



A Difficult Passage to Navigate: From Asylum Story to Refugee Tale

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Abstract

This article draws on the results of a life writing initiative, ARENA (Archive of Refugee Encounter Narratives), developed at the University of Innsbruck in Austria. It involves students of English collaborating with refugees over periods of three months to write down the latter's stories. Like other storytelling ventures spawned by the perceived European refugee crisis of 2015, ARENA aims to enable a better understanding of the situation of refugees in Europe than the dominant asylum discourse allows. To this end, students arrange regular encounters with participating refugees and encourage them to tell whatever they consider to be their stories. The texts the students craft from these exchanges capture not only the refugees' stories but also their own experience of hearing them. I will examine the embodied act of narration thus recorded in the ARENA corpus and contest critical claims that, too indebted to the rigid veracity standards defining official refugee testimonials, refugee life writing is unable to augment new ways of thinking about refugee experience and forced migration at large. My argument is that such criticism does not apply where the dialogic nature of *live telling* is consciously experienced and given due expression in the life writing it eventually becomes.

Keywords: dialogic narration, embodied act of narration, refugee experience, asylum narrative

Zusammenfassung

Dieser Artikel bezieht sich auf die an der Universität Innsbruck entwickelte *Life Writing*-Initiative ARENA (Archive of Refugee Encounter Narratives). In ihrem Rahmen arbeiten Studierende des Faches Anglistik über einen Zeitraum von drei Monaten mit Geflüchteten zusammen, um deren Geschichten aufzuzeichnen. Wie vergleichbare durch die sogenannte europäische Flüchtlingskrise inspirierte Erzählprojekte will die Initiative zu einem differenzierteren Verständnis der Situation Geflüchteter in Europa beitragen, als es der vorherrschende Asyldiskurs zulässt. Zu diesem Zweck organisieren die an ARENA beteiligten Studierenden regelmäßige Treffen mit ihren Projektpartner*innen und laden sie ein, von ihrer Migration nach Europa zu erzählen. Die Texte, die die Studierenden im Anschluss an ihre Gespräche mit den Geflüchteten verfassen, dokumentieren nicht nur individuelle Fluchterfahrungen, sondern auch die allmähliche Entwicklung eines transkulturellen Dialoges zwischen den jeweiligen Gesprächspartner*innen. Der vorliegende Aufsatz legt den Fokus auf letztere und den physischen Akt des Erzählens ('embodied act of narration') sowie seine Abbildung in den Texten der Studierenden. Er zeigt, dass – entgegen gängiger Annahmen in der *Refugee-Life-Writing*-Forschung – die Erzählung persönlicher Fluchterfahrungen nicht immer durch die im Asylverfahren geltenden Wahrheitsstandards eingeschränkt bleibt, sondern dass das bewusste Erleben dialogischen Erzählens ein freieres Sprechen über Flucht ermöglicht.

Schlüsselwörter: dialogisches Erzählen, physischer Akt des Erzählens, Fluchterfahrung, Erzählung im Rahmen des Asylverfahrens

Introduction

In December 2021, Sebastian and Marlies, two students of English, met the Syrian refugees Abdul and Ahmed¹ in a café near the University of Innsbruck in Austria. The students were participants in a life writing seminar associated with ARENA, a research-cum-teaching project designed to gather stories volunteered by refugees in regular meetings over the course of three months. In the journal ensuing from their collaboration, Sebastian describes how he and Marlies had brought a map of Central and Eastern Europe to their meeting for Ahmed and Abdul to retrace the routes on which they had come to Austria. After some time, the four of them noticed that they were being watched by a woman at the table next to them. She eventually got up, came over to them and inquired what they were doing. Encouraged by their response, she

asked whether she, too, could ask some questions. A friendly conversation ensued. Sebastian continues to relate how, a week later, the group met again at the same café, picked the same table and again spread out their map in front of them. After a while, they realized that, once again, they were being watched from the neighbouring table, this time by an elderly couple. Soon though, the couple left without another glance at them. A few minutes later, two police officers entered, walked across the crowded café straight up to the group of four and demanded to know what they were doing. Again, Sebastian answered that they were working for a project at the university, and offered to provide the contact details of their teacher, which the police officers declined. Their inquiry, they explained, was due to a phone call they had just received about four persons consorting in this café to plot a ‘mass migration event’.²

As Sebastian records in his journal, Ahmed and Abdul had remained unperturbed throughout the exchange. For the students, on the other hand, the episode was a novel and visceral experience of their own implication in the asylum discourse. It brought home to them the intrinsically political nature of refugee life writing, which manifests long before the refugee’s ‘amanuensis’³ sets down in writing what they have been told. Already when they meet with the refugee for the first time to begin their collaboration, they risk infringing upon what, in recent decades, has become the prerogative of state authorities. This takes the form of solicitation and documentation of refugees’ stories, which receiving states now routinely deploy to establish whether the asylum applicant is indeed entitled to sanctuary and has had to leave their home country ‘owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted’.⁴ To presume, as an ordinary citizen, that one, too, may ask for a refugee’s story (and perhaps even encourage refugees to tell this story in a way that differs from the account given before an asylum-granting tribunal), is to overstep another line in the sand. States have taken to drawing this line between citizens and non-citizens in defiance of the widely-accepted understanding that the integration of migrants can only work as a mutual or bilateral process. It is hardly surprising that, with rapidly fading state interest in the successful inclusion of refugees, the near criminalization of any (even completely harmless) forms of solidarity with refugees has become a common practice.⁵

As Marlies and Sebastian had to realize when collaborating with Ahmed and Abdul in the winter term of 2021/22, this is now the case also in Austria, a country which, at the beginning of the millennium, could still boast a remarkably benevolent and magnanimous immigration policy. The fact that, in the second half of the twentieth century, Austria granted sanctuary to as many as two million refugees is fading fast from collective memory, as is the pride citizens used to take in it.⁶ Rarely are the 1.4 million people recalled who arrived in Austria in the years after World War II; the

180,000 who came during the Hungarian Revolution of 1956; the 162,000 who sought protection in Austria after the suppression of the Prague Spring in 1968; or the 90,000 who fled to Austria in the wake of the Yugoslav wars in the 1990s. At least 700,000, or one third of the refugees who made it to Austria between 1945 and 2001, remained, which posed not an insignificant challenge for a population of only seven million in the 1960s and eight million by the end of the century.⁷ In 2015, at the height of the so-called European refugee crisis, over one million refugees passed through Austria, 72,216 of whom were granted asylum;⁸ even more followed in each of the subsequent five years, making Austria one of the top reception countries in Europe.⁹ The growing number of refugees arriving in Austria and the failure of other countries to accommodate them soon led to a change in the general attitude to irregular migrants. The initial enthusiastic generosity with which large parts of the Austrian public had welcomed refugees in 2015 and their, at first, vehement opposition to the militarization of Austria's southern borders to Slovenia and Italy began to fade. Eventually, they were replaced by a discourse as polarized as the debates on asylum in those parts of Europe, where, rather than the actual arrival of masses of refugees, the mere fear thereof was breeding xenophobic resentment and racist paranoia.

