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Diasporic Narratives and the Discourse of the Other in Marina Lewycka's Novels

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Diasporic Narratives and the Discourse of the Other in Marina Lewycka's Novels

by

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Abstract

This thesis examines Marina Lewycka's earlier novels to show how they represent the intrinsic discourse of the other evident in diasporic groups of East European communities in the UK. It also looks at how Lewycka's narratives engage and challenge the view of diaspora groups as unified and homogenous entities. As the field of diaspora studies continuously becomes more inclusive, it still overlooks the importance of the inner connections extant within diaspora groups and reduces the linkage of the diasporans to national solidarity and ethnicity. This thesis questions those relationships and proposes a Levinasian reading that demonstrates how, in Lewycka's novels, groups are formed based on the ethical responsibility of the self to the other. I prove my thesis by researching the novels as follows: firstly analyzing the diasporic representation of alterity and migration, secondly by looking at the possibility of hospitality and responsibility to the newly arrived migrant, and finally I examine how guests and hosts engage with the concept of justice in its cultural and universal understandings in a liminal space. One of the conclusions of this thesis is that an ethical reading of diasporic narratives is not only possible but also needed.

This thesis is original, unpublished, independent work by the author, Olga Eliya Krochak Sulkin.

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*For my late grandparents, Musya and Asher, who believed I could achieve anything
and my late grandmother, Valentina, whose faith in me has never failed
and whose memory in my heart will never fade...*

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*What the end usually demands
is something of the beginning*

Rienzi Crusz, Roots

Introduction

There have been numerous contributions to the concept of diaspora since its re-emergence almost thirty years ago, to the point that nowadays the term eludes any concrete definition. Khachig Tölölyan, in his extremely popular piece from 1991, “The Nation-State and Its Others: In Lieu of a Preface,” claims that the term diaspora that has been used in the past mostly in reference to Jewish people became more comprehensive and now includes an entire spectrum of terms, such as immigrant, expatriate, refugee, guest worker, and exile. He also adds that diasporas are a source of “ideological, financial, and political support for national movement that aim at a renewal of homeland” and that they operate across national boundaries to “bring to their kindred ethnonations new ideas, new money, even new languages” (5). While Tölölyan evokes the idea of ethnic solidarity, William Safran in the same first issue of *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies* asks (but does not answer) how do interethnic diaspora relations manifest themselves and, what are their “crucial elements” and “determinants” (95)? He is perhaps the first among modern diaspora scholars that even raises the question of difference within diasporic communities. In the same journal, almost twenty years later, an article finally appears that questions these internal relations. Mette Louise Berg and Susan Eckstein identify that “little is known about internal diversity and stratification within individual diasporas” (1). Although their approach does recognize the importance of the analysis of the relationships between diasporans, it is more historical than critical as they highlight the generational gaps and the time of immigration as constitutive factors.

Diaspora criticism has become a prevalent subject, and as Sudesh Mishra puts it: “it has turned into a vibrant culture industry ceaselessly defining an object – diaspora – without becoming in any way definite” (172). While Mishra admits that it is hard to explain the notion,

he identifies three main directions in diaspora criticism, which he calls scenes of exemplification. The classification is rather general, as it takes a broad terrain of theories and tries to fit them into neat categories, but it does present a good overview of diasporic scholarship conducted roughly from 1991 to 2006. To summarize, the first category, “dual territoriality,” shows how diasporans move between the notion of homeland and hostland; it is concerned with the “ethno-national community caught between the stable coordinates of the hostland and the homeland” (173). The second, “situational laterality,” is of a more complex nature and “focuses on the unstable, crabwise movements of bodies, ideas, goods and information across multiple territories,” while the participants in this scene “work with the key concepts of hybridity, double consciousness, transnationalism, liminal zone, third time-space, multilocality and hyphenated subjectivity” (174). The members of the third category – “archival specificity” – insist on specifying the archives and mainly the “socioeconomic context in which diasporas come into being” (174). The first category, which includes scholars such as Safran, Gabriel Sheffer, and Robin Cohen, accentuates the tensions between the homeland and the hostland and the aptitude of belonging to both and none of these spheres. The second scene, whose representatives are Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, and James Clifford, takes on an opposing approach to the first, mainly that the diasporan identity is in a state of *becoming* rather than *being* and it is affected by both axes, of homeland and hostland at once. The third scene analyzes in-depth some individual diasporas and their histories, such as religious groups and queer communities. Although Mishra’s categories are somewhat arbitrary, as many scholars can fit into more than one, his work provides a wide range of diasporic perspectives. Most importantly, however, it proves that within the multiplicity of diaspora theories, there has been a disproportionate accent on diasporans as homogenous entities that stand against nation-states. It is thus only partially true that “diasporas are characterised by

a... shared sense of moral co-responsibility, embodied in material gestures and extended through and across space” (Werbner 119).

The co-responsibility and solidarity are challenged from within diasporic formations. In the modern world where there is constant movement, there is a change (for worse) in the attitude towards various displaced people, by the state and by the population receiving the immigrants, who “have been migrants themselves or come from migrant families” (Young 174). Robert J.C. Young acknowledges that while there has always been hostility towards refugees and migrants in the past, the receiving population would never call the local authorities or ask for “papers or passport” (174), an act he sees more characteristic of today. The monitoring and policing of migrant populations are traces of a modern world, indicates Roger Brubaker (“Revisiting” 1559). Thus, while most of the postcolonial and diasporic literature chooses to amplify the binaries and hostility between guests and (indigenous) hosts, there is a need to look at literary works that emphasize the conflicts that exist between immigrants. The study of the gap between the West and the rest is important, but it reduces groups to ethnic communities that are homogeneous and unified, while their sub-ethnic and cultural diversity is not reflected upon.

Moreover, the ideas of “‘homeland’ and ‘home’” (Cohen xv) that are considered fundamental to the diasporic condition are questioned recently (for example see Stock 24 and Hall 544). Newer studies, such as Laura Rascaroli’s and Berg’s and Eckstein’s conjure the possibility of diasporic groups that form based on shared experiences. As an outcome, groups are starting to form that do not have the traditional unifying elements, but still consider themselves as diasporas. Cohen notes that within this variety, it seems reasonable to question the ability of diasporas to “mobilize a collective identity” (Cohen 7).

The ideas of solidarity and mutual identity have been overemphasized in diasporic fiction and theory, and yet the hostility and the power struggles that exist within those groups have not been given enough consideration. It is even more complicated in respect to East European diasporas, which received even less attention, as “migration movements within Central and Eastern Europe and the development of related migrant diasporas are to date relatively underresearched topics” (Triandafyllidou 226). It seems that there has not been much written in literature and criticism about East European diasporas, especially those that come from the post-Soviet countries, whereas these regions that are neither colonies nor post-colonies are “extraordinarily postcolonial... [and] extraordinarily little attention is paid to this fact” (Moore 517-8).

The East European diasporas that come from countries such as Ukraine, Moldova, former East Germany, and Poland, to name a few, have much in common with some of the more ‘traditional’ diasporic groups, but they also differ from them. The region experienced major political conflicts, such as the 1991 Reformation “Perestroika” and the Orange Revolution that shaped the economic, social and national psyche of those nations and their people. One reason why there has been so little scholarship about the Ukrainian diaspora in the West, for example, is assumed to be because Ukrainians “tended to be seen and to define themselves, as part of a larger ‘Russian’ presence” (Satzewich 88). Consequently, when they have migrated, they tried to assimilate or keep their national identity private (meaning they chose the hostland over the homeland, as in Mishra’s first scene). Vic Satzewich, who traces the last hundred and fifty years of the Ukrainian diaspora, says that this representation is an outcome of the Soviet’s colonizing efforts, while one of the most significant Ukrainian diasporic settlements has been formed in Britain.

The Ukrainian-British diaspora emerged after World War II when Britain saw a big wave of immigration from Ukraine, most of whose members were labour migrants or refugees. The postwar economic boom required many workers, and therefore “countries like Australia, Britain, Canada and the United States admitted Ukrainian immigrants, sympathetic to their plight as refugees” (Satzewich 89). Before that, Britain did not have an existing organized Ukrainian diaspora community, but after that, “the Ukrainians who settled abroad [started to] bear a strong resemblance to the ideal-typical features of diasporas that Cohen (1997) outlines in *Global Diasporas*” (Satzewich 214). With these geopolitical changes in mind, it is somewhat odd that there are still very few writers in Britain who deal with challenges and struggles of the East European (and primarily Ukrainian) diasporas.

Popular British diasporic and postcolonial literature, such as Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* and Zadie Smith’s *White Teeth*, offers critical insights into the lives of immigrants in Britain, their work perils, assimilation and religious influences as well as essential ties with the diasporic community at home and abroad. While the contribution of these two works to the field of postcolonial and immigrant literature is very well established, Lewycka’s novels (that are often considered in the same breath as the two above) did not receive the same degree of critical acclaim. Lewycka, who writes about East European diasporas in the UK, is concerned with the internal conflicts and animosity within diasporic groups. Lewycka is not the first to point out the factor of the hostility between migrants. Eva Hoffman in her novel, *Lost in Translation: Life in a New Language*, published in 1989, briefly expresses how more assimilated immigrants exploit their countrymen. Whereas Hoffman focuses on the Polish-American diaspora, Lewycka chooses to foreground the close encounters within the East European diaspora in the UK. Furthermore, while Ali and Smith are mainly preoccupied with visible minorities, Lewycka showcases the

experiences of the ‘invisible’ communities (East Europeans) that turn out to be not less challenging.

The literature available today reduces East European diasporic experiences to sex trafficking and poverty. But while these subjects are a vital part of the theorization of these diasporas, they are by no means the only ones. Therefore, I turn my attention to East European diasporic experiences in Britain, with an emphasis on the hospitality and hostility present within diasporic groups and the ability to accept the other as well as to demand justice for them. I also explore Cohen’s claim that sometimes members of the same diasporic group do not come to aid their newer members and do not take responsibility for each other. That is why Emmanuel Levinas’ theory of responsibility for the other becomes relevant. Levinas’ ethics combined with diaspora theories offer a new perspective on the internal formations of diasporas. I suggest that it shows how responsibility for the other depends on the acceptance of the other as unique and different, as well as ensuring that justice is done. In addition to that, I look at literary representations of diaspora formations and how these tend towards the imagined.

Shared experiences of exploitation of cheap labour, empowered by processes of globalization, are one way to create an imagined diasporic community. Another option is a community that is based on an ethical relationship towards the other and values of justice and mercy. Migrants who come to the West in search of better prospects have to deal not only with poverty and lack of status but also with issues of social and legal invisibility, manipulation by their countrymen, injustice, colonization of the mind and conflicting loyalties. Although Lewycka’s novels are very comical, they seem to present a dim picture of East European experiences in the West. Even her inclination to happy endings does not alter the mere fact that moral responsibility is not a given, but rather hard work and sacrifice.

Therefore, I ask, how does Lewycka's representation of hospitality-hostility in a diasporic group seen through lenses of Levinasian ethical responsibility to the other challenge the concept of unity within this group? I argue that Levinas' theory of the face of the other that is based on the idea of the responsibility to the other, applied to Lewycka's novels, reveals a set of complex hierarchies established on status and seniority of immigrants in the new land. The senior migrants assume the roles of the colonizers in the sense that they exploit the other and take advantage of them so as to promote their status in the new country. As a result, the new immigrant is 'doubly marginalized,' by the hosting nation as well as by the guest that became the host. However, as this thesis aims to show, if the self takes responsibility for the other, and accepts the alterity and uniqueness of the other, there is a chance of creating a diasporic formation that is not only based on ethnicity but also on collective experiences. I argue that a close reading of literary works from regions that are neither colonies nor ex-colonies, as of Lewycka, points to the importance of examining narratives of the diaspora beyond the hostland - homeland binary and focusing instead on the relationship between different groups of immigrants, while not entirely ignoring interactions with the native population. I will examine the manner in which Lewycka's narratives imagine and represent these relationships in the light of Levinas' theory of the ethics of the face of the other. According to Levinas, the (marginalized) other at once beseeches and commands not to kill; the other places an inordinate responsibility on the (centered) self to if need be die so that the other may live. Hence, overall, my study asks: How does Lewycka represent the paradox of the other's beseeching and commanding? How does she narrate the responsibility to the other? And, what insights might Lewycka's literary texts provide both Diaspora and Levinas Studies?

While Lewycka wrote several novels and short stories, I chose to focus on her first three novels. Lewycka's first book, *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian*, was unanimously her biggest success, and it has set the tone for her political and social writing. The novel to follow, *Two Caravans*, continued the theme of Ukrainian migrants in Britain and their struggles but added the dimension of global labour. The first two novels were well-received, nominated for awards and prizes, and the first book was translated into more than thirty languages. At the same time, and as Lewycka points out in her interview with *Book club* (Naughtie), the most hostile reviews were of the Ukrainian translation that saw the book as offensive and almost as an anti-Ukrainian conspiracy. Even though her third novel, *We Are All Made of Glue*, deviates from the theme of the Ukrainian Diaspora, it still explores the perils of other European migrants in Britain with an emphasis on Jews, Palestinians, and Israelis. Her latest novels, *Various Pets Alive and Dead* and *The Lubetkin Legacy* that are no longer concerned with immigration and East European diasporas received little attention. It is still curious that after a careful search in various databases and libraries, I found no more than a dozen articles about Lewycka's novels and even these were mostly about the first. I became intrigued about the reason why so little research has been done on the stories that discuss the inner struggles of diasporic groups. Also, being half Ukrainian, I felt that Lewycka's novels hit close to home.

My methodology in this thesis takes on a liminal approach, as it considers modern diaspora scholarship and some less cited articles about specific diasporic struggles and challenges. It can be said that it moves between Mishra's first and second scenes of diaspora formation. Since Lewycka's novels are not considered canonical diasporic literature, it seems suitable to use 'un-canonical' scholarship that does not fit neatly into categories in analyzing it. I believe that it is important to provide a space for theories and novels that are perhaps more

“marginal” than others, because the margins can move the centre as well, as Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o claims. The most important theory that I use in my analysis is Levinas' ethics of the face of the other at the moment of the encounter with the other. This specific theory of Levinas' that looks at people's relationship and the responsibility of the self to the other, without identification or tribal knowledge, allows exploring the various conflicts within diasporic groups in their literary representations. For this purpose, I use mainly three interviews in which Levinas explains in detail the major components of the ethical encounter with the other, which I identify as alterity, responsibility, and justice.

This thesis is divided into four main chapters, each of which is subdivided into smaller subtitled sections. Chapter one explains in further detail the methodological approach I have taken in this study in regards to diaspora theories and Levinas' ethics. It discusses the three major elements of Levinas' theory and how they are used in the subsequent chapters. The novels are not analyzed chronologically, but rather thematically, in the order of the Levinasian three principals, as each chapter builds upon the previous one's conclusions. Chapter one also mentions the main criticism on Levinas' theory and primarily the practicality of his ethics. Colin Davis and Jacques Derrida provide the most interesting criticism on the sacrificial notion of Levinas' philosophy, and both see shortcomings in Levinas' ethics, such as the feasibility of the sacrifice and the inability of a person to accept a complete stranger, with whom the self has not even a language in common. The contributions of Cohen, Pnina Werbner, Brubaker and Ngũgĩ to the body of diaspora criticism are also considered. Therefore, the chapter shows how Levinas' ethics, specifically the theory of the face of the other, can be fused with diaspora studies in a literary analysis of Lewycka's novels. It also outlines the major challenges with it.

Chapter two explores the notion of the alterity of the other in Lewycka's *Two Caravans* with an emphasis on the exploitation of migrants by other migrants and how migration becomes an issue of alterity. The chapter offers an insight to how the alterity of the other is not accepted as a defining characteristic within a diasporic group and how with the aim of gaining status in the host country immigrants establish power structures that are meant to exploit other immigrants. It also illustrates the hierarchies in the margins that disrupt the centre, exemplifying the non-reciprocal relations prioritized in Levinas' ethics. In this chapter, I analyze the possibility of building alternative diasporic formations that rely on shared experiences of exploitation and not solely on national identifications.

Chapter three deals with the response to the call of the other, as well as its failure and the challenges in offering unconditional hospitality and responsibility, as it is depicted in Lewycka's *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian*. It portrays a power struggle between the self and the other who are both migrants. The immigrants in the novel are in constant push-and-pull relationships and persistently move between loyalties to the host country and feelings of nostalgia to the homeland. It seems thus that feelings of double consciousness are always present in the mind of diasporans, but it requires another immigrant to evoke these. The term "double consciousness," as explained by Pramod K. Nayar, comes from the writings of W.E.B. Du Bois and Franz Fanon who theorized it as a condition of the black people losing their connection with their heritage and seeing the "white race as the one to be emulated" (53). However, in this thesis, I use this term in its more recent appropriation by Gilroy and Hall and mainly as a "productive" phenomenon that allows latter generations to speak of a "dual legacy" (54) and as an integral part of a making of one's own identity. And so, I suggest that the encounter with the other who prompts responsibility and hospitality triggers a renegotiation with one's diasporic identity. Also,

the analysis of the novel shows how the responsibility for the other is lacking in respect to social justice, and thus justice is the theme of the next chapter.

Chapter four concludes the literary analysis of Lewycka's novels with the exploration of the idea of justice within diasporic communities in *We Are All Made of Glue*. This chapter questions the role of the state in instituting justice within immigrant groups and exemplifies how justice can be culturally localized. It also imagines how the motif of home (and homeland) relates to the theme of justice and ethics in a diasporic context. Lewycka explores the idea of ethics in hospitality, establishing that first there is the acceptance of the other and then the knowledge. This chapter inquires how Lewycka's narrative imagines the ethical obligation to the other, and how Levinas' concept of justice relates to the ability to keep one's home. It also shows how the conflict between loyalty to homeland and hostland resolves within a liminal space. The self becomes a vehicle of justice for the other when they accept their alterity as well as responsibility for them. In conclusion, the chapter engages with how "diaspora studies will help forge new links between emergent critical methodologies and contemporary social justice movements" (Chariandy).

Social justice, however, must also be explored from the perspective of the state, an aspect that Lewycka's novels do not dwell upon as much, and hence only briefly mentioned in this thesis. This aspect is crucial because it is the role of the state, as per Levinas, to intervene to institute justice. Lewycka shows how the state fails to do so by implying how uninvolved it is with the lives of the diasporans and especially with power struggles and hierarchies present in their communities. It might be a good idea for future studies to explore the role of the state as an agent of justice within diasporic groups.

This thesis provides a space for the unique voice of Lewycka's literature that gives the stage to the experiences of East European immigrants in Britain. It also covers many ethical concerns and thus will have relevance to those who are interested in applying an ethical approach to diasporic studies, as well as those who question the concept of solidarity within diasporic groups. This thesis can also be interesting to those who are looking for alternative ways to theorize the various structures of diasporas and how they can be seen as imagined. Lastly, this thesis brings value to Levinas' enthusiasts who are anxious to see how his philosophy can be applied to literary studies, and most importantly, how it changes the epistemological appreciation of marginalized immigrant identities.

The study of diaspora is yet to be complete, and there is much to be covered, included, and challenged within this field. Every new concept that we add to this massive body of diasporic theory challenges and questions its predecessor. Ultimately, every such theoretical addition (including this modest research) shows how "the light gained illuminates above all the insufficiencies of the light acquired" (Levinas, "In the Name" 199).

Chapter 1: Responsibility and Hospitality in the Face of Diaspora: Theory and Practice

with Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, and Marina Lewycka

When we think about diaspora, we inadvertently think about community and unity as well as postcolonial politics; not immediately do we consider ethics as central to the formation and existence of diasporas. Werbner's argument that the migrant others share co-responsibility for one another due to their ethnic similarities reflects the popular tendency in diasporic studies to focus on reciprocity and solidarity in diasporic formations as well as similarities of ethnicity and nationality (Cohen 7). Cohen argues that diasporas are often reduced to two building blocks, homeland and ethnic affiliation, and the latter no longer explains the complexity of diasporic communities and the phenomenon of migration (Cohen 4).

Although there is a difference between diasporans and migrants, it is "rather blurred" (Sheffer 16). The period of settlement, its goal or sense of belonging to the host country that used to distinguish diasporans from migrants is no longer as clear as it used to be, asserts Sheffer. What is important, however, is the choice migrants make regarding the host country, meaning whether they decide to stay and live in diaspora or not. Another important element for Sheffer is the factor of community and belonging to an ethnic group and being involved with it on political and social levels, and when migrants decide to "form new diasporas or join existing ones ... [they] become motivated to undertake the burdens involved in diaspora existence and become active in the political arena as identified members and functionaries of diaspora organizations"(17). Then they become diasporans. Brubaker, however, defines diasporas and diasporans in a more inclusive (and elusive) terms, as for him there are no "sharp and definitive breaks with home countries" or a "singular path of assimilation" ("The 'Diaspora'" 8). This view of diaspora takes into account the multitude and diversity of immigrant experiences, such as

class, gender, culture, and social network. According to Brubaker's "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora," immigrants are as much diasporans as anyone else, even if, according to Sheffer, they would be considered as temporary diasporans.

There are many new diaspora groups that were formed in the twenty-first century, when suddenly the subject of diasporas became extremely popular in social and literature studies to the point that it became universalized, states Brubaker in his important 2005 article, "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora." Brubaker's concern is that if "everyone is diasporic, then no one is distinctively so"(3). However, the proliferation of diasporas allowed inclusion of other diasporans, such as "labour migrants" (Brubaker 2) who maintain emotional and social ties to the homeland, and who were excluded before.

Three elements constitute a diaspora, according to Brubaker, and these are a dispersion, homeland orientation, and boundary-maintenance. The latter is what enables a diaspora to speak as a "distinctive 'community,' held together by distinctive, active solidarity, as well as by relatively dense social relationship, that ... link members of the diaspora in different states into a single 'transnational community'" (Brubaker, "The 'Diaspora'" 6). This view is in line with the co-responsibility Werbner poses as central to diaspora formation. Claire Alexander, who revisits and criticizes Brubaker's seminal article, points out that these distinctions are opaque and confusing because rather than to set groups aside, they make them even more inclusive. Also, Alexander suggests that there is a problem with Brubaker's definition of homeland and the connection to it, and proposes the term "diaspora space" (1548-49) instead. This term avoids the question of the origin and opens the "possibility of commonality and exchange, as well as specificity and difference" (Alexander 1548).

