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“It is citizenship’s *acts* I dream of”: The Citizen of Erin Mouré’s O Ciudadán

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On one page of the highly experimental work O Ciudadán by the Canadian poet Erin Mouré, the fraction “2,564 / 75,721 = 3.38 %” appears in a grey box, followed by a single handwritten word, “borrar” (107). On the previous page, Mouré connects various twentieth-century attempts to cover up human rights abuses, beginning with a recent example. She reminds us that “Because 18 Texas Rangers died, the great America (Albright) / turned its back on the slaughter of / 800,000” in Rwanda, she makes loose references to the ongoing refusal to acknowledge atrocities committed at Sorbas, Spain in 1914, and she describes the willful negligence uncovered in the trial of Maurice Papon, a Vichy leader (106). So what does this strange equation mean? A little research reveals that the number 75,721 refers to the number of French citizens separated from the general population of France and deported by the Vichy regime “because they [were] Jews” (106), while 2,564 refers to the number of those who survived being sent to concentration camps – a mere 3.38%, in other words.¹

Mouré emphasizes the deported Jews’ French citizenship not only as a historical fact, but as a detail that is often overlooked in the present. Her poem, which in many ways seems more like notes toward an essay, is written in response to several texts, but

¹ Thomas Lacqueur, “The Sound of Voices Intoning Names.” London Review of Books. Vol. 19 No. 11 (5 June 1997) 3-8. Review of Serge Klarsfeld, French Children of the Holocaust: A Memorial.

especially in response to a 1999 New York Review of Books article, “The Trial of Maurice Papon.”² While Mouré’s quotes from the article demonstrate the author’s anger at the Vichy leaders’ collaboration in the atrocities committed against the Jews, she takes issue with this piece because it “does not seem to notice ... that separating citizens because they are Jews and ‘deporting’ them to work on ‘farms in Poland’ is already a crime” (106). In other words, the article does not frame the atrocities as something that happened to French citizens, as a perversion of the rights and protections of citizenship, but rather as something that happened to Jews. Mouré interprets the author’s acceptance of this historical fact as disturbingly continuous with the earlier, disastrous separation of Jews from the general population of France. Her project in O Ciudadán is to rethink citizenship not as a set of rights or entitlements, but as a set of vulnerabilities to power, particularly to the power of states, both one’s own and others. Correspondingly, she also works to recast citizenship as a series of acts by which the borders of states might be made more permeable in the interest of justice, where the characteristic act of a citizen would be to open state borders and extend the protections of her “national soil” (105) to non-citizens.

While Mouré’s book does not respect the stylistic, theoretical, or even terminological conventions of political theory, its arguments nevertheless resonate powerfully with recent feminist work on citizenship that has begun to theorize “arenas of citizenship beyond the state and the market” (Jaggar 95).³ Such work has increasingly brought the cultural grounds of citizenship into consideration, and often conceptualizes

² Robert O. Paxton, “The Trial of Maurice Papon.” NYRB. 16 December 1999.

³ In her essay “Arenas of Citizenship: Civil Society, the State, and the Global Other,” Jaggar contends that such studies are becoming more popular due in part to perception that the state is becoming less central to political life (91).

citizenship not as a relationship between a state and its citizens but rather as a set of practices whose implications may extend beyond the nation's borders (or conversely may have more radically local effects).⁴ Many recent feminist studies therefore focus on citizenship in civil society, and consider the arena in which citizenship is practiced as an imprecise combination of public and private elements, a non- or extra-governmental realm that might include business and the marketplace, the domestic sphere of kinship and the family, and popular culture.

To cite two completely different examples of this trend, Lauren G. Berlant considers the cultural grounds of citizenship and explores the ways in which national ties of feeling that define the experience of citizenship are produced through popular media such as film. Berlant describes “the intimacy of citizenship,” and how Reaganite conservative ideology has privatized politics, convincing Americans that citizenship “is something scarce and sacred, private and proper, and only for members of families[,] ... that the core context of politics should be the sphere of private life” (3). In her analysis, this form of “antipolitical politics” has reduced citizenship to “a category of feeling” whose practice is “a politics that abjures politics, ... on behalf of a private life” (11).⁵ By contrast, Alison Jaggar's recent work also epitomizes this recent concern with the cultural grounds for citizenship, as she demonstrates the importance of recognizing civil society as “an indispensable, though not exclusive arena for citizen activity” because “many areas of citizenship have become global as well as national” (106-107). Importantly, she also cautions that “activism in civil society is not an exclusive alternative to traditional

⁴ Feminist studies of citizenship in civil society have recently been undertaken by Lauren G. Berlant (1997), Alison Jaggar (2005), Marilyn Friedman (2005), Rian Voet (1998), and Iris Marion Young (2000), among others.

