

SPECIAL ISSUE ARTICLE

"Europe Is No Longer Europe": Montaging Borderlands of Help for a Radical Politics of Place

Kolar Aparna¹, Oumar Kande², Joris Schapendonk¹ and
Olivier Kramsch¹

¹ Radboud University, Nijmegen, NL

² Independent Researcher, NL

Corresponding author: Kolar Aparna (k.kolaraparna@fm.ru.nl)

In this paper, we position the societal expectation of the 'grateful refugee' in the larger European script of placing migrant help and integration. We ask how might we re-imagine geographies of migrant 'help' so as to break with the dominant ontologies of places as sites embedded within the nation-state and the accompanying relations of power which displace the migrant in a perpetual penumbra of gratefulness? By montaging a series of contrapuntal vignettes of borderlands producing Europe, we examine the moral geographies of help and debt and how geographical imaginations of place and place-identities of practices of refugee-help today are entangled with mid-20th century wartime aid. Drawing inspiration from the negritude movement, we argue that such 'untimely articulations' produce 'sites of décalage' where Europe (as manifesting in such entangled moral geographies of help) is no longer Europe, suggesting an initial vocabulary for a radical politics of place.

Keywords: Politics of place; Help; Montage; Gratefulness; Europe

Introduction: Placing 'Grateful refugees' in Europe

Some 3000 refugees were housed at the Heumensoord emergency camp located at the edges of the municipality of Nijmegen, in the Dutch/German borderlands, during Europe's recent 'reception crisis'. Despite the isolation from urban life (it was literally in a forest), despite the spatial abnormality, the tensions between different groups in the camp, the opaque asylum procedures, the noise and cold, some people got attached to the place of 'Nijmegen'. However, there was one remarkable moment. The people of the Heumensoord Camp, alongside with other refugees in other places of the province of Gelderland, began to express their gratefulness to the citizens of Nijmegen. They started to distribute flowers in the central station, and in and around the city centre, wishing to thank Nijmegen 'citizens' for their hospitality. Where did this need come from to thank the Nijmegen community? For us, this moment of gratitude reflects a broader moral geography of a 'need to help' (Malkki 2015, see

also Sandberg and Andersen this issue) that is inherently related to the societal expectation of the 'grateful refugee' (see also Casati 2018; Moulin 2012).

As we argue, this figure of the grateful refugee fits a wider European script of migrant integration in place. From the moment asylum seekers are granted with a temporary residence paper or a refugee status, and as soon they leave the nodes of the humanitarian mobility regime with that legal paper, they have to work on their integration. This integration work, seen from a nation-state perspective, needs to ground in place and, ideally so, in one place only. Following this logic of integration, displaced subjects need to be turned into active citizens and uprooted people should take root again according to the hegemonic national orders (Malkki 1995). Such approaches of placing immigration within state borders eventually bleed into local actions expecting 'grateful refugees'.

The aim of this paper is to re-imagine geographies of migrant 'help' so as to break with the dominant ontologies of places as sites embedded within the nation-state and accompanying relations of power which fix the migrant in a perpetual penumbra of gratefulness, un/deservedness and un/belonging. From the rich debate on transnational migration, we already know that migrants/refugees transcend boundaries of places and nation-states through their everyday practices and imaginations (see for some recent examples in this journal: Bendixsen 2018; Haikkola 2013). Recently, however, Glick Schiller (2018) argued that this field could take better into account the temporal dimension of transnationalism. Here attention is brought to the importance of theorising temporality in migration research to investigate how conjunctural changes make processes of migration different. We relate her arguments to a postcolonial critique and investigate instead how conjunctural changes produce different social expectations around practices of 'help' and shifting identifications of bodies in such relations (Ahmed 1997). We proceed by proposing a montage of contrapuntal vignettes that connect geo-historical moments and relations of help across three spaces: i) Thiaroye (Senegal)/France; ii) South Tirol (Italy/Austria), and iii) Nijmegen/Kranenburg (the Netherlands/Germany) that all work to reveal Europe as borderland (Balibar 2009), while simultaneously opening pathways to re-imagine the spatial assumptions of help and gratitude today.

In so doing, we seek to further de-essentialise the spatial assumptions of help and gratitude intertwining 'native populations' and 'immigrant populations'. We use the method of montage to craft vignettes out of a combination of material (varying from poems of the Negritude movement, snippets from novels, biographical and historical narratives, fieldwork notes of the Helping Hand Research Network, and informal conversations). Our first vignette juxtaposes a fragment of a comic strip circulated by the French colonial army in Dakar in 1940 aimed to attract young volunteers from Africa to Help France fight Hitler's occupation, with a narrative on the trajectories of actors travelling from Eritrea to Netherlands anno 2015 aimed to highlight the barriers to cross-border mobility in EU today for non-EU travellers. Our point here in juxtaposing relations of help as part of migratory routes during World War II with contemporary ones is not to equate the efforts of soldiers of colonial troops to those of migrants today. Nor is it to equate the voluntary efforts of some of these soldiers to those offered by volunteers in refugee support today. What we are primarily interested in is what geographical imaginations of place and therefore place-identities come to be produced within such moral geopolitics of help.

Our second vignette quilts cartographic anxieties underpinning anti-imperial, anarchist solidarities of mid-20th century in our Italian/Austrian borderlands of Tyrol with contemporary refugee support, to recuperate the forgotten 'geographies of home' of soldiers from colonies in-between empire and regional nationalisms. What concerns us here about histories of solidarities are what geographical imaginations of borders and place are being produced

(through maps and narratives) and therefore what/who remains at the margins of these imaginations.