Alexander is not the first to evoke a possibility of a ‘diaspora space,’ as Avtar Brah in another seminal book from 1996, *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities*, coins this term and defines it as an intersectional space between diaspora, border, spatial location, economic, political, and cultural processes. Brah looks at notions of migration through global spaces, and defines the term as a “conceptual category [that] is ‘inhabited’ not only by those who have migrated and their descendants but equally by those who are constructed and represented as indigenous” (178). The diaspora space is an important aspect of diaspora studies, as it looks beyond the historical and national ties, and some scholars even consider it the “future of diaspora studies” (McLoughlin and Knott 271). It seems thus that Brah, Alexander, Seán McLoughlin and Kim Knott all point out to the fact that the concept of diaspora has moved across the spectrum, from division to inclusion.

Some categories of diasporas and diasporans are still prevalent today, such as Sheffer’s four categories of diasporans: core members, members by choice, marginal members, and dormant members. Core members are those who maintain their diasporic identity openly and are ready to “act on behalf of their community and homeland.” Members by choice are those who choose to belong to a specific diaspora and participate in its life. Marginal members are those who maintain their “ethnic communal identity but not identify as such or purposely distance themselves from the community,” and dormant members are persons who have assimilated completely in the host society, but know their diasporic roots and “under certain circumstances... will identify with the diaspora and can be mobilized by its leaders and organizations” (100). The ability to mobilize diasporans is also acknowledged by other critics, such as Werbner, and is connected again with their ability to connect based on ethnic solidarity.

Although the scholars above draw differences and similarities between many diaspora formations, both acknowledge that incipient diasporas are more difficult to unpack. Russian or Russian-speaking diasporas, meaning those who previously been in the Soviet bloc, are identified by both Sheffer and Brubaker as developing diasporas that formed due to the transgression of borders and not of people. Sheffer calls this phenomenon – “stateless diasporas”(23). Although Brubaker’s definition and theorization of diasporas has been and still is one of the most influential theories since the beginning of the twenty-first century, it is largely a sociological view that looks at diaspora “empirically as a ‘category of practice’ while retaining its critical and political potentialities” (Alexander 1547). In his recent article from 2017, “Revisiting ‘The ‘Diaspora’ Diaspora,’” Brubaker in response to Alexander’s critique acknowledges that his analysis was more sociological than intended and that diaspora can be examined from different perspectives and in different fields, such as social sciences and humanities. More importantly, he suggests that there is another element he missed in his initial article – the language of the diaspora. The language of diaspora contributes to making people and new ways for them to be, because the “language of diaspora, as it is appropriated *by* them, enables the telling of new sorts of stories and the shaping of new sorts of self-understandings and subjectivities” (1559). It seems that Brubaker implies to a certain narrative or better yet a specific discourse that unites diasporas and diasporans. I suggest that the language of diaspora is indeed a discourse – discourse of the other. This turns to be an ethical discourse.

Levinas’ philosophy of ethics can teach us to look beyond the epistemological, sociological, and anthropological definitions of diasporas and into the specific faces of the people who form these groups. The concept of the call of the other is central to Levinas’ thought because it allows the self to acknowledge that the other is different and weaker, but not from a

disadvantaged point of view or even a place of sympathy, but rather from a position of responsibility for them. Levinas elaborates on this view in “The Proximity of the Other,” where he is concerned with the encounter with the alterity of the other and the welcoming of it, or in other words, with “an attitude of openness to exteriority, openness that is a call and a response to the other” (212). The encounter with alterity to which *I* (i.e. the self) owe the debt of openness and responsibility is a response to the call of the other.

This concept is further developed in another text, “In the Name of the Other,” where Levinas notes that “in the ethical relation, the other man remains other to me” (191). That is, ethics precedes knowledge in the way that understanding or relating to the other is not possible because the other is and always will be unique and separate from me. Levinas’ philosophy prioritizes the other over the self. For Levinas, the goal is not making the other *equal* to me, but rather prioritizing them *over* me. The reasoning behind this claim is that the “nudity of the face” (Levinas, “The Vocation” 108) of the other person, or their vulnerability, prompts a responsibility from the self that transcends all tribal connection. The concept of accepting the other in their uniqueness goes against the accustomed perception of diasporas as formations that are built upon the association of similarities of nationality and ethnicity.

It has been noted by Davis, Kelly Oliver, and Clive Barnett that Levinas’ theory of the face of the other is closely related to Derrida’s theory of hospitality, in that both are concerned with how the self treats the other at the moment of the encounter with the face of the other. These critics also provide some of the most poignant critiques of Levinas’ theory and its limitations. Derrida, a student of Levinas and one of the major supporters of his theory on ethical responsibility, also offers one of the most intriguing critiques as he theorizes and deconstructs the theory of the responsibility to the other. The examination of the ethical dimension of

diasporic experiences considering Derrida's critique provides a new outlook on the relationship of the self with the other within these communities.

Derrida, as opposed to Levinas, proposes a slightly different outlook on the relationship between the self and the other with an emphasis on the universal right of welcoming the other, i.e. hospitality. In "Hostipitality" Derrida reads Immanuel Kant's "Third Definitive Article of a Perpetual Peace" and unpacks its correlations with the historical, juridical, political, and economic questions of hospitality. He examines hospitality as "conditional" and "unconditional" as well as its status as a universal right. Universal hospitality as a concept is a duty and obligation regulated by law that the self must offer the other that is very similar to the duty of responsibility (also protected by law when the third appears) introduced earlier by Levinas. But, as opposed to Levinas, whose responsibility transcends all tribal connection, Derrida claims that some sort of affiliation and connection with the other is inevitable. Thus, the other can be considered a stranger, who can be treated as a friend or as an enemy. Alternatively, the host can choose not to offer hospitality to the stranger and instead be hostile towards them. In this situation, Derrida's self is different from Levinas', and somewhere lacks the responsibility of the priority of the other. It seems that Derrida's hospitality, while not entirely antithetical to Levinas' responsibility, offers a slightly different approach to the idea of the limitless responsibility of the self.

Furthermore, in "Hostipitality," Derrida deconstructs the word hospitality linguistically and finds that it contains two opposed meanings: hospitality and hostility (thus the title of the essay). While the host must offer hospitality to the guest, it can also potentially harm them, and Derrida exemplifies it by raising the issue of a hostage-taking in modern times. He says:

We would also need to pursue this terrifying and unsurpassable strategy of the hostage in the direction of a modernity... in the direction (the inverse, so to speak) of what Levinas calls ‘the hostage’ when he says that the exercise of ethical responsibility begins where I am and must be the hostage of the other, delivered passively to the other before being delivered to myself. (9)

This citation demonstrates how Derrida challenges Levinas’ ethical responsibility in the case of the self becoming the hostage of the other, claiming that the self can be put in danger and be a victim of the other’s misconduct.

Within the context of marginalized diasporas that are neither colonies nor ex-colonies and where the self and the other are both marginalized and othered, Levinas’ theory of responsibility in the face of the other and its possible restrictions are imperative to explore. Levinas places the responsibility within the realm of the self, as the other at once commands and beseeches not to kill, while Derrida indicates the dangers of this infinite accountability.

Diasporic studies scholars, especially those that concentrate on the postcolonial movements from previously colonized regions, such as Gilroy’s and Hall’s, often consider the relationship between guests and hosts as unequal relations, but in a sense that the other is victimized or persecuted by the indigenous and helped by other co-diasporics (see for instance, Cohen 39, Brubaker “The ‘Diaspora’” 2, Werbner 120, and Dufoix 29). Stéphane Dufoix, who provides a critical introduction to nearly all concepts of diaspora, states that the “loss of national territory creates a sense of identity in ... exile ... a national imagination that supports the maintenance of solidarity in dispersion” (29). While Dufoix argues that diasporas are defined as “transnational communities” or “ethnic community separated by state borders” (30), Cohen

briefly (but critically) notes that sometimes members of the same diasporic group do not come to aid their newer members (7). This points out to the failure of the communal responsibility.

Diaspora, as a word, phenomenon, concept or idea has grown to mean so much more nowadays, but tracing its lineage as well as current and future directions are not the purpose of this dissertation. This has already been attempted by notable scholars, such as Cohen, Brubaker, and Dufoix to name a few. However, none of them has considered the manifestations of the failure of communal duties and the inability or unwillingness of diasporans to connect with their expatriates. Moreover, all the above scholars have reviewed the phenomenon sociologically and anthropologically, not ethically or from the point of view of literary studies. I believe that the aspect of how diaspora is narrated and incorporated into stories of diasporans is an imperative addition to the field. Also, I suggest that the discourse of the other becomes a literary technique in narrating diasporic experiences within incipient diasporas, such as East European groups.

Lewycka's novels deal with what has been less emphasized in theory and fiction, and specifically with the relationship within and between immigrant communities (especially East European) in the hostlands. The self is identified as the more senior immigrant and the other as the newer migrant. It seems that Levinas' theory that prioritizes the alterity of the other as crucial to responsibility and justice does not engage closely enough with issues of diasporic hospitality and responsibility when the self and the other are both vulnerable members of society and in geographical proximity with each other. In this sense, the face to face encounter is by default politicized when experienced within the diasporic community, where justice, as instituted by the state does not seem to work, as it is demonstrated by Lewycka's narratives. In addition, Levinas' theory of the face of the other and Derrida's theory of hospitality help to explain Lewycka's representation of diasporic hostility that comes from within the marginalized groups.

Therefore, my research question is – how does Lewycka’s representation of the internal relationships of diasporic hostility and responsibility illustrate, engage, and challenge Levinas’ theory of the face of the other? Also, why does Lewycka represent East European migrants as a different type of diasporans in respect to other immigrants? Lastly, I ask, how do Lewycka’s novels provide valuable insight into the phenomenon of incipient diasporas from the Post-Soviet countries and how does her way of engaging with the ethical discourse of the other bring a fresh view for literary studies today?

Overall, I argue that the internal formations of the incipient diasporas as these are narrated in Lewycka’s novels, specifically those from the former Soviet Union, challenge the view that diasporas are connected by ethnicity and nationality. The ethical perspective of Levinas assists in unpacking the complexity of the community relationship in the hostland, as well as the possibility for ethical co-responsibility and hospitality based on the imaginary ties of the diasporans to each other.

To prove my thesis, I am going to, firstly, demonstrate how Lewycka’s representation of immigrants in *Two Caravans* challenges Levinas’ concept of the alterity of the other, secondly, explore the concept of responsibility for the other and the failure of the right to universal hospitality in *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian*, and finally, question how Lewycka engages with the issue of ethics and transgression of justice, when the third appears in *We Are All Made of Glue*. In what follows, I explain Levinas’ theory of the face of the other and its three major components: alterity of the other, responsibility for the other, and justice (when the third appears in the encounter with the other). In addition, in the following sections, I engage with Levinas’ theory and its major criticism and the correspondence of these with diaspora concepts.

The Alterity of the Other

One of the major points of emphasis in Levinas' "The Vocation of the Other" is that the self must accept the other in its absolute alterity and even love them: "to approach someone as unique to the world is to love him" (108). Levinas explains in this text what the self and the other are and the role of the self. He also emphasizes the importance of the other in its alterity. The self is the one that needs to recognize this alterity and be prepared to sacrifice itself for the other. To accept the other as unique is to love them, says Levinas, and the love for the stranger is what constitutes the idea of justice. Furthermore, Levinas argues that the basic obligation of all human beings is not to kill the other, surpassing all genus or tribal connection.

As opposed to Derrida, Levinas does not differentiate between the stranger and the other, because every other *is* a stranger, "the other is other because of me: unique and in some manner different than the individual belonging to a genus. It is not difference which makes alterity: alterity makes difference" ("The Vocation" 106). That is, the other is an absolute other in relation to the self, but the self does not define the alterity of the other because this recognition happens beyond being. For Derrida, there is a difference between the other as other and the other as a stranger to whom I do not owe the depth of hospitality. Hospitality, similarly to Levinas' ethical responsibility, is not a concept that lends itself to objective knowledge; it is beyond the concept of knowing. The other, thus, is an absolute stranger, the unknown, which we know nothing about. Derrida complicates it even more by claiming that while "hospitality is owed to the other as stranger ... if one determines the other as stranger, one is already introducing the circles of conditionality that are family, nation, state, and citizenship" (8). Derrida explains that the stranger is "first of all, he who is born elsewhere" (14). But defining someone based on the knowledge of their birth eliminates the concept of accepting the other in their absolute alterity,

for, in this situation, knowledge precedes acceptance of the other. While for Levinas ethics precedes knowledge, for Derrida, knowledge does exist on some level when we deal with issues of hospitality and nationality.

Irina Aristarkhova, who analyses Levinas and Derrida in relation to hospitality and ethics of the other, proposes that “Levinas argued that hospitality precedes any hostility and that welcoming is prior to war insofar as the ethical call of the Other is constitutive of and precedes ontology” and that “for Levinas ... hospitality stands for a primary dimension of being as always open to others” (164). Aristarkhova attests that hospitality for Levinas is what establishes that relation to the other and the welcoming and taking responsibility for them. Hospitality, according to Levinas and Derrida, explains Aristarkhova, is an active act of anticipation when the host awaits the guest and yet is always taken by surprise by their arrival. The surprise of the arrival of the guest, as it seems, is actually a surprise of the manifestation of universal hospitality or in Levinas’ words, “the recognition of the unique, the recognition of the other, the priority of the other is, in a certain sense, unreasonable. One may even be astonished that men would manifest goodness, each on the part of the other” (“The Vocation” 111). The acknowledgement of the self, who sacrifices their safety for the other and opens their door to the other, is an act of unconditional hospitality.

The political aspect of hospitality and the relations between the self and the other is extremely important for Aristarkhova, and thus she looks for an “approach that opens up the potential for hospitality as a concept that can respond to questions of immigration ... [and] as connected to concrete situations of maternal citizenship” (175). The definition of maternal citizenship by Aristarkhova is closely related to nationality, homeland and mother tongue. But if maternal citizenship is closely associated with homeland, thus the hostland cannot offer complete

and universal hospitality to the stranger. Lewycka's novel, *Two Caravans*, examines how hospitality is used as a pretence for bringing a cheap work force to the West. Moreover, the migrants in the novel mimic the colonizers (or the hosts) and exploit the Western fantasies of the newer immigrants for their own purposes. Although the tendency to "conquer others" ("The Vocation" 113) is natural, according to Levinas, it is an occupation with being, which is ontological and not an ethical consideration of the relationship between the self and the other. In this respect, Levinas mentions love and peace as the ultimate goal, "peace is sociality; it is to attend to the other. It means not to close one's shutters, not to close one's door, but to put a *mezuzah*, a sign of welcome, on the doorpost" (113, *italics* in original). Lewycka's *Two Caravans* explores the possibility of accepting the other regardless of their geographical belonging, identity or nationality. She illustrates the need for an ethical examination of diasporas and diasporic relationships and challenges the "natural" phenomenon of 'conquering of the other.' It seems that Lewycka is saying that the alterity of the other should be accepted with hospitality instead of hostility.

The novel, in a nutshell, describes the adventures of a group of foreign workers in the UK, their exploitation, personal maturation, and their fantasies (and later disappointments) in the Western myth of a global world that is open for migration. The unique writing style (that of multiple narrators) allows the reader to see through the eyes of the self and the other while it happens from both perspectives. At the beginning of the novel, Lewycka creates an idyllic community formed by East European migrants, such as Poles, Ukrainians, and Moldovans, as well as members of other groups, such as Chinese, and Africans. At first, they live together in harmony, "they all eat in silence, listening to the birdsong, watching the magical shifts of light as the sun slips towards the horizon. After a while, conversations break out in a babble of

languages” (40). The multinational collage of foreign workers that live happily in the midst of exploitative environment is ideal only on the surface. Although the other is not treated with hostility, it is hard to say they are accepted, seeing that the migrants stereotype each other continuously throughout the novel. For example, the “Chinese girls” are not called by their names, and both are identified as Chinese although one of them is Malaysian; Emanuel, who comes from Africa, is called a “black man” (14), and even Andriy and Irina that are both from Ukraine stereotype each other based on regions: “she thinks she’s better than you because she’s from Kiev and you’re from Donbas” (17), contemplates Andriy. What is even more interesting is that a page later, Irina says “I was pleased to discover there’s another Ukrainian here – a nice though rather primitive miner from Donetsk” (19). This exemplifies how the self and the other both try to ‘know’ each other and fit each other into categories, rather than simply accept one another. It also shows that genus and a tribal link exists between migrants even when they do not accept each other’s alterity. The link of nationality provides the migrants with a sense of community and security even if only on the surface.

Oliver Lindner’s text “‘East is East and West is Best?’ – The Eastern European Migrant and the British Contact Zone in Rose Tremain’s *The Road Home* (2007) and Marina Lewycka’s *Two Caravans* (2006)” is interested in the depiction of immigrants in Lewycka’s novel. Lindner mainly looks at the aspects of transculturation, while he observes that the East European migrants in Lewycka’s *Two Caravans* almost do not have contact with the British people. But the clash of civilizations for him is on the level of commodities, and not in respect to responsibility. Although Lindner fails to recognize the complexity of the relationship between the migrants themselves and their implications for transculturation, he does make a valid point, which is, “the migrant Other... has acquired a distinctly new face” (460). The East European

migrant embodies the place of the exotic Other, according to Lindner, and the exploitation happens mainly due to the differences in cultures and expectations. Lindner, however, does not concede the idea of the failure of the judicial system or that the exploitation and the mistreatment of the other are largely carried out by the “old” immigrant.

Pietro Deandrea in “Shards in the Landscape: The Dispersed Liminality of Contemporary Slavery in the UK” even more than Lindner is concerned with the exploitation of migrants. Deandrea shows how new types of slavery in the UK, as depicted in Lewycka’s *Two Caravans*, become systemic; he calls it “systemic liminality” (229). He explains how immigration becomes work tourism and how the fantasies of the West allure foreigners into these slavery. While Deandrea focuses on the exploitation of the immigrants and refugees in the contemporary UK, his article is very relevant to the exploration of otherness in the novel. Yet Deandrea, like other Lewycka critics, does not address the complexity of the relationship between the different types of immigrants, and the implications of the failure of communal responsibility to diasporas.

Lewycka’s narrative engages with the concepts of diasporic unity and solidarity as well as ethical acceptance of the other, and she illustrates the ‘natural’ tendency, what Levinas refers to in terms of Darwinian evolution, to be grossly unethical towards the other. Levinas’ point is that the relationship with the other is unnatural (“The Vocation” 113). As a result, one can look at Lewycka’s novel as criticism on both, radical acceptance of the other in its alterity (as per Levinas) and conditional welcome (as per Derrida). The other is not accepted in any situation, shows Lewycka, due to its affiliation with a marginalized group of people. This analysis is not complete, however, without an in-depth discussion of responsibility as it relates to the right to an unconditional welcome.

Responsibility and Reciprocity

In what follows, I would like to explore the concept of responsibility of the self to the other, and the right to universal hospitality as Lewycka represents it in *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian*. While there is merit to Levinas' concept of responsibility and Derrida's right to universal hospitality, Lewycka shows that it is rather theoretical than practical. For this purpose, it is crucial to examine another important criticism on Levinas' theory of the relationship between the self and the other that is voiced by Davis in his article "Levinas at 100."

Davis, who acknowledges Levinas as "one of the twentieth century's most original, demanding and influential thinkers," asserts that his most important contribution was his "concern to preserve and respect the alterity of the Other" (95). Yet Davis' stance is that to continue to preserve Levinasian ethics, one should continuously question and debate his central ideas, one of which is the immeasurable responsibility for the other. For example, according to Davis, there is a limit to the initial responsibility offered by Levinas, "the fact that I am not *legally to blame* for persecution does not mean that I am not *ethically responsible* for it in some (as yet inadequately specified) Levinasian manner" (98, *italics* in original). To explain the perplexity of this point, Davis offers an example: "if I am responsible for the acts of the persecutor, does this also mean that Jews are responsible for anti-Semitism? Surely not, but this is a dangerous territory" (99). For Davis, it is an ethical dilemma because there has to be a limit to the initial responsibility.

To illustrate the opaqueness of Levinas' explanation of the idea of responsibility, Davis quotes him: "I have previously said elsewhere – I do not like mentioning it for it should be completed by other considerations – that I am responsible for the persecutions that I undergo. But only me! My 'close relations' or 'my people' are already the others and, for them, I demand

justice” (99). At this point, notes Davis, Levinas’ thought starts to become vague because the grasp of responsibility is well beyond any reasoning. Yet Levinas says he is responsible for the other, because “in relation to the other, the other appears to me as him to whom I owe something and in regard to whom I have responsibility” (“The Proximity” 213). That is, the self owes the debt of responsibility to the other, simply because they are other and there is no relation of reciprocity between them. The self takes responsibility for the other because the other is weaker (213), and thus is responsible for their own and the other’s persecution in a sense that the self demands justice for the other. But only for the other!

In “The Proximity of the Other” Levinas explains that the other is more important than the self, and the self must assume the responsibility for the other to show generosity and goodness. Levinas insists on the “primacy of the benevolent relation in regard to the other. Even if there is ill will on the part of the other, the attention to and welcome of the other (like his recognition of me) marks the anteriority of the good over and against evil” (212). The welcoming of the other and taking responsibility for them is the response to the call of the other at the moment of the encounter. The face of the other requests and orders at once “Thou shalt not kill”, and thus it is at once “wholly weakness and wholly authority” (215). In this respect, the spectrum of responsibility for the other is clear: I am always and at all times responsible for the other, whose face I encounter, because I follow the measure of goodness and mercy and also, since the face of the other beseeches (weakness) and commands (authority).

The only limit to this responsibility is when a *third* appears, and then the second and the third are equal to me as the self. If they are to hurt each other, the self should call on the state to institute justice and thus my responsibility here for each of these others *separately* no longer holds, because there is more than one other. The self is responsible for their own persecution,

and thus the self does not blame anyone for it and avoids self-victimization, but the self is also responsible for the other and thus must demand justice for other's persecutions. It seems, therefore, that there is a difference in the type of responsibility one has to offer the other in a dyadic relationship and in a situation where multiple others exist. Davis is right in his understanding that the self is always responsible, but he does not decipher completely as to what the self is responsible for.