⁵ Berlant is not in favor of this form of citizenship, and is highly critical of its pretension to protect “private life from the harsh realities of power” (11).

state-centered politics,” because transnational non-state solutions such as “global feminist citizenship” (108) make it difficult to hold anyone accountable for the suffering of women. These works expand citizenship beyond the governmental realm, and understand it not as a set of rights or obligations, but rather acts undertaken within a particular cultural, political, and economic context.

Erin Mouré’s collection of poems O Ciudadán (2002) shares Berlant’s concern with the “intimacy of citizenship,” and her sense that the sphere of private life is intimately related to the “core context of politics,” but, like Jaggar, Mouré breaks the national frame upon which Berlant’s project relies, and she places greater emphasis on the state than do many of these recent feminist works. In O Ciudadán a critique of the independent, autonomous citizen is developed through an examination of the citizen’s desire, which is revealed as noncontinuous with the state’s desire in several important ways. While the citizen’s desire is figured primarily as a want of greater porousness in the state’s borders, enabled by citizens and aimed at combatting exclusion, this desire is described primarily as a kind of homoerotic excess: “my hand afterward a border’s opened *trait* / ... / one leg open in admission of caress” (101). Mouré’s poem theorizes a labile, flexible, and active form of citizenship that responds to and attempts to correct historical and contemporary forms of exclusion. She defines the citizen, “O ciudadán,” as “not the person subject to rules/laws, who then carries out this subjection (‘the sovereign) but ‘one who does not accept the gap and,” in response, “act[s] differently” (102).

Mouré begins her text with the following statement, which can be read as an articulation of her poetics, as well as a description of the tasks of her particular project in O Ciudadán:

To intersect a word: citizen. To find out what could intend/distend it. *O Ciudadán*. A word we recognize though we know not its language. It can't be found in French, Spanish, Portuguese dictionaries. It seems inflected 'masculine.' And, as such, it has a feminine supplement. Yet if I said 'a cidadá' I would only be speaking of 52% of the world, and it is the remainder that inflects the generic, the *ciudadán*. How can a woman then inhabit the general (visibly and semantically skewing it)? How can she speak from the generic at all, without vanishing behind its screen of transcendent value? In this book, I decided, I will step into it just by a move in discourse. I, a woman: o cidadán. As if 'citizen' in our time can only be dislodged when spoken from a 'minor' tongue, one historically persistent despite external and internal pressures, and by a woman who bears – as a lesbian in a civic frame – a *policed sexuality*. Unha cidadán: a semantic pandemonium. If a name's force or power is 'a historicity ... a sedimentation, a repetition that congeals,' (Butler) can the name be reinvested or infested, fenestrated ... set in motion again? Unmoored? Her semblance? Upsetting the structure/stricture even momentarily. *To en(in)dure, perdure.*

To move the force in any language, create a slippage, even for a moment ... to decentre the 'thing,' unmask the relation ... (n.p., Mouré's emphasis and ellipses)

Mouré's project in *O Ciudadán* is to speak the citizen "from a minor tongue." While calling attention to the masculine character of the general ("ciudadán" as the masculine-neuter form of the word, and "cidadá" as its specific, contingent feminine equivalent) and questioning the designation of the feminine as "minor" by reminding her readers that "52% of the world" is female, Mouré pairs the feminine article, "Unha," with the masculine-neuter noun "ciudadán" to create "semantic pandemonium." She unsettles grammatical gender in order to question the masculine inflection of the general that exists throughout Western society, regardless of the language in which its local formations speak. Mouré seeks to upset "the structure/stricture" of citizenship as a particular instance of the masculine-generic, "even momentarily" so that the concept of citizen will carry "even for a moment" "her semblance."

