

## Living Along the Border

For Batus

I have always been fascinated by borders. I live on a border. For years, as I taught in Geneva, I lived in France, in Nice, and what particularly pleased me about that city was its closeness to the Italian border. After a number of years, commuting every week between Nice and Geneva became too tiring; I moved closer to my place of work, and I now live in a house I have named "On the Border," which is indeed located a few yards away from the border between France and Switzerland. I cross that border almost daily.

You are perhaps familiar with Charlie Chaplin's remarkable movie entitled The Pilgrim, which concludes on the border between the United States and Mexico. I am haunted by the sequence where one sees Charlie walking with his feet on either side of the border.

We are all frontiersmen of sorts; we all have borders running inside our minds. Countries have come considerably closer to one another today on account of advances in means of transportation. We are constantly crossing borders that become more and more irksome to us: all those rites involving police and customs

officials make us aware of limits, of prohibitions that we overcome only with difficulty. We tend to wish for the pure and simple eradication of borders; let the world be a smooth surface, along which we might wander as we please. But we also seek something else, and for that reason borders are not merely irksome, they are also appealing, because borders are guarantees of diversity. That makes travelling worthwhile. Borders hinder our travel but at the same time give us a craving for it. How are we to deal with borders? What should we do with borders? What can we do to make them really useful while removing all of their obnoxious features?

When I became familiar with the work of Batuz in the United States I was struck by this fact--for a number of years all of his pictures could be summed up as follows: two areas separated by a line that displayed varying degrees of density. It is the relationship between those pictures and my own experience of the border that has made his work so deeply moving. When I became acquainted with Batuz himself I realized that the problem of the border had played an important part in his life. Here was a man with several homelands, a man whose consciousness had roots in lands separated by often considerable distances. Hungarian by birth, he lived in Argentina for a while. Between the two there lies an ocean. You may be familiar with the project involving a new Berlin wall, where a waterfall was to run along the borderline. After Argentina came life in the United States, on the other side of that imaginary line that was already present between Hungary and Argentina--the equator, where the most sur-

prising things happen, things that our body accepts only with great difficulty.

The equator is a kind of mirror, a looking glass that one goes through as one does in Lewis Carroll's book. For that reason the southern hemisphere is like a dream world for the northern hemisphere. As Thomas More admirably named it in the sixteenth century, it is "Utopia." It is the place that isn't really a place, one upon which we project our desires and obsessions. And for the southern hemisphere, the northern one is the site of the past, hence of nostalgia, of dreams that are turned toward the past.

After we cross the equator, especially when traveling sufficiently far to the south, we notice that some of the obvious facts of our experience are no longer valid. Here, when we go south we move mainly towards warm weather, towards fine weather, with all the mythology that accompanies such phrases; when we go north we proceed towards fog, cold, and snow. But the opposite takes place when we are in Argentina. The sun is to the north and cold weather to the south. People get used to it but language itself has not succeeded in doing so.

When we northerners go to that distant south, the very sky becomes alien to us. Even for those of us who are not astronomers the night sky is vaguely familiar. We recognize at least the Little Dipper, the Big Dipper, and two or three other constellations, even if we cannot name them. They are there, they have always been there. When we cross borders within Europe we recognize our Cassiopeia in the starry night, we recognize her in the United States or in Japan. But when we go to the southern hemi-

sphere we miss her; it seems as though we were on another planet.

Still our reflexes remain with us. Christmas in Argentina or Australia is as important a holiday as it is here, but Christmas comes at a time of high temperatures. Nevertheless, because of our literature, our songs, all our traditions, we are used to identifying Christmas with fir trees and snow--as a result, the shop windows of Buenos Ayres or Sydney, even though in mid-December everyone perspires abundantly, affirm the presence of snow thanks to a profusion of foamed polystyrene and absorbent cotton.

Another century at least will be needed before Christians of the southern hemisphere can think up a way to celebrate Christmas in warm weather. During the war the Americans had work areas built for the engineers of their command staffs [in Australia]. The blueprints were drawn by first rate specialists but when everything was completed it was clear that the workrooms were useless because, as in the northern hemisphere, the windows faced north; this, however, was the southern hemisphere, and the sun therefore came down full strength into the building. It was impossible to work there.

After we cross the equator, winter becomes summer; somewhat as if day were turned into night.