Thus, the responsibility for welcoming the other, as instituted by Levinas and revisited by Derrida, is relevant to immigration and diasporas, where multiple others exist simultaneously. Derrida says that the question of hospitality is not a question of philanthropy, it is a human right, and universal hospitality arises from an obligation and a duty regulated by law, "the right of the stranger... not to be treated with hostility ... when he arrives on someone else's territory" (4). But this is easily undermined when the master of the house is the one that welcomes the stranger or the other and thus he is the one who "defines the conditions of hospitality or welcome; where consequently there can be no unconditional welcome, no unconditional passage through the door" (4). That is, the master of the house is already hostile as well as hospitable because he asks for obedience to the rules of his home. One response to Davis' and Derrida's criticism comes from Lewycka's novel *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian*.

The novel tells the story of a female protagonist-narrator, a second-generation Ukrainian immigrant, who deals with her elderly father's infatuation and later marriage with a newly arrived Ukrainian divorcee. The major concern of the narrator, Nadezhda, is with the fact that her father, Nikolai, is being exploited by Valentina, who is taking advantage of his hospitality and money to get official status as a UK citizen. Nikolai, as an "old" immigrant, takes responsibility for others, Valentina and her teenage son, and not only because he is infatuated with her, as

Nadezhda believes, but because he feels pity for her and all Ukrainian people (Valentina is not the first Ukrainian immigrant Nikolai tried to bring to the UK). However, this relationship is complicated when Nadezhda decides to take responsibility for her father (due to a genus connection) and sees Valentina as the third that threatens the other. Then, Nadezhda demands justice from the state for her father, and ultimately actively seeks it. However, by doing so, she displays hostility towards the newly arrived immigrant (another other). Consequently, for Nadezhda – Nikolai and Valentina are both others, but she prioritizes the father over Valentina, and thus demonstrates Davis' criticism that the "Other makes an unconditional claim on us, but sometimes there is also a political choice to be made between others; and when this occurs, I will put my family or my people before other others" (103). Davis is certain that the self will always prefer the other that is closer to the self. In this explanation of Levinas' thought, there is no equality between the different others because the self chooses the other who is closer over the other that is a stranger.

One of the elements that prompts solidarity amongst people – or according to Derrida, makes the other, who is not family, welcomed – is language, or better yet, the mother tongue. If the master of the house defines the conditions of hospitality, the guest has to be at least able to speak the same language as the host; otherwise, as Derrida claims, the guest becomes an absolute stranger, whom the host does not have to admit. The major distress of the narrator is about language – English vs Ukrainian. Nadezhda, who does not speak well in Ukrainian, is afraid that her "father can speak with [Valentina and her son] in his own language. Such a beautiful language ... instead of going home to Ukraina, Ukraina will come home to him" (26). The affiliation of the mother tongue with a home in the novel is a recurring motif, used by Lewycka,

to demonstrate the unequal relationship between the second-generation immigrants and the newly arrived ones, who, according to the narrator, have the advantage of the mother tongue.

Heather Fielding in “Assimilation After Empire: Marina Lewycka, Paul Gilroy, and the Ethnic Bildungsroman in Contemporary Britain” (2011) claims that Lewycka’s *A Short* is a text that shows how conviviality and melancholy shape the “irreducible doubleness” (203) and what it means for an immigrant to assimilate. Fielding explains how immigrants create the phenomenon of postcolonial melancholia (a term she adapts from Gilroy), which represents Britain as the colonized, rather than the colonizer. The new immigrant in Lewycka’s text is seen as an invader on British soil and is not examined by Fielding as a part of an individual diaspora but rather as a part of a larger population of unwelcome foreigners. Fielding thus sees the novel as an “ethnic bildungsroman” rather than a text that has a place in the postcolonial and diasporic studies canon. Moreover, although Fielding identifies the importance of the other to the formation of one’s own identity, she is more concerned with the identification, which is achieved by knowing the other and understanding it, rather than with responsibility of the self to the other.

Therese- M. Meyer in “Ridiculously Ethnic?: Othering and Counterstrategies in Contemporary Novels” (2014) is also concerned with the status of the immigrants in the novel. She argues that the immigrants in *A Short* are being ridiculed to show how inferior the foreigners are in the eyes of the indigenous, whom she wrongfully assumes to be Nadezhda (Nadezhda is not completely ‘native’ as she is a second-generation Ukrainian immigrant). Meyer suggests that Lewycka displays how the stereotypical other is seen through the English point of view and even condemns her for using mockery and ridicule (similarly to many other writers that use these to describe immigrants), while herself being an immigrant. Although Meyer implies that the novel is about postcolonial representations, as opposed to Fielding, neither of them analyze the novels

as representatives of the internal group relations of individual diasporas. In addition, Meyer mentions only briefly (and in connection to another text) the relevance of Levinas' theory of the other to the tendency of ridiculing the foreign figure, while in fact, this theory is essential in understanding the power relations in the novel.

Another important text is Doris Lechner's "Interview with Marina Lewycka" (2010), where Lewycka indicates how the clash between the "old" and "new" immigrants in the UK was, in fact, her inspiration for writing *A Short*. Although Lewycka admits that she wanted to write this novel to show how the Ukrainian community deserves a place in the public discourse of diaspora and migration, she is more "interested in writing about human beings" (455). Lewycka thus is interested in claiming a place for a Ukrainian diaspora in the literary canon, but her utmost desire is to show the complexity of the relation between human beings. Eventually, she succeeds in doing both.

In conclusion, the concepts of hostipitality and responsibility for the other as these are represented in Lewycka's *A Short* show how it is much easier to tend towards hostility rather than hospitality. Although throughout the novel Nikolai continues to offer hospitality and responsibility to the other, Nadezhda consistently negates and impedes it. It is extremely challenging, demonstrates Lewycka in her first two novels, to accept the other in their alterity and unconditionally offer hospitality, as well as to assume responsibility for the other when the third is present. The role of the state and the self to secure justice for the multiple others, thus, must be acknowledged as well.

Justice and the Hostage

I would like to question how Lewycka engages with the possibility of hospitality and justice, when the third appears in *We Are All Made of Glue*. This novel seems to enquire if

justice as a political entity based on ethical ideas is even possible. Barnett argues that “Derrida’s... recent reflections on Levinas’ legacy are concerned with questions of the reception of guests and generosity towards strangers – with questions of hospitality ... [and]... current political debates about migration, asylum, and postnational citizenship” (6). In addition to bringing Levinas and Derrida to contemporary political debates over migration and citizenship, Barnett is also concerned with the impartial treatment of justice by them. He asserts that “in so far as Levinas, and in turn Derrida, communicate with [caring for the other up close and at distance] set of debates, then they do so by disrupting the homologies often drawn between spatial proximity, partiality, and care on the one side, and spatial distance, impartiality, and justice on the other” (11). Barnett’s criticism echoes Werbner’s claim about diasporas being politically mobilized structures: “members of the diaspora mobilize politically to defend or protest against injustices and human rights abuses suffered by co-diasporics elsewhere” (Werbner 125). Therefore, justice requires a relation of proximity between the self and the other, suggest Barnett and Werbner. Both critics recognize the importance of the encounter with the face of the other as a catalyzing event in evoking responsibility and justice.

Levinas in “In the Name of the Other” explains how the acceptance of the other in its uniqueness prompts justice. He proposes that the role of the *third* is to hasten political justice that in turn should be connected to responsibility and mercy. Levinas says, “it took Plato, Descartes, Kant, Hegel, and Bergson for charity to become one of the universal laws of justice, and to give these laws legitimacy” (190). In this citation, Levinas recognizes the philosophers whose work finally paid off nowadays to make mercy one of the universal laws of justice. In addition, Levinas explains that the necessity for justice arises when the *third* enters the equation: “we are

not a pair, alone in the world, but at least three” (193). To examine this idea further, one should look at Levinas’ explanation of the third and justice:

This is where the State steps in. The State begins as soon as three are present. It is inevitable. Because no one should be neglected, yet it is impossible to establish with the multiplicity of humanity in relation of unique to unique, of face to face. One steps out of the register of charity between individuals to enter the political. Charity pursues its fulfillment in a demand for justice ... Without justice or the State, charity runs the risk of being wrong. However, it is clear that from the point of view of justice, preference for the other is no longer possible. (193-194)

Levinas asserts that justice is central in face to face relations because there is always a third. Here, the state must step in to institute justice. Elisabeth Louise Thomas says that “the face to face relation contains the idea that the truth of representation is a product of a demand for justice, or in other words that there is an awakening to the question of justice in the face to face” (99). Thomas explores how Levinas’ concept of justice arises from the encounter with the face of the other and how accurate the depiction of the face is. The question of the representation of the other is also politicized because when the other is a migrant, they are connected with affiliations of nationality and statehood. The truth of the representation of the other would be challenged by Levinas as nonexistent in an ethical perspective because truth is connected to knowledge and knowledge comes after ethics.

Barnett also criticizes Levinas for suggesting that justice is “supposed to be governed by values of universality, equal treatment and impartiality that seem to negate the normative core of the ethical relation as Levinas sketches it” (12). The universal values of equality and fairness are important to Levinas because they are the building blocks of democracy and democracy is

crucial to the state that reinforces justice. Hence, although Barnett thinks it negates Levinas' thought, it is not quite so. While the prioritizing of the other works in the dyadic relation more clearly, it is more complex when multiple others are present, and the state has to intervene. This is evident in Lewycka's *We Are All*, where the narrator, Georgie, takes responsibility for a senior neighbour, Mrs. Shapiro, and tries to help her out in everything she can. Soon this dyadic relationship is complicated by numerous other others that also need help.

Lewycka's *We Are All* is the only novel that deals explicitly with political encounters, specifically with the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, and how diasporas create a diaspora space away from homelands. Lewycka's use of the metaphor of the house is central to the representation of multiple others in relation to the self. The house is inhabited by Georgie, a native UK citizen, Mrs. Shapiro, an old lady of Jewish descent, Mr. Ali, a Palestinian migrant, his two nephews, called the 'Uselesses' who are economic migrants also from Palestine and Chaim Shapiro, a newly- arrived immigrant from Israel. The house they live in is called "Canaan House." There are also other people involved, such as: real estate agents who want to sell the ground, city workers who want to preserve it and social workers who want to relocate its owner, Mrs. Shapiro, to a more 'safe' place. The hostess, Mrs. Shapiro, does not mind having so many guests and offers hospitality to all, as well as her many cats. One can say Mrs. Shapiro offers an unconditional passage through the door.

However, the danger of an unconditional welcome is in the host becoming a hostage. To clarify this vulnerability, Derrida quotes Levinas, "it is through the condition of being a hostage... that there can be pity, compassion, pardon and proximity in the world" ("Hostipitality" 9). The danger of the self becoming a hostage happens when the "notion of duty or obligation increasingly takes on the sense of risk and urgency involved in substituting myself

for another in a way that entails danger, even hostage ... in the sense of giving oneself over for the other” (Oliver 120). Thus, even before the moment of justice, or when the state steps in, the self is already responsible for the other, and due to this responsibility, they become a hostage of the other. Therefore, according to Levinas the *I* is always a hostage of the other, regardless of the status of the other as other or as stranger, because the other is more important.

Another feature of the hostage, according to Oliver, is that it already presupposes “strong connotations of community” (119). Oliver argues that, although Levinasian philosophy stems from the position of the encounter with the face of the other, it is not pure ethics, but rather political in the sense that the self and the other are always located within a community of other selves, and thus are in a “double bind of hyperbolic ethics” (130). Oliver politicizes Levinasian ethics, claiming that it cannot be otherwise because when communities are involved, politics are inadvertently present too. However, it does not have to be viewed as political, as diasporic communities can be social, cultural and ethical as well.

Lewycka does invoke some political moments though, when for example she chooses to burn the house at the end of the novel, and consequently, makes all the inhabitants leave and scatter. It seems that Lewycka implies that the self and the other relations work better when the national identity is at the backstage, and there is no need to offer a ‘true’ sacrifice. The guests of Canaan House are all marginalized members of society, and what is more, all are distanced from their community. Therefore, they are able to create an alternative community, based on solidarity and attachment to a home that is not national or political. They gather in Mrs. Shapiro’s house and try to preserve it, not only so they can stay there, but also because they want to keep their host safe in the house. They put aside their disagreements and work together for the other. Yet,

as in all Lewycka's novels, this ethical encounter with the face of the other is very brief, until all things return to their place.

Conclusion

In conclusion, in this chapter, I have attempted to show how Levinas' theory of the other is relevant in examining diasporic internal formations and exemplified how they work in Lewycka's novels. For example, the relationships between certain characters in the novels show the ability to take responsibility for the other and offer aid when needed. I also demonstrated how Derrida's theory is the main critique for this concept when, for instance, the self is not able to offer a complete and unconditional welcome in the hostland. The fact that Levinas' theory is challenged by many, including his own student and other scholars, confirms how important it is to "test" it in literary analysis. The issues of alterity of the other, responsibility for them and the role of justice are crucial in establishing hospitable and ethical relationships within dispersed communities. Lewycka's novels are unique in that they do not engage with the other as a constitutive part of a formed ethno-communal entity, but instead look at the internal relationship between the self and the other when both are members of an individual diaspora.

The seniority of immigrants creates the grounds for hostility, and the old immigrants act as hosts who establish the rules of the household. While there is no reciprocity between the 'old' immigrant and the 'new,' because the 'new' is always weaker, instead of mercy and responsibility, the 'new' immigrant is frequently faced with hostility. The 'old' immigrant steps into the shoes of the (unwelcoming) host, and instead of introducing mercy, offering hospitality and taking responsibility for the other; they exploit the other and take advantage of them to establish their own footprint in the hostland. Therefore, the new immigrant is doubly marginalized, by being a settler in a hostland and by being a "new" member of a diasporic

community. Consequently, it is important to examine the discourse of the other ethically, and the narratives of the homeland as these are manifested within diasporic communities of literary texts.

Chapter 2: Migration as an Issue of Alterity in Marina Lewycka's *Two Caravans*

Lewycka's *Two Caravans* shows how immigrant communities are more than their diasporic affiliation, and have complex ties with the hostland and homeland. The novel represents a critique of the lack of voice and visibility of East European economic migrants and an attempt to empower the migrant other by emphasizing their alterity through a multi-voiced narrative technique. By shifting the point of view from a communal consideration of diasporic groups to an individual analysis of personal experiences, while not entirely ignoring the tribal link, Lewycka's text represents an ethical approach to the other, consistent with Levinas' theory of the alterity of the face of the other, as theorized in "The Vocation of the Other." In addition, the shift from a communal perspective to an individual point of view represents a change of direction: instead of the centre affecting the margins, *Two Caravans* displays the power struggles in the margins that disrupt the centre, exemplifying the non-reciprocal relations on which Levinas debates in his text. This chapter aims to validate these claims by firstly addressing the representation of the alterity of the East European migrant other and its place within the centre-margin paradigm from an ethical point of view, secondly, by showing that economic migrants that are interlocked in the global labour enterprise are seen as one entity that lacks voice, visibility, and agency, which means they lack their natural alterity in the eyes of the self, and finally, by showing how diasporic communities that are based on a tribal link become imagined, whereas migration becomes an issue of alterity.

The East European Migrant Other

To understand the alterity of the "East European migrant other" and its place within the centre-margin paradigm, I review the idea of the East European migrant other, as it is introduced in Lewycka's *Two Caravans* through a multi-voiced narrative technique. I deconstruct this idea

into three major components: migration, otherness, and East Europeanness. A textual analysis of some of the individual stories of Lewycka's characters shows the complexity of people, who identify or are identified with this concept as well as how this representation disrupts the outlook on the other as a victimized and marginalized member of diasporic (or decolonized) community.

Although Lewycka does not use the term "migrant other," her novel concentrates predominantly on the experiences of migrant others in the UK. The idea of a migrant other is a combination of two terms: otherness and migration. The "other" is an "important feature of colonial discourse" (Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* 95). Ashcroft et al. define the term as "anyone who is separate from one's self. The existence of other is crucial in defining what is 'normal,' while "the colonized subject is characterized as 'other'" (186).

The postcolonial aspect of the term other relies heavily on Jacques Lacan's definition, which is based on knowledge and language; he asserts, "in order to be recognized by the other, I utter what was only in view of what will be. In order to find him, I call him by a name which he must assume or refuse in order to reply to me" (63). This definition shows reciprocity between the self and the other that is initiated by the self and accepted by the other. The self uses language to define the other and to call for him, while the other can choose whether to answer or not. Thus, although it seems that Lacan's definition of self-other relations is based on a unidirectional relationship, Anthony Wilden explains that otherness is concerned with the "Other in the discourse," because it is "by the Other that you are unconsciously controlled" (264). The relationship between the self and other from a Lacanian standpoint is a reciprocal relationship like Martin Buber's I – Thou because the discourse between the two is only possible if the message sent by one has been received by the other. In "The Proximity of the Other," Levinas outlines Buber's theory of I – Thou and the key point he opposes to is that there is reciprocity in

the relation between I and thou. Levinas does not agree with the equality and reciprocity presupposed in this relationship, and thus he resists the notion of “I am to the other what the other is to me” (213). As opposed to Levinas, for Lacan, there is conditionality in the relationship between the subject and the other, and the subject is not only permitted but also encouraged to distance itself from the other, who wishes them harm. Mari Ruti states that while Levinas “views the other as a site of unconditional ethical accountability, Lacan is interested in the subject’s capacity to dissociate itself from the (often coercive) desire of the other” (vii). The recognition of the other and its priority over the self for Levinas is “in a certain sense, unreasonable” (“The Vocation” 111), but it is still required.

The self is centralized and prioritized in the discourse of diaspora, and the other is considered a marginalized subject. Ngũgĩ, who is one of the major diaspora theorists, proposes that the centralized Western self can be challenged by the marginalized others, as the power structure starts to shift away from the centre. Therefore, instead of one supercentre that appropriates the other centres, there are margins that become many centres. Moreover, he argues that West has been in the centre for far too long and that finally nowadays margins start to challenge it in a way that they become centres too. The ability to move the centralized self is crucial because it moves away from a reciprocal position (or a position of superiority) towards humility and sacrifice. Although Ngũgĩ speaks about the uneven relations between the West and the East, the paradigm of margins disturbing the centre and creating hierarchies from within can be adapted to other diasporas that are not traditionally considered postcolonial, such as East Europeans. In the following quote, Levinas explains that the other is formed because of the self and that alterity creates difference:

The other is not other because he would have other attributes, or would have been born elsewhere or at another moment, or because he would be of a different race. The other is other because of me: unique and in some manner different than the individual belonging to a genus. It is not difference which makes alterity: alterity makes difference. (“The Vocation” 106)

This definition places the other beyond the grasp of a subject (or the self) since the other is an absolute alterity. Levinas’ other is not identified by a genus or by any other distinguishing factor, and while the tribal link exists, there is something beyond that link: “it is not that the tribal is proscribed; it comprises many virtues. But in principle, the human is the consciousness that there is still one more step to take; to appease the tribal” (“The Vocation” 109). For Levinas, this means to be human.

The preoccupation with the other as a migrant has become very popular in postcolonial literature, to the point that migrants and diasporic literature have come to be regarded as representative of postcolonial writing in general, argues Elleke Boehmer in the second edition of her critically acclaimed book, *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*. That being said, there is a difference between postcolonial and diaspora theories as well as between first-generation migrant writers and second generation diasporic writers, to which Lewycka belongs (Lewycka was born in Kiel, Germany to Ukrainian-refugees parents and grew up in England). The main attribute of the second-generation is that it has produced “definitions of the postcolonial as almost invariably cosmopolitan,” branding this type of literature as “necessarily transplanted, displaced, multilingual, and, simultaneously, conversant with the cultural codes of the West” (Boehmer 230). Furthermore, Boehmer criticizes the second type of writers for scrutinizing the other to “better ... understand themselves” (232). According to this, the self

needs the other to help and preserve their own identity. Therefore, the migrant other has to be continuously re-identified as different from the self, so the power relation will continue to persevere.

The other as a migrant questions the ability to accept alterity, and ideas of community and nation-state (that are closely associated with migration) are challenged. The phenomenon of migration no longer signifies the movement and mobility of communities or individuals solely from one place to another, but also the “integration, assimilation, segregation or exclusion of people of migrant background and the changes in society that may result” (Van Hear 34). Lewycka, who is very attuned to the national and cultural differences within diasporic groups, foregrounds these to an extreme, using grotesque descriptions, ironical expressions and accent to challenge the aspect of identity based on nationality. Lewycka’s novel could be categorized as one of the “migrant literatures [that] tend to win readers because, through bearing all the attractions of the exotic, the magical, and the other [it] participate[s] reassuringly in aesthetic and ethical languages privileged within a globalized Anglo-American culture” (Boehmer 230) if it did not represent the experiences of diasporic groups that have not been in the centre of diasporic literature, such as Ukrainians. But she also exemplifies that even within groups there are differences between their members, based on their home city, cultural affiliation, and human interactions.

The migrant other is different conceptually and perceptually because the new symbolic economy of global culture is based on “reciprocal relationship rather than nonlinear” (Gikandi 609) and that makes the encounter with the other twice as hard. For East European migrants, it is hard because they bear a great physical resemblance to the Western person, and yet on many accounts they are different. The “nudity of the face” (“The Vocation” 108) of the other that

discloses nothing about the other should prompt responsibility and acceptance of the other, from a Levinasian ethical perspective. But even seeing the face of the other can procure tribal affiliation within visible minorities, as Fanon said, “the whites were used to putting all Negroes in the same bag” (203). Lewycka, who understands that visible minorities occupy the central place, wishes to put the East European migrant on the map too. She writes, “I suppose what I felt was that the other immigrant communities were much more visible and the Ukrainians had really almost disappeared. They sort of blended in and nobody knew about us” (Lechner, “Interview” 453). Lewycka criticizes the view that the home discourse affects the migrants to the point of complete assimilation and she is even more concerned with the relationship between the diasporans themselves.

Lindner, who analyses Lewycka’s engagement with the East European immigrants and specifically with the Ukrainian diaspora, argues that East Europeans are not recognized as others at the moment of the encounter, since they are not “drastically Other and thus are endowed with an aura of familiarity, or of Europeanness, and yet they are not fully familiar, or European, either, as they come from the most remote regions of Europe, perceived as *almost* Oriental as *almost* exotic, yet not fully so” (Domnica Radulescu qtd. in Lindner 461, *italics* in original). East Europeans, thus, are not white, and neither are they non-white; they are somewhere between.

