Le Simplegadi ISSN 1824-5226

Vol. XVI-No. 18 November 2018 DOI: 10.17456/SIMPLE-99

Daniela Salusso

Hostile Country, Hospitable Language: Telling Stories to Survive History. Contemporary Attempts in British Literature and Theatre to Reshape the Language of Migration

Abstract I: Migranti, rifugiati, richiedenti asilo: sono tanti termini che si utilizzano per descrivere gli esseri umani che lasciano la propria abitazione, le persone care e la propria identità per costruire una nuova vita nel paese ospite. Tuttavia, per ragioni storiche e culturali, la Gran Bretagna oggi si configura come un ambiente ostile più che ospitale. Verranno analizzati e confrontati tre progetti di interesse: il testo teatrale *Lampedusa* di Anders Lustgarten del 2015, i due volumi del progetto *Refugee Tales* pubblicati da Comma Press nel 2016 e 2017 e l'antologia *A Country of Refuge*, edita da Lucy Popescu e pubblicata nel 2016 come parte del progetto Unbound. Ciò che hanno in comune è la ricerca di una lingua che sia in grado di carpire e restituire la complessità della migrazione dal punto di vista di tutti coloro che ne sono coinvolti: non solo i rifugiati e i richiedenti asilo, ma anche le guardie costiere, gli avvocati, gli interpreti, gli operatori sociali, e molti altri.

Abstract II: Migrants, refugees, asylum seekers: many words to describe human beings who leave behind their homes, their loved ones, and their identities to build a new life in a host country. However, due to historical and cultural issues, nowadays the UK is a hostile environment rather than a hospitable, welcoming one. Three interesting contemporary projects will be analysed and compared: Anders Lustgarten's 2015 play *Lampedusa*, the two volumes of *Refugee Tales* published in 2016 and 2017 by Comma Press and the anthology *A Country of Refuge*, edited by Lucy Popescu and published in 2016 as part of the Unbound project. What they have in common is the search for a language that is able to grasp and convey the complexity of migration from the point of view of all those involved: not only refugees and asylum seekers, but also coastguards, lawyers, interpreters, social workers, and many others.

Migration narrative: from the analysis of storytelling to the analysis of story-writing

Contemporary migrations are often a movement from a hostile home country to a host country that can easily become *host-ile* as well, a word that reminds us of Theresa May's intention in 2012: "the aim is to create here in Britain a really hostile environment for illegal migration"[1]. How is one supposed to find shelter and seek asylum in this scenario? Finding

[1] See: https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/apr/17/theresa-mays-hostile-environment-policy-at-heart-of-windrush-scandal (consulted on 17/04/2018).

or better, re-finding one's place in the world is first of all a matter of understanding one's roots, but also of retelling one's story to recreate one's identity. As the iterative aspect of the verbs suggests and the etymology of the word confirms[2], migration entails a removal but also a change of perspective, of geography, of culture.

This change of perspective can only occur if we rethink the very language we use to narrate. Labels used to give a certain group an identity may become dangerous when we lack the awareness of the networks of meanings and associations they create. For example, the UN Refugee Agency suggests that we stop using the terms "migrant" and "refugee" interchangeably, since the latter are persons fleeing armed conflict or persecution, whereas the former choose to move for personal reasons and may safely decide to return home. Barry Malone, the online editor of Al Jazeera English, contends that "the umbrella term migrant is no longer fit for purpose when it comes to describing the horror unfolding in the Mediterranean", explaining that "it has evolved from its dictionary definitions into a tool that dehumanises and distances, a blunt pejorative". The word migrant, in his view, "is a word that strips suffering people of voice", whereas "substituting refugee for it is – in the smallest way – an attempt to give some back". Once again, if we look at the etymology of the word, we will find that refuge comes from late 14th century Old French refuge "hiding place", from Latin refugium "a taking refuge; place to flee back to", from re- "back" (see re-) + fugere "to flee". In this case, the prefix re- does not signal a repetition, but something subtler: finding a place you can go back to again and again, a safe harbour, a sanctuary. I will therefore favour the term "refugee", but at the same time, leaving aside the governmentality of migration, I will be referring to the act of migrating simply in its original sense of moving from one place to another.

