

# Transcultural Studies and Novels for Young Readers: The Refugee Experience in Alan Gratz's *Refugee* and Gillian Cross' *After Tomorrow*

*Margarete Rubik*

## Summary

As a response to recent mass migratory movements, numerous children's novels about refugees have been published in the last decades. The paper analyses two of these novels, Alan Gratz's *Refugee* (2017) and Gillian Cross's *After Tomorrow* (2013), and puts them into the context of the 'transcultural turn' in cultural studies. The paper also presents the results of a survey among university lecturers of various countries about the benefits, challenges and teaching aims of including migrant and refugee literature into the courses they teach.

**Keywords:** transcultural literature, migrant literature, children's novels

The significance of the growing body of migrant ethnic literature has been widely acknowledged in academia. The genre has long had a fixed place in the University classroom – as is also evinced by the analysis of questionnaires answered by lecturers teaching at various universities in Europe and America (see the appendix to this paper). At least until the recent past, however, migration or refugee literature was not widely read in secondary schools. Yet in the last decades a broad spectrum of novels written for children and young adults have been published that deal with migrants and/or asylum seekers. This is hardly surprising, given the successive waves of immigration in recent years, due to wars, and political, ethnic or religious persecution, and the millions of displaced persons and economic migrants worldwide, who are often receiving polarized coverage in the Western media. These migrants and refugees have, naturally, impacted the environment and experiences of children as well, not only through media broadcasts or family discussions, but also through new schoolmates and neighbours.

Many children's novels about refugees are composed as autodiegetic narratives, presenting the flight from terror and war in the former homeland, as well as the challenges of adjustment to a new and alien culture in the host country through the eyes and voices of protagonists approximately the age of the young readers. Such a first-person perspective tends to render the narrators likeable to the audience and to invite identification. Scholars interested in pedagogy have therefore recommended the use of texts about refugees in the classroom, in order to interest children in Europe and the United States in their fates and to invite them to consider the current debate about asylum seekers from the perspective of characters from different cultures forced to flee and seek sanctuary abroad. Imaginatively projecting oneself into another person's place is an important social competence, Narratives, cognitive psychologists have argued, can promote this ability: reading fiction has been found to facilitate the development of empathy in children, which supports the conjecture that there is a connection between the empathy readers feel for fictional characters and their ability to empathise with real-life people (Stansfield/Bunce, 9). Therefore novels about refugees, it is hoped, can promote rapport with foreigners, decrease prejudice, foster an understanding between cultures, motivate altruism and prosocial behaviour, and encourage students to show solidarity towards marginalized and discriminated groups (Volkman, 'Opportunities', 244). Such solidarity, of course cannot consist in the reader's unreflecting adoption of the fictional narrator's values, but should involve critical reflection on both the characters' views and the reader's own cultural norms (Freitag-Hild, 85; Delanoy, Eisenmann and Matz, 5, 9), which in turn may contribute to overcoming "monocultural standpoints" and promoting "exchange and interaction" (Welsch, "Transculturality", 201, 205). Though literary works, Knellwolf (forthcoming) argues, "cannot directly and intentionally develop the [...] ethical predispositions of their readers", they may elicit "responses that can

inculcate a more welcoming attitude toward cultural difference”, and they can engender interest in the characters portrayed, which may eventually turn into “interestedness”. Teaching “ethically benign behaviour” (Volkman, ‘Opportunities’, 244) seems particularly important in view of the increasingly hostile climate towards migrants, who are presented by populist politicians “as threats to national unity and security” and as opportunists who have no claim to asylum (Nyman, 11, 17).

While it is certainly true that readers will relate problems dealt with in literature to their real world situations (Volkman, “Literary Literacies”, 53), it is, as I have argued elsewhere, impossible to prove conclusively how robust the influence of literary texts on real world behaviour might be, given that children are exposed to a deluge of simultaneous influences from friends and family members, quite apart from the negative images often disseminated in the social media (Rubik, forthcoming). Positive attitudes towards minority groups developed during the reading process may well wear off after a time. Nonetheless many scholars firmly believe in the potential of literature “to make readers more open-minded, more tolerant, and less parochial” and to help them negotiate transcultural encounters successfully (Volkman, “Opportunities”, 247, 259).

Intercultural competence and understanding have long been set down as teaching objectives in secondary education, though the term ‘intercultural’ has become increasingly discredited in recent years in the course of the ‘transcultural turn’. The concept of ‘intercultural’ understanding, it is argued, is based on outmoded concepts which treat cultures as monoliths with clear boundaries (Eisenmann, 221-2). Therefore, its critics maintain, it unduly focusses on the differences between various cultures – hence the term ought to be replaced by transculturality, which concentrates on the mutual permeation of cultures (Welsch, “Transkulturalität”, 334-5), tries to dissolve the self – other binary implied in the term ‘intercultural’, and prioritises hybridity and heterogeneity within one culture (Blell and Dorff, 80). Transcultural studies challenge the old concept of the collective identity of a particular nation (Freitag-Hild, 18; Stein, 252-3), blurring the difference between insider and outsider and acknowledging the multiplicity of individual and group affiliations (Bell and Dorff, 83). Modern individuals, it is argued, creatively assemble their identities from a “pool” of cultures (Hannerz, 49) and are no longer determined by one culture only. Modern identities are plural and hybrid, merging elements from various cultures and social classes in very individual combinations. Transcultural studies hence should teach us to reflect critically upon essentialist concepts of culture and identity (Freitag-Hild, 54) and make us aware of the interdependence of cultures in the age of globalisation (Eisenmann, 221). It needs to be added, however, that other critics have argued that intercultural and transcultural learning are complimentary terms and should not be conceived as opposites (see Siegmann, 171; Delanoy, 26).

Some scholars seem to use the terms ‘transcultural’ and ‘transnational’ almost interchangeably. In the *Cambridge Companion to Transnational American Literature* (2018), Yogita Goyal defines the aim of transnationalism as the unsettling of national myths of cultural purity, the displacement of nationalist binaries and the revelation of the interconnectedness of various parts of the world and peoples (6, 10) – which largely ties in with the way scholars have defined transculturality. The term ‘cosmopolitan’ is also used in a related manner. Hannerz underlines that we are influenced by the people we meet, the places we travel to, the books and papers we read, the TV channels we watch, and stresses the transnational ties of kin, friends and business associates in the modern world, but defines a more genuine cosmopolitanism as intellectual openness and a willingness to engage with the Other (89, 103).

