

## Leaving home coming home

- Organizing one's address book is always a thankless task. Every year, from my home in Havana, I attack the job of reviewing, page by page, all the names and data that make up my network of personal and professional relationships. Like a tapestry in which I am barely one strand, I review every thread that remains and each thread that was lost. And I find myself facing the alarming evidence of how many people I must subtract.
- I live, like so many others, in a country of escape.
- An island from which we depart in all directions, saying goodbye. A nation where the number of those who emigrate increasingly exceeds those who decide to come back. [...] If I had a map on the wall of my room with a red dot for every place on earth where a friend now lives, it would look as if the world had chickenpox.
- Many others around the world could probably say the same: The United Nations reports that in 2013 more people lived outside the country of their birth than ever before. These international migrants leave many places, sometimes escaping war in countries like Syria and Afghanistan, sometimes seeking brighter lives beyond the perpetually struggling economies of their birth or in more welcoming political conditions. [...]
- I have experienced exile from both perspectives: that of those who leave, and of those who say goodbye to those departing. Both are terribly emotional and sobering.
- I've always been reluctant to let myself be judged on things about which I was given no choice: being a woman, white, short, Cuban and Spanish-speaking. But it was my decision to become a philologist, to start a blog, to have a child, to learn some German, and even to return to my country after two years in the snowy mountains of Switzerland.
- To the happenstance of being born in Cuba, I've added my personal decision to live here and to see my grandchildren grow up in its streets and plazas. But many in this world we inhabit feel they were born in the wrong place.
- It's an old dilemma: Do we stay in the place of our identity, where we know the customs inside out? Or do we head for the distant unknown, with the hope of achieving greater personal fulfillment? Fruits or roots. It would seem that for some 232 million international migrants in the world right now – according to the United Nations, 3.2 percent of the world's population – the choice is the fruits.
- In Cuba, having a relative in exile is much more useful than a university degree. A popular Cuban word game consists of asking, "Do you have faith?" Respondents are not meant to reveal their religion. The question is whether they have "familia (en el) extranjero" – FE, which is also "faith" in Spanish. Someone with fe can afford to eat a little better, dress a bit more fashionably.
- My family had "faith" for the two years I was in Switzerland, where I settled in 2002 with the idea of escaping my country. Although separation is always difficult, there are also benefits. I remember how, before leaving, I parceled out among my family and friends the belongings I'd accumulated over the years.
- The airline's luggage allowance did not permit me to take many personal possessions, so I distributed some of my clothes, shoes, books, and even the plants from my balcony. Every gift was received as a blessing in those years of hardship. [...] I understood that many of those who leave contribute not only by sending money and gifts to their families, but also by allowing those left behind to enjoy a larger share of the things they have.
- No report from any international organization can [...] reflect the dual life, split down the middle, that those who leave their country must cope with, knowing that only by choosing, for themselves, the fruits can they truly expand their roots.
- I call this the "syndrome of emigration," and it is at its strongest in the first years after leaving. My symptoms were very clear, causing me to constantly compare what I was experiencing in my new home with what my relatives were feeling at that very moment in Cuba. To sit in front of a plate of food, delicious and piled high, was one of the most painful moments of my days in exile. What would my mother be eating right now? Had she ever tasted a kiwi? Will she go to bed tonight with an empty stomach?
- In my daily thinking I established a perpetual "monetary exchange" that made me look at every Swiss franc in terms of its equivalent in Cuban pesos. This, in turn, was translated into the hours of work that would be required for my family and friends to experience what I had in the "country of chocolate." A beer was two working days for my father, a train engineer. My neighbor, the TV cameraman, could buy an apple after eight hours' labor. My sister, the pharmacist, needed to put in a full week to enjoy a chocolate bar.
- The fruits, for me, were at hand, succulent, tantalizing. So painful, however, was the transplanting of my roots that I could not enjoy the taste of what I'd achieved. I packed my bags and again compressed my life into an airline luggage allowance. [...]
- I am one of the few who have returned to this island of escape. [...]
- Those who depart should know that they leave behind a trail of mixed feelings. Yearning, worries, happiness, relief.
- A sea of people with their red dots on the map on the wall, their best clothes put away for the day their relative returns; people who, at the end of every year, have to redo their address books, and erase, erase, erase. (970 words)

## Annotations

- line 5:** **tapestry** – an ornamental fabric made of coloured threads woven into heavy cloth, often in the form of a picture or a pattern, used to decorate walls, furniture etc.
- line 6:** **strand** – a single thin piece of thread, wire, hair etc.
- line 15:** **chickenpox** – a viral disease that particularly affects children, that causes a slight fever and many spots on the skin
- line 27:** **sobering** – making you feel serious, think carefully and act rationally
- line 101:** **succulent** – juicy and tasty
- line 102:** **to tantalize** – to make a person or an animal want sth that they cannot have or do, thus causing frustration

## Tasks

### 1 Content/Comprehension

Summarise what is revealed about the author and her personal experiences regarding immigration.

### 2 Form/Analysis

Analyse the style the author employs and its effect on the reader.