Mouré writes of reinvesting, infesting, or fenestrating the name "citizen," as if to re-endow it with power (OED), to invade it with a foreign substance or body, or to

furnish it with small openings, like windows (OED). But in order to understand what is intended by this project, it is vital to ask what conception of citizenship she begins with, and what kind of infestation or fenestration will reinvest the concept. Although her preface suggests that the masculine-generic citizenship of nation-state ideology and classical political theory will be invested or invaded by Mouré's lesbian body,⁶ or fenestrated so that such a body as hers might be visible within it. If the *ciudadán* is a woman and a lesbian, and if her social ties emerge from these specific categories, then the general, citizenship, must be reconceived through the specific. In other words, to re-imagine the general category of the citizen on the basis of the experiences of women and of lesbians is to imagine citizenship not as a set of privileges, rights, or obligations, but as a set of vulnerabilities.

The *ciudadán*'s erotic excess specifically opposes the cold rationality and autonomy of the citizen as he is traditionally constituted, and this excess is achieved primarily through a series of lyric poems that posit the speaker's erotic relationship as the beginning point of all public relationships:

Georgette, thou burstest my deafness

...

because I am not yet full of thee I am a burthen
to myself

⁶ In Manhood and Politics (1988), Wendy Brown writes that politics, "More than any other kind of human activity, ... has historically borne an explicitly masculine identity," "has been more exclusively limited to men[,] ... and has been more intensely, self-consciously masculine than most other social practices" (4). Brown reads constructions of manhood and of politics as being historically related, as both emerge through and are "traced upon formulations of political foundations, political order, citizenship, action, rationality, freedom and justice" (4). Indeed, what politics is and what is considered as outside of, or even threatening to politics is affected by its connection to masculinity, or "manhood," in Brown's terminology. Mouré's opening gambit, the text I quoted on p. 4, implies a similar analysis of the subject of politics.

Though breathedst odours, and I drew in breath and
 did pant for thee, tasted and did hunger, where thou
 had touchedst me I did burn
 for peace (3)

Significantly, this poem, the first “real poem” in the text begins with an assertion that Georgette, the speaker’s lover, “burstest my deafness,” symbolically breaking her isolation from the world. The speaker uses archaisms including the “thou” form of address and the archaic verb forms of “breathedst” and “touchedst,” as well as the archaic spelling of “burthen,” in order to create the high poetic diction appropriate to traditional love poetry. This over-the-top diction, along with the images of “pant[ing]” and “hunger[ing]” for the lover create a sense of erotic excess that is at once comic and sexy. However, this playfulness is directly tied to the place of the *ciudadán* in civil society: her erotic relationship to her lover produces a longing “for peace,” which we can read as a public desire. The physical location of the desire “for peace” in the place “where thou / had touchedst me” suggests that the *ciudadán*’s relationship to civil society and political life begins with her erotic relationship, or even with the erotic acts committed within that relationship.

While this relationship inaugurates all political relationships, Mouré does not make it a template for citizenship as such. Rather, this relationship motivates the *ciudadán* to enter into networks of sympathy with others; it is what propels her outward into the world. However, the basis on which she makes connections with the others that she encounters is not eroticism but harm, and indeed part of the project of O Ciudadán is to catalogue the harms that the *ciudadán* encounters in the world. There is certainly a sense that the *ciudadán* has suffered harm as a woman and as a lesbian: she writes that “there were places where we were cast aside / our grip was cast aside // irregular” (26). Yet the

harms that she experiences are comparatively rare, and the larger project of cataloguing harms is aimed at accounting for historical and contemporary injustices in which the *ciudadán* is neither victim nor perpetrator, but which provoke feelings of outrage, sadness or shame. She lists “(a ditch where they buried the shot children)” (6), “a torn muscle in the arm” (6), describes how “They came walking out along the rails, terrified, into the other country, / 200 families, a driven village” (40), and refers to the Dili massacre of 12 November 1991 in East Timor (86), atrocities by the Vichy regime in France, at Sorbas, Spain in 1914, and in Rwanda during the 1990s (106), “the child dragged outside the car by a seatbelt / during the car theft” (124), “Rio street children excised by police” (137), and “Villages burnt by the French or Romans” (138).

