

ENCOUNTERS WITH CYNTHIA COCKBURN

Taghreed Yahia-Younis and Rela Mazali

Taghreed Yahia-Younis and Rela Mazali are co-writing a piece to celebrate Cynthia Cockburn who died on 12th September 2019. In this piece, they pay tribute to Cynthia whom they knew as an independent scholar, as an activist, and as a feminist woman. They think, it is particularly appropriate to commemorate Cynthia in a dialogue between the two of them. Their chosen format is extremely significant because although they are both part of women's activism against discrimination and militarization in Israel/Palestine, Taghreed and Rela are positioned, by birth, by social means, by culture, on the opposite sides of what Cynthia called *an abyss*. And Cynthia's work committed to exploring women's and feminists' capacity for maintaining "bridges," in the sense of conversations, connections and contacts in the heart of hemorrhaging conflicts.

We both and each believe in the key importance of standpoint theory, as developed by feminist scholars and applied in feminist scholarship and knowledge production (Harding, 1991). Cynthia Cockburn (2015: p. 279) described the crucial importance of making standpoint explicit. "Being politically derived," she wrote, "it necessarily governs the questions we ask, how we make sense of what we discover and whom we address ...". Cynthia was writing about research, methodology, and epistemology. We are writing about Cynthia.

Each of us, Taghreed Yahia-Younis and Rela Mazali, were in touch with Cynthia Cockburn over decades; with Cynthia as a scholar, as an activist and as a feminist woman. The two of us have known each other for decades as well and, to a different extent in our separate ways, each of us has been an active participant in the loose network of feminist women's activism against war, dispossession, discrimination and militarization in Israel/Palestine.

While operating under a single broad umbrella of beliefs and attitudes, the two of us are positioned, by birth, by social means, by culture, on the opposite sides of what Cynthia called *an abyss*. Chapter four of her book, *The Space Between Us: Negotiating Gender and National Identities in Conflict* (1998), looks at feminist efforts to counteract some of the outcomes of a century of bloody, brutal conflict. It is titled, "Israel/Palestine: Across an Abyss."

“Identity,” Cynthia wrote, “is something that calls for questioning, not closure.” (2014: p. 12). Each of us, in her different but analogous manner, has intensively questioned her identity “setting a clear space between the ‘name’ with which a person is identified, or labeled by others, and that person’s lived sense of selves.” (ibid) Here are our informative respective descriptions of our selves:

Taghreed: I was born in Kufr Qari’, an Arab village in the near North, in Wadi Ara, an area populated by a majority of Palestinian citizens, part of the indigenous minority of Israel. I continue to live in the same area. In qualification terms, I’m a sociologist; I gained my higher education in Israel, including a PhD from Tel Aviv University, where I currently teach part-time as an affiliate fellow! My main academic interests, both in research and teaching, are sociology of strangeness/belonging, sociological theories, women’s movements and feminisms in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA), as well as gender and politics. Currently, I work on gender and folk art; gender, identity and language, and gender and environment.

Rela: I was born on a kibbutz in the Upper Galilee in 1948 in the far north of Israel. I am Jewish-born though secular and, with my family, I practice a small set of cultural Jewish rituals. As an Israeli-born Jewish woman, I am part of the dominant hegemony ruling this country, a majority whose nationalist, racist and militarized policies I have actively opposed for several decades. I live just north of Tel Aviv. I am a writer, an independent scholar and a feminist, anti-militarist activist. I was among the founders (in 1998) of the New Profile Movement to de-militarize Israel’s state and society and later (in 2010) of the Gun Free Kitchen Tables (GFKT) project, a small arms disarmament and gun control project housed by Isha L’Isha Feminist Center. I have coordinated GFKT since its foundation and continue to do so at present.

Our Chosen Format:

Academia in Israel (including feminist and gender studies) has largely overlooked Cynthia Cockburn’s scholarship, testifying perhaps to how deeply militarized Israel’s society and culture are, academia included. Cynthia had insightful contribution to scholarship, both theoretically and empirically. Inspired by feminist and other critique theories, she suggested the concepts “ethnic regime” and “ethnic bargain,” to mention but one example of her smart numerous others (Cockburn, 2004: 34- 35). By “ethnic regime” she conceptualized ethnic contexts where ethnicity displays as a basis for social differentiation, establishes power relations, infuses and reinforces whatever else bases of differentiation. Under this “ethnic regime,” exchange occurs among

members of different ethnic groups, where some members of disadvantage ethnic groups provide services to the dominant ethnic group in quest of patronage and protection (ibid). This is what Cynthia termed “ethnic bargain.” To this very contribution, Sa’ar (2005) one of handful faculties in Israeli academia, if at all, paid attention and drew on, as well as on Kandiyoti’s, in offering the term the “liberal bargain.”

