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## INTRODUCTION TO THE ISSUE

# LANGUAGING AS REFUGE: PRACTICE MEETS THEORY

AMANDA: I never learned the man's name, but I still remember the poem he recited to me in Hakha Chin after an English class I facilitated six years ago. After reading the piece (which he had also written), he summarized it: The speaker of the poem was a man who lived in a farming village and had given all he had to his lover, including money for a train ticket to a nearby city, where she now lived permanently while he remained in the village. Each day, he watched her ride past the village by train, never stopping to say hello.

Looking up from the page, the man explained that he had written this poem because it was too dangerous for him to explicitly express the poem's actual meaning, which was political. The government had come into his village, he told me, and forced its people into labor. They built power lines all the way into the nearest city, but when the work was complete, the village remained without power. Sitting in the dark of their homes, the villagers watched the lines skip past them as they channeled power into the larger town, like an old lover passing through on a train without stopping to say hello.

MARIANNA: I worked with a refugee from Bhutan for six years. He created dynamic, colorful, and passionate drawings and paintings of gardens; abstract flowers, butterflies, and leaves danced across pages and canvases. For the first few years, he rarely uttered but he continuously created. I knew he might never speak because of his PTSD, but at weekly meetings he began to gesture for more paper and paint. In the galleries, he'd pose with every painting asking to be photographed. As time went on, he would enthusiastically greet everyone as he arrived at the museum—echoing my boisterous welcome as he entered the door.

Eventually, we thought he would never speak English. As time went on, he began collecting words, telling me how the leaves were green, the flowers red, the sky was blue, and that there were butterflies. After six years, one night in the galleries, he read a description he had written. While the acts of speaking or writing were never guaranteed for this man, or so I had assumed, the process of creating and processing through creating were constant; his act of languaging firmly rooted in the non-verbal.

## Multilingual Dialogue on Migration, Flight, and Refuge

Languages, and acts of languaging, play important roles for individuals who migrate, flee, and seek refuge—as bonds to family and home; as grounds for creative expression; as gateways to employment, citizenship, and social acceptance; as resources for conforming to or distancing from particular identities or navigating new and existing linguistic, symbolic, and affective landscapes; as evidence of symbolic competence (Kramsch 2011); as means for resisting or challenging hegemonic practices. Languaging, creative expression, and theory naturally overlap in the work of practitioners, who often closely encounter the urgencies of flight, migration, refuge and multilingualism. While exploring languaging in contexts of refuge and migration in this special issue of *CMS*, the contributors attend to these important ideas, which percolate into the interstices of our work, our privileges, and our humanness, and press us to consider the ways our work is made literally and figuratively possible by the electricity that someone else’s labor afforded.

This volume is powered and empowered by the community of voices that form it, spanning across disciplines, genres, and backgrounds. It features not only traditional academic articles from psycholinguists, literary scholars, anthropologists, pedagogues, linguistic ethnographers, and applied linguists, but also creative work including painting, poetry, photography, and film, alongside practice-based contributions from teachers, museum practitioners, and those coordinating community-based programs. These voices necessarily speak in unique genres, dictions, and terminologies, representing a diversity which is itself a form of multilingualism. Through the languages of arts and academics, the works depict and theorize experiences of migration and refuge, probing at places where people’s awareness of language is shadowed by pressing institutional or disciplinary concerns, like the way observers’ perception of the sun’s glow from Earth is altered by the shadow cast by the moon in a solar eclipse. In vibrant ways, the contributors to this issue have depicted contexts and employed terminologies with which readers in various other fields may not be familiar, transporting us from edifices in urban Haiti to language classrooms in Corsica—and into art museums, boats, courtrooms, and onto the pages of a US citizenship exam. Along the way, we encounter ways of languaging that are unique and imperative for these contexts.

