

“Very much alive and very much under threat”:
Chasing the Coffee-Flavored American Dream in
Dave Eggers’s *Monk of Mokha*

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“Oh coffee, / Oh story of lovers, / You help me repel my sleep, /
You help me stay awake and worship my lord while people fall
asleep. / Don’t blame me for my intense love for coffee./
It is the drink of the righteous people.”
(Shaykh Ali Ibn Omar Al-Shadhili qtd. in Tai)

Abstract

This essay examines the manner in which Dave Eggers’s recent work of literary nonfiction, *The Monk of Mokha* (2018), sets out to amplify the voices of the marginalized by chronicling the adventures of a young Yemeni-American in search of the best coffee in the world. This takes the protagonist from the infamous neighborhood of his birth in San Francisco, “a valley of desperation in a city of towering wealth,” to his trials and tribulations in the war-torn homeland of Yemen. I will argue that the narrative, which blurs the lines between fiction and nonfiction and combines history, politics, biography and thriller, highlights the American entrepreneurial zeal and contagious exuberance which still feed the immigrant American Dream and proves that social mobility in the United States is still attainable, sometimes as a result of chasing the world’s most dangerous cup of coffee. Moreover, I argue that the protagonist’s endeavor can be read within the larger context of

contemporary political consumption as an example of social justice activism and ethics-driven buying.

Keywords: coffee, immigrant, American Dream, social mobility, civil war, Yemen, ethical consumption.

With approximately eighty percent of its population in need of international assistance and protection, war-torn Yemen has been confronted with a humanitarian crisis of epic proportions, “catastrophic levels of hunger” and an unprecedented cholera outbreak for several years now (“Yemen Crisis: Why Is There a War?”). Already the poorest of all Arab countries and with more than half of its citizens subsisting below the poverty line, since the beginning of the war, Yemen has witnessed the decimation and increased displacement of its population (Cainkar). What is more, in an attempt to restore the deposed President of Yemen, a Saudi-led coalition which benefits from major American and British military support is responsible for air strikes which consistently violate Geneva conventions concerning the targeting of civilians. In spite of all this and by vetoing a bill passed by the US Congress to end backing for the Saudi-led war in Yemen, the Trump administration has pledged further military support in the form of arms deals with Saudi Arabia. This decision falls in line with President Trump’s executive order commonly referred to as the “Muslim ban,” which aims at the “total and complete shutdown of Muslims entering the United States” (Taylor), and which has dealt yet another major blow to those fleeing the desperate land of Yemen hoping to find refuge in the proverbial Land of the Free or reunite with family members who are already American residents.

It is against this background that Dave Eggers’s most recent work of literary nonfiction, *The Monk of Mokha* (2018), seeks to give voice to the seldom heard – in this case, to a young Yemeni-American of limited means who rises to public prominence through entrepreneurial zeal and steadfast resolve. It is a feat which openly runs counter to the Trump administration’s policies and seeming

lack of empathy for the disadvantaged, especially in light of his recent political decisions regarding the humanitarian crisis induced by the prolonged civil war in Yemen. Eggers is co-founder of Voices of Witness, a nonprofit set up to record and expose human rights violations the world over with the aim of contributing to the efforts of social justice through the power of ethics-driven storytelling and deep listening. Telling rarely-heard people's stories seems to be his literary mission as well, as *The Monk of Mokha* is the third installment in a series which aims to amplify immigrant voices in the United States. The previous *What is the What: The Autobiography of Valentino Achak Deng* (2006) tells the story of one of the Lost Boys of Sudan's¹ phenomenal journey from his native war-torn country to the United States as a refugee. *Zeitoun* (2009) reads as yet another extraordinary tale, following the adventures of a Syrian-American and New Orleans resident in the aftermath of hurricane Katrina; he braves the waters to provide help to neighbors and pets only to be wrongfully detained by the authorities on suspicion of terrorist activities. *The Monk of Mokha*, Eggers's latest, chronicles Mokhtar Alkhanshali's hazardous undertakings spanning continents to restore people's imagination with respect to the Islamic space and to war-ravished Yemen in particular, through one of the world's highest-prized commodities to date: coffee.