The final vignette stretches across the Dutch/German borderland to the German village of Kranenburg, where a citizen's initiative was founded in the wake of 2015 to provide support to migrants. Here, we connect the anxiety and disappointment of members of this initiative at the supposed 'ungratefulness' of refugees who do not show up for organized coffee/cake socials (revealed during a field workshop visit) to the anxieties shown by Kranenburgers 75 years ago at the precise moment when Allied forces pushed into the Rhineland and liberated Nijmegen, Arnhem, and the broader border region in September 1944. What connects both moments, in our view, are visceral concerns on the part of the German population regarding the territorial coherence and stability of the border as well as the proper 'place' of non-integrated actors in their vicinity (Polish, Ukrainian, and Dutch forced labour as well as advancing American and Canadian troops [and cows] in 1944; African and Middle Eastern migrants in 2018). What concerns us here is the question of which bodies are the site of anxiety justifying the banalities of violence in demarcating borders.

In doing so, we suggest an initial, rather than a comprehensive, vocabulary to unearth the globally entangled spatial foundations of place. For the vignettes, we deliberately looked for diverse fragments (across forms) that reveal similar threads (of anxieties and geographical imaginations) across seemingly unrelated events, rather than looking for sources about the same events. The three vignettes are contrapuntal for the ways they shed a different light on Europe and its 'crisis' (see also Mainwaring, Mulvey & Piacentini this issue) as well as for the ways they diffuse presumed notions of help/gratitude, inside/outside, and guests/hosts that are implicitly or explicitly embedded in recent refugee aid initiatives (see also Aparna & Schapendonk 2018; Sandberg and Andersen this issue). In re-suturing the place-fixing dynamics of current migration and border regimes in Europe to the 'forgotten' stories of colonial troops and (in the case of the third vignette) German responses to Allied movement in a borderland that for a brief historical window became a global staging ground in the final act of a world war, we essay a redemptive spatiality that once again stages these borderlands as sites for world-historical theorizing and intervention yet-to-come.

Montage as Method: Re-cognizing Globally Entangled Spatial Foundations of Places

Inheritance of an early 20th century artistic and political avant-garde, montage-as-technique in art, film, theatre, and writing seeks through cutting, stopping, and pasting of heterogeneous fragments the production of unanticipated wholes which serve to 'extend the idea of the real to something not yet seen' (Lavin and Teitelbaum 1992: 8). For Bloch (1998), visual montage offers a fertile means to represent such utopianism, because its juxtaposition of fragments would permit the blossoming of allegory, offering multiple jumping-off points in the present from which to imagine a better future. In this paper we take 'jumping off points' very seriously. In replacing temporal images of a continuous life, they go far in providing us an explicitly spatial vocabulary that allows for the apprehension of multiplicity, simultaneity, and co-contemporaneity that linear time-based narratives traditionally deny. We use montage to re-present and re-cognize the globally entangled spatial foundations of places, as well as the utopian energies that can be released from acknowledging that 'not yet seen' (Pred 1995; Soja 1989; Soja 1996). As Pred (1995: 25) argues, montage allows us to 'reveal what is most central to the place and time in question by confronting the ordinary with the extraordinary, the common-place with the out-of-place'.

To achieve this we build on the poetics of the *négritude* movement, especially the works of Senghor, that both in form and content perform their own montage in creating shocks

through an outburst of sensations and metaphors that displace linear narratives of geo-histories of Europe and nation-states, one that was certainly inspired by but also took distance from the Surrealist movement. Living between Senegal and France, Martinique and France, and various other locations 'in-between' the metropole and peripheries gave the poets of the *négritude* movement the power to see Europe and the rest of the world as deeply entangled in pasts and futures. For these poets the unequal opposition between the 'Orient' and the 'Occident', the 'Black' and 'White', 'Senegal' and 'France', 'Africa' and 'Europe' understood as an opposition between 'Emotion' and 'Reason' underpinning common sense knowledges of colonialism and post-war independence movements—at a time when borders were being redrawn—needed to be 're-appropriated' while at the same time being deeply questioned in order to re-imagine a new humanism beyond these dichotomies.

At the same time, we read the works of the poets from our own multilingual positions today. We do not start from a clear-cut opposition between those who 'migrate' and those who 'study migration', between the 'voice of story' and 'voice of theory', between 'African migrants' and 'European scholars'. We rather articulate a relation of entanglement of geo-historical conditions producing our differential access to cross-border mobility, citizenship, and subsequent rights to education and scholarship, also at a time when borders are being re-drawn along dichotomies of Us/Them. In fact, the process of writing of this paper has been a practice of re-placing our own borderlands and biographies as produced from worlds otherwise separated as 'here' and 'there', 'Europe' and 'not Europe'. We write in response to the absence of narratives of transnational histories in collective memories of help (for example in museums, public memorial practices of World War I and II) shaping our borderlands in order to re-imagine the present-futures beyond such dichotomies.

Building on the poetics-as-politics approach of the *négritude* movement, we develop a lens for rewriting places that each of the authors inhabit and have witnessed as 'sites of help' for refugees. Rather than 'cities' within nation-states helping refugees, we instead sculpt a poetics of place within the context of a *longue durée* of 'aid' (since the early 20th century). We are inspired by Senghor's poetics of geographical *décalage* enacted through his poetry (1991: 68). Senghorian *décalage* implies for us not a theoretical concept but a way of mounting snapshots of events otherwise kept separate to both reveal the violence of borders and simultaneously undoing them. Speaking from such an entanglement allows us to escape the problem of difference and to carve out an alternative politics of place that goes beyond the notions of 'grateful refugees' and European citizens 'helping' others (see also Sandberg and Andersen this issue).