Outside of this country, however, a good deal of academic and activist work draws on and refers to this body of research. We firmly believe that more is yet to come. An intense interest that guided many if not most of Cynthia’s studies was women’s and feminists’ capacity for conversation across deep, violent, divisions. She carefully, repeatedly studied painful, productive and pointedly political dialogue, geared towards healing action. As Taghreed phrased it, “She was committed to the question of how women in general and in peace organizations in particular succeed in maintaining ‘bridges,’ in the sense of conversations, connections and contacts in the heart of hemorrhaging conflicts, sometimes even right after very bloody events.”

On this backdrop and given our own respective positioning, we felt it particularly appropriate to commemorate Cynthia in a dialogue between the two of us.

Below are excerpts from a conversation between Taghreed and Rela about our respective experiences of and with Cynthia Cockburn. In this reflective, personal text, we write of her as Cynthia, the actual, first-name-basis woman that each of us knew, rather than using the family name format customary for citing scholars in academic writing. Besides excerpts from our conversation, we have also integrated into this text some of the writing that each of us did, separately, for different events held to honor and commemorate Cynthia.

Like most of Israel’s Hebrew-speaking hegemony, Rela has not been required to master the Arabic language native to one fifth of Israel’s citizens and to several million Palestinian non-citizens living under Israeli control in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, as well as millions more in the Arab Middle East. While she has studied Arabic for varying periods, it was never a pressing necessity and she hasn’t mastered the language. On the other hand, Taghreed, like many Palestinian citizens of Israel and a huge majority of the academics among them, has had to become fluent in both Hebrew and English, besides mastering her native Arabic. This linguistic asymmetry is, in itself, reflective of the power structure within which both of us are situated and which situates our respective scopes of knowledge. Our shared writing process was somewhat constrained by Rela’s inability to read an Arabic text composed by Taghreed after Cynthia’s death. This is one of the reasons why our text is

so heavily based on verbal conversation. However, at various points, it is also interspersed with passages of explanatory background and context, provided by both Rela and Taghreed.

Our initial conversation was conducted in Hebrew. Rela translated parts of it into English and drafted a preliminary text, which we then finalized through an email dialogue, in which we commented, asked questions, suggested additions and deletions, developing a final version. While the spoken conversation followed a chronological timeline, the selections excerpted into text below were organized along thematic lines. These are not hermetically discrete segments, though. They weave back and forth between lives (ours, Cynthia's) and central feminist issues with which Cynthia was preoccupied, with which each of us is preoccupied, all of them running through the length and various parts of this piece.

Rela: Thinking back on what stood out for me in my encounters with Cynthia, I tend to think “life” no less than “work.” The way she conducted her life.

For one thing, Cynthia *named* me. That's a curious statement, given that I was in my fifties when I first met her. We had corresponded previously on email and, despite the physical distance, we had crafted some bits of shared activism. But during our first actual face-to-face conversation, Cynthia (re)introduced herself to me as “an independent scholar” and, instantaneously, I thought, “Ahhh, that's what it's called. That's what I am!”

She had gifted me a name for what had previously gone unnamed. Over roughly twenty years before I met Cynthia in person, I had been conducting and sometimes publishing independent research. Research was totally integral to both my literary writing and my activism and occasionally, although repeatedly over the years, it generated articles that were more academic than literary. Sometimes I conducted what amounts to action-research; in other cases I undertook what is usually termed fieldwork, which I reflected on in writing and in talks. The lectures, readings and publications produced by these processes were hosted by an array of venues, some of which were academic and some of which were activist or “artsy,” as cultural venues are sometimes called. While arduous and demanding, this part of my work almost never generated income. I did that by writing educational programs, translating from Hebrew to English and through a range of other forms of paid work. Aside from its acceptance, from time to time, by publishers that were recognized outlets (some more, some less) for academic or cultural work, my research was performed outside of formal institutions and independently of institutional funding or support of any kind. Given the absence of institutions, grants, financial support and other seals

of institutional approval, I wasn't sure to what extent it could or would be classified as research. At best, I thought, it might be seen as suited to the heading "informal research". This was one of the reasons why I tended to respond, "It's kind of complicated," when asked, "What do you do?" Often as not, I would then proceed, with a slightly sheepish smile, to evade the question.