While it is important to be aware that there is no unified national culture and that our individual identities –not only those of migrants drawing upon two or more cultures – are composites of diverse elements, the celebration of such creolized identities in some transcultural studies is problematic, not only because of the disturbing biologist overtones of the term ‘hybrid’. In the modern world a certain kind of cosmopolitanism is undoubtedly no longer the privilege of the “globetrotting ... elite” but open to a much wider section of the population, from students on exchange programmes to work migrants (Nyman, 4). Yet the very diversity of these mobile groups points to the danger of occluding the very different power relations and life options such ‘cosmopolitan’ border crossings involve. Hence transcultural studies have, with some reason, been accused of being blind to the power asymmetries between cultures and economies (Freitag-Hild, 33, Delanoy, 25). The concept of transculturality is potentially elitist, catering to the tastes of the rich, the young, the urban intellectuals, and disregarding the poor, the rural, the elderly and more traditional part of the population. Volkmann, for instance, criticizes that the concepts of transculturality and postmodernism gratify the personal sensitivities of privileged bourgeois elites in high- and post-industrial societies, and that the academy in its ivory tower fails to acknowledge the continued existence of binary and hierarchical patterns of thought (“Abkehr”, 43–4). Transcultural studies, Schulze-Engler defined pointedly, focus not on what culture does to the individual, but what an individual does with culture (46), concentrating on the myriad different ways in which individuals in a society construct their selfhood. This focus on the individual, however, involves the danger of underestimating the importance of class, religion and community (Fischer, vii). A sizable section of the population still feel themselves strongly rooted within a particular nation and define themselves in relation to “a collective ‘we-identity” (G. Alter, 63). Besides, terrorist attacks and the high number of people seeking refuge in Europe and America in recent years have aroused wide-spread fears of

foreign infiltration, giving new impetus to essentialist concepts of a national cultural identity imperilled by alien immigrants – unrealistic and plain xenophobic though this may be. The concept of intermingling cultures, Hannerz suggests, may be more easy to integrate into the old American ideal of the melting pot (although President Trump’s rhetoric and policies suggest otherwise), but in European countries “other ideas of historical roots would seem much more difficult to contest” (87). Instead of celebrating the cultural potential of hybridity and creolisation, as some postcolonial critics have done, many politicians and a majority of the population in the West demand that immigrants assimilate to the prevailing cultural norms, and that they should be speedily deported or preferably hindered from crossing the national border in the first place. Throughout Europe the influx of migrants and asylum-seekers has led to a continuous tightening of immigration laws, so that nowadays the global flow of money, media and goods is encouraged, while more and more border restrictions for people are introduced (Woolley, 6). Frontiers in Europe and the US are no longer as penetrable as Nyman predicted, and a large number of refugees are being deported. (36).

Nyman’s criticism of unrealistic visions of “easy adaptation”, “triumphant hybridities” and “such forms of postcolonial discourse that celebrate them as unproblematic ways of countering hierarchies and hegemonies” (1) has gained added topicality in view of these political developments. Transcultural identities, he reminds us, are not always voluntary, and refugees cannot be romanticized and posited as privileged models of identity in the postcolonial world (Nyman, 35). Besides, transitions between cultures in the writings of literary celebrities like Rushdie or Mukherjee “appear much less problematic and patrolled” than in other refugee narratives (Nyman, 20). Woolley (3), too, emphasizes that refugee narratives, which frequently tell about displacement, loss, death and trauma, are markedly different from this celebrated diaspora identity. Besides, as Volkmann (“Opportunities”, 241) points out, there is, today, both a proclivity towards globalisation and at the same time a resistance to homogenizing, for fear that cultural diversity may be wiped out. Particularly for minority groups cultural identity has gained enormous significance: it is a protection against a fading identity and against becoming invisible (G. Alter, 63). A transcultural, that is, instable, hybrid identity would mean the loss of a voice for these minorities.

In the classroom a transcultural approach should thus be negotiated with care. It can teach pupils to reflect upon essentialist concepts of culture and identity (Freitag-Hild, 54) and might offer them a sense of freedom to construct their own, individual identity, leaving behind confining traditions. It may open up routes of bonding with foreign classmates with similar interests, preferences and problems, which in turn might ease acceptance and tolerance of those foreign habits and cultural conventions which will seem unfamiliar and outlandish. The challenge,

then, is to acknowledge local traditions, customs and beliefs, but to show that they are historically constructed, open to change, not unanimously and universally accepted even within the national community, but open to contest. The difficulty is to find a way to accept and/or tolerate as much difference as possible, but also to uphold some basic values as not open to negotiation. Although Welsch has frequently expounded that all cultures are a conglomeration of diverse historical and recent influences and that there is no such thing as, for instance, a German, 'Leitkultur' (core culture), he also acknowledges the existence of something like a European core culture involving non-negotiable values such as the international human rights, an independent judiciary, democracy and the equality of the sexes, which new settlers must subscribe to if they want to be accepted in our communities (Welsch, Discussion).

Various critics have regarded literature as a privileged site for "exploring transcultural experience" (Nordin, Hansen and Llena, x), and indeed as a "'contact zone' [...] where transculturation takes place" (Loomba, 70). However, setting in motion such transculturation processes in a classroom is not so easy. Literary texts about different cultures and ethnicities can arouse empathy and understanding for the 'Other'; but they are also potential sources of misunderstanding. The schemata readers apply to interpret any text (and real-life encounters as well) are culture-dependent. As Freitag-Hild (335) has warned, and as has also emerged from the questionnaires briefly discussed in the appendix to this paper, pupils (and university students as well) often lack the background knowledge necessary to understand unfamiliar customs, values and attitudes of a foreign culture and tend to judge fictional characters from the limited perspective of their own cultural norms. Teachers must hence devote some time to explain the cultural, social, and historical background to the text.

What features do critics regard as characteristic of texts that offer a transcultural perspective? Helff (83) thinks that transcultural narratives challenge the collective identity of a particular community, dispute traditional notions of home and narrate experiences of border crossing. According to Hannerz (87) many stress hybridity and intermingling. Transcultural writers, Dagnino (74-5) argues, have normally undergone transpatriation themselves and had to re-negotiate their identity; they write about the dynamics of cultural encounters, presenting characters with more than one background and mixing languages and narrative genres. Freitag-Hild (3) suggests that transcultural stories develop alternative concepts of cultural identity; the stories are usually set in various countries and often employ multiperspectivity as a narrative technique. These descriptions partly overlap with features that are typical of the refugee and migrant genres: there, too, journeying across countries and questioning the concept of home are typical features, but narratives of forced migration also thematise death, trauma and lack of agency,

loneliness, melancholy and displacement, racialized borders between the migrants and the host community, the lack of full integration and acceptance in a hostile host community, and they want to give a voice to their subjects (Nyman, 12, 76). Many of these works, it should be added, also blur the distinction between refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants, between forced and voluntary migration – a distinction which is often unclear in real life as well, as many people seeking sanctuary abroad are not actually fleeing state persecution but state failure and the loss of livelihood possibilities (Loescher, 320).

In studies about transcultural texts and recent refugee narratives, scholars concerned with anglophone literature tend to concentrate on postcolonial authors from the periphery who have migrated to the metropolises of the West, have undergone transpatriation and have had to negotiate new identities, which draw on the cultures of both their home and host country. It is mainly in a historical context of American or Australian studies that also narratives, for instance, of Jewish, Italian or Eastern European immigrants are considered, which force students to revise the stereotyped contemporary image of migrants as coming mainly from the Middle East or Africa. Obviously, texts written by white writers of the metropolis are usually not taken into account. Yet many acclaimed children's novels about refugees, surprisingly, were written by white American or British writers, who tackle the problem of displacement sympathetically, but of course cannot really offer the wanted insider's perspective or a privileged insight into the target culture. The arrogation of refugee voices by writers from the majority culture is, of course, very problematic – a no-go in postcolonial theory. On the other hand, the critical praise the narratives have received and the fact that "teachers and librarians have embraced these titles as a way to explain the refugee crisis to children" (A. Alter) suggest that their authors indeed manage to make the plight of refugees accessible to Western children and to ease the clash of schemata which can mislead inexperienced readers in their comprehension and evaluation of foreign culture-specific forms of behaviour.