In this context, ARENA was started in the summer term of 2017 with the aim to create a space in which a better understanding of the situation of refugees in Europe could be developed than the dominant asylum discourse allowed. It began with a life writing seminar in which MA students of English¹⁰ learnt about the generic features and capabilities of the genre, read fictional and non-fictional accounts of forced migration, attended a workshop on trauma,¹¹ and practised techniques that would help initiate cross-cultural dialogue and narration. What they were taught in class they had to apply not in conventional research papers, but in conversations with refugees who had volunteered to share their stories in weekly meetings over a period of three months. Throughout the semester, the students kept writing about these meetings, eventually creating journals of about 8,000 words chronicling not only their project partners' stories but also their own experience of the collaboration. In 2019, a first selection of representative texts titled *Refugee Narratives – Fluchtgeschichten* was published in *bricolage*, a book series of Innsbruck UP showcasing research by students.¹² By then, the seminar had begun to be taught also at the Universities of Liège in Belgium and Bochum in Germany and until now has been repeated regularly there and in Innsbruck. More than 150 journals have resulted from this, which are currently being selected and collated for entry in a full-text database at the *Dokumentations Archiv Migration (DAM)*¹³ in Innsbruck. As the following will show, the compiled corpus is of special value, not only for the insights it yields into the lives

of refugees in Europe, their home countries, their escapes, and their efforts to forge a new existence in Europe. It also documents the endeavours of students in Europe to resist the essentialist thinking encouraged by the dominant refugee discourse, not by contesting it, but by engaging in a dialogue with those most directly concerned. In this respect, their texts cast light on the mediating function refugee life writing plays for receiving societies, which is often overlooked in corresponding research. This seems all the more important at present, when not only the possibilities but also the limits of the genre of refugee life writing have become subject to much critical debate.

Critical voices

Twenty years ago, Tom Cheesman still ascribed writing for and with refugees a 'double value', holding that while it allows involuntary migrants to process traumatic experiences, it also gives them the opportunity to speak to others as individuals.¹⁴ At around the same time, Kay Schaffer and Sidonie Smith published *Human Rights and Narrated Lives*, an emphatic assertion of the political value of life writing. In it, they stress that 'through acts of remembering, individuals and communities narrate alternative or counter-histories' of special relevance because they come 'from the margins, voiced by other kinds of subjects – the tortured, the displaced and overlooked, the silenced and unacknowledged – among them'.¹⁵ Similarly, in *Soft Weapons: Autobiography in Transit*, Gillian Whitlock describes life narrative as a powerful way to 'humanise categories of people whose experiences are frequently unseen and unheard'.¹⁶ Clearly, literary critics in the field of life writing were still endorsing the same view then that, as Marita Eastmond¹⁷ points out, ethnographers such as Barbara Myerhoff, James Freeman, and Marjory Shostak had advanced decades earlier, namely, that life writing is able to give voice to social groups otherwise largely ignored.¹⁸ The notion that life writing is a means of gifting a voice and visibility to abject others has since been replaced by concerns about the commodification of distant suffering and the solicitation of empathy. These are sometimes regarded as a form of moral appeasement for liberal audiences admittedly desirous of information about refugees, yet often unable or unwilling to acknowledge their own implications in their plight. Accordingly, Whitlock's more recent book, *Postcolonial Life Narratives*, cautions against the exploitation of testimonial narrative in propaganda and as 'the postcolonial exotic'.¹⁹ While she still concedes that the agenda of refugee life writing initiatives may be to create awareness and bring about social and political change, she also notes that testimonials of injustices, which life narratives about refugees are, rarely engage large enough audiences to engender compassion,

mobilize shame, and inspire campaigns for social justice. The circulation of refugee and asylum-seeker life narratives, she concludes, therefore ‘remains as constrained and proscribed as the silent and illicit movement of these bodies themselves’.²⁰

Agnes Woolley advances an even more sobering appraisal of the purpose and efficacy of narrating refugee experience, arguing that all narration of refugee experience, even when performed outside court and interview rooms, reproduces the punitive terms of asylum decision-making. This, she claims, forbids refugees to ever stray from their first telling of their flight lest any deviation from their original story invalidate their testimony, or, as Szörényi puts it, lest it ‘render illegitimate any future speech from that subject’ and turn it into an object ‘that somehow in its very existence becomes evidence of its own illegitimacy, its lack of right to exist’.²¹ ‘She or he’, Szörényi writes, ‘is henceforth positioned not merely as a liar, but as an “illegal”’.²² The narration of one’s asylum story thus can turn out to be anything but liberating, and produce what Kelly Oliver has called ‘the paradox of bearing witness of [one’s, HRK] own oppression’:²³ a situation in which the refugee’s attempt to speak up for themselves backfires, and, instead of affording them the opportunity to lay their past to rest, entraps them even further in their victimhood. For Woolley, the only exit from the otherwise inescapable pressure to keep reiterating one’s refugeehood is fiction, which, because it is not measured by the same ‘metrics of authenticity’ as verbatim and documentary narratives, can ‘reimagine and reshape the encounter between asylum seeker and citizen/reader/immigration officer’.²⁴ Not constrained by ‘the idea of an authentic or empirically discoverable subjectivity’,²⁵ tellers of fiction, Woolley believes, can extend and transform stories of displacement in ways asylum seekers tend to eschew for fear that these might undermine their credibility. For Woolley, therefore, fiction constitutes a far more effective means to ‘engender compassion and anger about the material injustices of asylum’²⁶ than refugee life writing.

