What We All Long For

Quy in Multiple Time & Dialogic Space

Chaps 19-25

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Outline

- Globalization of Strangeness + Risk
  - A. *Strangers*
  - B. *Strangeness* (Risks)
  - C. *Strange Selves*

- What We All Long For – *Q 1*
  - Jamal
  - Quy

- *Q 2 Chaps 19~25 Endings:*
  - Angie, Carla, Nadine;
  - Jackie/Oku, (Quy)
  - Tuyen’s Art

Who are Strangers?

- **Strangers:**
  -- flows of people: increasing migrant workers, immigrants, foreigners
  -- city dwellers (strangeness in the neighborhood)

- **Strangeness:**
  - time-space compression → flows of signs, capitals, viruses and desires
  - Worldwide disasters as daily occurrences
Routinization of Strangenessness

- “…the stranger is a more mundane figure than hitherto. Globalization leads to an increasing proximity to strangers and an experience of society characterized by a ‘routinization of alterity’ (Mendieta qtd in Rumford 10; more later)
City as a society of strangers – no longer an exception
routinization of strangeness
A. Urban Strangers

1. Modernity: they “come today, stay tomorrow” (G. Simmel)

1) Migrants, new residents, outsiders

2) Flaneurs
   - The stranger is Janus-faced; s/he provides opportunity, adventure, mystery, new perspectives, while
   - s/he can also be sinister, menacing and intimidating
Traditional
Strangers in Films

- (e.g. *Shane*) changes society or assimilated by it.
2. Strangers Today

A) They are “here today, gone tomorrow”

1) Urban Migrants (same as above)
2) Home-Grown Terrorists
3) Self
4) cosmopolitan stranger (Rumford 142)
Globalization of Strangers/Strangeness

B) Eliminating the binary opposition of

Self

Inside

Friend

Other

Outside

Foe

Community?
Urban Flows:
1) Local Terrorists: serial killer, MRT random killing (2014), Boston Marathon bombings(2013), Jamal in WWALL?

Cosmos (1996)
Urban Flows:
1) Immigrant & Migrant workers
   - call center
   - Illegal laborers (e.g. 2004 Morecombe Bay Cockling disaster)
B. Strangeness (Risks)

- Increasing discrepancy between the rich and the poor
- National sovereignty questioned, the farmers suffer.
- Instability in employment (e.g. The newly poor in Taiwan)
- exploitation of third-world laborers (e.g. Nike, Disney)
- The need to meet the global trends and face its crises.
B. Strangeness Routinized → Strange Selves

1) Strangeness exists when those who are physically close are socially and culturally distant. **Next door neighbours** may be the nearest strangers. At the same time we might find common purpose with those far away (via the internet, for example).

2) Strangeness exists when we are no longer confident that **we know who ‘we’ are**, and when we realize that we are all strangers to someone. In short, strangeness exists when what used to be an experience restricted to the stranger is now an everyday experience for each of us. (interview)

2) the globalization of strangeness leads to our increasing **distancing from ourselves**. (Rumford 38; 11) –psychic, physical, cultural and cognitive
Strangeness

- Strangeness is a form of social disorientation resulting from an experience of globalization, particularly the loss of familiar reference points, social signposting, and an awareness that community is not built from the building blocks of physical contiguity.
Community of Strangers?

Re-Defining “Self” and Community of strangers:

- **Recognition of strangeness** may form the basis for a new form of community solidarity, connecting people across vast distances and creating neighbours where previously only strangers existed.” (21)
Cosmopolitan Stranger

- (R. 150-151) The cosmopolitan stranger is not one who ‘arrives today and stays tomorrow’. The cosmopolitan stranger originates from within society but remains in distant orbit from the various groups and communities which attempt to claim his/her allegiance. The cosmopolitan stranger has not been captured by the groups claiming to work on his/her behalf: the cosmopolitan stranger is not committed to someone else’s political project. … The cosmopolitan stranger works to connect people to distant others, connecting not just to proximate states, regions, communities but globally.
Cosmopolitan Stranger: Examples

-- Installation Artist (Yellow duckling?) Narrator of WWALL?

