ACME An International Journal for Critical Geographies

On Stories, Storytelling, and the Quiet Politics of Welcome

Olivia Sheringham

Lecturer in Geography, Birkbeck University of London
o.sheringham@bbk.ac.uk

Helen Taylor

Director of Stories & Supper/Researcher
helen@storiesandsupper.co.uk

Abstract

Focusing on a collaborative storytelling project with refugees and asylum seekers in the London borough of Waltham Forest, this paper explores the potential offered by creative storytelling and story-sharing for providing alternative narratives and spaces for inclusion, welcome and mutual care against a backdrop of hostility and exclusion. It challenges tendencies within prevailing discourses to either treat asylum narratives as 'bogus' or to essentialise individual refugee stories through the prevailing tropes of 'victim' or 'hero'. Instead, we draw attention to the actual *process* of making, telling and sharing stories between refugees and local residents, in the Global Story Café project led by Stories & Supper. The paper examines how the spaces that emerged through sharing stories with refugees and asylum seekers in a series of creative workshops and targeted storytelling cafes with public participation opened up possibilities for what we refer to as a quiet politics of welcome – a form of welcome that moves beyond notions of charity or sympathy, disrupts perceived host-guest binaries and instead demonstrates the importance of 'being with'. The paper highlights the need for more engagement and understanding of these 'quiet' acts of welcome, which can provide insights for challenging the overriding discourses about, and practices towards, refugees and asylum seekers.

Keywords

Storytelling, refugees, welcome, narratives, encounters

Published with Creative Commons licence: Attribution–Noncommercial–No Derivatives

Introduction

In this paper, we explore the possibilities of creative storytelling and story-sharing with refugees and asylum seekers for providing alternative narratives and spaces for inclusion, welcome and mutual care against a backdrop of hostility and exclusion. We write this in a turbulent socio-political context, characterised by a widespread absence of compassion towards refugees and asylum seekers in the UK and beyond. A global context in which state borders are not only increasingly securitised and hardened (Huysmans 2000; Bauman 2016; Jones 2016; Trilling 2018; Watkins 2020), but one in which bordering practices permeate the intimate and everyday lives of migrants and refugees in the UK (Yuval-Davis et al. 2018; Back & Sinha 2018), from their workplaces to the places they study, socialise and dwell (see also Humphris 2019).[1]

Within this hard and hostile environment, compounded by an "austerity agenda" (Darling 2016; see also Goodfellow 2019), a narrative of crisis pervades, in which forcibly displaced people and those seeking asylum are invariably depicted in mainstream narratives through the dominant tropes of pitiable victims or unwelcoming intruders, "either a sufferer or a threat, yet never a human" (Chouliaraki & Stolic 2017, 8; see also Khiabany 2016). These dehumanising discourses and silencing of the voices of those who are "experts on their own experiences" (Stavropoulou 2019, 96) have been widely critiqued among scholars and activists who have increasingly sought to foreground refugee voices (Gill 2018) and drawn attention to the urgent need for an "alternative framing of refugees and migration" in order to "recalibrate, rather than augment, European crisis narratives" (Burrell & Hörschelman 2018, 2). Yet whilst there has been a growing interest in giving voice to those who have been forcibly displaced, some have argued that too much focus on individual stories risks reinforcing stereotypes and perpetuating experiences of powerlessness (Kisiara 2015; Harsch 2018; Fernandes 2017).

Bearing such cautions in mind, in this paper we explore more hopeful possibilities of refugee storytelling and story-*sharing* with wider publics and the potential to contribute to an "alternative framing of refugees and migration", as well as providing spaces of welcome and connection across difference. We do this through critical reflection on a collaborative drama and storytelling project with refugees, asylum seekers and local residents in the London borough of Waltham Forest, in partnership with Stories & Supper (of which co-author Helen Taylor is the coordinator).[2] The project, *Global Story Cafés* (henceforth *GSC*), involved a series of 10 drama and story-making workshops with refugees, asylum seekers and local volunteers, followed by four story-sharing 'cafés', in which members of the public were invited to sit at small tables to listen and tell their own stories about universal themes.

Our paper contributes to and advances a burgeoning literature on migrant and refugee stories (Burrell & Hörschelman 2018; Eastmond 2007; Esin & Lounasmaa 2020) and storytelling more generally (Cameron 2012; Brickell & Garrett 2015; Rogaly 2020), by drawing attention not only to the *content* of the stories, which can provide a much-needed counter-narrative to the prevailing focus on "numbers and things" (Khiabany 2016, 758), but also to the processes of *making*, *telling* and *listening*. We argue that it is within the relational spaces opened up through these processes that the radical potential of storytelling emerges, where meaningful connections occur and allow participants to start to move

[1] Our project was completed before the Covid-19 pandemic, which has exposed and further exacerbated the experiences of marginalisation and disenfranchisement amongst refugees and asylum seekers. During the pandemic, Stories & Supper continued to deliver workshops virtually throughout the lockdowns, and face-to-face during the gaps. Yet whilst the discussion in this paper explores the possibilities of stories and the (quiet) politics of welcome prior to the Covid-19 crisis, our arguments are pertinent for understanding how we might live together in a pandemic and post-pandemic context.

[2] Stories & Supper is an organisation based in North East London and formed in early 2017, which brings together refugees, asylum seekers and local residents to share food and stories and challenge negative narratives around migration.

beyond curiosity, performance, empathy and preconception. In the context of this project, these transformative moments emerged during both the story-making workshops that brought together refugees/asylum seekers and local residents, as well as the story café events in which these stories were shared with wider audiences. As we discuss below, the spaces and encounters enabled through both the workshops and the cafés were transformative for participants with and without experiences of forced migration, providing insights that, we argue, move beyond tendencies to reify or erase difference and instead draw attention to the unexpected possibilities of encounters (Askins & Pain 2011).

As well as contributing to the creation of new storylines relating to the lives of refugees and migrants – created from the margins and by, not on behalf of, those who have been forcibly displaced – this paper also builds on work that draws attention to "quiet" or "slow" forms of political activism (Horton & Kraftl, 2009; Askins 2015; Pottinger 2017; Kallio et al. 2020) to explore these practices as subtle forms of resistance (see also Meretoja 2018). Bringing such work into dialogue with recent attempts to (re)examine and advance theories and practices of hospitality and welcome (Agier 2018; Gill 2018; Darling 2010; Bagelman 2018; Derrida 2000) – including calls for ways of moving beyond the "universalising claims and the taxonomy of host–guest relations" (Berg & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2018: 4; see also McNevin & Missbach 2018) – we explore the ways in which creative storytelling has the potential to enact what we refer to as a 'quiet politics of welcome'.

