

TRANS PLANTATIONS, 2018

SOUNDTRACK

TRANSLATIONS INTO ENGLISH

AMHARIC

Voice: Mesfin Ali

English Translation

You ask me where I come from. I come from the Earth. I am coffee. I grow on what you call a plant anywhere in a forest area. Where I come from, they used to call me Buna before. So I am growing in the forest as a wild coffee. If you go to some places in Kaffa, where coffee came from, you can still find me in the forest. People from various parts of the country travel long distances and they come to pick me during the picking season, because you know there are seasons when I am ready to be picked. They come and they put me in a bag and they take me somewhere. They wash me, they clean me, and they drink me. They sell me to other countries as well. That particular area is called Sheko, in Kaffa and Kepi, these places are known for their coffee plantations. They have big farms. Outside of these farms, there is plenty of coffee in the forest, which is not owned by any farmer. So that is wild coffee, anybody can come and pick it.

I am sure you have seen how the ladies prepare me. I am not being drunk by a person on their own, but I am always consumed in a group, with family, friends or neighbours. For any celebrations, Christmas, New Year, Funerals and Weddings – it is an expression of togetherness, bringing people together.

I could also tell you the story how I have been discovered. A shepherd was looking after his goats and observed how a goat reacted after she ate me (the coffee plant). So, he told his father and others, and they tasted it. After that I became known to other people as well.

Now I am consumed all over the world, even in rural areas.

ITALIAN

Voice: Ileana Di Peri

English Translation

Here they call me coffee. In Italy, they call me *caffè*. I have many names. Most people think I am Italian. But I am Arabica. I do not know where I have come from. I was dropped here in a huge sack amongst many others after a long journey. Then I was transferred into a cylinder next to a loud machine. People queue here impatiently in the morning, while I am here poured into a disposable cup. It is very busy. I am crushed into small pieces and boiled. They mix me with frothy milk, sugar and caramel. I really do not enjoy being mixed with sugar and milk to become a latte. In Italy I am mostly consumed as espresso. Pure and black. I feel stronger like that. People never take me away in a cup on the street. They would stand at the bar or sit down to have a chat. Would you like to taste me? I think I am very addictive...but I am not sure why.

(EGYPTIAN) ARABIC

Voice: Kegham Djeghalian

English Translation

I come from a tree, which most of you will never have seen in nature. A Swedish botanist classified me as 'Coffea arabica'. However, he is wrong! I am in fact not at all indigenous to Arabia: I am an "African drink"! Genetically I can be traced back to a small tree growing in the rain forest in a region that today is known as Ethiopia. It is after an uncomfortable journey being squashed in a big bag with many others on a rocky boat across the Red Sea that I got to Yemen...ever since I have been mistaken to be Arabic.

When I came to Yemen, Sufi Monks discovered that drinking me helped them to stay up for their midnight prayers. I remember how I blushed, when they named me 'al-qahwa' after an Arabic word for wine. "Ya Qawwi" – I am the possessor of all strength!

First, I was mainly consumed for medical or religious use, but soon I became very popular and a part of everyday life in Yemen. Thanks to Muslim pilgrims, who passed through the port of Mocha, I quickly spread all across the "Ottoman Empire". I remember farmers in Yemen would grow me in small gardens alongside their food crops and hand-pick me and later on roast me.... Oh...the smell...how I miss those times!

At the time, I was still considered an exotic luxury in Europe...(laughing) the Christian priests did not quite know what to make of me....and they thought I was the devil's drink! At the same time, demands for me increased throughout the Ottoman empire... For a long time, the Ottomans held a monopoly over me and controlled my trade across the Empire. The houses where people came to drink me used to be called Zahwa-khana... These Zahwa-khanas popped up everywhere in Mecca and Cairo – where I have lived for a long time – and also Istanbul and the cosmopolitan city of Aleppo.

They became hubs for artists and intellectuals to gather there...energized by consuming me they discussed arts, poetry....and politics.

So, no wonder, I was banned several times by many rulers!

For a long time, I was considered a Muslim drink in Europe. Priests who wanted to instigate my banning asked Pope Clemens VII to taste me in order to ban me...but instead he baptized me! And now they drink me everywhere!

TURKISH

Voice: Özlem Ceylan

Here they call me Turkish coffee...it always makes me laugh, because in fact I come from Brazil! Either way, I am very significant for the people here...they even named a colour after me...brown literally translates to coffee colour, *kahverengi*, or my colour. Although, mind you, I come in many shades...so this is a crude generalization, of course, I can be light brown, dark brown and so forth. But I still feel flattered that they have named a colour after me.

The way they prepare me here is very special, maybe that is what is Turkish about it, I am not sure: traditionally I am ground into a very fine powder and then put into a copper vessel and mixed with water and sometimes with sugar too. In fact, I have become really good friends with sugar...and we both like to mix just the water splashing on us is a bit cold, but gradually we all mix and become very hot... Just before reaching boiling point in my liquid form, they take me off the stove and I am filled into a small porcelain cup. Ah... the smell...I love the moment when I touch their lips...

When you asked me where I am from, I know I said that I come from Brazil...but well...it is more complicated than that, you see...there were times, when I used to grow elsewhere...in a land called Yemen...the farmers there used to plant me next to their food crops...it was such a pleasant life. Then, with the expansion of the Ottoman Empire, I have travelled everywhere...oh these long journeys in the dark, crossing oceans...it was an adventure, you know, but also very uncomfortable...many hundreds of thousands of us would travel together in a bag of cloth, being squashed, on the rocky sea...