I will argue that, in his pursuit, Mokhtar adds to the potent social myth of the American Dream and evinces the contagious die-hard optimism and ambition which are deeply embedded in the consciousness of the American people and become apparent especially in the face of adversity. What is more, his entrepreneurial undertaking and the associated movement back and forth across geographical spaces provide a "kind of natural bridge between the inaccessible mountains and political mess of Yemen and the world market for these beans" (Eggers 77), thus building bridges across continents and between people in a world where the political discourse is dominated by the building of walls. From this perspective, I maintain that the narrative similarly points to the power of storytelling itself, from Mokhtar's obvious gift of gab,

which ultimately ensured his survival, to the very notion that contemporary times call for more stories like his. Lastly, I argue that Mokhtar's enterprise can also be read within the larger context of social justice activism and what came to be known as the "ethical turn" in markets and consumption at the beginning of the twenty-first century.

A "controversial drug of work and play," caffeine is arguably the world's most popular addictive substance, easily surpassing nicotine and alcohol (Weinberg and Bealer xi, xv), and the second most traded commodity worldwide after oil (Aljamra). The Americans' penchant for coffee consumption is steeped in history and entwined with the very birth of the nation. Benjamin Franklin, essentially an entrepreneur himself and hence "always alert to new business opportunities," would sell it running an advertisement that read "very good coffee sold by the Printer" (Weinberg and Bealer 183). The Green Dragon, a coffeehouse established in 1697 and deemed by Daniel Webster the "headquarters of the Revolution," would host "Red-coated British soldiers, colonial governors, bewigged crown officers, earls and dukes, citizens of high estate, plotting revolutionists of lesser degree, conspirators in the Boston Tea Party, patriots and generals of the Revolution" (Weinberg and Bealer 183). Another Boston-based coffee place, the Bunch of Grapes, was to become the site of the first public reading of the Declaration of Independence. Americans loved their cups of coffee so much that by the second half of the 19th century, they were consuming it in larger quantities than any other nation on Earth and "the drink had, in [their] minds . . . come to be . . . identified with their pioneering, robust, democratic country" (Weinberg and Bealer 185), which set them once again in opposition to the old European continent. "While the British sipped tea, their rebellious colonies gulped a stronger black brew, destined to fuel the remarkable American entrepreneurial spirit" (Pendergrast 72).

Eggers's book insists on tracing the often debated history of coffee from the legendary jumping goats of Ethiopian shepherd Khaldi, which presumably discovered the coffee fruit ("coffee beans [are] *inside* the coffee fruit") and its energy-inducing

properties while grazing in the bushes, to Ali Ibn Omar al-Shadhili, a Sufi holy man living in Mokha, Yemen, who first brewed coffee as people drink it today. It is the latter who became known as the Monk of Mokha as “he and his fellow Sufi monks used the beverage in their ceremonies celebrating God” (Eggers 59, 60). Finally, Eggers brings in the various Dutch and French and Portuguese adventurers who dispersed the coffee beans around the world. It seems an open act by the author-activist to reclaim coffee’s Yemeni origins and redress the land’s image as “one of the world’s most menacing places, home to burgeoning al-Qaeda and ISIS cells and the relentless American drone strikes meant to neutralize those threats” (Eggers 61-62). And young Mokhtar Alkhanshali’s ambition to “resurrect the art of Yemeni coffee and restore it to prominence throughout the world” (Eggers 65) becomes the vehicle for that endeavor.

First son of Yemeni parents and oldest brother to six siblings, Mokhtar was born in Brooklyn and relocated with his family to San Francisco when he was 8. His “earliest memory of San Francisco was of a man defecating on a Mercedes. This was on his family’s first day in the Tenderloin” (Eggers 13). Named “after a part of the city where bribes bought police the highest-grade beef” (Shaw), the Tenderloin was “the city’s most troubled and poor” district and the “go-zone for crack, meth, prostitution, petty crime and public defecation” (Eggers 13-14). It was, on the other hand, one of the city’s most affordable neighborhoods, which turned it into a destination for many immigrant families hailing from Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos, and the Middle East. Growing up in the Tenderloin, Mokhtar “became a fast learner, a fast talker, a corner-cutter, and a friend to an array of kids who also were fast talkers and corner-cutters.” Moreover, when he grew “tired of being poor, of stepping over homeless addicts, of sleeping with six siblings in one room,” Mokhtar would entertain the possibility that he, too, “was like Harry [Potter], part of this hardscrabble world for now, but destined for something more” (Eggers 16).

