

ON ARCHIPELAGOS & VOLUNTARY EXILE

by Pelin Tan

I accepted the conditions. No one could or did force me. I told them I would go there alone. I saw the ocean in between as I slowly approached the island. I accepted the conditions, the torture. I said I wouldn't leave. I will witness the decay and putrefaction of my mind as a part of this voluntary exile on this island. I accepted the conditions. I said I wouldn't leave.

Axiom 1: There is always another island behind the island that you think is at the end of the earth.

The other island is never connected to this island. Thus the horizon is not endless. Looking at and knowing the other island puzzles me. The other island creates curiosity, disturbs my Solitude. I wish it was a mainland. Thinking and convincing myself that I am on the very last island at the end of the earth clarifies my imaginative borders. Being in voluntary exile is a continuous self-discipline and a silent battle with the territory. On my first day on Ikaria, I chose the little hut on the top of a rocky hill that looked like a natural terrace with small, carved caves. Rumors say that once upon a time the caves were for the hidden escapes of refugees. The terrace overlooks the ocean, but directly below it are salt craters.

Axiom 2: Salt and rocks are anachronistic terrestrial forms of decay on islands.

I walked slowly to the craters when I first saw them. The white-grey crystal particles are opacities that are supposed to represent movement through cosmic time. The sea was blue-green. Big ships passed like dark shadows, unknown entities, ambiguous objects seen from afar. Sometimes the vertical dimension of the island was nearly identical to the size of the ships—two objects coming together for a few minutes, and then passing each other. I turned my face away, in order to not see it. I went back to my hut. I touched the sage bushes on my way and jumped up to the terrace. Whispering, I said, "I won't leave."

The rocks were reddish-blue in color, and also a little green in places. The wind and the souls were transforming their shape. This decaying form appeared as an infinite border. I pretended I was Andronikos.* I tried to mimic his movement and his thinking while walking among the rocks.

Axiom 3: Although the islands of an archipelago are identical, they are not the same in quality.

Every day I felt an inevitable desire to discover the other island I saw every morning from my rocky terrace. I heard

Pelin Tan

Letters against Separation – Pelin Tan on an Island



Image: Hera Büyüktaşçıyan, From the Island of the Day Before (drawing detail). 14th Istanbul Biennale, 2015. Photo credit: CHROMA.

a rumor that it was called Fourni Island, and animals that used to be human live there. It seemed much smaller than my island. Later I learned that there were many islands, and my island was part of an archipelago. I felt sad. I thought the island where I chose to live in exile was the very last island on earth. Rules around security and surveillance are a feature of archipelagos. A lone island is part of an endless free-thinking and lost imagination. However, an archipelago signifies relations of un-relation between each island. Humans often think each island in an archipelago resembles the others. It is not true. Although each island forms part of a terrestrial totality, they are not all the same. An archipelago creates conditions that function to justify exceptions. Once I think with a free mind among the islands of the archipelago, I immediately realize that the archipelago may hide pockets and territories of violence. I said to them, "I won't leave."

Axiom 4: An archipelago has the ability to sustain the addiction that humans had for islands before they became animals.

I keep watching the horizon. A few humans I saw a few days ago might have already left. I feel the changes taking place in my body. I know I will end up on Fourni. A certain and profound detachment from the mainland and my living environment shouldn't frighten me. As long as I maintain my exile and discipline myself, I will not forget the truth. To refresh my memory, I put a tattoo on my right arm, which I seldom use. I won't satisfy the condition of exception. They are deceiving themselves. Voluntary exile on this island leads to self-discipline. I refresh my memory and my movements. The other day, I realized that I forgot to speak. It did not annoy me.

I repeated: "I won't leave."

*The main character in the novel *Ada* (Island) by Turkish author Bilge Karasu.

This text was commissioned by the artist Hera Büyüktaşçıyan for the installation From the Island of the Day Before, 14th Istanbul Biennale, 2015. Below are translations of the text into Greek, Kurdish, and Armenian.

