sandglass theater

A Study Guide for the Performance of
Babylon, The Journeys of Refugees
and accompanying workshops

Written with help from **Clare Gillis**,
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SYNOPSIS:

BABYLON: an ancient city in what is now Iraq. Its ruins lie 59 miles southwest of Baghdad. The kingdom fell to the Persians in 539 BC. This fallen mythic civilization becomes, for us, a metaphor for the destruction and destabilization that is leading much of the world into a refugee crisis of these same mythic proportions. To live among the ruins of an earlier civilization, and to create new ruins on the same soil, is history repeating itself.

SANDGLASS THEATER's production looks at the relationship of refugees to their homelands, lost and new, and the conflicts that exist within American communities to which they have fled. Working with the Vermont USCRI/Refugee Resettlement Program, we have interviewed 9 "new Americans" (compiling 15 hours of recorded interviews), in order to gain first hand insight into their plight, trauma and the challenges of resettlement. The process of trust building and listening is at the core of all our work.
Using puppets and moving panoramic scrolls, we tell the refugees' stories in original four-part choral songs. We work with simple means, not much more than someone could carry with them as they flee. Babylon is performed by five actors/singers/puppeteers.

Babylon also explores our own attention spans, how capable we are to stay interested in the duration of someone else's journey – one that does not end with the arrival in a new land. There is more at stake for the refugees than safety, although that is the largest, most pressing issue. Once they are resettled, cultural issues come into play. What aspects of culture, language, religion, are left behind? How does this affect a refugee's dignity and sense of place?

The puppets are seven refugees at a metaphorical hearing about their need for asylum. Their stories intertwine. The refugees come from Syria, Afghanistan, El Salvador, and Burundi, one is a voiceless caterpillar and one is a ghost from a war past who is still on her journey. In Babylon, the blending of actual testimony with fictitious figures gives us a view into how we respond to the enormity of this crisis.

THE CHARACTERS:

Sima, The Afghan Mother:

Sima is fleeing the Taliban. She is, in fact, from Bamiyan, the part of Afghanistan where the Taliban pulled down two ancient Buddha statues, carved into the mountain. Bamiyan was a particular Taliban target, as the people are Hazara, an ethnic group. There is a long history of tension and discrimination between Hazara and other peoples of Afghani ethnicities. *Read: A Brief History of Afghanistan by Shaista Wahab and Barry Youngerman, Facts on File Press*.

Our character fled across the Koh-i-Baba Mountains, with her children and other townspeople, with the sounds of fighting in the town behind her. The mountains were covered in deep snow. She eventually reached Pakistan through a combination of determination, bribery, and luck. On the way, there were battles with pursuing Taliban. Some of the fleeing party, including a child, died of the cold.

The US armed the Mujahideen during the Afghan war again the Soviet Union in the 1980. The Soviet Union did not win that war, and the Mujahideen fighters, over time, grew to become the Taliban. So the United States is now fighting a Afghani force that it helped to create 38 years ago.

The conversation about refugees is linked to a wider conversation about how the Cold War between the US and the Soviet Union was fought through proxy wars in the Middle East, Southeast Asia, and Afghanistan. These proxy wars played a significant role in destabilizing these countries. The refugees we now see fleeing wars in those countries are the heirs of these proxy wars.

Desiré and Esperance, A Father and Daughter from Burundi:

Hutu and Tutsi peoples of Burundi fought an ethnic war of Genocide in 1972, during which between 80,000 and 200,000 people were killed, and hundreds of thousands fled to neighboring Zaire (now Democratic Republic of the Congo), Rwanda, and Tanzania. The Belgian and German colonists of the region enhanced the ethnic division. Many Burundians settled in refugee camps, until the Genocidal Mass Slaughter between Rwandan Hutus and Tutsis began in 1994, in which over 1,000,000 people died. Many Burundians lived in Rwandan camps for over 20 years. When the Rwandan slaughters began, many fled to the Congo, where the war spread. Congolese blamed Burundians and Rwandans for bringing the war with them, which, in fact, is true.

Our character, Desiré, might have fled Burundi as young man in 1993, during the next Burundian mass killings. He might have fled to Rwanda, from which he would have had to flee again a year later, as the Rwandan Genocide began. From there, he would have wound up in a refugee camp in the Congo, in which he would have grown up and perhaps had a child. Or, like many Burundians, he might have returned to refugee camps in Rwanda, where Esperance might have been born.

In 2014, Rwanda still hosted 75,000 Burundian refugees, and was issued an international warning to do something about the camps, as Rwanda was, purportedly, training Burundian

children from the camps to destabilize the government in Burundi. Burundian refugees live in camps in Tanzania (130,000), Congo (18,000), and Uganda (21,000). In 2016, Human Rights Watch still called Burundi a country of fear and violence: https://www.hrw.org/news/2016/11/22/burundi-country-fear-and-violence

Kevin, a Boy from El Salvador:

Kevin is an example of over 84,000 children from Guatemala, Honduras, and El Salvador who crossed Mexico to come to the US, fleeing widespread gang violence. There are over 60,000 gang members in El Salvador. The gangs started during the Salvadoran Civil War (1980-1992), in which the US funded the Salvador military. Salvadoran exiles in Los Angeles formed gangs, ostensibly to protect themselves from other LA street gangs. When these gangs members were deported, they brought the gangs to El Salvador and the "Northern Triangle" region. The gangs are involved in the trafficking of drugs and arms, but their primary work is extortion. Gangs have taken over houses and entire towns and forced residents to migrate, even within El Salvador. Children often face the choice of recruitment or death. Salvador has been called "the homicide capital of the world." (LA Times, Apr. 21, 2016) Almost 40% of the population of El Salvador is under the age of 18. The per capita homicide rate is more than 15 times higher than in the US.

Kevin cannot legally be a refugee because the violence in El Salvador is not state sponsored. He is not being targeted because of race, religion, nationality, and/or membership in a particular social group or political opinion. He is being targeted simply for being a child in a country practically ruled by gangs. We do not yet know if he has relatives in the US, which might make a difference in whether he is granted asylum. Many children who are sent back to El Salvador will simply make the dangerous journey again and again, risking the violence of the journey over the gang violence at home.

"While their deportation hearings, which can take years, are in process, the government is required to place them in the least restrictive environment available, usually with a parent or relatives or in foster care. However, a minority of them remain in detention, in facilities overseen by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, an agency of the Department of Health and Human Services." (nytimes.com/2017/07/05)

Khaled, A Man from Syria:

Our character of the Syrian Man is name Khaled. He is one of millions of Syrians who fled the Syrian Civil War via neighboring Lebanon, and from there, to Turkey, Greece, the Balkan countries, Hungary, Austria, Germany. And then from Germany, on to Sweden and other countries that took in refugees. This route was fraught with danger: refugees who were fingerprinted on one country could be returned to that country from the next border they tried to cross. Smugglers took large payments for promising to bring refugees to places and then not showing up, or taking them to more dangerous places. Border guards turned back waves of

refugees. Refugees were sometimes beaten en route, for their money, for their vulnerability, for instances of homosexuality, or simply because they were strangers.

Our character Khaled crossed from Turkey to Greece in a boat, and the boat was not permitted to land. Sent back to Turkey, the boat was the only "land" under his feet. Today, this route of migration is mostly closed.

Where do people from Syria go, if not by this overland (and water) route? Through Libya? Or waiting out the war in crowded camps in Lebanon and Turkey?

Gretel, A Ghost from a War Past:

Our ghost from a past war is Gretel, a German woman from the region of East Prussia. In the Second World War, as Germany began losing to the allies, Russia moved into East Prussia and claimed it for the Soviet Union. Germans fled west, and the land known as German before 1945 was divided into two countries. Although Germans from the east fled to regions that shared a language and a culture, they were still a displaced population. Many people see Gretel as Jewish, because that is our culture's primary association with German refugees of that era. In fact, she is not, and her character is based on an actual aunt of one of Sandglass' founders.

Gretel serves several dramatic functions in the show. One of the most important is that she helps to build a bridge for White audiences to empathize with refugees from the Africa, Muslim countries, and Central America.

What role does the conquering of land play in creating refugees? What happens to countries when land is divided among warring powers? Are refugees always those who oppose a government, or can they be people on all sides of a conflict?

STUDY GUIDE OBJECTIVES:

This residency fulfills core requirements included in the following subjects: Social Studies, Civic Engagement, Literature, Music, Art and Theater/Performing Arts

NATIONAL CORE ARTS STANDARDS FOR THEATRE

Theatre/Creating

> **TH:Cr1.1.I** a. Apply basic research to construct ideas about the visual composition of a drama/theatre work
> **TH:Cr2-I.** b. Investigate the collaborative nature of the actor, director, playwright, and designers and explore their interdependent roles in a drama/theatre work.

Theatre/Empathizing

> **TH:Cn10.1.I.** a. Investigate how cultural perspectives, community ideas and personal beliefs impact a drama/theatre work.
> **TH:Cn11.1.I.** a. Explore how cultural, global, and historic belief systems affect creative choices in a drama/theatre work.

Theatre/Responding

    TH: Re7.1.-III. a. Use historical and cultural context to structure and justify personal responses to a drama/theatre work.

    TH:Re8.1.III. a. Use detailed supporting evidence and appropriate criteria to revise personal work and interpret the work of others when participating in or observing a drama/ theatre work.

    b. Use new understandings of cultures and contexts to shape personal responses to drama/theatre work.

    c. Support and explain aesthetics, preferences, and beliefs to create a context for critical research that informs artistic decisions in a drama/theatre work.

Theatre/ Research

    TH:Re9.1.III. a. Research and synthesize cultural and historical information related to a drama/theatre work to support or evaluate artistic choices.

    b. Analyze and evaluate varied aesthetic interpretations of production elements for the same drama/theatre work.

    c. Compare and debate the connection between a drama/theatre work and contemporary issues that may impact audiences.

Theatre/Connecting

    TH:Cn11.2.III. a. Justify the creative choices made in a devised or scripted drama/theatre work, based on a critical interpretation of specific data from theatre research.

    b. Present and support an opinion about the social, cultural, and historical understandings of a drama/theatre work, based on critical research.

GUIDELINES FOR ATTENDING THE THEATER:

Attending live theatre is a unique experience with many valuable educational and social benefits. To ensure that all audience members are able to enjoy the performance, please take a few minutes to discuss the following audience etiquette topics with your students before the show:

How is attending the theatre similar to and different from going to the movies? What behaviors are and are not appropriate when seeing a play? Why? Remind students that because the performance is live, the audience can affect what kind of performance the actors give. No two audiences are exactly the same and no two performances are exactly the same—this is part of what makes theatre so special! Students' behavior should reflect the level of performance they wish to see.

Talking and calling out during the performance are not allowed. Any noise or light can be a distraction, so please remind students to make sure their cell phones are turned off. Texting, photography, and video recording are prohibited. Food and gum should not be taken into the theatre. If possible, restrooms should be used only before or after the show.

TOPICS FOR DISCUSSION IN THE CLASSROOM THAT COMPLIMENT THE PERFORMACE OF BABYLON:

1. Refugees: What they are fleeing and where they are looking for safety, including the process of resettlement and facts and figures about their migration found at USCRI website: http://refugees.org/.

> As the Arab Spring led to the democratization of Tunisia, to the fall of dictatorships in Egypt and Libya, the world expected that the Syrian president Bashar al-Assad would fall quickly. His refusal to step down has brought the country into a Civil War in which the Assad military is fighting several groups of rebels. The entrance of Islamic State into the conflict complicated and escalated the war, now in its 6th year of fighting. What role does the US play in this? Russia? Israel? Iran?

2. Stereotypes, assumptions and prejudice in the United States: Why are citizens afraid? What stresses do people experience when integrating new citizens? What do they value/ what are they worried about losing? Do they have only fear, or do they have hope too? Do you think they can imagine what it's like to be in a refugee's shoes?

3. Theater as a vehicle for social justice: Theater has a long history in every country, addressing social issues, bridging divides, healing through story telling and transforming communities.

4. How theater ensembles devise work: Not all plays are written by playwrights. What is an ensemble? What methods are used to create works of theater that are collaborations among all the performers, directors and designers?

5. Puppet traditions: What is the magic of this art form? Where do the traditions come from? What does it mean to learn from these traditions without appropriating other cultures? How do the puppets allow us to access human experience?

WORKSHOPS WE CAN OFFER:

Refugee Journey

An interactive game and discussion that helps students understand actual stories, challenges and obstacles that refugees face in fleeing war and violence. Participants will play a board game and engage in dialogue about their experience.

The Art of the Puppet

What is this unusual theater form and what does it do that is different from Actor's Theater? Students will learn Sandglass' approach to breathing life into puppets, through lecture, manipulation and compositional techniques.

The Crankie

Moving panoramas that enhance stories and songs connect us to folk traditions that transform contemporary theater. Students will build their own Crankie accompanied by a story or song.

Making Theater About Personal Testimony and Social Injustice

Based on John O'Neal's Story Circle method, developed by the Free Southern Theater during the civil rights era, this method develops listening skills and provides a form in which personal stories can be shared through art. Students will practice advocacy and agency, and learn techniques for developing theater from stories.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Note: Citations are in MLA8 format and are listed chronologically in their section with the older sources at the bottom of the list, and the more recent articles at the top.

<u>BOOKS</u>

Martinez, Oscar. *The Beast: Riding the Rails and Dodging Narcos on the Migrant Trail*. Verso, 2014.

> **Summary**: Martinez writes about migrants' journeys on the migrant trail through Mexico. Fleeing violence, migrants freight hop and avoid boarder patrol in attempt to seek asylum in the north.

Brothers, Caroline. *Hinterland: a Novel*. Bloomsbury, 2012.

> **Summary:** A fictional novel in which two Afghan boys, aged twelve and eight, cross Europe in search of safety.

Kidder, Tracy. *Strength in What Remains*. Profile Books Ltd, 2011.

> **Summary**: Kidder tells the story of a Burundian refugee as he flees genocide and moves to America.

<u>ARTICLES</u>

Hochwald, Bari. "To Inflame the Civic Temper." *HowlRound*, Emerson College , 7 May 2017, howlround.com/to-inflame-the-civic-temper?

> **Summary:** This article, published in an online theater journal, discusses the socio-political responsibility of contemporary artists. According to Hochwald, it is the responsibility of artists today to "help change the civic opinion away from manipulated fear and toward reasoned, empathetic action."

Miller, Andrea, and Marisa Pearl. "First Night in America." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 2 May 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/05/02/opinion/hotel-usa-refugee-op-doc.html?emc=eta1.

> **Summary:** This article and ten minute video document refugees' first night in America. The refugees are housed in a hotel, and undergo the disorientation, anxiety, and hope that comes with arriving in a new place.

Barnard, Anne. "Syria Changed the World." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 21 Apr. 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/04/21/sunday-review/one-countrys-war-changed-the-world.html?_r=0.

Summary: This article gives an overview of the Syrian Civil War and the western world's response to it.

Galofaro, Claire. "How a Community Changed by Refugees Came to Embrace Trump." *AP News*, Associated Press, 19 Apr. 2017, apnews.com/7f2b534b80674596875980b9b6e701c9.

Summary: While the African refugee populations that came to the city in the late 90s and early 2000s have revived the community of Lewiston, Maine, many white citizens have come to support Trump and his anti-immigrant rhetoric.

Nayeri, Dina. "The Ungrateful Refugee: 'We Have No Debt to Repay'." *The Guardian*, Guardian News and Media, 4 Apr. 2017, www.theguardian.com/world/2017/apr/04/dina-nayeri-ungrateful-refugee?CMP=Share_iOSApp_Other.

Summary: Nayeri fled Iran when she was a child and was settled as a refugee in the United States. She questions the idea that refugees should be grateful and indebted to the countries where they were granted resettlement.

Hammer, Joshua. "A Modern Odyssey: Two Iraqi Refugees Tell Their Harrowing Story."*Smithsonian.com*, Smithsonian Institution, 1 Apr. 2017, www.smithsonianmag.com/history/modern-odyssey-two-iraqi-refugees-tell-story-180962475/.

Summary: Two close friends from Iraq fleeing violence journey across Europe towards safety.

Kantor, Jodi, and Catrin Einhorn. "Canadians Adopted Refugee Families for a Year. Then Came 'Month 13.'" *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 25 Mar. 2017, www.nytimes.com/2017/03/25/world/canada/syrian-refugees.html?_r=0.

Summary: Canadian families struggle to let go of refugee families that they have "adopted" for a year. While the Canadian sponsors know that the adopted families need to learn to survive alone in Canada, some sponsors have forged tight ties with their adopted families. The article also addresses the issue of refugee cultural assimilation.

Kantor, Catrin Einhorn and Jodi. "Wonder and Worry, as a Syrian Child Transforms." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 17 Dec. 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/12/17/world/americas/syrian-refugees-canada.html?_r=0.

