CHAPTER 3

The Mother, the Hero, and the Refugee: Gendered Framings of Vulnerability in Margreth Olin's *De andre* (2012) and Leo Ajkic's *Flukt* (2017)

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For more than a decade, and especially in 2015, the so-called refugee crisis has stirred controversy in Europe, forcing its nations to debate their legal, social and ethical obligations towards non-Europeans fleeing from war and violence. A basic issue becomes one of othering those arriving from outside Europe's borders. They are regarded as different from a national 'us', as they are demonized, victimized and dehumanized. In these debates, the media plays a significant role in framing populations as more or less vulnerable, and as more or less deserving of our humanitarian interest. As Judith Butler (2010) explains in *Frames of War*, 'such frames structure modes of recognition, especially during times of war', and they are operative 'also in the politics of immigration, according to which certain lives are perceived as lives while others, though apparently living, fail

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to assume perceptual form as such' (p. 24). Writing in response to the US media coverage of the 'War on Terror', Butler critiques a dominant discourse of dehumanization that denies the basic vulnerability and interdependency of all human beings. What she calls on is a counter-framing, deconstructing the perceived us–them divide, emphasizing that 'there are no invulnerable bodies'—neither among 'them' nor 'us' (p. 34). As she repeatedly emphasizes: 'We are all precarious lives' (p. 43).[1] Butler's main questions are clearly relevant for Scandinavia, too. In Norway, global warfare and refugee migration spur ongoing debates on national identity. Who are we in terms of shared values, culture and politics, and what is our connection to, and responsibility towards, those fleeing from war-ridden countries?

Two recent documentary voices, working to deconstruct the us–them divide, have been particularly strong on this issue: those of filmmaker Margreth Olin and TV host Leo Ajkic. While Olin immersed herself in the documentary film project *De andre* (2012; *Nowhere Home*), Ajkic hosted the five-part NRK documentary series *Flukt* (2017; Escape/Fleeing) directed by Lars Petter Gallefoss. Both were highly acclaimed projects.[2] They exemplify what Butler calls for as 'a move toward the recognition of a generalized condition of precariousness' (2010, p. 48). The condition of precariousness is portrayed on three (often overlapping) levels: those of the refugee, the mediator/narrator, and the nation.

The focus of this chapter is on the way in which Olin and Ajkic relate the vulnerability of the refugee Other to their own—Olin especially through the national trauma brought about by the Oslo Massacres (22 July 2011), and Ajkic through his personal memories of fleeing from Bosnia in the late 1990s. A main argument is that they succeed in such mediation by inhabiting seemingly traditional, yet slightly modified and hybrid, gender roles vis-à-vis the refugees they encounter as well as their national audiences.

Gendered Positions

Gender plays a decisive role in our attitude towards refugees and asylum seekers. In *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, Sara Ahmed (2014) writes about the social imaginary as it appears in public discourse on the topic: 'The soft national body is a feminised body which is "penetrated" or "invaded" by others' (p. 2).[3] In line with this dualistically gendered logic, the threatening Other is a male immigrant. In a Norwegian context,

Marianne Gullestad (2006) finds that in prevailing social imaginaries, 'women and men typically occupy different roles—immigrant women are depicted as victims while immigrant men are depicted as oppressors and potential criminals' (p. 38). Hence, it should come as no surprise that a common way of framing others as vulnerable is by framing them as women and children. According to Butler, '"women and children" has a certain salience, makes a certain emotional claim, since both categories designate presumptively innocent populations' (2010, p. xxi). Olin and Ajkic, however, eschew such stereotypical appeals to innocence and instead maintain a focus on young male asylum seekers. They take the bull by its horns, so to speak, acknowledging that this is the greatest, most threatening, but conversely also most threatened, group of asylum seekers in Norway.[4] They then proceed to humanize them. They do so in three significant ways: (i) by insisting on the refugees' vulnerability as children—whether this pertains to the metaphorical child within, to childhood memories, or to their current legal status as minors; (ii) by insisting on their great potential as adult human beings to contribute to society at large; and, finally, (iii) by softening up gender stereotypes through their personal mediation of the young men. Olin does this by taking on a maternal role, filtering the young men's misfortune through the compassionate eyes of a mother, while also harnessing more 'masculine' legal and philosophical discourses to her project. Olin, as we shall see, combines the roles of national and global mother into what we may call a postnational mother.[5] Ajkic, in turn, embodies a version of the new man, who exposes a 'soft', emotional side, and ties this to a hero discourse, urging both men and women, boys and girls, Norwegians and immigrants, to act as everyday heroes. Hence, throughout their documentaries, Olin and Ajkic create counter-discourses and counter-frames to the notion that the nation is simply a feminized body which is dangerously invaded and penetrated by violent males arriving from outside.