We understand the spaces and practices of storytelling and welcome to be relational, referring to the mutually constitutive relationships between the people, objects and spaces as well as the dynamic relations of power that underpin these (Hall 2019, 773; see also Massey 1991). Our paper makes three overlapping arguments. First, we argue that whilst it is important to move away from victim or hero tropes within individual refugee narratives, creative and open practices of story-making and sharing can, if approached with care, be transformative for those involved and can contribute to the (co)creation of alternative knowledge and narratives surrounding migration and refugees (see also O'Neill 2010). Second, drawing on perspectives from literary and narrative studies, we argue that the *processes* of creating and sharing these stories and the form that they take are as important, if not more important, than their content or presentation. Following McKittrick (2021, 6), we understand the relational space of storytelling as relying on "the dynamics of creating-narrating-listening-hearing-reading-and-sometimes-unhearing" reminding us that the act of listening, as well as the silences, gaps and misunderstandings are integral to these multi-layered stories. Finally, we argue that paying close attention to these and the relational spaces they enable, contributes to wider moves to (re)conceptualise welcome in ways that take us beyond host-guest binaries "to the messiness of everyday life" (Berg & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2018, 4). We argue that the story-making workshops and story cafés opened up space for connection, inclusion and mutual care within these encounters across difference, thus 'quietly' disrupting, or working against, wider contexts of exclusion and hostility. Acutely aware of the power asymmetries and complex dynamics that surround such encounters, and reflecting on the ethical and practical challenges that emerged during the project, this paper points to some of the more hopeful possibilities that stories *as* spaces of welcome might open up. Before discussing and reflecting in depth on the workshops, story cafés and evaluation sessions that formed part of the *GSC*, our paper begins by developing our arguments in relation to wider debates surrounding welcome and stories.

On Welcome

In contrast to the increasingly brutal and *un*welcoming migration and asylum regimes across Europe and beyond, there have emerged a plethora of practices and spaces, across a range of scales, that seek to offer alternative narratives of welcome, safety and care towards asylum seekers and refugees. Indeed, the proliferation of discourses and practices of hospitality became particularly prominent in the European context in 2015 during what was widely referred to as the "summer of welcome", which saw an outpouring of compassion and support for refugees, galvanised through social media. Whilst the pace

and intensity of grassroots-led welcoming practices has decreased in Europe since 2016, spaces offering sanctuary and refuge to people who have been forcibly displaced have become more widespread at the level of the nation, city (Darling 2017; Bagelman 2016), university (see https://universities.cityofsanctuary.org) and home (Sirriyeh 2013). As Gill (2018) suggests, these more organic, grassroots forms of welcome stand in stark contrast to the official welcome – or rather absence of welcome – received by refugees and migrants who enter the UK, a fact highlighted by Trilling's observation "that in the same year that it spent €2 billion on border security, the EU spent only an estimated €700 million on reception centres for refugees" (2018, xi).

The burgeoning of "non-sovereign" spaces of hospitality (Bulley 2017) has been accompanied by growing theoretical attention to the concepts of hospitality, sanctuary and, more recently, welcome across a range of disciplines (Darling 2017; Bagelman 2016; Agier 2018; Gill 2018). Theories of hospitality in relation to migration and forced displacement often draw on the work of Jacques Derrida, who wrote extensively about hospitality in the context of the *sans-papiers* (undocumented migrants movement in Paris in the 1990s) (Derrida & Dufourmantelle 2000; see also Rosello 2002; Brun 2010; Friese 2010). For Derrida (2000), hospitality is inherently contradictory: always conditional and containing within it the potential for hostility. The conditionality of hospitality is underpinned by the necessary distinction between guest and host and the power asymmetries that sustain these relations. Thus, he suggests, the host always has the capacity to determine the depth and duration of the hospitality that is offered to the guest.

The cognate concept of welcome has been conceptualised more in terms of "interpersonal encounters" and what Gill refers to as "shared vulnerability" (2018, 91), shifts which, to an extent, move beyond the tendency to "maintain the state as the central space and agent of welcome" and to thus overlook "the numerous exclusions and exercises of state power that emerge once the threshold has been crossed" (Bulley 2017, 2). However, it still seems unable to escape the tensions implicit in hospitality, still implying an inherent distinction between those who "welcome" and those who "are welcomed" (Bulley 2017, 2). Recent work has sought to re-think welcome and hospitality and move beyond "fatalistic invocations of *hospitability*", in which the possibility of hosting on equal terms is regarded as impossible (Berg & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2018, McNevin & Missbach 2018). Such work has advanced debates in a range of ways, including for example, Fiddian-Qasmiyeh's (2015; 2016) research on refugees hosting Syrian refugees in Lebanon, Jordan and Turkey, and McNevin and Missbach's discussion of Acehnese fishermen's reception of displaced Rohingya that reveal acts of welcome that take place despite the "laws" that prohibit it, demonstrating the possibilities rather than the limitations of welcome's unpredictability (McNevin & Missbach 2018). This moves beyond the Euro-centric approaches to work on forced migration and demonstrates how welcome is contextual, negotiated and often risky, but that "hostility and rejection are not inevitable" (Berg & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2018, 3; see also McNevin & Missbach 2018). An expanded notion of welcome also emerges in Darling's discussion of the "fragility of welcome" in which he reminds us of the "multiple forms that welcome might take" as well as the labour and commitment that the *process* of welcom*ing* might entail (2018, 223).

Conceptualising welcome as a *process* is key to our understanding of the spaces of welcome that emerged in the course of the *GSC* project. Our approach is also informed by Berg and Fiddian-Qasmiyeh's (2018) invocation of Jean-Luc Nancy's notions of "being together" and "being with", which provides a useful lens through which to advance ideas around welcome beyond guest-host binaries and to explore encounters between refugees and citizens, refugees and refugees, as well as the spaces and practices that shape and are shaped by such meetings. Welcome-as-process and welcome as being with do not imply a linear movement towards a particular future of welcome, nor do these frameworks suggest flattening out of the uneven power relations that underpin these relationships. Rather, they offer a more nuanced understanding of welcome that is rooted in "interconnection and relationality" and in which, as

Askins writes in her discussion of a refugee befriending scheme in north east England, "different agencies ebb and flow across time" (2015, 473). Importantly, we explore the radical and transformative potential of these spaces of welcome which, we suggest, counter, contest or subvert wider contexts of hostility, violence and exclusion, albeit "incompletely" (Sparke 2018) and in quiet ways. Key to these relational and potentially transformative spaces of welcome were the storymaking, telling and listening practices that took place within them, which we discuss in more depth below.

On Stories

While all lives are storied, the centrality of stories to the experience of forced migration is particularly marked. Stories can be a way of remembering a lost home, passing on memories to subsequent generations, used as a form of testimony and, crucially, are central to the asylum process (Taylor 2013, 37). The telling of stories in the context of the asylum interview determines whether protection will be granted and is, therefore, fraught with danger (Marfleet 2006, 236; Smith-Khan 2017, 2). As Baldini (2019, 135) states, the ability of refugees to tell their own personal story "credibly and plausibly is decisive in the recognition of their status as a refugee". The asylum systems of potential host countries, such as the UK, France, the USA, Canada and Australia, require that an in-depth account of events which led to flight from the home country, as well as details of the journey to the host country, are satisfactorily recounted. Indeed, more than any other form of legal adjudication, refugee determinations are reliant on narrative and the extent to which the written or oral story is believed (Millbank 2009, 2). Yet once this story emerges, the vicissitudes of memory, the process of narrative construction, errors in translation, or inter-cultural misinterpretations will not be taken into account. As Vogl (2013, 76) writes, "any sense of a haphazardness or disorder to the sequence of events is often cited as evidence of the implausibility of the story". Therefore, the central role of first-person testimony in the asylum process will undoubtedly impact upon how an individual views any future demands of them to tell their stories.