Together, the contributors’ pieces guide our gaze toward places where taken-for-granted terminologies, modalities, literacies, languages and ideologies frame people’s work as scholars,

meaning-makers, and human beings. The works dialogue around major questions related to multilingualism in contexts of migration and refuge; they scrutinize essentialist definitions of “refuge” or “refugee writer,” gesture to the diversity of spaces from which one can experience refuge, and point out taken-for-granted institutional biases, literacies, cultural assumptions, and manners of “helping” or engaging with efforts related to refuge. The pieces speak beyond the specific regional and theoretical contexts in which they are situated. Where ALEXANDER MENDES explores the mixed impact of globalization on “unaccompanied foreign minors” on Corsica, for example, readers may reflect on similar questions involving unaccompanied minors in the United States. In the same way, they straddle disciplines, nations, and labels. LAILA HALABY reflects on her own identity and constructs of home, working to make sense in the world while challenging how people perceive her ethnicity; these sentiments will resonate with many who embody identities that transcend boundaries.

Zooming in on some of these themes, we have organized the dialogue of this special issue into four major threads, drawing the titles from the pieces they comprise. The first section, **What is the ‘Rule of Law’?**, documents and deconstructs the US American citizenship process, focusing closely on the US Citizenship exam and materials available to study for it. Works in the second section, **‘Social Facts’ and Other Assumptions**, focus on the ways in which migration is experienced in mundane and liminal ways, as well as on the taken-for-granted labels for individuals who have sought refuge. The third section, **“The Mango Tree Would Tell the Truth”**, explores spoken and written words, voices, and empowerment, adopting its title line from a poem produced collaboratively by participants in PELLEGRINO’s artistic program at Owl & Panther for refugees and asylum seekers who have experienced trauma, torture, and traumatic dislocation. The final section, **“They Don’t Hear my Tongue Dance in Arabic”**, a title borrowing a line from LAILA HALABY’s poem “used to be”, explores language learning and reimagines “integration.”

## IN THIS ISSUE:

### 1. What is the ‘Rule of Law’?

Multi-media artist ANH-THUY NGUYEN and applied linguist JENNA A. ALTHERR FLORES open the volume with works that interrogate the institutional barriers of citizenship, directing our gaze to how the construct of citizenship materializes in the institutional imagination of nation states. The collaboration between ANH-THUY NGUYEN & CRAIG BARON in *Citizenship Project* performs the steps necessary to obtain citizenship in the United States. Looking at the

installation view, featured on page 17, one sees a series of five posters that present the 100 possible civics questions that might be asked during a citizenship exam. Facing the questions is a single desk and chair, awaiting the next applicant. Adjacent to the questions are a series of ID cards, which indicate if an individual has passed or failed the test NGUYEN has administered. This multi-media installation was designed after NGUYEN found herself consumed with the duality of passing and failing this exam, and questioning who would qualify for citizenship in the aftermath of her own application. Ironically, many US-born individuals failed the test when presented with it by NGUYEN. Language is performed and presented in *Citizenship Project* as a way of processing and reflecting upon naturalization—and by extension the notion of belonging.

Drawing upon semiotic multimodal analysis, applied linguist and practicing teacher JENNA A. ALTHERR FLORES focuses on the citizenship exam as well, which, she argues, markets itself as a neutral tool, but is actually a test of (multi)literacies that relies on content schemata (inaccurately) assumed to be universal. ALTHERR FLORES' research is particularly concerned with the assumptions this test and study materials project onto emergent readers with refugee backgrounds, learners who are simultaneously learning to read and write for the first time while also acquiring the language of the region to which they migrate. However, print literacy—particularly from Euroamerican literacy frameworks—is taken for granted by the writers of this test and, as ALTHERR FLORES explains, the institutionally imagined test takers are assumed to engage in the specific multimodal literacies inscribed in the exam. Her work draws our attention to implicit, dominant ideologies that frame our work but which we may not be aware of, and may not align with the background knowledge of students.

