



This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 3.0

**Ilaria Oddenino**

**Re-Drawing Heterotopias: Challenging Refugee Camps as Other Spaces in Kate Evans' *Threads: From the Refugee Crisis***

**Abstract I:** Questo lavoro analizza gli spazi "altri" che migranti, rifugiati e richiedenti asilo si trovano ad abitare all'interno dei confini degli stati europei. Si concentra sui campi rifugiati in generale e sulla "Giungla" di Calais in particolare. Seguendo il modello di Michel Agier, parlerò del campo come "eterotopia", adattando il concetto sviluppato da Michel Foucault nel 1967. Mi concentrerò poi sul *graphic reportage* di Kate Evans, *Threads: From the Refugee Crisis* – testimonianza diretta dell'esperienza dell'autrice a Calais – e su come il fumetto possa illustrare, ma anche sfidare, la natura eterotopica di questi luoghi.

**Abstract II:** This essay deals with the "other" spaces that migrants, refugees, asylum seekers find themselves inhabiting within the borders of European nation states. It concentrates on refugee camps in general, and on the Calais "Jungle" in particular. On the model of Michel Agier, I will talk of refugee camps as "heterotopias" adapting the concept developed by Michel Foucault in 1967. I will then concentrate on Kate Evans' graphic reportage, *Threads: From the Refugee Crisis* – a first-hand account of the time the author spent in the Calais camp – and I will explore how the comic book illustrates, but also challenges and resists the perception of the camp as "other space" and, therefore, as a space of otherness.

**Introduction**

In recent years, the graphic novel as a genre has known an unwavering surge in popularity, establishing itself as a compelling form of fictional entertainment as well as a favoured means of representation of the most pressing issues of the contemporary world. It is therefore not surprising that more and more comic books are being dedicated to the portrayal of the 'damaged life' (Adorno 2006) of displaced people around the world, from the inhumane living conditions in their countries of origin<sup>1</sup>, to their life-threatening journeys<sup>2</sup>, to the precarious positions in their countries of arrival<sup>3</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> See for example Glidden 2016; Sulaiman 2016; "Madaya Mom" by ABC news and Marvel Comics 2016.

<sup>2</sup> For example: "A Perilous Journey" by Benjamin Dix and Lindsay Pollock, serialised in the *The Guardian* and *Aftenposten* (11-13 Nov 2015); Colfer & Donkin 2018.

<sup>3</sup> For example: Joe Sacco's "Not in My Country" published on *The Guardian* (17 July 2010) and Visintin's "Mare Nostrum" (2014).

Quite interestingly, as pointed out by L. K. in *The Economist*<sup>4</sup>, different countries around the world have recently started to produce state-sponsored “comics” themselves, often in the form of graphic guides to integration. Think, for example, of “Germany and its People”, posted online in October 2016 by the German state broadcaster Bayerischer Rundfunk, where “proper behaviour” is prescribed through cartoons reminiscent of airplane safety cards. Here, immigrants (Middle Eastern in particular) are instructed not to sexually assault women, not to hit children and not to harass gay couples, and they learn that in Germany – unlike, one must assume, in their own countries – conflicts must not be solved with violence<sup>5</sup>. Another example comes from Russia, where in 2017 the Department of National Policy, Interregional Relations and Tourism in Moscow released a 100-page comic guide featuring popular characters from traditional Russian fairy tales illustrating desirable behaviour and providing practical information on matters such as Moscow’s complex network of public transport<sup>6</sup>. A third and last example worth mentioning is a campaign launched in 2014 by the Australian government’s Department for Immigration and Border Protection, with the aim, in this case, to deter potential asylum seekers from attempting to reach Australia by boat. By detailing the dangers of a rough sea journey and the horrible life that awaits them in offshore detention centres, it aimed at demonstrating why these people should not embark on such a disastrous enterprise; and even if they choose to, there is no way, as clearly stated in the campaign’s slogan, that they will be able to make Australia their home<sup>7</sup>.