The harms that Mouré discusses are all specific and contingent, either because they are experienced by specific groups, such as “Rio street children” or in specific situations, like a “car theft” or the Dili massacre. The commonality that Mouré draws among these experiences of harm is that they are suffered by citizens, and it is her project to theorize citizenship on the basis of these specific, local and concrete experiences, not on the basis of abstract categories such as “man.” Much as she emphasizes the French citizenship of the Jews deported by the Vichy regime, Mouré contemplates what “citizenship” would mean if it were theorized through the figure of a woman raped during a war. In one essay-like text she writes, “To see her as citizen is indeed to know *citizen* as repository of harm, where harm is gendered too. Myths of violability, inviolability, volatility, utility, lability played out. In wars, women are territories, and territories are *lieux de punition*” (Mouré 79, emphasis in original). According to the bellicose logic that Mouré outlines, citizens are physical spaces, territories upon which one nation or state

can localize the punishment of another. Thinking of these gendered atrocities as things that happen to citizens, and not as things that happen specifically to women (as differentiated from citizens, or as a subset of the category) allows Mouré to rethink citizenship as a set of vulnerabilities, both to the caprices of one's own state, as in the case of the French Jews, to other states or national groups, as in the case of raped women, or indeed to other entities entirely.

Thus, the *ciudadán* is made specific to a particular gender identity and sexuality, but the harms that motivate and concern her are not specifically the harms that she experiences, nor are they the harms experienced by those who have similar identifications. In this vein, the "Sixteenth Catalogue of the Sorbas of Harms," which I described in the opening of this paper, is filled with indignant repetitions and outraged questions, directed not only at the perpetrators of the harms to which the text refers, but also at "a US student" who "really did ask a Madrid student in the year 2000: *Do the Spanish dream?*" and at Madeleine Albright, whose inaction in Rwanda suggests that she is "*unsure* about how 'humanity' is attributed to beings" (106, Mouré's emphasis).⁷ The *ciudadán* is characterized by her ability to feel herself within a nexus of harmed subjects, and to make connections and speak publicly about these harms – to catalogue them extensively as part of her experience of the intimacy of public life. This network of feeling, which extends internationally, is contrasted against the uncertainty of Madeleine Albright and the "US student," who are given a specifically national identification as "Americans" (106). The parochialism of national identification (which is not made specific to Americans in this text) prevents them from attributing humanity like their own

⁷ Harm in this sense takes multiple forms in addition to proceeding from multiple direct and indirect actions and inactions, and the power to harm is depicted as multivalent in a Foucauldian sense.

“to beings” whom they perceive to be different from themselves.

The pain that the *ciudadán* wishes to publicly iterate is not exclusively her own; rather, it is the pain that she encounters socially in her ability to make networks and form ethical relationships with other subjects. Her articulation of this pain has some relationship to blame, for she singles out the “US student” and Madeleine Albright, but unlike the politics of Nietzschean *ressentiment* that Wendy Brown describes in States of Injury,⁸ this is a politics that emerges from the *ciudadán*’s suggestion that the discourses used to cover up twentieth-century harms and atrocities are linked. In other words, this is not a politics based on the *ciudadán*’s own identity, although her identity is relevant to it. Instead, this is a politics based on the continuity between her local experience of being “cast aside” and the global “ties of affect” (Mouré 7) that this experience can forge with those around the world who have also experienced injustice. Like Brown, Mouré is not only interested in adding women to the “supposedly generic term, ‘man’” (Manhood and Politics 11), but in examining “the nature and quality of political life” (12), and in doing so through an extensive cataloguing of harms experienced by those like and unlike

⁸ Brown writes that the “foreclosure of its own freedom” and the “impulse to inscribe in the law and other political registers its historical and present pain” are “symptomatic of politicized identity’s *desire* within liberal-bureaucratic regimes,” and that identity politics prefers to take this route “rather than conjur[ing] an imagined future of power to make itself” (66, Brown’s emphasis). Brown interprets politicized identity as “predicated on and requiring its sustained rejection by a ‘hostile external world,’” as more invested in placing blame for the harms it suffers than “subject[ing] to critique the sovereign subject of accountability that liberal individualism presupposes, nor the economy of inclusion and exclusion that liberal universalism establishes” (70). “[P]oliticized identity” is “attached to its own exclusion,” and requires this exclusion in order to exist as a viable and discernible identity. “The formation of identity at the site of exclusion” gives a particular direction to suffering by proposing a site of blame, and therefore identity politics, in Brown’s analysis, constitutes “a politics of recrimination that seeks to avenge the hurt even while it reaffirms it, discursively codifies it,” and is reliant upon “entrenching, restating, dramatizing, and inscribing its pain in politics,” sacrificing any sense of a futurity of power (74).

herself. The *ciudadán*, then, begins from her own experience of harm, and from this experience moves outward into the broader sphere of politics and public life. In fact, it is her experience of harm that connects her to this broader sphere, and defines her as a participant – that makes her a citizen – within it.