There are political borders but also basic geographical borders, and cultural borders of course. There are place changes that lead to thought changes. The fact of Batuz's Hungarian birth is in a way conducive to such an experience of the border; indeed, Hungary is an entity that, even today, we seldom speak of

by itself. For a time it was Austria-Hungary, the Dual Monarchy, the two-headed eagle, the two "K's" of which Musil spoke--"Königlich-Kaiserlich." The inimical brothers "K," two halves of a complex empire's core, two regions that in some respect may already be envisioned as each other's reverse. If one was Hungarian one had to think of Austria, one was envious of Austria, because that is where the capital was, Vienna, the residence. One loved and hated it at the same time. When one is Hungarian, even today, if one speaks Hungarian one also speaks German.

Rooted in childhood, in the traditions of the family and the nation, there is that consciousness of a divided world.

We often speak of the world as divided into two blocs; it is an extremely oversimplified way of looking at things. We have the sense of belonging in one bloc, while the other one is far away. We indeed occasionally realize that the division is insufficient, that there is at least a third world. But some regions in particular have a daily, intimate experience of the border, of the other's presence. The city of Coblenz, where we are gathered today, is endowed with a strong frontier appearance, as the Rhine for centuries has been thought of as a "natural" borderline between Germany and France.

"The Border as Boundary."

This is the description of two countries, each bordering on the other, one white the other black.

"Snow and soot. Two lands; one is grown with corn, the other with sunflowers."

Both yellow, but different.

"One stony, the other sandy. Oak forests flourish here,

beech forests there. Two nations."

Here we are getting close to the historical reality of Austria-Hungary:

"Tall and fair with sweetbriar complexion and blue eyes, short and swarthy, tanned, with prominent cheekbones, having narrow eyes. In one place the language is agglutinative."

Hungarian.

"In the other it is flexional. Villages with tile or slate roofs, thatched or battened roofs. Land clearings and migrations that here and there produce clashes, hence a borderline that must be set, inscribed, beacons."

At first there were different people living in different places. As long as the world was not too densely populated they could all remain where they were without many problems arising. But when the population started to grow and to settle, problems of belonging show up. What goes with whom, belongs to whom? The line begins to take shape; centuries of discussions and battles are in store.

"There may be a center over there, the capital of an empire, that of a kingdom on some other side."

Vienna and Budapest. When one is close to a border one senses that somewhere there is a place where its line has been drawn, that people on the spot no longer make the decision.

"That is where these irradiations come from, these successive waves now butting at the wall. But we focus our stare on this borderland where matters would not be that much different if there were not a whole texture, a whole network of

transmission sources on either side. The main thing is that when nearing the boundary one will necessarily cause disturbances. In the distant nerve-centers people are at liberty to ignore the other with which we are confronted daily, to act as though it did not exist; we who live close by these barriers, we are always compelled to define ourselves in relation to it."

Suppose one resided close to a border; at the turn of the century, for instance, in the early 1900's, a Frenchman who lived in the eastern part of the country constantly thought of Germany. That was not the case for one who lived in Bordeaux. The same was true on the other side. The very fact that these borders were eventually determined from afar, by ambassadors, governments, Vienna congresses, and so forth, makes them more and more unpleasant. Those who live on the other side, whom we used to like, gradually take on horrifying features. We are going to be told, by those at the center, that we must be afraid of them, must not mingle with them; when they seem most kind we must be most suspicious of them, therefore hate them the most.

Today we are experiencing problems with completely artificial borders that have bred horrifying hatreds. The clearest examples are the two famous "parallels," the one that divided Indochina, the one that still divides Korea. The people from those lands are not responsible for them. International congresses have determined the line, have decided, without always realizing it fully, that on the basis of such a line there would be hatred.

The border is consequently turned into a threat:

"When sunflowers or beech trees extend all around us, we

might believe that they are the only species of their kind; they do not raise questions; it is not necessary to defend them, and we might as well entertain ourselves, in botanical gardens, by gazing upon exotic flowers and varieties--lavishness for our leisure time."

It is wonderful to see things that we know to be remote. It is a vacation; we are not really concerned.

"But when, beyond our dale, we suddenly catch a glimpse of forbidden oak or alien grain, we know that they constitute a menace, that their seed is likely to spread. Our beech trees therefore are not only beeches but counter-oaks; and so the roofs of our villages perpetually herald a panegyric of tile as opposed to thatch, or shingle as opposed to slate. Within our consciousness the other is always present."