GREEK

μ μ

π

Αποδέχτηκα τις συνθήκες. Κανένας δε με πίεσε ούτε μπορεί. Τους είπα θα πάω μόνη μου. Είδα το πέλαγο ανάμεσα όταν σιγά σιγά πλησίαζα το νησί. Αποδέχτηκα τις καταστάσεις, τα βάσανα. Είπα, δε θα φύγω. Θα παραστώ μάρτυρας της παρακμής και της σήψης του μυαλού μου ως μέρος αυτής της εθελουσίας εξορίας σ' αυτό το νησί. Αποδέχτηκα τις καταστάσεις, είπα δε θα φύγω.

μ 1: π π π π
π μ π .

Το άλλο νησί δεν συνδέεται ποτέ με το παρόν νησί. Έτσι ο ορίζοντας δεν είναι ποτέ ατελείωτος. Βλέποντας και γνωρίζοντας το άλλο νησί πάντα με μπερδεύει. Το άλλο νησί δημιουργεί περιέργεια, ενοχλεί τη Μοναξία μου. Εύχομαι να είναι μια στεριά. Η σκέψη και η πεποίθηση ότι είμαι στο πιο τελευταίο νησί στην άκρη της γης, καθαρίζουν τη φαντασία μου για τα σύνορα. Το να είσαι στην εθελούσια εξορία είναι μια συνεχής αυτοπειθαρχία και μια σιωπηρή μάχη με την επικράτεια. Απ την πρώτη μέρα στην Ικαρία, διάλεξα τη μικρή καλύβα στην κορφή του βραχώδους λόφου που έμοιαζε σαν φυσική βεράντα με σκαλιστές μικρές σπηλιές. Οι φήμες λένε, ότι παλιά οι σπηλιές ήσαν για κρυμμένους φυγάδες και πρόσφυγες. Η βεράντα βλέπει το πέλαγο, αλλά πρώτα, μπροστα, τον κρατήρα με το αλάτι.

μ 2:
μ

Προχώρησα αργά προς τους κρατήρες όταν τους είδα πρώτη φορά. Τα κρύσταλλα ασπρο-γκρί μόρια είναι διαφάνειες που υποτίθεται αντιπροσωπεύουν μια κίνηση μέσα στον κοσμικό χρόνο. Η θάλασσα ήταν πράσινη-μπλε. Μερικά καράβια περνούσαν σαν σκοτεινές σκιές, άγνωστες οντότητες, αμφίβολα αντικείμενα από μακριά. Κάποιες φορές η κάθετη διάσταση του νησιού ήταν πανομοιότυπη με το μέγεθος του καραβιού. Αυτά τα αντικείμενα έρχονταν μαζί, περνώντας για μερικά λεπτά. Γυρνούσα το πρόσωπο μου, ώστε να μην το βλέπω. Πηγα πίσω στην καλύβα μου. Χάιδεπα τα φασκόμηλα στη διαδρομή και

πήδηξα στη βεράντα. Ξιθύρισα... είπα δε θα φύγω. Τα βράχια ήσαν κοκκινο-μπλέ με ελαφρύ πράσινο μεσα. Ο άνεμος και οι ψυχές μετέτρεπαν το σχήμα τους. Αυτή η διαβρωμένη μορφή εμφανιζόταν ως ατέρμονα περιθώρια. Προσποιήθηκα ότι είμαι ο Ανδρόνικος, προσπαθούσα να μιμηθώ την κίνηση του πως με σκέψη περπατούσε μέσα στα βράχια.

μ 3: π π π
π μ π π

π.

