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2016

<https://doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/3358>

Veröffentlichungsversion / published version
Zeitschriftenartikel / journal article

Empfohlene Zitierung / Suggested Citation:

Rosello, Mireille: The Calais Jungle: Mediations of home. In: *NECSUS. European Journal of Media Studies*, Jg. 5 (2016), Nr. 2, S. 89–106. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.25969/mediarep/3358>.

Erstmalig hier erschienen / Initial publication here:

<https://www.necsus-ejms.org/test/calais-jungle-mediations-home/>

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The Calais Jungle: Mediations of home

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NECSUS 5 (2), Autumn 2016: 89–106

URL: <https://necsus-ejms.org/calais-jungle-mediations-home/>

Keywords: Calais, home, Jungle, migration, refugee

In October 2016 something happened that the French authorities would like the international community to interpret as a long-overdue humanitarian intervention: the dismantling of the Jungle, the unofficial refugee camp/slum where thousands of migrants lived. The operation, however, can only be constructed as a benevolent deployment of governmental resources if the authorities manage to convince the public that their objective was to provide the forcibly displaced migrants with the homes they did not have. The destruction of the Jungle is described in and for the media as an attempt to ‘shelter’ migrants ([‘mise à l’abri’]).^[1] But the rhetoric of protection and vulnerability hardly masks the political will to get rid of the controversial camp once and for all. President Hollande is reported to have declared: ‘[f]rom now on our objectives are clear – to guarantee the security of the people of Calais, maintain public order and ensure for the migrants and refugees conditions are dignified.’^[2]

It is certainly legitimate to wonder whether such promises are realistic,^[3] but the goal of this article is elsewhere. I propose to focus on the instrumentalisation of the concept of ‘home’ and to analyse how certain political agendas are better served by the deployment of radically different conceptions of the term. I argue that the political success of the October 2016 operation (and other similar attempts by the authorities) depended on the government’s ability to impose its own definition of what constitutes an acceptable home without listening to other voices – those of migrants, volunteers, anonymous or famous writers, journalists, or bloggers – who acknowledge that the Jungle had become a home to thousands of migrants. Outraged by the destruction of the Jungle, Antoine Hennion and Sébastien

Thiéry wrote an imaginary letter that the Mayor of Calais, who supervised the dismantling, could have written to the inhabitants of her city. They ask:

De quel droit jeter aux bennes à ordures ces tonnes de vêtements, de chaussures, de nourriture apportés par des bénévoles? De quel droit détruire des baraques, des écoles, des églises, des théâtres, des restaurants que des mains de tous pays et de toutes couleurs ont construits ensemble? De quel droit détruire une cité fragile, mais d'autant plus vivante qu'elle ne tient que par le soutien continu que sa survie requiert – et qu'elle obtient.

How dare we throw out those tons of clothes, shoes, food brought by volunteers? What gives us the right to destroy huts, schools, churches, theaters and restaurants that multiracial and international hands hand built together? The right to destroy a fragile town that is all the more alive as it only existed thanks to the constant support that its survival requires – and gets?[4]

Their rhetorical questions emphasise the remarkable influence of mediation when it comes to defining what constitutes home, who has access to home, or who has a right to a certain kind of home.

Defining home is a political and ethical act, as Shameem Black argues in her study of border-crossing fiction.[5] This text therefore wishes to understand which definitions of 'home' migrants, volunteers, journalists, sociologists, lawyers, or politicians have chosen to emphasise or de-emphasise depending on whether they wished to justify the dismantling of a camp or sought to improve the conditions of the inhabitants of a fragile and unauthorised city. Depending on which concepts or metaphors are invoked, it becomes easier to argue in favour of radically different agendas such as destroying shelters or organising the distribution of food. Depending on who has the power to impose a particular definition of home as self-evident one may (legally) interpret the same gesture as hospitable or criminal, a 'crime of compassion' or 'people smuggling'. [6] It is worth keeping in mind that no attempt at appropriating the definition of 'home' is guaranteed to constitute a felicitous speech act. Both some of the most generous and some of the most hostile interventions have failed to obtain the result they expected.