## 2. 'Social Facts' and Other Assumptions

The reality of being stuck in limbo as a migrant never fully wanes. *Boat Journey* by ANH-THUY NGUYEN sets the tone for this second section of the issue, as she refuses the notion of being bound to a single homeland. In several of these photographs, a headless figure holds onto a tethered small leather boat that is constantly landlocked, unable to move to its next destination. Each photograph alludes to water and the possibility of escape, whether through the appearance of wet earth, seaweed, a beached fish, or heavy clouds—and yet, this prospect of mobility is constantly denied.

Exposing 'assumed social facts' from the lens of queer migration studies, anthropologist DAVID A.B. MURRAY asks how adjudicators understand and evaluate sexual orientation-based refugee

claims in the Canadian legal system. To readers unfamiliar with these legal proceedings, the discourse mechanisms of nation states—specifically, in his analysis, relating to sexuality—are consequential, but hidden like the trapped arils of a pomegranate. Deftly angling his analytical blade across the intersecting layers of linguistics, geopolitics, anthropology, and legal studies, MURRAY releases the arils easily into our hands. He argues that, in the gate-keeping role of evaluating whether claimants’ testimonies serve as “credible evidence,” adjudicators primarily serve nation-states and draw upon an unexamined “common sense” understanding of sexual identity—based on their own privilege, cultural experiences, and training. Like ALTHERR FLORES, MURRAY explains how claimants’ use of “credible evidence” is actually a demonstration of a specific literacy—in this case, Canadian LGBT literacy—which is not shared by all asylum seekers, but to which they must prove access in order to be deemed credible and earn the right to asylum. The claimant’s futures rest on their ability to prove this literacy; thus, adjudicators’ decisions can marginalize vulnerable individuals.

Literary scholar LIDIA RADI considers the work of Elvira Dones (b. 1980), who defected at age 28 to Italophone Switzerland from her native Albania and was later tried there in absentia for treason. RADI explores Dones’ 1997 Albanian-language text *Dashuri e huaj* (“Foreign love”) which is as yet unavailable in English translation, but was translated into Italian to wide acclaim by A. Molla as *Senza Bagagli* (“Without Baggage”). In particular, RADI engages with Dones’ multilingual, transnational, communist protagonist in *Dashuri e huaj*, Klea Borova, an alter-ego for Dones herself. Dones chronicles Borova’s dealings with Swiss border enforcement officers, new employers and managers, and the ways the term “migrant” itself has become, according to the Italian-Somali writer Uxax Cristina Ali Farah, “the evocation of an absence, of the disfiguring character of exile, rather than the richness of metamorphosis and travel” (Uxax 2005). One of RADI’s primary critical projects is to ascertain what position Dones holds as a writer multiply intersected by her Swiss political refugee experiences, her current residency in the United States, her multilingual literary productivity, and her uptake as an “Italian migrant woman writer.” Like NGUYEN and ALTHERR FLORES in the previous section, artist ÖZLEM ÖZGÜR poses difficult questions and challenges assumptions. In her film *Under the Same Sky*, ÖZGÜR interviews six refugee women, who share their experiences reflecting on their status, flight, and resettlement in the United States.

### 3. “The Mango Tree Would Tell the Truth”

The reflection by teaching artist MARGE PELLEGRINO describes the process, and observed benefits, of collaborative writing for participants in the Tucson-community-based program Owl

& Panther. Since 1995, working in partnership with community groups and institutions, Owl & Panther has provided healing expressive arts and service experiences in the community and the natural world for refugee families who have experienced trauma, torture, and traumatic dislocation. PELLEGRINO shows readers what collaborative writing looks like by presenting a poem that participants constructed collectively.

