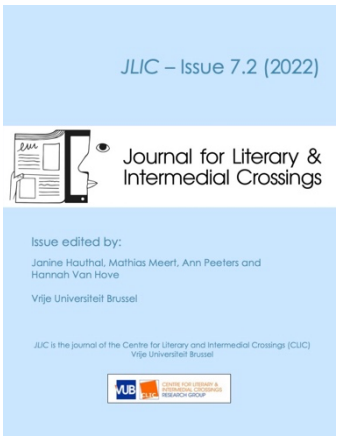

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Aleksandar Hemon's Photography-embedded Migrant Literature[1]

Sharon ZELNICK

University of California

Fig. 1. Photograph by Velibor Božović, unknown location. Featured in Aleksander Hemon's *The Lazarus Project* (2008), p. 0.

[1] I am grateful to Kalani Michell for her insightful suggestions and for always encouraging me to think outside of the box. I am also grateful to Ernst van Alphen, with whom I initially worked on this essay as part of my master's thesis and to Sonia Weiner, whose phenomenal migrant literature class first introduced me to Aleksander Hemon's writing. Conversations I had with Velibor Božović, Ksenia Robbe, Liesbeth Minnaard and Katherine Oktober Matthews further inspired the way I encountered the photographs in this essay.

At first glance, the photograph above of a man and his reflection appears unremarkable. He is shown in front of a small, old mirror bolted against a wall with a furrowed brow and puckered lips, adjusting his collar. Upon closer scrutiny though, several ambiguous aspects of the photograph make deciphering the subject's location and the time the shot was taken difficult. The way the man's face is partially obscured by a shadow on his right and by the framing on his left, combined with his gaze being directed at the photographer and by extension the viewers, paints an indeterminant picture of who he is. This particular framing of the man requires viewers to imagine all that cannot be clearly seen. Moreover, it is unclear what "event", ritual, or moment in time viewers are supposed to be observing here. Is he preparing to go somewhere? When we meet the man's gaze as he appears to be fixing himself up for something or someone that remains beyond our frame of knowledge, our attention is drawn to the live and futural quality of photographs themselves (Benjamin 1931; Schneider 2009; Behrend 2013). At the moment they are taken, the photographer and subject know that the image will be encountered again, and both seem to recognize this future occurrence here, locking eyes, exchanging glances, and unsettling the position of the supposedly "objective" viewer. Thinking about the futural dimension of photography implicates us viewers as participants who are unable to passively encounter the details and indexes in images, but instead are tasked with dynamically co-creating while we look at them.[2] Such instances of photography do not really show us what "has been" (Barthes 1980) but rather what is and "will be" (Bolt 2004). They do not so much capture the past as they anticipate the present and future. The futural dimension of this photograph is complicated by its placement next to and within a verbal object. The photograph, which appears on the verso of the title page of Aleksandar Hemon's novel *The Lazarus Project* (2008), raises key questions about the relationship

[2] Ariella Azoulay (2008) and Marianne Hirsch (2019) discuss this kind of active photographic viewing as a means of recognizing a subject's agency.

between the visual and the verbal in literature that thematizes migration. Namely, what qualities of this mixed form lend itself so well to stories about migration, how can this form change the way we encounter migrant literature and photography alike, and in which ways does it alter reading practices?

Introduction: Photography-embedded Migrant Literature

Hemon's novel is one of many hybrid photographic/literary works by migrant authors wherein the constellation of photography and prose plays an important role in relating experiences of migration after and in the wake of political violence. Additional migrant authors who employ this mixed form of photography-embedded literature include G. B. Tran, Michael Ondaatje, W.G. Sebald, Hanif Kureishi, Edward Said, Theresa Hak-Kyung Cha, Viet Thanh Nguyen, Teju Cole, Julio Cortázar, among others. This is a form of literature which embeds photographs into text and which includes biographies, memoirs, and poetry collections, among other textual genres. In migrant literature, namely literature written by migrants about their experiences while and after moving to a new country, these text-image relationships often concentrate on themes of belonging, loss, and memory.[3] In light of the fact that many 20th- and 21st century migrant authors left their countries of origin due to instances of political violence, such as wars, genocides, and colonialism, the mixed aesthetic of this form can benefit from being situated in relation to these complex and often emotionally-charged experiences. By more closely and critically exploring this subgenre of photography-embedded migrant literature, we can better understand why this form lends itself to

[3] The term *migrant*, as opposed to immigrant or emigrant, does not arbitrarily position these authors as either moving to or from locations. Even if they geographically move away from political violence in their "home" countries, some eventually choose to move back, and the term *migrant* can better accommodate both this geographical flexibility and the often-mutable nature of contact zones in the 20th and 21st centuries. It should also be noted that not all migrant literature is trauma literature, as not all migrants move as a result of political violence. For an extended discussion of this term see Minnaard (2008: 1-50).

migrant stories and develop further insights into the relationship between these two medial forms, literature and photography, in non-antagonistic or hierarchical terms.

