The IHU Writing Center:
We help get the writer's creative and critical energies flowing

MERVE AKTAR *

Almost 60 years passed for the reunion

After they were first separated in the early 1950’s, they were able to see each other after almost 60 years in 2010. After that they got the chance to meet two or three times, writing letters to each other in the meantime.

But their latest meeting was not that joyful. “Ayla” whose real name is Eunja Kim has been reunited with her 91-year-old Turkish “father” at an Istanbul hospital where he is undergoing treatment. When she went into his room, she could not hold back her tears. She grabbed her foster father’s hand as soon as she entered the room and sergeant Süleyman reacted to it. Sergeant Süleyman’s nurse said that he hadn’t been reacting to anything up until now, but apparently he felt that his daughter was there.

Road to the Oscars
“This is an international film first. The story is international; you can’t find this kind of story anywhere” the director Can Ulkay said of “Ayla: The Daughter of War”. The film will be the Turkish entry for Best Foreign Language Film this year in the Oscars. If “Ayla” receives a nomination, it will be the first of 24 submitted films to do so for Turkey.

Ayla

“Hard writing makes easy reading.” Wallace Stegner, Crossing to Safety

What makes writing strong? A logical train of thought and proper use of grammar undoubtedly constitute the foundations of good writing, but there are more structural elements and rhetorical devices that together work to produce a text that not only conveys information clearly but that creates an impact on the reader, regardless of the discipline or subject. Such texts are usually easy to read, and seem as though they were completed effortlessly. Serious effort is involved, however, including the writer’s grasp of the nuances in his or her topic, awareness of the intended audience, and knowledge of which rhetorical and argumentative strategies will produce the desired narrative effect. Strong writing does not come easily to anybody, and getting to that point involves an intense process of working through multiple drafts. This is the case for experienced academics and professionals as much as it is for students new to academia. Ibn Haldun University is keen on providing support to writers of all levels, and I am excited to share the news of the IHU Writing Center, a service that aims to assist students, faculty, and staff from all disciplines with developing their critical thinking and drafting skills, in the form of individual consultations. Workshops are also planned, and will be provided on topics ranging from sentence structure to annotated bibliographies.

Details regarding how consultations work, who the consultants are, and how to book appointments can be found in the email sent to all IHU users in November, and a Writing Center booklet is forthcoming. In brief, whatever stage of (not) writing you are at, you may book a twenty-five minute or fifty-minute appointment to share your draft-related concerns with the consultant, bearing in mind that your draft will not be edited or proofread. Consultations are constructive conversations wherein you are encouraged to speak about which parts of the writing process you are spending the most time on and why, and about what your goals are as the author. The consultant will help you explore your ideas, and, when necessary, will challenge you to articulate them in a style and structure that address your goals more effectively. This is because consultations are not product-oriented but writer-oriented, and aim to help you come into your own as a writer.

* Coordinator of the Ibn Haldun University Writing Center.

He was in a dilemma between two choices. He would either stay with her in Korea or go back to Turkey alone. Because of strict rules, he was not allowed to take her with him. In the end, Sergeant Süleyman decided to take the risk of abducting Ayla. He put her in a large box that was among his belongings, but unfortunately, he was caught red-handed.

“You are like a daughter to me. Do not ever forget me, I will never forget you, and I will patiently wait for the day when I can take you in my arms again!”

Heartbreakingly, this was how they parted.

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