-- Flash Mobs? (Flash Mob Chorus Taipei 101 2013-07-08 Beijing)
e.g. Why Rohingya refugees risk their lives to flee Myanmar

REFUGEES?
NATIONLESS STRANGERS?
What We All Long For: Strangers

1. **Jamal**: completely irresponsible?
2. **Quy**: how is he related to the reader “you”? Is he a sympathetic figure?
3. How about the omniscient narrator’s second-person address?
4. His Longing/Love? Can he belong?
Jamal

- **Family:**
  - Hated by his father, loved “unconditionally” by Nadine (276-78):
    - “Between them Jamal was a temperamental bundle seeking continuous attention yet blowing up because of it.”
  - Taught to love Angie, whom he does not know.

- **Personality:** guy’s innocence, sympathized by Oku
  - Tenderness in him behind the fronting (236)—body mechanized, restless
Plot Summary Chaps of Quy’s

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Quy – with his contradictions

- Started to learn English; buzzed around the UNCHR people
- The beauty of Pulau Bidong
- Could have had a different life

- “they” think “people like me” are preparing to bomb buildings
- No gratitude, or brotherliness (139)
- Personality distorted

Tell you a story to show a sense of humor
—a story about a “slavish” servant and revengeful stories. “Now who would make up a story like that?”
Quy – and the Monk after chap 15. 16

- After 15 [the monk and Thailand]
  - Educated by the monk and outsmarting him
  - The monk was supposed to teach us how farming the land was practising the way of the prophet. I never saw him farm anything except people’s stupidity.
  - I don’t believe in anything he said now. (197)
  - I took to the reading. (Sun-Tzu, Analect, etc.)
  - The fight between the monk (Loc Tuc) and Ba Chang – the monk had to leave for Singapore
  - Rivalry between Loc Tuc & Kien
比農島 (Pulau Bidong) 7 years
With the monk, Loc Tuc, to Singapore for seven months, backtracked up Malaysia to Thailand, and “settled” in Bangkok in the Klong Toey district.

His Redeeming Grace
- Missing his parents; compare himself with the others
- Describe the island & some misconceptions about “people like [him]”.
- Honest about his survival skills (the boy)
- Talking to readers (the story – and story-teller; revengeful stories and loyal servant)
Quy—his monologue to “you”

(After) Chap 1 –  Sympathy, but not judgment

▪ How do I tell who I am? Talking is always a miscalculation. (6)
▪ My parents loved me. My sisters loved me. I was loved. (6) I won’t say who. (7)
▪ “Don’t be sentimental. Don’t ascribe good intentions.” (9)

(After) Chap 6 -- Other tragedies have overshadowed mine. (74) – then I’ll be forgotten – I feel like telling you the rest.
Quy—his monologue to “you”

- (After) Chap 11 --
  - Started to learn English; buzzed around the UNCHR people → Could have had a different life;
  - “they” think “people like me” are preparing to bomb buildings
  - **No gratitude, or brotherliness (139)**
  - You – tell you a story to show a sense of humor –a story about a “slavish” servant and revengeful stories. “Now who would make up a story like that?” [who would be so slavish?]
Quy—his monologue to “you”

- (After) Chap 15 – re. the monk; bound for Thailand
- ★ Quy – I ask myself today—what did he (Luc Tuc) see in me. You don’t need to teach a dog good manners. (199)
- The strong survive, but not the best. The weak got killed in me.
- Remembering little of the past (201) – a red dress, a hat, a hand. → left for Thailand – a more fluid place (201)
- .
Calculative & Self-Defensive

- After 22: You are more interested in how I got off of Pulau Bidong. How I got here and how grateful I am. ... What if I told you that there’s a web of people like me laying sticky fingers all over the city?
- The Dong Khoi [the boat] had freed me of allegiances.
- And if you were a boy like me, you’d wise up soon enough to the way things get told and what the weight of telling is.
Quy’s Ambiguities

- After 22, Between body and face (284)
  - A face made up? “That face [of innocence] remained with me. …. ★It’s waiting for its mother and father to come back. You would fall in love with it.”

- Smuggling business:
  - he steals from the new boss (his cell phone and laptop); involved in human trafficking
  - The girls turn out to be 3000 dollars a piece. (originally 18,000 dollars)
  - “You want to know how I felt? Did I grow, did I believe, was I hopeful, was this a journey to start a new life? … For some of us, the world is never forgiving” (285)
Chap 23 I don’t trust this (295) a sense of foreboding 296;

There is “over-something. Overweaning, overconfident, overly formal. Then the quality of it—like someone trying to hide a self, a more ravenous side.”

feels drawn back to her parents’ life
Chap 24

Tuyen asked to stop in front of the house, not going into the garage.