Summary: A Syrian refugee girl who has been resettled in Canada is quick to pick up Canadian culture, however her parents fear that she may be leaving too much of her Syrian culture behind.

Cohen, Roger. "Opinion | Broken Men in Paradise." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 9 Dec. 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/12/09/opinion/sunday/australia-refugee-prisons-manus-island.html?_r=1.

> **Summary**: Asylum seekers are held indefinitely in prisons in Manus, an island off the coast of Australia. The conditions in these prisons are brutal, and many forced migrants suffer severe mental and physical health issues in result.

Semple, Kirk. "Fleeing Gangs, Central American Families Surge Toward U.S." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 12 Nov. 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/11/13/world/americas/fleeing-gangs-central-american-families-surge-toward-us.html?_r=0.

> **Summary:** Families from El Salvador and the Honduras fleeing gang violence head to the United States. One United Nations official calls the forced migration a refugee crisis.

Barker, Howard. "Howard Barker on Puppetry, the Actor, and Process." *HowlRound*, Emerson College , 5 Nov. 2016, howlround.com/howard-barker-on-puppetry-the-actor-and-process?

> **Summary**: This article, published in an online theater journal, is an interview of Howard Barker, a well-known marionette playwright, on his views on acting, marionettes, and theater.

Specia, Yara Bishara and Megan. "'I Dream in Fruit': What Hunger Looks Like in Syria." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 28 Oct. 2016, www.nytimes.com/interactive/2016/10/28/world/middleeast/syria-hunger.html?_r=0.

> **Summary**: Syrians in government and rebel territories make videos showing how they have managed to find enough to eat. Meat and fresh fruits and vegetables are nearly impossible to find.

Kristof, Nicholas. "We're Helping Deport Kids to Die." *The New York Times*, The New York Times, 16 July 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/07/17/opinion/sunday/were-helping-deport-kids-to-die.html.

> **Summary:** Children in Honduras are forced to flee their countries because of gang violence. In deporting kids back to their home countries, the U.S. government may be sending them back to die at the hands of the gangs.

Frey, William. "The 'Diversity Explosion' Is America's Twenty-First-Century Baby Boom." *The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation*, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, 2016, mellon.org/initiatives/our-compelling-interests/excerpts/diversity-explosion-americas-twenty-first-century-baby-boom/.

Summary: In 2011, there were more minority babies born in United States that year than white babies. The article discusses what that may mean for the future of America.

Kendzior, Sarah. "Why Does St. Louis Care More about Syrian Refugees than Its Black Population?" *Quartz*, Atlantic Media Co., 16 Sept. 2015, qz.com/502626/why-does-st-louis-care-more-about-syrian-refugees-than-its-black-population/.

Summary: Kendzior discusses the current discrepancy that exists between the aid given to Syrian refugees by the city of St. Louis and the continued neglect of the city's poor African-American communities.

Welsh, Teresa. "8 Facts about the U.S. Program to Resettle Syrian Refugees." *US News*, U.S. News and World Report, 2015, www.usnews.com/news/articles/2015/11/20/8-facts-about-the-us-program-to-resettle-syrian-refugees.

Summary: Asylum seeker undergo strict screening processes before they are granted refugee status and allowed to enter the United States. Once the refugees are resettled, they must apply for jobs and complete a variety of other requirements as a part of the resettlement process.

RADIO

NPR Staff. "A Poem From A Syrian Psychiatrist: 'Cloud-Cafe'." *NPR*, NPR, 23 Mar. 2017, www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2017/03/23/521265685/a-poem-from-a-syrian-psychiatrist-cloud-cafe.

Summary: Syrian psychiatrist and professor, Dr. Hussam Jefee-Bahloul has written the poem, 'Cloud-Café,' depicting a god who seems to sit aloofly with an iPhone in his "cloud-café" as war goes on.

Daniels, Patti, and Peter Hirschfeld. "Rutland Mayor: First Two Resettled Syrian Families 'Will Probably Be The Last'." *Vermont Public Radio*, National Public Radio , 25 Jan. 2017, digital.vpr.net/post/rutland-mayor-first-two-resettled-syrian-families-will-probably-be-last?utm_source=VPR%2BEmail.

Summary: Over one hundred Syrian refugees were expected to resettle in Rutland, VT in 2017. However, after President Trump's executive order to ban Syrian refugees from entering the United States, it seems unlikely that there will be any more Syrian refugee resettlement in the area.

Keck, Nina. "In Vermont, A New Resettlement Community Prepares For The Arrival Of Refugees." *Vermont Public Radio*, National Public Radio , 20 Dec. 2016, digital.vpr.net/post/vermont-new-resettlement-community-prepares-arrival-refugees?

> **Summary:** Residents of Rutland, VT take Arabic classes and stock up on donations of house hold goods in preparation for the incoming Syrian and Iraqi refugees.

Nelson, Soraya Sarhaddi. "Germany Deports First Group Of Afghan Asylum Seekers." *NPR*, NPR, 15 Dec. 2016, www.npr.org/sections/thetwo-way/2016/12/15/505653794/germany-deports-first-group-of-afghan-asylum-seekers.

> **Summary:** The German government deports 34 Afghan asylum seekers back to Kabul.

Amos, Deborah. "After Trump's Election, Uncertainty For Syrian Refugees In The U.S." *NPR*, NPR, 24 Nov. 2016, www.npr.org/sections/parallels/2016/11/24/503146992/after-trumps-election-uncertainty-for-syrian-refugees-in-the-u-s.

> **Summary:** A family of Syrian refugees, resettled in New Jersey, fears deportation and hate-crimes after the election of Donald Trump.

Mann, Brian. "Utica, N.Y., Which Welcomes Refugees, Monitors Trump's Muslim Comments."*NPR*, NPR, 22 Nov. 2016, www.npr.org/2016/11/22/502980034/utica-n-y-which-welcomes-refugees-monitors-trumps-muslim-comments.

> **Summary:** Utica, New York has been welcoming refugees for decades, and the people say that the recent comments made by Trump on Muslims does not match their values. Brian Mann interviews resettled teenage girls about their thoughts on this issue.

Clare Morgana Gillis

Baghdad stories – Babylon excerpt

19 aug 2017

In January of 2000, Hanna Batatu, renowned historian of Iraq's modern state, died with the question on his lips, "what is Iraq?" His brother was with him at the time, and does not recall any relevant context for the question. Nonetheless he believes the sentence was intended as an answer in the form of a question.

Batatu's question is all the more tantalizing given that he had dedicated his nearly 1000-page social history of the country "to the people of Iraq."

The question "what is Iraq" resurfaced in the summer of 2014, when an army of jihadis crossed into Iraqi territory and seized control of the entire northwestern section of the state, including its second city of Mosul. They linked Mosul with their Syrian capital of Raqqa and began to call themselves the Islamic State.

Newspapers and pundits began to claim "the end of Iraq," focusing on how it is an artificial state cobbled together by British colonials from three separate Ottoman provinces, thus destined to fragment along ethnosectarian lines. I wondered if Iraqis thought their country was ending, and in November of 2014 I went to Baghdad to ask some.

I.

BABYLON --

It is easy to begin at the beginnings of Iraq's history, because Iraq is where history begins.

Isn't it?

Babylon is nearly empty on a rainy November day when I visit. The stripped-down hulk of a city, the fertile place between two rivers, is swept by wind, hosting no one save its two caretakers (brothers who hold the job like their father and grandfather before them, a policeman, and a couple of college sweethearts stealing a moment of privacy.

My guide is Haider al-Mamori, a specialist in ancient Mesopotamia who holds a PhD from Tokyo University and will go on to a research fellowship at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. Haider grew up in the town closest to the ancient site

so spent his childhood visiting the ruins. He wears a jaunty professorial cap and smiles a lot, especially when he starts joking with my translator about whose stomach is fatter.

Only about ten per cent of the site has been excavated, Haider explains. One hopes that beneath the overgrown reeds more marvelous items are to be found, like the brilliant cobalt glazed Ishtar gate with its golden lions that has sat now in Berlin's Pergamonmuseum for nearly a century.

Mesopotamia, the land between two rivers, has been credited with the discovery of agriculture, the birth of writing, the establishment of laws. Its gently swaying palm trees have shaded kings and queens, deities, captive Jews, perhaps the Tower of Babel and even Adam and Eve.

All that is left are the walls, an unglazed sandy brown. Saddam undertook a massive reconstruction effort in the 70s and 80s and, like Nebuchadnezzar before him, stamped his own name and the date into the new-old bricks.

In the midst of the sanctions regime of the 1990s, following his failed invasion of Kuwait, he constructed a palace on the hilltop overlooking the site.

Haider points out one of the few original, unmoved statues, directly beneath the gaze of Saddam's palace. "It's the symbol of Babylon," he says. It's a lion standing on top of a man: it has crushed him to death.

"Refugeehood from World War II to the present"
Clare Gillis
Marlboro College Summer Speaker Series: July 5, 2017, 3pm, Snyder Center

A. HISTORICAL OVERVIEW

Data point #1 – the post-World War II human rights context
Concepts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, sense of universal moral responsibility
Nuremburg Tribunal, 1945-6
⬧ Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (1951), *Eichmann in Jerusalem* (1961)
⬧ Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948
⬧ The 1951 Refugee Convention, the founding document of the UN High Commission for
Refugees (UN Refugee Agency), defines "refugee" as someone who,

> owing to **well-founded fear of being persecuted** for reasons of race, religion, nationality,
> membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is **outside the country of his
> nationality** and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the **protection** of
> that country [*Article 1. A (2); see* unhcr.org *for all UNHCR documents*]

Data point #2: the UN and the politics of being apolitical
The 1951 Convention has 144 signatories and no legal mechanism to ensure that those countries
provide support to asylum seekers. How does the UNHCR compel them to share burdens?
⬧ David Forsythe, "UNHCR's mandate: the politics of being non-political," *UNHCR New Issues
in Refugee Research* 33 (March 2001)
⬧ Gil Loescher, "UNHCR and Forced Migration," pp. 215-226 in
★ E. Fiddian-Qismeyeh et al. (eds.), *The Oxford Handbook of Refugee and Forced Migration
Studies* (Oxford, 2014)

Data point #3 – the changing face of international refugeehood
• post-WWII: Europeans, including many Jews
• 1948, 1967: Palestine
• 1950s-80s Cold War: Soviet Union and Eastern Europe
• 1950s-80s "Third World War": local conflicts in Latin and South America, Africa, Asia, Middle
East often also served as sites for proxy wars between USA and Soviet Union
• 1990s Balkan wars: European refugees
• 2001-present: Global war on terror, US "Long Wars" in Afghanistan and Iraq, civil and proxy
wars in Syria, Libya, Iraq, Yemen, etc.
⬧ Literature: Matthew Gibney, "Kosovo and Beyond: Popular and Unpopular Refugees," *Forced
Migration Review* 5 (1999), pp. 28-30
⬧ Stephen Walt, "Whose lives matter?" *Foreign Policy*, Nov. 2, 2015

Data point #4: UNHCR and international refugee regime funding & bureaucracy
How nations share the burdens of providing economic aid and hosting refugees; earmarking
⬧ Loescher, "UNHCR and Forced Migration"

Data point #5: Security and securitization of refugees
Are refugees dangerous? Health, safety, economic concerns related to migration
⬥ M. Gibney, "Security and the Ethics of Asylum after September 11," *Forced Migration Review* 13 (2002), pp. 40-42

Data point #6: offshoring and outsourcing national obligations; thickening borders
⬥ M. Gibney, "'A Thousand Little Guantanamos': Western States and Measures to Prevent the Arrival of Refugees," in K. Tunstall (ed.), *Displacement, Asylum, Migration* (Oxford, 2006), pp. 137-169

Data point #7: many current humanitarian practices exacerbate global structural inequalities
The growth of the international refugee regime maintains the relative wealth, power and privilege of western, developed nations against the nations of the Global South

Data point #8: climate change and global structural inequality
Who bears most responsibility for climate change, and who suffers most from its effects?
⬥ Davida Finger and Rachel Luft, "No Shelter: Disaster Politics in Louisiana and the Struggle for Human Rights," in S. Hertel and K. Libal (eds.), *Human Rights in the United States: Beyond Exceptionalism* (Cambridge, UK, 2011), pp. 291-312
⬥ Jane McAdam, *Climate Change, Forced Migration, and International Law* (Oxford, 2014)
⬥ P. Schwartzstein, "The climate change refugee crisis is just beginning," Quartz, Jan. 31, 2016

Data point #9: "right to remain" v. "right of return"
Ethnonationalism: can or should (a) land "belong" to (a) people?
⬥ Megan Bradley, "Rethinking refugeehood: statelessness, repatriation, and refugee agency," *Review of International Studies* 40.1 (2014), pp. 101-123

Data point #10: refugeehood as life in suspension; IRR as carceral supra-state
Most refugees have no or very limited legal rights to live and work in exile.

B. IMPORTANT CONCEPTS/ LENSES:

Language
Legal: "well-founded fear of persecution" (1951 Convention on Refugees)
Terms for people: "refugee"/ "(economic) migrant"/ "asylum-seeker"
Perspective: for whom was 2015 a refugee "crisis"? Migration as "flood/ influx/ swarm"

Trauma, agency, narrative; depoliticization of refugees; "victimhood" v. "resilience"
⬥ Vanessa Pupavac, "Refugee Advocacy, Traumatic Representations and Political Disenchantment," *Government and Opposition* 43.2 (2008), pp. 270-292
⬥ Liisa H. Malkki, "Speechless emissaries: Refugees, humanitarianism and dehistoricisation," *Cultural Anthropology* 11.3 (1996), pp. 377-404

The nation-state
⬥ Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, rev. ed. (2006)

Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization
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Speechless Emissaries: Refugees, Humanitarianism, and Dehistoricization

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Massive displacements of people due to political violence and the sight—on television and in newspapers—of refugees as a miserable "sea of humanity" have come to seem more and more common. If these displacements, and media representations of them, appear familiar, so too does the range of humanitarian interventions routinely activated by the movement of people. The purpose of this essay is to explore the forms typically taken by humanitarian interventions that focus on refugees as their object of knowledge, assistance, and management, and to trace the effects of these forms of intervention at several different levels.

One of the things that most immediately demands notice is that the forms of these humanitarian interventions appear to be so inevitable—as do the perennial impasses and systematic failures from which such interventions often suffer (Calhoun 1995:xii; Ferguson 1994). The contemporary crises of mass displacement—especially those of Rwanda and Burundi, which I discuss here—offer an almost laboratory-like, tragic clarity of view into the larger question of humanitarian intervention.

My argument grows out of anthropological field research conducted with Hutu refugees from Burundi living in Tanzania (mostly in three very large refugee camps) since the "selective genocide" of 1972 in Burundi.[1] It also addresses the 1994 genocide in Rwanda and its aftermath. The essay moves through a comparison of the social construction and uses of the refugee category in different social and institutional domains.

In the first section I discuss the social significance of the refugee category for the 1972 Hutu refugees themselves—that is, for persons who have long been legally recognized and documented as real, bona fide political refugees with a well-founded fear of persecution. I trace how the Hutu refugees in a particular context (many of whom still live in refugee camps) had come to appropriate the category as a vital, positive dimension of their collective identity in exile, and in

what sense refugee status was a *historicizing condition* that helped to produce a particular political subjectivity.

The second section examines how the staff of the international organizations administering the Hutu refugees in Tanzania conceptualized the term *refugee* in the course of their everyday discussions. While the legal claim to refugee status by the Hutu was acknowledged by these administrators, other, more elaborate normative expectations and definitions of "the refugee" lived—unstated but vigorous—in the shadow of the law. The net effect of the administrators' views, I will argue, was to depoliticize the refugee category and to construct in that depoliticized space an ahistorical, universal humanitarian subject (Barthes 1980; Malkki 1995a:12–13 ff.).

In the third section the argument moves to a greater level of generality: the examination of the figure of the refugee as an object of concern and knowledge for the "international community," and for a particular variety of humanism. This exploration will suggest that refugee issues are one privileged site for the study of humanitarian interventions through which "the international community" constitutes itself (Calhoun 1995; Ishay 1995; Malkki 1994; Rusciano and Fiske-Rusciano 1990). The central purpose here is to examine some of the specific effects of the contemporary dehistoricizing constitution of the refugee as a singular category of humanity within the international order of things.[2] Much as in the case of the local refugee administrators in Dar-es-Salaam, one important effect of the bureaucratized humanitarian interventions that are set in motion by large population displacements is to leach out the histories and the politics of specific refugees' circumstances. Refugees stop being specific persons and become pure victims in general: universal man, universal woman, universal child, and, taken together, universal family (Barthes 1980).[3] Of course, refugee populations usually consist of people in urgent need who have been victimized in numerous ways. The problem is that the necessary delivery of relief and also long-term assistance is accompanied by a host of other, unannounced social processes and practices that are dehistoricizing. This dehistoricizing universalism creates a context in which it is difficult for people in the refugee category to be approached as historical actors rather than simply as mute victims. It can strip from them the authority to give credible narrative evidence or testimony about their own condition in politically and institutionally consequential forums (compare Balibar 1988:724, 1995).