Exploring text-image relationships in this way requires first reconsidering the familiar scholarship on the medium of photography that is based on binary concepts of time and the genre of migrant literature that relies on the figure of the double. From Henry Fox Talbot's famous early words about the camera holding "a mirror up to nature" (1), to Roland Barthes arguing that photographs emblematically show that which "has been" (*Camera Lucida* 77), photography has typically been thought of as a means of recording reality and connecting the past with the present. Classical theoretical texts on migrant literature often view the migrant author and/or characters as existing between worlds, encompassing a "here and there" quality to them.[4] Bhabha (1994) most canonically frames the migrant figure as being doubled and between worlds.[5] These frameworks conceptualize both the photographer and migrant author in ways that limit their aesthetic agency. Similarly hampering is the way in which scholarship regarded the photographs in literary works as illustrative of the prose or as indices of the past (Armstrong 1998; Barthes 1980). Critical of these limiting approaches, Sonia Weiner (2018) discusses how novels themselves can be a form in which migrants assert their sense of home in texts with images, which can in turn supplement the lack of belonging they may experience in their homeland or host country.

Several other scholars have similarly explored the interplay between photography and literature in non-hierarchical terms, relying on concepts of the image/text (Mitchell 1994), phototextuality (Nobel and Hughes 2003), photo-texts (Horstkotte 2008), and icontexts (2011). These terms illuminate the importance of looking at the clash and coalescence between the visual and the verbal and the importance of both media within a written text but tend to overlook the

[4] See, for example, Bhabha (1994), Aciman (1999), and Sayad, Macey, and Bourdieu (2004).
[5] For alternative readings of this phenomenon, see Adelson (2002: especially 244-248).

significance of this intersection on paratextual levels.[6] Building on these aforementioned terms but focusing specifically on the visual-verbal interplay in migrant literature, Ofra Amihay (2012) and Weiner (2014) discuss the use of photographs as being significant both thematically and aesthetically. Amihay suggests that the photographs themselves become metaphorical representations of the way in which migrants move across space, while Weiner locates the importance of the fracturedness inherent in photographs as emblematically shedding light on the split between fact and fiction with which migrant writers often play. Expanding upon earlier work by Silke Horstkotte (2002), Amihay and Weiner address the ways in which photographs in migrant literature upend readers' expectations by contradicting the prose. Although this is sometimes true, and although the blurred boundaries between fact and fiction are central to both photography as a medium and migrant literature as a genre, this mixed-media form does something more important than either solely illustrating or upending – more than simply confirming the "truth" of literature or problematizing it.

Photographs in migrant texts resituate readers to the paratextual dimensions of books and, in doing so, fundamentally alter conventional reading practices. It is for this reason that the term *photography-embedded literature* contributes to this body of scholarship on visual/verbal entanglements and intermedial studies, especially in, though not limited to, the context of migrant literature. The embeddedness of photographs in literary works is akin to the embeddedness of hyperlinks in documents. When there is a photograph in literature, as with a hyperlink in a document, we may ignore it, but if we do, we necessarily miss a major part of the story. The photograph's embeddedness encourages readers to perform scan and search functions with respect

[6] See Genette (1987) for a canonical discussion of paratexts, materials surrounding and about the "main" text but remaining simultaneously outside of it. For a more nuanced discussion of paratexts within various medial forms, see Stanizek (2006).

to what they have already read in the book and what is absent from the prose but epitextually significant, or indexed, through the photographs.[7] This approach insists on the performative and future-oriented nature of the photographic medium, rather than encountering it as supplementary, documentary, or explanatory (Schneider 2011; Behrend 2013). We can observe this by focusing on how readers/viewers of such works are compelled to simultaneously scroll, scan, and return to the photograph(s) in question within the mixed media constellation, which fundamentally alters the sense of temporal stability and orientation experienced during the encounter between photography and literature (McPherson 2006; Weibel 2003). How do viewers and readers "move" through such works in ways that are not as aligned with a linear progression of a novel, but are rather more similar to a hyperlinked document?

