


Borders Unbound: Cultural and Political Borders in Lawrence Osborne's *Beautiful Animals**

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Abstract

Lawrence Osborne's *Beautiful Animals*, published in 2017, is the story of two young women holidaying on a Greek Island. The American citizen Samantha and the British citizen Naomi befriend each other during their summer break when they find Faoud, a Syrian refugee washed on the shores of the island. Faoud turns into their summer project. They find him an abandoned home in a village and cherish him with food and drink every day. However, the project fails and they find themselves in a psychologically traumatic adventure that forces them to question the cultural, political and even psychological borders of what they dare to do. This paper focuses on the anxiety of the young women over Faoud's existence that prompts crucial cultural and political questions. In analysing the novel from the perspective of Sartre's existentialism, the paper also questions the cultural, political and geographical borders as well as the behavioural and psychological limits of what one can do for self-protection.

Keywords: Migration, Asylum, Culture, Politics, Existentialism, Refugee crisis.

Sınırlar Açık: Lawrence Osborne'un Güzel Hayvanlar Romanında Kültürel ve Politik Sınırlar

Öz

Lawrence Osborne'un 2017 yılında yayımlanan *Güzel Hayvanlar* romanı bir Yunan adasında tatil yapan iki genç kadının öyküsünü anlatır. Amerikan vatandaşı Samantha ile Britanya vatandaşı Naomi tatilde arkadaş olurlar ve adada karaya vurmuş halde Faoud adlı Suriyeli bir göçmen bulurlar. Faoud her ikisinin de yaz macerasına dönüşür. Ona adadaki köylerden birinde terkedilmiş bir ev bulurlar ve her gün ona yiyecek ve içecek taşırlar. Ancak, bu macera kötü biter ve genç kadınları yapabileceklerinin kültürel, politik ve psikolojik sınırlarını sorgulamaya iten bir travma içinde bırakır. Bu çalışma genç kadınların Faoud'un varlığı nedeniyle duydukları kaygıya, kültürel ve siyasi sorgulamalarına odaklanmaktadır. Romanı Sartre'in varoluşçuluğu açısından okuyarak, bu çalışma aynı

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zamanda bireylerin kendilerini korumak için yapabileceklerinin davranışsal ve psikolojik sınırlarını coğrafi ve siyasi açıdan analiz etmeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Göç, İltica, Kültür, Politika, Varoluşçuluk, Göçmen krizi.

INTRODUCTION

Lawrence Osborne's psychological thriller *Beautiful Animals*, published in 2017, recounts the story of two young women holidaying with their families on the Greek Island Hydra. The novel traces the summer adventures of these young women focusing on the issues of individual wellbeing, self-protection, social awareness to help people in need and global refugee crisis. Osborne's psychological and philosophical approaches to these issues raise questions whether it is the individual existence or morale that determines our decisions in times of crisis.

One of the young women is the American citizen Samantha, more vulnerable with a sense of morality and the other is the British citizen Naomi, more rational rather than moral. They befriend each other during their summer break when they find Faoud, a Syrian refugee washed on the shores of the island. Faoud, who turns into their summer project, becomes the key person in the novel around whom they alternate between their own moral values and existential resolutions to protect themselves from the legal obligations. They find him an abandoned home in a village and cherish him with food and drink every day. However, their project to help an illegal immigrant fails and they find themselves in a psychologically traumatic adventure that forces them to question the cultural, political and even psychological borders of what they dare to do.

The purpose of this study is to focus on the anxiety of the young women over Faoud's existence that prompts crucial cultural and political questions. In an analysis from the perspective of Sartrean existentialism, there are inevitable questions regarding the cultural and political borders as well as the behavioural and psychological limits of what one can do for self-protection. The objective here is, then, not only to question the social, political and cultural borders, but ethical and moral borders that one can cross for survival and existence.

1. REFUGEE CRISIS

The Syrian refugee crisis that started after the violent clashes prompted by the Syrian government's crackdown on anti-government demonstrations as part of the Arab Spring movement in March 2011 has been escalated by the armed conflicts of so many ethnic, political and religious organisations. The conflicts forced millions of Syrian families to move out of their homes and leave the country¹. During this refugee crisis regarded as one of the worst humanitarian disasters since the WWII², many of the refugees have attempted and still attempt to flee to Europe by means of sea on lifeboats loaded with people over the capacity, which, during 2010s, created scenes of drowning families and dead children on the shores of Mediterranean islands and towns.