In hindsight, a truly defining moment in the young boy’s life was marked by his parents’ decision to enable “an immersion in his

ancestry” when they sent their thirteen year old to his grandfather in Yemen, Hamood al-Khanshali Zafaran al-Eshmali, “lion of Ibb, scion of the al-Shanan tribe, principal branch of the Bakeel tribal confederation” (Eggers 7). Himself a “John Wayne of Yemen” (Eggers 127), his grandfather Hamood “had seen every film John Wayne had ever made, and collected holsters, hats, wore cowboy boots – anything Wayne had worn, he wanted” (Eggers 26). However, in the beginning Mokhtar showed interest in neither the American icon – himself an embodiment of American exceptionalism and ideal of freedom –, nor Yemen: “He didn’t wear his clothes correctly. He didn’t know the proper responses to standard greetings. He didn’t know the right Yemeni way to walk, act, smile, not smile” (Eggers 26). Conducting business all over Yemen, Hamood would bring Mokhtar on his rounds and teach his grandson “how a businessman carried himself, how a leader walked and talked” (Eggers 27-28). Before long, driven by ambition and eager “[t]o fit in, [Mokhtar] decided he would become super-Yemeni” (Eggers 26). So much so that after his initiatory stay in the native land of his parents, he returned to the US a changed youth: “he’d studied classical Arabic, awakened to his Yemeni heritage, and though Hamood hoped he might become an imam or an attorney, Mokhtar began instead to see himself in Hamood’s mold, as a man of enterprise. A man who liked to move” (Eggers 28).

Instead, Mokhtar became a doorman, or “Lobby Ambassador,” as they preferred it at the Infinity towers in San Francisco, where “doctors, tech millionaires, professional athletes and wealthy retirees . . . came and went through the gleaming Infinity lobby, and Mokhtar held the doors open so they could pass without undue exertion” (Eggers 7). Far from being a dream job, as he was constantly exposed to the “inanities and vulgarities of the Infinity residents” (Eggers 49), working at the Infinity made him “thankful for the paycheck” and for being “in a clean and safe place, in a job that was not difficult or dangerous,” especially given that some of his Tenderloin friends were by now in jail or working in corner stores, “shotguns within reach,” or even dead in unaccounted for shootings. Consequently, “alive and safe in the

Infinity,” young Alkhanshali “felt grateful. But he wanted more. He just didn’t know what” (Eggers 50). That is until another fateful moment, when he finally became aware of an enormous statue nearby that featured a man “in midstride, drinking from a giant coffee cup,” a “mash-up of Ethiopian and Yemeni,” but with “cute little flowers all over his thobe,” which made Mokhtar doubt its historical accuracy as “[n]o self-respecting Arab would be wearing flowers all over his thobe” (Eggers 57). However, as if “[s]ome ghost of memory passed through him” (Eggers 58), Mokhtar went home to his parents in a daze, only to learn from his mother that

‘We’ve had coffee in our family for hundreds of years,’ she said. ‘Don’t you remember your grandfather’s house in Ibb? He had coffee trees in his yard. He’s *still* got them. Don’t you know Yemenis were the first to export coffee? Yemenis basically invented coffee. You didn’t know this?’ (Eggers 58, emphasis in the original)

Consequently, Mokhtar decided then and there to probe deeper into the Yemeni roots of coffee, thus highlighting and doubling the earlier (re)discovery of his origins.

Filled with “educational aspirations” and “dreamy language about cross-cultural collaboration,” young Alkhanshali plans to “create an economically viable and sustainable coffee company in Yemen with the purpose of improving the quality, consistency and production of coffee beans” while at the same time and likewise significantly “changing the lives of the growers and producers through high ethical standards and socially conscious business practices” (Eggers 96). Evidently, his years of political and social activism, as well as a profound interest in social justice informed his business plan. For instance, when we first meet Mokhtar it is in his capacity as community organizer in San Francisco, having just raised money for Somalis affected by famine; we learn immediately that he had already “been in the public eye here and there, and sometimes he thought he had a future in organizing, in representing Arabs and Muslims on some more elevated stage” (Eggers 12). Moreover, back in 2011, when there was still hope for Yemen, he