Not all scholars agree. Anna Gotlib, for instance, insists that ‘refugee self-reclamation’ and ‘identity re-creation’²⁷ are possible because ‘we can build, destroy, and recover ourselves through stories’.²⁸ Indeed, for Gotlib, the recuperation and liberation of refugee authorship constitute urgent political goals for the sake of which national governments, especially in the Global North, should be urged to relinquish their narrative control over refugees’ lives.²⁹ This would, first of all, mean doing away with the asylum narrative as a tool to assess the validity of the refugee’s claim for sanctuary. ‘Second’, she suggests,

refugees should be encouraged to tell their stories grounded in whatever the refugee happens to value – whether she most fervently embraces her hopes for the

future or else defines herself via her past, her memories, nostalgias, and longings. And because I take memory and nostalgia to be central drivers in coming to know and define oneself – and in plotting one's story into the future – I suggest that turning to them by those who were torn from their pasts in often violent ways may be the beginning of finding new voices.³⁰

To be liberating, Gotlib reasons, memory work must not consist in an 'exacting restoration of the past', but has to be of a 'more fluid, more contemplative' kind that allows the refugee to recognize the 'possibilities of flexible meanings'.³¹ She holds that, in this way, refugees can learn to reject the master narrative of who they are and that, through creative acts of remembering, they can repair their sense of identity.

Gotlib's optimism aligns well with the work of Clare Brant, Tobias Heinrich, and Monica Soeting and their timely consideration of the critic's implication in the fates of refugees and their narrativization. In their 2017 essay, 'The Placing of Displaced Lives', they pose questions rarely addressed in refugee life writing research nor, for that matter, in critical studies about fiction on refugeehood. Their questions work as reminders of the special proximity, and pertinence, of life writing to life at large, including that of its readers. They ask:

How can the academic community help narratives and personal accounts be received with attention, care, respect, and constructive action? How do we sharpen and apply the intellectual tools of life writing to assist people whose lives have been forced into upheaval? What do we learn from the stories of refugees that changes our thinking so as to prevent and remedy more human tragedies? What sorts of listening do refugee stories need? What narrative forms besides stories can communicate experience and restore subjectivity?³²

It is doubtful whether these questions are best answered by ascribing fiction greater counter-discursive potential than life writing. For Brant, Heinrich, and Soeting, the transformative power of narrating refugees' experiences resides elsewhere: in the constitution of an intrinsically dialogical process, an exchange in which the recipient of the story does not remain a passive consumer but in which they participate as active respondents – much in the way Ali Smith envisages the exchange of stories between refugees and non-refugees. 'Storytelling', she writes as an official patron of the *Refugee Tales* project,

is an act of profound hospitality. It always has been; story is an ancient form of generosity, an ancient form that will tell us everything we need to know about the contemporary world. Story has always been a welcoming-in, is always one way or another a hospitable meeting of the needs of others, and a porous artform where sympathy and empathy are only the beginning of things. The individual selves we all are meet and transform into something open and communal. Imagine if every city, if every country, greeted refugees with signs which said in many languages the word *welcome*, and the words *you are safe*, like Vienna did last summer. *We will tell it like it is, and we will work towards the better imagined.*³³

The plural pronoun 'we' is crucial here. It refers to both writers and refugees and stresses the collaborative creation of stories. In turn, it highlights the joint endeavour to imagine refugees and their lives *truthfully* – 'like it is' – and in a 'better' way than they have been imagined and narrated by non-refugees (in whichever arenas), but also by refugees in their asylum interviews. Such an undertaking is not accomplished quickly but entails a 'working towards', a laborious movement of the kind symbolically performed as part of the *Refugee Tales* initiative where walking in solidarity with refugees marks a continuation of the refugees' unfinished journeys, which, however, they no longer undertake on their own but in the company of carefully listening citizens.

The wish to replace the coercion of refugees' stories in asylum interviews with just such a working towards a truth acceptable to the teller and the listener alike has crucially shaped the work of the Iranian-born anthropologist Halleh Ghorashi. 'My personal experiences as an asylum-seeker', she reflects,

have given me a certain loathing of the type of interviews that are too fast, too purposive, or much too short. During these years I often felt I was being treated like a number or a file. I was blamed for any sentence I did not formulate correctly, or for my 'inappropriate' attitude. All of a sudden, I could be facing a suspicious official who just wants to finish this case and an interpreter who is staring at me inscrutably, translating my passionate story in an indifferent voice. I was certain that both I and the other women who had gone through these procedures, had become thoroughly disturbed by officials reducing our stories to one among others, not doing justice to their 'reality'.³⁴

The sense that her story had not been duly heard and acknowledged in the asylum procedure led Ghorashi to base her own research on life stories that she would

encourage refugees to tell her. For this, she believed, it was essential that she should give time and a place to the narrations she sought to augment so as to initiate a proper dialogue between her interlocutors and herself as a ‘visible researcher’³⁵ rather than as a distant and silent listener. With her method of ‘participating observation’, she aims to ‘open up new spaces’ and create ‘a dialogical, interactive situation’ allowing her to experience the multiple layers of her interlocutors’ stories, including the silences into which they may, on occasion, lapse during their conversations. In the collaborative act of telling, Ghorashi insists, ‘the unsaid, the indescribable and the incomprehensible’³⁶ claims a special presence difficult to reproduce in writing. This, she criticizes, tends to be largely overlooked in scholarly work focused on ‘what is written by the respondent’, i.e., the researcher hearing out the refugee and recording in writing what they are told.³⁷

By the same token, Marita Eastmond observes that too much focus has been placed on narratives elicited by researchers when ‘stories which people *as a community produce together*’ (my italics, HRK) actually make for a ‘particularly useful area of inquiry in forced migration’.³⁸ After all, Eastmond stresses, ‘what is remembered and told is also situational, shaped not least through the contingencies of the encounter between narrator and listener and the power relationship between them’.³⁹ Eastmond therefore proposes that a distinction be drawn between ‘life lived’, ‘life experienced’ and life ‘framed and articulated in a particular context and to a particular audience’.⁴⁰ This should allow for a better appreciation of how the stories of migrants

make room for a more dynamic view of the individual as subject, acting in the world and reflecting on that action. As such, they also provide an opportunity or entry point to grasping the interplay between self and society, letting us see the ‘subjective mapping of experience, the working out of a culture and a social system’ that is often obscured in more typifying accounts [...]. They can tell us something about how social actors, from a particular social position and cultural vantage point, make sense of their world.⁴¹

The following will show that this kind of negotiation is precisely what the texts written for ARENA reveal, especially when attention is paid to how refugees begin to revise and refashion their asylum story as their trust in the students grows.