Many of these texts about refugees for young readers take an intercultural, rather than a transcultural approach, focussing primarily on the cultural differences the young refugees have to negotiate before they can develop a hybrid identity, in which they retain their roots but also adapt to their new home. In the following, I want to deal with two refugee novels written by award-winning white writers of children's books – *Refugee* by the American author Alan Gratz and *After Tomorrow* by the British author Gillian Cross – which not only promote tolerance and understanding but, I think, also convey a transcultural agenda and are well suited for the classroom. Narratives written for children, of course, cannot be expected to be as complex and sophisticated as novels for adults. However, Gratz's and Cross' novels do challenge concepts of collective national identity and narrate

experiences of border crossing and traumatic flights in which the protagonists have to face death, despair and helplessness, need to re-negotiate their identities and to re-think notions of home. The authors also question the distinction between refugees and economic migrants, which nowadays is often decisive for an applicant's right of residency in Europe; and they even manage to imply a form of multiperspectivity,

## **REFUGEE**

Alan Gratz's highly acclaimed novel *Refugee* was on the *New York Times* bestseller list for more than a year; it received numerous awards, among them the Sidney Taylor Book Award and the National Jewish Book Award, and was chosen as a Global Read Aloud Book in 2018 (Gratz, "About Me"). It is recommended for children from nine years up, but contains some violence (though never gratuitous) in connection with the perils the protagonists have to brave during their flights, so that slightly older readers might be more appropriate. The characters become eye-witnesses of deadly shootings and shark attacks, see corpses floating in the water, and hear reports about torture and executions in concentration camps. In an EFL classroom learners would probably have to be older anyway, and more proficient in English: although the book is written in a comparatively simple language, its 338 pages still present a formidable challenge to young foreign readers, despite the fact that the suspenseful narrative is likely to captivate their interest. In an interview Gratz said that he wanted to personalize the current conflict around incoming refugees: "I wanted to make individual refugees visible and turn statistics into names and faces that kids could relate to" (Gratz, qtd. in A. Alter). He wrote the novel with middle-graders in mind, who "are shaping their views of the world *right now* because the world is forcing them to", and, he felt, should be offered an antidote to the "racist and intolerant rhetoric" they hear from political leaders or on the internet (Gratz, qtd. in Jordan).

Novels for children, as mentioned above, usually employ a fairly simple narrative technique – most often, first person narration. A sophisticated technique like multiperspectivity – which is regarded as one of the features typical of trans-cultural novels for adults – is rare, because it can be potentially confusing to inexperienced readers. *Refugee* is one of the few children's novels that indeed manage to juggle multiple perspectives: it interweaves the stories of three different fictional characters forced to flee from their different mother-countries at different times, but whose fates and routes cross, although the main characters never meet in person. Yet their experiences seem to repeat themselves. Twelve-year-old Joseph is a German Jew whose father is arrested and whose family is terrorized by Nazi

storm troopers in the Kristallnacht of 1938. A little later, in May 1939, the family try to flee to Cuba – the only state willing to grant them visas – on the MSS St. Louis. The ship, and some of the characters on it, such as Captain Gustav Schroeder and the Nazi sailor Otto Schiendick, are historical; Josef's father is an amalgam of two real-life men (Gratz, "Author's Note", 326-7). As in real life, the Jewish passengers in the novel are denied entrance into Havana and also into the United States, and have to return to Europe, where Josef, his mother and sister are given sanctuary in France, which is soon afterwards occupied by German troops. Josef and his mother are arrested and killed in a concentration camp; his young sister Ruthie survives the holocaust.

The father of eleven-year-old Isabel stands in danger of being thrown into prison after a riot because of food shortages in Havana in 1994. Again, these food riots are historical, as is Fidel Castro's short-lived decision to let Cubans who want to leave go – which led to the exodus of hundreds of would-be emigrants on make-shift boats. Isabel, her parents, grandfather and neighbours (all of them fictional characters), too, try to flee to the United States. The US policy in operation at the time decreed that if they make it to the American shore, they will be granted asylum, but if they are caught at sea, they will be returned to Cuba, possibly facing prison sentences. Contrary to their expectations, the dangerous voyage lasts five days: they are almost run over by a tanker, almost drown, are blown off-course, are denied entrance in the Bahamas, lose a boy in a shark attack, and finally reach the coast of Florida – finding the sanctuary there that was denied to the Jews on the MSS St. Louis. In order to buy the family time to make the last meters to the shore, Isabel's grandfather – the very policeman who was forced to prevent the Jewish passengers of the St. Louis from disembarking in Havana – jumps into the sea, thereby forcing the American coast guard boat to start a rescue action, though this means that the Americans will send him back to Cuba. For him, this is an act of atonement for not taking action to help the Jewish refugees 55 years earlier.

The third strand of action, also merging historical incidents with fictional characters modelled on the thousands of Syrian refugees who fled to Europe in 2015, deals with twelve-year old Mahmoud from Aleppo, who in the Syrian civil war is in constant danger of being hit by barrel-bombs or killed by warring factions or religious fanatics in a city where law and order has completely broken down. When their house is destroyed by a missile, the family flees to Germany, braving a perilous sea-passage from Turkey to Greece, in which the majority of the passengers is drowned. On their way along the Balkan route they are exploited and robbed at gunpoint, arrested and incarcerated in a Hungarian refugee camp, before they finally make it to Berlin, where they are taken in by Ruthie, Josef's sister, the holocaust survivor who, as an old woman, offers a new home to the Syrian refugees. The novel thus comes round full circle, ending in the place where

it began: Germany, from which Jews in the 1930s had to flee if they wanted to survive, now offers sanctuary to asylum-seekers from another part of the world, who in turn had to flee for their lives. Mahmoud wonders whether Aleppo will rise from the ashes as Berlin did after the second world war.

Throughout the novel things seem to repeat themselves: “refugees continue to suffer because we make the same mistakes again and again”, Gratz complained (qtd. in Jordan). Although the protagonists have different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, different religions and live in different times, they share basic experiences typical of refugees, such as helplessness, fear, loss of family members and friends – which ought to make young readers aware that refugees are not a singular, contemporary phenomenon, but that the tragedies of displacement, persecution, flight and asylum-seeking repeat themselves over and over again. The three narratives alternate, with each consecutive chapter devoted to another protagonist in turn, in order to make the similarities between them all the more eye-catching. In all three strands of action immigration policies and officials who stolidly administer these policies deny entrance to refugees who have fled from terror, tyranny and death. Although the governments of their home countries hate and persecute these people, they nevertheless refuse to let them emigrate; and other countries incarcerate them if they pass through their territory during their flight. All three protagonists need to cross the sea on their way to sanctuary and are threatened by similar dangers: Josef’s father, who jumps over board to commit suicide, is saved from sharks by a police officer who turns out to be Isabel’s grandfather, but Isabel’s friend does not survive a shark attack. The Jewish would-be immigrants are put off by the Cuban authorities by constant promises for ‘tomorrow’; so is Mahmoud’s family by the people’s smuggler who promised them a crossing from Izmir to Lesbos. The question of the benefits and ills of visibility and invisibility is raised in all three narrative strands. In Nazi Germany and in occupied France Jews have to hide to escape arrest, and Josef’s father needed to be ‘invisible’ not to draw the attention of Nazi henchmen upon himself in the concentration camp; however, Josef also realizes that they cannot just be passive and therefore tries to help the passengers who mutiny to take command of the MSS *St. Louis*, but are finally persuaded to give up, lest they be officially charged with piracy and extradited to Germany. Isabel’s boat is nearly cut in two by a tanker, because it is so small and hardly visible on the ocean; but on the other hand the tiny craft also escapes discovery by the coast guards until the very last minutes. In Aleppo Mahmoud has learned to be invisible to escape from bullies and soldiers, but he comes to realize that the refugees need to be visible, otherwise they will be overlooked and no-one will help them.