### 3 Comment/Text production

Choose one of the following tasks:

- a) "It's an old dilemma: Do we stay in the place of our identity, where we know the customs inside out? Or do we head for the distant unknown, with the hope of achieving greater personal fulfillment?" (ll. 40ff). What is your personal attitude towards this dilemma? Refer to your own plans after you graduate from school.
- b) In 2013 and 2014 Germany faced the highest number of refugee claimants in decades. Many of these asylum seekers are from Syria, Africa or Afghanistan, and a considerable number of the applicants are under 18 years of age. Your class has decided to start an initiative to help teenage immigrants to integrate and feel welcome in your local town. Your task is to write a letter to the American-based headquarters of a major company in your hometown in which you ask for financial support for your ideas.

## Flüchtlinge dürfen schneller Deutsch lernen

- Wenn Politiker von hochqualifizierten Zuwanderern sprechen, meinen sie Menschen wie diesen 36-jährigen Syrer: Er studierte Medizin, arbeitete sechs Jahre als Assistenzarzt in der Chirurgie und vier Jahre als Nervenchirurg. Dann zerrüttete der Bürgerkrieg das Land, der Arzt floh und landete in Augsburg. Im März 2014 reichte er einen Asylantrag ein.
- Bisher müssen Flüchtlinge wie er neun Monate lang warten, erst dann prüfen die Behörden, welche Schule der Flüchtling besucht hat und ob er fließend Deutsch spricht. Diese Frist diente ursprünglich der Abschreckung und sollte die Anreize für Flüchtlinge vermindern, aus wirtschaftlichen Gründen nach Deutschland zu kommen.
- Ein neues Programm soll es Asylbewerbern jetzt ermöglichen, in Deutschland schneller Arbeit zu finden. *Jeder Mensch hat Potential – Arbeitsmarktintegration von Asylbewerberinnen und Asylbewerbern* heißt das Modellprojekt, bei dem Flüchtlinge schon während der gesetzlichen Wartezeit von neun Monaten auf ihre Qualifikationen getestet werden. Vor allem können sie in dieser Zeit bereits Deutschkurse besuchen. Die Flüchtlinge, die an dem Programm teilnehmen, können so nach Ablauf der Frist sofort arbeiten – sobald sie den sogenannten Arbeitsmarktzugang bekommen.
- Die Bundesagentur für Arbeit hofft, durch diese Tests ausländische Fachkräfte früher für den Arbeitsmarkt zu gewinnen: „Gerade vor dem Hintergrund des Fachkräftemangels müssen wir gut qualifizierte Flüchtlinge fördern und deshalb stärker und früher in den Arbeitsmarkt integrieren“, sagt Jürgen Wursthorn, Sprecher der Bundesagentur für Arbeit.
- Der Modellversuch [...] startete im September 2013. [...] Etwa 170 Flüchtlinge nehmen insgesamt an dem Pilotprojekt teil, 40 davon in Augsburg.
- „Die Leute hier wollen arbeiten“, sagt Daniela Ruhrmann von der Arbeitsagentur Augsburg. „Die Flüchtlinge sagen zu mir: Nichts ist schlimmer, als monatelang herumzusitzen.“ Die Teilnehmer in Augsburg sind zwischen 20 und 40 Jahre alt und häufig gut ausgebildet: Manche arbeiteten als Bäcker, es gibt Handwerker, Lehrer und Maler. [...]
- Die meisten Teilnehmer kommen aus Syrien**
- Die Teilnahme an dem Modellprojekt hat allerdings keine Auswirkungen auf das Asylverfahren der Flüchtlinge. Deshalb wählt die Arbeitsagentur besonders Bewerber aus Ländern aus, bei denen eine Anerkennung als politisch Verfolgter wahrscheinlich ist. Rund die Hälfte der 40 Teilnehmer kommt aus Syrien, der Rest aus Afghanistan, Pakistan und dem Iran.
- Die Behörden werten im Herbst die ersten Ergebnisse aus und entscheiden dann, ob das Programm auf ganz Deutschland ausgeweitet wird. Grund für das Projekt sind zwei aktuelle Entwicklungen. Zum einen die steigende Zahl der Asylbewerber: 2013 stellten in Deutschland fast 110.000 Personen einen Asylantrag – im Vorjahr waren es nur rund 65.000. Für dieses Jahr wird noch mal ein deutlicher Anstieg erwartet.
- Zum anderen suchen deutsche Firmen händeringend nach Fachkräften. Die schnellere Integration von qualifizierten Flüchtlingen könnte diese Lücke schließen. [...]
- (418 words)

## 4 Mediation

You are doing an internship in a newspaper office in Britain. You have been asked to provide some background information on the situation in Germany for a feature article on how different European countries have coped with the increasing number of refugees. On the basis of the *Zeit* article write a text of about 160 words for the editor-in-chief in which you explain the model project *Jeder Mensch hat Potenzial* and the reasons why this project was initiated.

## Erwartungshorizont

### Textinformationen

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<b>Textformat (Textlänge)</b>	Zeitungsartikel (418 Wörter)

### 1 Content/Comprehension

Summarise what is revealed about the author and her personal experiences regarding immigration.