For decades now thousands of migrants have found their way to the Jungle, because Calais is a national and physical border zone between France and the UK. Most were eager to cross the Channel. However, in order to reach their desired destination they had to break through the material, legal, and political fences that continue to be strictly policed by both nation states.[7] Sometimes their repeated attempts failed, or they gave up,

and they were stuck in a shantytown that was obviously not their home but was also as close to home as could be for an indeterminate amount of time. Regarding the continuum between home and non-home, others corresponded that stretched between building or destroying, helping or discouraging, welcoming or policing, detaining or freeing, staying or going, claim rights or hiding.

The Jungle was a conceptually disputed terrain that a dissenting chorus of voices wished to represent in order to legitimate the actions that they advocated: the French and UK local and national authorities, associations and volunteers, but also filmmakers, photographers, graphic book authors, writers, graffiti artists, as well as the journalists who worked for the local and international print or digital media. They all competed to describe the relationship between the migrants and the Jungle. This chaotic and dissensual assemblage of mediated descriptions of what home meant in the 'Jungle' ranged from private to public discourses, ephemeral installations, or published official documents. They included interdisciplinary works of art such as Banksy's interventions on the walls of London after parts of the Jungle were already destroyed by the riot police,[8] or his creation of a fake amusement park[9] meant to draw attention to the plight of Calais refugees; graphic blogs such as 'Nouvelles de la Jungle' posted on the *Le Monde* web environment by artist Lisa Mandel and sociologist Yasmine Bouagga; and [auto]biographies such as Wali Mohammadi's *From Kaboul to Calais*. An immense interdisciplinary internet archive is accumulating, made up of photos, texts, videos, and petitions. The migrants contributed to the mediated discussion as did volunteers, other Calaisians, or the truckers who use the Eurotunnel on a regular basis.

Given the significance of mediation and the immense power of rhetoric in this highly controversial arena it is productive to zoom in on a linguistic unit that may, at first, appear to have been a detail: the ambivalence of the word Jungle. The Jungle had become the building block of a myth. If we think about who was at home in the Calais Jungle, what kind of home the Jungle was, and wonder why conservative governmental voices refused to acknowledge that the Jungle was a home of sorts, we may at first be more tempted to research home as concept than to worry about the name itself. I, for one, had assumed that the label was a historically contingent reality, which I needed to understand, but only so I could move on to more pressing issues. Yet the Jungle turned out to be an example of the mediated, constantly reiterated, or 'remediated'[10] units of meaning that contained all

the nodes of the political and ethical debate about the migrants' rights to a home. I could not go beyond the Jungle because the constant remediation process was the crux of the matter. It turned out to be compelling to scrutinise the word 'Jungle' as the site where what I knew and did not know about the connection between the rights to a home and the name that describes the home kept changing.

What's in a name? Metaphors of home and their performative power

The Jungle. Such was and is the name used to describe the place where the migrants arrived and stayed when they could not cross the Channel. The first observation I would like to make is that the place was successfully named. An area that the French authorities wanted and are still trying to reduce to a 'non-lieu' or non-place,[11] that they would be relieved to see disappearing altogether, had acquired a name, even though it did not officially exist. The Jungle was not an official refugee camp. The mediated image was that most migrants there were not refugees (yet) and most had no desire to apply for asylum in France.[12] Of course, the name attached to the place that one considers home does not always align with the status granted to a city, a street, or a building by local or national authorities, but it remains significant that a name should have solidified in the absence of any institutional recognition. The radical distance between what some will call home and anything that resembles an official address reflected the constantly negotiated push and pull between the needs and wishes of human beings and the logic of institutions. The Jungle was clearly on some mediating radar rather than on any land registry, but the question remains: as what?

At the beginning of 2016, a few months before the dismantling, it was possible to start a research article with the assumption that readers would be familiar with the Jungle:

Le contexte de la 'jungle' de Calais est désormais bien connu : point de passage stratégique vers l'Angleterre, Calais et ses environs drainent les flux de personnes victimes des crises politiques, économiques et environnementales en errance ou souhaitant généralement rejoindre le Royaume Uni.

