

# Mass Immigration as a Cautionary Morality Tale

By CASSANDRA FRANK

**S***ea Changes*, Derek Turner's first novel, explores the many dark sides of immigration through the fictional tale of a young Iraqi man who leaves war-torn Basra for England, and the reaction of the English to his dramatic arrival and the tragedy of those who perish on the way. The book explores the effect mass immigration has through the perspectives of a diverse set of English characters. Some of them include a hapless farmer who lives in the countryside, the narcissistic leftwing journalist who casually destroys people just to better provide himself a showcase for his smug moral superiority, the politicians who take advantage of the frictions caused by immigration to squelch dissent and cement their own power, and the right wing opinion columnist who offers what seems to be a lone voice of articulate dissent.

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## Sea Changes

By Derek Turner

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The novel starts with a vivid and poetic description of a group of brown and black bodies that have washed ashore on the East Coast of England. The reader is not yet told who they are or where they come from, but it is clear they must be illegal immigrants. The scene then changes to post-Iraqi war Basra in Iraq to follow Ibrahim Nassouf, an Iraqi man in his early thirties who has resolved to leave Iraq and his family behind to go to England, though he will have to break the laws and pay smugglers to do so. For the next two-thirds of the book the narrative flips back and forth between Ibrahim's journey through to Europe through the Middle East and a variety of scenes set in England showing how vari-

ous English people react to the bodies on the beach and the recriminations that they visit upon each other. In the final third, Ibrahim reaches England at last and the various threads come together.

Though the book is clearly intended to provide a critical view of the phenomenon of mass Third World immigration to the West, the main immigrant character himself, Ibrahim, is portrayed very sympathetically. At 12 his father was taken and killed by Saddam's men, and he was left with the terrible burden of providing for a mother and three sisters in a land with few opportunities for an honest man. However, he meets occupying Westerners, and also sees and hears about the world of the West from the media. From this Western contact he naturally builds an alluring fantasy, imagining that the West is a paradise he has only to get to, and he will become rich beyond anything he knows now and even be able to provide for those sisters he leaves behind. His decision to go does not therefore seem morally blameworthy, he may have to break English laws to get there, but what are English laws to him and why should they prevent him from improving his lot in life?

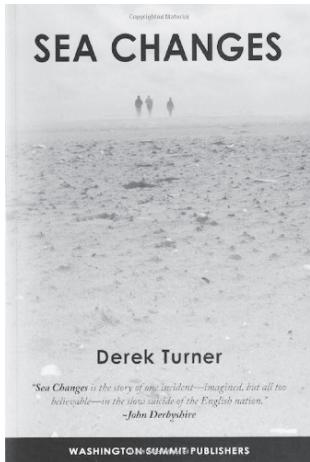
Yet, his understandable desire to come does not create the ability for countries like England to assimilate him and many millions of other immigrants and still remain recognizable to themselves. Attempting to share prosperity and freedom with everyone in the world who desires it, all portents suggest, will lead to their destruction. The depiction of those who insist that the would-be immigrants' needs create a moral duty to lift all immigration controls and that any objection is racism and hatred is not sympathetic at all; they are the villains of the work, rather than the immigrants themselves.

Perhaps the worst villain is the muckraking investigative journalist John Leyden, who exploits the tragedy on the beach for all its worth. Though the identity of those who sent the migrants to their death is unknown, Leyden does not hesitate to blame their deaths on vicious "xenophobes" and to use his paper to attack all supporters of any immigration controls as driven "by the lowest of emotions — hatred and fear of 'The Other,' an inhuman willingness to let those who have nothing

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*Cassandra Frank writes from the East Coast.*

share in our wealth and privilege...” Confident that his trite agreement with all of his peers will be hailed as courageous, he does not satisfy himself with articles that merely attack faceless and nameless members of what he terms “the great ignorant idle lump that re-elected governments year after year, sometimes even voted National Union—the caucus that perpetuated injustice and exclusion, kept the tabloids in business, ate in burger places, and watched movies about car-chases.” Rather, he sets



his sights on ruining the reputation of Dan Gowt, a farmer who happened to live near the coast where the bodies washed up and to be present when the reporters descended on the scene with their cameras. In the interest of being on television, Dan Gowt made the simple mistake of inarticulately telling an interviewer: I’ve been told that they’re all coloureds out there you know — foreigners.

Aliens, sort of thing. Sounds like they were trying to sneak into the country illegally. It’s very very sad. Poor people — poor silly people.” For these simple words, John Leyden recognizes him as the Great Enemy and sets out to destroy him in print.

In *Sea Changes*, “compassion” is thus used as a weapon to stifle dissent. The journalists, “human rights” attorneys, and politicians wield the notion of abstract compassion without a thought of the consequences; they turn children, such as Dan Gowt’s daughter attending university, against their parents, they force those who disagree to resign from their jobs, they expel a member of Parliament from participating in what is supposed to be a democracy for actions on the basis of an event he had nothing to do with. Yet they, who wield this lofty compassion for all the poor and downtrodden of the world, show no true compassion for their fellows. These characters are the most selfish of all. While the contrast between their heroic self-image and their destructive hypocrisy is compelling, and makes for biting satire, in the case of John Leyden, the repulsive depiction goes a little too far to be believable, as he does not have a single redeeming quality.

Contrary to the idea that there can be no virtue without mass immigration, the story shows that immigration breaks down the moral fiber of everyone involved. Visions of a better life inspires immigrants to transplant

themselves from places where they have a shared moral and cultural code with those around them to places where they don’t. Ibrahim and others like him, as they are breaking the law, must put themselves at the mercy of the unscrupulous, for whom illegal immigration offers ripe opportunities for profit. And even when the migrant successfully makes the trip, the process of immigration is alienating and confusing. Ibrahim dreams of England as though it were a magical paradise, and when he first arrives he intends to do everything he can to become a contributing member of the West, but reality lets him down. It is not his fault, but he does not fit in.

*Sea Changes* is finely written but depressing. Sadly, there is not a single character who seems to have any chance to stop the madness from destroying the West before it’s too late. Dan Gowt, the farmer, may see the results of mass immigration as harming England, but he shrinks from getting involved; he cannot even bring himself to defend his own words to his own wife and daughter. But, while he may see the problem, his inarticulateness makes the reader question if he could do anything useful if he were inclined to fight. Likewise, the relatively conservative journalist who writes a column critical of mass immigration and the leftist anti-racism that enables it, though he possesses the talent to articulate the issue, wants only to wail impotently from the pages of the newspaper, and will not fight for even so much in the end. Taken together, the message is overwhelming defeat.

Many readers will probably be those who are already horrified at the seeming inevitability of mass immigration. The question is whether this book could change the minds of those who haven’t thought about the question before. The book itself, which expresses the problem of immigration not through haranguing but through illustration, demonstrates that one can be compassionate and yet want to stop immigration. While the author does not directly tell the reader what to think, the reader can easily see that the author’s views are compassionate towards immigrants themselves but angry at the politicians, educational institutions, and members of the media that have no loyalty to their own country.

Most people don’t want to think of themselves as deaf to the needs of the less fortunate. Therefore the simple knowledge that one can be both compassionate and articulate and not see mass immigration from the Third World to the West as the salvation of the world might go a long way in convincing those who have given the matter little thought. For this reason, this is a book that open-minded friends should be encouraged to read. But a little more cheerfulness would probably also help, because most people don’t want to be depressed either. ■