The Soft, National Body: Olin's Maternal Framing of *De andre*

Throughout her career as a documentary filmmaker, Olin has sought to give voice to social outsiders such as, in the case of *De andre*, underage asylum seekers in Norway. In her production, she spans Bill Nichol's (2010) division of documentary films into six modes: poetic, expository, observational, participatory, reflexive and performative. *De andre* draws

on all these modes, but is first and foremost a participatory documentary, based mainly on her interviews with four male underage asylum seekers whom she maternally refers to as 'my boys'.[6] These are Goli Mohammed Ali (age 18) from Kurdistan, the brothers Husein and Hassan Ali (ages 16 and 17) from Afghanistan, and Khalid Faqiri (age 17) also from Afghanistan. She witnesses their accounts of past traumas and observes current ones as their applications for asylum are rejected. The four young men are then institutionalized in asylum reception centres until their eighteenth birthdays when they can be deported as adults—no longer children. Olin follows their lives over a period of three years—through the aftermath of rejection and deportation.

De andre was made as a response to political changes implemented in 2009 in order to limit immigration.[7] Previously, lone asylum seekers under the age of 18 whose parents could not be tracked down in the children's home country were given residence permits on humanitarian grounds. But, after the government saw a record-breaking number of lone underage asylum seekers in 2009, they decided to become more restrictive. Children over 15 who were deemed not to be in need of protection, or not to fulfil the requirements for receiving residence on humanitarian grounds were granted only a temporary residence and had to return 'home' at the age of 18. Olin's clear argument in the film is that Norway is breaking the United Nations' Convention of the Rights of the Child, ratified by Norway in 1991.

On the one hand, Olin uses the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child to frame her young refugees, and to make a logical argument pertaining to legal guilt expressed through the expository mode of the film—quoting, for instance, several articles from the UN Child Convention. The boys are victims, she shows, and the state is guilty of breaking UN Conventions. On the other hand, she frames her 'boys' to make an affective argument based on feelings of guilt, shame and common precariousness. This affective argument hinges on a humanist understanding that there is no Other, separated clearly from a self. It is an argument expressed both through the film's ambivalent title and through its participatory mode—through Olin's direct involvement with the boys and, especially, through the insertion of a dream sequence tied to the Oslo Massacres in the film's title sequence.

The title sequence constitutes a reconstruction of a dream Olin claims to have had, linking the fate of her asylum seekers to that of the young Norwegians massacred, injured and terrorized on Utøya on 22 July 2011.

On this date, a lone perpetrator shot dead 69 participants at the annual Labour Party youth (AUF) camp on Utøya after having bombed the government buildings in Oslo, killing 8 people. In all, 77 people died, most of them teenagers. The dream sequence consists of underwater scenes in which we see cropped images of clothed bodies swimming while Olin explains in voice-over that she had a dream about participants at the youth camp trying to save their lives by swimming away from Utøya and being rescued by their families and Norwegian government officials. In the dream, the image of the swimming youth in danger suddenly includes an image of two boat refugees, an 18-year-old girl and a 14-year-old boy, swimming towards the same Norwegian government official. At this point, age becomes a decisive factor. The policeman accepts the 14-year-old boy whereas the 18-year-old girl is denied entry and is told to swim back. 'In my dream they are no longer Norwegian kids. They are the boys from my film. And they're in open sea', says Olin.[8] We see a man floating on the surface of the ocean, the screen turns black, and the title *DE ANDRE* appears in white capitals, accompanied by digital foreboding music and Olin's voice: 'I make this film because I'm afraid. I'm not afraid of the others. Of the strangers. I'm afraid of what's happening with us when we no longer are capable of seeing the individual.'[9] Here is Olin's focus on a crisis and vulnerability pertaining to *us*, *our* values and *our* national identity, rather than to a perceived *them*.

Taking her role as witness to a national trauma one step further in the opening sequence, Olin taps into cultural memories as she inserts black-and-white photographs documenting the devastation and public grief expressed in the aftermath of the Massacres. We thus move from a personal, participatory mode to a more expository film mode as Olin shows us stills commemorating the grief felt after the Oslo Massacres, in particular photographs of flowers placed all over the city and of people in tears. Hence, Olin reminds her viewers of Norwegian values of tolerance and compassion, values that were attacked on 22 July and strongly expressed and reasserted in the following weeks. These are values that Olin wants viewers to keep in mind when watching the film about her refugee boys. Framing the Oslo Massacres as a national moment of grief and vulnerability related to the refugees forced to return 'home' at the age of 18 encourages viewers to expand their circle of concern, to make them see young, male asylum seekers as equally vulnerable, grievable and human.[10]

The dream sequence is an example of Olin using and transferring her own trauma to her viewers. Her dream is a result of her having witnessed both the trauma of the boys in her film and the trauma of 22 July as she is about to finish her documentary. In this latter position, she once more emphasizes her maternal role, now through reference to her own child. Towards the end of the film she explains that, after the Oslo Massacre, she walked through the streets with her daughter observing the emptiness, destruction and grief of a nation (captured by the black-and-white stills). Hence, *De andre* opens with a title sequence establishing the filmmaker's own, personal sense of vulnerability as well as that of the nation.[11] The two, in fact, converge and Olin represents and embodies Norway, its institutions, values, memories, traumas and overall spirit. Her daughter, in turn, represents Norway's future. As Susan Moeller (2002) puts it: 'Children are a synecdoche for a country's future, for the political and social well-being of a culture' (p. 39).[12]

A main rhetorical strategy in her film subsequently relies on depicting young male refugees as vulnerable. One way is by having us think of them as children, both legally (they are underage) and emotionally as we are taken back in time and given insight into how traumatized they were as children. The most challenging of the four cases is Goli from Kurdish Iraq who has committed several violent crimes, has been incarcerated in Norway, and is the least desirable type of immigrant (lone young asylum seeker with a criminal record). On the surface, he is much 'tougher' than the film's other young men, whose vulnerability comes across as they express a sense of abandonment through poetry and diaries, as they care for each other, and especially as one of the brothers, Husein from Afghanistan, collapses physically and mentally while his older brother desperately tries to help him. The overt vulnerability calls on the spectators' attention and involvement. Depicting Goli's vulnerability seems more challenging. Yet, Olin captures it by photographing the scars on his body (some self-inflicted, others inflicted by a violent stepfather), by testifying to his childhood miseries (also in Norwegian court), by capturing his childish and playful side, and by illustrating her own willingness to get to know him and take on her maternal role towards him.