That humanitarian interventions tend to be constituted as the opposite of political ones has, of course, a long history and complex reasons behind it (Loescher and Monahan 1989; Zolberg et al. 1989). But the purpose here is not to delve into that history; it is to emphasize the extent to which this opposition is taken for granted, and to ask what the effects of this conventionalized, depoliticizing, universalizing practice are. A vital part of the answer must be, as I will try to show, that in universalizing particular displaced people into "refugees"— in abstracting their predicaments from specific political, historical, cultural contexts—humanitarian practices tend to silence refugees.

A great deal of work has been done in recent years (in several disciplines) on the question of "voice" and representation, silencing and "ethnographic. authority" (Clifford 1988:21 ff.). Some of this work has tended to move in heavily textualized domains where the potential political stakes in having or not having a voice have slipped beyond the immediate field of vision. It is in the horror of current events in Rwanda and Burundi, and in the massive displacements of people that have resulted (and that could well multiply in the near future), that the question of voice reveals its importance. There, the systematic disqualification of the refugees' own inescapably political and historical assessments of their predicaments and their futures has been (between the summer of 1994 and now, in February 1996) forming into a contestation between life and death.

It is my hope that an examination of the contemporary political tragedies of the Great Lakes region of Africa will help to make the case that familiar forms of humanitarianism and humanism need careful, vigilant study, especially now—that they should no longer be left to lie in their accustomed circuits of international policy science, but rather should be studied by scholars in many fields. The intent here is not to dismiss humanitarian interventions as useless. The alternatives to humanitarianism that come most easily to mind—utter, uninformed indifference or repressive, undemocratic, mercenary logics—are clearly terrible. But precisely because international interventions (humanitarian and otherwise) are increasingly important, we should have better ways of conceptualizing, designing, and challenging them. This is why it is useful to examine the idea of a universal, ahistorical humanity that forms the basis of much of contemporary progressive politics. This liberal, progressive politics, with its vision of a universal humanity, is hard-wired into the history of anthropology. Perhaps anthropology is, therefore, an especially suitable site from which to begin questioning the workings and effects of these vital concepts and practices.[4]

Refugee Status as Lived by Hutu Refugees in Mishamo, Tanzania

The tens of thousands of Hutu refugees who fled the mass killings by the Tutsi-dominated army in Burundi in 1972 have, for the most part, been living in refugee camps ever since.[5] A much smaller group of these 1972 refugees (some 20,000–30,000) settled spontaneously in and around Kigoma township, and have thus had no experience of prolonged residence inside a refugee camp.[6] My fieldwork (1985–86) was divided between Mishamo, a refugee camp with a population of about 35,000 in western Tanzania's Rukwa region, and the town and environs of Kigoma on Lake Tanganyika, next to the historical crossroads of Ujiji. The biographical and social circumstances of the people in these two settings, the "camp refugees" and the "town refugees," were very different in exile, even though their lives in Burundi prior to 1972 appear to have differed much less. The most relevant contrast in the present context is that the social status of being a refugee had a very pronounced salience in the camp refugees' life-worlds, while in town it generally did not. In Mishamo it was indispensable to understand something of the social and political meaning given collectively to refugeeness and to exile by the camp inhabitants. In contrast, for the people

I have called the town refugees, refugee status was generally not a collectively heroized or positively valued aspect of one's social person. Insofar as it was considered relevant at all, it was more often a liability than a protective or positive status.

I have examined this contrast at length elsewhere (Malkki 1995a). But even in its simplest outlines, the case suggests that the elaboration of legal refugee status into a social condition or a moral identity does not occur in an automatic or predictable way, and that even people who fled originally from the "same place" can, and often do, come to define the meaning of refugee status differently, depending on the specific lived circumstances of their exile. In what follows I will focus only on the camp refugees' social imagination of refugeeness because it was their definitions that most directly challenged the refugee administrators' visions of the same.

The most unusual and prominent social fact about the camp of Mishamo was that the refugees who had lived within its confines for so many years were still in 1985–86 continually engaged in an urgent, collective process of constructing and reconstructing a true history of their trajectory as "a people." This was an oppositional process, setting itself against state-approved versions of the history of Burundi. The narrative production of this history in exile was sweeping. Beginning with what anthropologists and other students of mythology have called "myths of foundation," the Hutu refugees' narratives outlined the lost features of the "autochthonous," "original" Burundi nation and the primordial social harmony that was believed to have prevailed among the original inhabitants (the Twa and the Hutu). The narratives of the past then located the coming of the Tutsi in time and space: they were remembered as the pastoral "foreigners from the North" (sometimes as "the Hamites" or "the Nilotes") who came in search of new pastures for their cattle "only 400 years ago." There followed the progressive theft of power from the "natives" (Hutu and Twa) by Tutsi ruse and trickery, and the emergence of an extractive, oppressive social hierarchy. The refugees' historical narratives moved on to the colonial era, concentrating mainly on the period of Belgian administration, and defined the end of formal colonial rule as the defeat of the departing Belgians by Tutsi trickery. The culminating chapter in the refugees' historical narratives of the Burundian past amounted to a vast and painful documentation of the mass killings of people belonging to the Hutu category by Burundi's (mainly Tutsi) army—and, eventually, by Tutsi civilians—in 1972. So many years later, the historical and personal memory of the apocalyptic violence and terror of that era still had a sharp and shocking salience in people's everyday lives.

These historical narratives were ubiquitous in the camp, forming—as I have argued elsewhere with the benefit of more detailed evidence (Malkki 1995a)—an overarching historical trajectory that was fundamentally also a national history of the "rightful natives" of Burundi. The camp refugees saw themselves as a nation in exile. And they thought of exile as an era of moral trials and hardships that would enable them to reclaim the "homeland" in Burundi at some moment in the future.

People in Mishamo tended to see their refugee status, then, as a positive, productive status and as a profoundly meaningful historical identity. Far from being a "mere" legal technicality, or a disabling problem to be endured, refugeeness was clung to both as a protective legal status and as a special moral condition—for it was only by together passing through a period as refugees that the Hutu as "a people" could effect their return to their rightful homeland.

Such a positive light on refugee status should not be taken to mean that the people in question did not notice or suffer from the large and small difficulties of being in exile. Indeed, people in Mishamo were quite aware of their very considerable material and social hardships. But there were two important qualifications to this. First, legal refugee status and U.N.-issued refugee identity documents were seen as offering at least some protection against possibly even greater hardship. Second, and even more significant, many in the refugee camp were of the opinion that embracing instead of escaping hardships was wise as the knowledge of difficulties would teach and empower people, making them worthier and more able to reclaim the homeland. As one man put it in describing the Tanzanian camp administrators who were often seen as exploitative and oppressive: "They begin to educate us as refugees."

Conversations about refugeeness and exile with people in Mishamo began to suggest, over time, that refugeeness was seen as a matter of *becoming*. They often explained that in the initial stages of exile, the Hutu were not yet true refugees, refugees properly speaking. What they had to say strongly suggested that, socially, there was such a thing as a novice refugee. True or mature refugeeness, then, entailed a cumulative process embedded in history and experience. It had to do, if I have understood correctly, with a certain level of self-knowledge, and the camp was a privileged site for the elaboration of such a knowledge.

Another indication that refugeeness had come to be interiorized as an aspect of people's identities in Mishamo was that it was considered to be inherited from one generation to another as long as the Hutu lived in exile. To quote one person, "If I am a refugee here, of course my child is a refugee also—and so is his child, and his child, until we go back to our native country." This vision, of course, fit well into the narratives of history and exile that were so central in the everyday life of the refugee camp, but it was quite different from the legal definition, and also from the ideal trajectory of refugeeness usually constructed by the staffs of the international aid organizations.[7]

Being a refugee also naturally suggested, even demanded, certain kinds of social conduct and moral stances, while precluding others. Thus, for example, many refugees in Mishamo, in the camp, were continually angered by the conduct of those among them who engaged in commerce—those who had become "merchant refugees." (And, in fact, the most prominent Hutu merchant refugees mostly lived outside the camps, among the so-called spontaneously settling refugees in Kigoma and Ujiji, and in other towns). As one person exclaimed: "We have not come here to make commerce. We are refugees." This sense of outrage was echoed by another man: "[The merchant refugees,] they became rich. They have cabarets, hotels, restaurants . . . *being refugees!*" As we will see

momentarily, the camp refugees and their administrators agreed on the point that a rich refugee was a contradiction in terms; but they came to this conclusion from different premises. The camp refugees recognized that wealth would likely root people in the here and now, making them forget that they were in exile, and thus properly rooted elsewhere. In a curious way, wealth and commerce made people "this-worldly"—while the "other world," of course, was the homeland. And refugeeness, ideally, was an integral part of the process of a future return— just as it was inevitably linked to the past. It should be noted, too, that commerce put Hutu in the position of exploiting other Hutu, thus challenging their corporate solidarity.[8]

This brief account of the social construction and moral imagination of refugeeness in Mishamo has, perhaps, been sufficient to show in what sense refugee identity can be shaped by historical and political context. Why the Hutu had to flee, what the history of political struggle had been in Burundi, how the refugees expected to help bring about a new political order in Burundi: all these were issues inextricably tied to the social meaning of exile. It would therefore have been impossible for them to concentrate only on life within the confines of their camp, as if the camp were not itself deeply within history.

The Social Imagination of Refugee Status among Refugee Administrators in Tanzania

Throughout my field research in Tanzania I was offered crucially important assistance by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service (TCRS), that is, by the people who—along with officials of the Tanzanian Ministry of Home Affairs—were charged with administering and assisting the Hutu refugees.[9] UNHCR funded the greatest part of the refugee projects, while TCRS was the principal implementing agency. Linked to the umbrella organization of the Lutheran World Federation, TCRS was (and is) an organization with long experience of refugee work in Tanzania and one of the most effective of such groups in carrying out its mandate.[10]

When I had completed one year of field research in rural western Tanzania in late 1986 and returned to Dar-es-Salaam in preparation for my departure from Tanzania, the TCRS director invited me to his home to speak to TCRS staff about my research. To comply was a very modest way of acknowledging my debt to TCRS and the other organizations that had ferried my mail, given me access to their wireless radios, permitted their mechanics to sell me gasoline and fix my car, opened their library to me, submitted to interviews, furnished valuable maps, and rendered so many other similar services.

At the evening gathering on the terrace of the director's home, I gave an account of what I had heard and thought in the course of the short year in western Tanzania, knowing that numerous people in my audience had much longer experience of living in Tanzania than I. I spoke about the fact that the Hutu refugees in Mishamo saw exile in Tanzania first and foremost not as a tragedy, but as a useful, productive period of hardships that would teach and purify them, and

thereby help them to grow powerful enough to return to their homeland on their own terms. That the refugees considered they had undergone hardship in Tanzania was evident, and I tried to give an account of this also. I spoke about the antagonisms that had developed in Mishamo Refugee Settlement as a result of the very hierarchical social organization within it, about resentment over practices that were considered extractive of the refugees' agricultural labor power, about the control of movement through Leave Passes, about the scarcity of secondary and higher education for refugee children, and so on. The most important point I was trying to convey was that the experiential reality of the refugee camp was powerfully shaped by the narrative memory of relationships and antagonisms located in the past in Burundi, antagonisms between the Hutu peasant majority there and the minority Tutsi category that at the time predominated in the military and government. That is, the camp was a site of intense historicity, and to be a refugee was a historicizing and politicizing condition. To study this historicity, I said, had become one of my main activities during the fieldwork.

I knew as I spoke that my findings were in some measure incommensurable with the language of project evaluations and "development" discourse in which refugee issues were so often framed (Ferguson 1994). The results of my research were listened to politely but were clearly not received as particularly useful information by the TCRS staff, who were my audience that evening. What I reported was not completely novel to them. Several among them—especially the Tanzanian staff—had previously heard aspects of the grand historical narrative of the Hutu as a people in exile. (In other organizations, too, there were individual staff members who were sometimes quite knowledgeable about the struggles over history in the region).[11] But this historical knowledge, this narrative evidence, was, to all intents and purposes, irrelevant and unusable by the organization. Moreover, when it did become relevant to daily operations, it was as a potential trouble factor threatening to complicate the administering of the projects.

My presentation in the director's garden provoked a spirited discussion of what a real refugee was, or ought to be—and whether the Hutu who had come to Tanzania in 1972 still fit the picture. One of the guests heard in my presentation evidence that the Hutu refugees were ungrateful recipients of international assistance, and was moved to challenge the refugee status of the Hutu on grounds of material, economic well-being:

> Nowhere else in Africa do these people [refugees] receive their own land to cultivate. Not in Sudan, not in Somalia. They say that these people are refugees; they should not have all the same rights as citizens.

Another TCRS employee added, "In fact, their standard of living is *higher* than in the Tanzanian villages!" While both clearly were referring to complex questions regarding the distribution of poverty, there was also an evident moral intent to say that a real or proper refugee should not be well off. Later in the same discussion, the TCRS director himself commented:

> I should show you a film the Norwegians made of the Burundi refugees when they first came. One was showing a bullet wound, someone else a cut, torn clothes, dirty. . . . They had *nothing*. . . . These people don't *look* like refugees anymore. If you go to Mishamo [refugee camp] as a visitor, you will think these are just ordinary villagers.

It was not uncommon to hear similar comments from other refugee administrators, whether of TCRS or UNHCR. There was a pronounced tendency to try to identify and fix the "real" refugee on extralegal grounds. And one key terrain where this took place was that of the *visual image* of the refugee, making it possible to claim that given people were not real refugees because they did not look (or conduct themselves) like real refugees. This suggests that refugee status was implicitly understood to involve a performative dimension. The symbolic, social significance of the Hutu refugees' early wounds and physical problems for their administrators emerged only gradually, in the course of numerous exchanges with TCRS and U.N. staff. It appeared that the staff—in an effort to do their jobs properly and to direct assistance where it might be needed most—were in some manner trying to identify *exemplary victims*.

Frantz Fanon has observed that for "the native," "objectivity is always against him" (cited in McClintock 1992:97). For the refugee, much the same might be said. In his or her case, wounds speak louder than words. Wounds are accepted as objective evidence, as more reliable sources of knowledge than the words of the people on whose bodies those wounds are found. So the ideal construct, the "real refugee," was imagined as a particular kind of person: a victim whose judgment and reason had been compromised by his or her experiences. This was a tragic, and sometimes repulsive, figure who could be deciphered and healed only by professionals, and who was opaque even (or perhaps especially) to himself or herself.

This set of expectations about the communicative efficacy (Tambiah 1985:123–166) of corporeal wounds—and of the presumed unreliability of the refugees' own narrative firsthand accounts of political violence—should be seen in relation to more general social expectations and interventions directed at refugees in Tanzania. What was conspicuously absent from all the documentary accumulation generated in the refugee camps was an official record of what the refugees themselves said about their own histories and their present predicament.

They were frequently regarded as simply unreliable informants. There was also a more general tendency among some (though by no means all) administrators to characterize the refugees as dishonest, prone to exaggeration, even crafty and untrustworthy. So, in a sense, they had to be cared for and understood obliquely, *despite themselves*. Their bodies were made to speak to doctors and other professionals, for the bodies could give a more reliable and relevant accounting than the refugees' "stories." I often heard the Hutu refugees characterized as persons who were always "telling stories."

Writing in the 1930s, Ernst Bloch defined "realism" as "the cult of the immediately ascertainable fact" (cited in Feldman 1994:406). This useful phrase

accurately describes how the figure of the refugee comes to be knowable: it is necessary to cut through "the stories" to get to "the bare facts." It is here that physical, non-narrative evidence assumes such astonishing power. It has all the authority of an "immediately ascertainable fact." In contrast, the political and moral history of displacement that most Hutu in Mishamo themselves insisted on constructing was generally rejected by their administrators as too messy, subjective, unmanageable, hysterical—as just "stories." Set against an ostensibly knowable, visible medical history of injuries or illness, a political history snaking its way from Burundi to Tanzania, from the past to the here and now, weaving people into complex loyalties and unseen relations, presented itself as unstable and unknowable—and as ultimately, or, properly, irrelevant to the practical efforts to administer and care for large refugee populations.

In this manner history tended to get leached out of the figure of the refugee, as imagined by their administrators. This active process of dehistoricization was inevitably also a project of depoliticization. For to speak about the past, about the historical trajectory that had led the Hutu as refugees into the western Tanzanian countryside, was to speak about politics. This could not be encouraged by the camp administrators (whether the Ministry of Home Affairs, TCRS, or UNHCR); political activism and refugee status were mutually exclusive here, as in international refugee law more generally.