Despite their young age all three protagonists are forced to mature fast and to take up the responsibilities of adults. Josef – originally proud of having become

a 'man' at his bar mitzvah – all too soon must in full earnest take the role of the man of the family, which his paranoid father is no longer able to fulfil; from now on Josef is the one who takes action and decisions. Isabel, too, grows beyond her years, saving her neighbour from drowning, helping to bail the sinking boat, and carrying her baby brother, born on the boat, to safety in America. During the shipwreck Mahmoud makes the fateful decision of handing his baby sister to a passing boat of other refugees because they cannot keep her above water any longer – which makes him feel responsible for her loss when they cannot find her again after their own rescue. And he leads the flight of the imprisoned refugees from the Hungarian camp because he realizes that, under the eyes of UN officials, the Hungarians will not dare to detain them.

In spite of such similarities, however, Gratz is at pains to avoid essentialised descriptions of either the refugees or the majority population, but paints varied pictures of their reactions. While each community – the German Jews, the Syrian Muslims, and the Cubans – shares particular habits and customs (such as certain prayers, coming of age ceremonies, burial rites, etc.), each of the refugees is shown to be different. The behaviour of the Jewish passengers of the MSS St Louis ranges from the persecution mania of Josef's traumatized father to the innocent mischief of two little girls, from the distraught mother's wish to spend the last safe days on board dancing, to some desperate men's attempt (including Josef) to hijack the ship to run her aground in US waters. Gratz also makes it clear that not all Germans are monsters: the fanatical Nazi sailor is counterpointed with the St Louis's humane captain, who tries everything he can to save the passengers of his ship. The sadistic Nazi soldier (obviously taken from *Sophie's Choice*) who forces Josef's mother to decide which of her two children he should let go, is contrasted to the unnamed Germans who hid Ruthie's cousin during the war, and to the Hitler Youth who steals Josef's candy but otherwise lets him go with a warning from the restaurant car he is forbidden to enter as a Jew. And the disturbing images of the Kristallnacht are contrasted with the generous welcome Germany gives to Syrian refugees in 2015. Similarly, Isabel's relatives and the neighbours have different plans and attitudes, although they ultimately show solidarity with each other. The officials of the Bahamas, who are not allowed to admit aliens, are contrasted to the tourists, who try to help the refugees by giving them water and food. Mahmoud is contrasted to his catatonic brother, his optimistic father, his anxious mother. During their flight they meets people who ruthlessly exploit Syrian refugees, charging them horrendous sums for sleeping in a derelict shopping centre or selling them dysfunctional life vests, while others offer their help. The picture drawn of Hungary is almost completely negative (probably owing to the broadcasts about the brutal treatment of refugees there that went around the world in 2015): the policemen shoot tear-gas, whose effects are graphically

described, incarcerate and beat the refugees, throwing them food as if they were animals in a zoo: “We don’t want your filth here [...] You’re all parasites!” (Gratz, *Refugee*, 267). But some civilians cheer them on their way, while others boo. And while the tourists on the ferry from Lesbos seem annoyed when the Muslims kneel down to pray, the Austrians at the border applaud them after the prayer and welcome them kindly. Thus by and large Gratz tries to deconstruct national stereotypes, stressing the diversity of people in all nations.

I have already discussed *Refugee’s* unusual intertwining of three different refugee narratives. Unlike many other children’s books, Gratz also does not employ first person narrative, with the exception of Ruthie’s brief recollection, winding up Josef’s story, in which she tells Mahmoud that her brother volunteered to go to the concentration camp, so that she could go free. The rest of the novel is a third person narrative using the three protagonists as focalisers and showing the events through their eyes. Thereby, Gratz extends a similar invitation to the reader as autodiegetic narratives do to empathize with the main characters and understand their thoughts and feelings. However, as the world-views of eleven- to thirteen-year olds are occasionally too limited for the author’s didactic purposes, the young focalisers are at times endowed with insights and clairvoyance that are not entirely credible, given their age. Would a thirteen-year-old boy really have sensed that going back to Germany means going to their deaths – even if his father told him about the horrors of Dachau? And would he have feared, before the war broke out, that Germany might occupy half of Europe? Even if Mahmoud might notice the tourists’ frowns of displeasure when the Muslim migrants all kneel down to pray on the ferry, would he be able to formulate the insight that Westerners only see the refugees when they do something they do not want them to do? And could a twelve-year-old boy really lead the walk-out from the refugee camp to the border (although such a walk-out did happen in Denmark in reality), and have the perspicacity to understand that the Hungarians will not use violence under the eyes of the UN inspectors?

Such slight dissonances in narrative perspective are probably due to the author’s wish to spell out the book’s message to its young readers. Gratz was aware that his “sympathetic look at people whose lives are upended by war and oppression, might repel some readers” who assume he wanted “to push an agenda” (Gratz, qtd. in A. Alter). Such a resentful reaction – indeed, something like a caricature of the very attitude Gratz attacks – appears, for instance, in the blog of a rightist mother enraged at her child’s school-reading: she accuses Gratz of inculcating pupils with left-wing ideas, arguing that only Josef really qualifies as a refugee, whereas Isabel’s father should not have rioted, then he need not have fled from Cuba, and that Mahmoud’s family should have stayed in Turkey instead of “shopping for a better life” in Europe (Lee). As is typical of the migrant and

refugee genres, however, Gratz consciously blurs the distinction between asylum seekers, refugees and migrants, implying that such legal quibbles do not do justice to the problem. Josef undoubtedly should have qualified for asylum, which in 1939 both Cuba and the United States failed to grant. However, Gratz also describes a Cuba in which there is not only scarcity of food but in which political opponents and even people who just want to leave the country are imprisoned. Isabel's family hope to gain both (political) freedom and a better life in the US. Mahmoud's family are in constant danger of their lives in Aleppo. His father has heard that Germany will accept Syrians, so he never thinks of staying in the Turkish refugee camp, but crosses border after border, if need be also illegally, because he does not have enough money to wait for weeks for official permits. Readers are invited to ask themselves whether they would not have done the same, given the civil war in Syria, and the terrible living conditions and exploitation on the way. Not everything the family do is legal, but neither are all of Josef's actions (after all, he is willing to help hijack a ship). If we understand Josef's despair, Gratz tries to show, we should also understand Isabel's and Mahmoud's families.