Lewycka engages with East European otherness in relation to Western values and norms only to foreground and emphasize their differences from other Diasporas. Lindner says that the otherness of the new immigrants from Eastern Europe is not enough to evoke the fascination of the exotic, and yet its status is of oppressed, backward and of a “poor victim of a brutal communist regime” (461). But this is not the main concern of the text, but rather that the alterity of the other is invisible and voiceless. The multi-voiced narrative technique exemplifies how the

alterity of the other is perceived by various characters and gives the marginalized others a voice. It provides them with visibility and voice in the space of a diaspora discourse of the other.

The unique narration style allows Lewycka to represent migrants from the same or similar homelands (former Soviet territories) in diverse ways. This technique also allows her to show the migration experiences in their “plurality—noisy, authentic, street muddled” (Boehmer 229) way. The multi-voiced narrative technique of the novel shows different perspectives of the characters and at times even “conflicting versions of the same action” that display how the “postmodern form of storytelling dismisses any single version of what happens, and it powerfully underlines the complexity of migrant experience in Britain” (Lindner 467). The novel through its storytelling technique displays how difficult it is to accept the alterity of the other, even (and especially) in the same diasporic group.

Lewycka’s narration style provides plurality and multiculturalism to diasporas that are seen based on their countries of origin, by narrating thoughts of characters about each other or same occurrences almost at the same time. The plot is built in a way that several subsequent stories discuss the same set of events, mostly from various perspectives. This technique is also a pun on the novel’s central theme – migration – as Lewycka literally wanders from one’s character’s perspective to the other, without lingering on any of them or privileging too much one central narrative. Thus, while East European migrant others have no representation in diasporic literature, as Lewycka identifies, they receive a place and a voice in her novel. The fact that Eastern Europe is not a part of the European Union complicates the status of the migrants in the UK and often positions them as illegal and invisible persons in the eyes of the native population and the law.

The status of the migrants moves between two axes, that of work invisibility and that of extreme criminal visibility. According to Lindner, the Eastern European migrant has made a “sweeping impact on the British economy and its public life, as well as on the British cultural imaginary” as it has also “created a remarkable suspicion amongst British public” (459-60), due to its depiction as a criminal. Lechner also detects that Lewycka’s characters carry the image of “Eastern Europe’s perception ... of backwardness” (“East European” 446). The novel indeed shows several antiheroes, who happen to be recruiters. Vulk and Vitaly are the main antagonists of the novel that strive to use their compatriots for their benefit. The close encounter with the migrant other in the West challenges the liberal sentiments at the core, says Simon Gikandi because it means that if a migrant wants to be culturally identified it requires a sacrifice from both the self and the other. In this situation, the self needs to accept the other in their alterity and to sacrifice their sentiments, prejudices, and fears by welcoming a stranger into their home.

Lewycka engages with the figure of the other from diasporic and ethical perspectives, as she introduces concepts of reciprocity and generosity between migrants. From the inception of the displacement, the migrant others are placed in a vulnerable position. They are new arrivals in the hostland, illegal residents, and are also of low socio-economic status with no connections with the nation state either by nationality or family ties. The displaced persons in *Two Caravans* encounter hostility from the receiving migrant and non-migrant populations, which partially validates the claim that “states today are more and more reluctant to accept refugees and asylum seekers” and yet at the same time use the cheap work force for sex trafficking and “other forms of contemporary slavery” (Young 173). This demonstrates how economic migrants are instilled in a precarious state of being, while they continue to consume images from the West and sell themselves cheap, all for the hope of a “better life” (Young 176). The concept of otherness with

the discourse on migration puts the people subjected to this phenomenon on the margins of society. But as Young mentions, it is not only the status of being in bad work conditions that causes the economic migrants to be perceived as others but also their enslaved perceptions.

Invisible Global Labour

Lewycka's novel demonstrates how economic migrants are caught in a web of global labour and fantasies of better life in the West, where all the migrants are reduced to sameness, and the only differentiating factor between them is their efficacy at work. They lack voice, visibility and agency, and yet some of them manage to help each other and provide aid when other victimized migrants are in danger. Therefore, the novel is hopeful that an ethical relationship to the other is possible, although very difficult.

Two Caravans demonstrates how the period of colonization moved from physical domination of people and borders to colonization of perception. Young states that migration, especially for economic purposes, is an effect of the globalization today and the big corporations, much as colonial administrators from centuries ago, manage their people and move them around the world. The migrant workers, who travel for work purposes, legally or not, do so "in search of a better standard of living" (Young 175). The system of global capital that endorses work as a way for social ladder climbing is misleading, and labour is "not necessarily emancipatory" (Johansen 422). On the contrary, for migrant labourers, work is imprisoning. In this manner, migrant others become attached not only to a person (a recruiter, for example) but also to an idea, such as economic prosperity or social status, which is far worse. Where ideas are created based on false knowledge, ethics becomes even more important.

Lewycka's characters experience a "colonization of the mind," as their minds are infatuated with images of the West. The term "colonization of the mind" comes from Ngũgĩ's

famous book *Decolonizing the Mind*, in which he claims that the English language is the most important tool in the hands of the colonizer to control the colonized. It was also the last book he wrote in English. Irina and Andriy, for example, the two main characters of Lewycka's novel, come from Ukraine to the UK to build a new life in the West. But Lewycka shows how impossible this is. She uses the motif of 'Mr. Brown' from *Let's Talk English* book (a book that Irina and Andriy are both familiar with) to display the characters' innocence and ignorance. Irina wants to fall in love with the "dashing Mr Brown from *Let's Talk English*" (7) and Andriy wishes to marry the "*Let's Talk English* Mrs Brown, with [a] tiny waist and tailored spotted blouse" (21). Irina admits that she falls for stereotypes when she implores the reader: "please don't think that I'm one of those awful Ukrainian girls who come to England only to ensnare a husband. I'm not" (21). Andriy, on the contrary, does not or does not care, and he honestly declares that he wants a "blond-haired Angliska rosa [with] a rich Pappa," who will provide him with "luxurious en-suite-bathroom house ... nice job [and] nice car ... Mercedes. Porsche. Ferrari" (17). Irina and Andriy imagine English people through the portrayal of Mr. and Mrs. Brown, and while their perspectives are different (Irina looks for love and Andriy for prosperity), they both demonstrate how far Western metaphors travel and what implications they have. Ironically, Irina and Andriy do meet people who strongly resemble the images of Mr. and Mrs. Brown. But they get disappointed, as except for English manners, these people are completely different from what they have imagined. This is also one of the turning points in the book for Irina and Andriy when they stop looking for "English" lovers and start seeing each other as potential partners.

The gap between migrants' perceptions of the West is further intensified and ridiculed in the novel when Andriy meets his "Angliska Rosa" in the face of his employer's wife. Lewycka narrates this encounter as both invigorating and frustrating for Andriy. Andriy recounts:

The *Angliska rosa* grabs him in both her arms and kisses him ferociously on the mouth ... Her lips are warm and taste of whisky ... "You'll do, poppet." She rips open the buttons of his shirt. What's going on here? Is this a typical English display of passion? He notices with another small stab of disappointment that the sports car is not a Ferrari at all but a Honda. (48-9)

Even after his disappointment with 'Angliska Rosa,' Andriy still hopes to meet another English woman of his dreams, his childhood infatuation, Vagvaga Riskegipd. But as it turns out at the end of the novel he read her name wrong, which is Barbara Pickering.

Andriy's confusion with the Roman script of the name "Barbara Pickering" illustrates how similar the East European migrants are, and at the same time how different – the letters are the same but the pronunciation is different. It is a failure of mimicry in terms of language as well as an attempt to be "like" the West and the failure to do so. Mimicry, according to Homi K. Bhabha, "emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge" ("Of Mimicry and Man" 126). It is constructed as ambivalence because it is both an indication of power and resistance to it. On the one side, it is used by the colonizing power to appropriate and interpellate the colonized subject to the "norm" that is set by the colonizer. The norm disciplines the other on how to behave, look, and act. From the other side, it is also used by the colonized subject to undermine authority by mimicking it to an extreme. The grotesque representation reverberates back to the colonizer and challenges its power. Andriy, who throughout the novel pronounces the name wrong, is an example of an individual who tries to

read the English language and culture on his own terms. The result is not only a funny pronunciation of a woman's name but also a realization that as well as the name, such a woman does not exist. Moreover, there is no Mr. or Mrs. Brown, no Angliska Rosa or Vagvaga Riskegipd, as these are fantasies that the East European migrants have about the West.

These instances of confusion demonstrate that Eastern European migrants interpret differently cultural texts and contexts and thus become easy targets for recruiters who use fantasies of the global world as a reward for hard and cheap labour. For example, Tomasz, a Polish migrant and a fellow strawberry field worker, comes to the UK to try to become a musician, Irina is enthusiastic about the opportunity to improve her English and find love, and Vitaly, an immigrant from Moldova, wants to be a businessman. Each one of the migrant workers wants to achieve something in the West that they are not able to do in their own countries. England represents for them the land of possibilities, and it is not surprising that Lewycka uses the word "possibility" twenty times throughout the novel while always uttered by immigrants to show how they are concerned with this aspect of their migration. But *Two Caravans* also displays how economic refugees and migrant workers become victims of globalization and face rootlessness and precariousness (Král 148). They work in unsanitary conditions with no union rights or law system to defend them. In addition, the females are at constant risk of sexual abuse and sex-trafficking. The recruiters and the employers work together to exploit the foreign workers and use their dreams about the West as leverage against them.

The productivity of their labour is what migrant workers believe will decide their faith in the new world. Their status in the hostland is closely associated with their ability to work hard. But while they are being exploited, they believe it is going to help them advance on the socio-economic ladder. For example, when Irina finds another strawberry-picking job after she escapes

from possible rape and sex-trafficking, she says: “I thought, I’m lucky to get this chance ... so I picked like crazy, because I had to prove myself” (106). Irina associates hard work with the ability to keep a job and the opportunity to stay in the UK. Moreover, having no passport, as her recruiter took it from her, she has no choice.

Lewycka describes the perils of agricultural labour in Britain and is concerned with the increased rate of exploitation of the foreign workers. The novel shifts the gaze from “visible” minorities (Black, Bangladeshi, Pakistani and other physically visible communities) to the “invisible” communities (Polish, Moldovan, and Ukrainian), who can “pass” as Europeans. The diversity of the group of the strawberry pickers suggests that the global labour phenomenon has reached beyond the physical borders of formerly colonized colonies. The groups of workers that come with the intention to stay in the West, mostly East Europeans, become extremely visible in the eyes of immigrant recruiters (sometimes from their own countries and who worked with them in the same conditions earlier), and invisible in the eyes of the law. The diasporic groups created in labour conditions face double marginalization, from the nation-state that sees them as illegals and from their own that exploit them in their own interests.

Moreover, while colonialism and indentured labour have been mainly targeted towards colonies, its newer form, “global labour,” affects countries that are not considered to be former colonies. One of the most cited paragraphs of the novel, which is quoted below in full, demonstrates Françoise Král’s claim of how invisible the migrant workers have become since their “lives [have been] pushed outside the scene of visibility into a shadow existence ... [and]... legal precariousness” (25). The legal detriment is explained by one of the employers on the chicken farm, where most of the strawberry pickers end up after escaping their previous employer:

...six quid an hour. The other hour is voluntary, like I said. You don't have to do it. There's always plenty that do. Ukrainians, Romanians, Bulgarians, Albanians, Brazilians, Mexicans, Kenyans, Zimbabweans, you lose track. Jabber jabber jabber round here. Day and night. It's like United bloody Nations. We used to get a lot of Lithuanians and Latvians, but Europe ruined all that. Made 'em all legal. Like the Poles. Waste of bloody time. Started asking for minimum wages. Chinesers are the best. No papers. No speekee English. No fuckin' clue what's goin' on. Mind you, some folk do take advantage. Like them poor bleeders down at Morecambe. Jabber jabber jabber into the mobile phone, tide comin' in, and nobody's got a clue what they're on about. What's the point of having foreigners if you got to pay 'em same as English, eh? That's why we went over to the agency. Let them take care of all that. (117)

This excerpt, spoken by a British person, shows that employers understand that foreign recruiters are taking advantage of their own, but they do not care about this as long as they do not have to pay the foreign workers same as locals. This is their invisibility before the law. The migrants are viewed not only as a cheap labour force, and a welcoming boost for the burgeoning British economy, but also as a prime example of accelerated human mobility within the borders of an increasingly connected European Union, argues Lindner. Like Lindner, Král also pinpoints the importance of the cheap 'shadow' labour for English economy. Král writes, "vulnerable and invisible as they are, they nonetheless have a tremendous impact on workers in Western nations" (25). According to this, the existence of cheap labour that is not unified threatens not only the workers themselves but also those who are in unions or want fair pay for the same job.

The representation of the phenomenon of global labour, or in other words, cheap workforce, contemporary slaveries – a term used by Deandrea – or economic migration is one of

the main themes in Lewycka's novel. The workers who have minimal to almost no rights still manage to exploit each other to advance on the social ladder and become part of the Western world. Instead of one concrete figure of a colonizer, there are many that mimic it, and they are not located in the centre, but rather are part of the margins, as they are those who were 'colonized' or oppressed before. Thus, the distinctions between margins and centre, the one that mimics and the one that is being mimicked, become opaque and harder to decipher. There is, thus, an even greater need for ethics and acceptance of alterity.

Although globalization can be seen as a celebratory enterprise of freedom and movements, it also has a dark side, as Ngũgĩ points out; there is the dystopian and main (to his mind) characteristic of globalization, the imbalance of resources. That is, while the rest of the world produces, the West disposes and controls eighty percent of the world resources. It is ironic that what the strawberry pickers collect they cannot eat when, for example, Irina starts to eat strawberries while picking, she is alerted by other workers that this is not allowed.

The association of nations and the possibility of their exploitation that is displayed above shows how racialized the workforce is, and how globalized labour has become merely another type of indentured labour. The sentence "what's the point of having foreigners if you got to pay 'em same as English, eh?" also validates Král's and Lindner's suggestions – globalization made the exploitation of places that were never officially declared as colonies possible and desirable. English colonization has never ended, demonstrates Lewycka, it has merely changed its locus and target. Instead of going out to the colonies (or former colonies), the colonies are coming to the UK ready and excited to be used by the economic system of cheap labour. This also shows how East European countries and their migrants came to be disregarded.

Lewycka suggests that the exploitation comes not only from the West or even the global labour market, but rather it comes from the migrants themselves. She uses the term “mobilfonmen” as a metaphor for those immigrant employers who exploit cheap labour and sell dreams of better future to their countrymen and women. This term is used as a derogative allusion to the migrants, who instead of helping their compatriots, use their trust and naivety to promote themselves. In the penultimate section of the book, Andriy’s and Irina’s dialogue reveal how global capitalism has affected the world of the work migrants: “This mobilfon world all around you. Businessmen buying and selling human souls. Even yours, Irina. Even you they are buying and selling,” says Andriy. But Irina opposes, saying: “Nobody is buying and selling me. I made my own choice to come to the West” (255). Irina’s answer indicates that she does not consider herself as one among others; she is unique, and she has the right to decide about her life. While Andriy, unwillingly, reduces her to “one of many” work migrants, she challenges him and declares her own alterity. Although Andriy implies that it is not a choice to come to the UK and work for a minimum wage, in Irina’s opinion, she knew what she was doing and still made this move. Irina chose to risk everything for the chance to succeed in the West.

The word “mobilfonmen” is used to show the gap between the immigrants, who made it to the status of recruiters, and the ‘regular’ hard-working individuals. For example, at the beginning of the novel Vitaly is a part of the team, but when he becomes a businessman he changes: he has a nice suit, watch and a new model of mobile phone. But the way he advances the global capitalist system is by lying to his friends and selling them to sex-slave or cheap labour. He sells the two Chinese girls for sex-trafficking and finds jobs for the other workers in the chicken factory, where his former co-workers are mistreated, live in degraded conditions and are paid very little. While the group trusts Vitaly because of him being (they believe) a friend

and a countryman, he sees them as an opportunity to advance. In the end, before he is shot to death by one of his associates for failing to deliver a virgin girl to be a sex slave, he contemplates (or rather calculates) what will be better for him and his career – to establish an image of a serious businessman with a good wife, such as Irina, or rather sell her as a sex slave and get a lot of money for her: “What you need, he thinks, is a girl to share your good fortune with – a pretty, clean, good-class girl ... And – here is the real tragedy of it – even as you gaze into the silky hollow between her lovely breasts, a businesslike voice in the back of your head tells you: you could make good money out of this girl” (223). Vitaly’s decision to sell Irina, fortunately for her, does not turn into reality, as he is killed before he can do anything. Although the ability of Vitaly to grow from the oppressed to the oppressor demonstrates that the margins have their own centre and margins, it also shows the failure of ethical behaviour towards the other.

Lewycka illustrates how othering works on many levels, especially for women. Irina, who is othered even more by being a beautiful, young, and intellectual woman, is the most interesting instance in the novel of othering, especially because she is the only person who uses the first person pronoun “I.” Two other characters use the first person pronoun, Emanuel and dog, but the dog is an animal, and Emanuel (fellow strawberry field worker from Zomba) writes in the epistolary style, while Irina speaks directly to the reader as it adds to the sense of urgency in her manner. While she is trying to fit people into categories at first, Irina does display a natural generosity towards the other. One example is when she gives her last money to a random woman in the street, whom she mistakes for a beggar. Lewycka, through Irina, exemplifies that identification through reciprocity and knowledge does not work, since Irina’s appreciation of poverty is culturally affected. The woman eventually returns the money to Irina, saying she needs it more than her. Levinas proposes that “language (already) bears thought” (“The

Vocation” 108) and this is a thought of piety, goodness, and generosity towards the other that is already embedded in the self. The true sacrifice appears to be the giving up on knowledge and accepting the unfamiliar, as well as liberation from the primordial instinct of identification and murder. In this sense, as Ruti reasons, ethics does not “eradicate violence but rather entails a relentless struggle to fend off the temptation of aggression” (5). This is the sacrifice the self must offer the other: give up on the primordial aggression towards the other and the temptation to define them based on knowledge of genus or nationality. Irina demonstrates the ability to do so for the other, while Andriy does not, as he constantly tries to understand everybody and mainly her.

There is another level of othering that impacts migrants, and it is the matter of their appearance. The migrants in the novel are different from the rest because they dress differently, have specific physical traits and have unusual hairstyles, for example, Irina wears her hair in a braid with an orange ribbon (an allusion to the Orange Revolution’s leader Yulia Tymoshenko). To change their appearance as foreigners, they buy new clothes and make some changes to their looks, but these do not alter their disadvantaged status, as they remain invisible. When Andriy almost bumps into a random British lady in the street, he sees himself through her eyes: “the look in her eyes – it was worse than contempt. She looked straight through him. He didn’t register in her eyes at all. His clothes ... make him invisible” (205). When Andriy encounters the woman in the street, he sees himself as if from outside; he sees himself as other that is invisible because of his clothes. The knowledge of his otherness, represented through his clothes, creates the place where “the process of othering takes space” (Kinnvall 154).

But it is not only the knowledge of otherness of his clothes that makes Andriy invisible but also his lack of voice or the voice of his community. Král investigates Levinas’ theory about

the encounter with the face of the other. She draws attention to the importance of the voice in this encounter and notes: “the face can only become visible with the promise of a voice” (65). While, according to this interpretation, the voice is important, it is not clear whose voice it is, whether it is the voice of the other that beseeches and commands the self not to kill, or is it the voice of the self that assumes responsibility for the other. Král continues by stating that the ethical responsibility is on the self or, as she terms it, the “revealer of the visibility depicted”(66). According to Král, the self plays a central role in revealing the other. Hence, the encounter of Andriy with the woman on the street is an encounter with the face of the other, for him as well as for her. There is a gap in this encounter, as the self and the other do not communicate and both judge the other, as it seems, based on looks alone. Similarly, when Andriy sees a bus full of people who are immigrant workers, he is being told that these people are “fragments of globalised labour” and “minions of faceless global corporations” (278). Then he remembers home – Donbas– where “too, the mobilfonmen have taken over, and people have become disposable, their precious lives thrown away through avoidable accidents and preventable disease, their misery blunted by vodka. This is the future his country has prepared for him – to be expendable” (278-9). Finally, Andriy realizes that the dangers of globalization are not only localized in Europe but everywhere, even in Ukraine. In this respect, globalization is indeed “the process of the world becoming a single place” (Ashcroft et al. 127), whereas its centre is still in the West.

Therefore, the only way for migrant workers to acquire a passage to the West and escape their homes for a hope of a better future is by means of work that most of the time entails exploitation. Lewycka demonstrates how the gap between those who produce and those who use is constantly widening. The migrant workers experience the conditions of this imbalance because

the work they produce is invisible. But the invisibility of this sector not only originates from the fact that they are literally hidden, but also from the fact that there is a “reluctance to include them in the sphere of visibility” (Král 27). As a result, migrants are not secluded into the diasporic groups, but form communities, based on shared experiences, while not completely ignoring the tribal link. Shared experiences of mistreatment and social injustice unite the migrant workers across the globe and create a community, while migration becomes an issue of alterity.

Beyond Diasporic Communities

Two Caravans shows that in the global world of anonymous and invisible migrant workers, a voice of marginalized people starts to emerge from within the diasporic communities. The communities of migrant workers are examples of how “boundaries that once defined national cultures becoming fuzzy” (Gikandi 608). While globalization, as argues Gikandi, is constantly moving between two poles, that of celebration and that of crisis, it also creates multicultural communities. According to Gikandi, both globalization and postcolonialism are interchangeable and are concerned with explaining forms of social and cultural organization that want to transcend the boundaries of the nation-state. They wish to provide new perspectives on understanding cultural flows that can no longer be explained by one Eurocentric narrative and the “trend towards the minoritization of national societies” (Bhabha, *The Location* 316). Although Lewycka shows that the oppression often comes from within, as she portrays “cultural misinterpretation – not only between countries but also within them” (Saint), the migrants continue to strive for affiliation with one or more diasporic groups.

The communities of migrant workers are composed of members that share similar experiences, mostly of hardship and rootlessness, and thus can be named as “imagined,” because “all communities larger than primordial villages of face-to-face contact (and perhaps even these)

are imagined” (Anderson 6). Even though that it is not possible that all members of a nation or even the smallest community know most of their fellow-members, hear of them or meet them, in their minds, they are united by something bigger than that. In diasporic groups, this unity derives from belonging to a nation-state or motherland and having similar traits of national identity. Another element that ties them in is the notion of moral co-responsibility, or “nation-ness” (Anderson 150). Nation-ness, however, one must remember is a political feature that is sometimes used in the hands of racism and anti-Semitism to “justify not so much foreign wars as domestic repression and domination” (Anderson 150). It seems that Lewycka’s representation of power struggles within migrant communities exemplifies Benedict Anderson’s claim that the oppression and domination come from within.