was one of the young activists involved in the march for Yemen in San Francisco, “swept up in the catapulting hopes of the Arab Spring” (Eggers 43), then part of a national delegation of Yemeni-Americans invited to address the State Department and meet with President Obama’s foreign policy advisors in support of Yemen’s push for democracy. So his prospective business strategy focused on uplifting the people of his parents’ native land can be regarded as a natural consequence of his activist background. Moreover, he envisioned how his very life stood to change dramatically once he joined “the pantheon of coffee explorers” and became “part of the historical continuum of coffee, a vivid time line animated by a succession of rogue adventurers who also happened to be, almost without exception, thieves” (Eggers 68). It was this “feeling of destiny obliterating all doubt” (Eggers 231) that fed Mokhtar’s ambition all throughout his endeavors to become the first Arab Q grader – “essentially an expert on the quality of Arabica coffee and uniquely qualified to score it” (Eggers 113). This made him go back to a country ravaged by civil war in order to bring to the United States samples of “the best beans grown in Yemen in eighty years, a haphazard but still significant representation of the coffee from the country where coffee was first cultivated and the manifestation of five hundred years of tradition” (Eggers 232).

The Yemen Mokhtar returned to in 2014 to gather his samples was one marked by intertribal warring and an increased threat by the al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), which had been targeted with drone strikes by the American-led coalition for years, to no avail and generating important civilian casualties. Upon arrival in the capital city of Sana'a, he “was confronted with the patchwork of overlapping military units, security forces and ragtag groups of Houthi or pseudo-Houthi rebels all over the airport and the roads” (Eggers 182). This made him decide to begin carrying a few grenades besides his regular SIG Sauer – “[i]n Yemen, the grenades were more for show than anything. Men wore them on their chests, attached to vests, as a signal of their willingness to take any argument to its logical conclusion” (Eggers 185). What is more, in a country that comes second only to the United States as

the most armed nation per capita, “men wore AKs walking down the street” and even “brought them to weddings” (Eggers 165). Even though constantly worrying that “the country was going the way of Iraq – a lawless land of sectarian strife, suicide bombs, kidnappings, and the impossibility of untroubled life” (Eggers 213), Mokhtar continued his work with local coffee farmers as best he could until the *Charlie Hebdo* attack took place at the beginning of January 2015; one week later, the Yemeni branch of al-Qaeda (al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula) claimed responsibility for it.

In an escalation of events, the Houthis managed to take control of the country and force the president out of office, at which point the Western embassies started closing, but as Mokhtar was soon to find out, “there were no plans for a U.S. evacuation of American citizens” (Eggers 215). As the American authorities in Yemen “deemed the prospect of unintentionally bringing a terrorist into the United States too great a risk,” it was apparently decided “to leave American citizens stuck in Yemen to their own devices” (Eggers 225). Unwavering in his pursuit to bring coffee beans from the Yemeni war zone back to the United States and having survived the bombing of a mosque “sure that nothing would ever frighten him again” because “[i]t was as if he had died already” (Eggers 224), Mokhtar embarked on a perilous journey through an active war zone to the fabled port of Mokha and out of Yemen, which put his life in danger at every turn and made him wonder whether he would truly become a “coffee martyr” and receive posthumous recognition from the mayor of San Francisco and President Obama himself (Eggers 257). Threatened at multiple checkpoints on the way, incarcerated, interrogated and barely keeping alive at times, he managed to literally talk his way out of dangerous situations by telling everyone about his plan to show the world that Yemen was more than “civil war and drones and qat”² (Eggers 257). Seemingly living by the creed that “[w]hoever controls the conversation controls the deal” (Eggers 34) and given his background in the Tenderloin where you had to “think quick, talk fast . . . listen and assimilate. If you sounded ignorant, you got taken” (Eggers 31),

Mokhtar navigated dangerous situations solely based on his earnest appearance, persistence and rhetorical appeal:

'I just work in coffee,' he said. 'Look in my suitcase – it's just coffee samples. I'm trying to help people, help farmers.' He was talking quickly, and felt some security in their attention, their patience. He needed to stay alive, to keep his companions alive. He needed to keep talking. (Eggers 242)