As Butler argues, the body is a significant point of departure for understanding people's vulnerability and interconnectedness. The body may appear individual and bounded, but in reality it is 'unbound—in its acting, its receptivity, in its speech, desire, and mobility. It is outside itself, in the world of others, in a space and time it does not control' (Butler 2010,

p. 52). Goli's body is inscribed with social meaning through his style, expressed through grooming, fitness, posture, body movements, speech and clothing (e.g. piercings, tattoos, black leather jacket, cigarette at hand). As a type, Goli is tough. Yet, through her engagement with Goli, and her focus on his body, its scars, and its movements, Olin reminds us of his vulnerability as well as his inclinations towards change. Butler (2010) insists on the human's constant ability to respond to its surroundings:

> As something that, by definition, yields to social crafting and force, the body is vulnerable. It is not, however, a mere surface upon which social meanings are inscribed, but that which suffers, enjoys, and responds to the exteriority of the world, an exteriority that defines its disposition, its passivity and activity. (pp. 33–34)

Framing Goli as a playful individual (joking, laughing, playing with a dog, playing with a ball), Olin shows not only how he suffers, but also how he enjoys life. And prodding him with questions about love, children and family, she succeeds in showing that his hateful disposition is fostered by 'masculine' principles of rendering him passive (in handcuffs, within institution walls), while his loving disposition is fostered by 'feminine' principles urging him, for instance, to consider becoming a father. At the end of the film, Olin steps up her focus on children. She has a final conversation with Goli in which he declares that he has nothing to live for. 'What about love?', she asks, and turns this into a question of parental love: 'You like children. What if you had a child of your own?'[13] Goli dismisses her question, and Olin cuts to black-and-white stills documenting the devastation she experienced with her daughter in the streets of Oslo after 22 July. In voice-over she reflects on notions of vulnerability, fear, freedom and interconnectedness:

> I've always thought the best thing in humans is to seek freedom. We walked in parades for our freedom. We triumphed over fear. But did we also feel that our freedom depends on other people's freedom? And what will secure our freedom if not the protection of the value of every individual. When we treat children and young people in a way we would never treat our own, one have [sic] to ask if freedom could be limited and only apply to some people. Then what happens to freedom?[14]

We are back to the imagery and questions forwarded in the opening sequence: why do we only care about our own children and youth? In

order to reinforce this point, Olin turns to the more common trope of the innocent refugee child, juxtaposing images of a young homeless child in Athens having to sleep in public places, with a classic Norwegian lullaby, Margrethe Munthe's 'Dear God, I am well taken care of', sung in a dreary and melancholy manner, emphasizing the discrepancy between the visual and aural imagery.[15] Hence, the interconnectedness between human beings—and the falseness of the us–them divide—is stressed once more at the end of the film. We have all once been vulnerable children and, although we may come across as distinct, individual adults, living in distinct, individual nations, this is just a façade. War and acts of terror testify to our vulnerability as adults, too, in Norway as elsewhere.

If we return to Ahmed's (2014) statement that, in public discourse, 'the soft national body is a feminised body which is "penetrated" or "invaded" by others' (p. 2) we find that in *De andre*, Olin herself, as narrator, may well be regarded as the embodiment of a soft, national, feminized body.[16] What she argues, however, is that this body is not threatened by letting Others in, as long as it extends love, compassion and understanding to these Others. The threat to the 'soft' body comes instead from within. It is the part of the national body that lets itself harden, becoming xenophobically inhumane and overly nationalistic/patriotic. Olin's main strategy in getting this point across is precisely her framing of her documentary through the title sequence connecting Norwegian immigration policies with the terror of 22 July. In this case, Norway was not violated by a male foreigner but, instead, by a Norwegian man acting on an anti-humanist, anti-feminist and xenophobic doctrine. Nationalist anti-humanism, in other words, is the threat against Norway's soft national body with which we have to reckon. Olin, on the other hand, is an embodiment of the soft nation, emphasizing the strengths, rather than the weaknesses, provided by its vulnerability.

