls "rhetorical subordination" is found in both Hobbes and Locke, and is to be distinguished from the literal subordination of women that is a feature of both of their accounts. She turns, in the final part of the chapter, to a consideration of the implications of this rhetorical subordination for the debates over how to understand Hobbes and Locke from a feminist perspective.

In her chapter, Asynith Palmer analyzes the ethical ramifications of the reconceptualization of urban industrial ruins by photographers that she calls "urban Explorers" or "UrbExers." As she explains, every year thousands of Urban Explorers venture into off-limits buildings. With camera in hand, these "UrbExers" flock to de-sanctified churches, abandoned hospitals, and shuttered factories: places popularly dismissed as "dead space." As deindustrialization ravages local communities, Explorers gain new ground. They thrive in creative transgression of institutional spaces jettisoned from the capitalist grid. As this creativity plays out in defunct factories, UrbEx encourages us to consider how its camera-wielding practitioners appropriate former landscapes of labor. Palmer argues that UrbExers conceive of industrial ruins as stage sets, transforming the disciplined spaces of the factory-work into post-industrial playgrounds. Palmer focuses on one particular Explorer, mANVIL, whose self-proclaimed "lust for the rust" draws him to "infiltrate" and photograph abandoned power stations. His self-portraits are rife with bravado: the Explorer standing with arms akimbo atop a massive turbine, or posed in mid-climb at the edge of a nuclear cooling tower. Palmer explains how, on these ruined industrial stages, mANVIL seizes autonomy from a historical context of alienating labor. His (self-)performances defy the factories' pre-existing scripts, in which workers were constrained by the demands of machinery and management's surveillance. Re-made into a theater of action, industrial ruins furnish props for mANVIL's masculinist self-fashioning. His acts prove liberatory, but Palmer poses the following questions: are there ethical ramifications? How can mANVIL reconcile his appropriation of these worksites with their social histories? As he re-makes the abandoned space of production into a venue for self-making, does mANVIL substitute himself for the displaced workers?

In her essay "Debt and the Diaspora: The Return on Southeast Asian Refugees," Aline Lo delves into cinematic depictions of Southeast Asian refugees, the notion of returning to the "homeland," and the transnational afterlives of these figures that, by definition, are not able to go back. More specifically, she turns to the 2007 documentary film *The Betrayal,* which features a Laotian family's resettlement in America after the Vietnam War or, more specifically, the Secret War in Laos. Lo emphasizes the ambivalent position of refugees and the way in which the idea of a homeland is constantly destabilized or turned upside-down. Although, the politics of return are rife with notions of debt, nostalgia, and redemption, Lo focuses on the teleology of the return narrative, asking why this refugee story ends with a return to Laos and what this ending reveals about the recuperation of war. In presenting the return as the end of the refugee's journey, she asks if the film is able to resolve the issues of betrayal, loss, and guilt that are a direct result of war, if it is able to turn the world right side up again. In the end, the film's decision to conclude with a return journey brings about the possibility of redemption, but all it really confirms is the complicated hold that the homeland has on refugee identity. Yet, the film, in presenting viewers with the images of the return, is able to satisfy our desire to see the homeland even as it fails to bring about a full closure to the feelings of guilt and betrayal. In this manner, it does succeed in representing the refugee's ambivalent investment in the homeland and the notion of return.

In her chapter, Hyunhee Park discusses the changes in pre-modern geographic understanding and world mapping that were facilitated by the transfer of geographical knowledge and worldviews between three places—the Islamic world, China, and Europe—through cross-cultural contacts. After a brief comparison of world mapping practices in these societies, Park explores how certain mapping practices and views transferred from one society to another through cross-cultural contacts, and how those transfers influenced people's geographic understanding—sometimes in unconventional ways that made them conceptualize their geography in new and oppositional ways. New knowledge mattered as well: some cartographical changes in contemporaneous China and Europe were influenced not only by the south-on-top orientation of medieval Islamic world maps, but also by geography's growing content in terms of world geography, mapping techniques, and worldview. Inspired by Islamic world maps, which contained the world's most advanced system of world mapping, the Chinese began to seriously chart the wider world beyond China, while Europeans began to draw realistically, departing from the religious diagrams of T-O maps. As Park demonstrates, changes in geographic

understanding and world mapping, facilitated by new geographic knowledge from outside traditional cultural boundaries, inspired further changes, both dramatic and gradual, such as unprecedented global interconnection from the late fifteenth century.