As François Heisbourg notes, people fleeing to Europe passed "mostly through the western half of the Mediterranean" to the Greek and Italian islands from Turkey across the Aegean Sea (2015: 7). Heisbourg points out that the refugee crisis revealed new fault lines in

¹According to the reports of Mercy Corps, "More than 6.2 million people have fled their homes and remain displaced within Syria", and majority of the refugees headed to the Turkish border in the North. See: "The facts: what you need to know about the Syria crisis" on <https://www.mercycorps.org/blog/quick-facts-syria-crisis#start-syria-crisis>, retrieved on 02.05.2020.

²Mercy Corps report that "Over half of the country's pre-war population — more than 12 million people — have been killed or forced to flee their homes" on <https://www.mercycorps.org/blog/quick-facts-syria-crisis#start-syria-crisis>, retrieved on 02.05.2020.

Europe not only in the form of xenophobia but also in the form of Islamophobia in “anti-Islamic demonstrators” in Germany or “neo-Nazis” of Greece (2015: 10). In his kind of atmosphere, many refugees seeking refuge in Turkey that, in Benedetta Berti’s research, accommodated more than 20 per cent of the whole refugee population (2015: 41), also looked for opportunities to seek asylum in Europe by travelling through illegal means over Greece. Berti points at two major issues at the “forefront of the European security agenda for the Mediterranean”: the rise of “uncontrolled” migrants and “radicalisation” (2015: 51).

This kind of radicalisation has been provoked by terrorist attacks in France, Belgium and Germany “apparently inspired by the so-called ‘Islamic State’” that gave way to an “alarming growth in xenophobia and Islamophobia throughout Europe” (Zunes 2017: 1). In Lawrence Osborne’s *Beautiful Animals*, Faoud, washed ashore on Hydra, is a Syrian refugee fleeing from Turkey in order to find asylum in Europe. His disastrous situation when Naomi and Samantha find him bears all signs of his illegal sea journey on a lifeboat which left him with no food, no water and almost no clothes. Being the daughters of families who are alarmed with xenophobic and Islamophobic reactions against the overwhelming impact of the refugee crisis in Europe, Naomi and Samantha not only attempt to have a thrilling summer adventure, but also attempt to detach themselves from the eurocentrism of their parents by helping Faoud.

2. ANXIETY

As Katie Kitamura asserts, “*Beautiful Animals* is unlikely to radically alter [our] understanding of the refugee crisis” but it might make us “question the nature of [our] engagement with that issue and the world beyond” (Kitamura 2017: 2). Lawrence Osborne, in Lionel Shriver’s words, deals with the “catastrophic clash of civilizations” and “people rooted profoundly in one place ... well-educated elites who derive their only real sense of location from one another’s company” (Shriver 2017: 1).

Shriver’s reference to Samuel Huntington’s “clash of civilisations” invites a consideration of the novel from the perspective of Edward Said’s *Orientalism*. If orientalism is, as Said argues, a discourse of a “systematic discipline” by which “European culture was able to manage” the cultures and peoples of the Orient “politically, scientifically, and imaginatively” during the post-Enlightenment (2003: 3), it still is in Lawrence Osborne’s narrative. The characters’ reaction to Faoud in the novel fits into Said’s assumption that “Orientalism unilaterally determines what can be said about the Orient” and shows that “European culture gained in strength and identity” against the Orient (2003: 3). The girls, on the other hand, reject the superior collective consciousness of the West that Said calls as Orientalism and decide to help Faoud. By so doing, they, in the hindsight, have an unconscious objective to eliminate the boundaries between cultural and political differences as an act of ideological rejection of the orientalist perceptions. On the other hand, the boundaries and borders that they wish to discard are not only the political, cultural and geographical borders but also the borders of what they can do by rejecting the moral limitations of the society in which they have been raised. In addition, while the act of helping a total stranger – who is clearly an illegal immigrant – from a totally alien culture in the midst of a global refugee crisis is already a thrilling adventure for them, it also proves to be a decision to take a revenge on the white, elitist supremacy of their parents. At the end, they end up crossing the moral boundaries, too, by convincing Faoud to a murderous act.