The choice of resorting to illustrated guides is easy to understand, as their immediacy and trans-linguistic potential make them powerful communicative and educational tools. Apart from the practical information they provide, what some of these graphic guides seem to have in common is the way they “deploy visual language to paint a cohesive portrait of their respective nations”, depicting, for example, “Russians as descendants of their fairy tale heroes and conquering knights, or Germans as law-abiding, egalitarian citizens”<sup>8</sup>, while inevitably constructing the image of migrants and refugees as “other” and inhabiting “a space separate to the fairy tale of the nation”<sup>9</sup>.

This essay deals with this separate space that migrants, refugees and asylum seekers find themselves inhabiting within the fairy tale of the European nation states. It concentrates on refugee camps in general, the new “ghettos” of the contemporary world, and on the Calais “Jungle” in particular. On the model of Agier (2012), I will talk of refugee camps as “heterotopia” (literally: “other spaces”), adapting the concept famously introduced to

---

<sup>4</sup> *The Economist* (23 February 2017), <https://www.economist.com/blogs/prospero/2017/02/frame> (consulted on 20/02/2018).

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.br.de/fernsehen/ard-alpha/sendungen/punkt/kulturguide-arabisch-100.html> (consulted on 20/02/2018).

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.ntv.ru/video/1380146/> (consulted on 20/02/2018).

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/feb/11/government-launches-new-graphic-campaign-to-deter-asylum-seekers> (consulted on 20/02/2018).

<sup>8</sup> *The Economist* (23 February 2017), <https://www.economist.com/blogs/prospero/2017/02/frame> (consulted on 20/02/2018).

<sup>9</sup> *The Economist* (23 February 2017), <https://www.economist.com/blogs/prospero/2017/02/frame> (consulted on 20/02/2018).

the social sciences by Michel Foucault in 1967. I will then return to the graphic novel and present Kate Evans' latest work, *Threads: From the Refugee Crisis* – a first-hand account of the time the author spent in the Calais camp – and I will explore how the comic book illustrates, but also challenges and resists, the perception of the camp as “other space” and, therefore, as a space of otherness.

### Part 1. Refugee camps as Heterotopia

According to the UN Refugee Agency website, we are currently faced with the highest levels of displacement on record:

An unprecedented 65.6 million people around the world have been forced from home. Among them are nearly 22.5 million refugees, over half of whom are under the age of 18. There are also 10 million stateless people who have been denied a nationality and access to basic rights such as education, healthcare, employment and freedom of movement [...] nearly 20 people are forcibly displaced every minute as a result of conflict or persecution<sup>10</sup>.

What these figures tell us is that refugees and displaced people should be the central subjects of our political history, and yet they are invariably relegated to the margins of our institutions, cities and consciousness. In Europe, those countries which have built their modern (political) identity on the Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen are not prepared to protect the rights of people who cannot be identified as citizens, people who have “lost every other specific quality and connection except for the mere fact of being humans” (Arendt, quoted in Agamben 1995: 116). This paradox is implicit, Agamben writes, “in the ambiguity of the very title of the *Declaration of 1789, Déclaration des droits de l'homme et du citoyen*, in which it is unclear whether the two terms name two realities, or whether instead they form a hendiadys, in which the second term is, in reality, already contained in the first” (Agamben 1995: 116). Living outside of the holy “trinity of state/ nation/ territory” (Agamben 1995: 117) results in ever-growing aggregates of people loitering in what Said called a “perilous territory of non-belonging” (Said 2000: 177), of which refugee camps, such as the infamous “Jungle” in Calais, northern France, are perhaps the most representative physical realisation.

Refugee camps are conceived as temporary settlements where people who have been forced to flee their homes because of wars, violence and oppression can find shelter and receive assistance. They provide “immediate protection and safety for the world’s most vulnerable people”<sup>11</sup> and their establishment allows organisations such as the UN Refugee Agency to “deliver lifesaving aid like food, water and medical attention during an emergency”<sup>12</sup>. However, these camps are often far from being truly temporary, and their inhabitants can end up immobilised in these (supposedly) transitory spaces for months, years even. The Calais camp is no exception.