The conversation at the TCRS director's home illustrates how the everyday language and practices of those very people who worked with the Hutu because of their refugee status continually acted to destabilize the solidity of the legal category, as documented in the refugees' identity papers. This destabilization occurred along several different axes. On the one hand, there was a continual, informal monitoring of signs of decreasing refugeeness. As the visible signs of one's social refugeeness faded, one's worthiness as a recipient of material assistance was likely to decrease. But there was more to it than that. What emerges from this and other accounts is that the refugees were thought to be at their purest when they first arrived, and when their condition was visibly at its worst. So, instead of refugee status imagined as a state of being attained gradually (as the Hutu camp refugees themselves saw it) or as a legal status that one has or has not, the administrators tended to imagine refugee status as a processual condition that was at its purest and most recognizable early in exile, and was thereafter subject to gradual adulteration over time. All this added up, in a subtle way, to the barely noticeable but nevertheless powerful constitution of the real or true refugee—an ideal figure of which any actual refugees were always imperfect instantiations.

Refugees as Objects of Humanitarian Intervention

The case of Tanzania in the mid-1980s facilitates the effort of identifying (even if tentatively) certain key features in the constitution of the archetypal refugee at the more general level of humanitarian policy discourse. I take as a starting point the observation that there has emerged, in the post–World War II era, a substantially standardized way of talking about and handling "refugee

problems" among national governments, relief and refugee agencies, and other nongovernmental organizations (Malkki 1995b). I would also suggest that these standardizing discursive and representational forms (or, perhaps more precisely, tendencies) have made their way into journalism and all of the media that report on refugees. As a result, it is possible to discern transnational commonalities in both the textual and the visual representation of refugees. Such transnationally mobile representations are often very easily translated and shared across nation-state borders. And because they are shared among the institutions that locate, fund, and administer refugee projects, these representations can reasonably be expected to carry significant consequences. One of the most far-reaching, important consequences of these established representational practices is the systematic, even if unintended, silencing of persons who find themselves in the classificatory space of "refugee." That is, refugees suffer from a peculiar kind of speechlessness in the face of the national and international organizations whose object of care and control they are. Their accounts are disqualified almost a priori, while the languages of refugee relief, policy science, and "development" claim the production of authoritative narratives about the refugees.[12] In what follows I attempt to look a little more closely at the systemic underpinnings of this form of silencing and speechlessness. I approach this phenomenon from several different directions, starting with a brief look at the complex effects of the visual representation of refugees, especially in the media of photography and documentary film.

The visual representation of refugees appears to have become a singularly translatable and mobile mode of knowledge about them. Indeed, it is not far-fetched to say that a vigorous, transnational, largely philanthropic traffic in images and visual signs of refugeeness has gradually emerged in the last half-century. Pictures of refugees are now a key vehicle in the elaboration of a transnational social imagination of refugeeness. The visual representation of displacement occurs in many arenas: among refugee administrators (as we have seen), in applied and other academic scholarship (Forbes Martin 1992), among journalists (Drakulić 1993; Kismaric 1989), in the publications of humanitarian and international organizations (UNHCR's *Refugees* magazine), in television fund-raising drives, and even in fashion advertising (I once saw a fashion spread in a Finnish women's weekly magazine, *Anna,* entitled "The Refugee Look"). This global visual field of often quite standardized representational practices is surprisingly important in its effects, for it is connected at many points to the de facto inability of particular refugees to represent themselves authoritatively in the inter- and transnational institutional domains where funds and resources circulate.

The first thing to be noted about the mutual relationship between image and narrative, spectacle and self-representation, is that photographs and other visual representations of refugees are far more common than is the reproduction in print of what particular refugees have said. There are more established institutional contexts, uses, and conventions for pictures of refugees than for displaced

persons' own narrative accounts of exile. Indeed, some of these visual conventions seem to speed up the evaporation of history and narrativity.[13]

Mass displacements are often captured as a "sea" or "blur of humanity" (e.g., Lamb 1994:H5)[14] or as a "vast and throbbing mass" (e.g., Warrick 1994:E1), especially in Africa, as Figure 1 illustrates.[15] Black bodies are pressed together impossibly close in a confusing, frantic mass. An utter human uniformity is hammered into the viewer's retina. This is a spectacle of "raw," "bare" humanity. It in no way helps one to realize that each of the persons in the photograph has a name, opinions, relatives, and histories, or that each has reasons for

Figure 1
Refugees in Zambia, 1977. The photograph is taken from the front cover of a card designed for correspondence. Photograph by Peter Marlow; © P. Marlowe and Magnum Photos.

being where he is now: inside the frame of this photograph. (And this is no ordinary news photograph; it has been made into an "art card" offset printed in Lombreuil, France.)

Feldman's recent essay on "cultural anesthesia" explores these kinds of mass images:

> Generalities of bodies—dead, wounded, starving, diseased, and homeless—are pressed against the television screen as mass articles. In their pervasive depersonalization, this *anonymous corporeality* functions as an allegory of the elephantine, "archaic," and violent histories of external and internal subalterns. [1994:407; emphasis added]

This "anonymous corporeality" is a precise characterization of what happens to refugees in the regimes of representation under discussion here. No names, no funny faces, no distinguishing marks, no esoteric details of personal style enter, as a rule, into the frame of pictures of refugees when they are being imagined as a sea of humanity.

Of course, this anonymous corporeality is not necessarily just a feature of mass scenes; it is equally visible in another conventionalized image of refugees: women and children. This sentimentalized, composite figure—at once feminine and maternal, childlike and innocent—is an image that we use to cut across cultural and political difference, when our intent is to address the very heart of our humanity.

Elsewhere I have also suggested that the visual prominence of women and children as embodiments of refugeeness has to do not just with the fact that most refugees are women and children, but with the institutional, international expectation of a certain kind of *helplessness* as a refugee characteristic (Malkki 1995a:11). In an article entitled "The Refugee Experience: Defining the Parameters of a Field of Study," Barry Stein notes that "refugees are helped because they are helpless; they must display their need and helplessness" (1981:327). This vision of helplessness is vitally linked to the constitution of speechlessness among refugees: helpless victims need protection, need someone to speak for them. In a sense, the imagined sea of humanity assumes a similar helplessness and speechlessness.

The bodies and faces of refugees that flicker onto our television screens and the glossy refugee portraiture in news magazines and wall calendars constitute spectacles that preclude the "involved" narratives and historical or political details that originate among refugees. It becomes difficult to trace a connection between me/us—the consumers of images—and them—the sea of humanity (compare Calhoun 1995:xiii).[16] Or, more precisely, it becomes difficult to trace a connection, a relationship, other than that of a bare, "mere," common underlying humanity: "We are all human, after all." "As a parent, my heart breaks when I see those dazed Rwandan orphans." These are very human and very decent reactions. One cannot help but feel horror and profound sadness, I think, in the face of such images or in the knowledge that such social circumstances do exist. But it is also possible and, indeed, useful to notice that in their overpowering

philanthropic universalism, in their insistence on the secondariness and unknowability of *details* of specific histories and specific cultural or political contexts, such forms of representation deny the very particulars that make of people something other than anonymous bodies, merely human beings.

At first it is difficult to see what might be so problematic in seeing the suffering of people with the eyes of "humanitarian concern" and "human compassion." It is surely better than having no compassion or simply looking the other way. But this is not the issue. The issue is that the established practices of humanitarian representation and intervention are not timeless, unchangeable, or in any way absolute. On the contrary, these practices are embedded in long and complicated histories of their own—histories of charity and philanthropy, histories of international law, peacekeeping, and diplomacy, histories of banishment and legal protection, histories of empires and colonial rule, histories of civilizational and emancipatory discourses and missionary work, histories of World Bank and other development initiatives in Africa, and much more. These humanitarian representational practices and the standardized interventions that go with them have the effect, as they currently stand, of producing anonymous corporeality and speechlessness. That is, these practices tend actively to displace, muffle, and pulverize history in the sense that the Hutu refugees in Mishamo understood history. And they tend to hide the political, or political-economic, connections that link television viewers' own history with that of "those poor people over there" (compare Calhoun 1995; Ferguson 1995, in press).

These processes were in grotesque evidence when the most recent large refugee movements from Burundi began to be photographed in the world's newspapers. In the October 25, 1993, issue of the *Los Angeles Times,* on what the paper calls its "Second Front Page," there was a large photograph of women and children laden with bundles. Underneath was a slim caption:

> Hutu tribe refugees cross the border near Rwanda after walking more than 37 miles from Burundi. Tribal violence is believed to have flared up between the Tutsi and Hutu after a Burundi military coup overthrew and killed President Melchior Ndadaye on Thursday. On Sunday, 4,000 people marched through the streets of Bujumbura, the capital, calling for the release of the bodies of the president and of others killed in the coup. [*Los Angeles Times* 1993:A3]

The photo was a very large one, but there was no story to go with it.[17] It was as if this grouping of people—women clothed in colorful cotton wraps, children in ragged T-shirts and shorts, walking barefoot out of Burundi—had just become generic refugees and generic Africans in whose societies tribal violence periodically flares up. It was as if this was all the context that might be required. Whoever got close enough to this cluster of people to take that photograph could have asked them to explain (if not in Kirundi, perhaps in French, or certainly through an interpreter) what had happened to them and what they had witnessed. Instead, there was almost no news from Burundi at all—only this large Asso-

ciated Press photograph.[18] And this small group of speechless emissaries was allowed to go on its way.

This newspaper photograph helps us to see how "the refugee" is commonly constituted as a figure who is thought to "speak" to us in a particular way: wordlessly. Just the refugee's physical presence is "telling" of his or her immediate history of violence. So we tend to assume, at any rate.

But it is not just that photographs displace narrative testimony. When there is testimony about refugees, it mostly does what the photographs do: it silences the refugees. For it tends to be testimony by "refugee experts" and "relief officials" (or even by those ever ready "well-placed Western diplomatic sources"), not by refugees themselves. How often have we seen the media image of a (usually white) U.N. official standing in a dusty landscape, perhaps in Africa, surrounded by milling crowds of black people peering into the camera, and benevolently, efficiently, giving a rundown on their numbers, their diseases, their nutritional needs, their crops, and their birth and mortality rates? This mode of what may called a "clinical humanitarianism" looks for all the world like an exhaustive report on the displaced masses; and the official is surely trying to be informative, as well as to balance honesty and diplomacy. And yet the scene and the expert voice operate precisely to erase knowledge. In constructing a raw humanity and a pure helplessness, this spectacle all but blocks the possibility of persons stepping forward from the milling crowds, asking for the microphone, and addressing the glassy eye of the camera: "Now, if I may, Sir/Madam, there are numerous things that you have not considered, many details about our history and political circumstances that might assist you in helping us." Such details easily appear as mere quibbles, fine points, and posturing in the face of the other, very powerful narrative of emergency relief, humanitarian intervention, and "raw" human needs.

The visual conventions for representing refugees and the language of raw human needs both have the effect of constructing refugees as a bare humanity— even as a merely biological or demographic presence. This mode of humanitarianism acts to trivialize and silence history and politics—a silencing that can legitimately be described as dehumanizing in most contexts. And yet the mechanisms involved here are more complex than that. For one might argue that what these representational practices do is not strictly to dehumanize, but to humanize in a particular mode. A mere, bare, naked, or minimal humanity is set up. This is a vision of humanity that repels elements that fail to fit into the logic of its framework.

The Stakes in the Humanitarian Interventions in Rwanda, Burundi, and Beyond

The vast displacements of people that occurred in the wake of the fighting and the genocide of 1994 in Rwanda are a good example of what is at stake in the constitution of refugees as such passive objects of humanitarian intervention. This short section will specifically address the effects of the disqualifica-

tion of refugee knowledge in the matter of their repatriation to Rwanda from Zaire.

It would be impossible to give, especially in a single essay, a thorough account of the complicated history that has culminated in the genocidal massacres of over half a million Rwandan citizens, overwhelmingly Tutsi, and the displacement of several million other Rwandan citizens, mostly Hutu, since April 1994. Important work on the genocide and its aftermath in Rwanda, as well as the contemporary political situation in Burundi, has been done by Reyntjens (1994), Prunier (1995), Lemarchand (1994a, 1994b), Newbury and Newbury (1994, 1995), African Rights (1994), Mbonimpa (1993), Pottier (1994), Jefremovas (n.d.), Guichaoua (1995), Destexhe (1994), and others. The bare outlines, however, are as follows.

Whereas in Burundi the minority Tutsi category controls the military and, effectively, the government, in Rwanda it is the Hutu majority that had been in power for all of its postcolonial history until the Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) victory of 1994. The Hutu-led 1961 revolution that crumbled the monarchical system in Rwanda was violent; it resulted in the deaths of some 20,000 (mostly Tutsi) people and produced a sizable presence of exiled Tutsi in Uganda (and elsewhere). It is largely from the ranks of these refugees and their descendants in Uganda that the RPF grew. In October 1990 the RPF attacked Rwanda from Uganda. "Following the attack," Amnesty International reports, "some 7,000 people were arrested, most of them Tutsi; virtually all were subjected to severe beatings and some were killed" (1993:1). Fighting between the RPF and the Rwandan government forces continued intermittently from 1990 to 1993. On April 6, 1994, the presidents of both Burundi and Rwanda were killed in a plane crash for which responsibility is still being debated. This touched off a nightmarish campaign of mass killings in Rwanda, a campaign made the more appalling because it involved planning and premeditation (Lemarchand 1994a:1; Newbury and Newbury 1995:2; Prunier 1995). In the days following the crash there were "death squads" that systematically eliminated political opponents of the hard-line faction of the Rwandan government (including both Tutsi and moderate Hutu). Then civilian militias were apparently given "a free hand to just kill every Tutsi in sight" (Lemarchand 1994a:10). From Kigali, the killing spread to other regions of Rwanda. Eventually, many Hutu civilians began to kill their Tutsi neighbors (Smith 1994, cited in Lemarchand 1994a:11). In just a few months, hundreds of thousands of people, mostly Tutsi, were massacred. Most estimates of the death toll fall between 500,000 and 800,000. As RPF forces made advances inside Rwanda, Hutu civilian communities took flight into neighboring countries for fear of retaliation. When the Rwandan army finally collapsed, over a million people moved in the space of a few days into Zaire (and also into Tanzania and elsewhere). The highest number reported for the Rwandan refugee population in the region was 2.2 million. These people have since become objects of world attention as the most awe-inspiring refugee population in the memory of the aid organizations and media working there.

The hundreds of thousands of people living and dying in awful conditions in the Rwanda-Zaire borderlands know better than anyone else on the scene what they have done, what has happened to them, why, and what they can hope for if they return to Rwanda. If anyone is an expert on the apocalyptic Rwandan political situation now, it is they. And yet curious things are happening to their voices. Either they are not heard at all and not quoted in earnest as real, reliable sources by the journalists visiting the Zairean camps, or their words are quoted in ways they never intended (as symptoms of hysteria, evidence of brainwashing, and echoes of superstitious, gullible Africa). They are being rendered speechless in much the same way that the October 1993 refugees from Burundi's killings were.

This silence is the phenomenon to be understood. It is actually quite a riddle when we consider how much time, effort, and resources refugee agencies and other aid organizations, journalists, politicians, U.N. peacekeepers, the French and U.S. forces, and countless other expert agencies have had to expend in order to learn anything at all about the setting in which many of them have been deliberating over consequential interventions. One of the most consequential of these interventions still centers on the issue of the repatriation of the refugees from Zaire to Rwanda, a question that has been heatedly discussed ever since 1994.

But before considering the specific question of repatriation, it is worthwhile to try to identify the discursive forms and modes of knowledge that displaced local knowledge and understandings during the genocide and in the months after. At least three discursive registers were readily evident from that early media coverage.

The first register of coverage (dating from the period when massive population displacements had already occurred) emphasized the bodily, physical evidence of violence and atrocity in Rwanda. A colleague has commented, cynically but accurately, that this was the period of "blood and gore." Photographic evidence of almost unimaginable violence flooded print media and television. Rivers swelling with bodies distended and bleached by death; crying, disoriented toddlers clinging to the bodies of their dying parents; people with limbs cut off or infected panga slashes over their noses: this flood of terrifying images will not be soon forgotten.[19]

One particularly clear illustration of the place of photographic images in this crisis is to be found in a *Life* magazine special feature called "Eyewitness Rwanda" (1994:74–80). A short opening paragraph introduces six pages of full-color photographs, six pages that seem almost like a religious gesture of mourning. The paragraph ends: "What persists are images—a handful of pictures from among the thousands that have raced before our eyes on videotape or stared out from our daily newspapers. They require no elaboration. In their silence, they tell the story of Rwanda, 1994" (1994:74).