Already more than twenty years ago I spent a year in Berlin, the perfect place for studying border phenomena. From there I went to Hungary and Czechoslovakia. In Prague they told me, "You will see Bratislava; an extraordinary place; the ambiance is totally different, it is unique in our country." When I tried to ask in what respect, why, they evaded the issue, they said, "You will see for yourself." Once in Bratislava I saw the roofs of the city and I understood at once. They are spiked with television antennas. Bratislava is within reach of Vienna transmitters, and this means that it is the only large city in this area where western television programs are available. That amounts to an extraordinary window through which all kinds of news, ideas, or fashions come through. And since this window exists, the wall



thickens. The more absurd the wall gets, the more it tries to impose itself upon the people. At ground level one cannot go through, but above it practically everything does.

"The Intimate Border.

We are twofold; the border runs through the middle of our heart; and yet, we are either on one side or the other; for centuries on end a part of ourselves represses the other."

What this means is that the border is also a psychological image. It is our way of thinking, of feeling, that is inscribed in geography. Within each German there is an unconscious Frenchman, within each Frenchman a repressed German.

"Wants to keep it from expressing itself, smother it, devour it. Hatred for him who lives on the other side of the water is aroused because his voice is never silent on this side."

The reference is to one of Pascal's well-known thoughts.

"So, as one draws near the border, everything that was calm on the great plains begins to stir and sharpen.

The Ghostly Border."

Here, "ghostly" alludes both to the phantom and the optical spectrum, which allows us to analyze a substance. When we observe the stars, we are able to learn their chemical make-up by dispersing their light.

"If the border line were straight and true, everything perhaps might calm down; ignorance might win out in the long run; the other might become invisible. The border would become the outer boundary of the world."

There are still a number of countries today where the government's dream is to transform the border practically into the

end of the known world; thus there would be no more problems coming from that other side. But that never works, of course.

"All that is needed, however, is the slightest irregularity, the slightest rift for tensions to set in, not only at right angles to the border but along the length of it; a hollow here, opposite which there would correspond not only a hump but an inverted hollow a little farther on, and so forth. Each of these folds will reverberate as currents and vibrations. If the area that lies along the border assumes a color, life, and consciousness different from those found in areas that happen to be surrounded by like ones, one wonders what might occur in an area enclosed within a border on nearly all sides, or in one where it penetrates like a weapon whose tip must necessarily gather strength, extending within our domains something like a projected border, a desire to sunder? Such particular aspect of the terrain will favor such or such feature in plants, customs, and language; a little farther, a totally different feature will be decisive; and all of that will gradually become balanced along a fairly stable line that will make up, so to speak, the outline of the difference between two regions of our Earth and of our soul-- Austria and Hungary."

The very outline of the border can be analyzed as one does a physical spectrum. I have at my disposal an example that is particularly clear. I teach at the University of Geneva and for practical reasons I live mainly in France, just on the other side of the border. When in Geneva, I am in a kind of bulb forced by Switzerland into France. Geneva's canton is indeed completely

surrounded by France, except for a few kilometers along the border of the Vaud canton. In clear weather, from Geneva, one sees mountains all around, but they are all in France. In clear weather one always sees a foreign country. Thus the inhabitants of Geneva behave differently from those of other Swiss cities because the French presence is such as to make them feel not only contaminated by France but also in need of repeating almost all day long that they are not French.

"The Border in Depth.

If we are to focus, in painting, on the border phenomenon, it is indispensable that we eliminate as much as possible the other boundaries of our representation."

This is a musing on Batusz's painting. If that line is to be fascinating our gaze must not be distracted by the other lines that separate one region from another. A means must be found to make us see that this is what is important for the moment, and not that. Hence one must practically erase the other boundaries. That is why the works are never large enough. For a while, Batusz composed tremendous works. This is a feature one also finds in North American painting since the war, with Pollock or Rothko. It is an obsession with space.

"That is why the works will never be large enough. We must be able to penetrate in, to be swallowed up by, the contemplation of such and such a region, experience it as if it did not have a border."

We must be able to come close to this blue, to have the impression of living in this blue country; only by detaching ourselves from it, in moving away, should we glimpse the close-

ness of that other region into which we can also plunge.