Re-placing Help: Re-cognizing the Spatialities of Colonial Wartime Entanglement

Vignette I: 'Europe is no More Europe'

Mamadou and his friend Ibrahima, being good Muslims, drink lemonade, not alcohol in the cafes of Dakar and flirt with pretty African girls. Their girlfriends bid them a tearful farewell and the African public gives them a heroic send-off from the port of Dakar. The crossing is uneventful save for glimpses the two friends catch of enemy submarines observing their convoy. But French reconnaissance aircraft protect the fleet and they reach Casablanca and then Gibraltar safely; in the straits they express their admiration for the naval might of England, France's staunch ally. Finally, their ship reaches Marseille, where the African soldiers are warmly greeted by a French population showering them with gifts of cigarettes and flowers [...]. On a tourist excursion

by boat to Chateau d'If, Mamadou plunges into the cold winter water of the Mediterranean to rescue a young girl Mireille, who has accidentally fallen overboard. The two African soldiers are befriended by Mireille's grateful family and are invited home for meals and human warmth. They meet her brother Marius, a corporal who turns out, by coincidence, to be attached to their company at their new camp 'somewhere on the Côte d'Azur'. There is time for more tourism, the obligatory visit to a perfume factory at a town whose name is censored, but which is probably Grasse. By now the three friends are anxious to go to the front and deal with the hated enemy once and for all. [...The three friends take a train] 'somewhere to the northeast' (Translation of fragments of 'La Gazette Du Tirailleur', June 1940 in Echenberg 1985: 366–367).

M and J have travelled for years from a village in Eritrea and Asmara respectively to Italy. They meet each other in Milan and after hanging out in the bars near Porta de Venezia they depart their ways. After trying unsuccessfully to cross to UK and arriving in Amsterdam, M is transported to Ter Apel to register his fingerprints. After some months of waiting, he is transported on a day's notice to an apartment on the outskirts of Breda. Soon he hears through common friends that J has made it to the Netherlands and is living in the camp Heumensoord. J gets off the bus and is being welcomed by people in uniforms working for the organization running the camp. He is given a coloured waist-band, some bedsheets, coupons for lunch, and a bed. The rules of the camp are explained, hours of entering and leaving, rules for bringing in visitors, for using the 'recreation centre', etc. He is told that he has to wait in the camp until he receives an invitation for an 'interview'. He leaves his bags in the camp and comes outside for a smoke. He is welcomed by groups of people waiting to meet him and others who had arrived with tea, coffee and invitations for dinner and human warmth. In a few days J is standing in front of the main train station of Nijmegen, alongwith other residents of the camp, holding flowers and a banner that reads 'Thank You Nijmegen'. (Narrative based on incidents witnessed by authors as well as on journeys of inhabitants currently living in Nijmegen and Breda, September 2015–June 2016)

In the first excerpt of a cartoon strip depicting the route of Mamadou and Ibrahima, rural geographies of Africa and Europe are connected by sea as part of 'French territories', rather than what is today performed as the Mediterranean separating EU from states of Northern and sub-Saharan Africa (see also deBono and Mainwaring this issue). What differentiates these places however is the site of help. The frontlines of the war are depicted as occurring in France/Europe, while the village where the characters reside is only a place of recruitment. Europe comes to be produced as a place 'needing help', while places providing help are produced as 'outside Europe' despite being part of the same empire(s). Europe here, rather than a united homogenous entity, is in fact the battlefield of colonial powers at war needing help from their expanded territories.

What such geographical depictions conveniently erase however are the battlefields in-between this 'Europe' and 'outside'. Sites like Thiaroye¹ and many other such 'transit places' emerge as the 'not-yet-seen' that expose the paradoxes of the end of the war from an imperial experience that continue to be relevant to contemporary hierarchies of citizenship rights

¹ Thiaroye was a transit camp where Senegalese *tirailleurs* were returned to after they served France in World War II. After *tirailleurs* protested the unequal distribution of pensions for French and colonial soldiers, French soldiers killed over 30 Senegalese *tirailleurs*.

in EU. Where is Thiaroye? Or rather, who is Thiaroye? To Senghor, Thiaroye is a place where 'France is no more France' (Senghor 1991: 68). It is a place that symbolises the resistance against the unequal treatment of soldiers from the colonies who fought at the frontlines in Europe and for France during World War II. It is a place where 'the France' that these soldiers fought for, 'their France', vanished overnight when denied equal rights (for pension and repatriation) at a very early moment of 'liberation' while being severely punished for demanding the same. It is at the same time, for Senghor, a place from where to see a future in which 'this France' that discriminates is no more, as a promise to and witness of those who died at Thiaroye.

Ironically, the politics of transit and transit camps is put very central to the EU's approach to hamper African mobility today. Along important migratory routes through Mali, Niger, and Libya, the International Organization for Migration has installed 'transit centres' in which migrants wait for their return to their places of origin (see also Brachet 2016). Waiting, however, does not only occur outside Europe. The refugee experience—and in particular refugees' relation to place—is defined by the state of waiting (Khosravi 2014). Despite being produced by the standardized administration of asylum reception discussed initially, however, this state of waiting derives from the mundane practices of exclusion producing Europe. The bordering practices occurring in these transit places, while clearly unfolding along very different conditions of citizenship rights and legalities to those of the *tirailleurs* waiting in Thiaroye in 1944 (given that people waiting for their asylum papers do not possess legal documents of citizenship in the EU while the *tirailleurs* in Thiaroye were French citizens), nevertheless symbolize for us what Panagiotidis and Tsianos call 'temporal zones of hierarchized mobility' (2007: 82). The selective inclusion or allowance of certain mobilities needed as labour during the world wars and the simultaneous prosecution of those demanding equal rights as French soldiers early in the liberation (Sembène and Lo 1988) folds onto the conditions of partial inclusion of certain mobilities needed as informal labour in the EU who are also simultaneously managed as part of the 'deportation regime' (Mezzadra and Neilson 2013).