Towards the end of the novel, there are some regrettable mistakes which a careful editor should have corrected. Why English-speaking authors feel that they should include German words for the sake of authenticity when they do not know the language is not clear – in any case “komm hier” (Gratz, *Refugee*, 316) is not correct German. It is also not clear how Mohammed can understand Ruthie's report about Josef's fate and her promise to help him find his baby sister, if he does not speak a word of German. In the attached ‘Author's Note’, which gives interesting information about the historical background of the narrative and recommends donating money for UNICEF or Save the Children, Hungary is erroneously listed together with Germany and Sweden as having accepted “hundreds of thousands of refugees” (Gratz, *Refugee*, 334) – when, in fact, it has obdurately refused to take in refugees. This is all the more surprising because in the novel itself Hungary is excoriated for its treatment of refugees.

In their survey of refugee fiction for children and young adults Liang, Brendler and Galda (60) have identified three phases in the usual plot of refugee stories, on one of which these narratives tend to concentrate: either the novels focus on the precarious situation in the home country, explaining the reason for the flight of the characters; or they direct attention to the suspenseful journey, in which the young refugees are often in danger and have to overcome numerous difficulties; or they centre on the arrival, the difficulties of adaptation to the host country and the question of whether the hopes and expectations of the refugees are actually fulfilled. *Refugee* clearly belongs to the second type. It concentrates on the perilous journeys, providing only a brief background to the political, social and economic situation occasioning the decision to leave, and giving hardly any information

about the protagonists' lives after arrival: Josef never makes it to safety, but in Mahmoud's narrative we learn that Josef's sister now lives in a little house in Berlin (an American's view of urban life, that – Berlin being a city where few people would actually own a house, be it ever so small). We are told that, after her arrival in Miami, Isabel is proud of soon becoming an American citizen and that she starts to develop a hybrid identity, symbolized by the fact that at an audition she plays the American anthem on her trumpet Cuban-style. Of Mahmoud we only learn that he has a sense that Germany and Ruthie's house might feel like home; he has not yet had time to re-negotiate a new identity, and Gratz shies away from giving more than a very fleeting glimpse at the Syrian boy's surprise at being taken in by a Jewish family. By leaving the two survivors at the threshold, as it were, of their new lives, the novel also suggests to its young readers that they, too, might contribute to a positive new beginning for refugees by welcoming their foreign classmates in their midst.

## **AFTER TOMORROW**

Gillian Cross' novel *After Tomorrow* (2013) won the Little Rebels Children's Book Award 2014, was longlisted for the Carnegie Medal 2014 and the Guardian Children's Fiction Prize, and shortlisted for the Leeds Book Awards 2014, age category 11-14 ("LoveReading View"). The book is "a real page-turner with a strong sense of danger always present, and many big issues of a possible future just below the surface" (Wendy Cooling, judge of the Little Rebels Children's Book Award 2014, qtd in "Gillian Cross Wins"), and an exciting read for teenagers. In order to appreciate the full effect of the ironies it employs, however, children must be mature enough to understand its inversion of familiar schemata and expectations as far as migrants are concerned. The novel is quite unlike the run-of-the mill stories of persecuted, starving refugees from the Middle East, Africa or Latin America fleeing to freedom in the West (or, if a historical perspective is included, as in *Refugee*, German Jews trying to escape from Nazi terror). Instead, in this dystopian novel set in the near future, public order has completely broken down in Britain, and it is British citizens who by the thousands flee to France for sanctuary, reversing the wonted scenario of displacement and breaking up the protective layer of habituation and complacency most of us have developed vis-a vis migrants. By this strategy the narrative gets under one's skin, suddenly confronting readers with the spectre that this could also happen to them, a premise that is "a little too close for comfort" (Buckley-Archer).

After a black Monday in which five banks crashed all at once, the British economy has collapsed, putting an end to "a way of life we take for granted" (Buckley-Archer): there are food-shortages, and what food there is, is sold at exorbitant

prices. Hungry “raiders” break into houses in order to steal food and anything else of value, sometimes raping and even killing the owners in the process. Matt’s father, a truck driver delivering potatoes, was killed by robbers who were after his load, and his grandfather died of a heart-attack when his small allotment, in which he grew vegetables and fruit to supply his family, was raided. Matt’s mother is raped when she fails to knuckle down to a group of robbers, and his step-father is badly injured in the face. The family is also listed on a hate internet page identifying so-called “scadgers”. that is, hoarders, “[r]ich people who buy up all the food and hide it away so they don’t have to share it with anyone else” (Cross, *After Tomorrow*, 6). But Matt’s family is anything but rich – his mother just managed to collect a few provisions by trading home-grown vegetables for other food-stuffs. After this incident the family decide to do what many others have done before – namely to flee to the continent. However, the French are closing the border because of this mass exodus, justifying the measure by the familiar rhetoric of false regret politicians have lately adopted to vindicate the erection of fences, border controls and the rejection of refugees:

The people of France have great sympathy with their British cousins, but these are hard times for our country. We cannot afford to receive the great numbers of people who are trying to enter France, Therefore, with great regret, we must follow the example of other European countries and close our borders (Cross, *After Tomorrow*, 37).

For once Britons – who in real life have taken a stream of measures to prevent increased immigration (see Woolley, 4-5) – are at the receiving end of such frontier management; now they are the aliens that other European countries try to keep out. For Matt it comes as a shock that he needs to revise his view of the TV-pictures of long lines of people walking down a country road with bundles and babies: “*Refugees*, I thought automatically. But they weren’t. They were people like us” (Cross, *After Tomorrow*, 37). The novel thus prevents the readers from othering the refugees, but forces them to put themselves in their place.

Teenaged Matt, his little brother Taco and his step father manage to make it through the Channel Tunnel with the help of Bob, who, for money, crams his truck full with desperate people making a last-minute bid to escape to the continent. The truck-load of refugees suddenly stuck in the Chunnel not only conjures up appalling memories of migrants suffocated in vans on their way into Europe, but also constitutes a deliberate challenge of propaganda branding both people’s smugglers and illegal immigrants who make use of them as criminals. Given their circumstances – could anyone really blame the family for making use of Bob’s help? Then, however, we can hardly blame Mahmoud’s father in *Refugee* either for

paying money to an unscrupulous smuggler to help them cross the Aegean. At the other end of the tunnel, it turns out in *After Tomorrow*, armed French soldiers have erected crowd barriers, keeping the refugees penned up in a floodlight-lit space without any food, water, or protection from the rain. Finally, most of them are sent straight back to England, with the exception of parents with children and people whose “lives have been in danger” (Cross, *After Tomorrow*, 64). In locked-up trains uncomfortably reminiscent of Nazi transports, those allowed to stay are taken to a desolate camp, where they are housed in tents made of corrugated iron, cardboard and polythene. There is no proper hygiene or medical care, and Taco almost dies when he contracts fever from a rat-bite and no penicillin is available.

In its reversal of stereotypes, *After Tomorrow* goes even one step further: one of the TV crews reporting on the “desperate, starving refugees” (Cross, *After Tomorrow*, 107) and their precarious living conditions are Arabs probably working for Al Jazeera. The humane journalist Salman is genuinely upset by the misery he sees, yet has little power to change the refugees’ appalling situation. But he does save Taco’s life, although, as a reporter, he is not supposed to get involved. “But you can’t stay human in this job unless you break the rules sometimes” (Cross, *After Tomorrow*, 274). He sends an ambulance and pays for the hospital, so that the boy can receive proper treatment, in recompense, to be sure, for a sensational and probably mawkish cover story – an effective reversal of our wonted schemata of Western journalists reporting about and occasionally organizing aid for desolate Middle Eastern refugees.