And then in those days, they would still grind us by hand...what a weird sensation that is, to be ground into powder. It does not hurt, but it always surprises me how small I can become. Even smaller than my friend sugar!

I am fascinated that I am so important to them, I even rule their destiny. Can you imagine, they claim to decipher their future through me... See these old ladies sitting in the shade and drinking me while chatting. Soon they will turn the cup around, and my remains will stain the cups and saucers. I create strange shapes when I am drying (laughing) Funny enough they really seem to believe that they can predict the future by reading the images that I create on the cup.... But then... maybe they are right...who knows, what the future holds...

"The soul needs not coffee, nor a coffee shop. The soul needs fondness, coffee is just an excuse"

(CYPRIOT) GREEK

Voice: Rachel Eleftheriou

English Translation

Everybody knows me on this island, most grown-ups would have tasted me... I am delicious you know...some are addicted to me!

Sometimes I feel that I am not as popular as I used to be, but especially the older people here still enjoy drinking me in my original form, very finely ground and unfiltered. I believe they have done so for centuries. In fact, I cannot even remember how I got here. See these old ladies sitting in the shade and drinking me while chatting. Soon they will turn the cup around, and my remains will stain the saucer. I create strange shapes when I am dried (laughing) Funny enough they really seem to believe that they can predict the future by reading the images that I create.

The way they prepare me here is very special: I am ground into a very fine powder and then put into a copper vessel and mixed with water and sometimes with sugar too. In fact, I am really good friends with sugar...and (cheerful) we both like to mix Just the water splashing on us is a bit cold, but gradually we all mix and become very hot... Just before reaching boiling point in my liquid form, they take me off the stove and I am filled into a small porcelain cup. Ah... the smell...I love the moment when I touch their lips... You know what is really confusing me? Some visitors here have mistaken me for Turkish... But then, I was told that I was Greek. Well...it is a long story...maybe there was a time when I was considered a Turkish drink...but many bad things happened, you know...so anyway, I think I am Greek now. Or maybe I am Cypriot...or maybe I am both...or Mediterranean...or...maybe I do not belong to anyone....

I come from the earth...I belong everywhere... to everyone.

BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE

Voice: Alicia Bastos

English Translation

I have been here for as long as I remember. I grew up in Minas Gerais. I like the weather here: the fertile soil makes me feel good and I give more cherries...

I have not always lived here though. Some people call me Arabica. Others say I am from Africa. Maybe the Portuguese brought me here...in fact, I once heard a story that I was smuggled here from French Guyana by a man called Francisco de Melo Palheta. He apparently seduced a Governor's wife there to obtain my seeds and smuggle them over the border. Well, I guess I have always been desirable, but my popularity has just been increasing ever since!

To be honest, I have blurred memories of all this...but I remember that in the early days they planted an awful lot of us next to each other. We were so many that they had to bring in foreign work force to plant and pick us. Oh boy... how I felt sorry for these folks. It still makes me angry, when I think about it. (outraged) They kidnapped these people from their homeland, from a place they call Africa and then forced them to work here on the plantations. Almost five million of them... can you imagine!

You know, as I told you, the climate is nice here, so we grew quickly... the white folks trans-planted us here and now there is an awful, awful lot of us! Look at all these rows. And they still discover new corners of the land, where we could flourish...

It is a funny sensation to be picked from the scrub. It tickles me. Often, they will pick a lot of us at the same time, stripping us from the branch. Initially, I was screaming in fear, rolling around squashed into a bag with thousands of others... but I got used to it. After picking they lay us out on patios in the sun to dry...I enjoy that. It gives me a nutty and

creamy flavour later on. My smell is very strong...It makes people all over the world fall madly in love with me.

Most people here like me cheap and strong. Black. But sometimes they mix me with that disgusting white liquid, you know what they pump from the cows' breast, then they call me "media". Hmm... I do not think that the people who pick me actually drink me...I am probably too expensive for them...

Sometimes, after they pack me in huge bags together with hundreds of thousands of others... it will be dark and cold for a very long time... and I get very confused of where I am. It feels like a long coma and I suffocate, until I suddenly get unpacked by a pair of hands. (...)

COLOMBIAN SPANISH

Voice: Maria Campuzano Perez

English Translation

They say that I have a rich and full-bodied flavour with fruity notes...My taste is lovely, I am mild and well-balanced. I have grown up here in the mountains of Quimbaya...

...you know, before they planted me here, I used to grow in a place across the oceans, far, far away...in a place they call Africa...ah, what beautiful and lush mountains...ah, those long gone days...it all feels like a distant dream now...these curious goats used to snack on my berries and start to dance around and go crazy...Well, in fact, that's how the humans recognized how special I was...and now, they cannot live without me...isn't it amazing, how with time I have spread everywhere?

You see, I am quite fussy ...I do not like it everywhere... the weather and wind...the sun, the rain, the soil...everything needs to be perfect. But it did not take long until I began to enjoy growing here...I have to admit, I really like the soil. It is very special and fertile, nourishing my body and soul.... But more recently the weather has been strange...I do not know what is going on...but something is not right...sometimes I feel anxious...the weather is changing quickly...I have never experienced this before...

Anyway, ...

When I am happy, I flower from January to March and then I bloom again from July to September.... When they come to pick me, there is a lot of excitement.

I am proud of my beans, they are part of me, and through them I can travel and see the world...