Feels comforted by their commonality (307)

Thinks of adding Quy’s photos to her work.
Quy’s View of Urban Strangers & Their Self-Transformation

- P. 309 (after chap 24)
- If …. Who the hell am I?
- After some changes of thought, “how come this can’t be me? … Quy, it’s you” (311).
From Uncertainty, Jealousy to Feeling Accepted

- After chap 24:
  - Asking himself: Who the hell are you?
  - He hears the laughter and remembers his childhood;
  - it’s easy to disappear here. Who the hell am I?
  - **Re. Bihn** – I am so full of rage.
  - **Re. Tuyen** -- She says she’s sorry. → I feel lifted up by my father or my mother.
The Narrator’s

- Chap 1: to us- “have you ever smelled the city at the beginning of spring?” (1)
- Chap 20:

-- To urban designers (261): If you couldn’t see it in your heart to put a garden here …

-- For Jackie’s parents: “Where else could you enjoy the only thing you were sure God gave you, your body, without getting into any kind of trouble for it?” [95-96]
“You simply throw yourself at life, and the narcissism of being young and beautiful and handsome and strong and eager and ready is supposed to see you through.” [263]
The Narrator’s

- Speaking for the characters:
  - **Tuyen**: “What was that unease? she wondered. Why had she wanted as far back as she could remember to ‘not be them’?” (69).
  - **guys in the jungle**: “Life was all about getting the car, the blingbling, the honey … You somehow forget that you’re just fronting” (164)
Endings: Meanings?
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<td>Quy — The girls <strong>turn out to be 3000 dollars a piece</strong>. Re. Bihn, Tuyen, finally waiting for the parents, resting</td>
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<td>Jamal – <strong>still restless</strong>; Carla –still loyal to Angie, but <strong>ready for a new life</strong></td>
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Parents’ obsessions: Do we see signs of their release?

1. Derek’s car wash business (281), using recent immigrants
2. **Angie:** why does she fall in love with Derek? Why does she commit suicide?

Children’s obsessions & transformation

1. **Bihn:** Is he suspicious? How does he find Quy?
2. **Tuyen’s Love:** Why is there a scene of Tuyen at Pope Joan and with another woman? (271) Can Tuyen become Korean?
3. Jackie, Oku, Tuyen and Carla—all in the middle of something.
Angie: Obsessed, or Perceptive?

- Angie’s going to the bank and playing a game (to see if she existed for anyone) – laughs at the headline on a newspaper:

- “Breastfeeding prevents cancer in women.” She burst into a laugh. Well, fine, let the whole city get on her tits then. (246)
Carla: Released Temporarily?

- ~ sounds languished. Carla felt weaker than she’d ever felt, as if she cannot hold him up any longer (237)
- As a child, she vent her anger on the road to stay calm at home (250); now she confronts Derek, kicking him and slapping D on the face (255)
- With Nadine’s help, Carla is finally but temporarily released:
Nadine

- Sympathetic with Angie (274), but also feel flattered because of Derek; gradually ceases to love him, but curious about his going after Angie.
- Spoiling Jamal
- Nadine “would tell [Carla] the whole story” (280) → “The city around [Nadine] seemed new, soft-skinned and tender” (280)
• Oku: *knowing* Alexandra Park, he’ll know Jackie

• *Meeting her father (258-59), seeing him old and limp, with an old player in hm.*

• *Jackie about her neighborhood and the past 260-*

• 264-- In her mind, Jackie walking down the paths of flowers and trees. …

• Oku – Understand Jackie’s loyalty to her parents, and why she has the white boy. Not a player; not her father. –He will go back to school.
Tuyen’s Art work – What does it mean?
Tuyen’s Art Works

- Performance and installation artist
- Riot, Dance – at the anti-globalization Demonstration
- Traveler --reflect her own status
- Snaps photos of things she sees on the street, including Binh and Quy
- Even wants to “do a body cast” of Jamal (231)
Tuyen’s Lubiao

- The central cylinder will be the *lubiao* with “the old longings of another generation” (308),
- the second cylinder will have twelve video projections of contemporary longings.
- The third one: empty, in a silent room.