Mobile Identities

Mobile Identities:

Race, Ethnicity, and Borders in Contemporary Literature and Culture

Edited by

Kamal Sbiri, Jopi Nyman,
and Rachida Yassine

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

KAMAL SBIRI, JOPI NYMAN,
AND RACHIDA YASSINE

Mobility in the Era of Borders

More than ever before, mobility is now one of the factors that most powerfully contribute to the configuration of our current transnational and transcultural contemporaneity. Economic migration and refugee displacement, among other forms of mobility, have de-stabilized cultural barriers and borders, putting to test the ways in which nations and national imaginaries have traditionally been constructed or defined. Mobility and related border-crossings have created transnational spaces that challenge the idea of the nation-state and its borders, showing that national and cultural identities are unstable, metamorphic, and in a constant state of formation and transformation. While such transnational spaces are often sites where exclusionary practices involving race, ethnicity, religion, and gender – among other variables – are contested, where culture is productively transformed, and where new hybrid identities emerge, such development is at the same time increasingly challenged by diverse borders and processes of exclusion.

Mobility is central to modernity and contributes to the debates concerning both the centre and the margin. Tim Cresswell points out that since mobility is a social product, it constitutes "a meaningful world of social spaces and time" (2006: 5) where mobility also functions as a producer of time and space (2006: 6). In viewing mobility as a social construct, Cresswell suggests that the notion of becoming is constituent of mobility, and as such, our perception of the world appears fluid and mobile, enabling our thoughts to supersede the social, cultural, political, academic, and economic boundaries that separate the self from its others (2005: 45). Stephen Greenblatt distinguishes between metaphorical movement and physical movement, suggesting that a proper understanding of mobility can

only be attained through the interplay between the metaphorical and the physical (2010b: 250). As a result, mobility is examined as movement abstracted from power, as "an idea" involving the displacement of people and cultures through time and in space (Cresswell 2006: 2). Nevertheless, the space of mobility allows for both cultural productions and "cultural murder" (Greenblatt 2010a: 14), making mobilities appear on certain occasions as threats to the nation-states as is evident in contemporary European populisms. Consequently, certain groups and individuals attempt "to wall themselves off from the world" and sometimes resort to violence (Greenblatt 2010b: 252).

Mobility, in other words, is linked with borders as both geopolitical and cultural constructs that not only separate people and cultures but also generate new forms of belonging and becoming for those involved in bordering processes as well as for those inhabiting or journeying through different borderscapes (see Brambilla 2015: 20). Borders, as Schimanski and Wolfe put it, are sites of b/ordering that are involved in "processes of exclusion and inclusion" (2017: 149). Such acts are not limited to actual borders. Often involving race and targeting Otherness and migrant bodies, as Basham and Vaughan-Williams (2013: 509) suggest, bordering practices are performed regularly in different locations ranging from international airports with their visible border security practices and other public spaces to modes of everyday bordering such as monitoring international students' course attendance and insistence to report on suspicious people and events in local neighbourhoods.

As a response to such trends, this volume seeks to present a mosaic of perspectives on the issues of migration, mobility, bordering practices, and their importance for rethinking cultural identity and grasping the (dis)connections between East and West, and North and South, with the aim to understand different ways in which experiences of movement and displacement as well as cultural encounters reshape constructions of "home" and the nation, self and other.

The terms race, ethnicity, and cultural mobility are used in this volume as conceptual tools that help us understand how the construction of identities is triggered by perpetual mobilities and cultural encounters. We want to emphasize that the study of identities as mobile and transforming needs to account for race and ethnicity and understand how these concepts plug in with border-crossings, geographical imaginary spaces, and cultural mobility. In so doing, it is possible to highlight the constant and gradual changes that the field of border studies and the concept of diaspora have undergone. This volume, therefore, addresses the processes of bordering that the migrant undergoes, and how these processes affect the migrant's