<sup>10</sup> See <http://www.unhcr.org/figures-at-a-glance.html> (consulted on 5/04/2018).

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/camps/> (consulted on 5/04/2018).

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.unrefugees.org/refugee-facts/camps/> (consulted on 5/04/2018).

The progenitor of the “Jungle” was set up in 1999 by the Red Cross in the neighbouring village of Sangatte, in an attempt to assist the many people who arrived in the area (from Iraq, Afghanistan and Kosovo primarily)<sup>13</sup> hoping to cross the English Channel and get to the UK – Calais being the closest French town to British soil. It was evacuated in 2002, but within a few months a new makeshift camp emerged in the woods around Calais, the first ‘Jungle’. By the time it was bulldozed in 2009 it had reached a population of about 1000, and between 2014 and 2016 – when it was rebuilt – it became ‘home’ to more than 7000 people, this time primarily from Syria and the Middle East, as well as some African countries such as Eritrea or Somalia<sup>14</sup>. For its many residents, the camp became the ultimate place of banishment, “a purgatory between two countries, both of which unwilling to accept them”<sup>15</sup>. For the outside world, it became the ultimate political token, a catalyst for fears and frustrations fueled by polarising narratives of invasion, and the sworn enemy of a once prosperous town now faced with its own impoverishment and abandonment, itself geographically, culturally and economically at the margins of the nation state it belongs to. If Calaisians, however, can still aspire to their own legitimate place within the fairy tale of the nation, the people whose lives are confined to a refugee camp cannot: their confinement stigmatises them as a massive population of undesirables (Agier 2002: 337), a surplus of humanity (Barnum 2014), condemned to a state of ‘double locality exclusion’: “They are excluded from the native places they lost through displacement, and they are excluded from the space of the ‘local population’ where the camps or other transit zones are located” (Agier 2012: 278).

The space of refugee camps such as the ‘Jungle’ seems to perfectly embody what Foucault, in his notes to a lecture given in March 1967, describes as ‘heterotopia’, borrowing a term traditionally used in medicine that he opposes to the more famous concept of ‘utopia’. Foucault defines heterotopias as “real places, effective places, places that are written into the institution of society itself, and that are a sort of counter-emplacements, a sort of effectively realised utopia, in which the real emplacements, all the other emplacements that can be found within culture, are simultaneously represented, contested and inverted; a kind of places that are outside all places, even though they are actually localizable” (Foucault 2008: 16).

He then identifies a series of principles that can be associated with the different realisations of this concept, some of them particularly fitting for a reading of refugee camps as “other spaces”. He begins by discussing “crisis heterotopias”, those spaces inhabited by individuals who are in a state of “crisis” with respect to the society they live in, and whose manifestation of that crisis always takes place “elsewhere”. He quotes traditions such as the “honeymoon trip” involving young women’s deflowering, a practice that had to be carried out in a space separate from the familiar spaces of everyday life. These heterotopias, Fou-

---

<sup>13</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/37750368/the-history-of-the-calais-jungle-camp-and-how-its-changed-since-1999> (consulted on 4/03/2018).

<sup>14</sup> <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsbeat/article/37750368/the-history-of-the-calais-jungle-camp-and-how-its-changed-since-1999> (consulted on 4/03/2018).

<sup>15</sup> <http://www.euronews.com/2016/10/24/purgatory-a-history-of-migrants-in-calais> (consulted on 4/02/2018).

cault believes, are being replaced in today's society "by what we might call heterotopias of deviation: those in which individuals are placed whose behaviour is deviant in relation to the required mean or norm. Cases of this are rest homes and psychiatric hospitals [...] and, of course, prisons" (Foucault 2008: 18). It is quite obvious that the refugee camp, too, is designed to contain humanity that deviates from the norm, where by norm we mean the state/nation/territory trinity on which Western society is founded. The migrants' crisis of nonconformity to the Declaration's hendiadys – man *and* citizen – finds its elsewhere in the liminal space of the camp, a place outside the urban tissue of the European nation where this deviation is contained, tamed, controlled. Representing heterotopias of crisis and, even more so, of deviation, camps become off-places – Agier calls them *hors-lieux* in French (Agier 2008: 117) – places "outside", locations on the edges or limits of the normal order of things (Agier 2012: 278).