The 'Invading' Other: Ajkic's Hero Framing in *Flukt*

While Olin may be regarded as representing the nation's soft, feminized body, Leo Ajkic may be regarded as partly representing the threatening male immigrant. Bosnian-born Ajkic arrived in Norway at the age of 11 (born in 1983) and, to some extent, fits the threatening young male refugee profile, not least by virtue of his appearance. Dark-haired, brown-eyed, with a trimmed beard and moustache, pierced ears, standing 6 feet

4 inches tall (193 cm), speaking a foreign accented Bergen-dialect and usually sporting some kind of street-wear/hip-hop look (hoodies, caps, sneakers), Ajkic can come across as rather intimidating and reminiscent of a stereotypical ex-Yugoslavian 'bad guy'.[17] In reality, Bosnians are among the most successful immigrant groups in Norway (Dzamarija 2016) and Ajkic, who has studied social anthropology at the University of Bergen, is one of the most popular contributors at the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) where he has hosted programmes since 2010.[18] He often takes on mediating roles, negotiating between the Norwegian and the non-Norwegian (cf. *Leo & U-landslaget*). In *Flukt*, Ajkic becomes this type of 'translator-figure', mediating the strengths and vulnerabilities of the refugees he meets, and, by virtue of his own position as a successful refugee immigrant, he reassures the viewer that refugees can be a resource to Norwegian society. Ajkic simultaneously embodies the hybrid role of the refugee, mediator and national body, clearly destabilizing hegemonic us–them dichotomies. Meanwhile, he also destabilizes traditional gender roles, as he is a new man, performing what Demetrakis Demetriou (2001), inspired by Antonio Gramsci and Homi Bhabha, has termed a hybrid masculinity (p. 349).[19] This, as we shall see, is a position of dominant masculinity that maintains its power, not by simply opposing and negating but, rather, by incorporating, appropriating and negotiating aspects of non-dominant, marginalized masculinities and femininities (Demetriou 2001, p. 348). Ajkic exemplifies what David Sarvan has called a 'new, more feminized and blackened white masculinity', offering 'subject positions that have been marked historically as being both masculine and feminine, white and black'—and native and immigrant, we may add (Sarvan quoted in Demetriou 2001, p. 348). Emotionally, Ajkic performs a masculinity that combines traits of 'sensitive' and 'tough' men (Demetriou 2001, p. 349). Hence, Ajkic, too, ultimately problematizes the dualistic question of a soft, feminine, national body versus a violent foreign male invader.

Flukt was made in response to the refugee crisis, culminating during the fall of 2015 with more than 30,000 people seeking asylum in Norway that year (Østby 2015). A central strategy in the series is the way Ajkic's own refugee experience frames and introduces the five episodes. As a celebrity journalist, Ajkic and his personal history become the centre of attention. Thus, like *De andre*, *Flukt* is a participatory documentary based to a great extent on interviews yet, whereas Olin's film borders on

other modes, especially the observational documentary, *Flukt* borders primarily on the performative documentary. We watch Ajkic actively engaging with, and reacting to, the situation he is witnessing and documenting.

The first episode begins with Ajkic visiting his childhood apartment building in Mostar, sitting on a windowsill looking down into a courtyard and stating that he remembers 'that day' very well. It was a day of ethnic cleansing when Croatian soldiers came to round up Bosnians. Ajkic's mother was Croat herself and succeeded in lying to the soldiers, maintaining that her (Bosnian) husband was not at home. 'Things could have ended up differently', Ajkic reflects.[20] Then comes a title sequence used to introduce each of the five episodes: Ajkic explains that he was only seven years old: 'I will never forget what it is like to flee for your life.'[21] He walks through the streets in Mostar. This is followed by an aerial shot in which he is standing on the Stari Most Bridge, or 'the old bridge' (*Gamlebroen*), as he calls it. The perspective is gradually heightened, and Ajkic ends up a disappearing dot in the landscape. We then cut to archival footage of the bridge being blown up by the Croat military during the Civil (Croat–Bosniak) War in 1993. The bridge Ajkic was standing on is the 2004 reconstruction. In voice-over, Ajkic proclaims:

> There are more than 65 million refugees in the world today. The number increases by 34 000 each day. But I don't want us to see them as only as traumatized people in need. We also have to think that it is 34 000 opportunities each day.[22]

What Ajkic captures in this statement is an ethics of vulnerability in which one does not regard vulnerable people in terms of their weaknesses. As Erinn C. Gilson (2013) puts it in *The Ethics of Vulnerability*:

> If we are to respond well to vulnerability, then it is incumbent upon us to reflect on what we mean when we speak of vulnerability and to formulate a more developed account of the concept, namely one that does not rely upon uninterrogated presuppositions linking vulnerability with harm, affliction, and weakness, and thus opposing it to strength, agency, and ability. (p. 128)

After Ajkic's call for us to turn our attention to refugees, and—like Olin—regard softness and vulnerability as a strength and refugees as agents, rather than passive victims, the title *FLUKT* appears in white capital lettering against the back of his dark jacket as he enters that episode's site

of exploration. We are, in a sense, piggyback-riding on Ajkic, meeting the refugees through a mediator who has personal experience of fleeing from war.

In the first episode, we start out in Beirut, Lebanon, after having seen Ajkic in Mostar. Here, the refugee crisis is quickly framed in terms of the innocent child as Ajkic, who has just brought us close to his own childhood, engages with an 11-year-old boy who, like him, was 7 years old when 'the problems started'—in the boy's case, in Syria. Hence, the link between host and depicted refugee is emphasized. We follow the boy and his family, the Asaad family, consisting of a divorced father, a grandmother and four children, as they apply to become refugees in Norway. They are interviewed by the Norwegian police in a UN reception centre in Beirut—and, after three weeks, they are granted permission to come to Norway. The father's sister and her five children, however, are denied entry. Not only are they left behind, but the sister also has to part with her mother—who is her best friend—not knowing whether she will ever see her again.