CHARLES NORTON takes us to post-2010 Haiti, where foreign governments, NGOs, and other institutions mobilized a reconstruction effort that excluded the majority of Haitians and, in many cases, made their lives worse. This profit-driven, philanthrocapitalist “relief” effort was partially justified by white savior narratives that dehumanized earthquake survivors and depicted them as looters, untrustworthy as participants in the reconstruction of their home. In this context, NORTON argues, graffiti and street art—particularly multimodal and multilingual varieties—emerged as some of the few outlets for non-elite Haitians to critique foreign-dominated institutions and offer their own ideas for reconstruction. In his article, NORTON takes us through the genealogy of graffiti and foreign humanitarianism in urban Haiti since the 1980s, interviewing displaced Haitians and community leaders and conducting a case study of one Haitian artist, Jerry, who holds foreign powerbrokers, NGOs, and governments accountable through his well-known street art. Though graffiti may emerge during times of trauma and voicelessness, NORTON explains how the multimodal and multilingual images of graffiti offer powerful means for local individuals to criticize neoliberal initiatives.

In “Reclaiming Historical Memories” LEONARDO MATURANA BAÑADOS advocates for transforming his former torture site into a place of memory and healing. PAPAY SOLOMON, a refugee and painter, uses creative expression to reflect on identity, culture, and migration by focusing his attention on subjects who, like him, are of the contemporary African diaspora. In SOLOMON’s paintings, he explores the tension of being somewhere between African and American. *Diluting Dreams* is an extremely meticulous yet somber portrait of a young man who looks away from the viewer, lost in thought. The figure, while painted in great detail, is presented against a simple bright blue monochrome background. Around his neck is a boldly patterned African fabric that matches his orange Arizona Diamondbacks hat—a nod both to his home country and current place of residence.

#### **4. “They Don’t Hear My Tongue Dance in Arabic”**

LAILA HALABY opens the final section of this issue with three poems that illuminate and reflect upon the multiplicities within a single identity linked to a migration background. After

HALABY's reflections, CLARE COX, a teacher in a local community college's Refugee Education Program, introduces texts that her students, YAYA DAOUD, MOHAMED KHALIFA, & SINGAYE RWATWENGABO, wrote in their respective native languages.

While later in this section, ALEXANDER MENDES points out the micro-hegemonies prevalent in foreign language classrooms which see themselves as gatekeepers for national language ideologies, other works in this section present ways to disrupt these systems. BELMA HAZNEDAR, JOY KREEFT PEYTON, & MARTHA YOUNG-SCHOLTEN indefatigably challenge one-sided linguistic integration as the dominant model for teaching adult migrants who are emergent readers, arguing instead for pedagogical models that privilege learners' home languages and literacies. But while the consensus in academic literature that not all migrants are the same—both in terms of their past educational experiences, institutional legitimacy, and resources available to them—is not new, it has not yet found consistent anchoring in language classrooms and policies. HAZNEDAR, PEYTON & YOUNG-SCHOLTEN aim to uplift learners' home languages through online teacher training and professional development which introduce participants working with adult migrant emergent readers to theories of bilingualism, then providing concrete teaching strategies to promote language maintenance.

DENISSE BRITO, a museum professional, shares insights on the process of shifting from monolingual and monocultural to multilingual and multicultural design within an art museum. Through this reflection, BRITO stresses the importance of partnerships and programming in multiple languages in order to become more relevant and accessible to new audiences.

Linguistic ethnographer ALEXANDER MENDES offers the metaphor of the pearl as a lens for examining the impact of globalization on (im)migrant youth on Corsica. Conducting research in an FLE (French as a Foreign Language) context, MENDES draws our attention to the micro-hegemonies emergent in foreign language classrooms in so-called peripheral locations like Corsica, which nonetheless align with national values and promote standard language ideologies. In these contexts, (im)migrant youth, particularly unaccompanied minors, are at the mercy of globalizing surges which both submerge them and offer the possibility for mobility. It is in this institutional shell, however, which is at the same time constrained by systemic oppression and protected by social advocates, that the pearl of intersubjective complexity forms. MENDES looks to classroom discourse to uncover how sociolinguistic pearls emerge through interaction. He argues that the experiences students reveal in language learning contexts should not be interpreted as “banal biography,” but rather as elements of their linguistic, transnational,

and socioeconomic identities mingled with globalization and exposed in brief classroom moments of what he describes as “quotidian multilingualism.”