The heavily visual documentation of violence was subsequently joined by the second register: accounts of human tragedy, or what are perhaps most accurately called human interest stories. There were especially many accounts of

children in terrible circumstances. Again, the relevant historical and political contexts were missing.

The third register consisted of technical and heroic narratives. Here, the international aid effort had got underway among the Hutu refugees, and the papers were suddenly filled with detailed technical profiles of cholera, of the working principles of the water purification plants being flown in, of oral rehydration techniques, of the construction of airfields, and of the makes and capacities of the military transport planes and other heavy equipment involved in the relief operation centered in Goma. All three of these discursive registers share the feature that they do not require any sustained narrative inputs, any testimonial evidence, from the refugees on whose behalf all the activity was, and still is, being carried out. The refugees were relevant principally as the tragic mass of humanity that needed to be helped first and foremost not to die of cholera, dysentery, or other diseases, to be treated and fed. Epidemics had to be contained, clean drinking water had to be provided, orphans needed to be taken care of, the dead had to be buried (McGreal 1994). The relief workers, medical and other, have understandably been overwhelmed by the enormity of the tragedy in Rwanda and of their mandate in the refugee camps. The genocide left over half a million people dead and untold others wounded, orphaned, widowed, or alone; and the cholera epidemic in the camps in Zaire killed 40,000–50,000 people in little more than a month.[20]

In the face of these terrible epidemics and the sheer mass of the refugee presence, most of the international organizations assisting them, the national governments sending in relief supplies, and even the journalists on site who were mostly echoing all of their policy statements concluded early on that the only solution was to get people to go back into Rwanda. (It is difficult to determine how much agreement there really was among the relief workers, but the dominant stance being reported was—and is—one favoring quick repatriation).[21] The refugees have in many cases been told they would be safer there than in Zaire. Yet they have consistently expressed grave misgivings about returning. "Expert knowledge" has been terribly at odds with the principals'—the refugees'—knowledge of the situation, and it is clear that the latter has been almost automatically disqualified. For what reasons has this disqualification been considered rational or practically necessary? A vital part of the answer to this riddle is bound up with contemporary forms of humanitarianism. The speechlessness of the newest emissaries of suffering—the refugees from Rwanda—becomes intelligible in this light.

This is where the question of voice—the ability to establish narrative authority over one's own circumstances and future, and, also, the ability to claim an audience[22]—begins to show its teeth, then. Evidence suggests that the overwhelming majority of the Hutu refugees have never considered repatriation wise. They continue to fear retaliation from the new RPF-led government and from ordinary people for crimes for which, they know, the Hutu as a categorical collectivity are thought by many to bear responsibility. And they probably fear the specter of returning to the devastation that their surviving Tutsi neighbors

have witnessed. The Rwandan Hutu in Zaire are being urged to go "home," but a question of great practical importance has not been seriously addressed: can the places from which these people fled still serve as their homes (Warner 1994)? The physical sites might be there, even intact, but as social environments they are likely to be alien and terrifying to many. In addition to other considerations, people know that many of their houses and fields are likely to have been occupied by Tutsi repatriating from Uganda after decades in exile there. As Raymond Bonner, one of the few well-informed, seriously engaged journalists covering the Great Lakes region now, reported in November 1994:

> Since the war ended in July [1994], a dual repatriation problem has engulfed the tiny war-torn country. Tens of thousands of Tutsi have returned to Rwanda, as many as 300,000 by unofficial counts. They are not among the refugees who fled after the massacres erupted in April, but refugees from ethnic violence of 20 and 30 years ago. Their return is creating demographic and political changes that are potentially explosive. [1994:A3]

While officials of the new RPF government have stated publicly that "squatters must get out of houses when former owners return" from Zaire, the government lacks the means to enforce this; and "sometimes the new occupants have the real owner killed or picked up and taken away, often paying a soldier to do the dirty work" (Bonner 1994:A3). One need only accuse the returnee of complicity in the genocide.

Journalists have mostly echoed the position of the United Nations and several other relief agencies: it is necessary and desirable that the refugees should be repatriated. That the refugees have in general refused to return to Rwanda has been widely attributed, by the United Nations and several other humanitarian agencies and by the international press, to their vulnerability to rumormongering and manipulations by the exiled and defeated remnants of the Rwandan armed forces. There is good evidence that the refugee populations in Zaire are being intimidated by political leaders who wish to keep them in exile (compare Newbury and Newbury 1995; Prunier 1995). But to assume that they are all passive puppets moving mindlessly to the manipulations of a handful of callous politicians of the exiled Rwandan government may be unwise. In the early 1994 coverage of the crisis, the refugees were rendered as superstitious and hysterical, while Rwanda was painted for them as a safe and secure horn of plenty. Of the many news reports along these lines, it is sufficient to quote one:

> Aid officials say the estimated 1.2 million Rwandan refugees now facing the agony of Zaire's border camps have about two weeks to go home and harvest the bursting fields of corn, beans and other crops that carpet the lush country. . . . Yet the hungry refugees are fed a steady diet of fear and propaganda by former Hutu government officials and their minions, who insist they will be tortured and killed if they return to Rwanda. They claim that the estimated 30,000 refugees who have crossed the border since Sunday are dead, although journalists and other witnesses have seen them walking home safely. . . . So rumors and threats circulate daily from members of the former regime's murderous militias and the Interahamwe, the armed youth wing of the government party. . . . Their *propaganda machine* is

in full swing again. Many refugees insist, for example, that the Tutsi caused the cholera epidemic by poisoning the water. And nearly all are convinced they will be mutilated or killed by the new regime if they go home. "We've heard all the refugees [who went back] have no eyes anymore," 28-year-old Primitiv Mukandemzo warned. . . . Frediana Mukamunana, 54, using her finger to slash in the air as she spoke, shouted: "They cut out the heart, the eyes, the intestines! And they put people in cars and burn them!" "They will put us in houses and burn us," whispered 18-year-old Faustin Ntanshuti. . . . Educated Rwandans are just as terrified. "They will kill all the intellectuals," said Alphonse Harerimana, a physician working at the Doctors Without Borders tent hospital for cholera cases. [Drogin 1994:A3, A11, emphasis added]

Such reports paint the refugees' refusal to comply with the repatriation policy as a symptom of their hysterical, superstitious, overdramatic frame of mind. What fails to be mentioned is that violence such as that described above has repeatedly occurred in the region; there are numerous historical precedents for all these forms of atrocity, as any student of the area knows (African Rights 1994; Malkki 1995a; Prunier 1995). That the refugees talk about such terrifying violence is not a psychological fact but a historical one.

In the face of the refugees' resistance, many tactics and arguments have been used to persuade and cajole the refugees since 1994. U.N. officials on the scene have on several occasions issued statements emphasizing the safety of returnees in spite of the fact that the United Nations has had no adequate staff of mobile observers on site within Rwanda, and no good way of knowing what has become of those who actually returned. The following was reported on July 27, 1994:

> Wilkinson of the U.N. refugee agency said not a single returnee is known to have been injured or killed by soldiers of the new regime. "All the indications we've got is things are very stable there and the people who have gone back have had absolutely no problems," he said. [Drogin 1994:A11]

The same news report stated that "a reporter who explained to several old women that it was safe to return" was shouted down by angry young refugee men. "'You're telling lies!' they shouted angrily. 'It is not possible. Those who went back yesterday were all killed yesterday!'" (Drogin 1994:A11). On July 31, 1994, it was further reported that "U.S. Special Forces psychological warfare teams would bring in radio equipment to help the new government encourage more than a million refugees in neighboring Zaire to return home. The Tutsi-led government has assured Hutu refugees that there will be no reprisals for the massacres of Tutsis" (Los Angeles Times 1994:A7). Along the same lines, a August 6, 1994, report in the Economist states:

> The U.N. hopes to persuade more to return by setting up counter-propaganda. It is establishing a "Blue Beret" radio station and is giving technical help to Radio Rwanda, now under RPF control, so that it can broadcast to the refugee camps. It also hopes to coax refugees back by deploying more peacekeepers in Rwanda and offering refugees food, water, and medical care at way-stations along the route home. [1994:35]

But how were these early assurances of safety to be reconciled with other, contradictory reports documenting the growing incidence of reprisals against returnees, seizures of land, disappearances, and other disturbing practices? *Le Monde*'s Langellier already reported on August 7, 1994, that "more and more people have been 'disappearing'" in Kigali, that homes and lands abandoned by the people fleeing into Zaire have been reallocated by the RPF, and that "arbitrary seizures, accompanied in rural areas by the large-scale displacement of communities, amounts to a de facto ban on their rightful occupants' return" (Langellier 1994:16). Some days later, on August 16, 1994, the *Los Angeles Times* quoted a "veteran relief agency leader," who declined to be identified, as saying that the RPF army in Rwanda "has never shown any interest in keeping this [Hutu] population. Rwanda was overpopulated. Now they have an abundance of fields" (Balzar 1994c:A4; compare Bonner 1994).

If reports of reprisals against the few Hutu returnees have convinced the refugees of the danger of repatriation, so, too, has the incarceration of some 58,000–60,000 people accused of participation in the genocide in Rwandan prisons. The criminal lawyer Adam Stapleton reports for the *Human Rights Tribune:*

> The single most pressing concern was the arbitrary arrest and detention of hundreds of people each week. Suspects were detained on the say-so of anyone, particularly if the suspect was Hutu and the accuser Tutsi, and charged with genocide. . . . The army arrested and detained people unchecked (by March [1994] the average weekly rate was estimated to be 1,300) and the displaced persons and refugees refused to move out of their camps arguing . . . that it was not safe to return home. The appalling conditions and increasing daily death toll from dysentery and diseases associated with chronic overcrowding make the prisons a time-bomb. [1995:15]

The refugees' fears were further exacerbated in April 1995, when hundreds (by some accounts thousands)[23] of Hutu were killed by the RPF-led Rwandan forces in the displaced persons camp of Kibeho in southwestern Rwanda. Before people fled the camp in panic, 70,000–100,000 were living there. The government forces stated that the camp and others like it were "filled with armed militias" and had to be disbanded (Lorch 1995a:A1, A4).

It is plain to see that the repatriation question is very complex. It is problematic for many reasons to have hundreds of thousands of people living in exile outside of Rwanda; it is no less problematic to push them back into Rwanda. This essay does not presume to propose a solution to the crisis. So much said, it was a terrible responsibility that the international organizations assumed in urging the refugees to go back "home," for this has been the predominant argument throughout, despite the fact that the United Nations has more recently expressed concern over the dangers of repatriation, and has publicly objected to Zaire's recent announcements about closing the camps one by one.

How could anyone guarantee that no retaliatory violence would erupt, when anyone familiar with the region's history (and with the social struggles over history there) would be forced to recognize that such violence would be, at

best, unsurprising? How could anyone think that in the wake of a genocide the political situation in Rwanda is "stable"? What questions, what considerations, override these in importance?

There is every reason to suppose that the violence that has so shocked the world has similarly shocked those who were its Rwandan victims and witnesses. This is a scale and kind of violence that is not often seen in the world. It is, literally, extraordinary. And because of this, it must have forced people in the region to rethink the universe of what is possible and thinkable—just as genocidal violence in recent European history has reconfigured social universes there. In the wake of the past two years, anything would seem to be possible. Politically, intellectually, conceptually, affectively—in all these ways it would seem wise and realistic to acknowledge the horror of what has happened by not forcing, cajoling, or tricking people to return to the still very dangerous sites of their shame and tragedy.

Time must be allowed to pass so that the refugees waiting and watching in Zaire can make a reasonable, well-founded assessment of their alternatives. Time is also required from the humanitarian agencies involved. Surely they would not wish to have to acknowledge that they have marched people to their deaths in their desire to do away with a refugee crisis.

Time must be given to the tasks of witnessing and testimony, on both sides of the Rwanda-Zaire border, among Tutsi and Hutu. Beresford has rightly observed that

> there is . . . a forgetfulness in the world's fixation with the relief disaster that is Goma. The story of Rwanda is not that of a cholera epidemic, terrible though it may be; cholera is the consequence of the central horror of the last few months—genocide. . . . Genocide invites a Nuremberg. [1994:6]

For any kind of accounting or public justice to become a real possibility, all the parties concerned (national, regional, and international) would have to consent to become an audience to the "involved" stories that the inhabitants of this terrorized region have to tell. The obstacles to such accounting at all levels have become very clear in the funding and other difficulties that the U.N.-organized war crimes tribunal has faced.

The genocide in Rwanda has already happened; it is not possible to go back and change interventions or omissions of the past. But the dangerous effects of silencing are still all too salient in currently unfolding events in the region. The Hutu refugees from Rwanda are still in Zaire, Tanzania, and elsewhere, and, as of this writing (February 1996), refusing repatriation, still the objects of concerted efforts from the Zairean government, the United Nations, and various other agencies to push them back where they "belong." The effects of such silencing are detectable in neighboring Burundi, also. By ignoring the continual political persecution, intimidation, and killings occurring in that country, the "international community" risks coming face to face with another Rwanda-like period of terror there and finding that nothing that could have been done has been done (Balzar 1994b).

But preventive measures do not come easily in the conventional logic of the "humanitarian operation." For humanitarian help to be mobilized, the disaster usually must have happened already. When refugees and orphans have been produced, then the site for intervention is visible. Otherwise, the matter is "political" (or a "domestic" issue in a sovereign state) and thus beyond the realm of humanitarian intervention (Waal 1994:10).

Conclusion

It is obviously neither logically nor practically necessary that humanitarian intervention in and of itself dehistoricize or depoliticize. And I would like to make perfectly clear that by studying certain of the transnationally shared aspects of humanitarian intervention in refugee issues, I am not thereby seeking to belittle the importance of the moral, ethical, and political motivations that are clearly at the core of humanitarian interventions.[24] It *is* necessary to state that these forms and practices of humanitarianism do not represent the best of all possible worlds, and that it is politically and intellectually possible to try to come up with something better. Especially in the face of the political crisis in Rwanda, and the very real possibility that the political situation in Burundi will soon become much worse than it already is, it is necessary to do better. Perhaps a part (a crucial part) of the improvement is to be found in a radically "historicizing humanism" that insists on acknowledging not only human suffering but also narrative authority, historical agency, and political memory. Barthes's call for a progressive humanism (1980:101) addressed this very issue, as do Foucault's later writings; he suggested why it is more useful to seek to connect people through history and historicity than through a human essence (or "human nature"). This is not to make a simple, romantic argument about "giving the people a voice"; for one would find underneath the silence not a voice waiting to be liberated but ever deeper historical layers of silencing and bitter, complicated regional struggles over history and truth.

It is a historicizing (and politicizing) humanism that would require us, politically and analytically, to examine our cherished notions of mankind and the human community, humanitarianism and humanitarian "crises," human rights and international justice. For if humanism can only constitute itself on the bodies of dehistoricized, archetypal refugees and other similarly styled victims—if clinical and philanthropic modes of humanitarianism are the only options—then citizenship in this human community itself remains curiously, indecently, outside of history.

Notes

the international workshop "Finding a Place and Space for Culture," Institute of Anthropology, University of Copenhagen, December 1–3, 1993; the Department of Anthropology colloquium at McGill University in 1995; the University of California conference "Censorship and Silencing" in 1995; the Center for African Studies and the Townsend Center for the Humanities at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1996; and the Department of Anthropology colloquium at Princeton University in 1996.

1. The term "selective genocide" is from Lemarchand and Martin 1974 and was widely used.

2. Compare Rée 1992 and Malkki 1994, 1995b.

3. I would like to thank Daniel Segal for pointing out the presence of the universal family in this imagery. The universal figures of man, woman, and child are, of course, often (but not always) constitutive of that other abstraction, "the family," as Barthes's classic essay "The Great Family of Man" showed (1980:100–102; Segal, personal communication, March 8, 1996).

4. Humanitarian interventions take place largely within an internationalist institutional and conceptual framework; that is, they depend on the concept of an "international community" (compare Malkki 1994). Thus, the concept of internationalism is an integral part of any discussion of international community and international responsibility. In a longer essay it would be productive to combine the critical study of humanitarianism with long-standing debates about internationalism. For the present, this larger set of questions may be indicated by Craig Calhoun's particularly clearsighted discussion of internationalism in the context of Rwanda and Bosnia in his foreword to Micheline Ishay's *Internationalism and Its Betrayal:*

> In both cases [Bosnia and Rwanda], the problem of internationalism does not just arise with questions about universal human rights and possible humanitarian interventions, but is constitutive of the very crises themselves in ways not unrelated to the blind spots of liberal individualism.
>
> The problem is not just that international diplomats and multilateral agencies mishandled the two specific situations [Bosnia and Rwanda]: the entire international framework for understanding nationalism and related conflicts is deeply flawed. Among other things, it systematically obscures such international influences on the production of domestic, putatively entirely ethnic, struggles. It also leaves well-intentioned international actors with no good way of grasping their connection to the genocides and nationalist wars that have marred—but systematically marked—the twentieth century. Not only do these appear often as premodern inheritances, and therefore disconnected from genuinely modern and even contemporary sources, but they appear as fundamentally separate from the institutions and discourse of the respectable international community. Diplomats and analysts fail to see the connection between the structuring of the international community as a world system of putative nation-states, of making adaptation to the rhetoric of nationalism a condition for entrance into the United Nations, and the pernicious forms of nationalism they decry. Not only they but many of the rest of us fail to reflect on the ironic nationalism reproduced in asking whether intervention in genocidal wars is or is not a part of the compelling national interest of the United States or any other country. [Calhoun 1995:xiii]

5. The official designation of these camps by the Tanzanian Ministry for Home Affairs as well as TCRS and UNHCR was "refugee settlement"; however, the refugee residents of Mishamo always referred to it as a camp. Their reasons are discussed in Malkki 1995a.