Osborne's "concise style", as Luke Waller argues, "has been compared to that of Graham Greene, although ... Osborne is more existential than being moral" (Waller 2017: 1). With strong emphasis on rationalism and individual welfare, the novel turns out to be, as Molly McCloskey suggests, "a cold-eyed look at bourgeois ennui and the parasitic nature of privilege" (McCloskey 2017: 2). In the bourgeois ontology, even parasitic being becomes a privilege. For instance, when Naomi and Sam strengthen their friendship, Naomi's father invites Sam's family for a ride on his yacht around the island. Although Sam's father, who shows an inward reservation and dislike towards Naomi's father, does not accept the invitation, he assumes that his wife and his daughter Sam would love it. Thus, during the ride around the island that Sam and her mother attend, Naomi invites Sam for a swim to the shore in one of their stops at a small bay. In a few minutes, they swim to the shore where they can still hear the music from the yacht:

What beautiful animals we are, Sam thought, beautiful as panthers. When they reached the white rocks along the water she saw two red spots as she stepped past them. Blood, she thought at once. She stopped and kneeled to look closer and there was a sudden bafflement in her face. She had been right. They were two dried spots of blood, like small things that have been casually mislaid. She felt a quick thrill whose root was hidden to her. (46)

Thus, the delicacy of their holiday in a peaceful summer resort is intervened by "two dried spots of blood" which attracts them to further exploration of the land. Although Sam considers themselves as "beautiful animals" like panthers that aesthetically sprint on the wilderness of an island, the bloodstains, which, on the wilderness, might be an intrinsic part of the natural life that Sam wishes to feel, turn out to be a source of their thrill. Yet, while their attempt to climb on the untouched parts of the nature as a move away from their metropolitan background seems to be a temporary adventure for the summer, they continue to discover the source of the bloodstains. When they find Faoud, who struggle to survive literally, they choose to remain silent in an unspoken pact between them instead of informing the authorities of a wounded, half-naked man on the rocks of an island in the open sea. They take an immediate decision to keep the matter secret and help the total stranger who strives to exist.

3. EXISTENCE

Theoretically, as Ronald Aranson argues, Sartre describes the choice of being as remaining "unveiled" and throughout a text's "ontological analysis of truth" and Sartre finds conflicts in the nature of this ontology (Aranson 1989: xvi). So Sam appears to be searching for her true being since she "falls quickly under the spell of the slightly older Naomi, who is dominant, naughty, cynical" (McCloskey 2017: 1). As they walk into the bushes among the rocks, they see a half-naked man sleeping in a pile of rags. However, at first they see nothing threatening about the man who was "abject and abandoned" and the "two drops of blood were his":

A cut hand, a cut foot: his misery has expressed itself. Slowly they dropped closer. The man turned equally slowly onto his back and his mouth fell open. His naked torso was covered with long weals and scratches and the ledge from where they had started out, one step at a time, not a pebble displaced. (48)

Katie Kitamura suggests that Osborne is an "observer of privilege" and notes "the rites and rituals of the upper class" who find charity "intermittently selfless" (Kitamura 2017: 1). Thus their venture evolves into a highbrow, cynical helping hand. The day after

they see the sleeping man, Naomi and Sam return to the same spot and see that it “was a scene of quiet ruin at the centre of which sat a man who was unruined” (56) as he had groomed his long hair and beard with his fingers. McCloskey observes that Naomi cannot believe that “the savage ... speaks excellent English and also French, and is more bourgeois than herself” (McCloskey 2017: 2). After giving him the food they brought in shopping bags, he claps his hands in happiness rather than an inferior indebtedness and says “*Merci*” in French:

“Where did you come from?”

He pointed to the sea but without any convincing vehemence.

“You swam from a boat?”

“That’s right.”

“Where is it now?”

He shaded his eyes to see her better.

“Gone – it’s just me.”

“And the others?” Sam said.

He waved a hand – no others. (57)

The fact that Faoud’s fluency in French and English is audible in the way he thanks Naomi deconstructs the Orientalist assumptions and cultural constructs about the Orient as underdeveloped, weird, incomprehensible and dangerous.

Naomi’s father, Jimmie Codrington, is a British airline owner and an art dealer and he keeps a bust of Hitler in his front room (McCloskey 2017: 1). The fact that the book is set during the refugee crisis as a “humanitarian disaster that lurks beneath the surface of the island’s genteel social life” (Kitamura 2017: 1) symbolically juxtaposes Mr. Codrington’s bust of the notorious dictator. Using such contrasts Osborne pushes the limits of mutual sacrifice between people and, as McCloskey suggests, captures a “sexed-up intensity and self-satisfaction with which young female friendship are sometimes diffused” (McCloskey 2017: 2). With this kind of sexual intensity and a sense of protection that eclipses her revolt against her father, Naomi shows a kind of motherly affection: “Eat the cheese ... Get the protein. I’ll bring something better tonight” (59). Not only does she cross the political limits to uprise against her family, but also crosses the emotional limits.