Κάθε μέρα ένιωθα την αναπόφευκτη επιθυμία να ανακαλύψω το νησί που έβλεπα κάθε πρωί από τη βράχινη βεράντα μου. Άκουσα μια φήμη, ότι λέγεται Φούρνοι και ότι ζώα ζουν εκεί που ήσαν άνθρωποι πριν. Έμοιαζε πολύ μικρότερο απ το δικό μου νησί. Έμαθα αργότερα ότι υπήρχαν πολλά νησιά και το νησί μου ήταν μέρος αυτού του αρχιπελάγους. Λυπήθηκα. Νόμιζα ότι το νησί που διάλεξα να 'μαι στην εξορία είναι το τελευταίο νησί στη γή. Οι κανόνες της ασφάλειας και της επιτήρησης είναι στοιχεία του αρχιπελάγους. Ένα νησί είναι μέρος μιας ατέλειωτης ελεύθερης σκέψης και μιας χαμένης φαντασίας. Παρόλαυτά, ένα αρχιπέλαγος σηματοδοτεί τις σχέσεις των α-σχέσεων μεταξύ των νησιών. Οι άνθρωποι συχνά πιστεύουν κάθε νησί στο αρχιπέλαγος μοιάζει με το άλλο. Δεν είναι αλήθεια. Παρόλο που συμμετέχουν σε μια συνολική γήινη μορφή, δεν είναι από την ίδια ποιότητα. Το αρχιπέλαγος ορίζει μια συνθήκη που λειτουργεί σαν νομιμοποίηση της εξαίρεσης. Όταν σκεφτώ μέσα σε ελεύθερο μυαλό αναμεταξύ των νησιών του αρχιπελάγους, άμεσα συνειδητοποιώ ότι το αρχιπέλαγος μπορεί να χαρακτηρίζει επικράτειες θύλακες βίας. Τους είπα, δεν θα φύγω.

μ 4: π
π π
π π π π .

Συνεχίζω να βλέπω τον ορίζοντα. Κάποιοι άνθρωποι που είδα μερικές μέρες πριν από μακριά ίσως ήδη φύγαν. Αισθάνομαι τις αλλαγές στο σώμα μου. Ξέρω, θα καταλήξω στους Φούρνους. Μια συγκεκριμένη και βαθιά αποκοπή από την κυρίως χώρα και το ζωτικό μου περιβάλλον δεν πρέπει να με φοβίζει. Όσο κρατώ την εξορία μου και πειθαρχώ τον εαυτό μου, δεν θα ξεχάσω την αλήθεια. Για να διατηρώ το μυαλό μου φρέσκο, χτύπησα ένα τατού στο δεξί μου μπράτσο, το οποίο σπάνια χρησιμοποιώ. Δεν θα ικανοποιήσω τη συνθήκη εξαίρεσης. Κοροιδεύουν τους εαυτούς τους. Η εθελούσια εξορία σ' αυτό το νησί με οδηγεί στην αυτοπειθαρχία. Κρατάω φρέσκο το μυαλό μου και την κίνηση μου. Ξύπνησα μια μέρα, συνειδητοποίησα πως ξέχασα να μιλώ. Δε με ενόχλησε.

Επανάλλαβα, δεν θα φύγω.

Translated by Δημήτρης Θεοδωροπούλος / Dimitris Theodoropoulos

KURDISH

Li Ser Koçberîya (Sirgunîya) Bi Dildarî

Min şert qebûl kirin. Tu kesî zorê neda min an jî nikare zorê bide min. Min ji wan re got ez ê bi tena serê xwe herim. Wexta ku hêdîka nêzî giravê dibûm min oqyanûs dît. Min şert, îşkence qebûl kirin. Min got ku, ez ê neterikînim. Ez ê çavderîya rizîbûna aqilê xwe bikim di wexta sirgunîya xwe ya dildarî ya li vê gravê. Min şert qebûl kirin. Min got ku, ez ê neterikînim.

Aksiyoma 1: Wexta ku meriv difikire bê gihîştîye dawîya gerdûnê, têdigihê ku li paş giravê giraveke din heye.

Tu carî têkiliya girava din bi girava niha re nîn e. Welê ku, aso ne bêdawî ye. Nihêrtina girava din û zanîna hebûna wê min difikirîne. Girava din min dixine nava meraqan û aciziyê dide tenahiya min. Fikra ku dibêm qey hatime ser girava herî dawî ya li ser rûyê gerdûnê û xwe qanîkirina li ser vê mijarê, texeyyula min ya li ser sinoran zelaltir dike. Sirgunîya bi dildarî hewceyî bi xwe-kontrolkirineke bênavber û lêkdanekê bi xwezayê re dike. Ji roja min a ewil a li lkariyê û pê ve, min holikeke (bereqe) li ser zinaran ku li teraseke xwezayî ya bi şikeftên piçûk dorgirtî neqand. Dibêjin ku, ev şikeftên piçûk cihê xweveşartina penaberan bûne wextekî. Berê terasa xwezayî li oqyanûsê ye, lê berî wê jî li kraterên xwê.