6. It is not known how many people returned from the Hutu refugee camps in Tanzania to Burundi when the first democratic elections in that country brought a Hutu president, Melchior Ndadaye, to power in 1993 (compare Lemarchand 1994b).

7. This discussion also appears in Malkki 1995a.

8. I would like to thank Referee 1 for helping me to think further about this issue. Referee 1 remarks: "Antagonism against commercial classes is especially strong during periods of significant inflation as occurred with the economic policies of 'liberalization' followed by the Tanzanian [government] over these years. The idea that a 'fellow refugee' could raise prices and create hardship for those of his or her own group was a contradiction to the norm of refugee culture."

9. The officials of the Ministry of Home Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania were also very generous in their assistance, but their relationship to the refugees was quite different from that of the nongovernmental organizations, as I have shown elsewhere (Malkki 1995a).

10. I would like to thank Referee 1 for suggestions on this section.

11. Individual persons in UNHCR and TCRS have also engaged very seriously with my research in the Hutu refugee communities in Tanzania and have given me valuable critical feedback.

12. Referee 1 comments here: "From my experience, for example, in the Rwandan camps, it was astounding how the aid communities have selected texts that correspond with their image; having no other access to a wider range of discourse, and often dependent on their own interpreters for their impressions, they simply end up magnifying the very oppositions they claim to oppose—in a process that amount[s] to an excellent example of creating alterity."

13. Ortner's 1991 essay has helped me to think through issues of narrativity and historical agency.

14. Another news photograph of a tightly packed group of children with cups in their hands has the caption "A drop in the ocean of misery. . . . Rwandan children wait for water at Kibumba camp near Goma, Zaire" (Trequesser 1994:4).

15. I would like to thank my student Ghada Masri for giving me this photograph.

16. Compare Debord: "The spectacle is not a collection of images, but a social relation among people, mediated by images" (1983:2).

17. Other pictures with short captions but without stories appeared in the *New York Times* (1995a:A5, 1995b:E2); compare *Life* (1994:74–80).

18. This should be seen in the more general context of the gross underreporting of the violence that started in Burundi in October 1993.

19. In a theme issue on Africa, *Granta,* a literary magazine, published 22 pages of black-and-white photographs of the dead and wounded in the Rwanda genocide. The photographs were taken by Gilles Peress.

20. Estimates vary. The figure of 50,000 cholera victims is cited in Lorch 1995b:A1; compare Balzar 1994d:A23.

21. And, of course, "voluntary repatriation" is inscribed in the operating code of the UNHCR as the primary, and ideal, "durable solution" to displacement. See Warner's reflections on the implications of this ideal and its relation to the social imagination of "home" by refugee organizations (1994:1 ff.).

22. Compare Balibar on citizenship: he contrasts "citizenship understood in its strict sense as the full exercise of political rights and in its broad sense as cultural initiative or effective presence in the public space (the capacity to be 'listened to' there)" (1988:724). It is in this broad sense that the international citizenship of the refugees from Burundi and Rwanda has been denied in the arena commonly named "the international community" (compare Foucault, as cited in Macey 1993:437–438).

23. Estimates vary. See, for example, Lorch 1995a:A1, A4.

24. I also do not wish to imply that all relief, aid, refugee, and humanitarian agencies espouse the same philosophy; I am only attempting to identify a dominant tendency. There are, happily, dissonant voices in the ranks of these agencies, as in the following case:

> "If the U.N. doesn't learn from this, God help the next poor souls of the world who need help," said John O'Shea of the Irish relief agency GOAL, which has been active here [in Rwanda] since the beginning of the crisis. Using bitter profanities, O'Shea said the United Nations has failed to meet the refugees' needs and has made no serious effort to make them feel safe going home. [cited in Balzar 1994a:A6]

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Vanessa Pupavac

Refugee Advocacy, Traumatic Representations and Political Disenchantment

'THE YOUNG, UNREADY FACES OF THE POWERLESS, THE disenfranchised, the traumatised, the hopeful and the needy' are the words sympathetically describing refugees in a 2005 photographic exhibition at Margate.[1] From Margate to London to Edinburgh and Glasgow, the experience of being a refugee has captured the British cultural imagination over the last decade. Cultural representations in art galleries, museums or plays across the country have complimented haunting news images of traumatized people in wars or disasters. These sympathetic representations of refugees compete with hostile media scares over bogus asylum seekers scrounging welfare benefits.

The refugee problem rose in political significance at the end of the Cold War both domestically in Britain, regionally in Europe and internationally. Professional interest in refugee welfare has grown amid a more restrictive political climate against refugee rights. Official and non-governmental agencies' involvement with refugees has mushroomed, including designated organizations like the Refugee Council and Refugee Action or organizations, which have expanded their remit to encompass refugee matters. Refugee welfare has become a distinct field in the UK with more interventions specifically targeted at refugees, from refugee housing associations to Sure Start refugee parent support groups to refugee health and employment programmes. Local events like school harvest festivals commonly dedicate their appeals to refugees. Meanwhile organizations with very different purposes like the Arts Council have taken up the refugee cause. Refugee awareness campaigns have proliferated, such as Student Action for Refugees (STAR) begun in 1994.[2] Their cause has

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[1] Nicci Gerrard, 'Faces of Exile', *Observer*, 3 July 2005.

[2] See the website, at http://www.star-network.org.uk/.

become embedded in the calendar through events such as Refugee Week, held annually in June since 1998, which seeks to counter negative stereotypes and encourage better relations by promoting awareness of refugees' experiences and positive images of refugees.[3] Equally, events not specifically about refugees also highlight their plight, like the Mental Health Awareness Week held annually in October.

Different sorts of organizations are competing to make people aware of what it is like to be a refugee. If the 1990s were dominated by refugee faces, the new millennium has wanted to empower refugee voices. In this vein, the Museum of London hosted an exhibition on 'Belonging: Voices of London's Refugees' in the winter of 2005.[4] Strikingly, many initiatives, including Refugee Week, are centred on the arts.[5] There are Actors for Refugees and numerous refugee-related art events such as Asylum Monologues. Refugee projects themselves are often arts related, showcasing refugee artists' work or teaching young refugees film or photography.[6]

Most UK analysis of how refugees are portrayed in the media understandably focuses on negative representations. Past studies have focused on stereotypes in the traditionally more right-wing tabloid press.[7] Relatively less attention has been paid to representations in the traditionally more liberal media or the liberal professions, although recent studies are broadening their focus.[8] Even

[3] See the website, at http://www.refugeeweek.org.uk/.

[4] For more details, see http://www.museumoflondon.org.uk/English/Events Exhibitions/Community/Belonging/.

[5] E.g. 'Into the Asylum Exhibition', Howard Davies Refugee Arrivals Project Summer 2003, formerly available at http://www.refugee-arrivals.org.uk/. See also http://www.guardian.co.uk/.

[6] ICAR, *Media Image, Community Impact: Assessing the Impact of Media and Political Images of Refugees and Asylum Seekers on Community Relations in London*, London, ICAR, 2004.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Article 19, *What's the Story?*, London, Article 19, 2003, available at http://www.article19.org/pdfs/publications/refugees-what-s-the-story-.pdf. ICAR, *Reporting Asylum: The UK Press and the Effectiveness of PCC Guidelines*, London, City University, 2007; Ronald Kaye, 'Blaming the Victim: An Analysis of Press Representation of Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the United Kingdom in the 1990s', in Russell King (ed.), *Media and Migration*, London, Routledge, 2001, pp. 53–70; Paul Statham, 'Understanding Anti-Asylum Rhetoric: Restrictive Politics or Racist Publics?' *Political Quarterly*, 74: 1 (2003), pp. 163–77.

where their representations are discussed, focus is again on negative stereotypes. There is little analysis of counter-representations and their significance, although some is emerging.[9]

Sympathetic representations typically oscillate between portraying refugees as gifted or traumatized. Cultural initiatives or awareness campaigns self-consciously display refugees as talented and skilled individuals, comparable to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees' (UNHCR) Gallery of Prominent Refugees.[10] Professional models and sympathetic media coverage represent refugees as vulnerable survivors. Images of helpless distressed women and their children are preferred; masculine images recede here, reserved for those negative stories of bogus asylum claimants.

In this article I explore how refugee advocacy in Britain, if not depicting refugees as exceptionally talented, represents refugees as traumatized, depoliticized, feminized subjects. My thinking is informed by the compelling analyses of the philosopher Hannah Arendt on refugees and the sociologist Talcott Parsons on the sick role. Arendt observes that where refugees are regarded as belonging to a political community then their rights are more likely to be respected than if they do not.[11] The contemporary representation of refugees as troubled victims is inspired by compassion, but the medical framework has its hazards. Culturally the trauma tag affirms suffering, but it also suggests impaired reason. The sick role is ambivalent for the individual, as Parsons analyses, because the patient admits impaired capacity and surrenders his or her welfare to others.[12] Their interests risk becoming determined for them – and to their detriment. Crucially, I will suggest, belief in civil freedoms is becoming compromised even among refugee advocates, yet refugees' right to asylum is bound up with these freedoms.

I begin the article by recalling the Cold War political dissident, and suggest how cultural identification with the cause of the vulnerable refugee is linked to political alienation following the end of the Cold War. I then examine the rise of the health paradigm to understand refugees' condition and its implications. I then explore the representations preferred by advocacy organizations and how they tend to

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[9] ICAR, *Reporting Asylum.*

[10] Available at: http://www.unhcr.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/home.

[11] Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, San Diego, Harcourt, 1985.

[12] Talcott Parsons, *Social Structure and Personality*, New York, Free Press, 1965. Talcott Parsons, *Action Theory and the Human Condition*, New York, Free Press, 1978.

exclude the mass of ordinary refugees and the tough arguments required to defend refugee rights.

COLD WAR REFUGEE AS POLITICAL DISSIDENT

It is difficult now to remember that for most of the Cold War refugees to the West were commonly presented as political heroes and courageous defenders of freedom, not traumatized victims. The familiar image of the refugee was associated with the political dissident. Joshua Rubenstein's *Soviet Dissidents: Their Struggle for Human Rights* (1981) encapsulates how Cold War refugees from East Europe were presented as public intellectuals, moral thinkers, samizdat writers, artists standing up for freedom of artistic expression against political oppression.[13] Alexander Solzhenitsyn was perhaps the archetypal figure of the political exile. His novella *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich* tackled the suffering of prisoners in Soviet camps.[14] Yet the prisoners' lives were not viewed by Western audiences through a trauma paradigm, but through a political paradigm. Even when Solzhenitsyn's *Cancer Ward* used a medical metaphor to comment politically on the Soviet Union, the message was of heroic struggle not victimhood.[15] Political struggle for freedom rather than psychological trauma was the recurring interest. Solzhenitsyn, Mikhail Barushnikov, Milan Kundera, Irina Ratushinskaya, Rostropovich and others were embraced in Western official circles in their Cold War struggle as demonstrating the superiority of the free world against the Communist bloc. Left-wing circles championed their own political dissidents, anti-apartheid activists such as the prisoners' rights lawyer Joel Carlson, author of *No Neutral Ground*[16] or Latin American political opponents of military dictatorship. Cold War representations invited us to admire the courage, heroism and personal sacrifice of these political heroes who had sought refuge in our society. Concurrently we were encouraged to identify their struggles with a defence of our way of life.

[13] Joshua Rubenstein, *Soviet Dissidents: Their Struggle for Human Rights*, London, Wildwood House, 1981.

[14] Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *One Day in the Life of Ivan Denisovich*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1974.

[15] Alexander Solzhenitsyn, *Cancer Ward*, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1971.

[16] Joel Carlson, *No Neutral Ground*, New York, Thomas Y. Crowell, 1973.

The romantic representations of political dissidents and the flattering cooptation of their struggles to the Western bloc did not mean that most refugees were received with open arms, quite the reverse. Explicit or implicit racial discrimination operated and influenced which people were accepted as refugees. We can invoke the blatantly discriminatory treatment of Kenyan Asians in 1967 by the British Labour government, which hurried through legislation removing their right to enter Britain on their British passports, effectively making British citizens become stateless persons.[17] The Kenyan Asians were racially excluded from protection both as citizens and refugees. So, we should not idealize past treatment of refugees and ignore how racist assumptions undermined refugees' rights. The contrast I am highlighting here refers to the concept of the refugee itself, and how refugees could be identified as self-determining political subjects during the Cold War, but how this positive idea of refugees faded following the fall of the Berlin Wall.

POLITICAL DISENCHANTMENT AND THE REFUGEE CAUSE

Nightly television images of distraught refugees in the wake of the Cold War were not simply attributable to refugees fleeing a European conflict. Culturally those on the margins of society may come to personify society's highest ideals or worst demons. The refugee experience seemed to have a particular cultural resonance. Just as the archetypal refugee as political exile embodied the Western Cold War ideal of the courageous individual defying the totalitarian state, so the present archetypal refugee as traumatized victim and its negative, the scrounging bogus asylum seeker, also chime with contemporary society's fears and political disenchantment.[18]

There is now a large body of sociological research following Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone*, which analyses how communal life has weakened in the West as people have become disengaged from politics and civic involvement, whether political parties or trade unions, or voluntary work, and traditional organizations such as churches or even recreational clubs have witnessed declining

[17] Kenan Malik, *The Meaning of Race*, Basingstoke, Macmillan, 1996.

[18] Frank Furedi, *Politics of Fear*, London, Continuum, 2005; Philip Hammond, *Media, War, and Postmodernity*, London, Routledge, 2007.

membership.[19] People's employment patterns are also less stable, and people change jobs more often, and even if they remain with the same employer, it is common to experience large-scale reorganizations, whether in the private or public sector – British public institutions appear in constant flux.[20] Social disorientation has discouraged a sense of social solidarity and encouraged people to feel more wary of their fellow citizens. Under social fragmentation, the contemporary Anglo-American personality is becoming defined in terms of vulnerability and damage.[21] Diverse disciplines have proclaimed the death of character, the death of the subject, the death of the hero, and the death of public man along with the decline of community and social solidarity.[22] Idealization of the traumatized refugee fits with cultural attraction towards self-identities based on diagnosis or wounded attachments to a traumatic past.[23]

At the same time, the British elites feel more estranged from the rest of the population despite the unprecedentedly low levels of social unrest.[24] The ideal of the common man has deteriorated in politics and culture, paralleling the decline of beliefs in social progress and citizens' involvement in civic life.[25] Alienation from British society among the political and professional classes takes

[19] Robert Putnam, *Bowling Alone*, London, Simon & Schuster, 2001; Frank Furedi, *Culture of Fear*, London, Continuum, 2002; Theda Skocpol, *Diminishing Democracy – From Membership to Management in American Civic Life*, Norman, OK, University of Oklahoma Press.

[20] Michael Moran, *The British Regulatory State*, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007; Catherine Needham, *The Reform of Public Services under New Labour*, Basingstoke, Palgrave, 2007; Richard Sennett, *The Culture of the New Capitalism*, New Haven, CT, and London, Yale University Press, 2006.

[21] Frank Furedi, *Therapy Culture*, London, Routledge, 2004; James Nolan, *The Therapeutic State*, New York and London, New York University, 1998.

[22] James Heartfield, *Death of the Subject Explained*, Leicester, Perpetuity Press, 2002.

[23] Wendy Brown, *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1995; Ian Shaw and Louise Woodward, 'The Medicalisation of Unhappiness? The Management of Mental Distress in Primary Care', in Ian Shaw and K. Kaupinnen (ed.), *Constructions of Health and Illness: European Perspectives*, Aldershot, Ashgate, 2003, pp. 125–38.

[24] Alastair Campbell, *Extracts from the Alastair Campbell Diaries*, London, Hutchinson, 2007.