I had no model and no name for this process of researching, writing and publishing studies – some of them literary but nonetheless distinctly studies, to my mind – outside frameworks of institutionalized recognition. Suddenly, though, gifted through Cynthia's words, here it was; Completely unapologetically, put directly and simply. So very typically of Cynthia. "I think it would probably be less possible today," she said, describing her own extra-institutional career, "but I've carried out my work as an independent scholar."

For me, of course, this was much more than naming. I was discovering both a role model and a role at the very same moment. It was a powerful experience of revelation. As my feminist learning has taught me, naming can be crucial to acquiring *ownership* of an identity. It can form a new understanding of reality, actually constructing or *changing* reality. My reality was definitely changed by this encounter with a model, showing me that even though I had had to make it up as I went along, and even though I had never heard of it before, here was living proof in an already highly esteemed woman and scholar, that it *could* be done, that it *had* been done. This "informal chat," just a preamble to the "real" conversation or interview that Cynthia and I were just about to have, and that had brought her to my home, granted me the legitimization to adopt and claim the title, "independent scholar." Besides, I loved using the British sounding and more comprehensive "scholar," rather than the more focused, functional "researcher."

Combining Research with Activism:

In 1997, Cynthia initiated and organized a workshop in the village of Mijas near Malaga, Spain, for which she also secured the necessary funding. Its participants, whose travel and board were covered by the workshop grant, were Cynthia's interviewees (or other activists) from three women's organizations working across, and counter to, the national, social, religious, class divides feeding three violent conflicts in Ireland, Israel/Palestine, and Bosnia. Both the research process and Cynthia's findings were later presented in her 1998 volume mentioned above, *The Space Between Us*, and in several articles.

Taghreed: I was one of the interpreters at the conference in Malaga. A year earlier, I first met Cynthia. I had worked with her as her interpreter during about 3 weeks of her research of

Palestinian and Jewish women activists in Israel, and of the “Bat Shalom” organization in particular. I translated her questions (asked in English) for both speakers of Arabic and Hebrew, then their answers from Arabic or Hebrew into English. Beyond that, though, I also served as her informant, providing her with data concerning the social structure, culture, and position of the Palestinians in Israel, with special focus on gender dimensions.

Encouraged by her lively, curious, perceptive, no-nonsense but always kind questions, I presented her with the type of first-hand, experiential knowledge that she valued highly and presented very seriously in her work. I offered her a view of the context and history within which the women she was studying performed their activism. In particular, I introduced her to the experience of the Palestinian Arab minority living inside of Israel’s internationally recognized borders. Overall, our exchange was far deeper and more extensive than the translation service I provided.

A year after her fieldwork here in Israel, I was invited to the follow-up workshop that lasted several days in Mijas. Culminating Cynthia’s fieldwork on the study, the workshop afforded added insights through reflections and other materials brought to light in the course of its discussions. No less than this, though, it was designed to offer the participant activists access to expanded knowledge and increased cultural capital, through comparative experiences, new or strengthened contacts and varied opportunities that it occasioned. As Cynthia’s writing shows repeatedly, firmly embedded in her research methodology was the question: What might be useful to the activists she was studying and which practical steps could be taken (and could she herself take) to meet the needs they cited in answering this question.

The connection flight back home via London gave me an opportunity to spend short extra time in the city. England and particularly London were magical and magnetic to me. They had been for long years, since my late childhood teenage years. By this time, of course, I was well aware of Britain’s notorious colonial history, and particularly of its key role in the Palestinian people’s destiny. But I was fascinated by its culture and powerfully attracted to the parts of this culture that reached me, as a teenager, through books. When I was first able to travel abroad, London had been my obvious destination. While I can’t and couldn’t then describe just why, Britain, England and particularly London, were hugely meaningful to me, *there* I dreamed I would someday gain my graduate studies, specifically my PhD.

Countless Lives Crossing at The Heart of Empire:

Cynthia's final research, crystallized in her book *Looking to London: Stories of War, Escape and Asylum* (2017), beautifully epitomizes a somewhat similar mixture of sentiments towards the city. On the opening page of the Introduction, Cynthia wrote:

This book is a celebration of London, but a cautious one. It celebrates the city's famous cultural diversity. It celebrates the generations of migrants who have made it what it is. ... The celebration has to be cautious, however, because London is a profoundly unequal place, of obscene wealth and profound poverty ... We need to remember too, that [... London] was the capital of an empire that created the conditions giving rise to wars in Asia and Africa today.