Foucault continues by observing how "heterotopias always presuppose a system of opening and closing that both isolates them and makes them penetrable" (Foucault 2008: 21). Generally speaking, the heterotopic site is not freely accessible like a public place: "either one is constrained, as in the case of entering a barracks or a prison, or else one has to submit to rites and to purifications. One can only enter with a certain permission and after having performed a certain number of gestures" (21). Everyone can access these heterotopic sites but entering them is in fact an illusion: "one believes to have entered and, by the very fact of entering, one is excluded" (21). Camps can be places of detention, but they can also be places of refuge or shelter that people access for security or assistance; however, the very act of entering them marks these people's exclusion from society and underlines their impossibility to find a non-heterotopic site in which to freely exist. In the words of Agier, "those confined outside are people who are 'cast out inside' within the state-space" (Agier 2012: 279). Their social exclusion translates into an exclusion from the traditional categories of time and place in favour of a timeless, placeless existence, where people's lives are reduced to an incessant act of waiting (Agier 2012: 274): "waiting for a job, waiting for a meal, waiting to use the toilet, waiting for water, waiting for medical services, waiting..." (Barnum 2014). As far as the penetrability of the camps is concerned, it is represented primarily by the invasive presence of external authorities emanating from that inaccessible inside that is the outer world. The exterior's penetration of the camp takes the form of the state's judicial and political systems, often expressed through police intervention – police harassment, even – something that camp residents are subjected to on a regular basis.

This tension between heterotopic sites and the exterior introduces us to the last of Foucault's points, where he defines heterotopias by way of contrast to the outer world:

The last trait of heterotopias is that they have, in relation to the rest of space, a function. The latter unfolds between two extreme poles. Either their role is to create a space of illusion that exposes every real space, all the emplacements in the interior of which human life is enclosed and partitioned, as even more illusory. Perhaps that is the role played for a long time by those famous brothels of which we are now deprived. Or else, on the contrary, creating another space, another real space, as perfect, as meticulous, as well arranged as ours is disorderly, ill construed, and sketchy (Foucault 2008: 21).

The refugee camp contains, simplifies and stigmatises everything that life outside the heterotopia is *not*; it demarcates – physically and symbolically – the contours of that otherness in opposition to which a definition of the “self” can be more easily drawn or, in fact, constructed. In other words, heterotopias – other spaces, spaces of otherness and, therefore, spaces for others – are an integral part of the “top” culture’s self-image and public discourse, they are “instrumentally constitutive of the shared imaginary repertoires of the dominant culture” (Stallybrass & White 1986: 5). One cannot exist without the other, one defines – and defies – the constitutive nature of the other. What is socially peripheral – the camp, the marginalised other – despised and reviled in the official discourse of dominant culture and central power (Shields 1991: 5) is in fact symbolically central.

### **Part 2. *Threads: From the Refugee Crisis***

In October 2015 British cartoonist/graphic novelist Kate Evans – author, among others, of *Red Rosa*, a graphic biography of Rosa Luxemburg (Verso 2015) – travelled to Calais for the first time and spent a few days in the Jungle as a volunteer, collaborating to the building of facilities and distribution of humanitarian aid. She soon felt compelled to return, this time extending her investigative interests and active contribution to the nearby camp of Dunkirk, inhabited primarily by women and children. The result of her experience in the region is *Threads: From the Refugee Crisis*, a graphic reportage that is, as the author herself underlines, overtly partisan – it is not a coincidence, perhaps, that Evans is currently working on a biography of Gramsci – and that deliberately aims at foregrounding stories and perspectives that are typically underrepresented in mainstream discourse. When I interviewed her in her house/studio in Somerset last February, she insisted that I call her work graphic “reportage” rather than “journalism” because of the myth of objectivity attached to the latter, which she firmly rejects: “One simply *cannot* be objective when making a report”, she told me, before adding:

I explicitly write in opposition to mainstream media narrative. I want the medium of comics to engage the reader to the utmost and so I will use every way of enhancing the emotion in my representation of events that is consistent with the facts [...]. I want my books to work upon the reader, I want them to take them somewhere, I want them to make a political point. And I’m actually quite snobby about comics that aren’t really about anything. Since you’ve gone through the effort of writing all that, make it say something!<sup>16</sup>

On her very first trip to Calais, she happened to stay in a former lace-making workshop turned rental apartment, where she discovered the town’s centuries-old manufacturing history. Lace constitutes a powerful visual metaphor throughout the book: most panels are framed within intricate lace patterns, the same patterns which from time to time become the black smoke of Russian fighter jets bombing the skies of Syria (the event coincided with the date of her arrival in Calais) or the red strings on which paper cut-outs in the shape of

<sup>16</sup> Interview with the author (25 February 2018).

human bodies are hung out to dry in the work of artist Suzanne Partridge, displayed after the eviction of the Jungle on 10 March 2016 (Evans 2017: 164). Lace is also the first of the many threads we find in the book, which opens with the image of traditional lace workers weaving together what turns out to be white fences:

The first thing we see [...]. White fences stream along the highway. Metres high. Miles long. The smooth steel lacework glistens in the evening sun. Calais. The city was famous for its lace-making. The meticulous toil of women and girls sitting outside to make the most of the daylight. Nimble fingers. Bobbins dancing. Continuously twisting the threads (Evans 2017: 7).

The focus then shifts to the people trapped on the “wrong” side of the fence – “Politicians call them a ‘flood’, but of the millions of people around the world fleeing for their lives this is just a trickle. Maybe five thousand human beings? Nobody knows exactly. Nobody is counting. These people don’t count” (Evans 2017: 8) – and the territory of nonbelonging to which their existence is now confined – “Everywhere there is an air of expectation, of impermanence. People who have been on the move for so long are stuck in limbo, tantalizingly close to their destination, but the wrong side of those cruel fences, still so very far” (8). The beautifully illustrated pages that follow offer a rare insight into daily life in the camp, which allows us to observe the heterotopic features of places such as the Jungle, while at the same time – thanks to the author’s narrative strategies – disrupting some of the assumptions on which their perceived otherness is founded.

First of all, we have seen how the camp’s correspondence to heterotopias of crisis and deviation derives from a disconnection between the notions of man and citizen, which constitutes the deviation from the norm that legitimises the existence of other spaces of this kind. Evans chooses to portray life in the camp in all its complexity and vitality, refusing to subscribe both to the one-sided rhetoric of victimhood (and the pornography of suffering attached to it), and, of course, to the discursive creation of migrants and refugees as a threat, a flood, an invasion. There are, inevitably, moments of tragedy and despair, but they are interspersed with smiles – “There are a lot of smiles which I didn’t expect. Everywhere, little interactions, points of connections, life’s threads crossing” (8) – laughter, dancing, eating, drinking, playing, and art. Some of the most memorable of these moments include games of invisible cricket – “Suddenly a guy will blow an imaginary cricket ball and everyone dives for the save” (33) – improvised meals animated by conversations about yoga (98-102), screenings of Bollywood romantic comedies or action movies – much preferred by the Jungle’s predominantly male population – on the camp’s only TV (65), impromptu art sessions in which Evans paints watercolour portraits of refugees, preserved in plastic pockets for them to keep. Stories and paths criss-cross in the camp like lace work, connecting lives, showing the tapestry of humanity in all its colours. How is the nature of these men different from that of the citizens outside the fence? It is not, Evans clearly shows. Her strategy, aimed at reducing all sense of distance between the readers and the people portrayed, is a simple but effective and widely used narrative ploy.