Reshaping the language of migration is the starting point to restructuring the narrative. On 21 April 2016, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) organized a one-day expert roundtable on the theme "Changing the public narrative on migration: promoting tolerance and confronting xenophobia against migrants", to discuss how the issues of migrants and migration are being framed in the public narrative, and to examine possible collaborative efforts to re-frame the current "toxic narrative on this issue". The guidelines that emerged after a roundtable discussion focused primarily on: "story-telling through the stories, testimonies and images of migrants as well as of people who have not migrated but are impacted by migration […] in order to build empathy and confront prejudice and discrimination against migrants"[3].

In seeking asylum, a refugee asks for the most sacred kind of hospitality, and hospitality starts with listening to one's story. Sociolinguistics has tackled the problem from the point of view of narrative discourse, studying those stories and those accounts to understand "the ways and means through which language, and in particular narrative, displays

---

[2] Definition of migration found on the online etymology dictionary: "1610s, of persons, 1640s of animals, from Latin *migrationem* (nominative *migratio*) 'a removal, change of abode, migration', noun of action from past participle stem of *migrare* 'to move from one place to another,' probably originally **migwros*, from PIE **(e) meigw-* (source of Greek *ameibein* "to change"), which is an extended form of root **mei-* (1) "to change, go, move" or perhaps a separate root".

[3] See https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Migration/Pages/Shapingthepublicnarrativeonmigration.aspx (consulted on 3/09/2018).

its power to voice experiences, to bring about shared understandings of life events, to shape and transform individual and collective realities", as Anna de Fina explains in her *Identity in Narrative: A Study of Immigrant Discourse* (De Fina 2003: 5). She further points out that narrative "is central to the study of identity and which properties of narrative as a genre make it particularly apt to become the locus of expression, construction and enactment of identity, but also a privileged genre for its analysis" (De Fina 2003: 26). This analysis is based on conversational narratives, whereas my work falls into the research category that De Fina and Tseng described as focusing on "storytelling centred on migrants but told by members of out-groups" (2017: 384). In addition, I will not focus on narrative analysis and narrative interpretation but on narrative writing. The stories analysed here have been written by professional writers; regardless of the fact that some of them are first- or second-generation migrants, their accounts will be treated as literary fiction. The pivotal question thus becomes: how do writers write about migration? How do we make language a hospitable place, waiting for our nations to become such? In particular, I will be analysing three interesting contemporary projects: Anders Lustgarten's 2015 play *Lampedusa,* the two volumes of *Refugee Tales* published in 2016 and 2017 by Comma Press and the anthology *A Country of Refuge,* edited by Lucy Popescu and published in 2016 as part of the Unbound project. I purposefully chose to include various genres, including a theatrical piece, to address this issue; for the sake of this analysis, Lustgarten's play will be treated as a literary piece and the specificity of theatre discourse will not be addressed.

Reshaping the Language of Migration

The issue of language is at the core of my research. What language can we use to speak the unspeakable, name the unnameable and tell untold stories? What means do we have to sensitise the public to an issue that is at the same time over-debated and underestimated? The texts analysed reveal a language that is both new and ancient, very physical and rich in images, but also a lyrical language that poeticises the unpoetic. A rewriting of the old with a hope for the future, a sort of mythical method based on intertextuality, hybridity and the shoring of whatever fragments of civilisation remain against the ruins. A language that mixes all styles, from prose to poetry, from critical essay to intimate first-person account, from interviews to pastiches. What the texts chosen have in common is the search for a language that is able to grasp and convey the complexity of migration from the point of view of all those involved: refugees and asylum seekers, coastguards, lawyers, interpreters, etc. Despite all the differences, which would require a more in-depth analysis, three main tendencies can be identified: 1. the use of epic language paired with the rewriting of classics; 2. making language itself the focus of the story; 3. giving voice to the lexicon of suspension. These tendencies clearly demonstrate that the narrative of migration is actually changing by showing, respectively, that roots are common to all humanity, real dialogue is possible only through mutual understanding and the need has emerged to give voice and narrate also subjects which, like suspension, live by definition in a perpetual limbo and are impossible to narrate.