Students as life writers

Eastmond's insistence on the meaningfulness of the 'embodied act of narration' has been instrumental in the development of ARENA. At the outset, this initiative had as its primary focus the texts written by the students, the corpus which these texts would eventually form, and the refugee experiences this corpus would document. Accordingly, the acronym 'ARENA' was chosen to stand for 'Archive of REfugee NArratives'. Soon, however, it became clear that this did not sufficiently describe what was happening in the exchanges between the students and their interlocutors. It did not capture the role played by the students as the often first 'unofficial' contact the refugees participating in ARENA would have with Austrians, as listeners to the telling of their stories, and as writers with no prior experience in eliciting and chronicling such telling.⁴² Nor did it reflect how the refugees would position themselves in relation to the students and gradually, over the course of a semester, move from reiterating their asylum story towards a different narrative mode – one, in the best of cases, amounting to what Pia Zambelli has called 'unfettered refugee speech'.⁴³ The realization how crucial both the interaction between the students and the refugees and the relationship evolving between them are in facilitating this shift, soon led to the conclusion that 'ARENA' should really stand for 'Archive of Refugee Encounter NArratives' – admittedly an inelegant shorthand for what the project aims to do, but, perhaps precisely because of its imperfection, a fitting reflection of the difficulty to categorize the texts that it generates. Such texts in fact form accounts of narration taking place in the presence of tellers and listeners, or of life writing recording live telling jointly performed and experienced by refugees and non-refugees. As such, they reflect how, in the course of their collaboration, narrators and listeners overcome initial insecurities, step out of the roles they at first believe they have been ascribed and, in the discursive free space created through their regular meetings, find a place from which to speak about migration in their own terms.

At the same time, it is clear from the way in which this development unfolds in the ensuing narratives that students and refugees come to this place from opposite directions. For most refugees speaking and answering questions about their previous lives, their flight, and their situation in Austria has long become so routine that they reiterate, in often markedly monologic form and with little difficulty, what, after many rehearsals for the asylum interview, they have come to regard as 'their story'. The students, on the other hand, tend to express considerable doubt at the outset concerning their own ability to engage with their project partners and do so in an adequate manner. 'I am scared that I will say, ask or do something wrong, something

that offends my project partner’, one student writes. ‘I am scared that I will unconsciously upset my project partner or even hurt them’.⁴⁴ ‘Right now, I am afraid to be judged by migrants’, another reflects and goes on to ask, ‘Are they going to criticize me because of what I think?’⁴⁵ Yet another student admits concern that she might not do justice to the experience her project partner has gone through. Some students reflect on their anxieties in even more detail, as does William Neuner, in the following passage:

A name and a phone number. This is all I have for now. I expected to form an image in my head of the person as soon as I heard the name, but thankfully this did not happen. A name, after all, can only give you so much. Still, it is impossible to avoid forming an idea. It immediately struck me that I was not completely sure if the name given to me was a male or female first name. I guessed that it was male, but was unsure. I eventually gave in to the urge to Google the name, which showed me again the extent of my ignorance, which I so often like to deny. After consulting Google about the name, more questions started to form. What is he going to be like? Where is he from? I am not sure why this question is important to me. It shouldn’t be, should it?⁴⁶

What happens here is less a coy disavowal of authority than a first attempt at positioning oneself in relation to the task of authoring someone else’s story.

It would be wrong to assume that such hesitancy and self-doubt should hinder the exchange between the student and the refugee. Quite the opposite is the case, and not surprisingly so. As Zali Gurevitch insists, dialogue becomes serious only when ‘we recognize the other as Other and take account of him/her as someone who attends us from a distance’. Only then, Gurevitch argues, do we ‘cease to take our own utterances for granted and we begin to sense our speaking as the actual, though mediated, expression of our selves, and not a ritualistic participation in keeping a conversation going’.⁴⁷ To ‘celebrate the other’ and the ‘common purpose’, he also writes, ‘one silences oneself to call the other into speech, to listen, and to endow the other with recognition – “to kneel before the other” as Levinas phrased it’.⁴⁸ Awareness of one’s fallibility thus enables the hospitality Ali Smith sees realized in storytelling proper: a truly collaborative undertaking perverted in the asylum interview, where the basic principles of ethical dialogue are consistently violated.⁴⁹ According to Gurevitch, to speak, to listen, and to respond are the three principal obligations *all* participants in such a dialogue must share.⁵⁰ The following passage taken from the journal Stéphane Hacon wrote for ARENA about his collaboration with T_____,⁵¹ a refugee from

Ethiopia, mirrors the student's awareness of the need to observe these imperatives:

What would you like to drink? I asked both of them.

My mind was already spinning. He does not look like a refugee, I thought. What does a refugee look like, Stéphane?

'Three cappuccinos?' I suggested as nobody answered. [T_____] asserted himself and said: 'Cappuccino!' As I took out my wallet to pay, [T_____] looked at me and said, 'I can pay for myself, don't worry'.

*My mind started spinning again. This European guy thinking he has to pay for my coffee, who does he think he is? I don't need his pity, I don't need his money. I can pay for myself. That's probably what he is thinking now, Stéphane, well done.*⁵²

Later in their collaboration, Stéphane Hacon would exercise similar restraint and, when talking to T_____, keep reminding himself, 'This is not an interrogation, it is a conversation', in response to which T_____ would open up and eventually talk about the 153 days it took him to walk from Ethiopia to Austria. He would do so not in the form of a testimonial consciously formulated to appear consistent with the law and correspond with current Western social values'.⁵³ He would not seek to offer what he knows state authorities to consider credible proof of his persecution or enlist verifiable factual details of his origins and flight. Nor would he attempt to elaborate on why a return to his homeland would mean a threat to his life.⁵⁴ Instead of delivering an essentially monologic account of his experiences, he would tell his story in a way that prompted Stéphane Hacon to reflect on his own implication in T_____'s story. Ironically enough, around the same time T_____ was walking towards Europe, he himself was spending 150-odd days training for an Iron Man competition. In his text for ARENA, he uses this coincidence to mark a turning point in their collaboration at which all sense of difference between them seems suspended. Interweaving descriptions of his rigorous training programme with details from T_____'s narration of his journey, Stéphane Hacon writes, 'I am recalling a nightmare. It is his nightmare. Now it is also mine. I am him and he is me: I tried to avoid the police while fleeing my country. I was getting to the Sudanese border in Addis Ababa in Ethiopia. It took me two days.' Throughout the subsequent narration, he keeps revoking the idea of T_____'s journey being his own nightmare, using the refrain, 'Another training day is over. Another nightmare begins', to connect the self-inflicted pain of his own exercising with T_____'s, as he finds himself 'stuck on the back of a lorry with other people' and the driver 'driving through the desert way too fast and [...] under the influence of alcohol and drugs'.⁵⁵ This is a far cry from the distance Stéphane Hacon

registers between himself and T_____ during their first meeting. Imaginative identification has replaced carefully realistic self-doubt, and created a sense of closeness, which is convincing precisely because it does not serve the avowal of compassion but fuels an effort to understand.