Aleksandar Hemon's novel *The Lazarus Project* (2008) and memoir *My Parents: An Introduction / This Does Not Belong to You* (2019) serve as points of departure for exploring this reconfiguration of photography and literature in the context of contemporary migrant literature. Hemon, a Sarajevo native, was in the United States in 1992 when war broke out in former Yugoslavia, preventing him from returning home. His parents fled Sarajevo when it was under siege and were granted approval to move to Canada as refugees in 1993. *My Parents: An Introduction / This Does Not Belong to You* is comprised of two volumes, each with their own book cover. *My Parents: An Introduction* is a memoir about Hemon's family history, centered mainly, though not exclusively on his parents' lives, and *This Does Not Belong to You* revolves around Hemon's life. The two memoirs meet in the middle, with ten pages of family photographs connecting them. The narrator of *The Lazarus Project*, Vladimir Brik referred to as "Brik" throughout the book is a Bosnian migrant and author who uses the finances he received to write a

[7] On the epitext, see Genette (1997), which he describes as "any paratextual element not materially appended to the text within the same volume but circulating, as it were, freely, in a virtually limitless physical and social space" (344).

book that requires tracing the life and story of the deceased Jewish emigrant Lazarus Averbuch in Eastern Europe with his photographer friend, Ahmed Rora Halilbasic, referred to as "Rora" throughout the book. Averbuch escaped the pogroms in Kishinev, moved to America, and was then shot seven times by the chief officer of the Chicago police at the time, George Shippy, in 1908. The specific reasons as to why Averbuch visited Shippy's house remain unknown to this day, and the details of his death also remain incomplete. Shippy claimed to have shot Lazarus in self-defense because he appeared as a threatening anarchist.[8] Even though Lazarus was likely completely innocent and was simply labelled a probable anarchist as a foreign migrant in xenophobic Chicago, Shippy's report went unquestioned by the rest of the police force and the public.[9] Hemon alternates between contemporary chapters beginning with one of Velibor Božović's photographs and historical chapters beginning with an image from the Chicago Historical Society Archive.

Articles on Hemon's work by Ward (2011), Weiner (2014), and Aykol (2019), situate *The Lazarus Project* within the here/there discourse in which migrant literature and photography are conventionally discussed. In contrast, this essay draws on techniques of transmedial storytelling (Jenkins 2017) and the concept of "scanning-and-searching" in mixed media reading practices (McPhereson 2006) in order to offer a more complex understanding of the relationship between photography and literature in Hemon's works. According to Jenkins, transmedial stories are those that encourage "encyclopedic impulses" by weaving together multiple storylines across a range of medial forms (1-3). McPherson posits that readers often experience a fear of overlooking essential information when encountering mixed media texts, which encourages them to search for it and re-

[8] Roth and Krauss explain that "[t]he name Averbuch, was, to the mass of Chicago's populace, synonymous with anarchy, communism, malevolent foreigners, and violence" (6).
[9] See also Weiner (2012: 216).

scan what they have encountered, leading to an engagement with the work in non-linear, non-spatially contiguous and participatory ways (203-207). Building on these approaches, this essay explores how these two medial forms are uniquely reconfigured to relate migratory experiences of visual and verbal exchange for authors who migrate after and during political violence. By refusing the traditional binary frameworks for interpreting migrant authors and photographers, as well as the typical positioning of the photographic medium as either confirming or subverting prose, one can gain a more nuanced understanding of how this particular combination of texts and images offers a unique form of expression for the many complexities that accompany migration after political violence and the way in which this form prompts a novel experience of reading literature. Approaching the photography in Hemon's work as embedded hyperlinks recognizes how it reconfigures the encounter with life narratives that actively reconstruct the complex cultural processes he and his parents endured when moving to North America during and after the war in Bosnia. Hyperlinks in novels forge connections to materials internal and external to/from the texts in which they are situated and call on the reader to engage with material more actively as a participant (Landow 2006; Modir, Guan and Aziz 2014). In light of the way our cognitive linear attention is constantly interrupted while reading, we are encouraged to scroll back, inspect photographs more closely and migrate between the print and digital world the information prompts us to search for, just as one moves between a document and the links to other objects, documents, and websites embedded in it.

Intermedial Scanning and Searching

From the very first pages of *The Lazarus Project* it is clear that the work challenges its readers with different tasks than a standard reading process might imply. Instead of diving into a story by

reading and imagining, we, the readers, are asked to decode images, remember various histories, and actively connect the visual and verbal in multiple ways. To "read" this work, we must participate in the embedded histories and life narratives which often overlap within it. There are many connections between Hemon, Brik, and Lazarus, and likewise between Božović and Rora, that must be worked out. Božović and Hemon are friends in real life, and their journey through Eastern Europe to research *The Lazarus Project* was enabled by the financial support Hemon received from a McArthur genius grant, which facilitated him to write his novel. In addition to using both contemporary and historical photographs, Hemon constructs his narrative in multiple languages – Yiddish, Hebrew, and Bosnian – and does so by building on memories of the events he discusses, historical stories, newspaper clippings, and records from different time periods and parts of the world, calling for a reading strategy that can work across multiple medial forms.[10] The dynamic movements we make as readers parallel the multidirectional experiences of the migrant author, photographer, and characters alike.