It reminds, for example, of Joe Sacco’s *Palestine*, where the celebrated author accorded

special attention to the domestic life of Palestinian camp dwellers in general and their hospitality rituals in particular as a strategy of resistance to the camp heterotopia. “Sacco’s resistance to the refugee camp heterotopia in the Palestine narrative is achieved partly through depictions of the domestic and interior life of Palestinians” (Adams 2008: 138), who are “frequently depicted partaking in the ubiquitous tea ritual of hospitality” (138). However, in *Threads*, just like in *Palestine*, the domestic, interior life of people living in a camp (despite the obvious differences between the two realities portrayed) is inescapably subjected to the interference of the outside world, which constantly exposes it in all its vulnerability and provisionality. The fragile space of these much-needed moments of normality is haunted by the memories of the traumatic experiences that forced those people into the camp, which resurface in the stories of loss they share with Evans or the photos of their loved ones they show her. Far from being merely metaphorical, the interference of the outside also means, as we have seen, the arbitrary physical penetration of the heterotopic space by representatives of the impenetrable exterior. Indeed, “the domestic space is invaded by vicarious experiences, just as the transient space of the refugee camp is susceptible to violation by the occupying soldiers or the local militias that rule in the absence of effective civil institutions protecting human rights” (Adams 2008: 139).

In *Threads*, Evans chooses to make police interventions the key moments of crisis of the book, the incidents she depicts with the most striking dramatic force. There is a powerful quadryptic, for example (Evans 2017: 128), in which she shows a pregnant woman, two terrified children holding onto her legs, being hit by a riot policeman. The woman’s look is fierce, defiant, a detail Evans describes as an attempt to give her back at least some of the agency she has been deprived of<sup>17</sup>. This is also the only time we see the eyes of one of these men, otherwise represented as machine-like, faceless beings without any recognisable human traits: I am thinking of the large group of riot policemen supervising the eviction of the Jungle at the end of the book, for example, “rows of them, like robots, like insects” (Evans 2017: 155). The image is followed by that of a group of men standing outside the camp, looking at it burn – the fire is, once again, a cloud of black lace – their lips sewn shut with thread in one last desperate act of protest (158)<sup>18</sup>.

Finally, we have discussed how the heterotopic space has a function in relation to the space that remains, which defines itself and cements its identity by contrast to it. The text messages that Evans displays on smartphone screens, representative of the most common arguments against the presence of migrants and refugees in Europe (they are, she told me, comments she received on her blog, or that people made to her directly, etc.), are the threads of conversation the author tries to follow to expose the fears and frustrations anti-migrant political agendas feed on<sup>19</sup>. Evans does not counter them directly until the very end of the

<sup>17</sup> Interview with the author (25 February 2018).

<sup>18</sup> The episode refers to the camp demolition begun on 1 March 2016. Iranian migrants were seen stitching their mouths closed to protest against the eviction while the Jungle was being destroyed: <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/worldnews/europe/france/12181858/Calais-migrants-sew-mouths-shut-in-demolition-protest.html> (consulted on 25/02/2018).

<sup>19</sup> “This cartoon could not be better propaganda for battlefield veteran Islamic militant males invading