As opposed to oppression and exploitation from within, the novel also allows reading of kinship and disinterestedness. There are migrants that concern themselves with the other, and follow ethical principles, as Levinas outlines it, “Dis-interestedness is taking on oneself the being of the other. I also term this ‘responsibility’” (“The Vocation” 108). Thus, while for Anderson, disinterestedness is simply another word for generosity and community, for Levinas it is much more than that; it is the ethical responsibility that transgresses national affiliation and tribal links, because “the other concern[s] me” (“The Vocation” 108). Lewycka portrays responsibility within a community based on shared experiences at the beginning of the novel, when Emanuel describes an evening meal that all strawberry pickers share: “when our hearts were opened everybody began to sing ... at the end everybody sang Happy Birthday Dear Emanuel and it came to pass that this outstanding song is available not only in English but also in Ukrainian Polish and Chinese!!! And so united in song we enjoyed the Radiance of the evening” (42). However, at the background of this gathering, one member is working to ruin this unity and

exploit his friends. Vitaly, who has provided the beer, is counting the empty cans to identify his profits. This is a foreshadowing moment to what is going to happen next in the novel.

Although there is animosity within diasporic groups and most of the migrants do not accept each other as they are, for example, Andriy sets out a goal to re-educate Irina, Lewycka introduces a possibility to create an imagined diasporic community based on feelings of hope. Král calls this type of diaspora – “diaspora of hope” (54). Diaspora of hope consists of “economic [migrants] whose journey is mainly geared towards financial gain and social climbing” (54). The movement around the globe has become more routine and popular nowadays, and there are some that create communities based on shared sentiments, while hope being one of them, “it is with those whose hopes, dreams, fears or circumstances see them living in small mobile boxes, whether as regional tourists or as vagabonds” (Beilharz and Supski 36-7). This is the community represented in *Two Caravans*, where Ukrainian workers, a Zomba migrant, and a street dog can form a community.

Most of Lewycka’s characters are striving towards some sort of advancement in the UK, but they are rather unsuccessful in achieving that. The failure in the hostland makes the migrants wander again and again to other locations in search of another chance. The fantasies that guide them throughout the novel of a better life in the West slowly start to clear out and disappear. For example, when Andriy and Emanuel have to say goodbye to the Polish workers who go back to their country Andriy thinks about the condition of Ukraine in the global market, “there is the sadness of knowing that he is on the far side of this new boundary across Europe. It will be a long time before he can work freely in England; even in Russia, now, Ukrainians are illegals. Will Ukraine soon be the new Africa?” (157). Andriy considers Africa and Ukraine as similar in the aspect of cheap labour and while Africa is a former colony and Ukraine is not, both are being

exploited for their cheap work force. As an outcome, it is not surprising that Emanuel and Andriy become very good friends throughout the novel and from their first meeting protect and respect each other. This relationship resembles Levinas' ideal of the self taking responsibility for the other, as both exhibit generosity and kindness to each other for no reason or hidden motive. There is a true community that is established, based on "disinterestedness [that] is included in the responsibility in which no one could replace me and in the alterity of the other. That is the first, foremost, a truly human link" ("The Vocation" 112).

Conclusion

In conclusion, Lewycka's *Two Caravans*, provides a literary space for disadvantaged and voiceless migrant others, especially from East Europe. The analysis of the novel shows that contemporary forms of global labour are based on the conception of the necessity of a cheap workforce in the Western world, the supply for which originates from countries that are located on the margins of the global capitalist system, such as Ukraine and Africa. The temporary worker believes that he or she is offered a pact that associates good performance at work with corresponding pay and open prospects in the new land. The disadvantaged socio-economic status of the migrant workers as temporary work visa holders from a non-Western part of the world situates them in an unequal power exchange system, where power is moving from the West to the East, or from the centre to the margins. The continuity of this system is made possible due to globalization or in other words, the cultivation of the image of the West as the land of endless opportunities (while in fact, the risks to be exploited are greater than the odds to advance).

Although migrant workers (specifically East Europeans in Lewycka's novel) cannot speak of their experiences because they are invisible and voiceless, Lewycka speaks for them in her unique use of the multi-voiced narrative technique. This amplifies the importance of migrant

literature, that speaks on behalf of different others in various parts of the world, be they former colonies or not. The communities of different immigrants display kinship and generosity to one another, while migration turns out to be a complex phenomenon that is not easily explained or theorized. It is clear that migration does not create the need for alterity, as alterity already exists in the face of the other. Yet migration, as a literary theme, does emphasize how important it is to have a discussion on alterity within diasporic as well as postcolonial studies. What is even more imperative though, is the call for action, that is the call for responsibility and hospitality from the other, and this is the theme of my next chapter.

Chapter 3: Responsibility for the Other: Representation of Hospitality in Marina

Lewycka's *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian*

Lewycka's first novel, *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian*, demonstrates how responsibility for the other person in a diasporic group is connected to a person's willingness or unwillingness to offer hospitality. The connection between the concept of responsibility and hospitality in a diasporic context is established through the notion of the responsibility for the other. Levinas' text, "The Proximity of the Other," where he calls for responsibility and unconditional welcome of the other at the moment of the encounter with the other is the best theoretical source to explain this responsibility within diasporic groups. Levinas says, "I, therefore, insist upon the primacy of the benevolent relation in regard to the other. Even if there is ill will on the part of the other, the attention to and welcome of the other ... marks the anteriority of the good over and against evil" (212). In this way, Levinas prioritizes benevolent relationship to the other, even if the other has bad intentions to the self. The self, according to Levinas, must welcome the other in goodwill and even endanger one's own wellness and, in this way, goodness shall prevail. This insistence on a kind response as an answer to a bad will is the reason why Levinas is so frequently associated with religious thinking, mostly with the Christian metaphor of turning the other cheek. Levinas, however, explains that his thinking is affected by Jewish religious values, such as generosity and *hesed*, and that the "face is the site of the word of God, a word not thematized" (215). Therefore, the face is the site of transcendental power, a word that is yet to be appropriated, categorized, and explained.

The responsibility to be good and benevolent to the other is not natural, and thus it demands a sacrifice from the self for the other. Derrida, who criticizes and builds on many of Levinas' concepts, offers the concept of hospitality as an alternative approach. One can see

hospitality as similar and perhaps even a continuation of Levinas' concept of responsibility. In fact, both concepts are based on the benevolent relationship to the other, or in Levinasian terms – a response of generosity to the other at the moment of the encounter. However, as opposed to Levinas, Derrida introduces some conditions and limits to the idea of generosity.

Derrida suggests that hospitality is a right owed to the stranger as other. Therefore, the Levinasian debt of responsibility and Derridian right to hospitality are based on the fact that one should accept the other as absolute alterity. This means that the other person is absolutely different from me, for example, even if we share a tribal connection or we are both of the same skin color. The identification of people that is based on tribalism and race is not an ethical encounter, according to Levinas. For Levinas, ethics precedes knowledge and therefore, precedes ontology. So, while Levinas and Derrida call for acceptance of alterity in its totality, postcolonial and diasporic fiction made its name by distinguishing itself from others, most of the times leaning heavily on concepts of colonization and victimization. The latter requires the self to acknowledge the other as at least equal human being and citizen, while Levinas and Derrida argue that the other is more important than the self (Levinas more so than Derrida). Lewycka's novels draw a picture of the self and other that are in constant push-and-pull relationships that struggle to integrate into the society of the host country and share the feeling of nostalgia to the motherland. The first and second generation immigrants that are depicted in *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian* do not have the same levels of nostalgia towards the homeland or the same feelings of belonging to the receiving country.

Within this context, the characters are struggling to identify their national identities and consequently are not able to accept the other, even when the other is a family member. Mostly the other is the first-generation (that is, newer) immigrant who is not totally accepted by the

second-generation (the more ‘senior’ immigrant who has more established connections to the hostland). Fielding argues that the second-generation immigrant needs to eliminate the newer other immigrant (the first-generation) to be able to assimilate. But, the conflict of identity only begins when the other appears, Lewycka demonstrates. Consequently, even before the physical encounter with the face of the other, the self has already started to doubt their identity and heritage. It seems thus that feelings of nostalgia and double consciousness are always present in the mind of the immigrant, but it requires the other immigrant to evoke these.

In this paradigm, it is important to note that I refer in this chapter to the other as the first-generation immigrant and the self as the second-generation immigrant. This decision stems from the way of narration of the novel. The narrator of the novel, Nadezhda, is a focalizer and the protagonist of the novel. She is frequently biased and is not presenting the state of affairs as they are and more than often is aware of this. Because the narrator offers mainly her perspective, it is more reasonable to see her as the self and other characters as ‘others.’

I suggest that a close reading of Lewycka’s *A Short* demonstrates how the encounter with the other triggers a renegotiation with one’s diasporic identity. The encounter of the self with the other also shows that the self does not always respond positively to the other and does not always offer responsibility and hospitality, as per Levinas and Derrida. This is still a response, and it is important to investigate why the identity of the self and the other changes at the moment of the encounter and what is the importance of this encounter between immigrants for diaspora studies in general.

In this respect, it is imperative to note that Levinas’ theory of the face of the other is closely related to Derrida’s theory of hospitality; because both are concerned with how the self treats the other at the moment of the encounter and how alterity is perceived by the self. Both

Derrida and Levinas identify that at the moment of the encounter with the other there is a call for duty from the self. Levinas terms it responsibility and Derrida hospitality. Hospitality and responsibility are owed to the other because they are human, regardless of race, nationality, gender or any other differentiating aspect. In a sense, the concepts of responsibility and hospitality seem like universal rights owed to the other. These rights are also very important in the diasporic aspect, when in order to prove their identification with their motherland and the community, “members of diaspora communities must constantly confront their local invisibility through public acts of mobilization and hospitality and through demonstrations of generosity which reach out beyond their present communities” (Werbner 128). Therefore, to be visible and display agency in their communities, diaspora members show generosity to other communities, non-related to theirs. Werbner also points out that if the diasporans are disappointed with the politics of the state of affairs of their homeland they can walk away from it and set their gaze to other matters (125) – a very interesting but also problematic argument, as it goes against the communal responsibility for which Werbner advocates. Therefore, the diasporans can use their dual citizenship rights as double consciousness, according to Werbner. This is one reason why the contemporary diasporas are different from the traditional ones, as they rely more on the notion of co-responsibility than national ties to the homeland.

This corresponds to what Werbner says: “diasporas often *mobilize a collective identity... in solidarity with co-ethnic members in other countries* ... A useful description of this sentiment is ‘co-responsibility’” (Werbner qtd. in Cohen 7, *italics* in original). She argues thus that members of the same diasporic group often feel responsible for one another due to sentiments of solidarity. The co-responsibility builds on feelings of mutuality and reciprocity between people of the same group. As opposed to this view, Levinas insists that there is no reciprocity between

the self and the other. In other words, there is no reciprocity between the self and the other, because the other is more important and that is why the self must take responsibility for the them (Levinas, "The Proximity" 212-3). Sympathy and justice for Levinas should ascend from the acceptance of the other as unique and strange, and not from knowing the other or assuming it to be similar and familiar to the self.

Lewycka's text is a good case study to see whether and how this idea works, specifically because it looks at human relations between the "old" immigrant" (second-generation and the mature first-generation immigrants) and the "new" immigrant (first-generation new immigrant). This chapter shows how co-responsibility to the other fails and rather demonstrates what Cohen says, mainly that a "bond of loyalty to the country of refuge/settlement competes with co-responsibility, while those who have achieved national social mobility are often reluctant to accept too close a link with a despised or low-status ethnic group abroad, even if it happens to be their own" (7). Cohen and Werbner try to resolve the conflict between the moral co-responsibility in a group and the fact that those who have achieved a certain socioeconomic status in a foreign country for some reason are reluctant to help their countrymen. The theory of ethics thus becomes even more important in analyzing the literary representation of diasporic groups and the internal forces that are at play.

Although *A Short* is praised and celebrated for its "humorous, chick-lit character" (Lechner, "Eastern European" 441), it also carries a poignant social critique. It is a distinct novel, as it offers "something new, and while marketing otherness has been recognized as a success formula with reference to the 'postcolonial exotic,' Lewycka's Ukrainian topics and background added a new angle to this concept when Ukraine occupied a prominent place in public consciousness" (Lechner, "Eastern European" 445-6). Therefore, in addition to situating itself in

the midst of the British tradition of immigration fiction by imagining oneself in the position of “someone who seems unlike you” (Fielding 209), it has also discussed current political issues, such as the Orange Revolution in Ukraine and the Russian influence. The novel was Lewycka’s debut in the diasporic and ethnic fiction because it offered a glance into the community of British Ukrainian citizens and Ukrainian migrants in modern days, subjects previously unexplored by British writers, notwithstanding that Britain has one of the biggest Ukrainian diasporas in the West. The novel depicts a family drama, in which an elderly father, Nikolai, a Ukrainian World War II immigrant, wants to marry a young Ukrainian divorcee, Valentina (who also happens to be a single mother and in search of ways to stay in the UK as a legal citizen). Nikolai’s two daughters, Vera (the elder) and Nadezhda (the narrator) are against the match and do everything in their power to deport the new immigrant, who eventually marries their father and gives birth to a child from one of her many lovers. The novel ends with the deportation of Valentina, and Nikolai’s move to a nursing home.

Nadezhda is the narrator and the focalizer of the book. She is married to Mike, presumably a native British man, with whom she has one daughter. She was born in the UK after World War II, and thus she refers to herself as a “peacetime baby” (52). Nadezhda starts the novel by stating that her father fell in love with a “fluffy pink grenade” (1) that exploded into their lives and brought with her a lot of troubles. Valentina is immediately presented as the other and as an unwelcome guest who ‘exploded’ into the quiet lives of this Ukrainian-British family out of nowhere. However, a close analysis of the text shows that those lives were not as peaceful as Nadezhda would like to present them. In my analysis, Nikolai and Vera are seen as “old” immigrants and Valentina as “new.” Nadezhda belongs to the second-generation of immigrants and shares a bit of each – British nationalism and Ukrainian nostalgia.

Lewycka, whether on purpose or not, creates Nadezhda as a hostage of her own moralism, thus showing how an ontological limitation of knowing and understanding the other does not resolve the diasporic conflicts of lack of belonging. Although Valentina is the main other in the novel in the ethnic sense, she is by far not the only one, if to apply Levinas' ethics. Nadezhda's father, Nikolai, and her deceased mother are also represented as others by Nadezhda, and not only because they were the first-generation of immigrants and behaved very differently from others, but also because they do not share the same nostalgia as Nadezhda does. While the father has learned English and partially integrated into the hosting county, the narrator's mother has never succeeded in doing so, and it is even questioned if she ever wanted to do that. She is the embodiment of nostalgia for home and is represented by what she has left behind after her death: her garden. The death of the mother shapes Nadezhda's nostalgia for the motherland and unveils a symbolic conflict between two cultures, the Ukrainian and the Ukrainian-British.

In what follows, I show how the encounter with the other triggers negotiations of one's diasporic identity. The first encounter with the other happens in the garden of the dead mother, and it symbolizes the nostalgia for the home country and the inability of the second-generation immigrant to connect with the other or the image of home. Then, the self struggles to accept the other in its alterity and consequently responds with hospitality. Lastly, I discuss another symbolic moment in the novel, that of "English Justice" that is used to show how far perceptually the 'old' immigrants are from the 'new' ones and how they have abandoned the hospitality and responsibility for the other.

The Death of the Motherland

The garden is a powerful symbolic tool that allows Lewycka to engage with issues such as motherland and home. The death of the mother is tied with the wilting of the garden and to the

connection of the narrator with the heritage of her family. Werbner and Cohen claim that diaspora members retain some connection to their past and community through nostalgia and mother tongue. Lewycka shows that these are inseparable from the person, who teaches this heritage to their family, in this case, the mother. Thus, it is important to see why and how the mother is juxtaposed with the homeland and why the narrator, after her mother's death, decides to move away from this heritage. The narrator experiences conflict with her own identity after the death of the mother; this conflict is seen through the self-reflecting monologues she has with herself. In addition, the time and space of the novel are related to the garden, because most of the encounters with the other, whether it is the father or other newer immigrants happen in the house, and part of the time in the garden or connected somehow to the garden. In this sense, the garden becomes almost the centre of events of the entire novel and this is very important for the plot.

Lewycka's novel closely associates the mother with the motherland and time. The place and time of the novel are linked with the mother. Although the novel is written post factum, the time of the novel is linked to mother's death. The novel starts with the narrator declaring, "two years after my mother died" (1) and it ends with the two daughters sitting at their mother's grave, dividing the inheritance and cutting off the last roses of her garden. The narrator constantly reminisces about her mother and the stories about Ukraine that she has told her. She told her stories of bravery, romance, and heroism, and these are the stories she misses the most. Due to that, she decides to become 'the narrator of her family history,' and thus starts an investigation into the past. The novel's events take approximately four years after the death of the mother. Hence, while at the beginning of the novel mother's garden is described as rich, full of fruit and nourishing, at the end it is neglected. Looking at the garden, Nadezhda contemplates: "it makes me sad to see the havoc four years of neglect have wreaked" (246).

Moreover, the garden is used as a symbol of the purity of the old world and the hard-working, non-capitalist, and non-commercialist past. The tracing of this symbol yields a strong reference to the motherland as it is seen through the eyes of the old immigrant and the new, and therefore by analyzing the symbol of the garden, one can trace the relationship between the old and new immigrants. Derrida says that for hospitality to exist, there must be a threshold or a door, through which the guest can enter and which the host opens willingly for the guest. The garden serves such a threshold where most of the symbolic correspondence between the guest and host ensues. The narrator remembers the garden as a state of art of her mother. Everything grew there, and the mother cooked using fresh fruits and vegetables from the garden. The garden's fertility and magnitude are described at length and in detail at the beginning of the novel:

The sitting-room is full of windfall apples collected from the ground and laid out in shallow boxes and cartons on the table, chairs, sideboard and even on top of the wardrobe, filling the house with their fruity over-ripe smell. (55-6)

Even when no one is taking care of the garden, it still blooms and brings fruit, "my mother's garden, however, is still a refuge for birds and insects. The trees are heavy with fruit" (75). The change occurs when Valentina moves in and symbolically takes over the garden. The first time Nadezhda meets her, she "see[s] her – a large blonde woman, sauntering down the garden towards [her] on high-heeled peep-toe mules" (76).

The image of a glamorous blonde with neat pink manicure is contrasted with the image of the mother, depicted as a slouching figure in the garden with fingernails dirty from the soil. When a narrator judges Valentina for reheating ready-made meals, unlike her mother who made everything from scratch, she parallels the old world of self-production with the new world of

consumerism. However, she also unintentionally parallels her to how she and her parents were at the time of immigration: “my sister and I suffered humiliation in home-made dresses stitched up from market remnants. We were forced to endure traditional recipes and home-baking when we craved junk food and white sliced bread” (20). Valentina wants the same things Vera and Nadezhda wanted all these years back, and yet she is grotesquely represented and condemned. At the same time that the narrator romanticizes the past, she also secretly dislikes it: “we spoke a different language from our neighbours and ate different food, and worked hard and kept out of everybody’s way, and we were always good so the secret police wouldn’t come for us in the night” (48). Nadezhda, who is in a way a semi-biographical figure of Lewycka herself, is not proud of being different, as she would rather be as everybody else and blend in. Lewycka mentions that she wanted to blend in with other children in school in her semi-autobiographical short story “The Importance of Having Warm Feet,” as is mentioned in her interview to Lechner.

Although in the narrator’s eyes, the purity of the garden is contaminated by Valentina’s consumerism; neither Nadezhda nor her sister would come and take care of the garden. Lewycka criticizes the daughters by creating an irony of representation, whereas the reader picks up on these clues, and the characters do not. Valentina thus has free reign in the house and the garden, and she parks her cars, which she blackmailed Nikolai into buying, in the middle of the garden; the new Rolls-Royce is “sitting in the front garden, on the lawn” (176), while Valentina “has achieved the apogee of her dreams of life in the West... she now has a Lada in the garage, a Rover on the drive, and a Roller on the lawn” (177). The fact that the cars that are in the front of the house are British-made and the one that is sitting in the garage is of a Russian manufacturer is not a coincidence. Valentina’s Western ambitions progress and she moves from Lada to Rover and then to Roller, the ultimate symbol of luxury and status for her. Although Nikolai

continuously dismisses Valentina's compulsive consumerism, blaming the "Western propaganda" (89), Nadezhda does not believe any excuses and is set against Valentina.

Nadezhda and Vera base many of their stereotypes on what Lechner calls cultural capital. Lechner suggests that there is a potential link between economic, cultural, and social capital. Her idea is based on Ulrike Hanna Meinhof's and Anna Triandafyllidou's concept of "transcultural capital" (qtd. in Lechner, "Eastern European" 438) that highlights the "strategic use of knowledge, skills and networks acquired by migrants through connections with their country and cultures of origin which are made active at their new places of residence" (438). Nadezhda secretly wants to break free from her past and tradition, because she refuses to have a hybrid identity. There is nothing appealing to her in modern Ukraine, because the mother is dead and the romanticized past is nearly forgotten. Ukraine dies with the mother.

The neglect of the garden by Nadezhda herself points to the fact that she no longer wants to associate herself with the mother, and thus it is easier for her to give up the last relic of her mother, a necklace, at the end of the novel rather than at the beginning of it. Whereas in the beginning she was upset that Vera took the necklace, at the end she gives it up willingly. The sisters are concentrated on Valentina and her abuse of their father so much that they do not notice their own behavior because Valentina "becomes a scapegoat for the two sisters' own neglect of care for their father and their quarrel about the inheritance" (Lechner, "Eastern European" 443). The wish of Nadezhda to integrate completely with the host culture reverberates with what Lewycka says about herself, and mainly that her parents were very keen for her to integrate into the British society and had never pushed her to remember her Ukrainian heritage (Lechner, "Interview" 453). Paradoxically, one of Lewycka's reasons for writing the novel was because she felt that Ukrainians had integrated so much that they almost disappeared and became

invisible. Thus the “clash between the older generation of Ukrainian immigrants and the new generation of Ukrainian immigrants was something that people talked about” (Lechner, “Interview” 453) and that is why she decided to write *A Short*. But the motherland image is represented not only through the garden but also through the role of the mother tongue in the novel: i.e., Ukrainian. While the mother is associated with heritage and the romantic past, the father is described as someone who tried to integrate, learned the language, worked in a profession, but eventually also failed.