Beyond the asylum process, refugee stories and stories *about* refugees are produced and received in an increasingly hostile political context in many potential 'host' countries. Sara Ahmed (2014, 2) refers to ways in which narratives around asylum in the UK, in the discourses of the far right as well as in wider public debate, have perpetuated an image of a "soft touch nation…too easily seduced into assuming that claims for asylum, as testimonies of injury, are narratives of truth". In response, asylum testimonies are discredited through discourses which seek to portray the nation as welcoming to *genuine* refugees, at the same time as suggesting that we need to be alert to the fact that "any incoming bodies could be bogus" (Ahmed 2004, 122). In the same way, stereotypes of the 'good refugee' or the 'bad migrant' are reproduced so often that they become accepted as fact. For example, discourses used to justify the UK's very limited Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme focussed on vulnerability and worked to "exceptionalise the figure of the refugee worthy of care" (Armbruster 2019, 2681). In contrast, the political response in Europe to the migration 'crisis' of 2015 and the drowning of hundreds in the Mediterranean, was to portray the vast majority of those making the journey as economic migrants using the war in Syria as a cover for their subterfuge (Crawley & Skleparis 2017, 49). In this way, the repeated and misleading use of labels such as 'migrant' and 'refugee' indicates a separation between the 'real' and the 'bogus', between 'true' stories and 'lies'.

The stark division between the portrayal of refugees as pitiable victims or unwelcoming intruders (Chouliaraki & Stolic 2017, 8) leads to casual and rarely nuanced judgements about the veracity of stories of migration, which circulate in popular discourse. While Syrian refugees have largely been pictured in a sympathetic light, asylum seekers from African countries are often portrayed as illegal immigrants and their deaths at sea as unremarkable (Dabiri et al. 2015). The narratives of women and lesbians and gay men seeking asylum are similarly often viewed with scepticism, as stories about violence and discrimination against women are often not viewed as credible (Dorling et al 2012, 5).

NGOs and other organisations supporting refugees can also perpetuate stereotypes by choosing to tell certain kinds of stories – victim/hero/survivor – in order to elicit sympathy and influence public opinion. As far back as 1995, Lisa Malkki problematised the representation of refugees by governments, NGOs and the media, which led to a "systematic, even if unintended, silencing of persons who find themselves in the classificatory space of 'refugee'" (1995, 386). This was seen in the photographic depiction of refugees as a mass of anonymised bodies, seen as "bare humanity", or as helpless victims (usually women and children), while narrative testimony was delivered by experts and officials rather than by refugees themselves (Malkki 1995: 387-390). In the intervening decades there has been a move towards creating spaces for individual refugee narratives and yet these may still conform to stereotypes. For example, Rud critiques the use of "former refugee narratives" by the Refugee Council of Australia which, he argues, are used to demonstrate the difference between the individuals portrayed and prevailing negative political and media narratives that depict refugees as "boat people" and "queue jumpers" (2018, 37-8).

Critiques by activists, scholars and refugees themselves of the stereotyping and silencing of diverse experiences of forced migration have led to a body of research (see, for example, Burrell & Hörschelman 2018; Eastmond 2007; Esin & Lounasmaa 2020; Gill 2018), as well as first-person testimony, literature and performance (see, for example, Calais Writers 2017; Passarly 2015, and the work of Phosphoros Theatre)[3] placing refugee stories centre stage. The context within which individual stories are solicited, produced and reproduced is also crucial. Kisiara (2015, 162, 167), for example, critiques the ways in which people from refugee backgrounds are asked to present their displacement experiences in institutional settings, often being "invited to narrate their suffering" rather than comment on policy. She argues instead for a reframing to counter essentializing notions of refugees, as traumatized, dependent, and suffering people (Kisiara 2015, 170). Conversely, a move towards 'triumph over tragedy' narratives, which depict all 'genuine' refugees as heroes is also debilitating.

In the right context and conditions, stories and storytelling can provide a sense of agency for those who have experienced destabilising life events, as taking control of one's own story represents a turning point, so that "history no longer makes them. They make it, write it, speak it" (Westerman 1998, 225-7). As Michael Jackson asserts in *The Politics of Storytelling,* "constructing, relating and sharing stories is basic to this reclamation of humanity – of turning object into subject, givenness into choice, what into who" (2006, 104). Individuals who have been forced to migrate are neither an un-storied human mass lacking agency, nor purely noble individual exiles whose lives follow a heroic narrative, but people with lives as contradictory and complex as those who have not been displaced. There is a balance to be achieved between creating safe spaces within which stories can be told and falling into the trap of soliciting traumatic narratives. As we suggest in the remainder of this paper, it remains important to listen to individual stories, whilst also being acutely aware of the messiness surrounding this process. However, we argue that it is through this messiness and the process of allowing stories to emerge, that new forms of welcome can begin to surface.

The Project

The Global Story Café project was a collaboration between Stories & Supper and Queen Mary University of London that took place from February to June 2019. The project had the aim of breaking down barriers and challenging pervasive negative narratives about migration by enabling encounters through storytelling and food. The story café model was inspired by a project devised by Helsinki theatre company Universum, which uses story-sharing cafés as a form of social gathering, to facilitate the sharing of "everyday stories and listening to others" so that "immigrants, asylum seekers and Finns [can] meet

---

[3] https://www.phosphorostheatre.com

and share stories together" (http://universum.fi/universum/story-sharing-universum/). The *GSC* project involved two phases. First, 10 story-making workshops for refugees, asylum seekers and local residents, designed to increase storytelling skills, create bonds and build trust between participants, as well as developing facilitation skills and materials for the cafés themselves. Second, four story cafés, which were open to target groups in the community and/or the general public.

Thirty people attended the workshops over the 10-week period, around half of them from a forced migration background, including 18 women. Participants ranged in age from late 20s to early 70s and their countries of origin were Albania, Algeria, Bangladesh, Czech Republic, Ghana, Guyana, India, Iran, Kosovo, Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Syria, Turkey, United Kingdom and Venezuela. Neither Stories & Supper nor the Global Story Café project restrict participation according to immigration status. Those with experience of forced migration either self-identified as refugees, were still in the asylum process, had Leave to Remain or were without status. Refugee/asylum seeker participants were recruited to the project via adverts on social media, through referrals from partner organisations and through networks previously built up by Stories & Supper. Particular efforts were made to recruit female refugees to the project, through the targeting of women-centred partner organisations and the scheduling of the workshops during the day. The workshops took place on Saturday mornings in North East London, lasted for two and a half hours and were followed by a shared lunch.

The story cafés comprised a women-only café, a café for students at a local sixth form college, a café at a local community centre, and a final café at the Migration Museum in Lambeth. They were either advertised to members of the public, or to particular institutions (in the case of the sixth form café), were free to attend and were facilitated by the team that had been established during the workshop phase.