"That is why, even though we keep using a roughly rectangular shape, precisely because, being traditional, it does not call attention to itself, we shall remove all its rigidity. The very checkerwork of canvas, the usual prop for that art, would emphasize it yet too much. That is why we shall gradually make up a territory by means of successive alluviaions with a material especially chosen because it has, for a long time, conveyed information, sometimes affording the possibility of still deciphering some "news" of yester year; all sorts of paper, ranging from newsprint to cardboard, will thus imitate the processes of Nature and History, and this will have the advantage of providing us with a kind of deep expanse, an ambush for time; felt, thatch, bark, within which the swarming of ebb and flow will have full opportunity to express themselves, also the privilege of blotting up, impregnating, after a fashion, the inner space whose encounter could sometimes be further mitigated through the intermediary of a frame of the same material, before the official frame is put in place, allowing one to hang this strange picture, this icon of the alien's presence."

A characteristic example of this would be the first page of the book produced on the basis of the text that I am presently reading and commenting on: two areas with different color, material, and texture, with the border asserting itself in between. This square piece of paper is fastened on another slightly larger one. Their borders are completely different from the usual cut out edges; these are the borders that invade the rest of the

area, growing extensions, pseudopods, outward.

"The Natural Border.

Through its alchemic processing paper is purified in order to become a support for the musings on our own intimate borders, the light thrown on our intestine wars, and for that purpose, by those means, it unveils its own history, its origins."

It is possible to write on walls, cloth, wood, but today writers usually set down their words on paper and it is through paper that we know their text. Paper is a particularly important material in our civilization on account of its specific properties. Musing on the border line thus becomes musing on the paper, on the support for all the data that circulate, accumulate, and clash. Each of those regions is also a center of journalism and literature, each border a censorship.

"It becomes torn into fibers that will link up different places in the territory like those bundles of multicolored wires in the recesses of earlier electronic brains, or the neurons of our nervous system; it acknowledges its vegetal lineage so well that it is able to shift imperceptibly into straw, grass, or lichen."

Here are those fibers, and here is the shift to other natural fibers, there a few fragments of cloth that are coming apart.

"The image matter thus provided becomes similar to a natural event and reacts to the light of day like a meadow, a carpet of dead leaves in the woods, or a moss-covered stone. One might even imagine, in the manner of some fulgorous arrangement by a Far-Eastern gardener, a proclamatory work made of live grass, or more precisely of grass drying up in the center of a meadow, leaving a

flowering border. Comfortable at any rate among the trees, the icon becomes a summary of world history, a musing on the borderline between Nature and Culture.

The Free Border.

Our language habits lead us to locate ourselves to the right of the border."

In all Indo-European societies, as you know, there is a difference in value between right and left. The "right" is what is good, the "left" what is crooked, what is bad. That difference carries tremendous weight in our myths and language. That is why the arrangement of materials and proportions to the right or left plays an essential role in the way works affect us and allow us to think about all aspects of our existence, our politics for instance.

Language historians explain that the political significance of right and left basically comes from the fact that at the time of the French Revolution, in the first assembly, the boldest members sat on the left, from the chairman's point of view, the most coolheaded to the right. But this merely sets back the question.

Indeed, after some time, the right became far too boring and the left began to blossom, to enchant, until it came to ossify into a new right that was sometimes particularly sluggish, particularly hard to shake up, as a new left attempted to do, a new left that was at first scorned and hated, seen as a pack of dreamers, and so forth. The word "sinister," which in Latin meant "toward the left," has acquired in English as in French a very

dark connotation.

"The left is the other, sometimes the sinister, often the boundless. The line is more of a border on its right than on its left, and this is true, of course, no matter what the actual geographic location of the nations that might serve as concrete application of our musing."

In some cases, when one looks at a map with the north at the top, one's country is on the right and the other on the left. But one need only turn the map around in order always to fall back on one's feet.

"Thus while Austria with its mountains, monasteries, and string quartets is to the West, Hungary corresponds to it in the East, with its tremendous spaces, its large lakes with marshy shores replete with reeds that are constantly stirred by the wind from central Asia, its herds of free horses keeping within their manes memories of their forbears' conquering migrations, until the setting up of a sufficiently solid frontier that reorganized them--but all we need do is locate ourselves in the North and the usual semantic situation is reestablished. If we move to the American continent, whether it be in the North or in the South, in the United States or in Argentina, the image fits with all its strength, with no transposition: it is indeed the right, or the organized East, centralizing and more or less centralized, that gradually swallows up a more and more distant West, what lies on the other side of that particularly lively and enriching, unstable frontier; the West was viewed as being precisely that which had no bounds, the land of wandering and even of licentiousness, the place where one could breathe, far from worn-out codes--even

if a more searching examination forces one to qualify all that considerably."