Epic Language and the Rewriting of Classics

Lustgarten's play stages two juxtaposed tales: that of Stefano, an Italian fisherman whose job is to pull drowned bodies of migrants out of the Mediterranean sea and that of Denise, a mixed-race Chinese-British student who is financing her degree course by working for a payday loan company, tending to her sick mother and facing racism and complaints about immigration everywhere she goes. The first lines spoken by Stefano already set the tone: a language that brings together past and present, global and local, epic and mundane.

> This is where the world began. This was Caesar's highway. Hannibal's road to glory. These were the trading routes of the Phoenicians and the Carthaginians, the Ottomans and the Byzantines. […] Our favourite food is bottarga, salted roe: it tastes like being slapped in the face by a wave you didn't see coming. We all come from the sea and back to the sea we will go. The Mediterranean gave birth to the world (Lustgarten 2015: 12).

Stefano starts his speech with a praise for the sea that quickly becomes an elegy. After portraying a picture of death and devastation, in fact, Stefano will change his tone and declare "But the fish are gone. The Med is dead. And my job is to fish out a very different harvest" (Lustgarten 2015: 15). The combination of lyrical and everyday language hints at the fact that migration has always existed, people have always crossed the sea for trade, either in the hope to find better conditions, or simply out of sheer curiosity. Yet, today something has changed: there is "no hope", and pessimism is Italy's "national sport" (Lustgarten 2015: 22). The same pessimism affects Britain as well, as Denise points out:

> I'd not heard 'chinky cunt' and 'fucking migrant' in that accent till recently. But lately I get it quite a bit. Middle class people think racism is free speech now. Tip of the iceberg, Farage. Tip of a greasy gin-soaked iceberg of cuntery. The matchless bitterness of the affluent. Summat about the Chinese an' all. We're the last ones it's OK to hate. […] You can say stuff to the Chinese you wouldn't even say to Muslims. And I'm not even a proper one. Don't fit in anywhere, me (Lustgarten 2015: 25).

Not fitting anywhere: geographically, historically, socially, existentially. The condition of the migrant in short is someone who is equally unfit for life and for death, because what kind of death is it if there is "no-one to mourn for them?" (Lustgarten 2015: 58). Through the use of epic as a narrative point of reference, though, we see the status of these invisible people elevated to that of heroes, whose adventures need to be told for the sake of humanity. The reflection on silent, unseen and unmourned deaths finds its counterpart in the unspoken, unlistened and unbelieved stories of migrants' lives. The project *Refugee Tales* attempts precisely to do this:

> We set out to make a language that opens politics/ establishes belongings/ where a person dwells. […] Because we know too much/ about what goes unsaid/ and what we choose to walk for/ is the possibility of trust/ in language/ to hear the unsaid spoken/and then repeated /made/ unambiguous and loud (Herd 2016: 6-8).

Every summer from 2015, the *Refugee Tales* project walks in solidarity with Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Immigration Detainees. As the project walks, it reclaims the landscape of South East England for the language of welcome, taking Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* as a model. Every stop is punctuated by the public telling of two tales: one, the tale of an asylum seeker, former immigration detainee or refugee; the other of a person – for instance a lawyer or interpreter – who works with people seeking asylum in the UK. Placed high on their political agenda is calling for an end to the UK's policy of indefinite detention "to reassert/ the ancient covenant/ that the State/ as it is constituted/ shall not detain indefinitely" (Herd 2017: 4). The broader scope, however, is to make language a hospitable place and therefore "English / To be made sweete again" (Herd 2016: viii), following Edmond Jabès definition of language as a place intrinsically characterised by hospitality (Jabès 1991).

The Chaucerian frame adopted by the *Refugee Tales* project follows the postmodern trend of the rewriting of classics. The first story in particular, then, *The Migrant's Tale* by Dragan Todorovic (Herd 2016: 1-12) juxtaposes the story of Aziz, a Syrian refugee who embarks on a journey across the Mediterranean to reach Italy, and a retelling of Chaucer's *The Man of Law's* tale, where a young woman, Custance, the daughter of the emperor in Rome, is about to marry the Syrian Sultan, but because the emperor had required the Sultan to convert to Christianity, she becomes the object of the Sultan's mother's rage and is set adrift on the sea. The story is then retold in *The Lawyer's Tale* by Stephen Collis, who argues that Custance is the emblem of the migrant, since she is driven by forces she has little control over, and the sea is the symbol of homelessness par excellence as an existential condition: in fact, "the world was born yearning to be a home for all" (Herd 2016: 113).