It is important to note that this was not 'research,' but a 'public engagement' project, and did not, therefore, involve a formal process of ethical review, as is required within academic research. However, ethical considerations were integral to the whole process, negotiated and discussed over the course of the project in dialogue with participants (see Esin & Lounasmaa 2020). Rather than following "abstract rules" our approach was framed by what Riessman calls an "ethics in context", based on our reflections on the workshops and our "situated emotions" in response to the challenges that emerged (2005, 486). Yet it is important to acknowledge that these ethical reflections and dialogue are ongoing as we reflect here on the project in hindsight. The final workshop, which took place after the story cafés, was focused on reflecting on and evaluating the project as a group. This included individual feedback videos, a focus group, drawings and stories. The quotes in the following discussion are taken from this workshop (with consent), as well as from evaluation cards submitted by workshop and story café participants. Pseudonyms have been used for all participants.

'It's About Being Silly Together:' Story-Making and Gaining Trust

The story workshops had a goal, namely to design the content of the subsequent story cafés and build a team who could facilitate those cafés. However, they were also an end in themselves and this became more apparent as the project progressed. All participants in the project – people who had experienced forced migration, local volunteers and ourselves as coordinators – took part in the workshop games and exercises, which helped to establish mutual respect and trust and create a sense of community and common cause. Engaging in a shared occupation or common activity has been shown to provide support and build social networks for refugees who have experienced marginalisation (Raanaas et al 2018, 1). In a study of a community choir which brought together locals and refugees in Norway, Raanaas et al found that those taking part not only wanted to fill their time, but also wanted to "engage in meaningful occupations", which were able to "promote a sense of competence" and generate a "sense of belonging and community derived from participation" (Raanaas et al 2018, 5, 9). Similarly, the fact that

the workshops not only provided an enjoyable activity, but also increased skills and had a meaningful end goal appeared to enhance their value for participants.

Image 1. Workshop activity using pictures as prompts, 2019

The workshops explored storytelling techniques using props, pictures and other prompts, as well as developing performance skills. In addition, they were used to develop a series of flash cards to be used in the story cafés (discussed in more detail below). Theatre maker Sue Mayo, storyteller Jumana Moon and Phosphoros Theatre company, whose actors are former unaccompanied asylum-seeking children, each led two sessions. We co-led the remaining four workshops, sometimes employing the techniques of Brazilian theatre practitioner Augusto Boal from his Theatre of the Oppressed (TOP), which uses drama to depict, challenge and change instances of social inequality. We used such exercises to help the participants become more relaxed using their bodies, telling stories in different ways, constructing tableaux and playing games which built group cohesion. We acknowledged Boal's instructions that these exercises "should be done with pleasure and understanding. Nothing should ever be done in a competitive manner – we try to be better than ourselves, not better than others" (1992, xxx). Other activities included using Story Cubes to generate stories, Punch & Judy puppets and drawing exercises which encouraged seeing through the eyes of a partner.

Several participants said that one of the most positive things about the workshops was the permission to play and be silly together. Kavita, one of the local volunteers said, the games "broke the ice and helped people to connect...It took me outside my comfort zone, but then gave me a sense of comfort within this group". Two other volunteers agreed: "it's been such fun" commented Jill, and Joy felt "tickled" by what others said. Many activities involved working in pairs or groups. For example, one person would describe a scene and another would draw it; one person would create a rhythm, and others would beat in time. This symbiotic practice, or call-and-response, was constitutive of the spaces that emerged in which commonalities *and* differences could be held simultaneously and friendships could develop across these (Askins 2015). Indeed, as people got to know each other over the weeks, an easy familiarity developed and participants greeted each other warmly. This playfulness became central to the relational spaces created through the storymaking-telling-listening process whereby participants connected through engaging in each others' imaginaries (Woodrow 2016).

The sense of togetherness created through participation in the workshops appeared to be more profound than that which would have occurred without the games, drama and storytelling activities. Leila, a female refugee from Iran, talked about a sense of belonging she felt through involvement in the project: "When you're here [in the UK] and it's not your culture, you feel an outsider. But when this project's coming you feel, you know, they value me." Meanwhile, Abdul (an asylum seeker from Sierra Leone) said that, "telling my story and feeling that connection, it makes me happy". Sharing seemingly

trivial stories about childhood games or pets focused on convergences rather than divergences in the lives of those who had experienced forced migration and those who had not. As Leila remarked, "We're telling our story. Just to show, you know we are all the same. You are from Africa, I am from the Middle East…we have so much in common. Even our food, it's similar."

The building of trust and friendship within the group, through "being silly" and shared activities was also crucial in creating a supportive space within which difficult stories could be shared. The opportunity to build confidence and skills in storytelling as part of this was valued by all participants, as were the benefits of sharing difficult stories in a safe space. Ayesha, a woman from South India who had a prolonged battle to gain Leave to Remain, recounted that "since I've been telling my story, now I'm more confident". Maria, from Ghana, agreed that "when you come here to tell your stories, it gives you the confidence, the courage, the strength". As outlined earlier, asylum seekers are routinely asked to produce stories during the asylum process, and are accustomed to having their stories disbelieved (Baldini 2019; Marfleet 2006; Millbank 2009; Smith-Khan 2017; Woolley 2017). Therefore, asking refugees and asylum seekers to share aspects of their life stories requires care and sensitivity. Maria, who also had a prolonged and difficult experience within the UK immigration system, commented,

> when you go through the asylum process, you feel like you don't want to tell anyone [your story]. Sometimes you're scared. You hide it. You don't know who the people are that support you.

Indeed, whilst the emphasis of the storytelling workshops was to work together *and* individually to create stories, which were often biographical, it was also important they were open and fluid enough to provide space in which participants could, as Fiddian-Qasmiyeh (2017, np) suggests, "transcend and resist different forms of externally imposed expectations" as well as, she argues, "the very expectation that participants will (or should) be performing in an 'authentic' way by 'revealing' their 'true self' during workshops" (see also Jeffers 2011). Just as researchers interviewing people with lived experience of forced migration must be mindful not to replicate the tone of the asylum interview with urgent questioning (Knudsen 1995, 29), we were continually mindful of the possibility that in seeking to create a platform for migration stories, our project might inadvertently be eliciting certain kinds of narratives, which conform to tropes of victimhood or 'triumph' over 'tragedy' (Jeffers, 2011; see also Woodrow 2016 and Fernandes 2017). Some participants were keen to share their experiences as a way of testifying to what had happened to them, so that they were able to "write" their own history, rather than being defined by it (Westerman 1998), while for others, the telling was more of a "burdened retrieval" (Hartman 1992, 2). When stories about difficult or traumatic experiences emerged in the project, for the most part they did so within a context in which trust had already been established and the storytellers felt supported (Woodrow 2016, 55). In these instances, sometimes participants with similar experiences shared their own stories, while other participants offered words or gestures of support either during the workshop or quietly at the end. In some cases, silent acknowledgement seemed more appropriate.

Reflecting on the project, Abdul referred to the importance of being able to tell his story within a supportive context: "I think I started moving on, since the time I started talking…I feel like I belong now and your past cannot define you." Hector, who came to the UK as a child refugee from Biafra in the 1970s, said he got involved in the project "because it's very important that people do talk… Because people are realising that these stories need to be told, people need to tell their stories, they need that space". Here Hector draws attention to the importance of alternative narratives, stories of migration that "need to be told," but also the importance of context and process.