At the end of the episode, we return to Ajkic standing on the Stari Most Bridge. He once more takes on a mediating role, explaining that he knows how the sister feels. When he fled from Bosnia, he also had to leave behind his best friend—his grandfather. In preparing for the documentary series, Ajkic went through personal archives he had not looked at for a long time and found a letter he had sent to his grandfather in 1994, a couple of months after arriving in Norway. He translates it into Norwegian and reads: 'Dear Grandfather'.[23] While Ajkic reads, photos from his childhood are superimposed on the screen. The first one is of Ajkic as a child, standing together with his grandfather in front of the Stari Most Bridge. The end of the letter reads: 'Of all the pictures I have, the very dearest is the one I have of you.'[24] Ajkic chokes up and has to interrupt his reading: 'Yeah—just wait a minute.'[25] He quickly sniffles and continues: 'And when they make a new "Old Bridge" we will take a picture in the same spot. I hope to see you soon. If we have to flee again, we'll do it together.'[26] Through Ajkic's emotional reaction, we get the sense that Ajkic, meanwhile, has lost his grandfather and that the photo serves as a testimony to what once was, but no longer is, and no longer can be.

At the same time, the shedding of tears is 'a classic component' of the celebrity witnessing narrative (Christiansen and Frello 2016, p. 140). The celebrity witness goes on a journey to become acquainted with people in

need. He or she is positioned as the main protagonist of the travel narrative and 'the celebrity must display some form of genuine emotion and personal attachment to the "suffering other"' (Christiansen and Frello 2016, pp. 135, 137). Yet, Ajkic's narrative diverges from such a standard narrative in two significant ways. First, his vulnerability is evoked by a 'suffering other' who is, simultaneously, himself (as a child) and the contemporary refugee. The two are inextricably entwined, as the suffering Other reminds Ajkic of his younger self, and Ajkic conversely sees and understands contemporary refugees through his own memories and experiences. This goes for Ajkic as well as the viewer. Second, the protagonist of celebrity witnessing narratives tends to be gendered as feminine, following a traditional association between femininity, empathy and emotions (Christiansen and Frello 2016, p. 139). Ajkic is male and, as indicated, inhabits that role in terms of hybrid masculinities. Hence, as 'boys don't cry', his teary reaction may be considered particularly strong, even overwhelming, and thus also authentic and convincing.[27] Ajkic quickly recovers, both by holding back his tears and by addressing his emotionality in a 'masculine' language of English slang. Referring to the episode in retrospect, Ajkic explains that *Flukt* is the most demanding and important project he has carried out, and that it was impossible to hold back his tears. Yet, he dares to show his vulnerable side: 'I am not embarrassed to show emotions when it's about "real shit"' (Grøtte 2017).[28] Ajkic, in other words, constructs a hybrid masculinity allowing him to incorporate a female-gendered emotion and its expression—crying—while retaining a 'masculine' distance from femininity by, for instance, discussing it in rough, vulgar terms.[29]

Having finished reading the letter, Ajkic encourages the viewers to be nice to the Syrian refugees arriving in Norway. We see the Asaad family looking happy and hopeful in Norway, and are encouraged to think of them through Ajkic. History repeats itself. Ajkic was once like the Syrian boy arriving in Norway. He is now well-integrated—even a national celebrity. Refugees should be looked on as resources and opportunities, not as threats to a Norwegian way of life. Emphasizing this point of agency and resourcefulness is the fact that the Asaad father immediately starts working in his brother's kebab shop.

Like the photos used by Olin to document the aftermath of 22 July, the photos of the Stari Most Bridge serve to document a national trauma. They are taken at three different moments: (i) when the bridge was more than 400 years old, reminding us of peaceful times before the Yugoslavian

wars; (ii) when it was blown to pieces in the midst of war; and (iii) when it has been reconstructed after the war. The pictures bring us back and forth in time, testifying to times of peace and war. They trigger Ajkic's memories and emotions, and are a witness to history and History—personal history and world history. The series of photos captures the vulnerable child as well as the strong adult, and shows how the two combine in Ajkic. Places and persons may stand strong, be broken down and end up standing strong again.

Images of Mostar and the Stari Most Bridge reoccur in each episode. In Episode 3, which concerns anti-immigrant movements (in Lebanon, Austria and Greece), Ajkic returns to Mostar to explain how hatred divided the city into three parts. Ajkic felt the division on his own body, as he was previously regarded as 'Yugoslav' but ended up a child of 'mixed' marriage. Again, through Ajkic, us–them dichotomies are shown to be contingent.