Nonetheless, I have my own reason to value London. I arrived here 63 years ago, as a labour migrant, an ill-informed 19-year-old from the socially conservative, class-ridden and almost wholly white British industrial East Midlands in which I was born. Travelling to the capital in search of a shorthand-typist's pay packet changed the trajectory of my life, entirely for the better.

Taghreed: When Cynthia learned of my plans she invited me to stay at her London home. For me, this was an enormous and enormously moving gift. I knew she regularly let rooms to students, some of whom went on to become dear friends and research assistants and co-authors. I recognized this as both a warmhearted gift, a practical source of added income and a way of sharing the means available to her, including her welcoming home, with other feminist researcher-activists who would, she thought, use them well. I was already familiar with this pattern when she invited me to stay, and I was deeply touched and excited by the invitation.

"Once upon a time," about a decade earlier, I had actually taken a few practical steps towards graduate studies in England. I had spent a few days in London to examine options. But my life had taken a different turn and most of the decade before my doctorate was full of establishing family, of having and raising my four children. This mentioned occasion call in my way outstanding people who became very good friends of mine till now, and about whom I might write once in different context.

My experience of London, in the course of the two days I spent there based in Cynthia's home and mediated by the unique atmosphere of this home, reconnected me to those relinquished dreams and desires. Those two days rejuvenated and restored a path I thought I had lost and set me on the path to securing a post-Doc position at SOAS, a decade later.

Rela: So many different women, I believe, have experienced a far-reaching and nuanced commitment on Cynthia's part to learn and respond to the needs of the women she engaged with

and believed in. In describing it, I want to use a term that has been at least partly abandoned in the tortuous history of feminist practice and theory: She practiced a type of firmly supportive, strikingly attentive and rare *sisterhood*. I know that she herself was very careful with this term. But her specific mode of practicing it seemed to me to give it a new life. She regularly turned resources to which she had access into means of assisting students, young academics or activists – most of them feminist women. With deft ingenuity and creativity, and yet systematically, she extended support in the form of contacts or access to international venues towards expanding someone else's visibility.

I experienced this personally in her attempts, made over and over, on several occasions, to help me find a publisher for an English-language version of my cross-genre Hebrew book, *Home Archaeology: Essay Tales* (2011). Her combination of immense generosity and firm, businesslike determination in doing so flooded me with admiration, appreciation and hope. She set herself to the task in complete confidence that this text was worthy of her time and effort. Failing once or twice didn't phase or deter her from trying again or from looking for new, previously untried directions. That in itself was a gift, even though our attempts eventually proved unsuccessful.

The generosity that Cynthia practiced seemed to me to express her belief that her lot, the lot of its practitioner, was tied up completely with the lots of others. It was a generosity that worked to grow others' *independent* strength towards growing a *common* strength. As such, it was deeply *feminist*. It achieved the tricky feat of translating the concept of *solidarity* into practical steps.

Since this included an exceptionally honest and open engagement with issues of voice and ownership, I think it's no coincidence that my publishing efforts occasioned such a serious commitment on Cynthia's part. The introduction to the book she co-researched, with Rada Stakic-Domuz and Meliha Hubic, *Women's Organizing for Change: A study of women's integral organizations and the pursuit of democracy in Bosnia-Herzegovina* (2001), says, "Negotiation was needed ... over ownership and responsibility for the writing. Most ... was done by Cynthia, simply because this is her lifelong *métier* and ... a hard task for anyone who has not learned the trade." (p. 15)

While this is not often discussed, *published voice* can be as vital to activists as funds. Publication of their views, analyses, findings and statements can increase their credibility and, possibly, reduce their isolation or marginalization.

However, protocols for turning *activist* knowledge into respected publications are rare and when they do exist, they are relatively unknown. Recognizing, as she and her co-authors did in this introduction, that activists often lack the experienced skills or the networking that facilitate publishing, Cynthia repeatedly tried to address this power differential. Having developed experienced skill herself in this field, she took responsibility for actively assisting in accessing venues for others' publishing.

Taghreed: I now own three of the books that were formerly part of Cynthia's extensive library. I'm especially struck by her notes in the margins of these volumes she owned. These notes are so delicate, so considering of the book, even when some of them strongly debate various points or comment, "But here there's no mention of ...". She bequeathed this library so systematically, so beautifully and so much in character. I traveled to London for the "Celebrating Cynthia's" events, organized by her friends and daughters after her death. I felt utterly compelled to take this unique opportunity to both share and express her loss, at least to some extent.