[25] Michael Collins, *The Likes of Us: A Biography of the White Working Class*, London, Granta, 2004.

various forms: middle-class flight from the local state school, disengagement from domestic voluntary work or relocation abroad to find authentic communities. Importantly, identification with refugees seems to embody an inner emigration among British professionals away from the mass of the population. Media representations of migrants and refugees should be analysed alongside the prevailing media or policy representations of ordinary people. Past celebratory representations in the vein of Aaron Copland's 1942 *Fanfare for the Common Man* no longer resonate with today's media or policy representations of the man or woman in the street. The representations of ordinary people have become degraded, along with the demoralized representation of Western culture itself.[26] Policies micro-managing peoples' lives (in an expanding list from eating, drinking, smoking and exercising, to parenting and so on), abandon liberal assumptions of citizens as responsible, rational, autonomous individuals and rather suggest that people are intolerant, irresponsible, incompetent and wasteful. Consider how the dominant lifestyle programmes or reality television shows consistently portray people as stupid, dirty, greedy, lazy, tasteless, abusive or inadequate, to be censured and reformed by expert management. Then compare how refugees' contribution to the arts is celebrated and their moral status is affirmed in cultural circles. The refugee and media research organization the Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees (ICAR) notes how art 'can serve as an educative experience in a morally uncertain world' and it is interesting how the refugee is prominent in the arts today. Cultural circles clearly identify with refugees, but it also speaks of their own cultural isolation from the rest of the population. ICAR notes that, 'arts events and coverage of them mainly reach "the converted"'[27] and they reach them through cultured figures who they readily identify as their counterparts.

Advocates' demands for more images of women and child refugees, highlighted below, complement cultural retreat from identification with the common man. The preferred feminized representations put forward an ethical ideal of a politically blameless self, untainted by compromising political allegiances or economic self-interest. Refugee advocacy may slip into representing the local population negatively. Refugee advocates were slow to acknowledge

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[26] Richard Koch and Chris Smith, *Suicide of the West*, London, Continuum, 2006.

[27] ICAR, *Reporting Asylum*, p. 41.

genuine strains in local services experienced by ordinary people under the dispersal system and tended to dismiss tensions between locals and asylum seekers as arising from intolerance.[28] The refugee cause today may therefore embody feelings of powerlessness or a shrinking of social sympathies and aspirations for the developing world, not necessarily their enlargement.[29] Tellingly, sympathetic identification with refugees over the last two decades has been against the backdrop of worsening refugee rights.

REFUGEES IN THE SICK ROLE

Trauma in Western culture has become a mark of suffering, analogous to the old religious stigmata. Media reports of disaster, war or crime commonly inform us how the survivors are receiving counselling to verify the depth of their anguish. Consider a recent regional crime report stating how an assault 'left her traumatised . . . She is now taking anti-depressants and receiving counselling after being diagnosed with post-traumatic distress disorder.'[30] The ordeal is affirmed culturally by the trauma and counselling, as that of other victims today.[31] Collective horror is expressed culturally by a whole community being deemed at risk of trauma, and counselling is not just offered to immediate family victims but has become a cultural rite for the wider community. Fellow pupils of a murdered child are all offered counselling.[32] Reference to trauma is spreading to all manner of causes from local residents concerned with the blight of 'studentification'[33] to football fans' frustration over a court

[28] Derek McGhee, *Intolerant Britain? Hate, Citizenship and Difference*, Milton Keynes, Open University Press, 2005.

[29] Hammond, *Media, War and Postmodernity*; Mark Duffield, *Development, Security and Unending War*, Cambridge, Polity, 2007.

[30] Kate Henry, 'Knife Scare Victim's Life Ruined', *Shields Gazette*, 29 August 2007.

[31] Clare Weir, 'Murder Victim's Widow Tells of her Terrible Loss', *Belfast Telegraph*, 25 August 2007; BBC, 'Freed Britons "Traumatised" ', 8 August 2003, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/england/manchester/3136249.stm.

[32] Caroline Innes, 'Tributes Flood in for Tragic Rhys', *Liverpool Daily Post*, 23 August 2007; Matthew Moore, 'Rhys Shot on Anniversary of Liverpool Killing', *Daily Telegraph*, 24 August 2007.

[33] Michael Wooldridge and Stefan Page, ' "Studentification" and the "Student Ghetto" ', *Leeds Student*, 3 September 2007.

case.[34] If banal causes may invoke trauma, it is unsurprising that trauma is pleaded in the refugee cause.

Trauma diagnosis and counselling treatment are cited by advocates to affirm refugees' suffering and authenticity. Mental ill-health is important to substantiate individual asylum claims, but also to criticize general refugee policies. Liz Fekete focuses on the traumatized in her passionate denunciation of European deportations policies:

Today, those caught up in the EU's deportation drive include torture victims, those severely traumatised by war, psychiatric patients and the terminally ill. Even vulnerable children, including those who have sought asylum in Europe unaccompanied by any adult, are caught up in it. Some have developed symptoms of complete depressive breakdown, including severe apathy. Unable to thrive emotionally and physically, due to traumatic experiences in their home countries compounded in Europe by their fear of deportation, they have had to be hospitalised and fed intravenously.[35]

Similarly, Article 19's condemnation of media coverage invokes the psychological impact of negative images on refugees.[36] It is now difficult to remember when trauma was not a concern among refugee advocates. Yet previously UK advocacy was dominated by lawyers around organizations like the Joint Council for the Welfare of Migrants using a political-legal lens to address immigration problems, while the UNHCR and other international aid organizations gave little attention to the subject until the beginning of the 1990s, when interest exploded.[37]

Professional interest in refugees' mental health expanded following the American Psychiatric Association's recognition of post-traumatic stress disorder in 1980. During the 1980s, US psychiatric journals began to report on the mental health of Cambodian and Vietnamese refugees, and then Latin American refugees, building on interest in the psychiatric problems of holocaust survivors and Vietnam veterans, and also Latin American psychiatric work with former political prisoners, but with important differences.

[34] Myles Palmer, 'Why Harry Kewell Will Blossom at Arsenal', *Arsenal News Review*, 25 June 2003, available at http://www.anr.uk.com/articles/m-2003-06-25-11-02-25.html.

[35] Liz Fekete, 'The Deportation Machine: Europe, Asylum and Human Rights', *Race and Class*, 47: 1 (2005), p. 66.

[36] Article 19, *What's the Story?*, p. 9.

[37] Vanessa Pupavac, 'Pathologizing Populations and Colonizing Minds: International Psychosocial Programs in Kosovo', *Alternatives*, 27 (2002), pp. 489–511.

Henrik Rønsbo of the Danish Rehabilitation and Research Centre for Torture Victims is researching the history of trauma work in Latin American psychiatry. When interest in trauma originally appeared in the late 1960s, therapeutic work was seen as complementing political resistance.[38] Interventions sought to reintegrate the person into a political community. The professional acted in solidarity with the tortured person's politics. Trauma was understood as a political injury inhibiting the political rights of the individual. Later, as the 1980s psychiatric literature merged the combat veteran, the torture victim and the refugee, the idea of rehabilitating a political actor shifted to managing a victim at risk. Trauma was no longer an attribute of a political subject, but became understood within a health paradigm as an attribute of dysfunction.[39]

In Britain specialist interest in refugees' mental health was manifest in the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture's establishment in 1985. The foundation in important respects spans the shift from political therapy for a political actor to psychosocial therapy for a depoliticized human rights victim, although great international interest in refugees' mental health interest waited until the end of the Cold War. Initially much interest focused on humanitarian interventions abroad. Attention to the subject among British health professionals did not really become manifest until the late 1990s, suggesting how the cultural model of the traumatized victim preceded the subject becoming an issue widely taken up by the British National Health Service.

Concern for refugee health fits with a growing sensitivity within the health services towards health inequalities and cultural awareness that has encouraged more interest in refugees.[40] Undoubtedly the new focus on refugee health may result in better-resourced services for refugees, although it has been argued that concern with refugees' mental health is distracting from their basic needs for housing and work.[41] But health-based claim-making does not simply promote refugee welfare services or support individual asylum claims.

[38] Henrik Rønsbo, unpublished paper, European Association of Development Research and Training Institutes (EADI) 11th General Conference, Bonn, 22 September 2005.

[39] Ibid.

[40] James Macinko and Barbara Starfield, 'Annotated Bibliography on Equity in Health, 1980–2001', *International Journal for Equity in Health*, 1 (2002), pp. 1–20.

[41] Stefanie Borkum, *A Humane Asylum Policy*, London, Manifesto Club, 2007.

Importantly, the health prism involves a changed perception of the refugee identity from the refugee as political exile to the refugee as patient.

Parsons's discussion of the sick role helps clarify the advantages and disadvantages of health-based claim-making.[42] Refugee advocacy based on a health paradigm may use the language of solidarity, but casting refugees in the sick role departs from earlier political solidarity and is better understood in Parsonian terms as 'permissive empathy'. Permissive empathy, unlike political solidarity, is not based on a relationship between equals, but one of dependency, in which those with impaired capacity are released from normal responsibilities.[43] Importantly, individuals in the sick role are not considered to be at fault. Professional diagnosis, its associated permissive empathy and treatment, shield individuals from social obligations and mediate their relationship to the wider society.

The health prism, of function and dysfunction, has risky consequences for refugees, because it raises questions over refugees' capacity for self-determination. Under permissive empathy, individuals surrender their autonomy and allow professionals unparalleled institutional access over their lives and relationships.[44] Crucially, 'In adopting the sick role, individuals accept that their capacity to function is impaired and that therefore their ability to exercise individual autonomy is significantly impaired.'[45] Professionals organize the interests of the sick, rather than individuals themselves, albeit temporarily for Parsons. If Parsons viewed the sick role as a temporary condition, the adoption of a health paradigm to mediate individuals' status more generally has profound consequences for their civil and political rights. Parsons's analysis fits into the general problem of welfare dependence compromising political autonomy.[46]

Presenting refugees as traumatized is therefore a double-edged sword. The refugee may be offered greater protection in the sick role,

[42] Parsons, *Social Structure*; Parsons, *Action Theory*.

[43] Parsons, *Action Theory*, pp. 77–8.

[44] Furedi, *Therapy Culture*, p. 98.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Robert Jackson addresses the problem in international relations and Joanna Macrae addresses the problem more specifically in humanitarian politics. Robert Jackson, *Quasi-States: Sovereignty, International Relations and the Third World*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1990; Joanna Macrae, *Aiding Recovery? The Crisis of Aid in Chronic Political Emergencies*, London, Zed Books, 2001.

receive welfare and be released from certain social obligations such as employment, but the refugee accepts that his or her capacity is impaired and becomes an object of professional management. In short, permissive empathy develops professional management of refugees' welfare, rather than necessarily greater refugee rights. Ultimately, casting refugees in the sick role questions their moral agency and legitimizes the inversion of their rights into the rights of the external advocate. This dependent protective relationship is linked to broader victim advocacy in Western societies transforming rights into protective governance as public policy has retreated from previous political assumptions about citizens' capacity to determine their own lives without professional support, highlighted in the previous section.[47] Many UK refugee projects state they take a rights-based approach to refugee welfare, which initially appears to avoid the pitfalls of the sick role, but human rights too are conditioned by a form of permissive empathy.

FRAILTY OF HUMAN RIGHTS AGAINST POLITICAL BELONGING

Universal human rights are appealing against the limitations of the state-based system of rights for those who are stateless or whose state fails to secure their rights. Arendt has explored the potential for universal human rights to protect refugees, but her experiences during the Second World War led her to conclude pessimistically that human rights failed to protect people when they lost their citizenship rights because the stateless could not enforce any claims in a world of states.[48] To enforce a claim, you need to belong to a political community, but the majority of the world's refugees are not political refugees and cannot easily claim membership of a political community in exile.[49]

Why is the position of the non-political refugee so precarious? First, states are most generous in granting asylum when they are exceptional rights for exceptional categories of individuals. States are reluctant to extend such rights for large groups of people.[50] Second, the political refugee has an identifiable political status, albeit negative as a

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[47] For example, Furedi, *Therapy Culture*; Nolan, *Therapeutic State.*

[48] Arendt, *Origins of Totalitarianism*, pp. 292–300.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid., p. 294.

persecuted dissident voice, whereas the mass of ordinary refugees are anonymous, they do not have an individually identifiable political voice. The individual political refugee has typically found it easier to gain asylum in Western states than the mass of ordinary people, who cannot claim to have been singled out for political persecution.

Similarly, artistic fame may help refugee claimants, Arendt observes, singling them out as exceptions from the mass of anonymous, ordinary refugees: 'the chances of the famous refugee are improved just as a dog with a name has a better chance to survive than a stray dog who is just a dog in general.'[51] Refugee artists may find patronage not enjoyed by ordinary refugees. ICAR has analysed how most positive coverage relates to individual refugees' contribution to the arts, but individual cultural integration is not translating into general political integration of refugees.[52] Its findings are underscored by recent research on ethnic minorities in the arts, which concludes that identity-based inclusion policies culturally ghettoize ethnic minority artists rather than integrate them into the core art world.[53] Named exceptions are compatible with exclusionary policies and may even help legitimize the status quo.

The problems raised by Arendt over how the stateless enforce their rights when they are no longer members of a political community remains, despite human rights becoming codified in international documents. Empowering those who are powerless through recognizing human rights has a strong moral appeal, but this does not resolve the inherent problem of how the powerless realize these rights. As Arendt analysed 50 years ago, 'Innocence, in the sense of complete lack of responsibility, was the mark of their rightlessness as it was the seal of their loss of political status.'[54] Refugees in a world of states where border controls are jealously guarded effectively remain dependent on governments to permit their claims. Tellingly, the Convention seems less robust following the end of the Cold War, despite human rights being taken more seriously in the last two decades and codified into British law.

The frail defence offered by human rights has ironically been compounded by efforts to protect victims better. Historically, human

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[51] Ibid., p. 287.

[52] ICAR, *Reporting Asylum*, p. 41, p. 141.

[53] Sonya Dyer, *Boxed In*, London, Manifesto Club, 2007.

[54] Ibid., p. 295.

rights and civil rights demands have often been synonymous. Their close identity is evident in Cold War human rights advocacy on behalf of political prisoners. But civil rights are becoming less central to contemporary human rights advocacy, accompanying the shifts from human rights activism to human rights professionalism and advocacy around political prisoners to depoliticized victims. UK refugee advocates are less engaged in demands for freedom of movement and opposition to border controls, and relatively more occupied with refugee welfare and media representation of refugees. Indeed some thinking in the increasingly professionalized human rights sector is even seeking to restrict civil freedom to protect victims, highlighted below. But when some civil freedoms are compromised, others too risk becoming compromised, including the freedom of people to determine whether they flee and where they seek asylum. Today's protective model of human rights advocacy, which gives a greater role to human rights professionals to determine the interests of victims and mediate their relationship to society is analogous to the permissive empathy of Parsons's sick role.

Medical framing of refugees further compounds their lack of political subjectivity and frail rights. A health paradigm orientates people into an individualized patient–professional relationship counter to wider communal ties. Professional mediation in the sick role risks distancing refugees from wider society and deterring their integration when belonging to a political community is vital to realizing rights. There are obvious temptations for refugees as well as citizens in relinquishing to a sick role, not least the enhanced financial support of incapacity benefits, but self-help, initiative, ingenuity and not too much trust in authorities are vital for those like refugees in an insecure position politically and socially. Again Arendt's experiences of statelessness warn of 'the price for misplaced confidence and refusal to act'.[55]

TRAUMATIC CAMPAIGNING

Various refugee advocates have wanted to address the problem of 'the political integration of refugees'. But ICAR notes refugees'

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[55] Elisabeth Young-Bruehl, *Hannah Arendt: For the Love of the World*, New Haven, CT, and London, Yale University Press, 1982, p. 39.

reluctance 'to be politically active in the host country'.[56] Their reluctance returns us to Arendt's observation that most refugees are not political refugees. Since political activity has declined in Britain, it is hardly surprising that refugees follow the host population's disinclination. Moreover the refugee advocacy sector itself appears reluctant to engage in difficult political debate. Here I want to highlight four aspects of apparent reluctance: representations of exceptional refugees, representations of vulnerable, depoliticized, feminized subjects, representations distancing refugees from immigrants, and lastly ambivalence towards freedom of speech and willingness to restrict political debate.

The first three aspects are related to advocates' efforts to promote positive representations. Much refugee advocacy is concerned with combating negative media representations, raising awareness and changing public attitudes towards refugees. Various reports suggest NGOs could facilitate more refugee voices in the media. Whose refugee voices are refugee organizations willing to facilitate? Article 19 cautions, 'refugee organisations have their own policy and advocacy agenda which they work hard to communicate to the media, and the effectiveness of their message undoubtedly depends on its coherent and consistent presentation.'[57] There is an organizational temptation to present only endearing refugees.