perception of the self and its interaction with other selves, including those whom the migrants encounter and those who decide not to leave. As Brah suggests, diasporas include both local and global elements (1996: 196). Our specific point of departure is the realization that borders are complex and "not easy to locate, let alone to pass" (Gardini et al. 2017: 2) because they "exist both within and outside discourse" (Rosello and Wolfe 2017: 1). This recognition allows us to view borders as borderscapes, extended sites where the effects of the border, especially those of in/exclusion, are negotiated (see Brambilla 2015: 18), and which play a role in the creation of different forms of public in/visibilities regulating the positioning of migrants (Brambilla and Pötzsch 2017: 72–3). In other words, migrants face the danger of being too visible and thus may become objects of hostile discourses and racialization, even though political participation would demand visibility rather than invisibility. Yet, borders and borderscape, while sites of difference and exclusion, are in Brambilla's view also "*markers of belonging* and *places of becoming*" (2015: 24; emphasis in the original). As mobile locations, they offer migrants and others inhabiting such spaces new possibilities to construct communities, attain public visibility, and transform identities.

What this shows is that borders assume an ontological dimension, and crossing them amounts to an exploration of the self as much as to a confrontation with Otherness. Border-crossing is, thus, a site where difference becomes a form of encounter as well as a location that resists assimilation while simultaneously allowing for the dynamic possibilities of fusion that processes such as hybridity embrace and articulate. Hence, borders are not viewed as neutral (Rosello and Wolfe 2017: 2; Al-Mousawi 2016: 5; Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2007: ix).

As such, understanding borders as borderscapes allows for approaching borders as mobile and relational (Brambilla 2015: 18; Rajaram and Grundy-Warr 2007: x), which will help in highlighting the many meanings that the notion of border may entail for migrants and others. These produced meanings are ways of rewriting borders (Schimanski 2015: 93) and can be used to conceptualize a borderscape as "an area, shaped and reshaped by transnational flows, that goes beyond the modernist idea of clear-cut national territories" (Dell'Agnese and Szary 2015: 6). As we live in a time marked by a high degree of mobilities and migrations, their spatial consequences are of paramount importance in diverse ways. While borders are tightened, checkpoints increase, and the rationale is to block mobility at the border, experiences of border-crossing generate encounters that engender new alternative identities (individual and collective) on the move and transform ways in which borders and crossings are imagined. These

imaginations affect the construction of identities and in turn produce borders as narratives of race, ethnicity, and cultural mobility.

In this sense, bordering highlights diverse modes of Otherness and alterity, which generate friction between border-crossing migrants and host societies addressed in many contributions to the volume, but it also reveals opportunities for debordering. As a sign of the former, racialized minorities and diasporas are markers of Otherness in host societies where their "natural visibility" (Brambilla and Pötzsch 2017: 73) may turn into a problem amidst hostile discourses such as racism and Islamophobia as producers of further borders. However, the promise of border-crossings is seen in the fact that they also tell of possibilities of constructing identities across the border in that the border as "mobile, particular, unpredictable, porous, permeable, and even untraceable" (Gardini et al. 2017: 2) may generate inclusion, not only exclusion. This possibility indicates the complexity of identity construction that becomes apparent in the migrant's use of language as well as in the representations of gender, ethnicity, and race that constitute an entire morphology of self-construction of identity in transit.

Migrant subjects are often also diasporic subjects. In approaching mobility and borders, we also explore the diasporic condition, and address the different complexities generated by diaspora experiences from mobility and border-crossing that involve their identity construction. The term diaspora has a long history, and its recent use in academia shows that memory, dispersion, trauma (Morehouse 2015: 20), home, and representation remain, among other concepts, important indicators for locating diasporic communities (see Brah 1996). Since the experience of border-crossing may entail trauma, there is a clear need to address diasporic identity formation as it transcends the border. Diasporic subjects never fully belong anywhere: they constantly struggle to assert their subjectivities in disputed spaces where their role is often marginal. They must navigate these spaces in order to reconstruct their identities in multiple ways in a transitional and global environment, being involved in a constant struggle to negotiate the diaspora in search for agency and a sense of belonging in new communities. The idea of displacement, however, places the diasporic in a paradoxical situation, "one that is caught between 'here' and 'there,' or between those who share roots, and is shaped through multilocality" (Agnew 2005: 14). In this sense the condition of the border runs through the questions of race, ethnicity, gender, migration, and diaspora that forge intersectionally the identity of the migrant in the conditions of mobility.