The inclination to search and scan in this work is apparent right from the start once we consider the way in which the words from the previous page, Hemon's author note, shine through the previous image of the man in front of the mirror (fig. 1) and provoke the action of flipping back to view him (which you may also be doing now, within these very pages) and also looking to see if the subsequent pages provide information about him. This action of scanning the image and searching the previous and subsequent pages helps readers feel a sense of control over pertinent information about the author and photographed subject that might have been missed upon first glance (McPherson 205). The movement between the subject of the photograph and Hemon as an

[10] The novel is written predominantly in English, but Hemon includes phrases from these other languages which he italicizes and does not translate them (see for example 38, 123, 160, 198). Additionally, there is Hebrew writing on the photographs of gravestone (222).

author foreshadow many connections that exist between his own journey and his characters' movements. With little information about the photographs available in Hemon's novel, readers can either continue to move forward in the book or try to locate the photographs elsewhere. On the recto of the opening to the *Lazarus Project,* we learn that this photograph of the man in front of the mirror was taken by Velibor Božović, prompting curious readers to put down the novel and search for Božović online (fig. 1). On Božović's website, we discover a collection of photographs from the novel, including the image on Hemon's verso (fig. 1) with the sentence "the only one who was not me" underneath it – a sentence that does not appear in the book. This rather decontextualized caption simultaneously puts distance between the photographer, subject, and viewer and it piques our interest. Although we are kept at a distance, the curious ambiguity of the image online and in the novel encourages us to continue to try to piece together and learn more about the interconnected stories; the choice of which platform to use is left to us.

One photograph included in Božović's online archive but absent from the novel, which illustrates his aesthetic style of excess and unboundedness, is an image of pages of writing (fig. 2). It is unclear to us as viewers whether these are pages from books, newspaper articles, or pieces of writing from something else entirely. The quote underneath it – "I imagine my life to be big, so big I cannot see the end of it. Big enough for everyone to fit into it" – further speaks to the centrality of unboundedness to Božović's aesthetic. Additionally, because the photograph is of pages of writing, it seems to address the unboundedness of photography and literature alike; an aesthetic feature that can, as Leslie Morris argues, liberate mixed-media projects from limited binaries and that is inherent to transmedial stories (17). The kind of transmedial reading that the *The Lazarus Project* calls for functions differently on Božović's web-based archive of the photographs and quotes from the novel. Božović's introduction to this work confronts us with the idea that the

photographs exceed the form of the novel, and thus to approach them solely as additions to the text would be limiting. Božović explicitly writes on his website that "the photographs are intimately and deeply connected with the book, but they also speak of something that is beyond its limits." The connection is clear through the placement of a phrase or sentence from *The Lazarus Project* under each photograph. These quotes from the novel were selected by Božović rather than Hemon and the placement of the quotes does not align with how they are placed in the novel. Božović's archive includes fifty images, a large number compared to the mere eleven that appear in the novel form of the story, and yet those fifty are also only a small fraction of the 1,200 photographs he took for this project.[11]

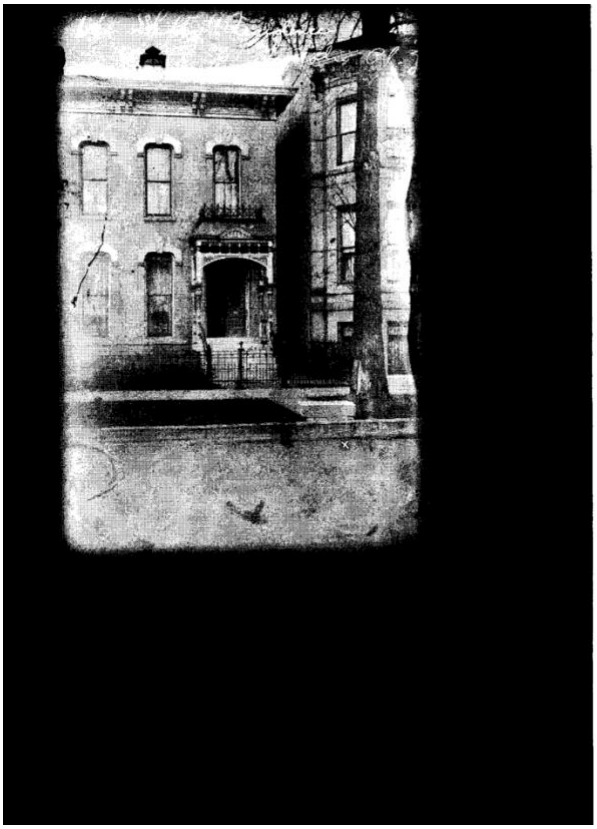
When we click on an image, only the photograph initially appears. After hovering over it for a while, the words show up in small text at the bottom of the images. When we click on the quote, however, nothing happens, perhaps signaling Božović's slight prioritization of images over text. Neither forms of *The Lazarus Project*, in print or in digital form, demand a singular kind of engagement with it, nor a linear reading of it, an indication that the story cannot be contained within a single medium. In this sense, they both act as "writerly works" (Barthes 1970). Writerly, as opposed to readerly works, enable the reader to engage as a co-creator of meaning rather than a passive recipient of it. Božović's and Hemon's projects exemplify the former, as they prompt us, time and time again, to choose the order through which we engage with their materials and to scan it once again to search for what we could have missed at first glance.