The context of the Calais 'jungle' is by now familiar: a strategic crossing point to England, Calais and the surrounding area drain flows of migrants who are the vic-

tims of political, economic and environmental crises. They are on the move or generally wish to reach the UK.[13]

Immediately, a gap was opening up between the way in which the 'Jungle' was described and the characteristics that would have to be present for a reflection about 'home' to take place. It is worth pointing out right away that this article as a whole was not at all hostile to migrants. On the contrary, the author was primarily interested in asserting the rights of *any* human being to a home. She carefully documented the internal struggle within the French government itself and researched recent court cases that concluded that the State was breaking its own laws by either failing to provide migrants with acceptable forms of housing or by destroying existing shelters. She showed that judges had confirmed that undocumented migrants should be protected (regardless of whether their camp was 'illegal' or not).[14]

It is therefore striking to notice that the beginning of her text mediated their experience in a way that ignored the concept of 'home'; the description downplayed the existence of the Jungle as a place where people actually lived; it was described as a 'context', a 'crossing point'. The account also de-emphasised people's need for a home when it referred to them by means of a familiar metaphor. The migrants were described as 'floods', which insinuates that institutions interact with large numbers of anonymised people who do not so much need a home as a properly bordered conduit, an engineered river bed. Calais was not a city but a river that carried along eroded soil. Such an account mediates migrants as elementary particles whose circulation happened to have been stopped. It ignores what happens to bodies whose journeys are interrupted when the night comes, when it is time to eat. The rhetoric inadvertently sides with institutional bodies that do not intend to take responsibility for providing the migrants with a home, and therefore avoids addressing the issue of dwelling or residing. The area around Calais was no home – it was a place of transit for water or air.

The wind tunnel was the metaphor originally invoked as a perfectly acceptable justification for the displacement of displaced people when the French government launched an operation comparable to the dismantling of the Jungle. The French authorities had already decided once to evacuate migrants in the area. At the time 'Sangatte', the name of a coastal town, had become synonymous with a shelter run by the Red Cross. Between 1999 and 2002 one of the warehouses that had been used during the construction of the Eurotunnel had been transformed into a temporary housing struc-

ture; migrants were, at the very least, acknowledged as homeless people and in need of a roof.[15] It is no coincidence that one of the often-mentioned interventions in favour of the opening of that unofficial refugee camp was a call made by the famous Abbé Pierre, founder of the Emmaüs movement, who had established his reputation as the champion of homeless people during the bitter cold winter of 1954.[16] For the French government, putting a roof over homeless bodies in the area of Calais was not an uncomplicated proposal, since the UK authorities considered that helping migrants boiled down to encouraging them to illegally cross the Channel. But respecting the Touquet Treaty (Calais Migrant Solidarity 2016) was and still is incompatible with a discourse about home and the right to housing, and it is definitely not supported by comparisons established between the migrants in Calais and the French ‘mal logés’ of the 1960s. In December 2002, when Nicolas Sarkozy, then Minister of the Interior, decided to close down Sangatte he naturally could not afford to declare that he wanted to destroy temporary homes and precarious shelters. Instead, he opted for the metaphor of the ‘indraft’ (‘appel d’air’), which now reappears, as if it needed no explanation, in countless accounts of the Calais Jungle. He wanted, he explained, to put an end to the ‘symbol of an indraft for illegal immigration in the world’ [un symbole d’appel d’air de l’immigration clandestine dans le monde].[17] The migrants were a chapter in an aerodynamic flow control (global) text book. Calais was but one exercise.

Does air have a home or a need for a home? The rhetorical question belabours the point because the strategic power of the image only becomes obvious in retrospect, when we take the time to think about the details of the argument.[18] In a town meeting it would still be difficult to highlight such mediating practices with any political effectiveness; objecting to apparently benign because depoliticised metaphors constitutes an unwelcome interruption of the supposedly more relevant political conversation. Not only is it tempting to argue that distributing blankets would be more useful than worrying about metaphors but it is also possible to critique the implicit claim without zooming in on the rhetoric. In response to the idea that more migrants come as a result of the construction of refugee centres Violaine Carrère has shown that it is illusory to try and scientifically demonstrate whether or not the existence of a camp attracts more migrants.[19] Opponents to closing down the Sangatte Center in 2002 had indeed predicted the exponential increase of new arrivals. That the region should still be looking for a solution in 2016 and that the migrants’ plight should have become

even more acute does not bode well for the aftermath of the dismantling. In September 2016 associations estimated that almost 10,000 people lived in the Jungle.[20] But as long as migrants are described as air or water, the issue of home and housing rights can be ignored.