The friendships and solidarities that developed through the workshops demonstrated the possibilities of "being together" and "being-with", dynamic and negotiated forms of welcome and connection that move beyond the dichotomous categories of host and guest and attune us to the "the potential for care, generosity, and recognition in encounters" (Berg & Fiddian-Qasmiyeh 2018, 4). It was

also the case that there was a certain fluidity of identity and experience between the refugee participants and local volunteers, who could not always be neatly categorised. For example, Hector could directly relate to the more recent experience of displacement of others in the group. Yet, having been educated in the UK and having lived all his adult life here, he has accumulated social capital and social networks both of which have been identified as among the most significant losses of the early stages of exile (Taylor 2015, 130). He joined the GSC project to help others going through what he had experienced, yet he admitted that participating helped him to reassess his own life and commented: "Everyone has an intrinsic worth…we all have something to contribute. I'm not saying I didn't know that before, but I appreciate it a lot more now."

Several of the volunteers were recently arrived migrants, who could relate to feelings of longing for distant homes and the struggle to settle in a new country, whilst others had more distant memories of arriving in the UK. Joy, a long-term migrant from Guyana, came along to volunteer because she was "curious" and she was struck by the strength shown by those who had lived through difficult experiences. She reflected on how she had "heard the word refugee" but, she continued, "I didn't know what it meant…I'm learning as I go along…We learn from each other." This fluidity reminds us, as Loizos states, that we "we must not over-produce refugees conceptually" by making assumptions that an individual's preoccupations, desires and actions are necessarily a result of their displacement (1999, 245).

During our reflections in the final project workshop, there was a widespread feeling in the group that the relationships that people had established within the group and the confidence that they had built were arguably the most important 'outcomes' of the project. For many of the refugee/asylum seeker participants, it was in these spaces that they felt less defined by their 'refugeness' and more as individuals with stories to share. For volunteers – and ourselves as project coordinators – the workshops were also transformative, shifting perceptions of ourselves and others in the team through processes of listening and being listened *to*, through creating alongside and creating *with others,* as well as through the moments when things were 'lost in translation'. Whilst we began by striving for clear structures and schedules for the workshops, it seemed that often the most meaningful connections emerged when things were not planned, in the gaps between pre-conceived activities. Wilson (2016) and others have highlighted how encounters are by their very nature unpredictable, and through allowing for these interactions to take place, we – albeit not deliberately – allowed space for uncertain outcomes (see also Sheringham et. al. 2019). These relational spaces emerged organically through messy processes, yet this messiness and unpredictability, we argue, was integral to the more spontaneous process of welcoming and feeling welcome.

'It's Like Throwing a Stone in the Water': Sharing Stories in the Cafés

The second phase of the project was the public story cafés. The workshops had developed the building blocks for these events, such that participants felt able to share stories with a wider audience as well as solicit and listen to the stories of members of the public taking part. The story cafés offered an opportunity for members of the public (who had registered in advance) to share space and time with refugees/asylum seekers in a setting that was participatory and convivial.

The events also provided the opportunity for the refugees/asylum seekers to be host rather than guest, as they welcomed members of the public into the session and led the discussion/games at each table. The format of the cafés was as follows: people would arrive and be greeted by one of the Story Café team (who wore Stories & Supper t-shirts). Guests were then invited to sit down at small tables set with snacks that had been prepared by volunteers, a pile of flashcards, and paper tablecloths and pens for participants to draw and write their thoughts. The first part of each café focused on flashcards that had been designed collectively during the workshops. Each had a question that invited a story, memory, thought or response about universal themes such as:

Where is home?

What games did you play as a child?

What would your superpower be?

Image 2. Women's story café, 2019

After a brief introduction by the project coordinators, participants were left to go through the cards with their table companions, allowing each person around the table to respond in their own way. During these moments, everyone in the room was performer and audience, storyteller and listener. People were invited to delve into their memory boxes and their imaginations, to tell and share stories. But they were also invited to keep these boxes firmly shut, to not share what did not feel comfortable. By all responding to the same questions, everyone learnt more about each other and often found points of connection and commonality despite vastly different life experiences. As one participant in the sixth form workshop said: "When I heard about this, I thought it was just going to be someone talking. I like that we sat in circles and talked whilst sharing everyone's experiences." Meanwhile, an attendee at the women's story café wrote:

I've just been to the women's global story café and met some amazing like-minded women. Even if from very different backgrounds, we found common ground and universal heart and humanity.

At one table in the women's cafe, there was laughter and recognition as women from many different countries and life experiences shared a common understanding about the importance of sisters. During other instances, responses from refugees and asylum seeker participants revealed a truth about their challenging life experiences. One asylum seeker said that his superpower would be to be invisible so he could cross borders and return to his home country to see his family again. Another said that their superpower would be to "rid the world of all weapons so that there were no more wars that made people leave home".

The cafés were about telling and talking, but, like the workshops, they were also about listening. As someone who attended the café at the Migration Museum remarked, "people are amazing when you have time to listen". Hector reflected on this further during our end of project evaluation: "It's not just about speaking, it's about being heard. This [project] gives a platform based around other people who

are listening." He explained how for many years he had remained quiet about the impact of the Biafran war on his family, but he came to realise that it was only through talking – and people listening to him – that the pain he felt about his childhood experiences became "more like an ache". Tamboukou (2020, 1) writes that, "listening is a political activity", which resonates with our discussion of the story café project and the spaces that it enabled. Storytelling and listening required relational processes whereby those taking part engaged with the storytelling process as active and respectful listeners as well as story*tellers*. In a climate where the life stories of refugees are routinely dissected and disbelieved, or carefully curated for a particular neoliberal agenda (Fernandes 2017), it becomes a disruptive and political act to create spaces where these stories can be heard on their own terms and actively listened to and heard. Here we are using 'political' in a broad sense, referring to, "*the making of relationships between people*", with an openness to the simultaneity of divergences and convergences within these relationships (Askins 2015, 474).

In this paper we suggest further that perhaps the most important aspect of the story cafés were the spaces that opened up through these encounters across difference, the spaces that emerged *in between* the telling and the listening. Across these small tables, groups of people – from a range of backgrounds, age groups, migration trajectories, beliefs – talked, listened, remembered, recounted, lamented, laughed, hoped and imagined. For several participants in the sixth form story café, the recognition of similarity of experience was revelatory. Whilst challenging injustice and the unevenness of experience involves recognition of difference, our project revealed how transformative encounters also involve enabling those points of connection to emerge through being with others in a shared space, and thus point to a different kind of welcome. For students who were themselves first- or second-generation migrants, hearing stories from refugees/asylum seekers invited them to reflect on their own journeys and connections with people and places across borders, which they would otherwise not have shared with their peers. The radical and transformative welcome created through shared stories moved beyond notions of charity or sympathy, disrupting perceived norms of host and guest and instead pointed to the potential of these storied interconnections. As one attendee at the women's café wrote:

> I'm touched by…the dedication put into making possible the creation of a community of women, who all come from different places but are brought together by humanity, compassion, difficulties.

During the weekly workshops we formed a small team of people and took quiet steps to counter the hostility and exclusions that increasingly permeate the lives of migrants and refugees in the UK and beyond. Through the story-sharing cafés, we extended these steps further which, as workshop facilitator Sue Mayo reflected, was "like throwing a stone in the water" so the "ripples... touch lots and lots of people". This speaks to the relational aspect of both the stories and the storied spaces of encounter and welcome that the project enabled, including the ongoing, processual nature of welcome and stories. However, as we discuss below, these attempts to 'scale up' the welcoming spaces and story-sharing that emerged through the workshops, did highlight several ethical questions and remind us of the labour required for this welcome-as-process to become more profound and less inherently fragile (Darling 2018, 223) .