While the father is associated with “Engineer’s English,” the mother is closely related to the memories of the motherland, “my mother spoke to me in Ukrainian, with its infinite gradations of tender diminutives. Mother tongue” (15). The mother cherishes all the aspects of her motherland, the culture, heritage, her past and language. She is the one who gives this language to her daughters, while the father tries to speak English most of the time. This happens while the mother is still alive, but after her death, the father returns to the mother tongue and speaks Ukrainian most of the time with Valentina, Nadezhda, and Vera. Language thus becomes an important factor in the novel as it alienates and brings characters together based on common culture. For example, the father is aggravated when Valentina speaks Russian or Ukrainian mixed with Russian words to him, and Nadezhda is frustrated with her inability to speak Ukrainian so she can fully communicate with her father and Valentina.

The knowledge and objectivization are subordinated to the “encounter with the other that is presupposed in all language” (“The Proximity” 211), according to Levinas. The encounter comes first, according to Levinas, and only then there is language. But language is already there at the moment of the encounter. If mother tongue is connected to the motherland, it becomes a type of hospitality. Judith Still, who analyzes Derrida’s concept of hospitality, says that Derrida

writes of the “two sharpest forms of nostalgia for exiles: that of the parents' graves and that of language ... the most unbreakable of fantasies ... is that of our *mother tongue* as our ultimate homeland. It is the first and last condition of belonging, that which you can carry with you always like a second skin, the most mobile of homes” (118, *italics* in original). The mother tongue is therefore not only associated with the home, but it is the symbolic home that the “exiles, the deported, the expelled, the rootless, the stateless, lawless nomads, absolute foreigners ... continue to recognize... as their ultimate homeland” (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 87, 89). Derrida and Still engage with the concept of mother tongue as interchangeable with the notion of the home. But it is also closely connected to a person's identity.

Lewycka's novel challenges the connection of a diasporan to their homeland. The concept of the mother tongue as closely related to the motherland is demonstrated when Nadezhda shares her greatest fear from the new arrival, Valentina: “father can speak with [Valentina and her son] in his own language. Such a beautiful language ... Blue-painted wooden houses, golden wheat fields, forest of silver birch, slow wide sliding rivers. Instead of going home to Ukraina, Ukraina will come home to him” (Lewycka 26). For Nadezhda thus, home is connected with the mother tongue, and yet she immediately undermines it by saying: “I have visited Ukraine. I have seen the concrete housing blocks and the fish dead in the rivers” (26). In this quotation, the narrator associates Valentina with a false image of a national ideal: Ukraine is not blue-painted wooden houses or slow wide sliding rivers, rather it is concrete housing blocks and dead fish in the river. In this powerful antithetical depiction of the romanticism of the Old World and the realism of the New, even the syntax of the sentence changes, as Nadezhda moves from the Ukrainian-Russian pronunciation of “Ukraina” to the English “Ukraine.” Linguistically and thematically Nadezhda dismantles the romantic image of Ukraina and instead introduces the

English, “real,” version of it. Therefore, when the narrator distances herself from the new arrival as her fellow countrywoman and categorizes her with the images of the concrete housing and dead fish, she distances herself from her homeland. The bond of language, culture and community is very strong, according to Cohen (35), and this is what creates citizenship and ties to the homeland. Valentina is not the romantic ideal to which Nikolai strives for and to which Nadezhda misses; rather she is a false symbol of Ukraine that no longer exists.

The mother tongue is closely associated with the motherland in this novel, and motherland, the garden and mother tongue intertwine to show how romantic the image of the motherland is for the second-generation immigrants. While the first-generation still remembers and respects the heritage, the newer (first) generation does not respect it at all, and the second-generation does not understand it anymore. This is to show that the stories of the motherland are connected with the mother, or with the other, as paradoxically, the word “mother” hides in itself the word “other” as well. Thematically, the mother is other, because she is a stranger to her daughters, who cannot comprehend her and especially the reason why she stayed with their father for all of her life. They do not understand her or her sacrifices and demonstrate how the encounter with the other, stays on the level of trying to comprehend, identify and know them. The next section shows even more how the desire to know the other, turns to an obsession to the point that the self instead of becoming a host turns into a hostage.

Host and Hostage: Responsibility and Hospitality Intertwined

Lewycka’s writing allows different appreciations of the other, and it emphasizes, most probably unwillingly, the importance of the other over the self. Levinas prioritizes the other over the self and claims that the goal is not making the other *equal to me*, but rather *more important than me*. The narrator in the novel struggles between these two notions, as she tries to accept

Valentina as a human being that needs help and at the same time she wants to deport her, seeing in her an equal rival. Most of the time, Nadezhda feels that Valentina is more powerful than her, as she has control over her father, her mother's house and the garden and she speaks Ukrainian more fluently. Therefore, she is a menacing other for Nadezhda, rather than a 'weaker' other. But the face of the other ultimately shows their vulnerability, and thus prompts responsibility from the self, which transcends all tribal connection. Therefore, according to this view, the self should sacrifice themselves for the sake of the other. Indeed, closer to the end of the novel, Nadezhda wonders whether she demonized Valentina too much, and in fact, she is simply a mother who wants a better future for her children, as her own parents did. This thought is too frightening for Nadezhda, as it induces feelings of mercy and welcome (she allows her to stay at her father's house after the birth of her child and even to take most of the things bought with her father's money). Therefore, she dismisses it along with all tribal connection to her Ukrainian heritage. Nadezhda is only able to demonstrate a 'partial' sacrifice for the other.

Derrida questions whether anyone can make the ultimate sacrifice, claiming that it can lead to abuse and maltreatment of the self, as the self becomes almost a hostage of the other. For example, the host must stay at their home while the guest is there and, in this instance, the host becomes almost a hostage of the guest, especially if the guest is not invited. However, what happens when we look at the relationship of self and other from the perspective of diaspora, a formation that is built upon feelings of mutual responsibility, hospitality, and tribal connection?

Lewycka's novel shows how diasporans do not always share the tribal connection or the notion of co-responsibility. They do not always come to aid their countrymen and women at times of crisis, and moreover, they do not always welcome them in their diasporic communities. The 'new' immigrants are menace to the representation of the motherland as they know it

because they come from a different time and geopolitical space. In addition, the ‘new’ immigrants are infatuated with images of the West as a place of prosperity and assumed to be only interested in accumulating wealth. The elderly father, Nikolai, is the only one who demonstrates co-responsibility, when he sends money to his countrymen, looks for relatives in Ukraine so he can bring them to the UK, and helps Valentina. While he offers an unconditional welcome to the other, Nadezhda and Vera do not do the same. They do not offer her hospitality of any kind, and they try to deport her by writing letters to a solicitor. In their eyes, she is an intruder. This would be true if Nikolai has not been the one to invite her to Britain. If to look at it conceptually – Valentina is not an entirely unwelcomed guest, but her ability to keep her right of hospitality is conditional.

Derrida examines the concept of hospitality and concludes that there are two types of hospitality – “conditional” and “unconditional.” The universal hospitality that is the vantage point of his theory is a duty and obligation regulated by law but is more an ideal than practice. The reason why the “unconditional” hospitality is almost impossible is that the self cannot accept the other in their total alterity, seeing the fact that some sort of affiliation and connection with the other is inevitable. He says: “the master of the house is at home, but nonetheless he comes to enter his home through the guest- who comes from outside. The master thus enters from inside *as if* he came from the outside. He enters his home thanks to the visitor, by the grace of the visitor” (Derrida, *Of Hospitality* 125, *italics in original*). According to Derrida, the master of the house and the guest both gain something at the moment of hospitality. The guest acquires a shelter, while the master enters his home through the guest. It seems that the master’s authority over his home is cemented by the guest. What is more, by permitting to enter, the host gains the

opportunity to be kind and generous to the other, who seeks help. Then the encounter is a gift that the guest offers the host.

Nadezhda initially thinks that Valentina can be good for her father; although she seriously doubts it, at least she allows herself not to judge Valentina immediately. At first, Nadezhda is hesitant about Valentina's motifs, and she tries not to judge her as harsh as her sister does; she is "constantly torn between sympathies for Valentina's migrant background and strong antipathy" (Lechner, "Eastern European" 443). Valentina's ability to keep her welcoming right is placed on her, as it is conditional upon her being good to Nikolai. But even before Nadezhda meets Valentina and sees that she might not have good intentions, she is persuaded by her sister, Vera, that the new arrival is menacing their family's well-being. It does not take long to convince Nadezhda to plot deportation.

Nikolai's offer of unconditional hospitality to Valentina is at times conditional as well, as he wants her to be a good wife for him. In this respect, the treatment of the stranger is decided by the host who can choose not to offer hospitality to the stranger and instead be hostile towards them. While the host must offer hospitality to the guest, they can also be hostile, or the guest can take advantage of the host. Hence, while Levinas says that the self must take responsibility for the other (and hospitality is part of this responsibility), Derrida warns that this responsibility can eventually harm the self. Eventually, Nikolai is also hostile towards Valentina, especially when he finds out that the child she was carrying is not his.

Another reason why the hospitality offered to the other is conditional is that not every stranger is other. Essentially, for Derrida, there is a difference between the other as other and the other as a stranger. Although hospitality, according to Derrida, is not a concept which lends itself to objective knowledge, as it is beyond the concept of knowing, there is other, and there is the

absolute other, who is the stranger. Derrida further complicates it by claiming that “hospitality is owed to the other as stranger. But if one determines the other as stranger, one is already introducing the circles of conditionality that are family, nation, state, and citizenship” (“Hostipitality” 8). The identification of the other as the stranger has roots in ontology or the very least epistemological thinking of the other. How else does one define the other as a stranger if they do not know anything about them? Derrida goes on to explain that the stranger is “first of all, he who is born elsewhere” (“Hostipitality” 14). But defining someone based on the knowledge of their birth, family, state or citizenship eliminates the concept of accepting the other in their absolute alterity for, in this situation, knowledge precedes acceptance.

Lewycka shows that responsibility for the other is possible, but not to the absolute stranger. The narrator takes responsibility for her father and decides to help her sister deport the threatening stranger, with whom she shares no tribal link. Nadezhda continuously distances herself and her family from others like Valentina. The father in this equation is also the other and Valentina is the *other* other, and between these two Nadezhda protects the one who is closer to her. This is the type of affiliation that exists between the self and the other, according to Derrida. Levinas also acknowledges this conflict and states “I ask myself who is the first. I pose the question of justice within this plurality ... among the members of society, there is a reciprocity, and equality. In justice, there is a comparison, and the other has no privilege in relation to me” (“The Proximity” 214). But the concept of justice can only work if the state intervenes and can judge fairly between the different others, because for the self the other who is closer, as Lewycka demonstrates, has priority.

However, even when the narrator is successful in evicting the threatening other from her father’s house (for some time), it is not enough for her. She starts following Valentina

obsessively wherever she goes, “I have become obsessed with finding Valentina ... I tell myself it’s because I need to know what her plans are ... But really it’s a burning curiosity that has possessed me. I want to know her life. I want to know who she is. I want to know” (Lewycka 223). The key words in this paragraph are “to know.” Nadezhda, the narrator, wants to know Valentina, the new arrival, as she cannot accept her alterity. Levinas is against the concept of knowing the other. He argues, “the encounter, it comes to pass between strangers; otherwise, the encounter would be kinship” (“The Proximity” 211) and clarifies later on, “the *for-the-other* arises in the I like a commandment heard by him as if obedience were a state of listening for the prescription. The intrigue of alterity is born before knowledge” (213, *italics* in original). Consequently, for Levinas, ethics comes before ontology. The self must welcome and accept the other in its absolute alterity at a time of the encounter with the face of the other and without knowing anything about them.

Nadezhda becomes a hostage of Valentina conceptually, as her mind is preoccupied with the desire of knowing the other. Levinas proposes that the *I* can become the hostage of the other, “hostage is the one who is found responsible for what he has not done ... I am in principle responsible” (“The Proximity” 216) and yet “it is through the condition of being a hostage ... that there can be pity, compassion, pardon and proximity in the world” (Levinas qtd. in Derrida, “Hostipitality” 9). Being kind to the other is a sacrifice already, and thus Lewycka illustrates the ‘natural’ tendency, what Levinas refers to in terms of Darwinian evolution, to be grossly unethical towards the other. According to Levinas the relationship with the other is unnatural, because accepting the other in their absolute alterity is not natural, and yet mandatory.

The narrator's first call for responsibility for the other (the father in this case) is by her sister, who declares that "You weren't there, were you, my little sister? ... Leaving all the

responsibility to me ... you can afford the luxury of irresponsibility, because you've never seen the dark underside of life" (10). Vera, Nadezhda's big sister, implies that the latter has to do something about their father's desire to marry Valentina. She prompts Nadezhda to doubt her father's judgment and suspect the new arrival in misdeed, although at that point neither the narrator nor the reader knows anything about Valentina, except the fact that she is from Ukraine. Thus Nadezhda, in pursuit of responsibility and the desire to become the new storyteller of her family's history, tries to track Valentina even before she meets her face to face.

Valentina's image is already well established in Nadezhda's and Vera's minds as the other who is also a stereotypical gold digger. Lechner says that this is an outcome of cultural knowledge, in other words, the "knowledge of nation's shared stereotypes of others" that Lewycka uses for comic relief and to "pick up the British reader" ("Eastern European" 443). Although this is partially true, another more probable possibility is that Nadezhda has to constantly *other* Valentina to maintain her cultural and tribal distance from her. That is, not being hospitable to someone who does not share anything with the self makes sense, as they would be considered total strangers and not somebody to whom the self owes hospitality.

Nadezhda is eventually torn between her Britishness and Ukrainian migrant heritage, and throughout the novel, she moves closer and closer to the former. Being born in the UK and not knowing the struggles of World War II as her sister does, Nadezhda is different from the first-generation diasporans. Her identity is unsolidified in terms of her connection to the motherland because her only link is through her mother, who is dead. At the same time, she is not totally British at least in the beginning of the novel, as she constantly romanticizes her culture and past. She speaks a "Mongrel" language as she calls it, as it is English mixed with Ukrainian. Hence, while the encounter with the other (Valentina) prompts the father to write A

Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian, which is an actual history of tractors in Ukraine, written in Ukrainian, Nadezhda rewrites her family's story of migration – but in English. Lechner explains this process of reconstruction of the memories in the novel as a "postmemory" ("Eastern European" 439) that applies to second-generation contexts of traumatic experiences in the parent generation. But not only that Nadezhda rewrites her past she also 'rewrites' her identity. Therefore, the novel becomes more than just a depiction of a family drama, but also a portrayal of struggles between migrants and identity formation within a diaspora.

The stereotypical depiction of Valentina as a 'success-hungry' new arrival "serves to differentiate the first group of migrants from Ukraine, the ingroup to which Nadia and Vera by their family heritage also belong, from the second group of migrants" and thus as opposed to Valentina who only wants to buy more and eat more, Nadezhda's family belongs to a "group [of] 'model citizens' ... hard working [and] willingly assimilating" (Lechner, "Eastern European" 443-4). There is an obvious gap between the new immigrants and the old ones: the old ones do not accept or assume responsibility for the newer immigrant, as they see them as threatening.

English Justice Best of All?

The characters in the novel celebrate English/British justice as best of all, and this happens on two occasions. In the beginning of the novel the father tells Nadezhda that he means to do anything in his power to help Valentina to stay in the UK and get a status, even to father her baby, "I am thinking that if she is mother to the British citizen, as wife of British citizen, they surely would not be able to deport her ... Because British justice is best in world" (14). This sentence is used with a slight variation and in a contradictory context at the end of the novel. When the family is finally able to deport Valentina from the UK, they are very happy, and Nikolai says "Got Nothing! Ha ha ha! Too greedy! Got Nothing! English justice best in world"

(291). The celebration of the justice system in both cases is symbolic because the first time Nikolai hoorays it for welcoming of the immigrants and the second instance by deporting them. At the end the “English judicial system steps in to provide poetic justice against the outrageous and threatening Other” (59), notes Meyer.

The judicial system becomes involved only because of the sisters’ letter that accused Valentina of mischief. The otherness of Valentina is too much to bear for the Ukrainian diasporans because she is threatening their own status as model citizens. The moments of sympathy Nikolai and Nadezhda share for Valentina are glimpses of hospitality and responsibility that the self feels for the other, and yet because the sacrifice is too big – the possibility of losing their old Ukrainian identity – the self affirms their power *over* the other by expelling it. Thus, while Nadezhda “presents both cultural scripts, the Ukrainian and the English, and is able to switch between both, she is firmly grounded in English mannerism and her point of view is that of her English readers” (Meyer 60). Nadezhda actively chooses to reject her heritage and culture, because the mother has died and she does not want to belong to the same group as Valentina. Ultimately for Nadezhda “Ukraine is not home, and she is everything Valentina is not” (Meyer 61).

The narrator reflects the fear of otherness, the melancholic guilt of Britain that is “phobic about the prospect of exposure to either strangers or otherness” (Gilroy 99, qtd. in Fielding 202). Yet what it means to be British “becomes correspondingly more capacious and different from itself” (Fielding 204). That is, the self and the other are not alike, and the identification does not reduce the other to be same as the self and yet to be British is to be “constantly open to identifying with other subjects. To become British ... is to internalize conviviality” (Fielding 204). But for Nadezhda to be British is to protect her own *others* (like her father) and thus the

lengthy description of the cleaning of the house and the garden that occurs after Valentina leaves carries political terminology: “this had the feel of a symbolic purging, the utter eradication of an alien invader who had tried to colonise our family” (Lewycka 217). Valentina is not only other in this sense, but she is also an invader that tried to colonize the host, who has graciously offered her hospitality. Fielding also asserts that the “nation that Nikolai and Nadia defend by securing Valentina’s deportation is one composed of immigrants, but it has been purified by the exclusion of the newest immigrants, who are imagined as categorically different and unfamiliar even to their countrymen” (213).

Nadezhda establishes her authority over different others, over Valentina as the threatening other, over the father and even over Vera, who is no longer the keeper of the family’s archive. Meyer says that the use of stereotypes and ridicule in Lewycka’s *A Short* allows her to increase her cultural authority over the “stereotyped foreign figures” (56). As all three characters: Valentina, Nikolai and Vera are associated with immigration and foreignness, Nadezhda achieves authority over the other. Therefore, the prevailing of the English justice serves to show how Nadezhda painted her heritage. She moves away from Ukrainian nostalgia and towards a better future with her English born family. The placement of the father in the nursing home comes to validate the claim made earlier in this chapter that the self needs to eliminate the other in order to identify itself as fully assimilated and British.

In conclusion, this chapter has showed how the nostalgia for the motherland is closely associated with the figure of an old immigrant. The experience of home is usually connected to people rather only to a place. Therefore, when a new immigrant comes who shows a different picture of the homeland that is much less flattering than the romantic ideal, the self, who is the second-generation immigrant, releases the link from the mother culture and moves to a full

habitation in the hostland. The mere concept of identification does not work for the benefit of the newer immigrant, but quite on the contrary.

Conclusion

The novel thus shows a gloomy picture of the relationship between members of the same diaspora. There is neither unconditional welcome nor acceptance of the other in their absolute alterity. However, in the process, when the self struggles to accept the responsibility for the other or offer them hospitality, the other defines the identity of the self. Nadezhda who is torn between her immigrant and UK heritage eventually decides to let go of her ties to the motherland and accepts the British culture as her one and only legacy. Valentina, who understands that there is nothing else left for her in the UK, returns to her first husband, although he is not the father of her baby, and goes back to Ukraine. In the end, there is another revelation for Nadezhda, as she realizes that Valentina acted as she did partially because she was pregnant. After the birth of her baby girl she changes and is no longer depicted as aggressive, but rather as a mother who hovers above her child.

When the other is gone, Nadezhda has no more doubts about her own status in her country. Nadezhda feels happy to return to her old life with her English husband and a daughter who know very little about her Ukrainian heritage. In addition, the father is placed in a nursing home, and the house is put up for sale. The novel ends with a very symbolic moment – the mother's garden, which was associated with the motherland heavily throughout the novel, is sold. Thus, when the last tie to the motherland is locked away, Nadezhda is certain in what she is– she is English and not Ukrainian anymore.

The total emancipation from the motherland towards assimilation, the symbolic “death” of the other and their dismissal (of Valentina, Nikolai and the mother) release the narrator's ties

from her heritage. Once she can write her own family history and “de-romanticize” her past, she accepts the new culture in its entirety. The others are needed for negation, and the disavowal of the power of the motherland that hovers above the novel and does not let the narrator rest free.

To conclude, the application of Levinas’ ethics and Derrida’s theory of hospitality to this novel demonstrates how diaspora studies have to be examined through an ethical perspective as well, so the tribal connection can be questioned. The other changes the self at the moment of the encounter. But the responsibility for the other is placed on the shoulders of the self. In this sense, the other is more important than the self, demonstrates Lewycka, because it defines the self and allows her to reconstruct her identity. Within diaspora studies, an ethical perspective, especially such as Levinas,’ is hard to apply because of the assumption that the self and the other who are part of the same group are tied to one another by association of homeland at the very least. My analysis of Lewycka’s *A Short* demonstrates how self and other can be very much apart, and there is no connection or tribal link between them, at least to their mind. Old and New Ukraine are two different countries for Nadezhda and Valentina, and neither of them likes the other. In this respect, I agree with Werbner, who claims that when diaspora members are disappointed with their homeland, they turn away from it. Thus, even if it is hard to apply ethics to diaspora theories, it seems that it is essential at least to try because the encounter between two human beings is the base for a community in general. The problem arises when the third appears, and justice has to intervene, and this is the subject of the following chapter.