The same may be said of the reflections offered by Carina Kuenz, after she and her fellow student have paid a visit to their project partner O_____, a single mother of two from Syria. 'The dinner was enjoyable', Carina Kuenz writes,

But we left with a bad feeling. We didn't talk much on our way home. We had a lot on our minds.

We both tried to walk in O_____ 's shoes. We didn't like it here in Austria. We were missing our home. We wanted things to be as they used to be. We wanted to work and to be able to provide enough for our children. We didn't want to sit in a small flat all day, waiting for our children to come home from school and kindergarten. We didn't want to get asked in a job interview what we would do if our children got sick during working hours. We wanted hope.⁵⁶

Passages such as this are not, as one might feel tempted to argue, epistemic usurpations of the project partner's experience. Expressly marked as attempts on the part of the student to process and comprehend what they have been told, they do not cancel out the project partner's voice, but only suspend their telling temporarily, arguably in order to turn to and invite the reader to follow the student's trains of thought. Accordingly, the ending which Carina Kuenz chooses to give her text deserves to be read not as an assertion of her own voice or perspective over O_____ 's, but as a final postulation of the possibility of speaking, listening, and responding to refugees and their stories in a manner that recuperates the ethical values, such as hospitality and the willingness to listen, routinely betrayed in the asylum interview:

Even though the semester was over and we had written all the blog entries for the course, we still arranged meetings as if nothing had changed. We celebrated O_____ 's daughter's birthday at McDonalds, we were at her son's school performance, and, most of the time, we sat in her flat, had Arabic coffee, sometimes even Arabic biscuits, and just talked. O_____ 's life is not perfect yet, it will never be. Nevertheless, she found a good job, a German course, a football team for her son that is reasonable, and she searches the Internet for a new, bigger flat. She goes out more often and is motivated to get better at German.

In such a short period of time, me and O____ got very close. I can't imagine abandoning our friendship just because the work is done. We will definitely meet again, we will drink Arabic coffee again, we will talk about life's challenges again, play with her kids, go to the playground...

Next week, her son will celebrate his 13th birthday. We will go to a theme park together.⁵⁷

It is true that Carina Kuenz's account ends in the form of a monologic reflection that does without O____'s presence and voice. Even so, the point of the particular form of closure chosen is not to claim ownership, let alone sole authorship of O____'s story. Rather, it is to throw into relief the special part played by O____'s non-refugee 'life-writer' who, in honouring the basic principles of hospitality and civility, practises a form of citizenship that defies pressures to exclude and discriminate against unwanted non-citizens.

Refugees as live tellers

This defiance is of greater political relevance than may be apparent at first glance. It recuperates the humaneness and inclusivity to which Western countries committed themselves after World War II with the passing of the 1951 UN Refugee Convention and to which O____ and all the other refugees participating in ARENA appealed in the hope to be granted asylum. Though rarely aware of it, the students and refugees keep returning to this connecting point in their collaborations as they undo the perversion of narration which the asylum interview has become as a practice increasingly serving the purpose of ex- rather than inclusion. The part of the refugees in reimagining the European nation state as the benevolent formation it once was is not insignificant. Not seldom it is they who challenge their listeners to revise their often pessimistic view of their own country and to check the moral panic on which this view tends to be based. This happens especially where refugees relate encounters with state authorities and, in particular, with the Austrian police. In such moments, they tend to act as Ahmed and Abdul did in the incident related at the beginning of this article, and assure their listeners that, whatever discriminatory treatment they may have experienced in Austria, it was nothing compared to what they went through in other parts of the world. In Greece, for instance, Ahmed and Abdul were arrested, robbed of all their possessions, including their clothes, and forced to walk back to Turkey in nothing but their underwear.⁵⁸ During a curfew in Ethiopia, A____⁵⁹ went out to watch a football match and was stopped by the police on his way home. The

officers questioned him for a while, making him stand with his hands up for a long time. 'Here in Austria', he ends his story, 'you can go anywhere; you can do whatever you want; you can be whatever you want to be'.⁶⁰ 'You know, in Afghanistan, you change the street when police come', Mohammad explains. 'Sometimes they ask you. But more often they hit you first and then ask questions later. Therefore, we have fear when we see police here'.⁶¹ It is clear that with these reflections Mohammad sets out to frame his asylum story in a way not meant for an asylum tribunal but for a listener in whom he feels he can trust.

This listener is Eva Zürcher, who, in turn, lets Mohammad elaborate further and does not interrupt him when he goes on to relate that he used to work as a cook at a police station in Kabul. Instead, she lets her own silence remain palpable throughout her account of what Mohammad chooses to tell her next: One day at the market, he was accosted by Taliban fighters who handed him a bottle of poison and threatened to kill him should he not put it in the officers' food. Mohammad agreed but went back to tell the chief of police, who, instead of taking measures to protect him, advised Mohammad to leave the country at once. The police in Afghanistan, Eva Zürcher's text records Mohammad explaining, are simply too afraid to help anyone against the Taliban. 'Here, the police are always friendly, but I still don't like it', she has him observe and his remark brings to mind earlier passages in the journal where Mohammad speaks about a group of policemen he sees regularly where he lives now.⁶² One day, Eva Zürcher recalls him telling her, when they were again walking past him, he made an attempt to greet them in his then still rather poor German and received no reply. He was indignant, he admits, and told a friend, who explained to him that he should have used a more formal mode of address. 'To police you must say "Grüß Gott" ["Good day"]', Eva Zürcher remembers Mohammad reasoning,

holding his cup of tea in his right hand and talking slowly as if he was not sure what he was telling us. He looked puzzled for a moment and then went on, 'I don't understand', I say to my friend. I want to be nice and say 'Servus' and police is just man ... like me. Why they get special greeting? It should be the same for all.⁶³

Such reflections are devoid of the drama that must be told in asylum stories; they do not serve to persuade the listener of the narrator's victimhood; nor do they contribute to a narrative of persecution, flight, and arrival.