As many contributors to the volume show, this border is located between Africa and Europe. As such it is one example of what the New Keywords Collective calls the "multiplication of borders and border-zones […] within

and around the amorphous 'European' space" (2016: 4) that serves as the location for enacting "the crisis *of* Europe" (2016: 2; emphasis in the original). As the New Keywords Collective (2016: 9) suggests, the current discourse has problematized the identity of Europe and Europeans – the contributors to this volume enter the debate through analyses of refugees and migrants in diverse geographical and historical contexts in the spaces "within" and "around" Europe. As the chapters in this volume reveal, narratives of mobility and migration open up new potential for a renewed understanding of terms, even though the prevalent discourse of the "crisis" promotes control, reborderings, and populist views.

To address the problematic outlined above, this volume is structured around several interconnected issues related to the role and representation of cultural mobility, migration, and diaspora in contemporary literature and culture with particular reference to the North–South nexus and processes of bordering. While the chapters in the volume address experiences of borders, mobility, and encounters in different ways with their own specific methodological tools, they share an interest in the changing politics of the representation of mobile identities and encounters in literature, culture, and history in the modern era up to the twenty-first century. The individual case studies deal with issues such as contemporary migrant writing by postcolonial and refugee writers and representation of post-9/11 Arab American identity in diasporic Arab literature.

Through a variety of case studies, the volume addresses new emerging topics primarily in the contexts of postcoloniality and globalization, and also addresses questions of citizenship and migration policy. It pays particular attention to the role of borders, race, ethnicity, and national identity in diverse socio-cultural encounters generated by mobility from the South towards the North and the West generally. The chapters address ways in which the encounters are represented through stereotypes and binaries, which often characterize encounters between Europe, the West, and other spaces, but they also problematize simplified Manicheanisms by addressing such issues as cultural hybridity, diaspora, and forced migration as treated in literature, film, and policies. While encounters between Africa and Europe have been addressed in previous works such as the edited volume *Africa and Fortress Europe: Threats and Opportunities* (Gebrewold 2016), the edited collection *Africa Writing Europe: Opposition, Juxtaposition, Entanglement* (Olaussen and Angelfors 2009), and the edited anthology *Black Europe and the African Diaspora* (Hine, Keaton, and Small 2009) exploring the image of Europe in Africa and the African presence in European literature, society, and culture, in this collection the emphasis is more clearly on migration and its representation in different contexts

involving processes of bordering. The North African or Arab focus in several chapters in the volume also links their concerns with Western perceptions of Islam and Muslim identities, distinguishing this volume from other work on the topic.

The multiple perspectives provided in the various chapters in the volume emphasize the interaction between migrants and hosts, interaction that is both material, discursive, and historical. This interaction shows that European and African identities are entangled to the extent that Europe can be seen as "a part of Africa" as Huggan puts it (2008: 122), echoing the thinking of Appiah (1992: 72), which further underlines the crisis of Europe as proposed by New Keywords Collective (2016). In the analyses, established stereotypes and images are challenged and revised, historical and cultural links revealed, and the porosity of borders uncovered. In so doing, contributors address emerging changes in representation and values, which are based on such socio-cultural factors as the increasing presence of (North) Africans in formerly homogenous nation states in the West, when new cultural identities become increasingly visible as results of large-scale global mobilities. Through a critique of views that address ethnicity as an unambiguous category, the collection aims to show that mobile identities are contradictory and even conflicting, constantly reconstructed in diverse border-crossings involving negotiations of in/exclusion and processes of bordering. By engaging with specific "moments" across North/South encounters generated by diverse forms of mobility, and introducing many voices that sometimes have not been heard, the collection aims to offer potential avenues for further reconsiderations and re-imaginings of identity and cultural mobility in a globalized world.

Chapter Breakdown

This volume consists of three intertwined parts that reflect on the migrant experience and the influence of mobility on the construction of identity from the perspective of the displaced. Using a variety of approaches and conceptual frameworks, the volume addresses issues pertinent to the role and representation of mobility from the South to the North with particular reference to (North) African literature and culture from the nineteenth to the twenty-first century. The volume addresses both work emerging from these regions as well as related discourses addressing migrants and diverse cultural encounters. Migrants are approached not as a homogenous category but in terms of their diverse experiences of race, ethnicity, gender, and religion.