Unlike *Refugee*, *After Tomorrow* is a straightforward first person narrative; yet like *Refugee*, it achieves some kind of multiperspectivity by showing the ways in which not only the narrator Matt, but also various other people react to the crisis: there is no uniformity, no national communality, either among the British or the French. For some raiders and scadgers in Britain, this is a matter of life and death: “It’s your kids or ours, mate” (Cross, *After Tomorrow*, 4); others are criminals who want to enrich themselves. Moreover, the British refugees cope with hunger, cold, powerlessness and boredom in the camp in different ways: the girl Paige manages because she can communicate in French. Bob is a fixer, adroit at getting his share of everything, but also good at motivating people, while Matt’s step-father seems to despair, hardly rousing himself from his cot. One refugee cooks soup for the community, inviting people to contribute edibles like nettles or gnawed chicken bones thrown away by some older boys outside the camp, obviously illegal aliens, who survive by stealing chickens and bicycles. Matt earns a little money by repairing these bicycles, and he himself steals the spare-parts from old, rusty bikes he finds in a Frenchwoman’s shed. The reactions of the French are equally varied: most people have little sympathy with the British migrants, but are angry because they get food vouchers for nothing. They stare at the unkempt refugees, even spit

at Matt's shopping trolley, and sneer when he wants to pay for a plastic bag with a worthless British banknote. But there are others who give little children food. The Frenchwoman Steff befriends Matt, Taco and Paige and even lends them her bike when they need to fetch penicillin for Taco from another town, and she feels ashamed for her compatriots when they defraud Matt of the bikes and give him old aspirins instead of penicillin.

Thus, as in *Refugee*, there is an emphasis on diversity rather than a national culture or stereotype. What most of the English refugees share, however, is ignorance of the French language, and indeed something like indignation that they are expected to communicate in it and have to fill out forms which are not in their own language. Paige needs to translate for all the others. Matt, in contrast, is anything but cosmopolitan, and is implicitly ridiculed for his narrow-mindedness. He dislikes both France and the French: to learn their language would mean to accommodate to the situation and to give up hope of returning home in the near future. He continues to call the camp of Les Mandeaux (Longshanks) Lemon Dough, though after a time he ought to know better. He gets het up that Paige should speak French when she is English. "You don't need to know that stuff. You're English", he reprimands his little brother and is shocked when Taco starts to think in French, "[a]s if he belonged here" (Cross, *After Tomorrow*, 79, 213). Taco, however, constructs his identity in a more transcultural manner – his very nick-name, referring to his favourite Mexican food, indicates that he indeed chooses from a diversified pool of cultures. It is only when Matt traverses the French landscape by bike to fetch the penicillin that he begins to appreciate its beauty. And it is only when Steff takes him to watch the Tour the France that he can develop a new dream (of participating in the race one day) which incorporates France. For the first time, he wishes to thank Steff in her own language for letting him see the race. And when, in the end, Paige and he agree to cooperate on a bicycle repair business, he is also willing to learn French himself. Relinquishing his insular mentality, he can finally appreciate Einstein's metaphor, which points to the fluidity of identity: "*Life is like a bicycle. If you want to stay balanced, you have to keep moving*" (Cross, *After Tomorrow*, 277).

While, as I have shown, *Refugee* concentrates on the journeys of the three protagonists, providing just enough information about their plight at home to make the flight understandable, and giving only the briefest information about the time after the arrival, this is different in *After Tomorrow*: Cross only hints at violence (for instance, the mother's rape) without describing it at length, but she nonetheless takes time to illustrate why the situation in Britain has become intolerable and Matt's family have to flee, no matter by what means (though in the end the mother has to stay behind with the sick grandmother). The journey itself is only tackled very briefly. The main part of the book is devoted to the adjustment

to the horrible conditions in the camp and the test of characters the refugees are subjected to by them.

Apart from reversing the perspective on migrants, the novel also raises ethical questions for which there are no simple answers. Clear-cut moral differences break down. Is it immoral to steal food, if you are starving? Is it wrong to hoard food? How much solidarity can you expect of people if their own subsistence is in danger? What if those who still have food will defend their possessions and kill the raiders – as happened to Paige’s parents? And how much threat and violence must an individual be exposed to in order to qualify as a refugee, and not as an economic migrant? In France, the moral dilemma continues: how culpable is Matt for stealing spare parts from derelict bicycles and cooperating with chicken-rustlers? Even the villain Bob, who as a “Super-Scadger” (Cross, *After Tomorrow*, 291) in fact had to run for his life from England, defies easy classification. To be sure, it is unforgivable that he cheats Matt by procuring him false penicillin from one of his cronies, but without his shrewdness Matt and his relatives would hardly have coped in France. In the end of the novel, only the small problem of how to punish Bob and get rid of him is resolved, but there is no solution to the economic crisis, and the future of the characters remains open.

When composing her novel Gillian Cross, a renowned author of children’s books, evinced a disconcerting clairvoyance for coming developments. She had her first inspiration for writing *After Tomorrow* when she saw pictures of Sudanese boys who had fled to Chad and wondered how English boys would cope as refugees if the British economy broke down – soon afterwards, in 2010, the euro-crisis began. In the book, the lack of food supplies leads to riots – in 2011, riots indeed broke out in the UK. And in 2012, when the book was finished, Prime Minister Cameron “announced that he would flout EU law and close the UK’s border to Greek economic migrants” (Cross, “Writing Reality”) – an ominous historical counterpart to the French president closing the border to British refugees in the novel. *After Tomorrow* has received additional topicality by the refugee crisis of 2015 and recent measures across Europe of preventing refugees from reaching the continent.

Like *Refugee*, *After Tomorrow* is capable of arousing empathy and understanding, and of questioning received notions of migrants. Both novels also open up room for the discussion of wider ethical issues. Both, of course, were written primarily with native speakers in mind and are, also because of their comparative length (317 pp and 296 pp. respectively), particularly suitable for young Anglophone readers. However, they are also of high interest for foreign readers who have acquired enough language competence both to enjoy the exciting plot and to engage with the moral questions raised in its course. Unfortunately, young readers with mother tongues other than English are often unaware of novels like *Refugee* and *After Tomorrow*, which are usually not available in translations. As a

rule, such texts are also not taught at University level, so that students who will become foreign language teachers are often unfamiliar with them as well and thus cannot recommend them to their pupils – quite apart from the fact that topical issues that could be discussed in the ELF classroom change so quickly that the necessary turnover hardly leaves time for the development of any ‘canon’ – even if there were such a thing in the field of modern children’s literature. This means that teachers will be on a constant lookout for suitable reading material that might be interesting and profitable to their pupils. The present paper has intended to bring two interesting novels for children to their attention.