Nonetheless they carry meaning less as a constitutive element of a specific trajectory than as part of a larger picture taking shape when one reads Mohammad's musing together with other refugees' encounters with representatives of the Austrian

state. These include stories of migrants like [W____], a refugee from Nigeria, who agreed to tell his story to his flat mate, Temidayo Akinyele, also a Nigerian, who, however, came to Austria on an international student visa:

‘Guy, nah this time ... dey dey [the police, HRK] outside more and if dem see you do none sense nah die’. These are the words with which he describes the situation. He constantly checks himself, especially in the Christmas and New year season, because he doesn’t want anything to happen that will cause him to be checked by the police. He has respect for the Austrian police because he said they are very organized and they don’t come for you until they have good evidence, but nevertheless he doesn’t really want to have anything to do with them.

Suddenly, the mood changed when the police came to our apartment. The son of our landlord had got into some trouble and then everything went south. Of course! The difference is clear now, I hadn’t really been too bothered about that because I know this is a developed country and the Police don’t come for you if you aren’t on their list. First, there is the fear of questions about your documents. Then, you don’t sleep in the night. Our fun Christmas turned into just another misery dividing two different worlds. It wasn’t that I hadn’t been thinking about the police at all; they had not been bothering me. Every night now I notice how you keep checking the window.⁶⁴

As part of the ARENA corpus, Temidayo Akinyele’s depiction of W____’s fear of the Austrian police complements the account of one refugee who, upon crossing the border into Austria, was greeted by a police officer, given food and drink, and taken to safe accommodation, as well as that of an asylum seeker who, after a failed asylum interview, was taken aside by an immigration lawyer and assured that his application would be successful next time. Considered together, these examples show very clearly how, in the course of their collaboration, the refugees interpellate the students less and less in the manner in which they have learnt to address authorities and more and more as confidantes.⁶⁵ On the basis of the trust that evolves between them, an increasingly creative form of remembrance becomes possible.

In one particular instance, the possibility to tell his asylum story with a difference dawned on a refugee participating in ARENA as he was sitting with his project partners, who had been trying to encourage him to speak more freely about his life and, after failing to engage him in a conversation about storytelling, resolved to tell him the story of Hänsel and Gretel. ‘He giggled’, Leonie Hasenauer writes,

and watched us in disbelief. His arms were under the table, his restraint was visible once more. His mother cannot read and cannot write, so when he was a child, they had to go to 'sleep alone', without her reading stories to them. His father can read, but all the books they possessed were burnt by the Taliban. And then all of a sudden, we did not know where this was coming from, he continued by telling us a story about an Afghan princess whose lovers fought hard battles to get her. Again, [M_____] ⁶⁶ giggled in disbelief that he was telling us this. ⁶⁷

At this moment M_____'s asylum story is replaced by a refugee *tale*, better still, a *refugee's tale* – owned by M____ and, for the very first time, shared by him with others, voluntarily, spontaneously, without any pressure to tell himself into legitimate existence, for the sheer pleasure of doing so. Ahmed seems to derive a similar pleasure when sharing his story with Sebastian. Telling Sebastian, Marlies, and Abdul how he was caught trying to leave Syria, found to be a deserter and arrested, he appears to revel in the impact of his story and the shock in Sebastian's face. 'Ahmed,' Sebastian Fritsche writes, 'just laughed. He would always do that: laugh when he opened up about the hardships of his journey. And when he saw our shocked faces, he would laugh some more and put his arm around my shoulder as if to say, "Don't worry; it turned out fine or I wouldn't be here".'⁶⁸ Sharing one's story was celebrated as a collectively experienced pleasure at a storytelling event, where one of the participants in ARENA volunteered to tell the story of his arrival in Innsbruck. Suddenly realizing that he was turning a harrowing experience into a tale so amusing that he had his audience laugh and cheer him on enthusiastically, he stopped and explained, 'One must try not always to tell things the ugly way. It's all sad but I want to tell it *schön, schön* [beautiful, beautiful]'.⁶⁹ The evening showed once more how the embodied act of narration, in literally *taking place*, becomes constitutive of a discursive free space apart from ongoing debates about forced migration, asylum, and the nation state's obligation to act and protect. If only temporarily, it opens up a forum, an arena, in which refugee experience becomes negotiable in terms not prescribed by the dominant discourse on immigration.

Conclusion

Much scholarly work has stressed how, in the process of narration, refugees are given a voice, visibility, and agency. More recent studies have cast doubt on such claims, cautioning against the inadvertent commodification of refugees' suffering which, instead of mobilizing witnessing publics, turns them into passive consumers content

with practising compassion from a safe distance. Such studies tend to be based on the implicit assumption that refugee life writing is a charitable act performed first and foremost in the interest of refugees. What they often ignore is that life writing is far more than that, and that its stake-holders are also the asylum-granting nation states whose responses to irregular migration remain grimly unimaginative assertions of the need for measures of border enforcement, detention, and deportation. Yet, these are only provisional measures unlikely to stop displaced persons from leaving their homelands and even less likely to enable receiving societies to meet the challenges the continued immigration of refugees is bound to pose. For this, a far more refined, more nuanced grasp of involuntary migration is needed as well as a repertoire of responses to new arrivals that do not violate basic values and traditions of civil communication and hospitable narration. Life writing projects such as ARENA provide a space for refugees and non-refugees to uphold such values and traditions through the very act of narration and, in so doing, keep working towards a better imagined.

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About the Author

Helga Ramsey-Kurz is associate professor of English literatures at the University of Innsbruck, Austria, and teaches in her fields of specialization, which are refugee and migrant writing, as well as socio-economic inequality in postcolonial literatures. Her publications include the essay collections *Uncommon Wealths in Postcolonial Fiction* (edited with Melissa Kennedy, 2018), *On the Move: The Journey of Refugees in New Literatures in English* (edited with Geetha Ganapathy-Doré, 2013), *Projections of Paradise: Ideal Elsewheres in Postcolonial Migrant Literature* (edited with Geetha Ganapathy-Doré, 2011). In 2017 she initiated the teaching-cum-research project ARENA.