The first part of the volume is devoted to an examination of the ways in which mobility from the South involves diverse border-crossings, both concrete and cultural, that generate traumatizing experiences. This is because borders are spaces that foster opportunity on one hand and anxiety on the other; they are both symbols of national sovereignty and identity markers. Despair and the promise of another country set people in motion, but to reach the country of their hopes, they have to cross oceans, overcome mountains, and even walls. A line cuts through the space between here and there. This is where another law begins; only a few manage to filter through to the other side, but they stumble unto divergent bodies and cultures of knowledge and conflicting epistemologies and ontologies. As a result, the border-crossers' identities shift and change in the course of crossing, marking the initial stages of forming borderless identities. Hence, in addition to understanding borders and borderscapes as acts and locations generating new identities through encounters, the chapters in this volume locate their topics in crosscultural currents and underline the important role that cultural encounters play in the formation of identity.

In the first chapter Jopi Nyman examines a set of contemporary narratives by refugees, produced in collaboration with writers and artists, which tell of their attempts to reach Europe and Britain in particular. Reading the recent anthology *Refugee Tales* (2016), the first volume in a series of three, as a narrative of the borderscape and border-crossing, the chapter argues that the borderscape is represented as a Gothic space of death, but that it also generates new identities and hope. The border trope of waiting (van Houtum and Wolfe 2017) that characterizes migrants' predicament at the border is relevant for both this chapter and the second chapter by Kamal Sbiri. Sbiri pursues this exploration of the troubling and yet generative resilience (Gardini et al. 2017) of the borderscape by addressing sub-Saharan mobility towards Europe through an analysis of the postcolonial French writer Marie NDiaye's novel *Three Strong Women* (2012). Using ideas presented by theorists Tim Cresswell (2006) and Stephen Clingman (2009), the chapter shows that the space of fiction is a site of multiple processes of navigation amid hegemonic and counter-hegemonic endeavours where certain narratives of bordering are excluded from western discourses of homogeneity. In the third chapter, Rachida Yassine presents another perspective onto experiences of discrimination and exclusion engendered by mobility towards Europe. She analyses the Senegalese writer and film director Sembène Ousmane's groundbreaking reflection on immigration and the trauma of border-crossing in his first feature film *La noire de…* (1966). Deploying the Marxist-inspired postcolonial theories of Frantz Fanon, which were later re-read and re-cast

by postcolonial theorists such as Homi Bhabha, and more recently Achille Mbembe, the chapter explores the way this film was prophetic of the epistemic effects of the geographical location North/South, which has culminated in the present-day immigration crisis and the persistent questions of race, identity formation, and transformation in the context of immigration. These questions have become the focus of diaspora literatures in the West, some examples of which the second part of the volume aims to explore.

The second part continues the analysis of different forms of textualizing the migrant experience. In particular, it shows how migrants are unable to fully identify themselves as members of the homeland nor as members in the host community. This is shown in fictions of diaspora that emerge amidst mobility: writers across different cultural locations address the concepts of identity and home, belonging or not belonging, and the various forms these concepts gain in transnational contexts. Such feelings of strangeness are shown in particular in Brahim Benmoh and Hamza Touzani's chapter that opens the second part of the volume. Benmoh and Touzani examine the novel *Once in a Promised Land* (2007) by the Arab American writer Laila Halaby as a post-9/11 and postcolonial fictional narrative. In so doing, they reveal the extent to which Halaby fictionalizes and reinterprets the 9/11 trauma and its impact on diasporic Arab Americans. The chapter argues that Halaby's representation of the 9/11 trauma results in a sense of deterritorializing and the ambiguity of diasporic identity, race, and home in a post-9/11 context where anti-migrant sentiments and stereotypes mushroom, and where migrants in general and Arabs in particular are met with moral panic, violence, and discrimination. Although mobility engenders discontinuity, fragmentation, and confusion, it can also be a productive and constructive experience for self-positioning in this globalized world. In the case of women, migration often leads to momentous (trans)formations that significantly alter the most intimate aspects of a person's life: feelings, sexuality, strategies of self-representation and social interaction, and ability to imagine and create their own life paths (Nolin 2006). Gendered mobility and crossings have always involved a necessary stage of transition, and the consequent redefinition of the self interrogates the stability traditionally associated with women's sexuality and their conventionalized roles. This issue is the main concern of the chapter by Fatimaezzahra Abid with a focus on contemporary diasporic Moroccan women's writing. The chapter examines the representation of identity, religion, gender, sexuality, and migration in Najat El Hachmi's *The Last Patriarch* (2011) telling of Moroccans in Spain. The chapter pays particular attention to the transforming and potentially transgressive role of