The Jungle: Colonial translations

Haydée Sabéran, the author *Ceux qui passent* (Those who cross over), has worked in the area of Calais since 1999. She remembers the arrival of a few hundred Kosovars fleeing war. They were trying to reach the UK, and their presence was perceived at the time as an urgent humanitarian and political crisis that mobilised the French and UK governments.[21] When in 2002 the decision was made to close down Sangatte the word 'Jungle' had not become familiar yet. But as new migrants kept coming to Calais new ethnic groups (this time, mostly Afghans) arrived, bringing with them not only their traumatic past but also a culture and a language, including a word that led to mistranslations. When Sabéran encountered homeless migrants she was also exposed to sounds that, paradoxically, connected her to them via a home that was not (her) France. Sabéran's empathy for the migrants also has to do with a shared linguistic homeland. Asked by an interviewer why she chose to do research on the Calais Jungle, she answers:

Je parle persan, mes parents sont Iraniens. Ça m'a retournée d'entendre cette langue. C'est la langue parlée dans la cuisine de ma grand-mère, la langue des mots doux... À l'époque de Sangatte, c'était la langue de communication, un Kurde d'Irak peut parler un mauvais persan parce que les Iraniens sont assez voisins, un Afghan va parler un persan différent des Iraniens mais ils vont se comprendre. Les gens, grâce aux Persans pouvaient communiquer et moi avec eux, également.

I speak Persian. My parents are Iranians. It was overwhelming [literally: it returned me] to hear that language. It is the language spoken in my grandmother's kitchen, the language of soft sounds. At the time of Sangatte, it was the lingua franca; the Iraqi Kurds can speak some Persian because Iran is relatively close, some people from Afghanistan speak a different Persian from the Iranians but they understand each other. In Persian, people could communicate with each other and with me too.[22]

The serendipitous linguistic intersection was the reason why Sabéran was able to provide the readers of her book with a piece of information that they may have searched for in vain in otherwise well-informed accounts of

the Jungle. She remembers talking to a Kurdish migrant from Iraq who told her that he was living 'in the forest': 'Tou jangal'.

La voilà la jungle: une forêt. Des arbres. En anglais, la langue commune des migrants et des bénévoles, que pourtant peu de migrants parlent et que pas grand monde ne maîtrise, la forêt se dit *forest*, et *jungle* si c'est celle de Kipling. Mais en persan, en dari, en pachtou, en ourdou et en hindi, la forêt, celle de Rambouillet et celle des tigres, c'est le même mot, *jangal*, jungle. Quand les bénévoles demandent aux Afghans, majoritaires à l'époque, où ils dorment, ils répondent avec le mot qui leur vient à l'esprit et sans de douter de l'effet sur leur interlocuteur: In the jungle. Léger malentendu.

And here is the 'Jungle': a forest. Trees. In English, the lingua franca between migrants and volunteers – a language which few migrants speak and in which hardly anyone is fluent – a forest is a 'jungle' if it is Kipling's forest. But in Persian, Dari, Pashto, Urdu and in Hindi, the forest, be it the Rambouillet Forest or that of tigers, is the same word, *jangal*, jungle. When volunteers ask the Afghans (the majority of migrants at the time) where they sleep, they say 'in the jungle', the first word that comes to their mind, without realizing its impact: a slight misunderstanding.[23]

Of course, the misunderstanding that Sabéran ironically describes as 'slight' has had undesirable consequences. When the Western media appropriated the mistranslation of *jangal* they deliberately or unthinkingly mediated the kind of re-Orientalising or neo-Orientalising logic that critics are dismayed to locate in literature.[24] When translated or imported into the English and then the French language the jungle meant something radically different from 'the forest'. Saturated with old and contemporary versions of Rudyard Kipling's imaginary, the word jungle suggested that migrants were not only animals but dangerous predators whose natural habitat was cruel, chaotic, and lawless. Perhaps less obviously derogatory than the 'dark continent', the expression used by explorers who imagined Africa as unknowable, sinister, and dangerous, the word 'jungle' opposed the world of (wild, tangled, impenetrable, and resistant) nature to the obvious benefits of (British, colonial) culture. The dense and exuberant forest was perceived as the metaphorical opposite of 'civilisation' when civilisation was understood to mean Victorian England. What Michael Lundblad has evocatively called the 'epistemology of the jungle' is a mixture of powerful discourses that rehearse a popular and vulgarised version of Darwinian and Freudian theses. References to the Jungle manipulate a crude understanding of Darwin's theory of the survival of the fittest which transposed to the social setting of the Calais Jungle was supposed to explain instances of violence and brute force. The dichotomy

between animals and humans served to put migrants in the category of abject exceptions who were not entitled to human rights.