### **Editorial Considerations**

As the anecdotes at the beginning of this introduction reveal, our experiences collaborating with individuals who have refugee and immigrant backgrounds in educational and community settings have heavily influenced our curatorial approach to this volume. As we engaged with and juxtaposed the works in this special issue, we had to consider not only which voices we included, but how they were peer-reviewed, contextualized, and presented on the *CMS* platform. Even the most minute logistical decisions could highlight or obscure the works and reinforce a hierarchy between theory and practice; in this way, the presentation is also a form of languaging. For example, we asked ourselves: if we formatted the poems and works of art like academic articles, with abstracts and keywords, would we compromise their authorial agency and creative content by forcing them to comply with the norms of academic genres? If we didn't, would we risk rendering these pieces less searchable and, as a result, marginalize them? We faced similar considerations about organizing the works. Many of the academic articles and creative pieces harmonized with each other symbiotically, with the art and community voices beautifully complementing theoretical concepts, and the academic articles putting words to experiences and approaches depicted in the artistic and community contributions. Some of the “academic” pieces—NORTON and ALTHERR FLORES most evidently—are invested in creative practice and its implications, while the “creative and community” contributions endeavor to intervene in the norms of academic disciplinarity. We sought to recognize these symbioses spatially, by pairing pieces like these by thematic focus, not disciplinary genre—drawing out the connections among them throughout the arc of the four subsections, this introduction, and, of course, the works themselves.

Though we are describing the contributions by genre, the layout of this volume attempts to resist the trichotomy between “community voices,” “academic voices,” and “creative voices.” However, we acknowledge the persisting reality that academic voices often have easier access into journals like *CMS*. Among other reasons, this is because institutional positions and titles often steer individuals into publishing or not publishing: they determine individuals' access to library resources such as academic journals and interlibrary loan, as well as to work time dedicated to writing, familiarity with publishing platforms, promotion procedures connected to scholarly productivity, and university-based IRB boards which adjudicate permission for human research. With these realities in mind, we recognize that including community voices

does not mean they have full institutional access to all of these resources and privileges. As Dafina-Lazarus Stewart (2017) challenges us to remember, as ze considers minoritized identities in the academy:

Diversity asks, “Who’s in the room?” Equity responds, “Who is trying to get in the room but can’t? Whose presence in the room is under constant threat of erasure? [...] What conditions have we created that maintain certain groups as the perpetual majority here?”

As we considered the conditions which may keep community practitioners and artists engaged with multilingualism out of the space of *CMS*, we debated how to equitably include genres that are traditionally not represented in academic journals—without tokenizing, marginalizing, or othering them.

This project was grounded in reflection about our own positionalities as individuals, academics, and practitioners with a varied (albeit metaphorical) collection of professional and personal hats. Though our academic affiliations and professional practice make this issue possible, our involvement was very much influenced by connections to communities whose voices, expression, and experiences we saw as crucial to a conversation on multilingualism, migration, and refuge; to not include these voices would be myopic and detrimental to the conversation. As the poem Amanda’s student long ago wrote might remind us, even after precipitous treks to gain access to public transportation, a lot can shift once one is comfortably seated on a train bound for a bustling city.

### **The Ally Industrial Complex**

In a 2014 zine, Indigenous Action Media proposed the term “ally industrial complex” to describe the trend of “activists whose careers depend on the ‘issues’ they work to address. These nonprofit capitalists advance their careers off the struggles they ostensibly support” (10). In this volume, NORTON offers the example of foreign NGOs providing profit-driven relief after the Haitian earthquake, thereby stripping most Haitians of voice and agency. The structural tendency toward commodifying allyship extends to those of us working with individuals with migration and refugee backgrounds, even when we are committed to self-examination. Scholars and practitioners who grow professionally by studying, doing research with, or writing about someone else’s oppression and continued subjugation—regardless of whether this potential growth motivates their work—are necessarily implicated in the ally industrial complex. The graduate student who receives a fellowship to study refugee concerns, the professor who

publishes an article that will advance her towards tenure, or the non-profit employee hired through a grant to address health disparities, for example, all benefit personally and professionally from the struggles with which they engage.