At another level, in our re-narration of the route of M and J² despite the voluntary and forced (im)mobilities of the two characters across various cities, J is expected to show gratitude to the residents of the city of Nijmegen at a time when it is in fact meant as a 'transit place' to the residents of the camp. Simultaneously, M is expected to show gratitude to the (volunteer) residents of the city of Breda as part of 'integration' like towards those providing language support or towards all residents by participating in the voluntary sectors in the city. The villages of Africa, among others, that were once the site of 'giving help' during World War II, and whose peoples were welcomed with flowers by local populations for helping 'France' (among others) fight the war, in today's context of poverty, war, and insecurity causing people to move along the same routes to 'Europe' are however put into binary expectations: either expected to give flowers to the 'local citizens' (see Introduction) despite the harsh conditions of welcome or treated as 'violable' bodies that are 'out of place'. The moral relations towards non-white bodies whose blood came to write courageous acts of World War II that were however dispossessed of their rights and disposed from the script of Liberation (Echenberg 1985)

² Both the vignettes are based on real trajectories of people but are fictionalized and re-narrated for specific purposes in the context of this article. With reference to the story of Mamadou and his friend, Echenberg underlines, 'Hyperbole aside, [Mamadou s'en va t'en guerre] is essentially consistent with the realities experienced by African soldiers as they were mobilized for the second world war' (1985: 367). With reference to the story of M and J, one of the authors met both of them in Nijmegen and whose trajectories were revealed during shared research processes and informal conversations.

are contrapuntal to acts of everyday violence towards black bodies at the margins of asylum procedures. One of the authors of this paper is confronted in his everyday life with racist attitudes and violent attacks. These events however are rarely recognised in the societal expectations of 'grateful refugees' and 'benevolent helpers' scripting Europe. These violent acts are for us deeply rooted in the geo-historical mentalities and imaginaries producing Africa and Europe along the unequal contours of the colour line (DuBois 1903/1989; Fanon 1991) where (in)gratitude is but an ongoing struggle for human dignity and equality. The amnesia towards shared histories of war, we argue, not only separates the territories and identities of migrants/refugees from Europe but in doing so also imposes an ahistorical power relation that either places gratitude as a default sense of place separating M and J from the citizens of Nijmegen or displaces their non-white bodies as violable rather than entangled in a *longue durée* of 'aid'.

And yet, despite the violence of Thiaroye that deeply affected Senghor—himself a soldier of France during World War II and a freed 'prisoner of war' returning from the camps across Occupied France—he wrote just one day after the killings of Thiaroye in Paris, December 1944:

Black prisoners, should I say French prisoners, is it true
That France is no longer France?
Is it true that the enemy has stolen her face?
Is it true that bankers' hate has bought her arms of steel?
Wasn't it your blood that cleansed the nation
Now forgetting its former mission?
[...]
No, you have not died in vain.
You are witnesses of immortal Africa.
You are witnesses of the new world to come.
Sleep now, O Dead! Let my voice rock you to sleep,
My voice of rage cradling hope.
(Senghor 1991: 68)

Vignette II: Displacing cartographic anxieties and 'geographies of home' along the African/Italian/Austrian borderlands

[T]his is the story of the longest route of my grandfather. He travelled from Eritrea to Libya during the first world war... returning from the war my grandfather brought back all his clothes. He kept the clothes he was wearing while in the military. He used to dress in traditional Eritrean clothes before, but when he returned from the war he started to dress like when in the Italian army and we still have these clothes hanging on the wall in our home.

[M, referred previously as recently participating in integration activities in Breda, NL, workshop Lungomare, Bolzano, June 2016]

This platform 3 is particularly very strong in my memories because the waiting room was shut and the police did not allow the people to take the train to Germany. I was crying and shouting, asking them, "Why? Why?". Then the refugees were coming to console me saying, "Don't cry mama, don't cry mama."

[Volunteer of a bottom-up citizen initiative in Bolzano, personal communication, September 2016]

With refugee routes shifting because of the harsh controls along the Balkan route, Bolzano's train station transformed overnight into an EU borderland manifesting in the presence of German, Austrian, and Italian police stopping people randomly for 'paper checks' and preventing travel of those not in possession of the 'right documents', despite possessing fully paid tickets to Munich. Local police, who were themselves offering food to such stranded passengers on an ad hoc and voluntary basis had restricted capacities. The meek presence and near absence of volunteers from Caritas and Volontarius (the two large humanitarian organisations in Italy) reinforced the sense that humanitarian agencies were implicitly working in line with security regimes rather than contesting them—of the humanitarian border (Walters 2011). All this eventually led to a powerful initiative of citizens who spontaneously organised support at the station. Literally using the train platforms for cooking warm food, reimbursing tickets for these travellers with their own identity and bank cards needed for the same, and mobilising clothes and other daily essentials, such practices transformed a 'place of transit' or 'place of border control' into a place of conviviality (Gilroy 2005) whose encounters continue to foster new friendships and new families that are being built today.

And yet, there were also striking moments of conflicting intentionalities and missed communications. We were confronted with this when a member of the above-mentioned citizen initiative reflected,

When they arrived here from Libya and so many places after a long journey, many of them did not know where they were. So, we began to draw maps of Italy, to give them orientation. We made these maps to tell them that there is Austria between Italy and Germany. But they were not interested. Arriving here with clothes worn out from 2 or so years of travel, they were more pre-occupied with arriving in Germany with new clothes. (See **Figure 1**)

The gesture of spontaneously drawing maps to people who are new to a place is definitely with good intentions and in this case can also be potentially useful for very practical purposes of travel and anticipating border-checks. However, it also raises the question of whether maps are always the most legible or productive tools for orientation. One can also argue that they close the possibilities of orienting oneself based on other embodied and sensorial histories and geographies, such as memories, stories, smell, touch, and so forth that one carries with oneself while travelling. According to Painter, "cartographic anxiety" can be defined as the unease that places may not be mappable; its corollary, cartographic desire, is thus precisely the yearning for mappability' (2006: 347). We see the tendencies to help refugees 'orient' themselves in Europe through mapping bounded nation-states of the EU against a detached and separate 'Africa' today as part of a longer trajectory of cartographic anxieties.