Similarly, the anthology *Country of Refuge* is comprised of short fiction, poems, memoirs and essays. The project Unbound was funded directly by readers, and the aim is very similar to that of *Refugee Tales*: since most of the stories we read and see on the media are negative or highly standardised or prejudicial, the attempt is to find real identities behind false labels. The collection also presents a few rewritings of classics, the most striking of which is *Metamorphosis 2* by Amanda Craig, where a celebrity wakes up to find herself turned into a giant cockroach, and as the story develops more and more human beings are turned into such animals, giving voice almost literally to the widespread fear of the "contagion" of migrants (Popescu 2016: 41).

Making Language the Focus of the Story

In his brief essay *These Mysterious Strangers: The New Story of the Immigrant*, Hanif Kureishi contends that the migrant has become one of the most debated subjects in Western societies. Despite this, it is not really migrants we are talking about, but our stereotyped idea of them, which the media have turned into a sort of zombie-like figure: "In the current public conversation, this figure […] is an example of the undead, who will invade, colonise and contaminate […]. Unlike other monsters, the foreign body of the immigrant is unslayable" (Popescu 2016: 31). Also in *The Lorry Driver's Tale* by Chris Cleave, immigration is seen as a horror film and Calais the scene where the zombies are massing. How and when did migrants become such scary monsters and how do we get rid of this preconception? As the

anthropologist Mondher Kilani points out, today more than ever we need to deconstruct the logic and the foundations of the "invention of the other". He explains that each culture interprets all things new with old criteria, and it does so by domesticating and neutralising the presence of the other by affirming its own identity and its system of meanings and values even more. Kilani suggests, thus, that culture should no longer be a thing we talk about, but rather a place from where we start our discussion (Kilani 2015: 33). This "place" is above all dialogue. In the texts analysed, there are a few ways in which this dialogue proves difficult if not impossible to achieve. In *Lampedusa,* Lustgarten portrays the worst-case scenario, in which the refugee does not speak the language of the host country at all and is forced to resort to English as a global language, thus starting a process of double translation "Speaks shit Italian, Modibo. I say, why come somewhere you don't speak the language? He says I didn't come here, I came to Europe, the language of Europe is English" (Lustgarten 2015: 14). The two anthologies, instead, focus on the link between language and identity: the impossibility to tell one's story – and even when the story is told, the impossibility to be fully understood or believed – is the impossibility to find one's identity. The first issue is the lack of words in one's own language. When a refugee tries to describe his journey across the Mediterranean, he lacks the words to describe the boat he was on: "Arabic has forty words for sand, sixty for sword, seventy for water but none for what the Walker wanted to tell. What was his boat like?" (Herd 2017: 31). What cannot be said about that boat, the horror that defies all explanations, raises questions of believability, tellability and reportability, as Labov contends (Labov 2013: 7, 14). It is not only refugees who lack the words to tell their stories; often incommunicability goes both ways. In another story, *Selfie* by Stephen Kelman, a man is unable to explain to the fellow human being selling selfie sticks why he won't buy one because he has no need for it, therefore it would not really be an act of kindness, since it would "unman" him. The man obviously feels guilty for not performing an act of charity, but also sees the gap between a true act of kindness and a conscience-clearing, Catholicism-imbued one. However, there are no simple words for this concept. The only way the two men may communicate on a deeper level, the protagonist feels, would be if they could touch each other, but then the rules of social contact make him doubt whether that would be appropriate. The story finishes with what appears to be a problem of translation: "The only reason we can't be the same is because we lack the words. Our uncommon languages are what keep us hidden from each other. Only words sever us" (Popescu 2016: 58).