Cynthia had prepared a list of friends to whom her daughters and close friends in the organizing committee wrote, inviting us both to the events and to visit her library and take whichever books each of us wished. She had organized the books by topic. All the shelves and books were numbered and she had prepared a comprehensive catalogue. You could take as many books as you wanted; You were just asked to note on the list which ones you had chosen. The three volumes I chose are actually old classics. Nothing up to date. But each of them is meaningful to me and relevant to my specific research interests. And throughout them, clearly running through Cynthia's notes on all three, is a distinct, ongoing study of patriarchy – Cynthia tracing its manifestations and fleshing out the concept.

A Gendered Social Order and its Multiple Manifestations:

Note number 6 of *Women's Organizing for Change* (page 140) offers the following, nuanced view of patriarchy as discussed and described in 2001, by Cynthia, Rada Stakic-Domuz and Meliha Hubic:

The usage of the term 'patriarchy' has been keenly debated in the context of the feminist movement since the late 1960s (Eisenstein 1979, Sargent 1981). A particularly useful formulation has been that of Pateman (1988), stressing its historical variations. Here, as elsewhere, we use it to mean a long-lived, but adaptive, form of sex/gender system (Rubin 1975) characterized by a hierarchy among men, and of men over women, that structures and is structured by other hierarchical systems, notably those of class and ethnicity

(see Cockburn 1983, 1985 and 1991). R.W. Connell has usefully introduced the term 'gender regime' to mean the power relations between men and women that characterize a given society at any one moment (Connell 1987).

Taghreed: Patriarchy crosses lines of time and place. It structures social order both in western and eastern societies, presenting numerous differing manifestations. In examining politics and gender in my fieldwork within the Palestinian society in Israel, patriarchy comes to the forefront both on the municipal and country-wide levels. It manifests in participation, as reflected in the most basic form of electoral behaviors, and in representation (Yahia-Younis, 2010, 2013, 2015). Patriarchy and "gender regime" are accordingly at work in constructing strangeness/belonging, with regard to women in particular (Yahia-Younis, 2006, 2014).

Besides the literature cited in the above quotation on patriarchy, Kandiyoti (1988) made an outstanding contribution towards uncovering/dissolving women's adherence to patriarchy. Based on her research, with my co-author Hannah Herzog, I examined primary elections within *Hamayel* (families). We developed Kandiyoti's concept and phrase "The Patriarchal Bargain" originally referring to women, and applied it to men, as well (Herzog and Yahia-Younis, 2007).

In connection with this, in the early stages of my graduate work, and the more it arose from the interviews I conducted, masculinity increasingly became an unavoidable topic. I had begun forming and examining a hypothesis that municipal politics was (and mostly still is) almost the sole site in which the state of Israel allows its male Palestinian citizens to constitute masculinity in the public sphere (Sa'ar and Yahia-Younis, 2008). I wanted to take this idea further, to do some uninterrupted research on this new topic. This research project allowed me, finally, to realize my dream of doing an extended period of scholarship qualification in England. I applied for two scholarships, both are considered prestigious, one from the British Academy. The task of filling out this application was particularly daunting, arduous and lonely. But it was the only scholarship that would allow me to take my whole family to England, although it would cover less than a full academic year.

The British host scholar was Nadia Al-Ali one of the facilitators at the Mijas workshop, where I first met her. By the time I applied for the British Academy scholarship, she was already the Director of Gender Studies at the School of African Studies (SOAS) in London. It is the networks that Cynthia gracefully bounded her friends together in academic, feminist, activist, and social bounds.

I sincerely don't believe that I would have applied for this life-changing scholarship if Cynthia hadn't "been there." I was in no way relying on her for any kind of concrete, specific support. But it made a huge difference to me just to know that I could consult her if I got stuck or confused while bearing the huge responsibility of (temporarily) relocating three daughters, two teenagers and a pre-teen. I knew that I could count on her hugely warm open-heartedness and her quick, businesslike, no-nonsense practicality. It was actually Cynthia who made herself *very* available to me and my family, to help guide us through often mundane but crucial issues such as how to identify a good school for the children and how to find a quiet safe neighborhood to live in. Together with me, she studied and evaluated school districts, simplified school registration procedures, researched neighborhoods and rent prices. She explained the English educational system and introduced me to the areas where I could ensure a safe environment for my daughters. That was my guiding principle. I didn't think twice about long commutes to and from SOAS.

There are so many things, small and large, that I remember about how she welcomed and supported us through that period.