[11] See Božović, Velibor. "The Lazarus Project." VeliborBozovic.com, http://veliborBožović'.com/projects/the-lazarus-project/.

Fig. 2. Velibor Božovic, unknown location, 2008. Image part of the images that make up "The Lazarus Project." VeliborBozovic.com, http://veliborBožović'.com/projects/the-lazarus-project/.

Migrating Story-Worlds: The Biblical and Historical Lazarus

The written prologue and images in the printed space of the novel raise other questions through their evocations of different historical moments and mythical figures. The prologue, a quote from the book of John, describes the resurrection of the biblical Lazarus. Notably, Hemon chooses not to include the source of this quote, inspiring us to look it up and therein momentarily leave the peritextual and textual space of the novel. In the book, the inscription at the top of a photograph details the fact that this is the residence of Chicago's Chief Police officer at the time, George Shippy, demonstrating how the mixed-media configuration causes us to migrate across different temporalities (fig. 3).



The time and place are the only things I am certain of: March 2, 1908, Chicago. Beyond that is the haze of history and pain, and now I plunge:

Early in the morning, a scrawny young man rings the bell at 31 Lincoln Place, the residence of George Shippy, the redoubtable chief of Chicago police. The maid, recorded as Theresa, opens the door (the door certainly creaks ominously), scans the young man from his soiled shoes up to his swarthy face, and smirks to signal that he had better have a good reason for being here. The young man requests to see Chief Shippy in person. In a stern German accent, Theresa advises him that it is much too early and that Chief Shippy never wishes to see anybody before nine. He thanks her, smiling, and promises to return at nine. She cannot place his accent; she is going to warn Shippy that the foreigner who came to see him looked very suspicious.

The young man descends the stairs, opens the gate (which also creaks ominously). He puts his hands in his pockets, but then pulls his pants up—they are still too big for him; he looks to the right, looks to the left, as though making a decision. Lincoln Place is a different world; these houses are like castles, the windows tall

Fig. 3. Photograph from the Chicago Historical Society, Unknown Photographer, 1908. Featured in Aleksander Hemon's *The Lazarus Project* (2008), p.1.

This detail and the wear and tear quality of the photograph bring us to BCE, 1908, as well as the 21st century. Hemon's visual and verbal reformatting of the biblical and historical Lazaruses' stories at the start of his novel highlight his process of reinscribing these histories in relation to one another and our contemporary moment. This echoes Marek Jancovic's perspective of how the act of reformatting programmatically reinscribes histories to avoid loss (197), as well as Jenkins' notion of transmedial stories as intrinsically performative (3). According to Jenkins, transmedial

stories function by calling on us to interact with them as they weave together interrelated characters and their narratives, which causes an "encyclopedic impulse in both readers and writers" (10).

The multiple time frames in the photograph come across through the inscriptions that reference the biblical Lazarus, as well as the layers and shadows that call attention to the scars from the brief encounter between Lazarus Averbuch and George Shippy, their lurking presence in the present and the eerie concern of their seeping into the future. The different levels of light, a brightness glimmering at the top left contrasted with shades of dark grey at the bottom, as well as the blurriness in the image have a ghostly, ominous affect. The fact that this shot was taken from a distance and includes various borders, such as the house's closed gate and windows covered by shades, gives off an aura of mystery, which is heightened by the white "x" marked in the bottom right corner. Hemon's selection of photographs from the Chicago History Museum resonates with what Rebecca Schneider describes as an intentional, future-oriented use of photography, a "call toward a future live moment when the image will be re-encountered, perhaps as an invitation to a response" (255). Eager to make sense of this photograph and decode the signs within it, our glance is directed to the recto of the page, on which Hemon's narrator, Brik, shares that, "the time and place are the only things I am certain of, March 2, 1908. Beyond that is the haze of history and pain" (1). Are we meant to take these "facts," both in the prose form and in the inscription on the photograph, at face value? The fact that Hemon addresses the failure of words and photographs alike in both works further complicates how we approach the theme of truthfulness.[12] Beyond questioning the veracity of the content, we are encouraged to rethink how we approach the photograph itself; not only as marking what has been, but also what is and what could be.