His confident appeal to the implicit empathy and altruism of their captors was persuasive and the party heading for the Port of Mokha emerged unscathed, even with an apparent upper-hand, since upon release Mokhtar "started shaking their hands, patting their backs. He smiled, laughed, made it seem that he was some kind of visiting American dignitary inspecting the troops" (Eggers 244). But it was not just his appearance as a learned man (as it turns out, his only year at the madrasah paid out) with good people skills and a convincing story to tell that enabled Mokhtar to "walk out of his captivity in bright camaraderie with his former jailers" (Eggers 264). It was also the fact that his enthusiastic pursuit revealed even to the locals new dimensions of Yemen, one which reached far beyond the warring factions and persistent crisis:

Mokhtar said yes, that's Yemen, that it was all Yemen, that there was so much more to the country than Aden, than Sana'a. More men gathered around Mokhtar as he waved his fingers over his screen, left and right, showing them the drying beds, the red cherries, the bright green leaves, the tanned faces of the farmers, their children. Another man, younger than the last, asked the same thing: 'That's really Yemen?' (Eggers 254-55)

His arrival at the San Francisco airport was nothing short of a media circus and Mokhtar found himself in high demand with news stations, but also with the Arab-American community, Muslim American advocacy groups, and coffee specialists in the United States (Eggers 300). His presence at the Specialty Coffee Association of America conference in Seattle – his ultimate goal at

that point and the reason for which he strived so hard to get the beans out of Yemen – was similarly a major success and his keynote address was largely commended by the community of specialists. It seemed that Mokhtar’s dream to shed light on the Yemeni ties of specialty coffee in the United States, one of the largest consumers of this praised commodity in the world, had finally been achieved, given the public platform his triumphant return benefitted from. It has been argued that “the great appeal of the [American] Dream is its decisively public character” and that in “[i]ts most mythically appealing form, American opportunity thrives in sunlight” (Cullen 20). Along these lines, one of the final, symbolic moments that Eggers’s book describes is the arrival of the first ship carrying Mokhtar’s coffee in an American port, in broad daylight:

The sun was high and white. The day was impossibly bright. There were a few sailboats out, a ferry or two, nothing else. No ships. No tankers. Whenever a ship appeared between those towers, it would be the *Luciana*. There was nothing else like it on the water. . . . And there it was. Between the towers, the black nose of the ship. ‘Oh my God,’ Mokhtar said. The *Luciana*. It said so right on the bow. The ship was stacked high with containers of white and blue, yellow and green. Mokhtar turned on his camera and narrated. ‘We’re here on the twenty-sixth of February. Between those two buildings, right over there, that ship is carrying eighteen thousand kilograms of the world’s best coffee. From Yemen.’ (Eggers 315)

In June of 2016, Port of Mokha coffee became available at Blue Bottle³ coffee shops all over the United States as the most expensive brew ever sold, at \$16 a cup. The following year, it reached shops across continents and received the highest rating in the *Coffee Review*’s twenty-year history of publication (Eggers 321). However, the steep price of Port of Mokha coffee is indicative not just of the coffee’s obvious high quality (given its rating by specialists), but especially of the hardships encountered in the production and shipment processes, as well as of Mokhtar’s commitment to supporting the local growers and harvesters of

Yemeni coffee. As a result, in chasing his very own American Dream, Mokhtar also becomes an agent of the ‘ethical turn’ in markets at the beginning of the twenty-first century. It has been argued that until the second half of the twentieth century consumption tended to be regarded as morally condemnable and hence

the rise of modern consumer politics in Europe and North America after 1945 represented a *demoralization* of consumption, in so far as this politics focused on the benefits and risks associated with specific products in a context in which generalized mass consumption was considered a norm. (Hilton qtd. in Barnett et al. 3, emphasis in the original)

However, with the advent of the twenty-first century, “there is a discernible trend to *remoralize* the market through issues of ethical consumerism and globalization,” so much so that within this context “moralities of consumption might therefore be re-emerging as globalized critiques of the discrepancies in northern affluence and southern poverty” (Hilton qtd. in Barnett et al. 3, emphasis mine). Furthermore, according to Keith Brown, nowadays consumers, activists, and entrepreneurs always find themselves in competition for moral / altruistic status within the marketplace, with implications for brand reputation and profitability (16).

