If you missed our book discussion last Friday between author Roya Hakakian (A Beginners Guide to America: For the Immigrant and the Curious) and author Carlos Eire (Waiting for Snow in Havana), you can now view the recording online [1].

At a time when America seems more divided than ever, Roya Hakakian, a naturalized immigrant shares her American experience, and tells others what it took to fall in love with America, despite its flaws. A Beginner's Guide to America: For the Immigrant and the Curious [2] exemplifies how one immigrant wishes to do her part to heal our national wounds and enable the native-born to see what they can't see.

While it disguises itself as a manual for newcomers to America, it is truly Roya’s way of talking to the native-born Americans and reminding them of the significance of their racial multiplicity, founding ideals, and democratic principles, not only for the sake of America herself, but for all others who have known and are fighting totalitarianism. As shifting demographics and our divided political culture make anti-immigrant backlash stronger than ever, it’s all the more important that all Americans hear Roya’s story and those by others included in the book.

Speaker Bios:

ROYA HAKAKIAN is the author of Assassins of the Turquoise Palace and Journey from the Land of No, and has published two collections of poetry in Persian. Her essays have appeared in The New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, and on NPR's All Things Considered. She has collaborated on programming for leading journalism units in network television, including 60 Minutes. She is the recipient of a Guggenheim Fellowship, and served on...
the editorial board of World Affairs. Since 2015, she has taught at THREAD, a writing workshop at Yale, and is a fellow at the Davenport College at Yale. She lives in Connecticut.

CARLOS EIRE received his PhD from Yale in 1979, and specializes in the social, intellectual, religious, and cultural history of late medieval and early modern Europe, with a focus on both the Protestant and Catholic Reformations; the history of popular piety; and the history of the supernatural, and the history of death. Before joining the Yale faculty in 1996, he taught at St. John’s University in Minnesota and the University of Virginia, and was a member of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton for two years. He is the author of War Against the Idols: The Reformation of Worship From Erasmus to Calvin (1986); From Madrid to Purgatory: The Art and Craft of Dying in Sixteenth Century Spain (1995); A Very Brief History of Eternity (2010); Reformations: The Early Modern World (2016); and The Life of Saint Teresa of Avila: A Biography (2019). And he is co-author of Jews, Christians, Muslims: An Introduction to Monotheistic Religions (1997). He has also ventured into the twentieth century and the Cuban Revolution in the memoir Waiting for Snow in Havana (2003), which won the National Book Award in Nonfiction in the United States and has been translated into more than a dozen languages. His second memoir, Learning to Die in Miami (2010), explores the exile experience. A past president of the Society for Reformation Research, he is currently researching attitudes toward miracles in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. His recent book Reformations won the R.R.Hawkins Prize for Best Book of the Year from the American Publishers Association, as well as the award for Best Book in the Humanities. It was also awarded the Jaroslav Pelikan Prize by Yale University Press. All of his books are banned in Cuba, where he has been proclaimed an enemy of the state – a distinction he regards as the highest of all honors.

Presented by Yale University Office of International Students and Scholars, Sanctuary Kitchen, Yale University's Jackson Institute for Global Affairs, The MacMillan Center at Yale University, and Dwight Hall at Yale University.

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