Closing the volume, Marieka Arksey's chapter demonstrates that sacred spaces do not conform to accepted archaeological and geographic definitions of landscape boundaries, which should be expanded in order to achieve a holistic understanding of ritual landscapes. In her view, archaeologists studying ritual and religion must focus on the performative aspects of the surrounding landscape. Arksey argues that full consideration of how the landscape may have been modified in direct relation to the creation of an audience-spectator relationship will provide a more complete interpretation of the sociopolitical implications of ancient ritual practices.

Together, these essays provide useful examples of how humanities research on past and present scenarios can be deployed to interpret contemporary challenges, from refugee studies, to border studies and national allegiance. This interdisciplinary approach ultimately reveals that the discomforting realization that one's world has suddenly been turned upside-down may me closer to the norm than to the exception in human relations and human history. A society's ability to flexibly adapt to changing circumstances and norms may turn out one of its best guarantees of success.

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"THEY HAVE BECOME TURKS (*SEINDT TÜRKHEN WORDEN*)": ANTI-HABSBURG RESISTANCE AND TURKIFICATION IN SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY HUNGARY

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In 1985, László Benczédi, a now largely forgotten scholar of early-modern Hungary, called on historians to take a new open-minded look at the relations between Hungarians and Turks during the late seventeenth century, when the Ottoman Empire reached its farthest geographic expansion in East Central Europe. In particular, he called for looking beyond the well-known negative images of the Turks and Muslims, which, in his opinion, had led Hungarians scholars to avoid examining the day-to-day interactions between Hungarians and Turks across the borders separating the Ottoman and Habsburg Empires. Benczédi, who died in 1987, blamed the silence of Hungarian historiography on the moralizing attitudes of his predecessors and colleagues:

> Binary juxtapositions such as Transylvania [the Ottoman vassal state–G. M.] vs. Vienna, East vs. West, . . . good vs. bad Hungarians, patriots vs. traitors, smart vs. narrow-minded Hungarians, champions vs. enemies of Christendom—and we could enumerate others—have formed the coordinates of the traditional manner of asking questions and viewing [the Turkish orientation in Hungarian history] . . .We act properly as historians only if—instead of making . . . preconceived historicizing judgments—we uncover new facts and their [historical] contexts . . . These are still monumental liabilities (*hatalmas adósságai*) of our historiography." (21)

More than thirty years after Benczédi's call for a careful study of the historical evidence, positive relations between Hungarians and Turks remain one of the least explored topics of East Central European historiography. The national historiographies of historical Hungary's

modern successor states—most importantly, Hungary, Slovakia, Croatia—continue to focus on the purported horrors of the Ottoman expansion, anti-Turkish propaganda, and the so-called wars of liberation that followed the siege of Vienna in 1683.[1] Recently, a group of historians at the University of Leipzig, Germany, recognized the problem and vowed to study "the specific forms of interaction" (Born and Jagodzinski 7), between Ottomans and East Central Europeans. But the volume that resulted from their collaboration remains disappointing, as it devotes significant space to what had long been known, that is, the self-definition of noble elites as anti-Turkish warriors who celebrated the triumphant slaughter of "the bloodhound and archenemy of Christendom" (Born and Jagodzinski 224), The most promising contribution came from Croat historian Nataša Stefaneć, who dug deep into the archives to show that Christian warrior elites stationed along the Ottoman borders had multiple "interactions with the Ottomans . . . [that] cannot be characterized as merely confrontational . . .The opposing sides were engaged in various types of rather complex interactions and thus challenged the paradigm of *antemurale Christianitatis*" (Born and Jagodzinski 87).[2]