Of course, the “semantic pandemonium” Mouré creates involves not only the speaking of citizen by a woman and a lesbian, but also the speaking of citizen by another kind of minor tongue. When Mouré writes of a tongue that is “historically persistent despite external and internal pressures,” she refers not only to a feminine or lesbian voice, but equally and perhaps in a more literal sense to a voice speaking in Galician, a language that has persisted historically despite periods of censorship and pressures from the Spanish state that contains its physical territory. In other words, Mouré is speaking the citizen – “*ciudadán*” – in a language that does not have its own nation-state, and therefore does not have its own citizenship.⁹ Mouré focuses explicitly on her own physical inhabiting of the term citizen, yet speaks the name citizen in a language that neither refers to her citizenship, nor names a citizenship of its own. By speaking the Galician *ciudadán* rather than the Canadian citizen or *citoyen/ne*, Mouré suggests a citizenship that is at once radically local, a relationship to an entity much smaller than the nation-state, but that at the same time has global ties that stretch far beyond its bounds. She points to the exclusions enacted by the nation-state form, which are widely accepted and rarely questioned, and in response she imagines citizenship as a set of acts in which the “national soil” is opened up to strangers in the interest of justice.

O Ciudadán is written in English, Galician, French, Latin, and Spanish, and most

⁹ Most Galician speakers are Spanish citizens, some are Portuguese. The Galician language is much closer to Portuguese than Spanish, linguistically speaking, but for political reasons they are usually described as different.

sections are named for the locations in which the *ciudadán* finds herself, whether these are geographical locations (Yorkshire, Vigo, Montréal), or more radically local spaces (roof, Parc Jeanne-Mance, fleuve portal). Throughout the text, the *ciudadán* questions her social and legal status in these locations: in Yorkshire she asks, “Am I local *here* in my unease” (7, Mouré’s emphasis), wondering if the feeling of “unease” will provide a “tie[] of affect,” and produce a sense of “My Yorkshire” (7), a sense that she belongs. Later, at home in Montréal, describes herself as one who has

made myself strange in the *arena* of country and, here, come to Québec where I bear a strange tongue (yet hegemonic), allowed to be foreign. As foreign, to be, paradoxically but sensibly, a part of the body politic. To be a stranger (*hospes* or *advena*) here is to *faire partie de tout ce qui comporte le civis* (82, Mouré’s emphasis)

The Anglophone *ciudadán* has come to Québec, where as an Anglophone she is a member of a linguistic minority, but one that is hegemonic in the rest of Canada. Her linguistic background makes her a foreigner in Québec, but as a foreigner she is still “part of the body politic,” both in the sense that she exists physically as a part of this public and political space, and in the sense that she enjoys the privileges of citizenship throughout Canada. She writes that her being in Québec, either as “*hospes*,” a guest or stranger, or “*advena*,” a foreigner, is to be a part of “*tout ce qui comporte le civis*,” or a part of everything that makes up the citizen. In this poetically convoluted definition the citizen is one who is at once at home and abroad, protected and vulnerable, “a part of the body politic,” and yet a “stranger,” as demonstrated by the movement between English, Latin and French. Montréal comes to symbolize competing nationalisms and citizenships, for the text acknowledges the possibility of “Québec citizenship,” while despairing the possibility of the ethnic-nationalist “*Québec of Michaud raising its head again*” (135,

Mouré's italics).