We would like to especially dive into the geographical imaginations popularised through accounts of explorers, travel writing, and scientific production through which Europe's internal and external borderlands came to be demarcated in the nation/empire building processes of the 19th and 20th centuries (Atkinson 2005), Italy being part of the same. The discipline of geography came to play a crucial role in producing ethno-cartographic territories, making them available for conquest, civilising missions, and colonisation (Atkinson 2005). Bolzano, as part of Europe's 'internal' Italian/Austro-Hungarian borderlands of South Tyrol, can be seen as in fact related to the outer borderlands/'regions' like Eritrea, Libya, and lands constructing Italian East Africa, among others, that were being bargained between empires and powers fighting the two world wars (Thompson 2008). At the same time, as Ferretti (2016) highlights, anti-imperial scholarly critiques inspired by anarchist thinkers like Reclus and Kropotkin simultaneously emerged during these times, especially between 1875–1917. Here the critiques against 'internal colonialism' in the north and south of Italy by

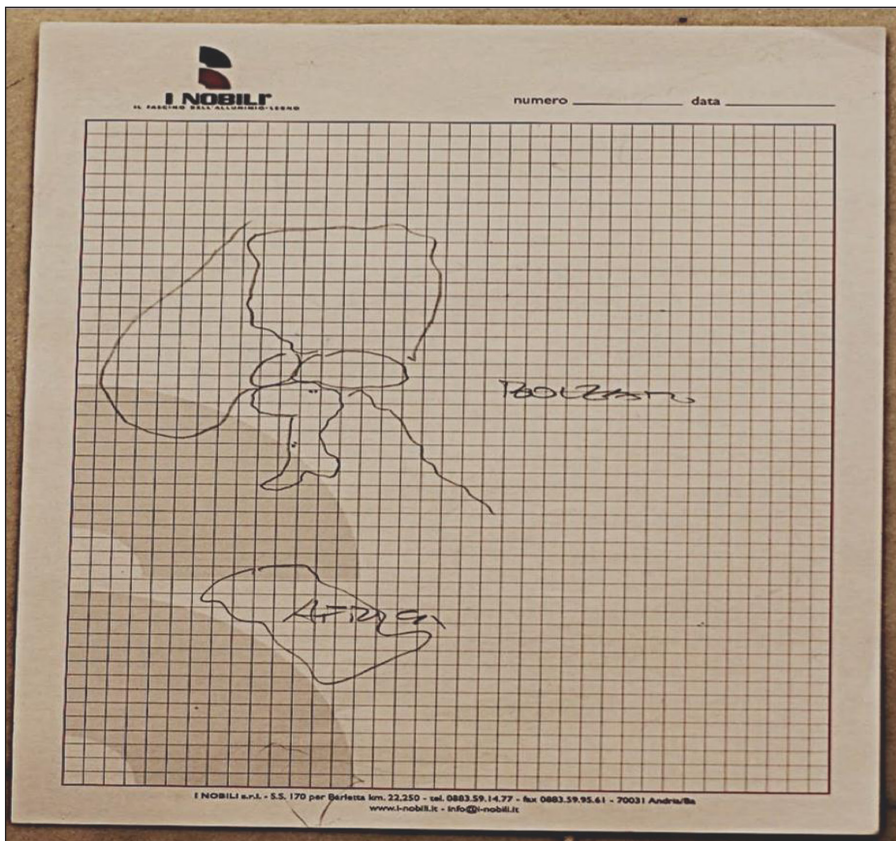


Figure 1: Mapping Borders, Credit: Beatrice Catanzaro June 2016.

the Austro-Hungarian empire came to be linked to debates against Italy's ambitions of expansion in Africa. Regional anarchists saw their struggles as part of anti-imperial debates across the world. However, such anti-imperial arguments, especially led by the figure of Arcangelo Ghisleri (1855–1938), a geographer/activist working outside the University and teaching in public schools and publishing scientific texts in non-academic circles, also fed irredentist movements aiming to 'free' Italian-speaking regions. While condemning Italy's expansions in Africa against the anti-geographic visions of 'the scramble for Africa', nevertheless such approaches claimed for a 'geography of home' and the northern border of Italy within 'pure linguistic borders' and social geographies rooted in Italian cultures (Ferretti 2016).

The singularity of the locality being produced by this geography of home somehow closes the possibility to acknowledge intertwined histories and entangled futures of lives caught in-between and beyond these dual scales. Where, we ask, will the story find its place of the grandfather of our collaborator and friend from Eritrea (whose trajectory from Eritrea to the EU today is fictionalised in the beginning vignette as M), who fought in Libya for the Italian army in early 1900s and came 'home' with the Italian uniform that always hung on the wall of their 'home' in Asmara, in such dual scalar politics? Can one think of geographies of home from such a relational elsewhere caught between the hierarchies of imperial armies separating colonial subjects and citizens and the uprootedness of local belonging coming from war?

In these lost geo-histories of the present, Bolzano emerges as a site of *décalage*, precisely in the gaps of anti-imperial cross-border solidarities during the age of empire that produces

Asmara as separate from a 'geography of home' of South Tyrol, and the gaps of geographical knowledges underpinning refugee help along the Italian/Austrian border today producing Africa as detached from Europe. Thinking of Bolzano as such a site of *décalage*, we argue, allows us to montage solidarities now and then to fold onto each other in order to re-imagine a future beyond the Europe of cartographical anxieties, a beyond that connects more with the *onderduikers* in Kranenburg (following vignette) and the protesters in Thiaroye, than the here and now of expectations that come with refugee help.

Vignette III: Placing empty hands across the Dutch/German border: The long shadow of 'der Fall Kluettgen'

Water, a pump, meadows, fields, a few trees. Perhaps a flight into illusion ... now, where the noise of war from the front threatens to become ever louder, to write about the beauty of the Fatherland ... Here – your Fatherland, for which it is worth defending with all our strength.³

(Michels and Sliepenbeek 1964: 28)

American optimism appeared to consist mostly of fantasies about yet another foreign country. A young lieutenant remembered wondering 'what all those blonde girls really looked like, with wooden shoes on their feet and windmills in their eyes'. A number of paratroopers had heard that the Netherlands was the country of diamonds, and they dreamed of returning home with enough loot to set themselves up in style.

(Beevor 2018: 76)

Stanley Nosecki visualized with his eyes closed 'the Poniatowski bridge, the Column of Zygmunt, the King's Castle and the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier'. He wondered, 'Are they still fighting in Warsaw on those famous streets of Nowy Swiat and Tamka? Is the Holy Cross Church still there, where I used to serve as an altar-boy every other Sunday?'