The second problem is, in fact, one of translation: one to one equivalence is a rare thing between languages, and even rarer when the languages come from different families and we are dealing with abstract concepts. In *The Interpreter's Tale* by Carol Watts (Herd 2016: 63-68) an interpreter is frustrated by the gap between the importance of words, which are "the skin of another's arrival, know the violence of borders" (Herd 2016: 63) and the pressure to translate everything that is said, without embellishments, and "find the words closest to obscenity" (Herd 2016: 63), to give voice to "so many unseen unspoken bodies, as many and more as make it to the sea" (Herd 2016: 67). I believe it is not by coincidence that so many writers break into poetry when concepts become too dense for everyday prose:

> Words are tarmac and concrete./ They can be prison houses or their unlocking./ We build cities from them around our freeways./ We walk and occupy them, they feel given to us./ How our words secure us./ We, you, us. I. […] No punctuation to give this history reasonable measure./ The longest sentence could never span the devastation, tell this story into available maps, translate this indifference (Herd 2016: 67-68).

How can we tell the story into available maps and translate the difference between two languages if we are not aware of the differences between cultures? The third issue is precisely this: some cultural elements cannot be conveyed. One example is the Western obsession with dates and documents. In the story *A Time to Lie*, Noo Saro-Wiwa comments that there is an assumption that certain data sources define and prove a person's identity. But if a refugee has been raised "in a country with fragile public institutions and civil registry apparatus", they might not possess the required documents. For instance, the author explains, African people born in rural areas may not know their precise date of birth: "What are 'July' and 'August', anyway? A span of thirty days, named after a couple of Roman emperors from way back. What do such dates mean to the rural, fifty-something African? Uncle tells me I was born just after the rains started" (Popescu 2016: 129).

These differences create a paradoxical situation in which refugees tell "alternative truths" on their asylum applications because otherwise they would not be believed. Noo Saro-Wiwa quotes Beneduce to examine the case of the occult and witchcraft, explaining that when it comes to ritual abuse, based on animist beliefs, the terror imposed on its victims is real, but "the occult holds no currency in our empirical world", and the perceived dream-like language used by the applicant "challenges the bureaucratic grammar of human rights" (Popescu 2016: 132) *Cloud-Dervish* by Moris Fahri brings up the same subject from another point of view. According to the protagonist, we falsify the tragedy because: "we deny that the exilic state carries a deep sense of divestiture; that for most exiles this sense creates an unconscious anguish which mourns the loss of a heritage that should never have been lost – namely, roots" (Popescu 2016: 48).

Giving Voice to the Lexicon of Suspension

The lines cited above touch two pivotal points: the idea of divestiture and the importance of roots. To "divest" means literally to strip of your own clothes, to remain naked, therefore vulnerable. Noo Saro Wiwa – again quoting Beneduce – points out that in Lingala, the main spoken language in the Republic of Congo, the process of migration is called *kobwaka nzoto*, which literally means "to sacrifice", "to give up one's own body" (Popescu 2016: 131-132). The loss of identity coincides with the loss of one's body, which becomes invisible as an individual entity in the eyes of the Western public. However, the process of disappearance starts much sooner, in the very moment the journey begins. "When they enter the blue desert they disappear" – Stefano notices in *Lampedusa* (Lustgarten 2015: 23), primarily because these people have no contact with the loved ones, they do not know whether they are dead or alive and often they lose track of space and time to the point that they wonder if they themselves are dead or alive. The only way to feel alive again is to search for one's roots, to be found in one's narration of reality, which does not need to be true to facts but to emotions.

The delicate poem, entitled "The Believing of Trees" we find at the end of *The Visitor's Tale* by Hubert Moore summarises this need beautifully: "There's no need to finger/ the wounds of the trees/ to believe them./ You can trust/ tell-tale scars, branch-loss,/ uprootedness./ Even their stories/ don't have to be true/ to be true of them./ Stand in their presence./ Breathe in time with them./ Wait with them" (Herd 2016: 47).