Alongside this phenomenon of the ally industrial complex, activists in Indigenous Studies, Critical Race Studies, and queer studies point to ways scholars—often already beneficiaries of struggles that do not directly impact them—are privileged, credited, and appreciated over community members who are most engaged and directly impacted. Such privilege surfaces when an academic’s publications help them get tenure, while their co-author from the refugee community, whose knowledge of and access to the community were indispensable, worked on the article outside of their primary paying employment and thus won’t receive professional recognition for the contribution. It occurs when a local high school teacher asks a leader in the refugee community to spend time and resources hosting a group of teenagers to “volunteer” for a day, because the teacher feels the teenagers would benefit from exposure to other communities. Or when the graduate student, who receives a fellowship to do dissertation research with a refugee community, recruits volunteer participants into the research—members of the refugee community who aren’t compensated proportionally to their contributions to the research, if they are compensated at all.

It occurs when a white community member is praised for “doing good work” volunteering to teach English to immigrants, an activity which she does in her free time, while the students she teaches regularly mentor newly arrived migrants and engage in unpaid, unrecognized labor to help neighbors in their own communities. At the community level, this manifests when a multilingual individual with a refugee background is hired as a teaching assistant in a public elementary school, but is regularly asked to use her local connections and linguistic expertise to advance an indispensable piece of the school’s funding stream and ratings: parent engagement. As a teaching assistant, her precaritized and unprotected minimum-wage salary and nonexistent benefits are justified by her lack of formal certification, while her comfortably-paid administrator—who does not speak the languages of families in the school—is rewarded for the outreach endeavors made possible by the teaching assistant’s linguistic and local connections.

In the examples above of ally-industrial-complex phenomena, well-intentioned individuals benefit professionally and personally from struggles they work sincerely to address, while efforts among refugee community members are taken for granted or not remunerated. In a more nefarious example, Pittaway, Bartolomei and Hugman (2010) cite a report-back session with a

refugee men’s group in Thailand in which the participants complained that organizations had come to camps tending to “see the refugees [...] as [...] monkeys in a cage” (230). The non-profit organizations in question documented stories of oppression, using these to gain monies they mainly used for their own purposes (perhaps even to fund staff), rather than for the refugees they claimed to help. Though US American IRBs, since the Belmont Report (1979), have required human subjects research to be deemed ethical according to principles of respect, dignity, justice, and beneficence, there is no institutional protection against *benevolent injustice*: violations which may be committed unintentionally and / or under the guise of being helpful.

LGBTQI+ activists have pointed out that so-called allies do not have the same stake in issues they are addressing and have the luxury of abandoning the cause when it’s inconvenient to advocate. As Mark Nagasawa and Beth Blue Swadener (2017: 210) put it, it is “easy” to “use the shield of white privilege to say one is an ally, when facing few if any of the same risks that those who experience systemic forms of oppressions [...] deal with daily.” In the arena of critical multilingualism studies, this kind of “shield” emerges when a white middle-class academic goes to a holiday dinner at which family members are making pejorative racial or linguistic remarks but, after gently probing the outspoken family members and asking provocative questions, she decides that it would be futile to engage in the discussion and, seething, silently finishes her pie. Another common example of lower-stakes engagement in an activist cause is when an individual changes a Facebook profile picture in support of a trending cause and is rewarded by “likes” from their inner circle. Though these acts demonstrate solidarity, individuals often assume very little risk—but are often praised—when performing such support. Princess Harmony Rodriguez (2015) gives the term “ally theatre” to this form of low-stakes or token activism with the expectation of praise.