Aksiyoma 2: Xwê û zinar, formên bejayî yên anakronîk ên rizîbûna giravan in. Dema ku min cara ewil ew dîtin tavilê hêdîka ber bi krateran ve meşîyam. Ne zelalîya (opaklık) di kitekitên rengê spî-gewrê ê krîstal de, temsîliyeta tevgerê dike ku di nav zemanekî goya kozmîk re derbas dibe. Behr di rengê şîneke hêşînê de bû.

Keştiyên barkêş ên mezin, sıyên tarî, puxteyên meçhûl, derbas dibûn wek heyberên nediyar ên aidê dûriyê. Carina rehenda tîkane ya giravê hema hema wekhev bû bi rehenda keştiyekê re. Ev heyber bo kêliyêkê, qasî çend deqeyan dihatin ber hev û derbas dibûn. Min rûyê xwe bada ji bo ku nebînim. Vegeriyam holika xwe. Gava ku vedigeriyam min destê xwe da şafirên gıyagewrikên li xaçîrêka xwe û min xwe avêt ser terasê. Min kire pistepist... Min got ku, ez ê neterikînim. Rengên zinaran sor-şîn bûn ku tê de rengê kesk hebû. Ba û ruh teşeyê zinaran veguestibûn. Ev formên rîziyayî, bi helwestên bêdawî xuya dibûn. Min xwe wekî Andronikos his kir,

wexta di nav zinaran re dimeşim, min kir ku liv û lebatên wî teqlit bikim bi fikrên wî re.

Aksiyoma 3: Giravên li komgiravê jihev in lê ne eynî ne.

Her roj, min daxwazek li hember kifşkirina girava din dikir ya ji terasa min a ji zinaran pêkhatî ve xuya dikir. Bi qasî ku bi ber guhê min ketibû, navê girava din Fourni bû û heywanên ku berê insan bûn dijin li wir. Piştî hîn bûm, hê gelek girav hebûne û girava min yek ji nav van komgiravan bûye. Xemgîn bûm. Min digot qey girava ku min ji bo koçberiyê hîlbijartibû, girava dawî ya gerdûnê ye. Normên ewlehî û kontrolkirinê, taybetiyên komgiravan in. Giraveke yekjimar, parçeyeke fikrîna azad a bêdawî û texeyyulên wenda ne.

Lêbelê komgiravek, têkiliya bêtêkilîbûnê ya di navbera giravan de nîşan dide. Mirov bi gelemperî dibêjin qey her giraveke di komgiravê de hevdu tînin bira hev. Lê ev ne rast e. herçiqas parçeyên formeke total a dinyewî bin ji ne wek hevdu ne. Komgirav şertekê pêk tîne, ev şert dike ku meşrûbûna istsınayê bi rê ve biçe. Wexta ku ez bi temamî bi hişekî azad difikirim di nav giravên komgiravê de, lê hay dibim ku komgirav nîşaneyê erdên dorpêçkirî û şiddetê ye. Min ji wan re got ku; ez ê neterikînim.

Aksiyoma 4: Berî ku mirov veguherin ajalan, komgiravan dikir ku mirov bendeyî giravan bin.

Min aso sêr dikir ji xwe re. Mirovên ku min çend roj berê ew ji dûr ve dîtibûn ji zûde ve ye çûbûn ez dibêm qey. Min guherîna di laşê xwe de his kir. Dizanim, talîyê ez ê bibim Fourni. Vebirana kûr a ji jiyana min û parzemînê divê min netirsîne. Ez ê rastîyê ji bir nekim heta ku koçberî û oto-kontrola xwe bidominim. Ji bo ku hişê xwe binim ser hemdê xwe min deqek çêkir li ser mile xwe yê rastê ku zêde bi kar nanim. Ez ê tetmîn nekim şertên istsınayê. Ew xwe dixapînin. Ev koçberîya min a bi dildarî ya li vê giravê berê min dide oto-kontrolê. Binye û helwesta xwe nû dikim. Rojekê şûnde gava şiyar bûm min ferq kir ku min axaftinê ji bîr kiriye. Ev rewşa hanê ez aciz nekirim. Min dubare kir: ez ê neterikînim.

Wergera ji tirkî / Translation from the Turkish by Semra GUÇLU

ARMENIAN

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