(Beevor 2018: 69)

[All] those orange flags made it very like Ulster. (observation of Irish Guards officer upon entering Eindhoven, cited in Beevor 2018: 169)

Once the furions firing...died down, a defiant 'Whoa Mahomet!' rang out. This was the 1st Parachute Brigades war cry from North Africa.

(Beevor 2018: 138)

It was very hard to persuade them to return. (observation of British soldier upon seeing hundreds of asylum patients wandering the woods in shock around the village of Wolfheze after an ammunition dump near their asylum hospital was hit accidentally by Allied mortar fire) (Beevor 2018: 99)

The other problem was cows. Sergeant Roy Hatch became desperate when a cow kept running ahead madly rather than escaping to the side. Even once the glider came to rest, the men were still not safe. (Beevor 2018: 87)

³ Translated from original German by authors.

These epigraphs glide into our lived borderland from 75 years ago, at the very moment of Nijmegen's 'liberation' by the Allies, in one of the final dénouements of WWII. In the way we stop and cut them—alternating between the texts of German-language and English-language historians narrating the Allied landing as it was experienced on either side of this borderland—we suture perspectives that were meant to be kept apart at all costs: the self-contained world of a locally contained Heimat, a view whose liminal edge matched the edge of one of the largest forests in Germany—the Reichswald—and those views which, falling literally from the sky, would blast that space into something entirely other, rendering it for a brief moment a 'global border' (Kramsch 2006). Notable in this worlding dynamic is the extent to which many of the actors involved—from the fantasy-filled Americans to Warsaw-obsessed Polish officers, from orange/Oranje-inspired Irish Guards to the battle-hardened troops recently emerged from the North African theatre, including local cows who become a vital infrastructure for Allied troops—projected a comparative-relational 'elsewhere' onto this wartime frontier. In the resulting montage, a set of resonances is attempted which connects the 'problem' of multi-perspectivalness and ungovernable bodies perplexing a local German citizen's initiative engaged in refugee support to that of earlier generations of that same community at the end of the war, illuminated by a notorious war crime now commonly referred to as 'the Kluettgen case'.

During our field visit to the small German village of Kranenburg on 30 November 2017, we were confronted with a shared sense of disappointment among a small group of helpers (all older than 50), engaged in volunteer work for Runder Tisch, an informal network of citizen-activists established since 2015 to assist in integrating the town's growing migrant community. The perspective of disappointed helpers was documented by one of the Scottish members of our Helping Hands project (see Sandberg and Andersen this issue for the context of fieldwork) attending the meeting:

The question of gratitude was of huge importance to this group. They could not understand why, if they were setting up a meeting or a session people would either not come or come late. This cultural practice was assumed to be shared by everyone and so non-attendance was often taken quite personally. (Mulvey 2017; personal fieldwork notes)

This group of Kranenburg citizens had the intention to do something good for the recently arrived refugees. They approached refugees, they invited groups and individuals to *kaffee-kuchen*, they made public announcements. There was help but no receiver. A welcome culture was established, but the grateful subject was missing. This produced disappointment and misunderstanding, and it even reproduced a narrative of difference (different interpretation of clock time, different ways of valuing 'appointments', and different norms around materialism, communication). The small group of citizens that were so ready to help, however, know now that even with the best of intentions they are not the only people who have a say in where and how people attach to places. They must contend with bodies that 'misbehave', ungovernable bodies operating on the basis of other space-time expectations, wishes, and desires. They must learn to put up with Senghorian *décalage*, as evinced by one of the authors attending the Runder Tisch meeting.

I was out with [my daughter] the whole time since the place of the meeting was not really baby friendly. As I stand in the passage waiting for the group to come out, I speak with the people living in the house. The men here are busy cooking. I get to warm a bottle of milk from the microwave in the basement where the computers were being used. It was more baby friendly outside the meeting room so I stay there.

After the meeting I speak to A, a Syrian refugee in Kleve. 'They don't talk about the real problem!', he tells me. 'So, what is the real problem then?' I ask. 'The real problem is that they are afraid of anyone who is not Christian. I tell them I am from Spain.' (Aparna 2017; personal fieldwork notes)

The inhabitants of Wyler had listened restlessly and fearfully at the noise of the fighting. Houses burst in flame in the Lage woods, and as they watched their own troops flood back the sky became dark again around 3pm ... Airplane upon airplane let go of its glider, which thereafter sailed down to earth. The [gliders] swayed over their heads, and nineteen landed in the meadows between their village and Zylflich. One party crashed into the Lamers farm.⁴ (Michels and Sliepenbeek 1964: 33)

A lieutenant in the 82nd was entranced when he looked down from the open door and saw a convent below, with a group of nuns in the courtyard staring up at them in amazement. (Beevor 2018: 81)

An 'impossible' space-time separates the above-placed pieces of quote-collage, making their juxtaposition all the more poignant and subversive. Impossible, firstly because their readers were never meant to know each other, encounter each other, understand one other, except on pain of death. A forest literally separated their world-views. How could those who knew deeply what the destruction of 'Hof Lamers' meant ever know the exhilaration felt by the lieutenant of the 82nd Airborne as he looked down over the nunnery? Similarly, an impossible space-time separates the well-meaning citizen-helps of Kranenburg from that Syrian refugee, who must go underground as a diver (*onderduiker*)⁵ in order to pass as a socially integrated member of a German border village. Those unable to 'dive', those who remain un-integrateable, become vulnerable bodies, bodies to whom the care of well-wishing helpers can be withdrawn at a moment's notice. They become as expendable as the two American servicemen caught by German forces in the border village of Wyler on the 21 September 1944. Both were disarmed and transported to Kranenburg, located just a few kilometres from the border. In front of Kranenburg city hall they were presented to SA-Obersturmbannführer Klüttgen. In his diary, Herr M. reports that upon being informed that they were American prisoners

The SA-leader then drew his pistol from the holster, closely approached the prisoners, held the pistol a hand's-breadth from the head of the first one, and pulled the trigger. The pistol did not fire. His assistant took it from him and busied himself with it briefly. Then he held it again near the head of the prisoner and fired again. Again there was a hindrance. As on the first occasion, he pointed the pistol away again and once again aimed it at the head of the prisoner. Now a shot fired. The prisoner was hit in the head and fell wordlessly to the ground. The assistant then shot the second prisoner in the head, and also he fell without a word to the ground. (Michels and Sliepenbeek 1964: 33)⁶

After being executed, the bodies of the two Americans were thrown over an adjacent fence into a neighbour's garden. The place of this incident is shown in **Figure 2**.