## **APPENDIX:**

### **An assessment of the outcome of a survey on the teaching of migrant/refugee/ethnic literatures in English at university level**

As evinced in a brief survey among a number of colleagues teaching English literature in various European and American universities – mainly Austria, Slovenia, Germany, Italy and the United States –, the teaching practice as regards texts about migrants and refugees, and diasporic and ethnic literature in general, is varied, also depending, of course, on the respective university curricula, which usually require a wide coverage of historical and canonical textual material. Responses to questionnaires devised by Igor Maver and myself show that lecturers interested in the field on an average devote some 10-30% of their teaching time to ethnic texts. However, there are considerable differences: while some colleagues (among them many who offer courses on American literature) teach ethnic and/or migration texts regularly, others manage to devote a class to the subject only once a year, or even less often. A great variety of authors is being taught, ranging from black British writers to ethnic and indigenous American and Canadian, Australian, African and Indian writers. Migrant texts are sometimes included into mainstream courses (for instance, when it comes to dealing with works written by authors who emigrated from the home country of the students to America or Australia, or in courses devoted to specific themes and motifs); in other cases special courses on transcultural writing are on offer.

In spite of these differences, which seem to be mainly due to institutional constraints of the curriculum and the need to offer a wide variety of courses in English and American literature, a number of remarkable similarities across various countries and teaching practices have emerged. Most lecturers dealing with migrant or ethnic literature select prose texts for their teaching – novels, short stories or life-stories, usually from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries –, though some also teach historical surveys and hence include earlier narratives. Although the

books discussed in some classes also comprise less known texts (including children's literature or non-English texts in translation), not surprisingly many courses concentrate on canonized authors (such as Rushdie, Kureshi, Zadie Smith, Adichie, Amy Tan, etc.), or, as the term does not really work in postcolonial studies, authors (as one respondent phrased it) who are widely recognized and considered publishing successes. Selection criteria include literary quality (many of these texts employ striking and innovative stylistic techniques), and thematic and narrative complexity on the one hand, and the insights afforded by the texts into the thematic foci of the course, on the other. Topics which are specifically addressed and discussed in these courses include transcultural relations and identities, the culture clash, attitudes to ethnicity, cultural stereotypes, problems of mobility and displacement, the refugee experience, racism and pioneer life, gender roles, the intersectionality of gender, race and class, and ways of dealing with traumatic memory.

Respondents generally affirmed that students are interested in ethnic literature and narratives about migrants and refugees, relating these texts to their own experiences and to those of their families, though, obviously, they connect to some texts better than to others. Students, respondents reported, tend to be intrigued by how different the world looks when approached from a different ethnic vantage point, but (just like pupils in secondary schools) as a rule lack the background knowledge necessary to understand the cultural context of these literary texts, which needs to be explained and taught before they can fully appreciate them, either through information given by the teacher herself or through students' group activities and oral presentations. The feedback considered necessary ranges from the historical background of the narratives to politics, religion and cultural practices. Naturally, the more alien the culture, the more difficult the reading is for students, a difficulty that is sometimes exacerbated by the writers' choice of a complex narrative technique and structure and their use of variants of English. Thus, in my own experience, a novel about first encounters like *That Deadman Dance* by Aboriginal author Kim Scott poses more problems to students than Kate Granville's *The Secret River*, narrating events from the a white settler's perspective (and controversial for that reason). Some of Rushdie's and Mukherjee's narratives require more explanations of Indian cultural norms and religious taboos than those of Zadie Smith or Rohinton Misty.

Although teaching aims in these courses of course vary, it is noteworthy that responses to the question why texts about migrants and refugees, or ethnic texts in general, are being selected for discussion in the University classroom frequently referred to the attempt of teachers to raise ethical consciousness in the students, and to invite them to reflect on the humanitarian crisis, the consequences of armed conflict and ethnic intolerance – objectives very similar to the teaching goals formulated by pedagogues for the school reading of migration texts and,

I would suggest, different from the major teaching goals in University courses dealing with the literary canon. Volkmann, in his remarks on foreign language teaching in secondary schools, recommends going beyond mere language acquisition to include aesthetic aspects and wider educational aims (“Abkehr”, 45). In a related manner, in University courses on migrant and refugee literature lecturers wanted to go beyond aesthetic appreciation and an education in liberal arts to include humanitarian aspects and to raise moral awareness.

In addition, a transcultural agenda was also frequently addressed by the respondents: including ethnic narratives and stories about migrants and refugees into their teaching, they maintained, widens the concept of a British or American national literature and culture, expands students’ knowledge of the variety of literatures in English and creates awareness of transnational identities. Such texts, teachers affirmed, challenge racial and cultural hierarchies and deconstruct binaries, helping students to transcend their own narrow perspective and to appreciate the complexity and diversity of migrant experiences. Several respondents also emphasized the ability of literature to render abstract political arguments concrete, to personalize the fates of refugees and migrants, and to engender empathy and a sense of responsibility – a reading experience, one might add, which students who want to become teachers of English can hopefully then pass on to their pupils in secondary schools.

## WORKS CITED

### Primary Sources

- Cross, Gillian, *After Tomorrow*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013.  
 Gratz, Alan. *Refugee*. London: Scholastic, 2017.

### Secondary Literature

- Alter, Alexandra. “Why Children’s Authors are Taking On the Refugee Crisis.” *The Independent*, 15 Aug. 2017. <https://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/books/features/refugee-crisis-childrens-books-a7893661.html>. Accessed 10 June 2019.
- Alter, Grit. *Inter- and Transcultural Learning in the Context of Canadian Young Adult Fiction*. Wien: LIT, 2015.
- Blell, Gabriele and Sabine Dorff, “It Takes More Than Two For This Tango: Moving Beyond the Self/Other-Binary in Teaching About Culture in the Global EFL-Classroom.” *Zeitschrift für Interkulturellen Fremdsprachenunterricht* 19.1 (2014): 77-96.

- Buckley-Archer, Linda. "After Tomorrow by Gillian Cross – Review." *The Guardian*, International Edition, 10 May 2013. <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/may/10/after-tomorrow-gillian-cross-review> Accessed 11 June 2019.
- Cross, Gillian. "Writing reality: Gillian Cross on After Tomorrow." *Oxford Education Blog*, 4 Feb 2013. <https://educationblog.oup.com/childrens/writing-reality-gillian-cross-on-after-tomorrow>. Accessed 11 June 2019.
- Dagnino, Arianna. "Re-discovering Alessandro Spina's Transculture/ality in *The Young Maronite*." *Transcultural Literary Studies: Politics, Theory and Literary Analysis*. Ed. Bernd Fischer. Basel: MDPI, 2017, 73-83.
- Delanoy, Werner, Maria Eisenmann and Frauke Matz. "Introduction: Learning with Literature in the EFL Classroom." *Learning with Literature in the EFL Classroom*. Ed. Werner Delanoy, Maria Eisenmann and Frauke Matz. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015, 7-15.
- Delanoy, Werner. "Transkulturalität als begriffliche und konzeptionelle Herausforderung an die Fremdsprachendidaktik." *Transkulturelles Lernen im Fremdsprachenunterricht. Theorie und Praxis*. Ed. Frauke Matz, Michael Rogge and Philipp Siepmann. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014, 19-35.
- Eisenmann, Maria. "Crossovers – Postcolonial Literature and Transcultural Learning." *Learning with Literature in the ELF Classroom*. Ed. Werner Delanoy, Maria Eisenmann and Frauke Matz. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015, Frankfurt a. M.: Peter Lang, 2015, 217-236.
- Fischer, Bernd. "Special Issue Introduction 'Transcultural Literary Studies: Politics, Theory, and Literary Analysis'." *Transcultural Literary Studies: Politics, Theory, and Literary Analysis*. Ed. Bernd Fischer. Basel: MDPI, 2017, vii-xi.
- Freitag-Hild, Britta. *Theorie, Aufgabentypologie und Unterrichtspraxis Inter- und Transkultureller Literaturdidaktik. British Fictions of Migration im Fremdsprachenunterricht*. Trier: WVT, 2010.
- "Gillian Cross Wins 2014 Little Rebels Children's Book Award." *Booksforkeeps. The Children's Book Magazine Online*. <http://205.186.129.247/childrens-books/news/gillian-cross-wins-2014-little-rebels-children%E2%80%99s-book-award>. Accessed 11 June 2019.
- Goyal, Yogita. "Introduction: The Transnational Turn." *The Cambridge Companion to Transnational American Literature*. Ed. Yogita Goyal. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, 1-13.
- Gratz, Alan. "About Me." *Alan Gratz. New York Times Bestselling Author*. <https://www.alangratz.com/about/>. Accessed 13 June 2019.
- Gratz, Alan. "Author's Note." *Refugee*. London: Scholastic, 2017, 325-338.
- Hannerz, Ulf. *Transnational Connections. Culture, People, Places*. London/New York: Routledge 1996.