'Nothing Went to Plan, but that was the Point': Stories and the Poetics and Politics of Welcome

There were many aspects of the *GSC* project that did not go to plan and the challenges that we encountered along the way revealed some of the project's limitations. For example, attendance at the workshops fluctuated and people were often late, meaning it was sometimes difficult to continue particular activities from one week to the next. Vastly different levels of English sometimes led to different levels of engagement in activities, particularly those that involved writing flashcards or writing

out stories in storyboards. Moreover, one of the story cafés was attended by only six guests, despite us anticipating 30 people.[4]

Yet most importantly, as discussed above, the sharing of stories – even within a 'safe space' of the story workshops – was often a painful experience for participants and as we spent more time together, we learnt more about the trauma that some had been through. For example a discussion about childhood games led to one participant revealing that they had been a child soldier for 10 years. The solidarity and trust had been sufficiently established by that point, so that the rest of the group were able to listen to and 'hold' the story and the storyteller, though this incident reminded us of the care is needed when dealing with the emergence of past traumas and of the continual and contextual need for critical reflection. In the story cafés, we sometimes struggled to achieve a balance between creating a platform for refugees/asylum seekers to share stories on their own terms – about why they left their home, their journeys to the UK and their experience of seeking asylum – and feeling that the trust they had established during the workshops placed them in a vulnerable position when sharing stories in a more public setting. These instances highlighted some of the challenges that arise when seeking to 'scale up' particular spaces of welcome which are relational and constantly negotiated. These instances were important lessons for us as researchers and practitioners both with regards to the project and for future research and practice.

With regards to the practical challenges and the more output-driven aims of the project, when things did not go to plan, we sometimes felt that we had failed: we had not spent enough of the session designing flashcards, too much time had been spent throwing an imaginary ball across the circle, or listening to one participant share their housing saga. Yet during the course of the project, we came to realise that, as Hector remarked in our evaluation session, that things going to plan "was not the point". He added, "I think it's about the journey rather than the destination…nothing *worked* but it wasn't really about that". Certain activities which were not necessarily 'productive', were arguably the most transformative moments for the group and our understanding of each other's experiences. For example, in an exercise where we used Punch & Judy puppets to express our frustrations at the immigration system, there were many heartfelt outpourings, which were both cathartic for the speaker and illuminating for those who hadn't been through the indignities of seeking asylum. The exercise became an important and powerful moment for building a sense of purpose and engendering solidarity within the group, even though it did not directly feed into the content of the story cafés. As Anna Tsing writes, "unpredictable encounters transform us; we are not in control, even of ourselves" (2015, 20). With regards to the GSC project, rather than fulfilling a set of predictable objectives and outcomes, the transformations that occurred for participants from all backgrounds (however minor) happened unexpectedly and as part of non-linear processes. These unplanned, messy and unpredictable moments – that were only able to come about through the shared labour and interaction between the group over a sustained period of time – contributed to what we conceptualise here as a 'quiet politics of welcome'. In the stories and spaces enabled through this project, welcome emerged quietly and unpredictably, through processes defined not by linearity and waiting for something to happen, but by making, telling, listening to, hearing and – as McKittrick (2021, 6) reminds us "sometimes unhearing" – stories together and through being with others.

Conclusion

In her welcoming address on the website of the *Refugee Tales* project, writer and patron of the project, Ali Smith, writes, "The telling of stories is an act of profound hospitality…Story has always been a welcoming-in, is always one way or another a hospitable meeting of the needs of others, and a

---

[4] This was a café held at a local community centre, and only six members of the public participated, even though we had prepared food and drink for at least 30. We determined that poor attendance was due to the bad weather, the accessibility of the venue and the lack of clear 'buy-in' from the venue to help publicise the events to the local community.

porous art form where sympathy and empathy are only the beginning of things" (Refugee Tales). Through our discussion of the Global Story Café collaborative refugee storytelling project, this paper has examined some of the ways in which stories, and the spaces opened up through their telling and sharing, can perform this kind of "welcoming-in". Moreover, through our discussion we have sought to enhance understandings of welcome and stories such that both can be conceptualised as porous processes in which, to return to Smith's quote, "sympathy and empathy are only the beginning of things".

The GSC project provided spaces in which refugees and non-refugees could be together, play games, share food and share stories through which commonalities *and* differences in experiences and ideas emerged. Such spaces, we argue, enabled and enacted a 'quiet politics of welcome' – a politics that was not loud or demonstrative, but in which, we suggest, certain shifts in perspective and possibilities for subversion were enabled for those involved (Pottinger 2017, 221). Whilst the recognition of difference was essential to this politics, stemming from the project's commitment to challenging and critiquing the wider structures of inequality and experiences of discrimination that condition the lives of forced migrants in the UK, the quiet politics of welcome that emerged included, what Askins (2015, 473) describes as "a radical openness to the simultaneity of difference and similarity, to deconstruct dominant discourses that essentialise minorities as *only* different" (emphasis added). Thus forced migrants, volunteers and café guests connected through listening to and learning about different experiences – ranging from distinct culinary practices to the unimaginable trauma of violence and dangerous journeys, as well as through finding points of connection and similarity – shared childhood games, experiences of motherhood, grief and connecting with families across distance. At a time when the prevailing discourse surrounding forced migration and the people who migrate is one of suspicion and hostility, creating a space for alternative stories to be shared and heard offers an opportunity for a radical resistance to dominant narratives. While sharing food and conversation over, at times, seemingly trivial subjects might appear at first glance to be polite and inconsequential, the subtext of the story café format demonstrates that forced migrants have a right to be here, to share the stories they want to share and to not be defined by their displacement.

As well as gaining insights into the lives of others, which forms part of wider urgent moves among scholars and activists to produce alternative narratives surrounding migration and refugees through refugee story-telling (Esin & Lounasmaa 2020), we suggest that the quiet politics of welcome *also* encompasses the gaps, the silences, the misunderstandings and messiness that emerged through these encounters. Thus moving beyond the content of the stories that emerged, this project points to the possibilities of storytelling, story-sharing and the relational spaces that they enable for a quietly transformative politics of inclusion, solidarity and mutual care that can subtly resist dominant discourses of exclusion and hostility.

However, it is important to emphasise that enabling these minor spaces of hope and a temporary transcendence of the wider structures of inequality that continue to marginalise refugees does not signal an acceptance of, or worse still an upholding of, the status quo, a wider milieu in which the rights and freedoms of refugees and migrants are increasingly curtailed and exclusions and racism prevail (Bagelman 2013). Nor are we suggesting that such a project could be easily 'scaled up' to other contexts and practices of welcome (McNevin & Missbach 2018). To echo the reflections of *Stories in Transit*, a project that works with forcibly displaced people in Palermo, ours did, "not extend approval, tacitly or otherwise, to conditions that curtail the right to freedom of movement and work for refugees; no man or woman should be made to pay for their survival with their dignity" (Stories in Transit). The quiet politics enacted here contributes to and informs wider moves to challenge and resist the silencing of refugee voices (Woolley 2017). It does so through demonstrating the potential shifts that emerge through sharing stories that neither flatten out nor reify difference, but instead allow space for the unknown and transformation. Extending Sue Mayo's metaphor of the ripples created by a stone being thrown in the

water, these more hopeful spaces of quiet resistance and solidarity will continue to ripple and reverberate as they counter and disrupt the overriding discourses about and unjust practices towards those who have been forcibly displaced.