Waiting is also at the centre of the process of dehumanisation and invisibility. On the one hand, in *Lampedusa* we witness the waiting that precedes the arrival in the host country (the journey) and then a completely different kind of waiting, the one Denise experiences, the constant waiting to be recognised as a rightful British citizen, which may have been granted by the state, but is yet to be granted by the fellow citizens. *Refugee Tales* above all, but also *Country of Refuge*, on the other hand, mainly deal with the in-between waiting that happens in detention centres. *The Barrister's Tale* by Rachel Holmes well describes the Beckettian waiting inherent to the concept of infinite detention: "Indefinitely temporary: temporarily indefinite. Holding people prisoners of language. Prisoners have proper sentences, […] but our detainees face unlimited days that can only be counted upwards without the end in sight" (Herd 2017: 59).

There is a whole lexicon of suspension: pending deportation, removal, refused bail, as David Herd notices in *The Appellant's Tale* (Herd 2016: 69-84). In the story, the Kafkaesque motif of bureaucratic nonsense is explored when a former BBC translator from English into Hausa is suddenly arrested with no warning: in order to be released, he is asked to give proof of his former job; to do that, though, he would need a letter that is in his house, but he is not allowed to leave unless the letter proves who he is. People like him live in a limbo, exacerbated by the fact that hearings in the UK asylum system are not courts of record. Basically, they are denied what Hannah Arendt called "space of appearance"[4]. Waiting to be heard, waiting to be seen, waiting to have a role in society again. "Waiting waits for ground waiting erodes all ground waiting loses ground waiting steals all ground […] waiting eats the soul waiting eats the bones waiting eats the heart waiting eats all hope", says Caroline Bergvall in *The Voluntary Returner's Tale* (Herd 2017: 69). When media speak about "destitute asylum seekers", Josh Cohen observes in his *The Support Worker's Tale,* it goes "beyond material deprivation, down to the destitution of the whole self. It means being in but not of the world" (Herd 2017: 74), to the point that "you'd wonder if you existed at all, while feeling you exist too much, like there's no space to accommodate the burden of you" (75). The space to accommodate a human being is first of all the space to accommodate their story. Telling stories binds together the present and the past, and it raises awareness so that issues can be addressed collectively. Old stories need a new frame, and the language must be reshaped to mould a new skin to contain the body of tales that ultimately makes up our heritage. To put it in the words of *The Lover's Tale* by Kamila Shamsie: "stories allow us to structure our experiences into beginning, middle, end, and decide which parts to skim over, which to go into in detail; stories allow us to put forward our own points of view and interpretations; stories, in short, allow us a measure of control over our memories" (Herd 2017: 14).

[4] In *The Human Condition*, Hannah Arendt described the space of appearance as a place "where I appear to others as others appear to me, where men exist not merely like other living or inanimate things, but to make their appearance explicitly" (Arendt 1958: 198-199).

The Reclamation of Language and Identity through the Use of Metaphors

The attempts analysed so far, though, are not enough to render the language a truly hospitable place. As A. L. Kennedy warns us in the story entitled *The Migrants*, "when art fails, there is cruelty, because cruelty in humans is caused by a lack of imagination" (Popescu 2016: 205). In his view, art is seen as a fundamental defence of humanity, in absence of which we are condemned to forget and repeat the same mistakes over and over again, for nothing new can be imagined if the memory of what has been seen and imagined before is gone. New, powerful images are needed to hold together these fragmented stories and give a hope for the future. Cognitive linguistics helps us understand how this need for innovation at the linguistic level corresponds to an equal need at the social level. As Hart (2010: 142) points out, quoting Santa Ana and Wolf and Polzenhagen, metaphors provide the cognitive framework for a certain worldview, and deciding to use one metaphor instead of another has a strategic value, in that it allows writers to reflect their intentions and ideologies. Furthermore, Lakoff and Johnson remind us that "metaphors create realities for us, especially social realities. A metaphor may thus be a guide for future action" (Lakoff & Johnson 1980: 156). There is one metaphor in particular that is used consistently throughout these texts: animals as signs of revelation or good omen. In *The Smuggled Person's Tale* by Jackie Kay, a refugee arrives at the protagonist's house with "the story in his rucksack". When she opens the door, he immediately feels welcome, as during his travels he had been in prison, in detention centres, but very rarely had he been invited into people's houses. Suddenly there is a magical realism twist and the story he was keeping in his bag turns into a bird, a powerful Dickinsonian image[5]:

> It was an injured bird. […] And perhaps because he felt welcome, he could at last take his time. He sat down at the kitchen table still holding the bird. […] And perhaps because the door was already open, it flew through it […] and then paused, as if to say, look up here, look at me, here's your story. And then, astonished, he watched it take to the sky; […]. For now, he could leave it behind. And so he did. He left with his bag beautifully light after months and years of carrying the weight around with him (Herd 2017: 107).