- Helff, Sissy. "Shifting Perspectives – The Transcultural Novel." *Transcultural English Studies. Theories, Fictions, Realities*. Ed. Frank Schulze-Engler and Sissy Helff. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2009, 75–89.
- Jordan, Tina. "That Huge Surprise in His Own Family Genealogy? It's Playing out in His Novels." *New York Times*, 3 Aug. 2018. <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/08/03/books/review/refugee-alan-gratz-best-seller.html>. Accessed 13 June 2019.
- Knellwolf, Christa. "Multiple Positioning: Responses to Cultural Difference in Readings of Abdulrazak Gurnah's Novel *By the Sea*." *Style*, 53: 2 (2019), forthcoming.
- Lee. "Alan Gratz's 'Refugee' Review – Should Your Kids Read It?" *Simple living ... with kids*. 26 Aug, 2018. <https://simplelivingwithkids.com/2018/08/26/alan-gratzs-refugee-review-should-your-kids-read-it>. Accessed 13 June 2019.
- Liang, Lauren Aimonette, Beth Brendler and Lee Galda. "The Refugee Experience in Books for Adolescents." *Journal of Children's Literature* 35.2 (2009): 59–68.
- Loescher, Gil. "Human Rights and Forced Migration." *Human Rights: Politics and Practice*. Ed. Michael Goodhart. 3<sup>rd</sup> edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016, 311–332.
- Longshanks, Lottie. "After Tomorrow by Gillian Cross – Review." *The Guardian*, International Edition, 12 Sept. 2013. <https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/2013/sep/12/review-after-tomorrow-gillian-cross>. Accessed 10 June 2019.
- Loomba, Ania. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*. London: Routledge, 1998.
- "LoveReading View on After Tomorrow." *LoveReading 4 Kids* <https://www.lovereadings4kids.co.uk/book/8631/After-Tomorrow-by-Gillian-Cross.html>. Accessed 10 June 2019.
- Nordin, Irene Gilsenan, Julie Hansen and Carmen Zamorano Llena. "Introduction. Conceptualizing Transculturality in Literature." *Transcultural Identities in Contemporary Literature*. Ed Irene Gilsenan Nordin, Julie Hansen and Carmen Zamorano Llena. Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi, 2013, viii–xxvii.
- Nyman, Jopi. *Displacement, Memory, and Travel in Contemporary Migrant Writing*. Leiden/Boston: Bill Rodopi, 2017.
- Rubik, Margarete. "Narrating the Refugee Experience in Verse: Two Novels for Young Readers and their Potential for Arousing Empathy for Asylum Seekers." *Transcending Boundaries. Migrations, Dislocations and Literary Transformations*. Proceedings of the CISLE Conference in Ljubljana. Ed. Igor Maver and Wolfgang Zach. Tübingen: Stauffenberg, forthcoming.

- Schulze-Engler, Friedrich. "Von 'Inter' zu 'Trans': Gesellschaftliche, Kulturelle und Literarische Übergänge." *Inter- und Transkulturelle Studien. Theoretische Grundlagen und interdisziplinäre Praxis*. Ed. Heinz Antor. Heidelberg: Carl Winter, 2006, 41–53.
- Siepmann, Philipp. "Transnational Cultural Studies im Englischunterricht der Sekundarstufe II." *Transkulturelles Lernen im Fremdsprachenunterricht. Theorie und Praxis*. Ed. Frauke Matz, Michael Rogge and Philipp Siepmann. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014, 167-178.
- Stansfield, John, and Louise Bunce. "The Relationship Between Empathy and Reading Fiction: Separate Roles for Cognitive and Affective Components." *Journal of European Psychology Students*, 5.3 (2014): 9-18.
- Stein, Mark. "The Location of Transculture." *Transcultural English Studies. Theories, Fictions, Realities*. Ed. Frank Schulze-Engler and Sissy Helff. Amsterdam/New York: Rodopi, 2009, 251-266.
- Volkman, Laurenz. "Die Abkehr vom Differenzdenken: Transkulturelles Lernen und *Global Education*." *Transkulturelles Lernen im Fremdsprachenunterricht. Theorie und Praxis*. Ed. Frauke Matz, Michael Rogge and Philipp Siepmann. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014, 37-51.
- Volkman, Laurenz, 'Literary Literacy and Intercultural Competence: Furthering Students' Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes.' *Learning with Literature in the EFL Classroom*. Ed. Werner Delanoy, Maria Eisenmann and Frauke Matz. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015. 49-66.
- Volkman, Laurenz. 'Opportunities and Challenges for Transcultural Learning and Global Education via Literature.' *Learning with Literature in the EFL Classroom*. Ed. Werner Delanoy, Maria Eisenmann and Frauke Matz. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2015), 237-262.
- Welsch, Wolfgang. "Transculturality: The Puzzling Form of Cultures Today." *Spaces of Culture: City, Nation, World*. Ed. Mike Featherstone and Scott Lash. London: Sage, 1999, 194-213.
- Welsch, Wolfgang. "Transkulturalität. Zwischen Globalisierung und Partikularisierung." *Jahrbuch Deutsch als Fremdsprache* 26 (2000): 327–51.
- Welsch, Wolfgang. "Discussion during the Symposium 'De-Lokalisierung'", Vienna, 24 Jan. 2019.
- Woolley, Agnes. *Contemporary Asylum Narratives, Representing Refugees in the Twenty-First Century*. Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014.

Margarete Rubik  
*University of Vienna,*  
Margarete.rubik@univie.ac.at



### **Transkulturene študije in romani za mlade bralce: begunska izkušnja v romanih Alana Gratza *Begunec* in Gillian Crossove *Pojutrišnjem***

Kot odziv na nedavna masovna migrantska gibanja so v zadnjih desetletjih izšli številni romani za otroke. Članek analizira dva izmed njih in jih postavlja v kontekst transnacionalnega obrata v okviru kulturnih študij. Članek predstavlja tudi rezultate kratke raziskave med univerzitetnimi učitelji v različnih deželah o pozitivnih elementih, izzivih in ciljih poučevanja pri vključevanju migrantske in begunske književnosti v process poučevanja.

**Ključne besede:** transkulturena književnost, migrantska književnost, romani za otroke