female sexuality. It argues that, in their endeavour for self-positioning, migrant women challenge the traditional social codes and national boundaries. The final chapter in this part by Abdelaziz Tritha presents an example of border-crossing far from current cultural tensions and is important as providing a cultural and historical comparison. He explores strategies that nineteenth-century North African travel writing telling of journeying to the West has applied as an attempt to rewrite and reconstruct Otherness and cross-cultural boundaries. While these texts are often left out of history as primarily aesthetic, they remain valuable materials that present what the author describes as alter(native) discourses of difference; such narratives subvert, challenge and write back from their own perspectives. In so doing, they represent a process that may be termed as de-bordering where travellers and migrants are not considered trespassers or intruders but rather translators or mediators between geographical and cultural spaces. Through an analysis of Muhammad as-Saffar's *Sudfat Liqae Maa al Akhar* (1845–1846), telling of its author's journey to France, the chapter argues that such travel accounts are Occidentalist parallels to discourses that rewrite North African cultural historiography, as they surpass parochial Manichean binarisms and stand as valuable documents chronicling North African travellers' presence, showing that they are not silent interlocutors but active participants and eye-witnesses in Western contexts. As the chapters show, borders move with migrants and play a role in forging their relationship with their new communities.

The third part of the volume contributes to the ongoing debates surrounding national identity and citizenship as well as individual and collective rights with particular reference to borders and mobility. It presents two studies dealing with cultural and theoretical understandings of migration, integration, and citizenship in the contexts of border policies and crossings. Migration and border-crossing present serious political, social, and cultural challenges, which force countries to craft policies to address security, economic, and humanitarian concerns. Many cultural theorists have called for a new brand of cosmopolitanism, one that is not "from above" (Hall and Werbner 2008: 346), and for a convivial culture in which "the recognition of mutual worth, dignity and essential similarity imposes restrictions on how we can behave if we wish to act justly" (Gilroy 2004: 4). This part of the volume, then, offers new perspectives onto some forms of intellectual and civic mobilization that may create spaces of inclusion and promote the integration of migrants into the social and political context of the host country. In the first chapter in this part, Rachid Ait Abdelmouman addresses the possibilities of constructing a new transnational and border-crossing form of ethic of difference on the basis of the work of such

cosmopolitan thinkers and philosophers as Jacques Derrida, Charles Taylor, Seyla Benhabib, and Kwame Anthony Appiah, whose views are analysed in the context of crosscultural difference and its significance. The following chapter by Mohamed Ouhemmou and Mohamed El Amine Moumine discusses the transformation of Morocco's migration policy in recent years. As Morocco has changed from a country of origin to a country with a large Sub-Saharan migrant population, the demands of integration and concern over migration have surfaced. The chapter shows that the new policy is based on a homogenizing conception of Sub-Saharan migration and that it does not fully recognize the difference and diversity of Sub-Saharan migrants. The participation of the civil society and local NGOs in sharing the burden through efforts such as literacy classes and vocational training does fill the gaps left by official policy makers, but remains incapable of addressing the institutional and structural problems that hamper integration and affect border policies.

In sum, the volume is characterized by an attempt to address the issue of mobility and cultural borders from several perspectives ranging from analyses of literature and film to discussions of policy and cultural encounters. The approach is transnational and interdisciplinary, using contemporary methodologies in postcolonial and border studies. In addition, the contributors – whose scholarly backgrounds range from literature to political science – locate the representation of mobility in discourses and counter-discourses of Self and Other in the era of modernity until the twenty-first century. While not aiming to erase difference between or within culture(s), the chapters argue for a more sensitive recognition of Otherness and difference at various levels, ranging from recognizing the role of borders in encounters at global and national levels to friction and transformation in relation to encounters between and within diasporic and minority cultures. Such recognition is currently becoming more and more urgent owing to global changes and accelerated population mobility (e.g., forced displacements from Syria, Afghanistan, South Sudan, Myanmar, Somalia, and so on) as well as the rise of populist and nationalist sentiments.