Chapter 4: Home, Human Bonding and Justice in Marina Lewycka's *We Are All Made of Glue*

“At the core of the concept of diaspora lies the image of a remembered home that stands at a distance both temporally and spatially” (24), Femke Stock begins his article “Home and Memory.” This argument suggests not only that the theme of home is closely related to diaspora and migration in its geographical meaning as homeland, but also as a place of origin and difference. The concept of ‘home’ moves beyond its geographical borders and becomes an idea that has to be constantly “imagined, recreated, longed for [and] remembered in the present through the diasporic imaginary” (Stock 24). Similarly, Hall, who theorizes the notion of home and its relationship to diaspora in “Thinking the Diaspora: Home – Thoughts from Abroad,” argues that in the diaspora situation, “alongside an associative connection with a particular island ‘home’ there are other centripetal forces” (544) that affect home and change it to an unrecognizable state. Hence, while the physical home might not change at all over time, its imaginary status changes regularly with the perspective of the migrants. The home turns to be an important part of constructing one’s identity.

Home as a concept is very important for diasporas, according to Cohen, as they “retain a collective memory, vision or myth” of their original homeland and at the same time “believe they are not – and perhaps can never be – fully accepted in their host societies” (6). But homelands also become unattainable, as some homes no longer exist. Therefore, migration appears to be unavoidable. In this respect, Aimé Césaire’s claim that “it is a good thing to place different civilizations in contact with each other; that it is an excellent thing to blend different worlds” (61) makes sense. Otherwise, when civilization withdraws into itself, it atrophies. Migration, it seems, has positive effects on societies and communities and what is more, it has the “potential

to bring about greater social justice. As migrants ... develop a new perspective on their societies ‘back home’, and they adopt alternative ways of formal political organising and informal coping strategies” (Bastia et al. 1492). Diasporans, therefore, can bring about social justice not only in the hostlands but also in the homelands “effectively creating new relationships across transnational space” (1492). The relationships between migrants and non-migrants and how they promote the idea of social justice are the main themes of Lewycka’s third novel – *We Are All Made of Glue*.

Lewycka’s *We Are All Made of Glue* continues to explore the relationship between and within local immigrant communities, like her two previous novels, but this time there is more emphasis on the homeland and its importance in instituting these links. In addition, the third novel moves away from Ukrainian diaspora and explores connections in the larger community between native British people and Jewish and Palestinians diasporans. Although these two diasporas are considered to be the ‘core’ diasporas (those that started the whole phenomenon of diaspora studies), Lewycka once again takes a less popular approach in exploring these connections. She is more interested in how these people can be seen as marginal even within their own communities and how they interact with other vulnerable members of the community. Lewycka thus explores the task of the individual in protecting the rights of others and challenges the function of the state in instituting justice.

The novel conveys a story of a relationship between an old lady, who presents herself as Mrs. Naomi Shapiro, and her neighbour, Georgie Sinclair. The idea of Canaan House, Mrs. Shapiro’s home, is what drives the narrative forward and becomes one of the central themes in the novel. The subject of Israeli-Palestinian conflict is brought up and is closely associated with the house, but even then Lewycka emphasizes, according to one of her reviewers that the

“biggest threat to social harmony” comes from “slimy estate agents and meddlesome social workers” (O’Keeffe 46). This means that the biggest threat to Mrs. Shapiro and her house comes from individuals within her local community that under the pretence of good intentions are violating her rights (or so thinks the narrator, Georgie). The narrator eventually finds herself protecting Mrs. Shapiro’s right “to live out her old age in splendid disarray against the twin forces of greedy estate agents and heartless social workers ... ghastly caricatures of our nation's two most hated professions” proposes Olivia Laing.

The motif of home (and/or homeland) is correlated with the themes of justice and migration in the novel, whereas the relationship with other non-migrant communities impacts the perspective of justice for both migrants and non-migrants, as Tanja Bastia et al. claim. The novel imagines a way to create a community that consists of migrants and non-migrants who learn from each other how to treat the other with responsibility and justice. Seyla Benhabib, who discusses the place of the individual versus the state with respect to human rights in *The Rights of Others: Aliens, Residents, and Citizens*, suggests that the universal principals of human rights respect the equality of all people as moral agents. The sovereign states, explains Benhabib, are major players, but most certainly not the only ones, and we can view the “world community ... as a global civil society” (104), where the individual agency becomes important alongside the communal responsibility. The communal perspective is important because it takes as its starting point the Kantian view that, “the actions of one can affect the actions of another” (Benhabib 104). Although diasporans bring with them different perspectives on justice and responsibility from their homelands to hostlands, the moral responsibility to the other is universal, as individuals are moral agents who have responsibility for the well-being and freedom of others. This chapter inquires how Lewycka’s narrative imagines the ethical obligation to the other, and

how Levinas' concept of justice, especially the responsibility to bring justice for the other, as it is explained "In the Name of the Other," relate to the ability to keep one's home.

The theme of migration is a major idea in the novel, while people continue to move in and out of the Canaan House. Although Lewycka explored the theme of migration in her previous two novels as well, it is the first time that it is actually analyzed from a perspective of a non-immigrant narrator. Thus, I would like to disagree with Lechner's claim that Lewycka has "abandoned the trademark that made her a household name" that of "ethnic novels" ("Eastern European" 447), and partially agree with Alice O'Keeffe, who argues that *We Are All Made of Glue* has "much in common with the previous two [novels]" (46). However, the most important comment is voiced by Anna Carey, who identifies the importance of the house as a central theme in the novel. Carey also finds that the house "fills up with people ... all looking for a home" and that the narrator, a Yorkshire woman, is in her own way "a displaced person." The narrator, it seems, has difficulties connecting with London city dwellers, as she has no friends and family there, and instead, she befriends an elderly neighbour, who also happens to be an immigrant. This friendship is central to the novel's development, as the narrator becomes a fierce advocate for her neighbour's right to remain independent in her house. Also, it is the narrator that actively brings most of the inhabitants of the house together under one roof, and it is her who becomes the vehicle of migration and justice processes in the novel.

I argue in this chapter that the Canaan House is represented as a liminal space for an ethical relationship to the other where the rights of others are respected without the interference of the state and with encouragement from the self. I contend that, firstly, the Canaan House stands for a homeland for multiple displaced others, secondly, that the encounter with multiple others in the house challenges the narrator's understanding of mercy and justice, and thirdly, that

Lewycka demonstrates how the experience of protecting the rights of others affects the self, and specifically the sacrifice the self has to make.

House as Homeland

The theme of home is explored through references to Canaan House, an actual physical place and the mystic Canaan Land that Palestinian characters see as the place of origin and Jewish diasporans (although not all) – as a place of return. The house is a major theme in the book, and it illustrates that “the notion of home ... is not necessarily bound to physical places but may also allude to symbolic spaces of belonging” (Stock 25). Stock theorizes the multi-layeredness of the concept of home, from the geographical and spatial meanings to the symbolic and mythic significance. He also questions the “feeling at home” (25) for migrants who choose hostlands as their new homes and try to belong there. Eventually, Stock concludes that the notion of home is the “creative tension between the emic notion of ‘home is where the heart is’ and the openness and layeredness of home as an analytical concept which makes it such a powerful idea in the study of diaspora” (27-8). Although this idea is obviously vast and complex, this chapter analyzes it solely in respect to a physical and metaphorical Canaan House, and especially how it provides a space for negotiation of social justice.

The (assumed) owner of the Canaan House is an old European migrant of Jewish descent, Mrs. Shapiro, who has lived most of her life in London and who is also estranged from her local and diasporic communities. Mrs. Shapiro, inadvertently and with the help of her friendly neighbour, Georgie, brings multiple others to interact and work together to help her keep her home, all the while fighting social workers, nurses, and other representatives of authority that want her to move into a nursing home. In this section, I will introduce and explain the theme of the house and how it serves as a symbol. I will also show how it creates opportunities for

multiple others to interact as well as how it becomes a liminal space between the homeland and hostland, as it is theorized by Stock, Hall, and Benhabib. Canaan House, it seems, challenges the choice immigrants are required to make, between homeland and hostland, and offers a space that can be both. This is an exemplification of the in-between spaces (between the hostlands and homelands), where there is a possibility for “economic and cultural relations” (Dufoix 29).

The importance of Canaan House is emphasized immediately in the first paragraph of the novel, when the house is introduced to the reader, even before its owner. The beginning of the novel with the description of the house and the ending with its demolition shows how the house, in fact, is in the center of the plot. The novel begins with Georgie, the narrator, accidentally venturing into an unknown alley and stumbling upon a house. Georgie describes the house as gothic and mysterious:

I found myself standing in front of a big double-fronted house, half derelict and smothered in ivy ... crouched behind a straggly privet hedge and a thicket of self-seeded ash and maple saplings. I assumed it was uninhabited – who could live in a place like this? Something was carved on the gatepost. I pulled the ivy aside and read: Canaan House. Canaan – even the name exuded a musty whiff of holiness. (3)

The description of the house has an air of mystery around it and its history, for example how such a big house becomes so concealed from the eye, and also why is it called Canaan. The house has a symbolic meaning as it comes to resemble its owner. For example, the house has a double front—Naomi Shapiro has two names and two different identities; the house is neglected and old—as its owner, and it is hidden and mysterious. The house, although neglected is not uninhabited, as Mrs. Shapiro lives there with her many cat companions. Although Georgie is revolted at first from the stench and dirtiness of the house (as well as its owner’s), she grows

fond and curious of both. The importance of the house is only relevant because its owner seems to need help in maintaining it and proving she is fit to live there by herself.

Georgie comes to the aid of Mrs. Shapiro almost unquestionably, and she becomes involved with Mrs. Shapiro's sufferings and pain. Her desire to restore justice for the other grows more powerful throughout the novel to the point that she becomes consumed with the idea of finding everything she can about Mrs. Shapiro, Canaan House and later all of its other residents. Unlike Nadezhda from *A Short History of Tractors in Ukrainian* who wants to find out everything she can about the other so she can harm them, Georgie wishes to help the other. Every chance Georgie has she uses to investigate, so she can understand Mrs. Shapiro and why she refuses assistance. When Mrs. Shapiro sends her to bring some things from the house, she uses this opportunity to poke around the house. But Georgie returns with more questions than answers and admits that "there were no documents or photos, or letters or a diary that would fill in the gaps in Mrs Shapiro's story" (202). Georgie's desire to *know* everything she can about Mrs. Shapiro derives partially from her natural curiousness, as she declares, but also from her inability to accept the other as absolutely and totally different. Yet Georgie answers the cry for help from the face of the other without a second thought, because it is the "suffering, and not the lacks and vulnerability of things that has importance, suffering which is mired in itself, that urgently requires assistance, and immediately afflicts my sensibility and my powers to act" (Lingis 397). Georgie sees in the sufferings of the other a call for help, for "material response," because "I make, with my words, the things I see visible to [the other]; I make, with my deeds, the resources I have appropriated available to him" (Lingis 398). Georgie tries to protect the interests of Mrs. Shapiro and specifically her right to live independently in her own house.

Georgie's disinterestedness in helping the other is questioned by the hospital social worker, Mrs. Goodney, who comes to visit the house and who also has secretly conspired with an estate agent to sell the house and put the old lady in a home. Mrs. Goodney says to Georgie: "we have to do what's best for her, not what suits us ... it can be hard for a carer to let go ... they like to think they're doing it all for the other person when really they're just being selfish ... because they want to feel valued ... we wouldn't want to be held responsible if she had another accident, would we" (81)? The social worker, who represents authority while working for her own interests, raises two important issues: that of reciprocity and responsibility. Mrs. Goodney's comment stands in contradiction to Levinasian principle of responsibility for the other, when the "sensitivity of the subject [is] an opportunity for the self to grasp a responsibility for that which is not of itself, and move outside of a restricted and multifariously located movement of the self" (Zimmermann 985). She accuses the narrator of wanting to feel needed as she helps the other, and for taking responsibility for what she should not. But Georgie actually goes beyond the self-contained movement of the self and helps the other, "Dad ... would approve of my befriending a vulnerable old lady" (24), she says.

Lewycka challenges the link between identity and homeland through the movement of people in the novel, all the while illustrating what Levinas called the "ineluctable original chain" ("Reflections" 9), which is the "kinship solidarity and territorial belonging-together" (Biti 108). The reference to identity is first stated, when Mrs. Baddiel, the municipal social worker who is interested in keeping Mrs. Shapiro in her home, says to Georgie, "one thing surprises me... [Mrs. Shapiro] doesn't seem to be getting support from the Jewish community. Usually, they're good at looking after their elderly" (118). Georgie then ponders, "the same thought had once occurred to me, but I understood now that Mrs Shapiro was, like myself, someone who'd

come unstuck” (118). Georgie commends Mrs. Shapiro for disengaging from her community and becoming independent of it and thus demonstrating how “human sociality rests on recognising the demand for care, generosity and selfless love, conveyed in the face-to-face encounter” (Secomb 59). The face-to-face encounter is central and more important than community’s obligation, proves Lewycka in the novel.

Although disconnected from her own community, Georgie still feels a link to her Yorkshire heritage. For example, she gets emotional when she hears the Yorkshire accent and when she continuously excuses her curiosity by saying – ‘I am from Yorkshire.’ Nevertheless, Georgie is unconvinced that homeland is important and she associates ‘knowledge of the homeland’ with the ability to judge who is right and who is wrong. When Georgie listens to the Jewish-Israeli Chaim Shapiro and the Palestinian Mr. Ali who are trying to get each other out of the Canaan House (literary and metaphorically), she thinks: “why does everyone go on about homeland? Surely what really matters is the people we’re attached to?” (356). For Georgie, it is people and family who are the homeland of an individual. Yet, at the same time that Georgie rejects the idea of a homeland, she fights for Mrs. Shapiro’s right to keep her house. The situational irony of the metaphorical reading of the novel demonstrates once again how the notion of ‘home’ moves between two poles, loyalty to the original homeland and acceptance of a new home in the hostland.

The liminal zone that exists between the homeland and hostland in Lewycka’s novel is similar to the space Rascaroli identifies in her article “Home and Away: Nanni Moretti’s ‘The Last Costumer’ and the Ground Zero of Transnational Identities.” In this article, Rascaroli analyzes the Italian pharmacy in the documentary movie, “The Last Costumer” that is about to be demolished, as a place of transnational interaction and a liminal space between host and home

lands. I contend that Canaan House can be similarly theorized as a space that is ‘in-between’ the host and home land cultures. Liminality is associated with theorists, such as Bhabha and Edward Said and in its original context, it is defined as “spaces and conditions of transition, in-between spaces where identities are not fully formed” (Nayar, *Dictionary* 98-9). Furthermore, it is the borderline space where negotiations of identity happen, where a possibility for hybridity exists and where people, who are in-between their home and host lands live. Rascaroli suggests that liminality with respect to homeland and hostland has a very important element – cultural in-betweenness. She analyses the pharmacy in the “Last Costumer” as having elements from the home country, such as language and goods as well as possessing association to the hostland, and concludes that it functions as a “home away from home” (196). Canaan House seems to serve a similar purpose, of a liminal space that at times refers to the homeland and yet is clearly situated in the hostland. For example, people speak different languages in the house (Hebrew, English, Arabic, and mixed Yiddish-Russian) and yet always remind each other that they live in London.

The division between the homeland and hostland is intensified in times of conflicts between characters. The four men (Chaim Shapiro, Mr. Ali, and his two helpers) continue to divide the house between Arabs and Jews. Mrs. Shapiro constantly reminds Chaim that “we are in London now, Chaim. Not in Tel Aviv ... this is a house, not an aeroplane ... and these are my Attendants [the two Palestinian handymen], not suicideniks” (351). This comment (one of several uttered by Mrs. Shapiro and Georgie) distinguishes between “here” (London) and “there” (Israel or Canaan). It seems to suggest that ‘here’ – peace is possible, while ‘there’ – it is not. The geographical remoteness of the homeland creates a distance from the national identity as well as from the loyalty associated with the nation-state. Georgie, who tries to emphasize the

‘here’ space, suggests that “it’s quite a big house ... maybe everyone can live here together” (352). This time the house symbolizes UK – the hostland, rather than Canaan.

The event that brings all these people to work together is a big mishap in the house that threatens to put Mrs. Shapiro in a nursing home. The characters put all of their differences aside to fix the house, so nobody has to move out, and Mrs. Shapiro can stay in her home. After that, there is a short period of peace that is represented in one big garden party (very English) that also has elements of Middle East (such as kebab barbeque). The house thus becomes a liminal space between the homeland and hostland that exhibits a new kind of a diaspora group, “whose networks, activities and patterns of life encompass both their host and home societies” (Van Hear 37). Most importantly, claims Nicholas Van Hear, is that these new kinds of diasporic groups also establish a link with other societies in which diaspora members are located, and thus encounter what is called a “dual loyalty” (37). They are not completely assimilated in the hostland and nor do they feel an absolute loyalty to the homeland. If to evoke Mishra’s diasporic scenes of representation, they belong to the second scene of situational laterality. Perhaps this is why Lewycka chooses to end the novel with the destruction of the Canaan House, as in the “Last Customer,” hinting that this liminal space is only possible for a while, if at all. Therefore, the Canaan House is an example of the dual notion of a home, its physical meaning and the symbolic one, or as Stock puts it: “a realm of concrete locality and everyday experience on the one hand and a more ideational, symbolic or discursive realm on the other, while at the same time stressing that home entails both” (26). At the end of the novel, Canaan House is burned (accidentally) and detonated (planned). It has been revealed that a Nazi bomb was buried underneath it and it had to be demolished. Canaan House was unsafe after all, ironically comments Lewycka.

The novel demonstrates how we are at all times connected in human sociality and that we are never two in the world. When there are three people in the encounter of the self with the other, there is a danger for the rights of the other, and thus justice via the state has to intervene. The self and the other exist in a community that is governed by the State, and before the State, the other as unique does not exist. For the state to maintain justice, and protect the freedom of others, it has to see all individuals as equal and thus “from the point of view of justice, preference for the other is no longer possible” (Levinas, “In the Name” 194). The individual and collective responsibility to the other differ, but the “consequences of our actions generate moral obligations; once we become aware of how in fact they influence the well-being and freedom of others, we must assume responsibility for the unintended and invisible consequences of our individual and collective doings” (Benhabib 104). That is why the individual responsibility should never be dismissed, even when the state and the law intervene. The liminal space of the house provides the self with the opportunity to protect the rights of others even when the state intervenes, as when Georgie challenges the social worker. The self has to make sure that justice is done to the other that is, of course, assuming that the self follows the principles of mercy and charity.

“Mercy. Forgiveness. If only it came in tubes”

The house becomes a meeting place for multiple others, and it also challenges the narrator’s understanding of mercy and justice. Georgie becomes involved with those strangers, because she wants to help them all, but by helping one she might hurt another. Thus, it seems that the novel challenges the individual understanding of justice that is undermined by the juridical system as well as by beliefs of other people. In this section, I wish to demonstrate how individual and collective norms of justice are challenged in the novel, as well as how Lewycka

engages with the cultural and economic understandings of justice. My intension is to show how individual understanding of justice conflicts at times with the collective one, and how these are culturally affected.

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict is treated on the local and global levels, and it is represented in the relationship of Chaim Shapiro with Mr. Ali and his two handymen, who are also Palestinians. Later in the novel, Nathan, Georgie's boss, who is also a homosexual and a Jew, gets involved in it, but more as a consultant to Georgie in her attempts to mitigate the conflict and establish a truce. At first, the men are preoccupied with the birthright of Jews and Palestinians for the land of Canaan, but later in the novel, it grows to be much more than that. The idea of the right of the victimized people to hurt others is discussed. In a very poignant critique, Georgie comments: "How could a Jew who was himself a survivor of the death trails of Europe act with such casual cruelty against the hapless civilians of his promised land? What had happened in his heart" (339)? She even asks Nathan why Jews, who went through so much suffering, are not more compassionate to others (specifically Palestinians, she means), and Nathan answers: "Why would suffering make anyone compassionate ... And if you've convinced yourself that you're really the victim, or even just potentially the victim – well, it gives you a free rein, doesn't it" (398)? The self feels that they have the right to hurt the other if they feel in danger of victimization, Nathan suggests. Tyler et al., who outline the different cultural contexts for justice, especially the fact that "cultural context shapes people's views about what is right and wrong and what is fair or unfair" (231), can be used to demonstrate how views of immigrants in the novel about the fairness and the right to keep one's home can be in conflict with each other. According to Nancy Fraser, globalization played a major part in the redefinition of justice, in the way that it has become connected with concepts of protection of vulnerable

populations, such as refugees and dispersed people. It seems thus that the theme of justice for immigrants is strongly connected with the home country and identity in the way that diasporic affiliations shape the ideas of justice, especially in the context of the Israeli and Palestinian characters' conflict.

Throughout the novel, Georgie's personal views of justice and what is right and moral are questioned. She finds herself torn between mercy for the terrorist-attack-victim, Chaim Shapiro, whose mother sacrificed everything to build the land of Israel, and Mr. Ali, who lost everything when evicted from his home by a Jew who came to Israel to build it. Georgie becomes conflicted: "my parents had taught me always to look out for the underdog, but even underdogs can snap and snarl. How could I know who'd started it? Whose fault it was? Maybe that was the wrong question to ask in the first place" (359). The narrator's internal struggles are not resolved in the end, and she simply wishes, "if you could just get the human bonding right, maybe the other details – laws, boundaries, constitution – would all fall into place. It was just a case of finding the right adhesive for the adherents. Mercy. Forgiveness. If only it came in tubes" (359). Besides the obvious glue metaphor implied in this statement, it seems that Georgie juxtaposes mercy and forgiveness as natural adhesives with the values that allow people to connect with each other. More importantly, however, it seems that she is proposing that the responsibility to offer mercy and forgiveness to the other is what creates a civil society that is based on social justice. Although the glue metaphors are not always effective, this time Lewycka succeeds in showing how the values of mercy, forgiveness, charity, and generosity are what make all of us "stick" (Carey).

In an interesting reference to William Shakespeare's *The Merchant of Venice*, Lewycka further challenges individual interpretations of justice. Georgie recalls the play and "something

about the quality of mercy. When mercy seasons justice” (358), during her conversation with Chaim Shapiro. Similar to Shylock, who refuses to forgive the wrongs done to him and wants revenge, Chaim Shapiro does not see a solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in his lifetime. Derrida, who analyses this expression, translates “seasons” as “relève” in French and therefore Portia’s phrase “when mercy seasons justice” changes to – when mercy relieves justice. Henceforth, when Shylock is asked to assume a “supreme power” (“What is ‘Relevant’” 187) of mercy (a Christian power as Derrida claims) and to forgive the debt owed to him, he resists it. But it is not so in Levinas’ perspective. Levinas argues that mercy is not a Christian value, but Jewish; he calls it “*hesed* ... it means charity in its absolute gratuity. The responsibility for the other, of which I am speaking, does not expect reciprocity” (“In the Name” 193). There is no give-and-take in Levinas’ argument because the self should offer responsibility for the other, without any hope (or thought) for a return. Levinas, as Portia in the play, sees the link between justice and mercy, when he asserts that between two individuals charity is possible. But when charity enters the realm of the political, the rules change: “charity pursues its fulfillment in a demand for justice ... without justice or the State, charity runs the risk of being wrong” (Levinas, “In the Name” 194). Thus, mercy and charity are interconnected with justice, and while mercy needs justice to fulfill its vocation, justice needs the values of mercy, generosity, and *hesed* to “season” it. This is of course only valid when there are multiple others involved, as the novel demonstrates. In this way, Lewycka endorses Levinas’ claim that “we are not a pair, alone in the world, but at least three ... [and] this is where the State steps in. The State begins as soon as three are present” (“In the Name” 193).