References

Agier, Michel. 2018. *L'étranger qui Vient – Repenser l'Hospitalité*. Paris: Le Seuil.

Ahmed, Sara. 2014. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press

Ahmed, Sara. 2004. "Affective Economies." *Social Text* 22, no. 2: 117-139.

Armbruster, Heidi. 2019. "'It was the photograph of the little boy': reflections on the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme in the UK." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 42, no. 15: 2680-2699.

Askins, Kye. 2008. (Re)negotiations: Towards a Transformative Geopolitics of Fear and Otherness. In *Fear: Critical Geopolitics and Everyday Life,* edited by Rachel Pain and Susan J. Smith, 235-248. Aldershot: Ashgate.

Askins, Kye and Rachel Pain. 2011. "Contact Zones: Participation, Materiality, and the Messiness of Interaction." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 29, no. 5: 803–21.

Askins, Kye. 2011. "Being Together: Everyday Geographies and the Quiet Politics of Belonging." *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 14, no. 2: 470–478.

Asylum Aid. 2018. "Sexual Borders: Does the UK Adequately Protect People Seeking Asylum Based on Risk of Persecution Relating to Sexual or Gender Identity or Expression?" *Asylum Aid Policy Briefing*.

Back, Les and Shamser Sinha. 2018. *Migrant City*. London: Routledge.

Bagelman, Jen. 2013. "Sanctuary: A Politics of Ease?" *Alternatives: Global, Local, Political* 38, no. 1: 49–62.

Bagelman, Jen. 2018. "Who Hosts a Politics of Welcome? – Commentary to Gill." *Fennia* 196, no. 1: 108-110.

Bauman Zygmunt. 2016. *Strangers at our Door*. Cambridge: Polity.

Berg, L. Mette, and Elena Fiddian-Qasmiyeh. 2018. "Introduction to the Issue: Encountering Hospitality and Hostility." *Migration and Society*, 1, no. 1: 1-6.

Boal, Augusto. 1979. *Theatre of the Oppressed*. London: Pluto Press.

Boal, Augusto. 1992. *Games for Actors and Non-Actors*. London: Routledge.

Bonini Baldini, Simona. 2019. "Narrative Capability: Self-Recognition and Mutual Recognition in Refugees' Storytelling." J*ournal of Information Policy* 9: 132-147.

Brickell, Katherine and Bradley Garrett. 2015. "Storytelling Domestic Violence: Feminist Politics of Participatory Video in Cambodia." *ACME: An International Journal for Critical Geographies*, 14 , no. 3: 928-953.

Brun, Cathrine. 2010. "Hospitality: Becoming 'IDPs' and 'Hosts' in Protracted Displacement." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 23, no. 3: 337-355.

Bulley, Dan. 2017. *Migration, Ethics and Power: Spaces Of Hospitality In International Politics*. London: Sage.

Burrell, Kathy and Kathrin Hörschelmann. 2018. "Perilous Journeys: Visualising the Racialised 'Refugee Crisis'." *Antipode* 51, no. 1: 1-21.

Cameron Emilie. 2012. "New Geographies of Story and Storytelling." *Progress in Human Geography* 36, no. 5: 573–592.

Calais Writers. 2017. *Voices from the 'Jungle': Stories from the Calais Refugee Camp*. London: Pluto Press.

Chouliaraki, Lilie and Tijana Stolic. 2017. "Rethinking media responsibility in the refugee 'crisis': a visual typology of European news." *Media, Culture & Society* 39, no. 8: 1162-1177.

Crawley, Heaven and Dimitris Skleparis. 2018. "Refugees, migrants, neither, both: Categorical fetishism and the politics of bounding in Europe's 'migration crisis." *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 44, no. 1: 48-64.

Dabiri, Emma, Leah Green and Bruno Rinvolucri. 2015. "Africans are being left behind by a two-tier refugee system." https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/video/2015/sep/30/africans-left-behind-two-tier-refugee-system-video

Darling, Jonathan. 2010. "A City of Sanctuary: The Relational Re-imagining of Sheffield's Asylum Politics." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 35, no. 1: 125-140.

Darling, Jonathan. 2016. "Privatising Asylum: Neoliberalisation, Depoliticisation and the Governance of Forced Migration." *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers* 41, no. 3: 230-243.

Darling, Jonathan. 2016. "Asylum in Austere Times: Instability, Privatisation and Experimentation within the UK Asylum Dispersal System." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 29, no. 4: 483-505.

Darling, Jonathan. 2017. "Forced Migration and the City: Irregularity, Informality, and the Politics of Presence." *Progress in Human Geography* 41, no. 17: 8-198.

Darling, Jonathan. 2018. The Fragility of Welcome – Commentary to Gill. *Fennia* 196, no. 2: 220-224.

Derrida, Jacques. 2000. "Hostipitality." *Angelaki* 5, no. 3: 18.

Derrida, Jacques and Anne Dufourmantelle. 2000. *Of Hospitality*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press.

Derrida, Jaques. 2005. "The Principle of Hospitality." *Parallax* 11, no. 1: 6-9.

Dorling, Kamena, Marchu Girma and Natasha Walter. 2012. "Refused: The Experiences of Women Denied Asylum in the UK." London: Women for Refugee Women.

Eastmond, Marita. 2007. "Stories as Lived Experience: Narratives in Forced Migration Research." *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20, no. 2: 248-264.

Esin, Cigdem and Aura Lounasmaa. 2020. "Narrative and Ethical (In)Action: Creating Spaces of Resistance with Refugee-Storytellers in the Calais 'Jungle' Camp." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 23, no. 4: 391-403.

Fernandes, Sujatha. 2017. *Curated Stories: The Uses and Misuses of Storytelling*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Elena. 2016. "Refugees Hosting Refugees." *Forced Migration Review* 53: 25-27.

Fiddian-Qasmiyeh, Elena. 2017. "Disrupting Humanitarian Narratives?" Blog for *Refugee Hosts*. https://refugeehosts.org/representations-of-displacement-series/

Friese, Heidrun. 2010. “The Limits of Hospitality: Political Philosophy, Undocumented Migration and the Local Arena.” *European Journal of Social Theory* 13, no. 3: 323–41.

Gill, Nick. 2018. “The Suppression of Welcome.” *Fennia* 196, no. 1: 88-98.

Goodfellow, Maya. 2019. *Hostile Environment: How Immigrants Became Scapegoats*. London: Verso Books.

Hall, Sarah Marie. 2019. “Everyday Austerity: Towards Relational Geographies of Family, Friendship and Intimacy.” *Progress in Human Geography* 43, no. 5: 769–789.