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PART I:

IDENTITIES ON THE MOVE:
THE TRAUMAS OF BORDER-CROSSING

CHAPTER TWO

NARRATIVES OF CONTEMPORARY IM/MOBILITY: WRITING FORCED MIGRATION IN THE BORDERSCAPE

JOPI NYMAN

Introduction

Migration, mobility, and travel are central to today's world of rapid transformations, quick movements, and allegedly easy adaptation to life in new surroundings. To counter such visions promoting unrealistic views of the processes of globalization and its triumphant hybridities, this chapter examines contemporary literary narratives of global migration with particular attention to the ways in which they address border-crossings – or rather borderscapes as we will see later – that structure the migrants' journeys and their experience of a new space with a new way of life. Migration and mobility generate new social and cultural narratives that examine various border-crossings and diverse sites where cultures come into contact with each other. Rather than freely moving nomads remaining distant from other cultures, contemporary migrants need to negotiate their identity while travelling and entering new spaces containing established hegemonies.

This chapter examines representations of migration and mobility, two aspects of global movement that are related to borders and borderscapes, sites and spaces where diverse encounters between migrants and hosts, us and them, take place and generate different responses. I will shed light on contemporary postcolonial narratives focusing on north-directed migration from Africa and the Middle East to Europe, a trajectory where encounters in the borderscape are crucial. The narratives under study have been published in the recent collection *Refugee Tales* (2016), which has been edited by David Herd and Anna Pincus and contains retellings of migrants'

oral stories by established writers and artists. This volume has been followed with two further anthologies in 2017 and 2019. What I will address is the way in which the characters in the stories included in the first volume negotiate their identities in the borderscape where the promise of mobility often turns into immobility.

Encountering the Borderscape

The capability of encounters to engender new cultural phenomena and identities has received wide attention in recent years. The more traditional focus on the colonizer–colonized encounter as explored in Mary Louise Pratt's *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (1992) that addresses "contact zones" as sites of mutual interaction and emphasizes "the[ir] interactive, improvisational dimensions" (1992: 7) has been replaced by an emphasis on issues such as cultural contact, hybrid identities, and globalization. In the world today, migration and mobility play a central role at various levels ranging from the transnational mobility of media and other images to labour and forced migration, and such mobility challenges nationalisms and fixed identities (see Appadurai 1996: 33–7). The everyday character of cultural and national border-crossings by groups such as migrant workers, their families, pensioners, exchange students, and others has led to a situation that Ulrich Beck calls "cosmopolitanism from below" (2006: 103), where cultural encounters are part of the normal life of the contemporary world, rather than limited to the life of the globetrotting cosmopolitan elite. Such encounters, however, are not always welcome by European nation states where migration – especially today – is more often seen as a threat than a benefit.

While contemporary mobility generates new identities, they are not necessarily voluntary – travel and mobility are not always chosen but may be forced upon the migrant subject. Migration, while leading to new identifications and locations of identity, also involves narratives of displacement and dislocation. Such narratives are notably present in contemporary globalization. Rather than merely an unlimited movement of people across national and cultural borders, the mobility is forced: ecological factors and military conflicts push human beings towards borders such as those separating Europe from Africa. However, the border is not only a line of separation but it also brings together various actors, and creates new modes and spaces of interaction – these can be understood as new borderscapes where identities, belonging, and citizenship can be negotiated (see Newman 2007: 7–57; Brambilla 2015: 1–14). These

borderscapes are spaces of social and cultural interaction that generate diverse encounters between "hosts" and "crossers."