Similarly, in *The Unaccompanied Minor's Tale*, Inua Ellam (Herd 2016: 17-24) tells another story of difficult Mediterranean crossing: one day, when the boat has too many holes and is about to sink, dolphins appear, as if they were "water angels". The Med is not completely dead, then. Hope is to be found in imagination, in those imagined tales that are not a mere consolation to render life a little more tolerable, but the dream of what could be. Even the gloomy tone of *Lampedusa* gives space to hope in the end; over-critical and disillusioned Denise who has just lost her sick mother realises that "the monkey trap experiment is fundamentally an indicator of hope. It speaks to our ability to walk away from delusions, from

[5] The bird as a symbol of hope is reminiscent of one of Emily Dickinson's poems that begins: "Hope is the thing with feathers/ That perches in the soul/ And sings the tune without the words/ And never stops – at all" (Dickinson 1951: 314).

traps. To save ourselves from our baser instincts" (Lustgarten 2015: 32), whereas Stefano rejoices when his friend Modibo finally manages to reunite with his beloved wife, who he marries again to celebrate the coming back from the dead after their trip across the sea: "I defy you to see the joy in Modibo and Aminata's faces and not feel hope. I defy you" (Lustgarten 2015: 34). Perhaps in order to make stories of migration heard, the language itself needs to undergo a change in order to change the imagery it creates: from a language of despair, fear and uncertainty to a language of freedom, imagination and hope.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arendt, Hannah. 1958. *The Human Condition.* Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
De Fina, Anna. 2003: *Identity in Narrative. A Study of Immigrant Discourse.* Amsterdam-Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
De Fina, Anna & Amelia Tseng. 2017: Narrative in the Study of Migrants. Suresh Canagarajah ed. *The Routledge Handbook of Migration and Language.* London: Routledge, 381-396.
Dickinson, Emily. 1951. *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson.* Thomas H. Johnson ed. Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
Hart, Christopher. 2010. *Critical Discourse Analysis and Cognitive Science. New Perspectives on Immigration Discourse.* London: Palgrave Macmillan
Herd, David & Anna Pincus eds. 2016. *Refugee Tales I.* Manchester: Comma Press
Herd, David & Anna Pincus eds. 2017. *Refugee Tales II.* Manchester: Comma Press.
Jabès, Edmond. 1991. *Le Livre de l'Hospitalité.* Paris: Gallimard.
Kilani, Mondher. 2015. *L'invenzione dell'altro. Saggi sul discorso antropologico.* Bari: Edizioni Dedalo.
Labov, William. 2013. *The Language of Life and Death. The Transformation of Experience in Oral Narrative.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
Lakoff, George & Mark Johnson. 1980. *Metaphors We Live by.* Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
Lustgarten, Anders. 2015. *Lampedusa.* London: Methuen Drama.
Popescu, Lucy ed. 2016. *A Country of Refuge.* London: Unbound.

WEBLIOGRAPHY

https://www.etymonline.com/ (consulted on 17/04/2018).
https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/the-difference-between-a-migrant-and-refugee-in-one-sentence-10476567.html (consulted on 4/05/2018).
https://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/Migration/Pages/Shapingthepublicnarrativeonmigration.aspx (consulted on 3/09/2018).
http://refugeetales.org/ (consulted on 2/04/2018).
https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2018/apr/17/theresa-mays-hostile-environment-policy-at-heart-of-windrush-scandal (consulted on 17/04/2018).
https://unboundproject.org/ (consulted on 2/04/2018).

Daniela Salusso works at the University of Turin at the Foreign Languages and Literatures Department, as a contract professor of Translation. After completing a PhD in English Literature with a dissertation on Drama Translation, she is working on translation studies, applied linguistics and contemporary British theatre.
daniela.salusso@gmail.com