Thus, Mouré argues for a complex form of inclusion, using ethnic nationalisms to symbolize the kinds of exclusion that she argues against. For if the state is what binds disparate groups such as Anglophones and Francophones in Canada, "it is also clearly what can and does unbind," as Judith Butler writes in a recent collaboration with Gayatri Spivak:

If the state binds in the name of the nation, conjuring a certain version of the nation forcibly, if not powerfully, then it also unbinds, releases, expels, banishes. If it does the latter, it is not always through emancipatory means, i.e. through 'letting go' or 'setting free'; it expels precisely through an exercise of power that depends upon barriers and prisons and, so, in the mode of a certain containment. (5)

As the example of the French Jews that opened this paper illustrates, the state "is supposed to be the matrix for the obligations and prerogatives of citizenship" (Butler 3), and as such it is given the power to define who is a citizen. Because it has this power, of course, it equally "can signify the source of non-belonging, even produce that non-belonging in a quasi-permanent state" (4), and often justifies doing so by invoking a specific image of the nation. Mouré therefore advocates a form of citizenship as a "public relation" that is "unsubsumable under the significantion of a 'State,' / unless such a state implies a multiplicity and plurilocality of relations / Zones that can overlap" (Mouré 63) because she sees this "multiplicity and plurilocality" as more inclusive, and as more adequate to the task of ensuring social justice.

Mouré's text valorizes figures who have directly contested forms of ethnic nationalism by "opening" the "national soil" and "invit[ing] the other onto it" (105). She describes the Portuguese consul-general Aristides de Sousa Mendes who "issued 30,000 visas to refugees, admitting them to Portugal in direct defiance of instructions" in 1940,

opening an escape route from Nazi persecution in Bordeaux. Mouré writes that he worked “For three weeks ... day and night, signing papers for anyone who needed them, in his office and in his car” (98). She also writes of Captain Paul Grüninger of Switzerland, who “altered 3600 passports to permit Austrian Jews to enter his country” in 1938. Both men suffered legal persecution as a result of their actions and were not pardoned until the 1988, in the case of de Sousa Mendes (who died in 1954), and 1995, in the case of Grüninger (who died in 1972). Mouré’s theoretical interest in their acts is directed primarily at the men’s existence as “physically a prosthetic application of ‘Swiss border’” in Grüninger’s case (42), or Portuguese border in de Sousa Mendes’s. Each man made himself an opening, or as Mouré would say, a “fenestration,” in the border of his own country, allowing others access to his “national soil” in order to ensure their protection. Mouré considers theirs to be the ultimate acts of the *ciudadán*, stating, “To make one’s own inviolable seam permeable ... is a citizen’s act” (42).

In Inclusion and Democracy (2000), Iris Young argues that “[t]he nation-state system enacts exclusions that are sometimes grave in their consequences yet widely accepted as legitimate” (236). These might range from “the right to exclude non-citizens who wish to live within their borders,” to “a right against interference from other states or international bodies concerning the actions and policies they take within their jurisdictions” (236). Young also describes the popular perception that “[s]tates and their citizens ... have no obligation to devote any of their intellectual and material resources to enhance the well-being of anyone outside their borders” (236). Although some political theorists argue that these exclusions are not legitimate, and that a more cosmopolitan view of moral responsibility and political action is required, these nationalistic

formulations are widely accepted.

Young inquires as to “the proper scope of obligations of justice to which political institutions ought to correspond” (238), a question that seems to parallel Mouré’s, although political institutions specifically are not the focus of her inquiry. Young describes how states are typically viewed as having the obligation to “maximize [their] own interests and those of [their] citizens,” but are not typically viewed as obligated to consider “how this pursuit may affect the interests of outsiders, so long as ... the state does not directly interfere with the internal affairs of other states” (238). In other words, “outsiders have no moral right to make claims upon a state other than their own or upon its citizens except under the laws of that state,” and in this sense, “[f]rom a moral point of view, the people of each society are thought to be entirely independent of one another” (238). Young is critical of this interpretation, citing various environmental and economic examples of how such a view is untenable in a globalized society.

Mouré provides a similar critique to Young’s, considering both the exclusion of citizens by their own states, and the exclusion of non-citizens by states other than their own. One of the most noticeable examples of this focus on the exclusion of non-citizens is one of the dedications, which states that the text is written for

*two young Africans who tried to call out to Europe,
with the body (mortos) of writing (escridas nos seus petos):
Yaguine Koita and Fodé Tounkara
(n.p., Mouré’s italics)*

Koita’s and Tounkara’s bodies were “found in the cargo hold of a plane in Brussels in August 1998” (Gikandi 630), along with a letter addressed to the “Excellencies, gentlemen, and responsible citizens of Europe,” offering their “most affectionate and respectful salutations,” and asking for “help” for the impoverished peoples of Africa (qtd.