The term borderscape needs to be discussed, as it has several meanings in different disciplinary contexts. While it has been occasionally seen as a mere border landscape, the concept is currently used in more nuanced ways and understood to be a part of the processes of globalization and the forms of mobility it has generated (Dell'Agnese and Amilhat Szary 2015: 7–8). The etymology of the concept is linked to the set of other terms that have been formed with the suffix –scape, which are perhaps most clearly seen in Arjun Appadurai's work that aims to explain the transnational character of "global cultural flows" by using terms such as ethnoscapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes (1996: 33). The terms emphasize the dynamic nature of contemporary mobility and underline that the imaginary landscapes evoked are experienced by individuals when they participate in the processes of globalization (see Brambilla 2015). While the use of the terms borderscapes and borderscaping does not always evoke migration and its effects, the need to address the border and reflect on its effects on identity remains important. While Rajaram and Grundy-Warr see borderscapes as "zones of varied and differentiated encounters" (2007: xxx), Brambilla claims that they are spaces where borders emerge as sites of interaction and contact: in her view, borderscapes are relational and moving spaces where "bordering processes have impacts, are represented, negotiated or displaced" (2015: 22), and "identities [are] negotiated" (Brambilla et al. 2015: 2).

The term and its applicability have been widely debated. While some (e.g., Strüver 2005) suggest that a borderscape is strongly rooted in the border and its representation, for Schimanski the term is capable of addressing processes that take place "not only on the border, but also beyond the line of the border, beyond the border as a place, beyond the landscape through which the border runs, and beyond borderlands with their territorial contiguities to the border" (2015: 35). In other words, borderscapes are sites of encounter that extend beyond the actual border and where it may be possible to construct new identities – or prevent their formation. I will next address the representation of migrants in the borderscape – and actually in different kinds of borderscapes – in contemporary narratives produced in the wake of forced migration.

Approaching *Refugee Tales* (2016)

My analyses will focus on the recent collection *Refugee Tales*, a volume whose publication in 2016 inaugurated a series of currently three anthologies aiming to bring into light the plight of detainees and forced

migrants in the United Kingdom. The volumes are linked with activism and especially organized walks aiming to bring attention to issues of detention and forced migration. The first volume is associated with a nine-day walk from London to Canterbury organized by the Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group and Kent Refugee Help and its participants included both writers, activists, and migrants. These walks are now arranged annually, and the second walk in summer 2017 started from Runnymede – where the Magna Carta was signed – and led to Westminster Abbey as the symbolic site of British power. The texts in the first anthology under study in this chapter border on fiction and non-fiction as some of the stories are written versions of oral stories told to writers by detainees and forced migrants, but the final version of the story is in each case result of collaboration between the storyteller and the writer, the explicit aim being "to call for an immediate end to indefinite immigration detention in the UK" ("Afterword: Walking with Refugee Tales" 2016: 133). The website of the project provides further information concerning the events.[1]

The collection under study consists of narratives and tales that professional writers have rewritten as stories and poems. The work has a strong intertextual link with Geoffrey Chaucer's classic narrative cycle *The Canterbury Tales*. As in Chaucer's work, the stories in this collection are named after their protagonist's profession or type, as we have such stories as "The Migrant's Tale," "The Detainee's Tale," and "The Lorry Driver's Tale," to mention a few. Being stories telling of the different aspects of the refugee experience and based on real-life events, these narratives tend to be realist and occasionally didactic in tone.

To highlight the issues, in this chapter I will address three ways in which the stories in the collection construct borders and borderscapes in the context of contemporary North-South migration. I will first address the stories' construction of what I call the zombie border, continue with the representation of the border as a death zone, and finally analyse the border as a site of waiting as suggested by van Houtum and Wolfe (2017).

"The Lorry Driver's Tale" and the Zombie Border

What the stories in the collection share is a major thematic focus on forced migration and displacement that is often contextualized in border discourse. Chris Cleave's "The Lorry Driver's Tale" is a good example of this. It addresses the borderscape of Calais, France, from the perspective of a lorry driver but places the story in larger cultural and discursive contexts. The

[1] See http://refugeetales.org/

lorry driver, the narrator of the story, is characterized stereotypically as one of many of his kind:

> Our average age is 53. We're male, white, and we have bad backs. We're twice as likely as you to be divorced or separated. […] We're three per cent of the workforce, 20 per cent of the studio audience for Top Gear, and 40 per cent of the petition to have it put back on TV. They say we're the core of the UKIP vote, but they shouldn't take us for granted. As the lorry driver said to the politician: if you can't see my mirrors, I can't see you. (Cleave 2016: 25)