Accidentally generous (mis)interpretations of the Jungle as home

My point however is that it may or may not be the best option to systematically object to the use of such words, because once the mediation had occurred several tactics were possible to oppose the dehumanisation of migrants. Nor was the discovery of the 'real' origin the only solution. Joseph Harker, writing for *The Guardian*, insisted that the media should stop using the word 'Jungle' with or without inverted commas. As the first rhetorical question of his article suggested, people who lived in a Jungle could not be expected to be respectable, civilized, or to share our values.[25]

Like Angliviel, Harker spoke up in defence of the migrants, and he wished to radically distinguish between them and the dangerous connotations that the name of their temporary home brought to mind. But when he narrativises the history of the 'Jungle' to explain his objection his move becomes paradoxical. He writes:

over time, the media's use of this terminology has changed. First it was, 'the migrant camps, known by some as "the Jungle"'; then 'the so-called "Jungle"'; before simply becoming the Jungle, without quotation marks.[26]

Even a reader who has no reason to question the plausibility of his story may be struck by both the passive voices (who was doing that?) and by the lack of specificity about what had happened when. Was a malevolent force calling the refugees' home a jungle to animalise them and deny them a right to a home? If a reader had encountered Sabéran's book before reading Harker's article he or she may simply have dismissed his interpretation – he was misinformed and drew conclusions before checking the facts. Since he does not quote his sources we have no way of ascertaining whether he had heard the story from a refugee, a volunteer, or another journalist. But like all stories, once printed or posted, Harker's performed a certain cultural work, and it is interesting to see how Harker used his own myth to uphold the refugees' right to basic housing. He was not only making the point that the migrants' dignity must be reflected in the name of their current home.

He claimed that ‘the camp was christened by the migrants themselves, in ironic reference to the squalid conditions’.[27]

Sabéran’s intervention implied that the migrants could teach us their language; her book made us discover a word that remediated the migrants’ description of their precarious home. She made it clear that volunteers and migrants were lost in translation when they started using ‘the Jungle’. But in a sense she took credit for rediscovering the true etymology of the Jungle, while Harker’s ignorance of their linguistic import credited them with a different kind of authorship. In his story the migrants were not only the actors who named their temporary home they were also a collective force capable of the kind of ironic distance that constituted a strong political act. Here the naming of the Jungle was read as self-deprecating irony, which is after all an antidote to despair and resignation. The migrants both acknowledged the squalid conditions in which they lived and refused them as inadequate. They (knew that they) deserved better. Harker thus posited that the migrants’ ‘christening act’ was an ironic self-portrait of themselves as uncivilised, not respectable, and incapable of sharing European values. Their self-animalisation was directed at Europe, a continent that tends to present its own standards of living as the only acceptable global norm, while letting slums proliferate within its borders. If that were indeed the case (I am still reading the internal logic of Harker’s myth) then I wonder why he wished to suppress the label instead of tactically appropriating the migrants’ irony? After crediting the migrants with some form of authorship he then went on to assume that this original act was annihilated by discursive remediations and that the word Jungle should no longer have been used.

The migrants’ strategic uses of the word Jungle

In the end then the issue of whether Sabéran and Harker were factually correct about the origin of the word ‘jungle’ is at least as interesting as the tactical re-appropriation of various and sometimes incompatible myths. This was the case not only for commentators but also for the inhabitants of the Jungle; they did not always agree about what the word represented. Or, more accurately, depending on their needs and their own definition of what home was, they emphasised different aspects.

Some migrants and members of associations (who did not recognise the word ‘jungal’ or did not know why it was used) did object to the word ‘Jun-

gle'. They put up posters that read: 'The Jungle is not for us, the Jungle is for animals'.^[28] Their tactic here was to refuse both the animalising and the place itself. Human beings, they implied, have a right to a different kind of home. Whether or not they were aware of referring to international agreements, they were claiming the 'Right to housing' protected by the 25th Article of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Housing is on the list of human needs such as 'food, clothing ... and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security', and to access to such services in the event of emergencies. In the Declaration, 'Housing' (rather than home) is regularly mentioned, and the cluster to which 'housing' belongs defines the dwelling place as one of the necessary components of the adequate 'standards of living' to which human beings are entitled.^[29] The right to housing then is a subset of a more generally conceived right to a minimum 'standard of living', and it is implicitly presented as an easily recognised, quantifiable objective to be met.