Harsch, Leonie. 2018. “Giving Refugees a Voice? Looking Beyond ‘Refugee Stories’.” Blog for *Refugee Hosts* https://refugeehosts.org/2018/01/08/giving-refugees-a-voice-looking-beyond-refugee-stories/

Horton, John and Peter Kraftl. 2009. “Small Acts, Kind Words and ‘Not too Much Fuss’: Implicit activisms.” *Emotion, Space and Society* 2, no. 1: 14-23.

Humphris, Rachel. 2019. *Home-land: Romanian Roma, Domestic Space and the State*. Bristol: University of Bristol Press/University of Chicago Press.

Huysmans, Jef. 2000. “The European Union and the Securitisation of Migration.” *Journal of Common Market Studies* 38, no. 5: 751-777.

Jackson, Michael. 2006. *The Politics of Storytelling – Violence, Transgression and Intersubjectivity*. Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press/University of Copenhagen.

Jeffers, Alison. 2011. *Refugees, Theatre and Crisis: Performing Global Identities*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Jones, Reece. 2016. *Violent Borders: Refugees and the Right to Move*. London: Verso.

Kallio, Kirsi P., Isabel Meier and Jouni Häkli. 2020. “Radical Hope in Asylum Seeking: Political Agency Beyond Linear Temporality.” *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies* 47, no. 17: 4006-4022.

Khiabany, Gholam. 2016. “Refugee crisis, imperialism and pitiless wars on the poor.” *Media, Culture and Society* 38, no. 5: 755–762.

Kisiara, Otieno. 2015. “Marginalised at the Centre: How Public Narratives of Suffering Perpetuate Perceptions of Refugees’ Helplessness and Dependency.” *Migration Letters* 12, no. 2: 62-17.

Knudsen, John C. 1995. When Trust Is on Trial: Negotiating Refugee Narratives. In *Mistrusting Refugees,* edited by E. Valentine Daniel and John Chr. Knudsen. Berkeley, California: University of California Press.

Lawson, Victoria A. 2000. “Arguments within Geographies of Movement: The Theoretical Potential of Migrants’ Stories” *Progress in Human Geography* 24, no. 2: 173–189.

Loizos, Peter (1999) “Ottoman Half-Lives: Long-Term Perspectives on Particular Forced Migrations.” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 12, no. 3: 237–263.

Massey, Doreen. 1994. “A Global Sense of Place.” *Marxism Today* 38: 24-29.

McKittrick, Katherine. 2020. *Dear Science and Other Stories*. Durham, USA: Duke University Press.

McNevin, Anne and Anje Missbach. 2018. “Hospitality as a Horizon of Aspiration (or, What the International Refugee Regime Can Learn from Acehnese Fishermen).” *Journal of Refugee Studies* 31, no. 3: 292–313.

Meretoja, Hanna. 2018. *The Ethics of Storytelling: Narrative Hermeneutics, History, and the Possible*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Millbank, Jenni. 2009. "'The Ring of Truth': A Case Study of Credibility Assessment in Particular Social Group Refugee Determinations." *International Journal of Refugee Law* 21, no. 1: 1–33.

O'Neill, Maggie. 2010. *Asylum, Migration, Community*. Bristol: The Policy Press.

Passarly, Gulwali and Nadene Ghouri. 2017. *The Lightless Sky: An Afghan Refugee Boy's Journey of Escape to A New Life in Britain*. Atlantic Books, London.

Pottinger, Laura. 2017. "Planting the Seeds of Quiet Activism." *Area* 49, no. 2: 215–222.

Price, Patricia L. 2010. "Cultural geography and the stories we tell ourselves." *Cultural Geographies* 17, no. 2: 203-210.

Raanaas, Ruth K., Sissel Ø. Aase and Suzanne Huot. 2019. "Finding Meaningful Occupation in Refugees' Resettlement: A Study of Amateur Choir Singing in Norway." *Journal of Occupational Science* 26, no. 1: 67–76.

Refugee Tales. www.refugeetales.org/about

Riessman, Catherine K. 2005. "Exploring Ethics: A Narrative about Narrative Research in South India." *Health* 9, no. 4: 473-490.

Rogaly, Ben. 2020. *Stories from a Migrant City: Living and Working Together in the Shadow of Brexit*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

Rosello, Mireille. 2002. *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Immigrant as Guest*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Rud, Jeremy. 2018. "After Asylum: Hermeneutic Composability in Former Refugee Narratives." *Narrative Inquiry* 28, no. 1: 30-55.

Sheringham, Olivia, Janetka Platun, Caoimhe McAvinchey and Alison Blunt. 2019. "Globe's Encounters and the Art of Rolling: Home, Migration and Belonging." *Cultural Geographies* 27, no. 2:177-199.

Sirriyeh, Ala. 2013. "Hosting Strangers: Hospitality and Family Practices in Fostering Unaccompanied Refugee Young People." *Child and Family Social Work* 18, no. 1: 5-14.

Smith-Khan, Laura. 2017. "Telling Stories: Credibility and the Representation of Social Actors in Australian Asylum Appeals." *Discourse and Society* 28, no. 5: 512-534.

Sparke, Matthew B. 2018. "Welcome, its Suppression, and the In-Between Spaces of Refugee Sub-Citizenship – Commentary to Gill." *Fennia* 196, no. 2: 215-219.

Stavropoulou, Nelli. 2019. "Understanding the 'Bigger Picture': Lessons Learned from Participatory Visual Arts-Based Research with Individuals Seeking Asylum in the United Kingdom." *Crossings: Journal of Migration & Culture* 10, no. 1: 95-118.

Stories in Transit: *http://www.storiesintransit.org/info/about/*

Tamboukou, Maria. 2020. "Narrative Rhythmanalysis: The Art and Politics of Listening to Women's Narratives of Forced Displacement." *International Journal of Social Research Methodology* 24, no. 2: 149-162.

Taylor, Helen. 2015. *Refugees and the Meaning of Home: Cypriot Narratives of Loss, Longing and Daily Life in London*. London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Trilling, Daniel. 2019. *Lights in the Distance: Exile and Refuge at the Borders of Europe*. London: Picador.

Tsing, Anna. 2015. *The Mushroom at the End of the World*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press.

UK Lesbian & Gay Immigration Group. 2018. "Still Falling Short: The Standard of Home Office Decision-making in Asylum Claims Based on Special Orientation and Gender Identity." London.

Vogl, Anthea. 2013. "Telling Stories from Start to Finish: Exploring the Demand for Narrative in Refugee Testimony." *Griffith Law Review* 22, no. 1: 63-86.

Warner, Marina. 2019. Stories in Transit. See https://www.marinawarner.com/teaching-and-other-activities/current-projects/

Westerman, William. 1998. Central American Refugee Testimonies and Performed Life Histories in the Sanctuary Movement. In T*he Oral History Reader,* edited by Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson. London: Routledge.

Wilson, Helen F. 2016. "On Geography and Encounter: Bodies, Borders and Difference." *Progress in Human Geography* 41, no. 4: 451–471.

Woolley, Agnes. 2017. "Narrating the 'Asylum Story': Between Literary and Legal Storytelling." *Interventions* 19, no. 3: 376-394.

Yuval-Davis, Nira, Georgie Wemyss and Katheryn Cassidy. 2018. "Everyday Bordering, Belonging and the Reorientation of British Immigration Legislation." *Sociology* 52, no. 2: 228–244.