Academics looking to support human rights causes are not without robust role models. Efforts many are already engaged in—such as mentoring, distributing the work of thinking about these issues instead of pushing it onto a few colleagues, collaborating across contexts, and prioritizing diverse voices—cannot be underestimated. We both, Amanda and Marianna, wish we had access to, or had better utilized, academic or professional connections that could have amplified the voices of immigrants or refugees. I, Amanda, wish that I had had academic connections at the time that I heard the man read me the poem, and that I could have invited him to submit the poem to be disseminated in Hakha Chin. These solutions are not new, but they remind us that we must be deliberate in our work and advocate for spaces that honor non-traditional, or non-academic, perspectives.

We have engaged closely with the pieces throughout this volume, immersing ourselves in our own research related to language learning—which is itself an act of creative expression—with all of the imaginative depth we were able to conjure. We intend to present these reflections humbly, recognizing that others have considered them more than we have, and we invite readers to join us in considering our roles as scholars, on-the-ground practitioners, and human beings touched directly or indirectly by flight, migration, and refuge.

### **Undisciplining Multilingualism, Broadening Perspectives**

Within this issue of *CMS*, we have wondered what might happen when individuals who've experienced flight assert their own expertise and act of languaging within the context of refuge. Important to note here is that all of the creative works in this volume, as well as some of the academic and community pieces, were submitted by individuals who have experienced forced or voluntary migration and are processing these experiences through their preferred modes of languaging.

In *Death of a Discipline*, Gayatri Spivak (2003) sees undisciplining as an act of flexibility within systems of constraint:

There are Haitians and West Africans in [...] remedial classes whose imaginations are crossing and being crossed by a double aporia—the cusp of two imperialisms. I have learned something from listening to their talk about and in Creole/French/so-called pidgin and English-as-a-second-language-crossing-into-first—the chosen tongue. I have silently compared their imaginative flexibility, so remarkably and necessarily much stronger, because constantly in use for social survival and mobility. (12)

The creative, or imaginative, works in this volume by NGUYEN and HALABY speak directly to the reality of Spivak's aporia. They use their creative acts as a way of understanding and communicating their own personally embodied contractions as a result of their own migration and sometimes lack of refuge. NGUYEN's photographic series *Boat Journey* is a visual document of "a dual tension" where it is impossible to assimilate "in a new land," while simultaneously acknowledging "the difficulty of returning and integrating in one's own culture." HALABY, in her poems, calls the reader's attention in two separate stanzas to her both-and-neither positionality: "they only know the impatient American me" and "they don't hear my tongue dance in Arabic." These artists use their creative process as a refuge and as a way to produce meaning and understanding.

But how has undisciplining broadened the scope of this iteration of *Critical Multilingualism Studies*? For one, it forced us to face our own assumptions about languaging and to question the concept of refuge in an age of mass migration. Within our collaborative editorial roles, an “imaginative flexibility” as Spivak (2003) calls it—a movement between things and towards new modes of understanding—was essential for continuing the multilingual exploration of migration and refuge.

As Blommaert et al. (2005) note, “multilingualism is not what individuals have or lack, but what the environment, as structured determination and interactional emergence, enables and disables them to deploy” (213). As academics, artists, theorists, and practitioners, our actions—and those of the institutions with which we are affiliated—can amplify or stultify an individual’s multilingual abilities. Thus, within this volume of *CMS*, we sought to undiscipline and broaden multilingualism in order to interrogate the contemporary phenomenon of migration and refuge. In order to be truly multilingual, we had to work to honor, amplify, and broaden differences.