Notes

¹ Abdul and Ahmed are not the real names of the two refugees. All documents quoted in this article are retained in the *Dokumentations Archiv Migration* in Innsbruck with the express written consent of both the students and the refugees. Where deemed necessary by any of the persons involved (including the refugees' legal representatives or counsellors), names and other personal data have been omitted, redacted or changed. At the end of the project, the refugees read the students' journals in the original or in Google translation. They can request changes, are invited to add comments, and are free to choose in what form and format their identity is modified.

² Fritsche, Sebastian, 'Mosaics of Two Persons: Conversations with Abdul & Ahmed about their Experiences of Escaping Syria and Living in Tyrol' in: *ARENA*, Bundle SoSe 2022, *DokumentationsArchivMigration/ARENA/Author/Fritsche*.

³ Smith, Sidonie, 'Presidential Address 2011: Narrating Lives and Contemporary Imaginaries', in: *PMLA* 126:3 (2011) 564–574, 569.

⁴ United Nations, 'Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees', <https://www.ohchr.org/en/instruments-mechanisms/instruments/convention-relating-status-refugees>, date accessed: 13 April 2023.

⁵ Cf., for instance, Melina Duarte, 'The Ethical Consequences of Criminalizing Solidarity in the EU', in: *Theoria* 86:1 (2020) 28–53. In light of this tendency to criminalize acts of solidarization with refugees, the extent to which the ethical validity of initiatives such as ARENA are subjected within the academe warrants reflection. Suffice it to say here that ARENA has been reviewed both by the Advisory Board of Experts supervising the work of DAM as well as within the context of a submission for funding to the Austrian Science Fund. In both cases the reviewers' verdict was that the project meets the ethical standards set by both institutions.

⁶ Rupnow, Dirk, 'Deprovincializing Contemporary Austrian History, Plädoyer für eine transnationale Geschichte Österreichs als Migrationsgesellschaft', in: Ingrid Böhler and Dirk Rupnow, *Arbeitsmigration in Österreich – Historische Perspektiven und methodische Herausforderungen: Zeitgeschichte* 40:1 (2013) 5–22, 6.

⁷ Steinbauer, Michael, 'Größte Flüchtlingsbewegung für Österreich seit 1945 möglich', *Wiener Zeitung*, 16 March 2022, <https://www.wienerzeitung.at/nachrichten/politik/oesterreich/2140947-Groesste-Fluechtlingsbewegung-fuer-Oesterreich-seit-1945-moeglich.html>, date accessed: 13 April 2023; Kratzmann, Katerina, and Katharina Hartl, 'The National Migratory Context', in: *Common Home: Migration and Development in Austria*, Vienna: Caritas Austria, 2019, 13–17, 13.

⁸ UNHCR, *Statistical Yearbook 2015*, 15th edition, <https://www.unhcr.org/statistics/country/59b294387/unhcr-statistical-yearbook-2015-15th-edition.html>, date accessed: 13 April 2023.

⁹ European Commission, 'Austria: Asylum Application Figures 2015', *European Website on Integration*, 5 March 2016, https://ec.europa.eu/migrant-integration/news/osterreich-asylzahlen-2015_en, date accessed: 13 April 2023.

¹⁰ The course was, and still is, offered as one of several compulsory courses from which the students can choose. This ensures that recruitment for the project is as objective as it can be as no one is selected on any other grounds than the formal requirements stipulated in the official curriculum.

¹¹ This workshop is offered by a leading trauma expert at the Department of Psychology of the University Innsbruck who is available for consultation throughout the project. Such consultation, however, has never been needed. This is mainly for four reasons: 1) the contacts to project participants are provided by aid workers who monitor the process; 2) no refugees are included in the project who have not already had their first asylum interview, after which, as research has shown, the danger of retraumatization tends to decrease significantly; 3) participation in the project is voluntary and tends to appeal to refugees with a relatively stable psychological disposition; 4) the refugees are never pressed to talk about anything they do not want to talk about.

¹² Ramsey-Kurz, Helga, and Gilles Reckinger (eds.), *Refugee Narratives – Fluchtgeschichten*, Innsbruck: Innsbruck UP, 2019.

¹³ Please note: the transfer of these texts to DAM is still pending and the file names under which they will become retrievable are not yet final. In case the process has not been completed by the time this article is published, interested readers may write to arena@uibk.ac.at to obtain access.

¹⁴ Tom Cheesman, 'Preface', in: Eric Ngalle Charles et al. (eds.), *Between the Mountain and the Sea: Refugees Writing in Wales*, Swansea: Hafan Books, 2003, 1–7, 7.

¹⁵ Schaffer, Kay, and Sidonie Smith, *Human Rights and Narrated Lives: The Ethics of Recognition*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004, 16–17.

¹⁶ Whitlock, Gillian, *Soft Weapons: Autobiography in Transit*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007, 3.

¹⁷ Eastmond, Marita, 'Stories as Lived Experience: Narratives in Forced Migration Research', in: *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20:2 (2007) 248–264, 248.

¹⁸ Ibidem.

¹⁹ Whitlock, Gillian, *Postcolonial Life Narratives: Testimonial Transactions*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2015, 203.

²⁰ Idem, 170.

²¹ Szórényi, Anna, 'Till Human Voices Wake Us: Responding to Refugee Testimony', in: *Life Writing* 6:2 (2009) 173–191, 178.

²² Ibidem.

²³ Oliver, Kelly, *Witnessing: Beyond Recognition*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2001, 93.

²⁴ Woolley, Agnes, 'Narrating the "Asylum Story": Between Literary and Legal Storytelling', in: *Interventions: International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 19:3 (2017) 376–394, 384.

²⁵ Idem, 385.

²⁶ Ibidem.

²⁷ Gotlib, Anna, 'I Am Not Your Canvas: Narratives, Nostalgia, and the (Re)claiming of Refugee Voices', in: Oliver, Kelly, Lisa M. Madura, and Sabeen Ahmed (eds.), *Refugees Now: Rethinking Borders, Hospitality, and Citizenship*, London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019, 239–258, 240.

²⁸ Idem, 251.

²⁹ Idem, 248.

³⁰ Idem, 249.

³¹ Idem, 249–250.

³² Brant, Clare, Tobias Heinrich, and Monica Soeting, 'The Placing of Displaced Lives: Refugee Narratives', in: *a/b Auto/Biography Studies* 32:3 (2017) 625–628, 625.