But a tactic that consists in claiming one's right to housing immediately reveals the ambiguous relationship between housing and home. The link between the right to housing and the concept of acceptable standards of living will always be double-edged for the migrants. They risk eliciting a cynical response from the authorities who indeed emphasised the urgency of putting an end to the deplorable conditions that prevailed in the Jungle. At the beginning of 2016, Fabienne Buccio, the Prefect of the Pas-de-Calais region, declared: '[i]t is time to tell the migrants of Calais who live in undignified conditions and give Calais an image that isn't dignified either, that we have a solution for each of you.'^[30] Noble objective indeed, but the title of Khomani's article left no doubt as to what the 'solution' entailed: 'Calais orders up to 1,000 residents of Jungle camp to leave by Tuesday'. The Prefect was announcing the opening of a new center, the first since the closing of Sangatte, but the price to pay for the improvement of the 'undignified' housing conditions was the destruction of large parts of the Jungle, a move that prefigured the supposedly final dismantling. Once again, thousands of people saw their tents and shelters destroyed, the operation leading to clashes between the police and the migrants, images of tents going up in flames, and reports of tear gas and violence appearing in the news.

As homes burned the issue of whether better housing was indeed achieved by the installation of metallic containers was debated in the media. Expelled from the Jungle, (some of) the migrants were redirected to an area that Marilyne Baumard described as 'une structure d'aspect peu accueillante,

composée de 1500 places d'hébergement dans des conteneurs chauffés, alignés et empilés derrière des grillages' [a less than welcoming structure, that can accommodate 1,500 migrants in heated containers, lined up and piled up behind fences].[31] Posted on the site of BBC news, a short video explained why the 'Calais "Jungle" migrants resist the move to the container park'.[32] The camera focused on the fences that separated the containers from the colourful and chaotic landscape of tents, and when they interviewed one of the migrants he was filmed through the fence, as though he were behind bars. He himself compared the container park to a 'jail'. Angélique Chrisafis also wrote in February 2016 that some

asylum seekers [said] they [were] afraid to transfer to the new containers' because 'the facility resembles a prison and does not have cooking facilities or communal areas – unlike the Jungle, which has shops, cafes, kitchens, churches and a mosque. The new container facility also required palm prints to be taken to move in and out, which some fear could impede their efforts to reach Britain and apply for asylum there.[33]

In short the containers provided better housing (heating, real beds) – although the level of comfort was not acceptable to many organisations. More importantly, psychologically, the containers were not home. It was easier for the State to provide 'housing' than respect for the migrants' 'homes' when their 'home' did not resemble standard 'housing'. That particular point was made in 2013 by another poster held up by migrants who tried to stop the police from tearing down their improvised village. This time, instead of equating the Jungle with a zoo, they pleaded: 'The Jungle is our house, plz don't destroy it, if you do so then where is the place to go'.[34] In this instance 'house' meant home, and the concepts of home and housing were at odds. If the right to better housing meant giving up on what had become a minimalist form of home, then another description of the Jungle was needed to claim the right not to see one's shelter destroyed by the police.

What was destroyed in Calais in October 2016?

What then did the French authorities actually tear down when they sent police forces to 'shelter' the homeless migrants? At the end of January 2016 Barbara Tash described the Jungle as 'a small town where shops, restaurants and a library can be found'.[35] In her account the Jungle as 'home' was

much more than a precarious roof over the migrants' heads. Regardless of whether they slept in a tent, a caravan, or a shack, some people were engaged in activities that provided the camp with its own economy ('The restaurants, shops, and cafes are all run by refugees from different nationalities. The currency used in the camp is the euro although exchanging goods also commonly takes place.'). with its political life ('Weekly meetings now take place between camp 'elders', who each represent a community inside the camp.'). and with services normally supplied by the State or municipalities ('The Jungle Books Library – run by volunteers and refugees – offers a selection of reading material and English and French lessons are available along with free WiFi.'). A portfolio of pictures also revealed the presence of a children's centre, several grocery stores, and the 'pink caravan' that welcomed newcomers.[36]