Undisciplining is sometimes an uncomfortable process; it asks us to confront and challenge our perspectives and academic backgrounds, in order to encounter new concepts of languaging. As we worked through this introduction, editorial revisions, formatting, and structuring the table of contents, our process was uncomfortable and messy. Tensions emerged from the difference of perspectives, and these contradictions or divergences were crucial to an opening up of disciplinary approaches to the idea of how we were conceptualizing refuge, a making of productive space through languaging, within this volume. We were committed to including diverse contributions—whether creative, practice-based, or scholarly—from the beginning of the editorial process, even writing a separate call for proposals for community-based pieces. However, we struggled with how to put the various pieces into dialogue and make their unique, multilingual perspectives accessible across their disciplinary roots. In describing the act of undisciplining, John Robison (2008), a professor of Global Affairs and Public Policy, reflects on “the existence of multiple knowledge domains, in the forms of disciplines, sub-disciplines, interdisciplines, fields of study, etc.” which may present “inconsistent or even contradictory positions on specific issues” (79). Included in this volume are creative responses from individuals who grapple with identities and constructs of nationalism, exploring what it means to be more than one nationality, from more than one world, and fitting into neither category seamlessly. The works of HALABY, NGUYEN, ÖZGÜR, and SOLOMON exemplify how power exists in authorship, and how the act of creating enables artists to produce moments of refuge despite citizenship, nationality, and past experiences. These artists are engulfed in a constant

state of undisciplining as they encounter, engage, explore, and embrace the inconsistent and contradictory inherent in migration and refuge.

Furthering the act of undisciplining and broadening scope is the inclusion of community reflections that provide insights into the way language is used, activated, produced, and sometimes problematized. BRITO, MATURANA BAÑADOS, PELLEGRINO, and COX consider ways to reconcile and process the aftermath of migration by acknowledging the difficulties institutions have in adapting to changing populations, advocating for sites of memory after trauma, working with multilingual intergenerational refugee participants, and appropriately approaching language learning with adult refugees, respectively. COX reflects in this issue, “As a teacher, I feel that giving students the opportunity to express themselves in their native language is very important. It emphasizes the idea that their culture has value [...]” (152). This sentiment is a crucial one, reflecting moments in practice where the default is to honor multilingual abilities rather than force assimilation.

Together these eight voices—BRITO, COX, HALABY, MATURANA BAÑADOS, NGUYEN, ÖZGÜR, PELLEGRINO, and SOLOMON—amplify narratives and themes that were essential to this special issue: language learning, politics, experiences of migration, and multilingual identities. Their voices can help broaden how we discuss individuals who have migrated, fled homelands, and sought refuge.

### **Acknowledgements**

Thank you to all the contributors for sharing your work. We are humbled and honored to have the opportunity to work next to you during this process. We are incredibly thankful to community practitioners and creative individuals who enthusiastically and willingly shared their reflections with us—trusting us to honor their works within the scope of this volume. We also wish to thank eighteen anonymous double-blind peer reviewers who read and commented on the pieces under review in this issue. The works in this volume are brighter because of your generous feedback.

We cannot extend enough thanks to our general Editors, Professors David Gramling and Chantelle Warner. If, for journal editors, inviting guest editors offers some relief from the less glorious tasks of editing, they hardly seized this sabbatical. Instead, motivated by a commitment to support us and the contributors, they assumed a role of humble accomplices, supporting us and the contributors while expressing confidence in our agency. The integrity of their work speaks for itself in, among many other things, the 6+ years of *Critical Multilingualism Studies*

thus far. Less publicly visible than what they have produced, but more impressive, perhaps, is the *way* they work. Authors, too—as we’ve learned from eavesdropping in on cc’d e-mails—regularly thank them for their cheerful attentiveness at all stages of the editing process. They have never reminded me (Amanda) at any point that I am a graduate student, instead making me feel like a colleague, patiently giving me feedback and responding quickly to my deluge of e-mails. Such dedicated mentoring can mean more work for them, and attests to their commitment to the field and the human beings working in it. They are role models not only of scholarly brilliance, but of academic generosity on all levels.

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