They keep carrying him food and drink and they do it willingly by using their privileged bourgeois ontology with a high sense of superiority over Faoud who becomes the medium for them to prove their antiracist stance as a reaction to the upper class conservative sensitivity of their parents who are obsessed with their security. However, Naomi thinks that it is not good for Faoud to stay on the rocky beach. She tells him that he cannot continue to stay there and it is better for him to move to one of the abandoned houses in Episkopi, a village on the outskirts of the island: “‘You have to move today,’ she went on. ‘Tonight. I’ll come back tonight and take you there’” (60). Yet, Sam turns out to be more cautious and appears to be more reluctant to hide her prejudiced white Christian superiority. The fact that Faoud may not be a Christian is at the centre of her anxiety:

"Do you think he's a Christian or a Muslim?"

...

"What?"

"I said do you think he's a Christian?"

"I don't really care if he is or he isn't. Should I have asked him? I'm not doing it for religious reasons."

"What if he's a Muslim?"

"I'd be even kinder." (62)

Sam is cautious, but the above quotation implicitly hints that she could have been relieved if Faoud had turned out to be a Christian. Yet, Naomi's determination stands out as the juxtaposition of Sam's cautiousness: Naomi would be much kinder if he were a Muslim. Naomi's attitude is not only the deconstruction of the Orientalist perspective, but a reaction to it. While her reaction is actually directed against her father's fascistic views about the non-Europeans, she also presents a challenge against the clash of civilisations; religious, racial and cultural prejudices and offers more humanistic attitudes than the dominant mind-set of the society that shape her position in the world as a white, privileged person.

When Naomi starts looking for a place for Faoud, she gets acquainted with an unfamiliar part of the island which she has always thought she knows very well. She realizes that there are "shepherds" she is not acquainted with "in their sixties in coarse patched shirts and braces" (63). She speaks to them about her plan and offers "a ridiculous price that they would never refuse" (63). One of the shepherds agrees to give her a hut he uses for the animals. After Faoud moves in, they keep carrying him food and drink. However, after a while, when Naomi goes to Episkopi, the shepherd stands on her way:

"That friend of yours," he said, looking her in the eye ... "he's quite a character, isn't he? You didn't mention anything about single men sleeping up here alone."

...

"It's a favour I'm doing him. Did he do anything wrong?"

The man shook his head slowly. "Not that I know of. But I'm sure it isn't legal him being up here. I'd say the rent I charged you is a steal." (76)

The villager's stance here not only functions as a sign of his moral detachment, by claiming for legality, from what Naomi and Samantha wish to do ethically in order to help a human being in despair, but also indicates his European notion of establishing an "us" and "them" dichotomy between himself and non-Europeans. He is in a moral proximity to "the hegemony of European ideas about the Orient" that initiates "the idea of European identity as a superior one in comparison with all the non-European peoples and cultures" in Said's perspective (2003: 7). Upon his reaction, Naomi finds herself dealing with the rural understanding and desires of a shepherd trying to take advantage of her class. His insistence on increasing the rent does not only stem from the fact that he wants to benefit from her financial means but also stems from the prejudiced approach to the refugee crisis in the collective unconscious. Shriver points out that "the morally thorny European migration crisis is difficult to write about" as a "steady flow of people ... into Southern Europe from Africa and the Middle East seems more like a new normal" (Shriver 2017: 2) and this new normal is disturbing for the shepherd:

"All right," she muttered. "How much should it be then?"

"He's an Arab."

...

"It doesn't matter what he is."

"Got nothing against them, myself. But it's illegal. If he's an Arab, it's different."

...

"A hundred euros?" she tried. (77)

After convincing the shepherd, Naomi tries to groom Faoud by giving him razors to shave and new t-shirts: "He put on one of the T-shirts and suddenly he looked clean-cut, austere and curiously middle class. What he really needed was a shower, but it would have to wait" (79). In Kitamura's views, "Osborne plays with this objectification of Faoud" and portrays him "from the point of view of women", but "the novel fills in the outline drawn by the women, moving into the point of view of Faoud, a character for whom the stakes are the precise opposite of the theoretical" (Kitamura 2017: 2). Naomi's surprise to see Faoud as "curiously middle class" makes her realize that Faoud has a bourgeois background: "I've been around" he says, "I went to Paris and London when I was small. My father took me. ... He bought me a tie at Old England. Do you know that store?" (79). Faoud's petti-bourgeois past and his western tastes forefront his identity that puts him outside the Orientalist categorisations in Naomi's cultural background.