Of course, the problem of studying the Ottoman-European relations—or more broadly Muslim-Christian relations—during the early modern period remains a challenge not just for historians of the former Communist block (where nationalist discourses have filled the vacuum left by the fall of communism). As the Ottomanist Daniel Goffmann showed in a thoughtful 2012 study, Western European and American scholarship also continues to essentialize the Ottoman Empire and other Islamic societies as the threatening non-western Other. Goffmann called for discarding the age-old Eurocentric stereotypes according to which Islam "symbolize[s] terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians" (1-20, esp. 5 citing Edward Said)—a call that is especially timely today, as such stereotypes are being actively promoted by right-wing politicians all over Europe (such as Victor Orban in Hungary). In particular, Goffmann urges historians to reconstruct the actual first-hand encounters and interactions between Europeans and Ottomans rather than making a priori assumptions about "the mental or psychic walls that separated the world of one's own from that of the alien Other" (Heppner and Barbarics-Harmanik, 73).

The prevention of contacts between Hungarians and Ottomans became an important goal of the ruling estates of the Hungarian Kingdom and the Habsburg court after large parts of Hungary fell to the Ottoman Turks in the middle of the sixteenth century. It was then that Hungarian law, that is, the law of Habsburg-Hungary, developed a bizarre new category that has no parallels in other European law codes: the accusation of associating

with the Turks and becoming Turkish—described in shorthand with the Latin, German, and Hungarian epithets Turcismus, Türkenthum, or Törökösség (which might be loosely translated in English with Turkishness). The category was coined in a diet meeting of the Hungarian estates in 1567 on the eve of the Adrianople Peace Treaty, which for the first time created stable boundaries between the Ottoman and Habsburg empires after decades of warfare in Hungary. During the next century, the category was further specified and redefined. During the last three decades of Ottoman rule in Hungary, that is, from the late 1650s to the Habsburg conquest of Buda in 1686, the fear of Turcismus greatly influenced the Hungarian policies of the Habsburg court. The captain-generals of the border defense system, officers of the Habsburg army, and special envoys dispatched by the Habsburg emperor began to replace Hungarian nobles and county officials as the principal watchdogs of Turkishness.[3]

What insights does the existence of this legal category reveal into life on the Habsburg-Ottoman frontier? What kinds of historical realities were captured by Turcismus accusations? Hungarian historian Ferenc Salamon noticed more than a century ago that nobles living inside Habsburg Hungary used such accusations to spread fear among Christian populations in Ottoman territory and keep them from developing close ties with their Muslim masters. And Ferenc Szakály and István Sugár demonstrated during the 1980s that Hungarian absentee landlords who held lands and tax revenues on Ottoman territory were greatly worried about the loyalty of the peasants and townsmen living on their estates. In order to keep these subjects from handing over existing assets to Turkish administrators, these landlords threatened them with severe punishment for Turcismus.[4]

However, the law was not created for such purposes. Rather, border defense and security were the most important concerns of the lawgiver. My focus here is, therefore, on Hungarians living inside Habsburg Hungary and their relations with Ottomans across the border—a topic that the late Hungarian scholar László Benczédi rightly described as one of the least explored in Hungarian history.[5] I will first outline the major stipulations regarding Turcismus in Hungarian law. Then, I will look at people who crossed the Habsburg border into Ottoman territory without official permission, as well as individuals and groups expressing pro-Turkish sympathies inside Habsburg-occupied Hungary. I will demonstrate that official fears of Turcismus intensified during the 1660s after a new Ottoman military invasion had reduced Habsburg Hungary to a thin sliver of territory stretching like a half moon from the Adriatic Sea in the West to Poland and Transylvania in the East.