[12] See, for example, Hemon 2008: 90-94 and 184-189.

Another historical photograph that Hemon embeds in his novel, which calls attention to both past injustices and present/future concerns, is the police portrait shot of the deceased Lazarus Averbuch with Captain Evans (fig. 4). The inscription in the image merely states both of their names. Their positioning, however, is notable: Evans' name on the left upper corner and Averbuch's on the bottom, can be understood as representative of the power that Evans had over Lazarus. Beyond these white, cursive inscriptions, when we look closely at the wall on the left-hand side, there appear to be marks that look like letters and/or symbols. Though their shapes and significances remain unclear to us, they show textual elements in the photographs and, in this way, subvert our conception of them as solely visual objects. Like the complex transmedial aesthetic dimension in the shot itself, this photograph serves to bring our awareness to the transtemporal ethical injustices of xenophobia; a problem spanning across the century between the two Lazaruses. Furthermore, Hemon's problematization of photography's status as evidence enables him to reappropriate police photographic styles of mug shots for his own purposes. It is possible to see Hemon's use of this image as playfully reclaiming the style that oppressive police forces used when photographing migrants [13] Hemon's choice of photographs that exemplify and problematize police photography indicates how he works within this genre in ways that are potentially similar to postcolonial authors choosing to write in and appropriate the language of their (former) oppressors. [14] This kind of aesthetic re-appropriation further demonstrates the significance of the transmedial nature of Hemon's practice.

[13] On police photography of migrants, see Reinhardt (2007: 15-20).
[14] For a discussion of the ways in which authors write in the language of their oppressors subversively, see, for example, Armitage (2000).

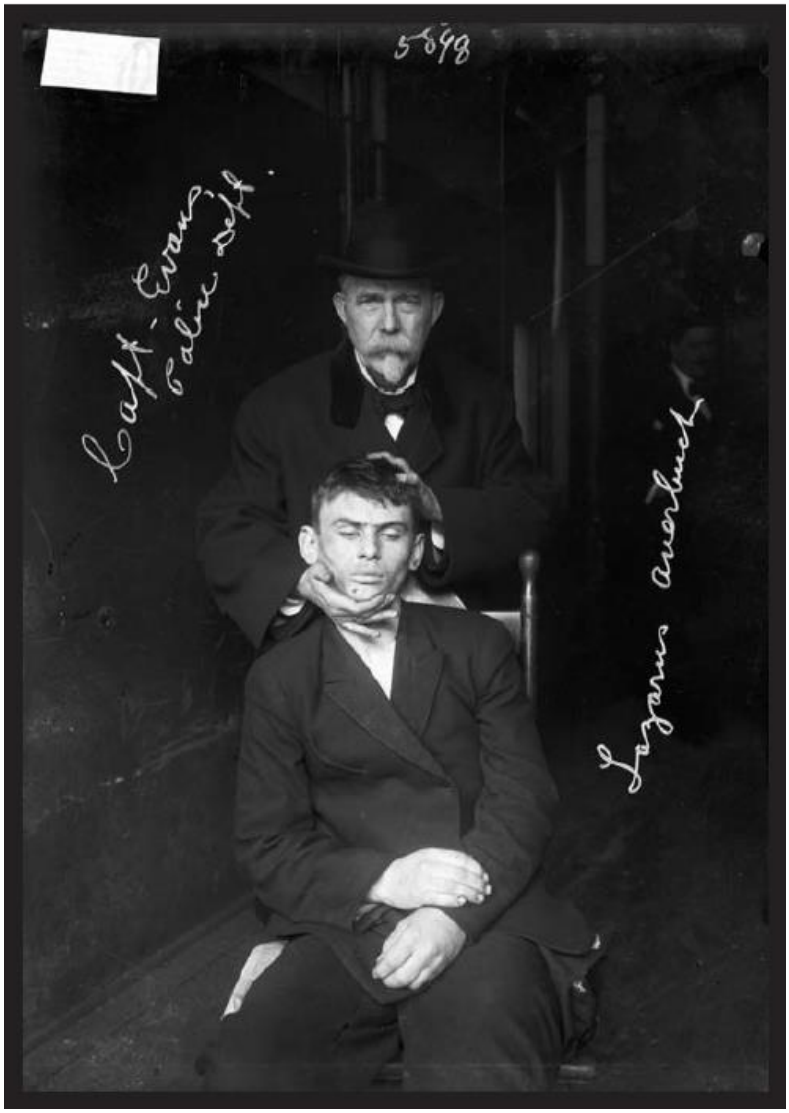


Fig. 4. Chicago Historical Society, Unknown Photographer, 1908. Featured in Aleksander Hemon's *The Lazarus Project* (2008), p. 52.