For the last episode, Ajkic poses the question of how Norwegians should welcome refugees to their country as he advocates an everyday-hero approach. First, he investigates how they are received on Lesbos, stating that 'maybe we Norwegians have something to learn'.[30] The choice of pronoun interestingly reinforces Ajkic's own status as a Norwegian in this series.[31] In the last part of Episode 5, we return to the Asaad family and their arrival in Søgne, close to Kristiansand. The children run out to play on an outdoor playground. This serves as yet another segue to Ajkic's childhood. He states that he recognizes their childhood happiness: 'Once I was the new boy in the foreign country.'[32] Again, photos from Ajkic's childhood are superimposed on the screen. 'But the war stayed with me. What you have experienced stays with you. It's not always easy to fit in.'[33] We cut to live footage of Ajkic from behind as he enters a pedestrian tunnel. In voice-over he continues: 'When I came to Norway, I was restless. I did something stupid and ended up in a bit of trouble. I even had the police arriving at my parents' door. To be honest, things could have gone wrong with me.'[34] We are reminded that Ajkic relates to young, criminal, immigrant boys. In the next shot, Ajkic is filmed front-on emerging from the tunnel. The architectural symbolism provided by the tunnel is as heavy as that of the bridges (especially the Stari Most Bridge). Ajkic has been through dark times, but has re-emerged into the light. 'But the people one meets on one's way can change everything', says Ajkic, inviting us to hear more about his arrival in Løvstakken, Bergen, and to reflect on this statement, and how it may involve you as a viewer and

fellow Norwegian.[35] A Norwegian took on the role of an everyday hero and helped Ajkic.

When Ajkic was twelve, he met Yngve Træland who was working for the county to integrate young immigrants, 'people like me', as he says.[36] Træland took the kids on trips and vacations, and involved them in making radio programmes. In his archives, Ajkic has a cassette with a young Leo interviewing another boy on the radio. Ajkic listens and concludes that this turned out to be the first step on a path he had no idea he would take: 'And things have ended up pretty well for me.'[37] This the viewer can attest to, and Ajkic's story is used to encourage people to be everyday heroes.

And, as Ajkic points out, the role of an everyday hero is limited by neither gender nor age: 'Everyday heroes do not have to be adult men who work for the county; an everyday hero can also be a 10-year-old girl.'[38] The next shot shows one of the Asaad girls who has befriended a 10-year-old blond Norwegian girl who 'welcomes her new Syrian neighbours'.[39] Ajkic returns to visit the Asaad family after they have lived in Søgne for half a year. The children confirm that they are well-integrated and have new friends. Ajkic then reflects on his documentary project overall, reminding us of all the refugees he has met during each episode in Africa and Europe, and on the Mediterranean Sea. 'For me, it's been a great journey. I have met amazing people who can become an opportunity for Norway. If they are given the chance.'[40] Again, Ajkic encourages the viewer to regard refugees as opportunities, not just as liabilities, and we are reminded of the role we play as hosts in a host country: 'Then you have to welcome them.' Cause you cannot create world peace or get rid of poverty. But you can say "welcome".'[41] While Olin expresses abstract philosophical humanist ideas in her voice-overs, Ajkic brings them down to earth. As a translator figure, he seeks to affect his listeners by speaking in plain language, in pragmatic terms about what the ordinary person is able to do for a good cause—for people who can do something for Norway. Olin, by contrast, remains the maternal, overtly moralizing figure, educating her viewers through more philosophical questions such as the: 'Then what happens to freedom?'

A final shot shows the Asaad family from behind—the father in the middle with two children on each side, all holding hands and walking on a paved path—walking away from the camera and towards the rest of their lives in Norway. Again, images of paths are used literally and metaphorically—with bridges, tunnels and open roads constantly reminding us of

people moving through life phases, encountering other people and other cultures. The strong father is in the middle, once more reinforcing the image of a new man, in this case a divorced man serving a dual caretaker role, rather than an image of a threatening male immigrant. The path is paved, metaphorically speaking, by everyday heroes inclined to help each other.

Feminist Alternatives to the White Man's Burden

The refugee 'crisis' has brought on new discourses of Scandinavian vulnerability, as many fear the violent and criminal consequences of especially young, male refugees gaining access to the country. Olin and Ajkic present counter-discourses that involve Norway losing sight of its own identity based on humanist and humanitarian values: Norway being vulnerable to internal right-wing terrorism, and Norway missing out on the opportunities provided by hard-working and innovative immigrants. In terms of gender, Olin comes across as a postnational maternal figure who is able to see, depict and remind us of the vulnerable child that still resides inside the tough-looking young man. She is also able to safeguard national values in a globalized world, tending to the future of her own child as well as that of refugees. Ajkic, on the other hand, reveals the vulnerability of the child he once was. He is an object of fascination as he, himself, could have been the threatening, criminal, male immigrant in Norway but, instead, ends up an exemplar refugee and celebrity mediator between 'us' and 'them'—a dichotomy he nonetheless destabilizes as he personally figures as 'Yugoslav', 'a son of a mixed (Croat–Bosnian) marriage', 'Bosnian', and 'Norwegian'. Overall, Ajkic serves as a reminder of how we may be overly focused on the negative aspects of vulnerability—focused both on our own helplessness as a national body opening up to refugees, and on the refugee as a weak, suffering Other. In both cases, Ajkic urges us to think not in terms of helpless passivity but, instead, in terms of strength, agency, and ability, to use Gilson's words (2013, p. 128).

