

HOW TO RESPOND TO POPULIST NARRATIVES OF MIGRATION

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Debating Europe

Narratives of Migration

Stories of migration captivate us because they touch on universally important themes: home, family, belonging, identity, pain, loss. In this course, we will explore narratives, or stories, of migration, as told by refugees and immigrants from across the world, through different media: written, spoken, photographed, and constructed digitally on social media. This course approaches narratives of migration primarily from the perspective of sociocultural linguistics and discourse analysis, but we will refer to other scholarly traditions as well. This is a Service-Learning course: students will engage in a mentoring relationship with an immigrant student in a Durham high school.



rhetoric

frames

metaphors

~~Narrative~~

messages

description

explanation

‘Story’: **giving meaning** to our social reality by connecting heterogeneous events within **time** and **space**, and vis-à-vis **each other**.

Story

There **was** a massive influx of irregular immigrants **into** the EU in **2015** and **we were** not prepared. But **since then** we have implemented a number of measures, and the numbers **are going down, so** there is no need to panic.”

(Narrative shortcut: “The refugee crisis is over”)

Frame

Migration as a security issue

Metaphor

Migration as a wave

STORIES: KEY ELEMENTS

1. Basic Structure: Beginning, Middle, End
2. Conclusion and 'Followability'
3. Necessarily Selective
4. Emotive and Concrete



distortion

scandal

nationalism

POPULIST STORIES OF MIGRATION: (WHY) ARE THEY PROBLEMATIC?

radicalisation

emotionalisation

polarisation

COUNTER-STORIES

1. What stories do we *ascribe* to populism?
2. What about the protagonist-antagonist structure?
3. What is the (long-term) conclusion?

CONCLUSION

- Perceptions of migration are not only influenced by how political actors tell stories of migration – but also by how others respond to it with their own (counter-) stories
- When we debate ‘narratives/stories of migration’, we need to focus more on actual practices of story-telling (rather than political ideologies, values, etc.)

Thank You for Your Attention!