³³ Smith, Ali, 'Welcome from our Patron, Ali Smith', *Refugee Tales: A Call to End Indefinite Immigration Detention* (2016), <https://www.refugeetales.org/about>, date accessed: 13 April 2023.

³⁴ Ghorashi, Halleh, 'Giving Silence a Chance: The Importance of Life Stories for Research on Refugees', in: *Journal of Refugee Studies* 21:1 (2007) 117–132, 118. The danger of transforming the refugees' narratives in the acts of (re-)translation is one of which students participating in ARENA are acutely aware. While the final texts are all written in English to make the ARENA corpus accessible to an international readership, students have worked with their project partners also in Arabic, Farsi, French, German, Hindi, and Russian.

³⁵ Ibidem.

³⁶ Idem, 127.

³⁷ Ibidem. Some exceptions in other areas of anthropological inquiry may be noted here, such as Behar, Ruth, and Deborah A. Gordon (eds.), *Women Writing Culture*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996; and Visweswaran, Kamala, *Fictions of Feminist Ethnography*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994.

³⁸ Eastmond, 2007, 251.

³⁹ Idem, 249.

⁴⁰ Ibidem.

⁴¹ Idem, 250.

⁴² This inexperience has had significant beneficiary effects. Apart from sharpening students' awareness of the complexity of their task and the need to exercise caution and discretion, it has been enabling what Carolin Gebauer and Roy Sommer call a 'level telling field'. 'Beyond Vicarious Storytelling: How Level Telling Fields Help Create a Fair Narrative on Migration', in: *Open Research Europe*, 3:10 (2023), <https://doi.org/10.12688/openreseurope.15434.1>, date accessed: 10 May 2023.

⁴³ Zambelli, Pia, 'Hearing Differently: Knowledge-Based Approaches to Assessment of Refugee Narrative', in: *International Journal of Refugee Law* 29:1 (2017) 10–41, 24. 'Unfettered' in this context does not mean that the refugees embark on a full disclosure of personal details but that they feel under no pressure to speak about their persecution, let alone to speak as informers or interviewees to the students. Rather they know that they are free to engage in conversations about topics of their choice.

⁴⁴ Neuner, William, 'Journal', in: *ARENA*, Bundle SoSe 2019, DokumentationsArchivMigration/ARENA/Author/Neuner.

⁴⁵ M., I., 'Archive', in: *ARENA*, Bundle Liège WiSe 2018, DokumentationsArchivMigration/ARENA/Author/M.I.

⁴⁶ Neuner, 2019.

⁴⁷ Gurevitch, Zali, 'Distance and Conversation', in: *Symbolic Interaction* 12:2 (Fall 1989) 251–263, 262.

⁴⁸ Gurevitch, Zali, 'Dialectical Dialogue: The Struggle for Speech, Repressive Silence, and the Shift to Multiplicity', in: *British Journal of Sociology* 52:1 (March 2001) 87–104, 94.

⁴⁹ Cf. for instance Ghorashi, 2007, 117-132; Baillot, Helen, Sharon Cowan, and Vanessa E. Munro, 'Seen but Not Heard? Parallels and Dissonances in the Treatment of Rape Narratives across the Asylum and Criminal Justice Contexts', in: *Journal of Law and Society* 36:2 (2009) 195–219, 209; and Blommaert, Jan, 'Investigating Narrative Inequality: African Asylum Seeker's Stories in Belgium', in: *Discourse & Society* 12:4 (2001) 413–449, 419.

⁵⁰ Gurevitch, 2001, 96.

⁵¹ The name has been anonymized upon the request of the editors.

⁵² Hacon, Stéphane, 'Journal', in: *ARENA*, Bundle SoSe 2019, DokumentationsArchivMigration/ARENA/ Author/Hacon.

⁵³ Shuman, Amy, and Carol Bohmer, 'Representing Trauma: Political Asylum Narrative', in: *The Journal of American Folklore* 117:466 (2004) 394–414, 398.

⁵⁴ For detailed analyses of the generic features of asylum stories, see for instance Woolley, Agnes, *Contemporary Asylum Narratives: Representing Refugees in the Twenty-First Century*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014; as well as Blommaert, Jan, 'Investigating Narrative Inequality: African Asylum Seekers' Stories in Belgium', in: *Discourse & Society* 12:4 (2001) 413–449; and Holland, Madeline, 'Stories for Asylum: Narrative and Credibility in the United States' Political Asylum Application', in: *Refugee* 34:2 (2018) 85–93.

⁵⁵ Hacon, 2019.

⁵⁶ Kuenz, Carina, 'Journal', in: *ARENA*, Bundle SoSe 2019, DokumentationsArchivMigration/ARENA/Author/ Kuenz.

⁵⁷ *Ibidem*.

⁵⁸ Fritsche, 2022.

⁵⁹ The name has been anonymized upon the request of the editors.

⁶⁰ Elabd, Arwa, 'Journal' in: *ARENA*, Bundle SoSe 2022, DokumentationsArchivMigration/ARENA/ Author/Elabd.

⁶¹ Zürcher, Eva, 'Journal', in: *ARENA*, Bundle SoSe 2022,

DokumentationsArchivMigration/ARENA/Author/ Zürcher.

⁶² *Ibidem*.

⁶³ *Ibidem*.

⁶⁴ Akinyele, Temidayo, 'A Short Narrative of [W_____] from Nigeria', in: *ARENA*, Bundle SoSe 2022, DokumentationsArchivMigration/ARENA/Author/Akinyele.

⁶⁵ The term "confidante" is not used here to insinuate that the refugees drop their guard and disclose sensitive information, blind to any risks they might be taking in so doing. Rather, it is meant to stress

the confidence that gradually emerges in their telling once they begin to see that, in their conversations with the students, they are under no pressure to legitimize their quest for asylum but that they will be heard and taken seriously by their listeners also when they speak about other aspects of their lives unrelated to the circumstances of their flight. See also endnote 43.

⁶⁶ The name has been anonymized upon the request of the editors.

⁶⁷ Hasenauer, Leonie, 'Our Stories', in: *ARENA*, Bundle SoSe 2018, DokumentationsArchivMigration/ARENA/ Author/Hasenauer.

⁶⁸ Fritsche, 2022.

⁶⁹ Ramsey-Kurz, Helga, 'Course Description', in: *ARENA*, Bundle SoSe 2019, *ARENA*, DokumentationsArchivMigration/ ARENA/Author/Ramsey-Kurz.