Rhetorically, Olin appeals to her audiences primarily on a political level, demanding compliance with human rights laws. Her point of departure is more abstract, legal and philosophical, presented in a classic humanitarian discourse. Emotionally, she nevertheless also appeals to our sense of compassion by emphasizing the vulnerability of both refugee Others and ourselves, ultimately framing current refugees in terms of how they could have been our own children. Ajkic, on the other hand, appeals to

his viewer in a more quotidian way, asking him or her to act as an everyday hero—someone willing to step in and help another person when he or she needs it. His appeal is rooted in the personalized idea that current refugees could have been (and once were) him. Both mediators use their personas in gendered ways—as mother (the nation's mother, a global mother) and as everyday, new-man hero—to destabilize common perceptions of an ethnic and cultural self and Other. This, in part, allows them to speak from a non-dominant Norwegian position, deconstructing ethnic dichotomies. In the end, both Olin and Ajkic represent alternatives to the imperialist trope of the white man carrying his burden of civilization. Each, in his or her own way, represents a new man and a new maternal figure, and each emphasizes what Butler (2010) refers to as 'the recognition of shared precariousness' (p. 28).

Notes

1. Butler further distinguishes between 'precariousness' understood as a general threat to the safety of all lives and 'precarity' as a structurally determined precariousness, rendering certain groups of people more vulnerable than others. Both terms are relevant for a discussion of refugees; in this chapter, I focus on 'precariousness' and 'vulnerability', and use them synonymously.
2. *De andre* was awarded best documentary at the 2012 Bergen International Film Festival, the 2013 Amanda Awards and the 2013 Documentary festival in Volda. The film is also used for pedagogical purposes in schools (cf. Dokka, n.d.). *Flukt* won the 'Gullruten' ('Golden Screen') for best documentary series of the year, while Ajkic also won the 'Gullruten' for best male host as well as Fritt Ords Honnørpris 2017, for having used his own background as a refugee to provide insight into the lives and dreams of refugees in Europe and Norway. In 2019, he won the Jonas Prize, awarded to people who have contributed to creating a more tolerant society in which human variety and individual difference is considered an enrichment, rather than a problem. The jury especially emphasized his work with the two documentary series *Flukt* (2017; Escape/Fleeing) and *Uro* (2019; Unrest/Worry).
3. This trope is well-known from postcolonial theory where nations (a people, their nature, and spirit) are imagined as women, while nations as states are imagined as masculine institutions in charge of order and protection, such as the military (cf. Nagel 1998).
4. Lone, minor asylum seekers tend to be regarded as violent and criminal. In an article on Olin's *De andre*, Anne Marte Blindheim recognizes this

point: 'The lone, minor asylum seekers constitute a grey mass of youth, largely boys. Usually they are mentioned in the same breath as drug selling and knife stabbing' (Blindheim 2012; my translation).

5. I use the term 'postnational' to indicate a situation of globalization in which nation states and national identities lose their importance relative to transnational and global entities. The prefix indicates that our understanding of the national—while still meaningful—is under pressure and is being renegotiated.
6. 'gutta mine'. Throughout this article, I use the English subtitles on the DVD for English translations of *De andre*.
7. To give an indication of the refugee situation in Norway: *De andre* premiered in 2012. Between 1990 and 2011, Norway registered 110,000 immigrants living in Norway as refugees. Of these, 67,000 had sought asylum (Dzamarija 2013, p. 22). Until 2012 (having started in 2003), Iraqis constituted the largest refugee group in Norway. In 2012, the largest refugee group arriving in Norway was from Somalia; out of 9800 people seeking asylum in 2012, 2200 were from Somalia, 1200 from Eritrea, and 990 from Afghanistan (UDI, n.d., pp. 1, 5). Jumping ahead in time to the most recent available statistics: as of 1 January 2015, 188,100 people with a refugee background were registered as living in Norway. They comprised 3.6% of the total population (Østby 2015). In total, the three largest refugee immigrant groups were still from Somalia (26,100 people), Iraq (20,600 people) and Eritrea (14,100 people). Yet, the fastest growing group compared to previous years consisted of Syrians (Østby 2015). In 2014, 2000 Syrian refugees arrived in Norway compared to 800 in 2013 (Østby 2015). *De andre* captures a moment in time when Iraqis comprised the largest refugee group in Norway. The first person we meet in the film is Goli from Kurdistan as he is deported to Iraq.
8. 'I drømmen er det ikke lenger norsk ungdom. Det er guttene i filmen min. Og de er i åpent hav.'
9. 'Jeg lager denne filmen fordi jeg er redd. Jeg er ikke redd for de andre. For de fremmede. Jeg er redd for det som skjer med oss når vi ikke lenger er i stand til å se det enkelte menneske.'
10. Butler (2010) coins the adjectives 'grievable' and 'ungrievable' to discuss how we mourn the loss of lives among people with whom we identify, while we seem unaffected by the death of others; for example, civilians dying in countries against which the USA has waged war.
11. Here, traditional boundaries between the individual, communicative and cultural memory are collapsed (Assmann 2010). Although this may be understood in terms of a personal trauma on the one hand, and contemporary mediatization on the other, the immediate effect of this collapse among critics was a sense of discomfort directed at Olin as a filmmaker. For further analysis, see Oxfeldt (2019).