Visually and Verbally Unfolding Life Stories

The reconstruction of life stories through embedding photographs is quite differently executed in *My Parents: An Introduction / This Does Not Belong to You* (2019). Aside from the barcode on the side of Hemon's personal memoir, there are not any other indications that this side should be

read second; instead, the choice of where to begin is left up to us. One major difference between each part is that *My Parents: An Introduction* reads primarily chronologically, whereas *This Does not Belong to You* is a collection of anecdotes, reflections, and stories relayed non-chronologically. The photographs that connect the two memoirs do not merely show what has been described verbally in parts of the memoirs, but rather tell additional stories with their own significant content. The non-chronological nature of Hemon's memoir speaks to the way in which his work requires us to scan and search for different pieces of his family puzzle. For example, pages 26 through 28 include three distinctly different sections: a discussion of the nature of memory, then a discussion of his present, and lastly an anecdote from his school days. The photographs which are constructed as a family archive in the center of the two volumes notably brings his and his parents' memoirs to a full circle of 360 pages of connected, transtemporal content. Strikingly, reviews of Hemon's work claim that it is 350 pages, as they outright exclude the pages containing photographs.[15] By merely glossing over these ten pages, readers will overlook how Hemon's embedded photographs individually function as hyperlinks signalling important information and, when seen as a whole, evoke the medium of a family album. Moreover, the way he frames the photographs vertically requires that we flip our heads or turn the book to its side in order to view them, thus while we may not necessarily always jump to another platform as hyperlinked documents engage, the photographs similarly call on us as participants to form connections with other material. The futural nature of the images is present in this work but functions differently than in *The Lazarus Project*. For example, an image of Tata and Mama holding Canadian flags (fig. 5.) invites us to search for the places in which he discusses their experience of migration and, in doing so, we migrate across the mediums of images and texts.

[15] See for example Chakraborty (2019) and Szalai (2019).

Fig. 5. Unknown Photographer and unknown date. *This Does Not Belong to You*, p. 183 and *My Parents: An Introduction*, p. 178.[16]

We are also invited to rethink the snapshot and its placement in this book form as something that does not merely document a moment. Rather, certain symbols in this still, such as the national flags these people hold in their hands, mark a movement towards belonging to Canada, if only on a superficial nationalist level. Thus, even in the moment of it being taken, the snapshot anticipates our looking and participating in the unfolding of their migrant journey (Schneider 264). The multiple ways in which the different people in this image direct their glances, in addition to the young child standing behind Mama, remind us of the multiple generations present in this captured moment as well as different constructions of (un)belonging.

[16] Notably, the pages with the photographs are not physically numbered in either volume so I have provided page numbers that correspond with whichever side the reader begins from.

These transmedial constructions and multiplicities are further but differently configured in the subsequent image (fig. 6).