⁴ Translated from original German by authors.

⁵ Translated from original German by authors.

⁶ *Onderduiker*: Dutch word referring to a Jewish or Gentile fugitive from the Germans under the National Socialist regime (Beevor, 2018: 20).



Figure 2: 'Empty place' Credit: Authors.

Post-war rationalizations of Kluttgen's behaviour vary. Some say in executing the two Americans Kluttgen was taking revenge on the fact that several members of his family perished during the Allied bombing of Aachen just a few days before the incident. Others suggest he was acting rationally in an extremely precarious situation in which any non-ethnic Germans—and here the role of Polish, Ukrainian, and Dutch foreign forced labor working to build the Westwall front must be noted—risked at any moment deserting to the 'other side', to that of American and British troops advancing from Groesbeek Heights (Michels and Sliepenbeek 1964: 45). We are not in a position to judge the historical record. But 75 years on, we can recuperate the 'silence' of both American soldiers in the face of their agonizingly awkward and slow execution as a world-historical silence, one that speaks eloquently beyond the grave not only to the absent rule of law during the time of German National Socialism (as the 'case Kluttgen' is often portrayed), but as an 'empty place' in which 'empty hands' risk exposure to state-sanctioned violence and terror. Here, as in the case of the massacre at Thiaroye, which would occur just a little over a month later, at this moment and on this spot, 'Germany is no more Germany'. Our montage of views and sites/sights converging onto this Kranenburg street corner allows us to beat out rhythms resonating with the *décalage* and discontinuities of placing help proffered to foreign bodies who do not 'fit' dominant social scripts assigned to them. In so doing, it attempts to open a space 'beyond' by showing how that 'beyond'—both then and now—has been crucial in the constitution of our borderland as lived space today (Massey 1995).

Coda: Excavating Europe as a Site of *Décalage* for a Radical Politics of Place

This paper uses the method of montage to de-essentialise the spatial assumptions of help and gratitude in relation to refugees in Europe. We see the politics of time as inevitably related to the problem of refugee 'help' producing Europe as a place. The contemporaneity, or 'timeliness', of the refugee question underpinning the politics of place-shaping relations of 'help', we urge, needs to be deeply questioned. Instead, we position our lens of *décalage* as symbolizing the 'untimeliness' of 'help' related to a politics of place, rather than understood as

representative of a 'discontinuity' that requires restoration into an imagined coherent script of 'timely' places and their pasts. Such a poetics of untimeliness comes from fundamentally not knowing or claiming what one's 'true place' is (Leuwens 1988), rather than the other way around. Wilder refers to 'untimely as

ways that the historical present is not – or no longer appears to be – identical with itself. Untimeliness may entail processes of temporal confusion or illumination when conventional distinctions between past, present, and future no longer obtain, when tenses blur and times (seem to) interpenetrate. Untimely processes also lead social actors either to misrecognize or deliberately conflate one historical period for another, to act as if they inhabited an epoch that had already passed or had not yet arrived. These untimely practices, whether unconscious or intentional, can serve either transformative or conservative ends. (2015: 37)

The above vignettes are to us collisions of 'untimely articulations' (Haraway 1992) between the ruptured future-presents of the postcolonial not-yet in relation to the 'already passed' silences and absences of colonial borders. These collisions, shaped by the encounter with the Other (be it the *tirailleur* or the migrant), have yet to fully meet each other in place—a place where Europe is no more Europe. From such a lens the Europe of geohistorical processes relating to black bodies as violable is no more, while at the same time the amnesiac Europe of 'benevolent helping hands' is also no more. Outlining an agenda for a 'radical politics of place', Doreen Massey argues to go beyond 'simple temporal continuity' or 'spatial simultaneity without historical depth' (1995). Our plea for a 'radical politics of place' urges for a Europe that is no more Europe, one emerging from the ashes of hidden histories and retrospections of pregnant elsewhere via processes of creative poetic destruction. It is a proposition for a radical practice of place that rejects neat tightly bound histories while constantly searching for the not-yet-seen spatial entanglements from the existential condition of never fully knowing one's place. A Europe where gratefulness and refugeeness gets disentangled; it is a Europe where we do not know beforehand who is willing to give flowers to whom.

'Only one ending is possible: TO BE CONTINUED ...' (Soja 1996: 320).

Acknowledgements

This paper is an outcome of the Helping Hands Research Network, financed by the Danish Research Council (DFF/6107-00111). We thank Marie Sandberg and Dorte Andersen for their coordination and the other HH friends for their active engagements and reflections.

Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

References

- Ahmed, S.** 1997. "It's a sun-tan, isn't it?" Autobiography as an identificatory practice. In: Mirza, HS (ed.), *Black British Feminism*. London: Routledge. pp. 153–167.
- Aparna, K and Schapendonk, J.** 2018. Shifting itineraries of asylum hospitality: Towards a process geographical approach of guest-host relations. *Geoforum*. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2018.03.024>
- Atkinson, D.** 2005. Constructing Italian Africa: Geography and Geopolitics. In: Ben-Ghiat, R, et al. (eds.), *Italian Colonialism*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 15–26. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4039-8158-5_2