Lewycka investigates the concept of national homeland and its connection to identity, as well as the “Jewish diaspora and its prophesied ‘return’ to Israel, that is the source of Israel’s

quarrel with its Middle Eastern neighbours, for which the Palestinian people have paid so dearly and, paradoxically, by expulsion from what is also, after all, their homeland” (Hall 546). Hall draws the connection between what he calls a “prophesied return” to homeland and identity. He explains the attachment of identity to the soil, claiming that “essentially, it is assumed that cultural identity is fixed by birth, part of nature, imprinted through kinship and lineage in the genes, constitutive of our inner most selves” (545). Levinas also acknowledges the link of the body to the self; he argues: “man’s essence no longer lies in freedom, but in a kind of bondage... to be truly oneself does not mean taking flight ... it means becoming aware of the ineluctable original chain that is unique to our bodies, and above all accepting this chaining” (“Reflections” 9). The bonding seems to be the values of charity, generosity and responsibility for the other, as Lewycka demonstrates. But the risk of accepting it without contest lies in accepting a “society based on consanguinity... and then, if race does not exist, one has to invent it” (9)! Racism, claims Levinas, is not a particular principle or a dogma; it is not even connected to a specific regime, “it is the very humanity of man” (“Reflections” 11). If racism is the very humanity of man, then the sacrifice self makes for the other, is giving up on the knowledge of the other and the connection to the soil. Georgie’s pursuit of knowledge of the other (that also turns out to be more futile than productive), shows how easily it can happen. If Georgie did not meet Chaim Chapiro, she would feel mercy only for Mr. Ali, and if she would not meet Mr. Ali, she would be a strong advocate for a Jewish right of return to Israel. Lewycka’s *We Are All* imagines an unconditional welcome of responsibility for the other and the ability of the self to sacrifice themselves so that justice can be done for the other.

Justice and Sacrifice

Lewycka exhibits that in the process of protecting the rights of others, the identity of the self (in this case of the narrator's) is transformed. Georgie fights for Mrs. Shapiro's right to keep her house and be independent because the other concerns her. Georgie assumes responsibility as an individual who is part of a civil community in order to fight for justice for another member of her community. Consequently, in this section, I will inquire how justice is perceived on the levels of the individual and the collective, the differences between the responsibility for the other in the dyadic relations and when more than two are involved. I will also show how the structure of the novel permits only one apprehension of justice – that of an individual agency.

The link between the individual and the community is established through the belonging of a person to a specific community that carries responsibility to its members. Levinas states that "Justice, which comprises between men and judgement upon men, and consequently the return of the unique to the individual, the return of the unique to the community of genus and therefore the genesis of the political, of the State and its institutions, all of this at the same time presupposes the for-the-other of responsibility" ("In the Name" 108). This argument can be understood in the following manner: the idea of justice takes shape when the self assumes the responsibility for the other and accepts them in their uniqueness. Nevertheless, the self and the other exist in the community that is governed by the state, and before the state all are equal. But the concept of justice is understood differently in a relationship when self and other are involved and in an encounter when more than two people are present. Justice, when administrated by the state, is governed by one's "community of genus" ("In the Name" 194), which reduces the uniqueness of the other, because there can be no unique other before the state. Nonetheless, there is a special place for the individual self in this system, and it is to be the "vehicle of justice"

(Putnam 52). Therefore, Georgie's place in instituting justice between multiple others is imperative, because she is the one who demands justice for them, and makes sure to follow it through – she is, in fact, the vehicle of justice.

In “Objectivity and of Justice: A Critique of Emmanuel Levinas' Explanation,” Alphonso Lingis suggests that the role of the self in demanding justice for others is also sacrificial because the self “sacrifices his wife and children to answer the demand for justice. The demand for justice is an injustice done to those whose needs are important, urgent, and immediate” (406). By sacrificing their own family for the other, the self commits injustice to their closest or other others, whose needs are also important and urgent. That is because there are never only two people involved in the encounter, even if there are only two present at the time, there can always be a violation of rights of another other. Even if the third can be geographically removed from the encounter, they can still be very much impacted by the actions of the self. For example, while Georgie spends time and energy to help the residents of the Canaan House, she is not available to support her son's needs. She inadvertently sacrifices her relationship with her son and does not notice his illness and suffering. Lingis further challenges the Levinasian sacrificial responsibility for the other in the name of justice. If I help multiple others, Lingis continues, I sacrifice not only myself but my family. For instance in the example of starvation, if I feed everyone, my family and I will starve. Hence, Lingis says that justice is unattainable, “no doubt the very notion of justice always goes beyond what is doable. Every sacrifice of my attention, my time, my resources to another already opens the horizon of justice for still another, and for all” (Lingis 406). There is no way to achieve absolute justice, proposes Lingis, it is always a work in progress, but there is always something that the individual can do. This is why justice is both not doable, and yet something that we should strive for: “charity can accomplish a lot ... justice –

summoned by charity – nevertheless founds the State and its tyrannical component. By admitting its imperfection ... justice is already questioning the State” (Levinas, “In the Name” 194). Every act of sacrifice from the self to the other brings the self one step closer to justice, Lewycka shows in the novel. Thus, charity is important, as it allows justice to reconsider itself, admit its imperfection and question the state. Although Levinas admits that it is impossible to “move from the absolute splendors of *hesed*, of charity, to an analysis of the state procedures at work in our democracies” (“In the Name” 195), it at least must be attempted.

Seán Hand, who analyses Levinas’ philosophy in depth, clarifies that the first condition of justice is a multiplicity of others that exist before the self, and then justice emerges as a “non-negotiable responsibility,” because the face “obligates me” (43) to act. The encounter with the face of the other displays the pre-existence of justice and the command of the other to preserve life and institute justice. Hand also identifies that Levinas’ idea of absolute and primary justice is “culturally localized” (44). There is a difficulty, therefore, to understand the concept of justice that is also absolute as well as culturally effected. The dilemma references back to Levinas’ community of genus. It seems that the responsibility for the other is absolute, but it manifests itself differently in various cultures and communities. Levinas defines justice in *Totality and Infinity* as something that comes naturally, and it is meant to ensure “by way of knowledge of the world, a complete exercise of spontaneity by reconciling my freedom with the freedom of the others” (83), and when freedom realises itself to be arbitrary and violent, then morality begins (84). The idea of morality is not to moralise, but merely to point out to the freedom of the choice one person makes when taking responsibility for the other. Georgie makes this choice for Mrs. Shapiro, but she also makes a stand in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict represented by Chaim

Shapiro and Mr. Ali. Although Georgie feels that she cannot do much in resolving the conflict, she makes a change by listening to the men and accepting them (almost) without stereotypes.

Georgie demonstrates that justice operates on ideas of charity and “charity can accomplish a lot, even after a rigorous justice has been passed” (“In the Name” 194). This is the difference between economic and ethical justice, explains Thomas. Thomas considers justice as a “guiding element” (xv) in Levinas’ work, and almost as a synonym to ethics. In this respect, she attempts to distinguish ontological justice and ethical justice. Ethical justice is subordinated to truth and freedom of the “I,” while ontological is conceived in terms of its “dispensation” (xvii). While trying not to reduce Thomas’ theorization to simple terms, one thing can be deduced from her analysis of Levinas’ ethical and economic justice: economic justice has to do with ontological appreciation of being and “it heightens the play of injustice” (101). While economic justice is represented mostly by the state, ‘ethical justice’ can be evoked by the individual. This way, at the moment of the encounter with the face of the other, there is an “awakening to the question of justice” (Thomas 99). Lewycka imagines in this novel how justice is not a prerogative of the state but is the responsibility of each and every one of its members.

The individual agency in instituting justice is affected not only by absolute ethics that is global, like the commandment not to kill, but also from local cultural perspectives. Tyler et al., who consider the cultural applications of justice, are interested in the relationship between people and their responsibility for others as well as their actions. In *Social Justice in a Diverse Society*, they define social justice as a “subjective understanding of the world” (1), that is: what people mean by “justice,” what they consider as right, wrong or fair and unfair in their relations with others. In Georgie’s case, it is implied that she compensates for past wrongdoings. Her desire to help others is explained in her guilt feeling about leaving her home in Kippax and by bullying a

young girl, daughter of a strike breaker, during the hard times of the miners' strike. Georgie recalls that when she was a young girl during the miner's strike, one miner broke strike and Georgie with her friends abused his daughter because of it. Although Georgie regrets this in adulthood, she still remembers why she was doing it: "we didn't bully Carole Benthorpe because we'd been abused ... we did it because we truly believed that something – something higher than us – gave us the right" (398). Only after the encounter with the other, such as Chaim Shapiro and Mr. Ali, does Georgie understand that the cause does not justify the means. It is not clear if Georgie feels remorse for what she has done in her childhood, but her comment parallels to what Jews and Palestinians do to protect their homeland, while each claims ownership on the land. It shows how the understanding of what is just is culturally localized. In the relationship between multiple others, ethics is supposed to lead us to some theory of justice, but it does so "without telling us in any detail what this theory might be" (Critchley 27). Georgie's answer to the call of the face of the other is, however, important. According to Thomas, it is what justice is all about, "justice, as a demand of the Other, requires a response. This reaction does not remain between two" (110).

In the process of investigating and helping Mrs. Shapiro and other residents of the Canaan House, Georgie herself changes. Georgie is determined to find out everything she can about the multiple others that inhabit, or used to live in the house: Mrs. Shapiro, the real Naomi Shapiro, Artem Shapiro, Chaim Shapiro and Mr. Ali. She wants to know their past because she thinks it will help her understand them. Her ultimate sacrifice for the other is in accepting the other in their alterity and giving up on her curiosity. In the end, Georgie accepts the other even when she realizes that she does not know everything about them. She also makes it her own story; she says: "this story – I wasn't sure where it was leading me, but now ... it had become

my story, too, and I knew I had to follow it through” (331). In her quest to *know* Mrs. Shapiro, she also learns things about herself. For example, Georgie’s name is misspelt and twisted in many different ways throughout the novel: it is pronounced “with hard ‘G’s and ‘eh’ sound at the end. Gheorghineh” (18); “Mrs George” (261) and “Georgina” (416). The resolution is that all her names are different aspects of her identity – “I’ve been experimenting ... with different ways of being myself” (408), she reveals to her son at the end of the novel. Georgie realizes eventually that her identity is composed of multiple layers and that all of them manage to live inside of her, just like the inhabitants of the Canaan House.

This way, Georgie follows her own justice during the novel, when she does everything she can to help Mrs. Shapiro and mitigate the conflict between the various residents of the house. However, individual justice that is culturally localized can also hurt the other. The communal concern that it is not safe or healthy for an old lady to live in a neglected big house seems to be at odds with the principle of a personal choice. Georgie, similar to the social workers, also offers Mrs. Shapiro the option of moving, but when the latter declines it; she decides to help her to maintain her independence. At the penultimate page of the novel, Georgie goes to a grocery store, where she meets most of the characters of the novel, as well as Mrs. Goodney, who reproaches her by saying: “it was for her own good, you know. Do-gooders like you, you have this romantic idea that old people want to stay in their crumbly grotty houses until they die. But they don’t ... Making the move is always a wrench ... But once they’ve done it, they never want to go back” (417). Mrs. Goodney offers Georgie a different view on her actions, when ethical “in the guise of the good, commits the worst violence” (Thomas 119).

Although *We Are All* is not a human rights text per se, it is concerned with themes associated with that type of literature, such as the protection of vulnerable diasporans. Nayar

asserts that Human Rights texts insist on “storytelling and the recall of traumatic memories [as] essential – for reconciliation and forgiveness, for a better understanding of history... [and] as constitutive of the ... community’s identity” (*Human Rights* 92). Similarly, *We Are All* insists on telling the traumatic stories of Chaim Shapiro, Mr. Ali, Ella Wechsler aka Mrs. Shapiro and even Georgie Sinclair, to understand their individual and communal identities. However, while Lewycka is successful in showing the two-sidedness of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, she does not encompass all the complexity of the encounter of the self with the other. The more Georgie investigates Mrs. Shapiro’s past, the more she gets confused, and the more questions she has that she dares not ask. Yet, Georgie is satisfied, as she learns how to accept the other in their alterity and offer them responsibility and love without knowing everything she wants about them. The giving up on knowledge seems to be the biggest sacrifice Georgie has to make, and at the end of the novel, she does not pursue her curiosity anymore, not even when it concerns her husband. She lets it be because the human bonding is more important than knowledge. This way, by failing to show all the sides of the other’s identity, Lewycka substantiates Levinas’ claim that the other is and always will be other to the self.

Although Canaan House is destroyed, the last scene of the book that shows most of the characters meeting in a community grocery shop gives hope for another liminal space that will bring them all together again. As a result, the novel “expands beyond its immediate contexts to generate an ethical frame for reading” where we work towards the “*generalizability* of the vulnerable without sacrificing the local and the particular” (Nayar, *Human Rights* 151-2, *italics* in original). This way, the encounter of the self with the other, where the vulnerability of the other demands that the self asks for justice for the other, is respected in its particularity but can also be generalized to other communities. Eventually, Lewycka is interested in writing about

“serious matters” (Morgan) but in an entertaining way. She once again succeeds in prioritizing the human relations and the encounter with the other over global issues that are not under the individual’s control. Her faith in individual responsibility is very important in all of her novels, but most vividly in *We Are All*, where she has “a great belief in human nature” and “when you talk to people the goodness just comes out,” Lewycka concludes in her interview with Julia Llewellyn Smith.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter has inquired how the novel imagines a way to create a community that consists of migrants, diasporans, and native British people all who learn from each other on how to treat the other with responsibility and justice. It also examined how the narrative imagines the ethical obligation to the other, and how Levinas’ concept of justice, especially the responsibility to seek justice for the other, relates to the ability to keep one’s home. The relationship between Georgie and Mrs. Shapiro within the liminal space of Canaan House is imperative to the plot and the understanding of the importance of the responsibility for the other. What is even more crucial though is how the responsibility to maintain or institute justice is culturally localized. Not only does Georgie become the vehicle of migration in the novel, but she also serves as a means for justice. The encounter of the self with multiple others under the roof of Canaan House shows that a resolution can come from an individual perspective, without the interference of the state, if the values of mercy and charity are guiding it. The obligation for the other becomes a concern of each of us and thus the paradox of the other who is at once beseeching and commanding is solved within the realms of the responsibility of the self. The self has the right and the responsibility to conjure justice for the other.

Conclusion

Lewycka's novels imagine and engage with ethical encounters of East European migrants in the West. Her fiction enforces Levinas' call for the responsibility for the other and provides an opportunity to theorize diasporic experiences from an ethical point of view. Lewycka puts the spotlight on East European diasporas, their struggles in Britain and specifically the lack of mutual accountability and group harmony. In doing so, she challenges the idea of diasporas as homogenous structures that share moral co-responsibility to each other due to ethnic affiliation. On the contrary, Lewycka shows in her earlier novels that shared cultural background is used by some immigrants to exploit others.

Lewycka's novels offer a unique voice that has not been heard before, that of a member of the East European diaspora who criticizes its own members. But while some of her critics only see the negative implications of her literary works (because of her apparent distancing from the "new" East European migrant, in other words, the Post-Soviet one), this thesis has demonstrated how, in fact, her novels can also be read from an ethical perspective. It will not be true to say that Lewycka does not care about the division of the West and the East and the exploitation of the illegal workforce by the Western global economy. But it is, however, worth noting that the encounter with the other immigrants is a major theme in her narratives. Lewycka demonstrates that the relationships between immigrants that are never just between two people reflect on the values and culture of a particular community and on the degree of connection to the homeland and the hostland. Yet, she also challenges whether the obligation to the other is feasible, and what happens when the sacrifice is too big to make, and the self's own family is at stake.

The experiences of various groups of immigrants, as these are depicted in the novels, are important to the understanding of how diasporas are formed. Levinas' theory of the other and Derrida's concept of hospitality are relevant in examining diasporic internal forces because they showcase the importance of the ethical responsibility to the other person and the obligation of the self to take care of the other. Although it is not always the case within migrant communities, as Lewycka suggests, the issues of alterity of the other, responsibility for them, and the role of justice are crucial in establishing hospitable relationships within dispersed communities. There is no reciprocity between the 'old' immigrant characters and the 'new,' as the new are always depicted as "weaker." The new immigrants try to connect with their diasporic communities, but they are faced with different values, personal agendas, and most of the time hostility, instead of hospitality. This, Lewycka explains, is not only an outcome of a generational gap but also comes from individual, cultural, and socio-economical experiences. The world before World War II and the Orange Revolution is not the same place that the new immigrants come from. Therefore, the ability to connect with each other requires substantial negotiations as well as the sacrifice to give up on what is familiar and known.

Whereas the new immigrant is 'doubly marginalized,' by the host country as well as by the other, more senior immigrant, Lewycka's 'others' are not always 'good' people. This creates even more tension when considered from Levinas' ethical perspective that always sees the other as weaker and as more important than the self. Many of Lewycka's characters struggle with the fact that they hurt the other immigrants, even if (in their mind) they deserve it. Although briefly, the immigrants reflect on their actions and their loyalty to the diasporic group, before they continue in their course of action. It seems that they react positively to what is known and safe and are threatened by the alterity of the other, even when the other is their compatriot.

Alterity is a very important term in diaspora literature, Lewycka suggests, because everyone is different even within diasporas. When groups are theorized as single entities based on commonalities, there is the risk of omitting the marginalized people of these groups and their differentiating factors. The self who has the authority to accept or reject the other takes the 'easy' way out and stereotypes the 'new' immigrant as one who lacks the knowledge and capacity in assimilating in the hostland. What is lacking in this perspective, and what this thesis has shown, is that the 'new' immigrant might want to be 'different' and keep their alterity, they may wish to separate themselves from other, more senior, immigrants because shared ethnicity and homeland are no longer enough to form a real community that cares about its members. The novels show how literature is helpful in creating a discourse in a liminal space, where different others are able to connect based on mutual experiences and responsibility to each other.

Hence, Lewycka provides a way to form another type of community, although rather ideal, but nonetheless possible if the self accepts the other and takes responsibility for them. The imagined community based on experiences of exploitation and fantasies about the West lacks voice and visibility before the law. The migrants establish their own social hierarchies based on what has already been accomplished in the West and thus create a centre in the diasporic margins. This power paradigm is very similar to how some theorists, such as Ngũgĩ, see the relationship between the oppressor and the oppressed, in his theory between West and the rest. But, as argued by Young and outlined in the introduction, immigrant communities are alarmed by the many illegal migrants who come as workers, refugees, and asylum seekers. As an outcome, a hostile atmosphere is created in diasporic groups whereas centre and margins are formed from within.

Lewycka, therefore, establishes a unique voice in the diasporic literature. She provides a literary space for the under-researched East European diasporas, and also acknowledges the risks of belonging to such a group. Her solution is rather simple – establish an imagined community that is based on moral co-responsibility and help to the other. Although this seems to be in line with what Werbner is saying about loyalties of diasporans to each other, it is not exactly what is implied by Lewycka. Lewycka's diasporas include members who do not necessarily share the same homeland, ethnic background, or language; but, they rather unite those members who are marginalized by their own communities. Consequently, Lewycka creates a space for marginalized others to interact and have the chance to create an alternative group.

This type of literature is not traditionally diasporic or postcolonial; it is somewhere in between. Lewycka constantly plays with binaries and margins, and thus it seems that her fiction is of a liminal nature, somewhere between comedy and tragedy, postcolonial and national, diasporic and not. Similarly, her characters are 'stuck' somewhere in-between, and they constantly need the other to help them redefine their own identity. In this sense, the other is indeed more important than the self, as Levinas theorizes. But between the self and the other, there is a third person, and therefore justice is evoked.

The novels, this thesis suggests, narrate justice in a community setting in a way that challenge its absoluteness and rather demonstrate how it is culturally localized. The perception of justice from the perspective of the state and from an individual point of view can be at odds with one another. When the state intervenes, it places responsibility on diasporic communities for their members, instead of acting based on values of mercy and charity. This means it is harder to have a universal understanding of ethics and justice in respect to diasporas. Although Lewycka tries to dissociate her characters from nationalistic ties and move them towards an absolute

appreciation of justice as well as to focus on human relations, she does not always succeed in doing so. The link to the community of genus is still very important to immigrants, even if they engage with it only to negate it.

This thesis has also demonstrated how Lewycka's novels are examples of texts that are not strictly diasporic but at the same time community oriented. Their texts engage with some of the most researched elements in diasporic literature, such as mimicry, visible minorities and hybridity to name a few. But they also employ ethical elements, such as responsibility to the other regardless of their community of genus, alterity, justice and hospitality. In this way this thesis showed how (semi) diasporic texts are an opportunity to theorize the 'margins' of the diasporic field and their effect on the centre. Lewycka's fiction provides a voice for the diasporic margins, for communities that are not traditionally postcolonial, such as East Europeans, and for groups that are of a more imagined nature. It seems that the margins are moving the centre in a sense that they redefine how diasporic communities are formed and theorized.

Lastly, it would be worthwhile investigating in future endeavours the connection between female agency and diasporic experiences, as this is implied in Lewycka's novels. Levinas' philosophy of ethics that is very well known, critically acclaimed and constantly challenged by critics, is probably the best-fitting theory to investigate the animosity between and within diasporas, but it is not the only one. Other theories, such as Immanuel Kant's, can be helpful in exploring the topic. My thesis, however, has emphasized the importance of reading diasporic literary narratives from a Levinasian ethical perspective that provides a new outlook on the relationship within diasporas and also gives a platform for the East European diasporic discourse.

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