As Shriver asserts, from this part on in the novel, "the iffy scheme seems unrelated to Naomi's newfound social conscience, and instead bound up with ambivalent relationships to her father and stepmother" (Shriver 2017: 1). Her choice to help Faoud is not solely a political stance but a reaction against her father's elitism and her stepmother. The problem for Osborne's characters, in Kitamura's views, "is their lack of fixed principle" and they "are people emblematic of our time", "make bad decisions, live through terrible things and yet remain unchanged because on some level they lack the imagination and the discipline to change" (Kitamura 2017: 3).

Jonathan Webber asks why some people "act compassionately in certain situations" when others do not and why "some people lie or cheat while others are honest" (Webber 2009: 16). Webber argues that one way to answer these questions "is to explain the aetiology of character traits, to point to the origins of character in nature or some combination of the two" and another way to answer is "to point to current facts about some people that make them behave compassionately or honestly in those situations" (Webber 2009: 16). In the aetiology of her situation, Naomi takes an existential decision instead of an ethical one and crosses another moral border. She suggests that Faoud rob her parents' house:

It would be the sweetness of a necessary treason. ... there was nothing to it. He could rob the house while they were asleep.

"Would you do it?" she went on. "Would you do it if you knew no harm would come to them and everything you took was insured?" (98)

Her decision points to her character that Webber describes and stands out to indicate how much she can cross the political borders by not only helping a refugee illegally but by aiding him to commit a robbery in her parents' house. This has multiple dimensions: her revenge against her father for marrying another woman after her mother's death; her political revenge against her father's fascistic elitism and her protest against the morality of

her class. In a sense, she wants Faoud to act out her “unconscious desire to punish her father” (Waller 2017: 2). She plans the robbery as imperfectly as could happen. She tells the maid to leave the door open when her parents are asleep and she will stay over in Sam’s house. When Faoud enters he will take whatever he wants. Thus, the novel “takes on the tone of an existential noir” as Kitamura asserts (Kitamura 2017: 2). Faoud, being confident, “wary and single-minded” (Shriver 2017: 2) will do what he must to survive. So he agrees to it:

On the ground floor of the villa there was only one light on. ... There was a large bag opened for him to fill. ... She had already piled certain things in the bag, he saw. ... Money, documents and a ring of keys for the house in Italy which Naomi had invited him to use. ... Jimmie Codrington’s passport, which she laid inside the bag, and a small slip of paper upon which were written the PIN numbers for Jimmie’s credit card. (119)

However, when Naomi is in Sam’s house, she gets a phone call from the maid and she immediately understands that the plan has gone wrong. She creates an excuse to leave from Sam’s house and go to her parents’ by saying that “the maid has a problem with the house and I have to go up there right away. You know how these things are” (125). Sam also joins her in order not to leave her alone. When they arrive in the house, they face the catastrophic result that the events have reached. Faoud has killed Naomi’s parents:

The bodies lay where they had fallen during the night, composed and peaceful, and the flies swarmed around them and the furniture which perhaps would never be used again. The most curious thing, however, was that Carissa was not hysterical; she merely appeared surprised to see the American girl as if that was the more significant calamity. (126)

Truth, says Sartre, is “a certain dimension that comes to Being through consciousness” (4). When Naomi considers the scene in her conscious mind, she is faced with the terrible certainty of the irreversible fact: her parents are killed by Faoud either by accidentally or willingly. Yet, “consciousness is not knowledge but existence” (Sartre 1989: 4). Through this existential reality, Naomi finds herself on a new dimension of her life. She would either give in or keep her head above the water and survive. On the other and, from Faoud’s perspective, things are in an even more nihilistic state. In addition to that, both Naomi’s and Faoud’s attitude towards the situation they are in recalls Sartre’s “bad faith” that leads the individual “to hide from or avoid the truth, or refusing to take responsibility for it” (Aranson 1989: xxv). His calmness to adopt himself to the Sartrean existentialism of the situation makes him cross the religious borders:

So the crisis had come. But it had left him cold and lethargically calm. The terror will come later, he thought. He recalled a few words from the sura of Al-Isra, though he couldn’t say why they mattered to him or why he remembered them now. They were about the journey the Prophet had taken from the Kaba ... (128).