The definitions of home were also debated in local, national, and international legal documents. The judicial and executive branches of the French State did not always agree, and the administrative tribunal in Lille stipulated in 2016 that the shops and little cafes in the Jungle, although they were illegally set up, were protected by the law and international agreements.[37] Sometimes the legislator was asked to reproduce, within the legal realm, the debate started by the migrants' incompatible definitions of the Jungle. The French Republic's 'Defender of Rights' was regularly commissioned to write reports on Calais. One of the questions he had to decide upon was whether a tent set up in a non-official refugee camp could be said to constitute a house. In 'Exiles and fundamental rights: the situation in the territory of Calais', the Defender reminded the French government that '[t]he unconditional right to emergency accommodation is established under article L.345-2-2 of the Social Action and Family Code (CASF / Code de l'action sociale et des familles)' and that '[i]n this respect, case law produced by the European Court of Human Rights clearly specifies that any shelter which a person considers to be their home falls within the field of this protection, even in the case of improvised shelters (tents, huts etc.).'[38]

Conclusion

When a migrant used to say, 'I live in the Jungle', even if s/he qualified the statement with, 'I can't tell my mum and five brothers that I live in the Jungle',[39] she or he in this case refuted two mediated constructions of the

area – an abstract geological network of forces that attract gas-like or water-like organisms, or a dangerous forest populated by wild animals. The Jungle existed and it was a home. All the various manifestations of such a performative statement (I am home in the Jungle) constituted a legitimate though often unheeded intervention into the disputed domain rights and responsibilities.

Not all migrants chose the same tactic, and commentators also disagreed about the status of the Jungle. Their voices, taken together, did not add up. They represented incompatible discursive operations that exposed the constant and ambivalent conflation of home and housing. When the media, politicians, refugees, or members of associations referred to the camp as 'the Jungle' the identification of the specific place contributed to the transformation of a potential non-place into a collective home/non-home; 'The Jungle' was not quite an address but at least it located and situated. In other words, the name made it impossible to dismiss it completely and to destroy it without some physical or virtual witnesses being aware that there has been a loss, a deliberate erasure.

Depending on who speaks about (or for, or with, or as a refugee), but also depending on how the local context is mediated and localised or globalised by those who happen to have access to the mediation in question, the relationship between home and what one wants, what one lacks and what one wishes to recapture, forget, remember, or recreate will not only be radically different but sometimes the wishes and desires expressed about home will add up to incompatible and dissenting paradigms. In each context it may be necessary to ask again what is meant by 'home' when we observe that it is what some refugees want, but also sometimes what they do not want (they would rather cross over to the UK), or think they cannot afford to want (they are afraid of being fingerprinted in the containers), or cannot afford not to want. In the Jungle the various definitions of home destabilise the 'problem-solution' or 'success-failure' dyads.

Depending on whose voice dominates the conversation, on which image is in the foreground, the definition of home and of the migrants' positioning changes; the Jungle is implicitly and explicitly represented as a place where one lives (even if temporarily and in squalid conditions), a place of transit where one is stuck, or a zone whose original purpose was transformed and corrupted by people who occupy it illegally. Depending on whose image or narratives of home gain cultural currency, various arguments about what has to be done (by, about, with, or to the migrants) can be

deployed more or less successfully. On one level a simple opposition between anti-immigration discourses and benevolent humanitarian voices remains relevant. But in the realm of decision-making the truth, inaccuracy, or political valence of metaphors, names, or narratives is only half of the story. Whether they are capable of solidifying as transportable myths is what matters when political actors vote, donate time or money, demonstrate for or against, or have the power to build or destroy, stay or leave.

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Notes

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- [12] Burdsey 2016; Harding 2012, p. 84.
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- [26] Ibid.
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- [29] The web page of the NGO 'NESRI' (whose main cause is the right of housing) lists a number of documents that specifically mention housing as a fundamental human right. See 'The Right to Housing is protected in: Article 25 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; Article 11 of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights; Article 27 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child; Article 5 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination; Article 14 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women; Article XI (1) of the American Declaration on Rights and Duties of Man' (<https://www.nesri.org/programs/what-is-the-human-right-to-housing>).
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- [33] Chrisafis 2016b.
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