The author, a philologist who started a blog, is a white, Spanish-speaking woman from Cuba and a mother of one child. She decided to immigrate to Switzerland in 2002 but returned to her home country two years later. Although she did enjoy the positive aspects of her new life with plenty of food, for example, she did not feel entirely happy in her new home: "So painful, however, was the transplanting of my roots that I could not enjoy the taste of what I'd achieved" (ll. 104ff). The author also personally experiences immigration in a different respect: Every year many of her friends and acquaintances emigrate from Cuba, so she has to erase those names from her address book (ll. 1–5).

### 2 Form/Analysis

Analyse the style the author employs and its effect on the reader.

The author employs a highly personal and emotional style. She refers to her own experiences at great length throughout the article. She uses highly effective images to illustrate how frustrating and sad her yearly routine is when she erases the names of her friends and acquaintances from her address book: "I attack the job [...] Like a tapestry in which I am barely one strand, I review every thread that remains and each thread that was lost" (ll. 2–7). This simile as well as another one in line 15 ("... as if the world had chickenpox") to draw the reader's attention to the huge scale of emigration from Cuba and the tremendous effect that has on those remaining in the country. The writer makes use of the extended metaphor "fruits or roots" (l. 43, ll. 101–103) twice in the text. That way the readers become aware of the two sides of emigration: On the one hand there are the rewarding benefits of leaving behind a difficult situation in one's home country; on the other hand one might lose touch with one's origins. The readers will certainly be emotionally touched by the very personal account of the author and her particular style. Thus the article will leave a lasting impression on the readers.

### 3 Comment/Text production

- a) "It's an old dilemma: Do we stay in the place of our identity, where we know the customs inside out? Or do we head for the distant unknown, with the hope of achieving greater personal fulfillment?" (ll. 40ff). What is your personal attitude towards this dilemma? Refer to your own plans that you have for the time after you have left school.

Staying in the place of one's identity where you know the customs inside out:

- ♦ You'll be able to rely on a stable social network (family, friends and neighbours).
- ♦ You'll be able to concentrate on your studies/job training etc. without having to cope with a totally new environment, culture, language etc.
- ♦ Knowing the traditions, customs and values of a community will provide you with a sense of community, a feeling of belonging and a feeling of safety and comfort.

- ♦ You will be able to take over responsibilities in your community, e.g. do community work, become committed to political issues, volunteer etc. which is much easier in an environment that you know very well and that you can trust.

Heading for the distant unknown with the hope of achieving greater personal fulfilment:

- ♦ You'll mature and become more independent as you'll have to develop some autonomy, self-reliance and resourcefulness if you leave your country of origin and have to adapt to a completely new environment.
- ♦ You'll become more communicative and sociable as you will leave behind your former social network and have to find new friends and acquaintances.
- ♦ Experiencing new things and getting to know new customs and traditions will broaden your horizons, and you will gain valuable skills which could be useful for the rest of your life.

b) In 2013 and 2014 Germany faced the highest number of refugee claimants in decades. Many of these asylum seekers are from Syria, Africa or Afghanistan, and a considerable number of the applicants are under 18 years of age. Your class has decided to start an initiative to help teenage immigrants to integrate and feel welcome in your local town. Your task is to write a letter to the American-based headquarters of a major company in your hometown in which you ask for financial support for your ideas.

To the CEO of XY (name of company)

Dear Mr/Ms ...

In September this year more than 100 asylum seekers from Africa, Afghanistan and Syria arrived in our town, many of whom were children and teenagers. The majority of these young refugees are traumatised, lonely and desperate. They have not only lost their homes and have had to leave their native country, but they also often had to leave behind close family members and friends.

Our class is deeply moved by the fate of these teenage immigrants. That is why we would like to contribute to integrating these refugees and making them feel at home in our town. We are planning to found a sports club in which German teenagers can meet and befriend young refugees. By doing sports and by organising games and tournaments together, we will be able to get to know each other and learn about cultural differences as well as common ideas and interests. We hope to make these teenagers feel welcome.

We would very much appreciate it if you could provide some financial support for this project. We are planning to equip them with sportswear and pay for their public transport to the stadium. We will also need a sponsor for the coaches and the tournaments.

We would be happy to meet with a representative of your company to discuss these issues in more detail.

We look forward to your reply.

Kind regards

Class XY

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A model project, whose title might be translated by 'Everybody has got potential', is aimed at enabling asylum seekers to find work faster once they have been granted the right to stay in Germany. Up to now refugees have had to wait nine months before the authorities examined what kind of school an applicant had attended and/or tested the applicant's language skills. This period of time was intended as a kind of deterrent and was a disincentive to refugees moving to Germany. However, as the number of asylum seekers is currently rising and the demand for qualified employees is increasing, the model project tests the applicants' skills and qualifications during this nine-month period. Moreover, refugees can attend German language courses in that time so that the participants can start working right away. The project was initiated in September 2013 with about 170 refugees in total. After evaluating the outcome, German authorities will decide in the autumn whether this project will be expanded throughout Germany.