In the history of the United States and of the entire modern American continent, the notion of frontier plays an essential role, but it has a connotation that is different from that of the European borderline. The frontier is precisely that place where there is no more line; until the day when the entire continent was crossed, when one arrived on the Pacific Ocean, when lines, railroad lines for instance, were set up everywhere. But there remain in the Far West wonderful traces of that erstwhile freedom. I have lived there myself for two years; it is a land I still dream of and where I strongly hope to return.

"The Constituent Border.

There is opposition between a centered region and a non-centered region or one that is much less so; one might ask what allows a border to be established in order to oppose the irradiation issuing from such a center. A study of incomplete borders shows that it is fitting, in part, to reverse matters: the progressive irradiation coming for a nascent center on the right encounters resistances, often fortuitous, where there used to be no borders, and these resistances become organized as multiple centers of opposition. One might say that any interruption in the flow, in the original migration, even owing to accidental causes, will bring about a kind of analysis or dialysis, will gradually divide into two distinct populations what at first was a sole settlement. A dotted line is what the border was at first, as our maps show us so well, and the examination of each of its frag-



ments allows us to learn how, in times of crisis, when the threat of the other becomes particularly distressing, they will tend to join and strengthen one another.

#### The Thickened Border.

It is mainly when the very center feels threatened that the border will be reinforced, it becomes a great wall, more and more impervious, taller and taller, and an attempt is made to intercept even the flight of birds and the path of informative broadcasts."

Great examples in antiquity are well known to us and allow us to reflect on the modern ones. The first that comes to mind is the Great Wall of China, built during the Earlier Han dynasty against the invasions coming from central Asia and endangering the outer reaches of the empire. A similar phenomenon took place a few centuries later when Hadrian's Wall was built across Great Britain to protect the Roman colonies of the south against the Scottish tribes. We then witnessed the building of the "Limes," the effort to surround and protect the whole empire by a wall that was completed only in a number of sections. As you [here in Coblenz] are located on that wall, you know that there are places where it reached a high degree of realization.

Today's "walls" are mainly constituted by ditches, barbed wire fences, artillery units; sometimes, however, because of those ancient walls and their symbolic value, our walls become true walls, walls built in stone or concrete.

"The more the border is accidental in its origin, decided upon, for instance, at a remote center, a military headquarters, or an international congress without the concerned parties being

in any way consulted, the more it tends to become vicious, bristling, murderous (the Berlin Wall, the 38th parallel); it then casts its shadow on the surrounding regions. When it reaches the height of distrust, the border necessarily splits into two lines."

The border becomes a third region that thickens. It is called a "no man's land," the land where no one belongs, the land where one gets killed. The phrase originated during the war of 1914, but what it refers to is now present in all the thickened borders that we know, and it can be several kilometers wide.

"Two lines, each facing the outside, but which must also protect the inside from the threat not only of the other but of this intermediate, interstitial region--the no man's land; that geographical statement of incomprehension, of laceration, is first a hallway of death, desolation, and barbed wire, but this could at times be alleviated, become the very image of border crossing when such crossings can finally take place."

My French home is right next to Switzerland. The present path of the border in no way results from the advice of those immediately concerned. The area is, geographically, strongly determined: around the end of a lake there is level land surrounded by rather steep mountains. The precise allotment between Geneva and the Savoy of the time was based on mysterious diplomatic reasons. As a compensation, if you wish, for the absurdity of the border at that place, as in several others, a "zone franche" [free zone] was established; this means that the border was twofold and the intermediate region enjoyed a few privileges.

Today only a few odds and ends remain, but it still increases the number of customs houses and officers, whom one does not dare put out of work. So butter is not as highly taxed in that area but in principle has to be eaten on the spot. Customs officers, if in a particularly bad mood, might have drivers open the trunk of their car to see if they are taking butter from France into France. It is as if the good old days of city tolls were back. It goes without saying that drivers easily think up codes to warn others of the presence of a patrol that suddenly takes seriously what usually is, thank goodness, just a laughing matter.