- Balibar, E.** 2009. Europe as borderland. *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space*, 27(2): 190–215. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1068/d13008>
- Bendixsen, S.** 2018. Transnational Practices of Irregular Migrants And Nation-State Management in Norway. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 8(4): 229–236. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2478/njmr-2018-0033>
- Beevor, A.** 2018. Arnhem: *The battle for the bridges, 1944*. London: Viking.
- Bloch, E.** 1988. *The utopian function of art and literature*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.
- Brachet, J.** 2016. Policing the desert: The IOM in Libya beyond war and peace. *Antipode*, 48(2): 272–292. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12176>
- Casati, N.** 2018. How cities shape refugee centres: 'Deservingness' and 'good aid' in a Sicilian town. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 44(5): 792–808. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2017.1354689>
- DeBono, D** and **Mainwaring, C.** Forthcoming. Solidarity at the edge of Europe. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*.
- DuBois, WEB.** 1903/1989. *The Souls of Black Folk*. New York: Penguin Books.
- Echenberg, M.** 1985. 'Morts Pour La France': The African soldier in France during the Second World War. *The Journal of African History*, 26(4): 363–380. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0021853700028796>
- Fanon, F.** 1991. *Black skin, white masks*. New York: Grove Weidenfeld.
- Ferretti, F.** 2016. Arcangelo Ghisleri and the "Right to Barbarity": Geography and Anti-colonialism in Italy in the Age of Empire (1875–1914). *Antipode*, 48: 563–583. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1111/anti.12206>
- Gilroy, P.** 2005. *Postcolonial Melancholia*. New York: Columbia University Press.
- Glick Schiller, N.** 2018. Theorising Transnational Migration in Our Times. A Multiscalar Temporal Perspective. *Nordic Journal of Migration research*, 8(4): 201–212. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2478/njmr-2018-0032>
- Haraway, D.** 1992. The Promises of Monsters: A Regenerative Politics of Inappropriate/d Others in Cultural Studies. In: Grossberg, L, et al. (eds.), *Cultural Studies*. New York: Routledge. pp. 295–337.
- Khosravi, S.** 2014. Waiting. In: Anderson, B, et al. (eds.), *Migration: The COMPAS Anthology*. Oxford: Centre on Migration, Policy and Society.
- Krasmch, O.** 2006. Postcolonial shadow plays in the Dutch/German borderlands. In: Engel-DiMauro, S. (ed.), *The European's burden: Global Imperialism in EU expansion*. Berlin: Peter Lang. pp. 29–51.
- Lavin, M** and **Teitelbaum, M.** 1992. *Montage and modern life, 1919–1942*. Cambridge, MA, and London: The MIT Press.
- Leuwers, D.** 1988. Senghor: Une poétique du décalage. *Revue D'Histoire Littéraire De La France*, 88(2): 179–184.
- Mainwaring, C, Mulvey, G** and **Piacentini, T.** Forthcoming, Troubling Europe. Migrant Solidarity Work in Times of 'Crisis'. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*.
- Malkki, L.** 1995. Refugees and Exile: From "Refugee Studies" to the National Order of Things. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 24: 495–523. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.an.24.100195.002431>
- Malkki, LH.** 2015. *The need to help: The domestic arts of international humanitarianism*. Durham: Duke University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv125jptn>
- Massey, D.** 1995. Places and Their Pasts. *History Workshop Journal*, 39(1): 182–192. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/39.1.182>
- Mezzadra, S** and **Neilson, B.** 2013. *Border as Method, or, the Multiplication of Labor*. Durham: Duke University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822377542>

- Michels, W** and **Sliepenbeek, P.** 1964. *Niederrheinisches Land im Krieg*. Kleve: Boss-Druck und Verlag.
- Moulin, C.** 2012. Ungrateful subjects? Refugee protests and the logic of gratitude. In: Nyers, P, et al. (eds.), *Citizenship, migrant activism and the politics of movement*. New York: Routledge. pp. 66–84.
- Painter, J.** 2006. Cartophilias and cartoneuroses. *Area*, 38: 345–347. DOI: https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1475-4762.2006.688_3.x
- Panagiotidis, E** and **Vassilis, T.** 2007. Denaturalizing "Camps": Überwachen Und Entschleunigen in Der Schengener Ägäis-Zone. In: *Transit Migration Forschungsgruppe Turbulente Ränder. Neue Perspektiven Auf Migration an Den Grenzen Europas*, 2: 57–86. Bielefeld: Transcript. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.14361/9783839407813-003>
- Pred, A.** 1995. Re-cognizing European modernities: A montage of the present. Oxon: Routledge.
- Sandberg, M** and **Andersen, D.** Forthcoming. Introduction to Special Issue. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*.
- Sembène, O, Thierno, FS** and **Lo, I.** 1988. Camp De Thiaroye, Senegal/Algeria/Tunisia. Sédar Senghor, L 1971, Problématique de la Négritude. *Présence Africaine*, 78(2): 3–26. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.3917/presa.078.0003>
- Senghor, LS.** 1991. *The collected poetry Translated with an introduction by Melvin Dixon*. Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia.
- Soja, EW.** 1989. *Postmodern geographies: The reassertion of space in critical social theory*. London: Verso.
- Soja, EW.** 1996. *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and other real-and-imagined places*. Malden: Blackwell.
- Thompson, M.** 2008. *The White War: Life and Death on the Italian Front, 1915–1919*. New York: Basic Books.
- Walters, W.** 2011. Foucault and frontiers: Notes on the birth of the humanitarian border. In: Bröckling, U, et al. (eds.), *Governmentality: Current Issues and Future Challenges*. New York: Routledge. pp. 138–164.
- Wilder, G.** 2015. *Freedom Time: Negritude, Decolonization, and the Future of the World*. Durham: Duke University Press. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1215/9780822375791>

How to cite this article: Aparna, K, Kande, O, Schapendonk, J and Kramsch, O. 2020. "Europe Is No Longer Europe": Montaging Borderlands of Help for a Radical Politics of Place. *Nordic Journal of Migration Research*, 10(4), pp. 10–25. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.33134/njmr.333>

Submitted: 30 August 2019

Accepted: 21 March 2020

Published: 26 November 2020

Copyright: © 2020 The Author(s). This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC-BY 4.0), which permits unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original author and source are credited. See <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>.