Understood as “an organized field of strategic interventions” within the larger context of the contemporary politicization of consumption (Barnett et al. 13), ethical consumption aims to mobilize and encourage people to “recognize themselves as bearing certain types of global obligation by virtue of their privileged position as consumers, obligations which in turn they are encouraged to discharge in part by acting as consumers in ‘responsible’ ways” (Barnett et al. 13). Along these lines, Brown observes that Americans have long sought social change through shopping and refers to Lizabeth Cohen’s seminal work *A Consumers’ Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America* (2003), in which the author argues that following the 1930s, Americans “started to become more self-conscious about

their identities and interests as consumers” (qtd. in Brown 17). Brown concludes that today’s “consumer-dependent social movements (e.g. fair trade, organic, pink ribbon) are a rejuvenated version of the citizen consumer movement” in mid-twentieth century (17).

Mokhtar’s entire business strategy was devised with the contemporary demands for an ethical market in mind; his ultimate goal was to bring high-quality Yemeni coffee to the world from an impenetrable war zone while uplifting the Yemeni farmers involved in every stage of coffee growth and harvesting, as well as the regularly underpaid or exploited agents of distribution:

Everywhere along the line there were people involved. Farmers who planted and monitored and cared for and pruned and fertilized their trees. Pickers who walked among the rows of plants, in the mountains’ thin air, taking the cherries, only the red cherries, placing them one by one in their buckets and baskets. Workers who processed the cherries, most of that work done by hand, too, fingers removing the sticky mucilage from each bean. There were the humans who dried the beans. Who turned them on the drying beds to make sure they dried evenly. Then those who sorted the dried beans, the good beans from the bad. Then the humans who bagged these sorted beans. . . . The humans who tossed the bagged beans on trucks. The humans who took the bags off the trucks and put them into containers and onto ships. The humans who took the beans from the ships and put them on different trucks. The humans who took the bags from the trucks and brought them into the roasteries in Tokyo and Chicago and Trieste. The humans who roasted each batch. The humans who packed smaller batches into smaller bags for purchase by those who might want to grind and brew at home. Or the humans who did the grinding at the coffee shop and then painstakingly brewed and poured the coffee or espresso or cappuccino. (Eggers 89-90)

Part and parcel of the same contemporary process of political consumption, Mokhtar’s adventure narrative across continents and through war zones is good branding and works to support his entrepreneurial venture – that is, the same knack for storytelling

which helped him out of Yemen in the first place now ensures the popularity of his sixteen-dollar cups of coffee.

Bringing to the forefront the figure of a young man on “his hero’s journey” (Eggers 40), Eggers’s latest book reads as a captivating adventure story and a thriller at times, but mostly as an illustration of this “great epic” that is seemingly “[America’s] greatest contribution to the thought of the world” (Anonymous): the American Dream. Paralleling Benjamin Franklin’s own rise from “Obscurity” to “a State of Affluence and some degree of Reputation in the World” (Franklin 43), it has been argued that Mokhtar can be considered an entrepreneur or an altruist, but what he appears to be first and foremost is “a living distillation of the enduring, endlessly elastic power of the American dream” (Greenblatt). His ambition to resurrect the lost art of and interest in coffee cultivation in his parents’ native land and, hence, help add to the contemporary discourse about Yemen; the Muslim space also serves to bring together “people, places and times no longer easily accessible – whether it’s due to politics, geography or simply physics,” thus emphasizing once more the manner in which “communities of color have long been a creative force in defining America, despite its historical insistence that they do not belong” (Tai). Furthermore, Mokhtar’s endeavors across continents speak to the power of storytelling itself and about how spinning a good story ultimately ensures survival even through tempestuous times. Along the same lines, what makes Mokhtar’s accomplishment even more a story for our times is its abundance of empathy and solidarity, from friends who lend him money repeatedly to finance a ludicrous endeavor to strangers who help him flee Yemen under flying mortar shells to Yemenites who open their homes to this young American boy who promises to help redress the image of their country in the world through coffee.

Notes:

¹ A group of over twenty thousand boys orphaned and / or displaced during the Second Sudanese Civil War (1983-2005) who managed to flee

to the neighboring Ethiopia and Kenya, where they were taken in at refugee camps. Close to four thousand were eventually offered resettlement to the United States.

² Illegal in the US, qat (also khat) is a “long leaf that when chewed in significant quantities provide[s] a mild narcotic effect” (Eggers 62). It grows in similar climates but is far more profitable than coffee.

³ Blue Bottle Coffee is a so-called “third-wave,” premium coffee chain which commercializes high-quality, single-origin, freshly roasted beans.

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