Through this stereotypical characterization, the story contrasts its lorry driving, UKIP voting narrator with a liberal journalist, significantly named Clark Kent, a superman saving liberal Britain who is also known as a restaurant critic. Kent rides with the lorry driver and his Italian helper from France to Britain with the aim of documenting ongoing irregular migration. The drivers display openly hostile attitudes and racist views, separating themselves both from the soft-minded "lefties" with their "little place[s] [holiday homes in France] with lavender and wi-fi" and "think that the illegals should be allowed in" (Cleave 2016: 26). For the drivers, the borderscape of Calais is one of danger and Othering. It resembles a zombie movie and its effects extend far beyond the actual physical border marked by the police and custom officers:

> If immigration is a horror film then Calais is the scene where the zombies are massing. You see them out of the corner of your eye at first, when you're still a couple of hundred kilometres out. Say you're pulling to Saint Quentin for diesel. You give them the hard eye and they act casual, hands in their pockets – but no one's fooled. Because they're Somali and Rwandan zombies, not Parisian zombies with berets and baguettes. (Cleave 2016: 26)

This transformation of the borderscape into a Gothic space of fear and otherness, haunted by ghosts that remind Europeans of violence in other spaces and are about to enter Britain, has a double function. On the one hand, it uses the zombie figure as a trespasser in Europe whose aim is to devour white human flesh, thus representing long-standing fears of invasion. As the narrative makes clear, these are African zombies, not "domesticated" ones, as the text refers to migrants in France. If the case is, as Dorothea Fischer-Hornung and Monika Mueller have suggested, that "every age and culture creates the vampire *and zombie* it needs" (2016: 8; emphasis in the original), the zombification of the migrant is a sign of fears of invasion and of the problem of maintaining national borders (see Fischer-Hornung and Mueller 2016: 12). This use of the zombie as a migrant-related

trope has been under considerable attention in cultural studies. Nikos Papastergiadis locates a historical development of the trope in writers such as John Berger and Albert Memmi to address migrants in contexts where "identity becomes split and alienated when it is out of place" (2009: 149), and also sees zombification as a metaphor for neoliberal capitalism and migrants' lack of hope for resettlement (2009: 164). Further, Claire Mouflard examines its concrete use in her recent essay (2016) examining the French film *Les Revenants* (dir. Robin Campillo, 2004), and its later television adaptation as a drama series by Fabrice Gobert (2012–2015). For Mouflard, the use of the zombie figure in these French texts, drawing on the closing of the Sangatte refugee camp in France, emerges as part of the discourse of the post-human where the migrant is newly configured (2016: 2–3). According to Mouflard, in the discourse of the post-human the zombie figure may

> appear as a symptom of a world in which the social, ethnic, and national power balance of One and Other has shifted after the migrant Others arrived en masse on the main (European) territory. "Post-human" would therefore mean "post-Western," an era in which the historically imperial construct of the West would be jeopardized by the increased presence of the Other. (2016: 7)

While the migrant is shown in Cleave's narrative as a zombie, the story reverses the assumptions of the discourse identified by Mouflard. Initially the performance of the lorry driver's identity appears to support the narrative construction of his identity as a right-wing reactionary UKIP voter who shares a Manichean view of the world and its current state where "we" are threatened by "them," this is, the zombie Others. This imagined identity is juxtaposed with the values of the story's journalist whose position is similarly outlined through stereotyping: "He gave me the same look as when he'd seen my UKIP flag on the back wall of the cab – as if I wasn't necessarily evil, but that I couldn't be expected to know any better" (Cleave 2016: 29). Such an identity is supported with lines of dialogue by the lorry's co-driver Mr Hyde that are full of stereotypical views of the "illegals." As the driver puts it in his response to the journalist's question of what to do if one of them were to be found hidden in the lorry:

> I put my hand over the webcam, making sure to cover the mic as well as the lens. "The two of us would drag him out and give him a kicking. Because *one*, the load would be contaminated and the company would have to write off a hundred grand. And *two*, you need to get the word out that you don't mess with British lorries. An old fashioned kicking sends that message in every language the illegals speak. (Cleave 2016: 31; emphasis in the original)