Carissa the maid, on the other hand, stands out as the most cold-blooded one among them although she was the only one who was present when Faoud came to the house. Her calmness is strangely more shocking to Naomi than what Faoud did. She says the “Arab was very calm when he came” (138). As the three women confer as to what they should do, Carissa objects to the most legitimate solution as calling the police:

"No," Carissa said in Greek to Naomi. "We can't do that. The police will think that we were accomplices. They'll assume it immediately and they'll find out that I opened the door for him and that you asked me to do it. I'll tell them if they ask me." (140)

The crucial question of the moral limits they can cross hangs in the air. The dilemma of doing the legitimate and moral one for the price of sacrificing themselves or to ignore the moral and ethical values to protect each other is a difficult one. Justification again comes from Carissa, once Naomi's aide de camp, who does not wish to miss the opportunity to take Naomi's fate into her hands by turning her into an aide now:

The garden was tiny but it was enough. ... How many times had the master talked idly about being buried in his own garden? There was nothing wrong with it. In any case they couldn't go back to their prior lives, they had to deal with what the present moment had inflicted upon them. Bury them, she said. (141)

When Sam who, in McCloskey's view, "is even more dismissive of her own father's social justice indignation" (McCloskey 2017: 2) protests that they cannot do that and they must call the police, Carissa threatens she will not cover for her and tell the police that Sam is also involved. On the other hand, Naomi, who accuses Faoud of leaving them in such a disaster, blames him for being foolish, losing control and panicking. Yet, Carissa again shows her rationalism: "Maybe not ... He didn't leave the money behind did he? He made a choice. You should have realised he would" (141).

However, his choices cause him to be followed by the police who can track him as he spends money on Jimmie's credit card. Finally, they find him in Italy, chase him and finally surround the Jimmie Codrington's car he drives in a rural area just outside an Italian village. He would either kill or be killed. Shriver argues that Faoud "has his Darwinian wits" that the Westerners no longer have (Shriver 2017: 29), because when pursued by the European officers, he does not assume that they would dare to kill him. His judgements about his situation are existentialist: "Death was far from him being the worst thing that could afflict you" (253), but he arrives at a resolution that being a slave was bitter than death:

He wondered how long it would take for them to kill him, those soft officers of European law who had probably never fired a weapon in their lives. ... They, after all, cared about their lives: it was a tremendous, perhaps fatal disadvantage. (253).

CONCLUSION

Practically, according to Ronald Aranson, "it is absurd to wish to ignore the truth: our projects, whatever they may be, organize themselves around a specific unveiling of being" (Aranson 1989: xvii). In Faoud's case, his being is unveiled by the circumstances he is surrounded by and he can no longer ignore it. "We are condemned to the kind of existence we have because we did not choose it and we cannot escape it except by ceasing to exist" as argued by Webber (2009: 59). Naturally, Faoud fires his arms and kills one of the policemen. In the chapter that follows it, the writer gives the reader the description of the funeral of the killed policeman. However, there is no clear hint about Faoud being killed, which leaves unanswered questions as to whether this is a suggestion that he will re-enter into Naomi's life or this is the writer's symbolical suggestion that the refuge crisis will continue. In the finale, Naomi inherits the assets and Sam continues her university education in the US. Their friendship continues while Sam carries on dating her boyfriend she met on the Isle of Hydra, marking the fact that the island and its memories will always be with them.

Although the cultural borders are still there, the issues of existence in the novel eliminate the borders of what one can do to save themselves. The unbound borders are not the political and cultural borders that Osborne significantly foreground in the novel. These borders built particularly by cultural prejudices create a murderer out of a refugee who tries to stay alive and find a passage to a life in welfare. Naomi's project does not seem to turn him into a murderer in the first place but to help out of his hopeless situation by providing him with her parents' wealth, which turns out not only a way of saving Faoud but a way of taking her revenge for her parents' egotism in their sterile lives.

In a brief conclusion, Osborne's narrative ends with the choices of faking new lives, existential decisions, rejections of morale and ethics and many questions about the refugee crisis. The novel's psychological aura intensifies the class distinctions that turn out to be overwhelmingly political in the parts where Naomi decides to lead Faoud into robbery that implicitly suggests a revenge against the western superiority as well as her father's elitist grandiose. On the other hand, Osborne also raises existentialist and nihilistic questions over the issues of self-protection and self-safety seeking for answers as to how far one can cross the ethical borders.

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