I am quite happy with the thought of living in a "zone franche," for the word "frank," which first referred to confederated German tribes and later gave its name to the country to which I belong, in their language meant a "free" man. The word has kept that meaning throughout the history of the French language. A free town [ville franche] enjoyed a number of privileges in relation to the lord. To be frank is to tell the truth, to have the privilege of being able to do so. In a "zone franche" I am thus, I hope, in an area where the truth can emerge and where one enjoys a number of freedoms, where one can cross [franchir] borders.

#### "The Border Crossed.

The mere tracing of the border constituted an analysis of differences between areas, between nations. With borders that are thick and split in two, that are plane projections of their vertical reinforcements, we are reaching the expression of what puts them into question, of what aims at going beyond them and viewing them from a distance. If the border becomes thicker, it

is indeed because it is more and more difficult to hold; more and more, on either side, one wishes to cross it, and the more the borderer is conscious not only of the existence of the other but of his qualities, the more he desires to become acquainted, thus rebelling against the injunctions of the center or the right who want to seal all remaining exits; the aim, furthermore, is to protect the borderer himself from the unimaginable dangers coming from the other, for the consciousness of the center inhabitant does not have the same structure. The higher the walls, the more the watchmen command a view of the landscape on the other side, which fascinates them more and more.

#### The Open Border.

It is fortunate that, gradually, all territories come into contact on one side or another."

Airlines have introduced customs and police formalities into the suburbs of major cities. Customs are never as tedious today as in the middle of the country, that is in airports, where luggage still has to be Xrayed and one must go through those symbolic gateways that start beeping when one wears a metal belt buckle or worse carries a key, which is of course frightfully suspicious as far as the keepers of the walls are concerned.

"We are all becoming frontiersmen. Left and right braid their hands. And thus the borders that are most difficult to breach are slowly becoming transparent; the intermediate areas, areas of transiency, doors, and gaps become new centers (Hong Kong, Singapore, the Riviervas) toward which the crowds converge and from which they spread out, acquainted with a new perception

of things."

There are today entire states that are airports, that are fully "zones franches," where all the shops are "duty free," free of the usual requirements.

"The Livable Border.

Thus the overcome border has become a vibratory diaphragm, as much one that produces sound" (the loudspeaker), "as one that receives it" (our ear); "it becomes the place where two territories hug each other lovingly, where two skins touch. The split, liberated border comes to life as a dancing couple, outlining its shadow and flame on the walls of the cavern Earth, conquering space with its entanglements."

Here is an image of that happy border, that dance of geography, of cultures within space.

The border is a guarantee of diversity but borders are there in order to be crossed; so as better to cross them we must multiply them. Their territories must be disunited. It is obviously simpler to maintain order in a country that is as uniform as possible, and that is why organizers of empires have always tried to unify their territories starting with the language. The Roman empire is the installation of the Latin language. The history of France is basically that of the unification of the French language. Even in the nineteenth century the French government tried everything for the sake of eliminating the other languages, Provencal, Breton, Basque, Alsatian. Soviet Russia tried everything in order to Russianize the other republics, but fortunately ran up against considerable resistance on the part of language.

It is the respect for such and such an interior border that makes it possible to open up, without risk, exterior borders. Instead of having an absolute division between states that are on the same level, there is a much more flexible organization of hierarchical federations. You are in a federation, I work in another.

When the Swiss explain to some of my countrymen that a confederation can function effectively, the latter are generally surprised and incredulous because of the considerable strength of the unifying tradition in my country. France has a lot to learn from Germany in that respect, and from many other countries as well. Different European countries are in the process of becoming federalized but almost in an underhanded manner, for if governments well realize that it is the only way out, public opinion finds it very difficult to get rid of decades and nearly centuries of patriotic brainwashing in the schools.

It is up to us to seek out all the differences that exist among us, among states, and within states, becoming more and more conscious of the often accidental origins of their configuration. We need to become conscious of our world's variety and uphold it more and more. Even in classic lands of uniformization like France, agencies are compelled to promote that variety for touristic reasons. We are reaching the era of diversification.

I hope you will cross many borders within yourselves and outside of yourselves. I shall again cross two borders tomorrow, since I shall take a plane for the Geneva airport, which is on French soil although its buildings are in Switzerland, and then I

shall have to leave Switzerland to join my family in our French home.

Michel Butor, 1987

(Talk given in Coblenz on September 14, 1987.)

Translated by Leon S. Roudiez