Gikandi 630). Mouré's text in English states that they "call[ed] out to Europe, / with the body of writing," with their letter. Her parenthetical additions in Galician clarify that they are dead ("mortos"), and suggest that the letter is written on their chests, literalizing "the body of writing." In this multilingual reading, the "text" that Koita and Tounkara have written is not simply the letter, but their own dead flesh, which "call[s] out to Europe" in a dramatic protest against the exclusion of people like themselves, whose only access to the protection of European states is found – or more accurately not found – "in the cargo hold of a plane."

This dedication can be read alongside a brief reference to "the Fujian women jailed by Canada for exercising their 'right to depart' / (which does not include the right to arrive somewhere)" (124). These women depart as citizens of China, but when they arrive in Canada, they arrive precisely on the condition of "not belong[ing] to the set of juridical obligations and prerogatives that stipulate citizenship" (Butler 6). The Fujian women, much like Koita and Tounkara, are subjected to "the vulnerabilities of having only one jurisdiction within which to appeal to redress injustice" (Young 13): unable to receive it in their own countries, they seek justice from other jurisdictions. But because they have no real claim on states other than their own, they do not have "the right to arrive somewhere": they are jailed as illegal immigrants upon their arrival, if they even survive the attempt. Mouré does not deny the importance of "borders. For they mark a disruptive and unruly edge. And in auguring an outside, they constitute the inside" (112). Rather, she argues that inclusion happens through "porosities or what might be 'penetrations'" (112), particularly when citizens enable such "porosities" and "penetrations" of their national borders. In this sense, her conception of the just "state

implies a multiplicity and plurilocality of relations” (63), a variety of spaces in which a variety of relations are practiced and evinced. This form of multiply inclusive citizenship and national porosity provides greater access to justice and contests the multiple forms of exclusion that have produced the “Twentieth Century of the Festering of Harms.”

Ultimately, Mouré wants to argue that citizens are vulnerable to multiple sources of injustice, enacted by their own states, by other states, and by private citizens. Accordingly, citizens must make *themselves* sources of justice that are multiply available. She argues for a form of trans-border justice broadly similar to that which Young describes in Inclusion and Democracy, where “principles of justice apply” across a “global” scope (249), and where the obligation to do justice to those who are immediately proximate is greatest (250). Young’s understanding of proximity allows for a certain kind of identification, which she calls “Recognition of Distinct Peoples without Nationalism” (251). Mouré’s poems also employ identification as a motivating factor in doing justice to others, but her understanding of proximity is informed by her use of affect, so that the *ciudadán* feels proximate to those who might be at a great geographical distance from her. The kinds of connections between individuals that might make “more principles of justice apply” (Young 250) are not necessarily connections of physical territorial proximity; rather, Mouré argues that the *ciudadán*’s obligation to do justice to others proceeds from her identification with other harmed subjects.

In imagining a system of porous national borders and cosmopolitan *ciudadán* foreigner-citizens, it is significant to note that the justice Mouré advocates does not involve repatriating the other or resolving her foreignness in any way. The nation, instead, is imagined as “a nexus of differential topolities in the subject, who is formed

partly by the coextensivity of subjects-around-her” (39). Combining the words “topography” and “polity,” Mouré conceptualizes nationality as a multiplicity of regions and of groupings that the subject feels herself a part of, constituted in part by the community of others in which she finds herself. Nationality in O Ciudadán is therefore a kind of group feeling that the subject has, but Mouré formulates this in such a way as to emphasize the multiplicity of “subjects-around-her” and the “*differential* topolities” that will comprise this “nexus” of affiliation. This does not directly imply that nation-states as political entities are absent from Mouré’s framework, but rather that she demands a deeper and more nuanced way of conceptualizing and responding to diversity within the nation, of understanding the multiple sources from which the power to harm proceeds, and of conceptualizing the obligation to do justice to harmed subjects outside of and within the nation’s borders.

How to live this citizen, who invites the other onto the national soil, thus opening it. Who plays on the complexity of *hôte*. Where *host/guest*’s configural. The knee continues to dream. (105)

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