book, where she devotes two pages to reporting facts, comparing and correcting figures. Throughout the comic, however, she mostly chooses to simply let these comments sit next to the images. This exemplifies the power of the genre *Threads* belongs to: the comic book is an extremely accessible medium, but at the same time it requires an active participation on the side of the readers. It invites them to fill in the blank spaces between and beyond each panel, activating connections, bridging silences and distances. Indeed, “comics omit far more information than they include. They’re a series of deliberately chosen visual fragments that don’t represent the time between or the space around other panels. And because they’re cartoons, they omit most of the details of the things they actually do depict in a panel” (Wolk 2007: 133, 4). It is up to the reader to piece the fragments together, to weave the threads of the stories. Reading a comic, in other words, involves “crossing boundaries by the thousand” (Knowles 2016: 382), and a graphic reportage about disconnection, displacement, distances and bridges seems to mimic in its very make up the themes it deals with, thus making it a privileged means of representation of one of the most urgent issues of the contemporary world.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Adams, Jeff. 2008. *Documentary Graphic Novels and Social Realism*. Oxford-New York: Peter Lang.
- Adorno, Theodor W. 2006 [1951]. *Minima Moralia. Reflections from the Damaged Life*. London: Verso.
- Agamben, Giorgio. 1995. We Refugees. *Periodicals Archive* (Symposium Summer) 49, 2: 114-119.
- Agier, Michel. 2012. From Refuge the Ghetto is Born: Contemporary Figures of Heterotopias. Ray Hutchison & Bruce D. Haynes eds. *The Ghetto. Contemporary Global Issues and Controversies*. Boulder (CO): Westview Press, 265-292.
- Agier, Michel. 2008. Quel temps aujourd’hui en ces lieux incertains. *L’Homme*, 185-186: 105-120.
- Agier, Michel. 2002. Between War and City: Towards an Urban Anthropology of Refugee Camps. *Ethnography*, 3, 3: 317-341.
- Barnum, Anthony. 2014. Marginalized Urban Spaces and Heterotopias: An Exploration of

---

Northern Europe if Lenin himself produced it. The situation would not exist if the very people breaking laws in Calais did not ruin their homelands with ethnic religious hatred, intolerance, and war. You are importing death” (23).

“These refugees are safe in France where they could claim asylum if they wanted 2 shame they want out benefits 2 much!” (27).

“These cute refugee babies grow into vile adults who want to destroy our country and all that’s in it” (32).

“Oh, you’re volunteering in Calais? That’s, like, the ultimate fashion statement these days...” (54).

“Just try and think what it will be like in the UK if these people get in? Get yourself a job, start paying taxes and see how YOU like it when you have to wait for NHS treatment, or you can’t get your children into a school of your choosing. If you are so hell bent on helping people, why not help the homeless in your country? [...] (72).

“If u think their refugees ur seriously deluded they are economic migrants. How can u tell if the so-called ‘refugees’ at Calais are really asylum seekers? 99% are chancers trying to game the system” (141).

Refugee Camps, <http://rumiforum.org/marginalized-urban-spaces-and-heterotopias-an-exploration-of-refugee-camps/> (consulted on 15/02/2018).

Colfer, Eoin & Andrew Donkin. 2018. *Illegal*. London: Hodder.

Evans, Kate. 2017. *Threads: From the Refugee Crisis*. London: Verso.

Foucault, Michel. 2008 [1967]. Of Other Spaces. Michiel Dehaene & Lieven De Cauter eds. and trans. *Heterotopia and the City. Public Space in a Postcivil Society*. London: Routledge, 13-29.

Glidden, Sarah. 2016. *Rolling Blackouts. Dispatches from Turkey, Syria and Iraq*. Montreal: Drawn & Quarterly.

Knowles, Sam, James Peacock & Harriet Earle. 2016. Introduction: Trans/formation and the Graphic Novel. *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 52, 4: 378-384.

Sacco, Joe. 2014. *Palestine*. Seattle (WA): Fantagraphics Books.

Said, Edward. 2000. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge (MA): Harvard University Press.

Shields, Rob. 1991. *Places on the Margin. Alternative Geographies of Modernity*. London: Routledge.

Stallybrass, Peter & Allon White. 1986. *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*. Ithaca (NY): Cornell University Press.

Sulaiman, Hamid. 2016. *Freedom Hospital*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Visintin, Fabio. 2014. *Natali neri e altre storie di guerra*. Roma: Comicout.

Wolk, Douglas. 2007. Pictures, Words, and the Space Between Them – What Cartooning Is and How It Works. Wolk Douglas ed. *Reading Comics. How Graphic Novels Work and What They Mean*. Cambridge (MA): Da Capo Press.

**Illaria Oddenino** holds a PhD in English and Postcolonial Literatures from the University of Turin. Her research interests include postcolonial studies, modernism and migration studies.

[ilaria.oddenino@unito.it](mailto:ilaria.oddenino@unito.it)