Overly santized representations effectively advance refugee rights for culturally deserving exceptions, not ordinary refugees 'warts and all'. Refugee advocacy repeatedly invokes talented middle-class asylum seekers deprived of their profession and forced to live off benefits or take illegal poorly paid menial work. Consider a recent leading article in the *Independent*, championing the (professional) refugee's right to work:

The plan would also open the British economy to an untapped set of skills. It is often impossible for academics or doctors who have sought asylum in Britain to work in the field in which they have been trained. While their claims are being processed, they are forced to live on state handouts. If they are turned down, they often disappear into the black economy to do menial jobs. Under this scheme, they would be free to use their training for the wider public good.[58]

[56] ICAR, *Reporting Asylum*, p. 41.

[57] Article 19, *What's the Story?*, p. 34.

[58] 'A Sensible Proposal to Break this Vicious Circle', *Independent*, leading article, 25 April 2007. See also special pleading for a visa extension in James Randerton, 'I Am Not an Asylum Seeker', *Guardian*, 23 October 2007.

It appears easier for refugee advocates to plead on behalf of special individuals or professionals like themselves, whom advocates identify as their peers or fit their cultural moral frame. Strikingly, much refugee advocacy is concentrated in particular attractive areas like the arts.[59] Asylum rights are thereby implicitly made conditional on qualifying as nice, talented, sensitive individuals. But where does this leave any unappealing, untalented, unskilled asylum seeker with culturally repellent views and habits? A well-founded fear of persecution is not confined to nice people.

The next common counter-stereotype is the vulnerable, depoliticized, feminized refugee. But morally affirming vulnerability carries further cultural associations of being at risk and impaired capacity, not simply material support. The twin idea of vulnerability and empowerment implies a therapeutic relationship, while simultaneously creating the identities of the impaired refugee and empowering capable advocate, distinct from the idea of political solidarity between equals. Consider, for example, how the model of refugee vulnerability in campus refugee advocacy creates a model of student moral capacity, thus the refugee cause transforms the common cultural image of student apathy to one of 'energy and enthusiasm'.[60] Yet refugee advocacy under the banner of protecting the vulnerable appears politically timid and inclined to support welfare interventions for those in the UK over civil freedoms, as I will highlight below.

ICAR wants to move beyond the current simplistic positive versus negative images and is unusual in raising problems with sympathetic counter-stereotypes of the gifted or traumatized refugee.[61] Both ICAR and Article 19 recommend more personal stories about refugees because they are more likely to evoke sympathy.[62] The human interest approach was earlier proposed for war reporting by the former BBC correspondent and politician Martin Bell in his 'journalism of attachment'.[63] However, the human interest approach may not advance beyond the current counter-stereotypes, potentially sharing problems identified with the genre elsewhere. The human interest approach has been criticized as 'therapy news' for being deep on

[59] ICAR, *Reporting Asylum.*

[60] Student Action for Refugees (STAR).

[61] ICAR, *Reporting Asylum*, p. 13, p. 141.

[62] Ibid., p. 35

[63] Martin Bell, 'The Journalism of Attachment', in Matthew Kieran (ed.), *Media Ethics*, London, Routledge, 1998, pp. 15–22.

emotion (and putting the journalist's emotional response in the limelight) but light on analytical context and fostering poor under-standing and bad interventions.[64] This critical literature has been highlighted by MediaWise on its website, but not directly applied to its refugee analysis. The cultural narrative of trauma influencing the genre elsewhere may influence personal stories of refugees and exac-erbate the tendency to cast refugees in the ambivalent sick role.

The cultural trope of vulnerability appears more comfortable with feminized images. Male and female representations have become shorthand for negative and positive representations. Media reports complain of the predominance of male images. Article 19 complains that media images 'are dominated by the stereotype of the "threat-ening young male" '.[65] Similarly, ICAR complains of women's in-visibility 'within the male dominated discourse on asylum law and policy'[66] and their 'lack of voice'.[67] Analyses of specific controversies like the Sangatte camp observe the predominance of male images over women and children. Conversely, refugee advocacy appears drawn towards women refugees with projects specifically targeting women. The fact that male householders typically head family asylum applications is regarded as problematic for their claim.[68] Core rec-ommendations by advocates seek more representations of women, although it is acknowledged that young single men are proportion-ately more likely to become asylum seekers in the West, and most Sangatte residents were male. But is refugee advocacy seeking to replace the stereotype of the 'threatening young male' with a counter-stereotype of the unthreatening young woman? Efforts to resist male representations when most asylum seekers are men are problematic. UK refugee advocates' preference for safe feminized and infantilized figures has not been picked up in comments on

[64] Hammond, *Media, War, and Postmodernity*; Tessa Mayes, 'Submerging in "Therapy News" ', *British Journalism Review*, 11: 4 (2000), pp. 30–6; Greg McLaughlin, *The War Correspondent*, London, Pluto, 2002; Howard Tumber and Marina Prentoulis, 'Journalists Under Fire: Subcultures, Objectivity and Emotional Literacy', in Daya Thussu and Des Freedman (eds), *War and the Media: Reporting Conflict 24/7*, London, Sage, 2003, pp. 215–30.

[65] Article 19, *What's the Story?*, p. 9 and 35.

[66] ICAR, 'Women Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the UK', women's briefing, available at http://www.icar.org.uk/briefings_womens.

[67] ICAR, *Reporting Asylum*, p. 34.

[68] Article 19, *What's the Story?*, p. 35.

positive counter-stereotypes, although the critique is familiar in international aid.[69] Preference for the woman refugee is consistent with growing organization around the hyphenated refugee's cause: the refugee doctor, refugee artist, refugee academic and so on. Universal refugee rights, always frail, risk becoming further eroded in advocates' preference for the hyphenated refugee.

Emphasis on feminized images accords with efforts to distinguish refugees and asylum seekers from economic migrants. Refugee advocates today are keen to communicate the legal distinctions between economic migrants and refugees[70] and stop the terms being used 'as synonyms'.[71] ICAR deplores the mixed terminology like 'illegals', or the legally incorrect 'illegal asylum seeker' conflated with the 'illegal immigrant'.[72] Media adherence to legal distinctions is a core recommendation. Article 19 proposes that refugee organizations 'develop a glossary of correct legal definitions', and easily accessible online glossaries or leaflets are now provided by various organizations.[73]

Yet past campaigners were less preoccupied with the distinction, save in legal proceedings, seeing immigration and asylum controls alike as racist. Much campaigning work politically linked immigration and refugee rights, and treated them as a common cause until the mid-1990s. Campaigning against immigration controls has receded. Some limited campaigning exists around 'No Borders. For Asylum and Migrant Rights', to cite a banner on a May Day demonstration in Nottingham, but organizations campaigning for open borders today are rare. The Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants, with its remit of 'campaigning for justice in immigration and asylum law and policy since 1967', is unusual today, in its very name proclaiming its organization around immigrants. Instead, campaigning against mistreatment and misrepresentation of refugees and asylum seekers has come to the fore: campaigning against detention of asylum seekers rather than freedom of movement, or against the ever-tighter restrictions rather than the restrictions in principle. At the same time, campaigning appears keen to disassociate the feminized refugee from the masculine economic migrant, whereas

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[69] See, e.g. Erica Burman, 'Innocents Abroad: Projecting Western Fantasies of Childhood onto the Iconography of Emergencies', *Disasters*, 18: 3 (1994), pp. 238–53.

[70] Louise France 'It is as if I Am Dead Already', *Observer*, 22 July 2007.

[71] Article 19, *What's the Story?*, p. 9

[72] ICAR, *Reporting Asylum*, p. 31 and 61.

[73] Article 19, *What's the Story?*, p. 10.

campaigning was previously relaxed about mixing the identities of immigrants and refugees. However, refugees' ability to enter a country is detrimentally affected by tighter visa regimes and immigration controls, so it is questionable to what extent the fortunes of refugees and immigrants can be neatly distinguished.[74] Not least the phenomenon of human trafficking is closely linked to tightening immigration controls, although it is ironically constructed as a problem requiring tighter border regulation, not open borders.[75] Meanwhile government legislation has repeatedly linked immigration and asylum issues in the very title of its bills. Preoccupation with positive representations of refugee women over negative images of migrant men indicates advocacy preference for depoliticized relationships of dependency over the harder more complex relationships of political equality and freedom. Refugee representations only regularly converge with the immigrant today over the feminized human trafficking victim, with solutions of permissive empathy, more regulation rather than freedom of movement.[76]

Identification with feminized representation and disassociation from male representation implicitly reveals advocates' own political subjectivity and trust in victim rights of protection over civil rights of freedom. Consider the title of STAR's first national student conference in 1998 – 'Beyond Words'. The idea of 'beyond words' captures a sense of contemporary political inarticulacy and voicelessness. Frustrated at negative media coverage and its influence on public debate over immigration and asylum, some advocates have even considered curbing free speech. ICAR asks whether self-regulation of the press is sufficient and whether there should be further legal (criminal)

[74] Frances Nicholson and Patrick Twomey, *Refugee Rights and Realities: Evolving International Concepts and Regimes*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999. For a personal example, my parents-in-law were fortunate in arriving in Britain on the evening before the government introduced visa requirements for Yugoslav citizens in November 1992. Their nephew who tried to travel to Britain the next day failed and was unable to flee the war, although had he managed to enter Britain his claim would probably have succeeded.

[75] Rutvica Andrijasevic, 'The Difference Borders Make: (Il)legality, Migration and Trafficking in Italy among Eastern European Women in Prostitution', in S. Ahmed, C. Castaneda, A. Fortier and M. Sheller (eds), *Uprootings/Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*, Oxford, Berg, 2003, pp. 251–72.

[76] Ibid.

sanctions to curb detrimental reporting, 'Vulnerable people have a right to be heard and understood and a right not to be harassed unduly by the press.'[77] Here we see tensions between the freedom of the press and refugees' freedom from fear, and rights as freedoms or rights as protection. But ICAR authors are conscious of arguments against limiting free speech to protect religious minorities and are cautious about restricting freedom of speech in this area.[78]

Indicatively, perhaps, it was younger refugee advocates associated with a newer organization, STAR, less embedded in the older political movements, who were prepared to demand restrictions on free speech in the name of protecting refugees. Members of STAR's Oxford branch organized a petition against demography professor David Coleman, calling upon Oxford University to 'consider the suitability of Coleman's continued tenure as a Professor at the University in light of his well-known opinions and affiliations relating to immigration and eugenics', although the authors later said their action did not seek his dismissal, but to 'raise awareness' and was not formally submitted to the university.[79] Their initiative fits with longer developments in national student politics, which have invoked measures to prevent universities giving a platform to individuals with undesirable views.[80]

Responses among pro-migrant advocates were limited, but divided over the efficacy of their action. The *Guardian*'s coverage was sympathetic. For Teresa Hayter, author of *Open Borders: The Case Against Immigration Controls*,[81] protective rights trumped civil rights, 'They cry free speech, as if that principle overrode issues of human rights and morality.'[82] Conversely, the coverage in the *Independent* – another broadsheet generally sympathetic towards refugees – was unenthusiastic and focused on academic freedom.[83] In an online journal, two

[77] ICAR, *Reporting Asylum*, p. 145.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Jonny Medland, 'Coleman Petition Slammed', *Oxford Student*, 19 April 2007.

[80] National Union of Students (NUS) 'No Platform', available at http://www.nusonline.co.uk/campaigns/antiracismantifascism/11534.aspx.

[81] Teresa Hayter, *Open Borders: The Case Against Immigration Controls*, London, Pluto, 2004.

[82] Teresa Hayter, 'Watching David Coleman, Comment is Free', *Guardian*, 16 March 2007.

[83] Terence Blacker, 'If Academics Can't Think Freely, Who Can?', *Independent*, 9 March 2007; Richard Garner, 'The Academic: Oxford Professor Defends his Anti-Immigrant Views', *Independent*, 9 March 2007.

Oxford postgraduate open-borders proponents deplored evasion of political debate over immigration, arguing that 'Pro-immigration views are in danger of becoming "dead dogma" today,' and that the argument for open borders could never be won without debate.[84] STAR did not formally adopt the petition, nor did other refugee organizations. But the particular student advocates' lack of confidence in free speech, prefigured in NUS 'no platform' policies, the idea of certain problems being beyond words, and the sanitized representations preferred in refugee advocacy, suggests growing political timidity in the expanded, professionalized sector. Refugee organizations were reluctant to support or criticize the students' petition publicly, although their initiative reflected trends in contemporary advocacy and gave an opportunity to clarify and evaluate contemporary strategies.

The initiative highlights how future refugee advocacy may become more willing to adopt measures to protect refugees that would undermine civil rights. Yet previously, refugee and migrant rights were linked to civil freedoms. Not least the political refugee was regarded as having been persecuted for their demands for political freedom, including free speech, or their offence against their country's political, social or cultural norms. If free speech is only for those whose words we like, are asylum rights also only for those we like? Such interpretations give succour to many an oppressive regime globally. Advocates' nervousness over risking full open debate does not bode well for a robust defence of refugee rights. There are dangers in cherry-picking refugee images or cherry-picking political debates. I have already indicated problems with advocates' preferences for artistic, professional or depoliticized female refugees. The right to freedom of movement underpinning refugee and migrant rights was historically closely identified with other civil freedoms like freedom of speech. To curb one civil right like freedom of speech was also to curb other civil rights, including freedom of movement, which underpins migrant and refugee rights. Hence the idea of curbing free speech was an anathema to many past advocates.

[84] Maria Grasso and Lee Jones, 'If We Want Open Borders, We Need Open Debate', *Spiked Online*, 5 March 2007.

RISK AVERSE ADVOCACY AND VULNERABLE RIGHTS

This article has suggested that refugees' rights have best been real-
ized when refugees are identified with as political subjects. Arendt's
model of political participation is exacting, but relevant to how the
exceptional political engagement led political dissidents during the
Cold War to being welcomed into a new political community. Most
refugees are in an inherently precarious position because they no
longer belong to their original political community and are not
claimed by alternative political communities. Refugees' potential
integration into a political community in exile is complicated today
by the present weak communal engagement in host countries like
Britain. Refugee advocacy extravagantly represents refugees' talents,
distinguishing them from the mass of ordinary citizens, while simul-
taneously stressing refugees' trauma-induced incapacity and their
exemption from ordinary responsibilities. These representations
tend to distinguish them representationally and distance them per-
sonally from the host population.

Individuals in the sick role are not expected to contribute to
society and until they recover they need social support and are a
social expense. Thus claim-making for refugees through the sick role
assumes the need for social expense. Yet exaggerated representations
of refugees' contributions or asylum seekers' potential contributions
deny the welfare burden implied by representations of refugees in a
sick role. Obviously some are able to contribute economically to
society, but others will remain an economic expense, some tempo-
rarily, some permanently, such as elderly refugees with all the health
problems and welfare needs of age.

Advocacy has failed to bridge these contradictory representations
and face anti-immigration and asylum arguments with representa-
tions grounded in ordinary refugees. Constructing refugees as trau-
matized dramatizes their suffering and underscores the validity of
their claims for asylum, but casting refugees in a sick role advances
permissive empathy rather than refugees' rights to determine their
own interests. Refugees in the sick role are not immune from
censure. Importantly, negative coverage is emerging against so-called
'health tourists'.[85] The spectre of refugee patients is not adequately

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[85] See, for example: BBC online news, 'Asylum Seekers' NHS Use Reviewed', 2
December 2007; BBC online news, 'Are Health Tourists Draining the NHS?', 14 May,

countered by representations of refugee doctors, which assumes a demand for more doctors nationally, but which may fluctuate as seen in recent years.[86] Doctors and refugee advocates raise serious concerns about regulations governing failed asylum seekers' and foreigners' access to health care and have anticipated further restrictions.[87]

Finally, asserting refugees' freedom of movement is difficult in a political climate where even refugee advocates lack confidence in civil freedoms. Frustration over negative media reporting may be tempting some refugee advocates to demand restrictions on freedom of speech. But the impulse to regulate civil freedoms will ultimately harm the refugee cause.

2004; BBC online news, 'Fresh Crackdown on NHS "Tourists" ', 14 May 2004, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/; ' "Health Tourists" Leave Tens of Millions in NHS Bills Unpaid', *Daily Telegraph*, 2 October 2006, available at http://www.telegraph.co.uk/; Frances Elliott, 'NHS Bill for Treatment of "Health Tourists" Soars to More Than £62m', *The Times*, 3 September 2007, available at: http:www.timesonline.co.uk.

[86] BBC, 'BMA Warns of Job Shortage Threat', 25 June 2005, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/health/4618677.html; Jo Revill, 'Job Shortage for New Doctors', *Observer*, 25 June 2006.

[87] Edwin Borman, 'Health Tourism: Where Healthcare, Ethics, and the State Collide', editorial, *BMJ*, 10 January 2004; Zosia Kmeietowicz, 'GPs to Check on Patients' Residency Status to Stop "Health Tourism" ', *BMJ*, 22 May 2004. 'Asylum Seekers and their Health', *BMJ*, November 2006, http://www.bma.org.uk/ap.nsf/Content/asylumseekershealth.