As Christmas approached, she planned to visit us at the home we were renting. London was so elegant and grand. I cooked some traditional Palestinian dishes. Cynthia stopped her car outside the house and unloaded a Christmas tree and a pile of tree lights and decorations. My girls, who were in sixth grade, eighth grade, and a high school graduate were squealing with delight. They had been closely watching the houses around us. It was magical!

Though she knew we're Muslims, Cynthia offered this as a joyous experience. And she was hugely appreciative of how open we were to taking pleasure in symbols that weren't our own without feeling that it offended us or our religion. Months later when we finally packed up to leave, the girls insisted on taking all of the tree decorations with us. They stayed with us for many years.

Rela: As activist Marie Mulholland told Cynthia in the mid-nineties "All of us are misfits in our own communities ... there *is* a non-conforming streak in all of us." (1998: p. 80). Studying feminist activist narratives, as Cynthia did over decades, can grant academic feminists a license to heresy, to quoting and indeed voicing the unacceptable. This is a form of wealth that feminist activists sometimes offer feminist researchers.

From the often less privileged position of unpaid, unpopular oppositional work, activists can bring a wealth of relative poverty to research. Many have waived the kind of job security accessible to academics (though far more in past than today). While some activists, myself included, draw on

various forms of social and economic capital in order to sustain this move, it nevertheless burdens work and life severely. It does, however, mean less to lose by misbehaving.

That space for misbehavior can provide academic feminists with venues and terms for alternative, unconventional writing and speaking. Cynthia gave a beautiful description of how this works in her keynote talk at the Gender and Peace Conference in Istanbul, May 2017. Taking an unconventional stand, she said: “We can, I believe, say the gender order as we live it has been one of the *causes* of the prevalence of violence in society throughout history.” This theory is not yet widely recognized, she explained, because “the post-structuralist and post-modernist turn in the 1990s seemed for a while to make it impossible to use the concept of patriarchy. Patriarchy became an outdated structuralist notion. However,” she went on, “I was hearing feminist anti-violence and anti-war activists boldly continuing to use the word ... when many academic feminist theorists were avoiding it. It’s *they* who gave me the courage to persist in using it.”

To me, there was something of the exquisite, unflinching misfit about Cynthia herself. I caught glimpses of it in her persistently independent scholarship, in her insistence on studying *and* supporting marginal, seemingly impractical, *feminist* groups, long before that became a standard practice of gender studies students. I witnessed it, as well, in her rare, honest, self-searching reflexive analyses and in her own poetic channels of activism, interconnected with her thinking and writing. Perhaps above all, I discerned it in her stubborn prioritization of strategies for resisting global violence and war. Through my limited, intermittent but meaningful experiences of all of those, Cynthia gave *me* courage.

Taghreed: I can’t express how much the memorial, celebrating events I attended in London meant to me. We were 163 participants with a vast majority of women. We gathered at the Friends House in London, the regular meeting place of Women in Black London, one of Cynthia’s main channels of activism. I spoke at length with close friends of hers who had accompanied her throughout her last months and years. Her life and work were truly celebrated. Speakers read from her writings, talked about her legacy, her personality, her life, and activism.

Her writing is so intentionally accessible! When I taught courses on politics, including academic units on the informal politics, I assigned students the Israel/Palestine chapter of *The Space Between Us*. It was distinctly readable and clear, avoiding inaccessible, dense formulations. I also found it an advantage that it was written by someone who was neither Palestinian nor Jewish.

In the recent years I tried not to miss an opportunity seeing her. Last summer I spent at Cambridge University as a visiting scholar. Two summers before, in 2017, I had attended a conference in Oxford and then spent a few days in London, along with my second daughter who remembers and loves Cynthia. Both of us hoped to meet her but she was too unwell at the time (we corresponded regularly on email and later she wrote me that she had recuperated). I missed her sorely. So last summer I was determined to make that happen. We were in contact and she was joyous that I had secured this visiting scholar position. She too said that this summer we would definitely see each other. But my attempts to arrange dates and times failed. She was very ill again and very weak. Finally, I decided I couldn't let myself leave without seeing her. I thought I would surprise her and arrive unannounced for a very brief visit. On September 9, 2019, I took a train to London and stopped to buy her a bouquet. My knock at her door in Kentish Town was answered by a student, who told me that Cynthia had just left. I left the flowers and wrote her a note. She died three days later, on September 12th in Switzerland.

I had missed her again. But I am also glad to be able to remember her as healthy, strong, assertive woman, inspiring and empowering those around her.

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