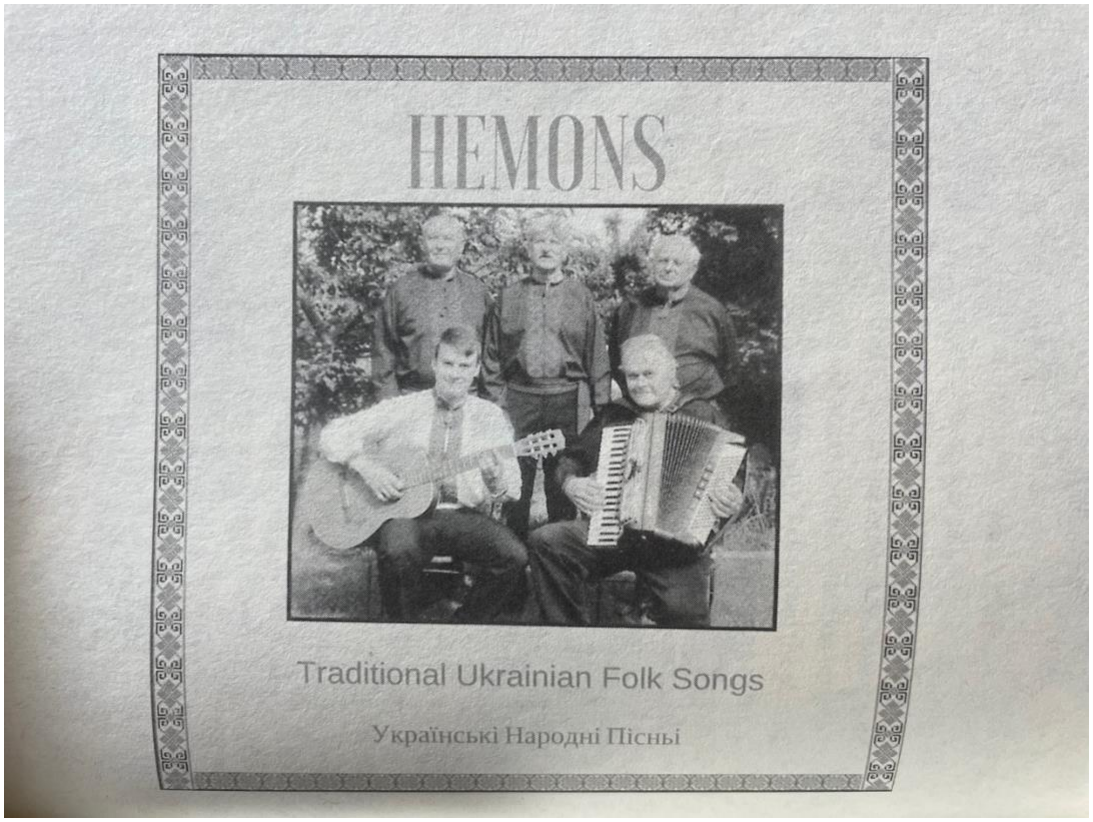


Fig. 6. Unknown Photographer and unknown location. *This Does Not Belong to You*. p.184 and *My Parents: An Introduction*, p.177.

This photograph (fig. 6), which includes multiple frames and textual messages, is transmedial in the liberatory ways described by Jenkins and Morris, but it evokes starkly different emotions than the previous image. This photograph features five men, presumably from Hemon's family, two of whom hold instruments: a guitar and an accordion. They are framed between writing, evoking a sense of belonging by being framed under the heading "HEMON" and above the caption stating in both English and Bosnian that this group plays "Traditional Ukrainian Folk Songs." Hemon and

his parents are of Ukrainian Christian origin, but they are agnostic. By juxtaposing these photographs, Hemon prevents us from situating the migrant as either being back in the "homeland" or in the "host" country, nor does he allow us to understand the image as simply an index of the past. Rather, the juxtaposition in this part of his volume calls for a transmedial engagement that aligns with the complexities of migration after the Bosnian war and the heightened charge of encountering this image today, in light of the catastrophe currently faced by Ukraine since the Russian invasion in 2022.

While searching and scanning across the visual and verbal mediums, the shortcomings of both photographs and prose are addressed directly by Hemon. Specifically, the middle of *This Does Not Belong to You* evokes philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein's famous claim from *Tractatus Logigo-Philosphicus* (1922) that the limits of language are the limits of our world (122). Hemon frequently reflects on the failure of words to capture, describe, and create, and the incompleteness and fragility of memories, and his use of photography thus testifies to his belief that the visual and the verbal remain inextricable from one another. Moreover, in his discussion of certain memories that are not visible through the images, Hemon suggests that photographs are of course also not an all-encompassing medium that can essentially capture more from the past. This evokes W. J. T. Mitchell's notion of writing as incomplete in its "limits of space and writerly ingenuity," while photographs are not whole pictures since they always impose a frame that can never include everything that was supposedly "there to be taken" (289). The incompleteness of both forms of expression are aspects of photography and prose to which Hemon's text purposefully draws our attention. As such, he reminds us of the complexity of constructing representations of life stories and the potential of embedding photographs in order to articulate otherwise overlooked aspects of these complexities.

Conclusion: Reading Photography-embedded Literature as Co-Creation

Hemon's photography-embedded migrant literature requires us to rethink the way in which we interact with the shapes of books and the entangled malleability of photographs and prose. In the sometimes complementary and sometimes antagonistic intersections of them, his works refuse to be categorized in the binary-based frameworks in which they have been situated thus far. Rather than understanding the photographs as either subverting or confirming the texts, they function as embedded links to memories, stories, and histories that can be approached as individual parts, but also as part of greater narrative journeys and arches that we as readers co-create. Looking at the paratextual, peritextual, and epitextual dimensions of Hemon's project by positioning the photographs as akin to hyperlinks embedding new information reinstates photography in non-essentialist, nonbinary ways, situating it as central to the unfolding of stories, memories, and migrations between these realms cross-temporally. *The Lazarus Project* and *My Parents: An Introduction/ This Does Not Belong to You* evoke the past, present, and signal to the future through the text-image intersections and transhistorical concerns. It is this last temporal dimension that importantly breaks away from well-rehearsed, overly-used theorizations about photography and migrant literature that situate the medium and author as being geographically and temporally in either the past or the present. Liberated from this limiting context, photography-embedded migrant literature illuminates, through its very form, the complexities of movement during and after political violence and means of conveying those experiences aesthetically.

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