12. Olin uses her daughter in a similar way to point to the future in her documentary *Ungdommens råskap* (2004; *Raw Youth*).
13. 'Kjærlighet, da? […] Du liker jo barn. Tenk om du hadde et barn som var ditt.'
14. 'Jeg har alltid tenkt at det beste i mennesket er å søke frihet. Vi gikk i tog for vår frihet. Vi vant over frykten. Men kjente vi også da at vår frihet er avhengig av andres frihet? Og hva skal sikre friheten om det ikke er beskyttelse av hvert enkelt menneskes verdi. Når vi behandler andres barn og ungdommer slik vi aldri ville behandlet våre egne, da er det grunn til å spørre om friheten kan begrenses til å gjelde bare noen. Hva skjer med friheten da?'
15. 'Kjære Gud jeg hard et godt' (my English translation). The shame-inducing juxtaposition of the genre of the lullaby and imagery of refugee children is similarly used by Henrik Nordbrandt in his poem '*Vuggevise*' (Lullaby), inspired by Alan Kurdi's death (Nordbrandt 2015).
16. This resonates with her overall film oeuvre: Olin's breakthrough documentary film was *Kroppen min* (2002; *My Body*), depicting the vulnerability of her body (and her relationship to it).
17. This is a common stereotype used in Scandinavian films; for example, the Serbian drug lord Milo in Nicolas Winding Refn's *Pusher* trilogy (Philipsen 2013).
18. Approximately 14,000 people fled to Norway from Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1990s. Measured in terms of education and employment, Bosnian immigrants are exceptionally well integrated (Dzamarija 2016). They have the greatest percentage (over 40%) of young people enrolled in higher education. The number is greater than for any other immigrant group in Norway and for the Norwegian average in general (Østby 2015).
19. In his discussion of hybrid masculinities, Demetriou aligns himself with David Sarvan as well as Brian Donovan (Demetriou 2001, pp. 348–349).
20. 'Det kunne gått annerledes.' All translations into English from *Flukt* are my own.
21. 'Jeg kommer aldri til å glemme hvordan det er å flykte for livet.'
22. 'Det er over 65 millioner på flukt i verden i dag. Tallet øker med 34 000 hver eneste dag. Men jeg vil ikke vi skal se dem bare som traumatiserte mennesker i nød. Vi må også tenke at det er 34 000 muligheter hver dag.'
23. 'Kjære bestefar.'
24. 'Av alle bildene jeg har, så er mitt aller kjæreste det jeg har av deg.'
25. 'Yeah—bare vent litt.'
26. 'Og når de lager en ny "gamlebro"', skal vi ta bilde samme sted. Jeg håper vi sees snart. Hvis vi må flykte igjen, gjør vi det sammen.'
27. 'Boys don't cry' may be explained by the fact that in some cultures, including Western cultures, women are expected to show vulnerability expressed through emotions of fear, shame, embarrassment, distress, sadness and so

on, whereas men are 'expected to express anger, an emotion associated with a superior social status' (Vermot 2015, p. 149). Or, as Alan Petersen (2004, p. 5) puts it, '*acting* "emotionally", "lovingly", "passively", "sensitively", and so on, is strongly associated with *being* "feminine", while *acting* "rationally", "distantly", "assertively", "insensitively", and so on tends to be associated with *being* "masculine"'.

28. 'Jeg er ikke flau over å vise følelser når det handler om "ekte shit".'
29. Michael Messner from a similar feminist perspective analyses powerful, American men shedding a tear in public (Messner 1993).
30. 'Kanskje vi nordmenn har noe å lære.'
31. Ajkic's in-between status as Bosnian–Norwegian manifests in his changing use of pronouns. Sometimes, as here, he includes himself among Norwegians and says 'we'. Other times, such as when he published a New Year's speech on *NRK Ytring* in 2016, he addresses Norwegians through the second person plural pronoun: 'Now it's the time of year when the king and the prime minister give their new year's speeches, so I figured that I, too, would use the occasion to say some words. But I won't speak of how nice Norway is and how great you Norwegians are. You already know that I like you' (Nå er det den tiden på året da kongen og statsministeren holder nyttårstale, så jeg tenkte jeg skulle benytte anledningen til å si noen ord, jeg også. Men jeg skal ikke snakke om hvor fint Norge er og hvor fete dere nordmenn er. Dere vet jo at jeg liker dere) (Ajkic 2016). In a similar New Year's speech at the end of 2018, he acknowledges that many are afraid of people like him, immigrants, but ends up using the pronoun 'we', stating that 'we' disagree on many things in this country, but that 'we' nevertheless seem to agree on the most important things, like wanting to take care of each other and the welfare state (Ajkic 2018).
32. 'En gang var jeg den nye gutten i det fremmede landet.'
33. 'Men krigen ble med meg. Det du har opplevd, blir med deg. Det er ikke alltid lett å passe inn.'
34. 'Da jeg kom til Norge, var jeg rastløs. Jeg gjorde noe tull og havnet litt i trøbbel. Fikk til og med politiet på døren til foreldrene mine. For å være ærlig kunne det gått galt med meg.'
35. 'Men folkene man treffer på veien, kan endre alt.'
36. 'sånne som meg'.
37. 'Og det har gått ganske bra med meg.'
38. 'Hverdagshelter trenger ikke være voksne menn som jobber i kommunen. En hverdagshelt kan også være en ti år gammel jente.'
39. 'som tar godt imot sin nye syriske nabo'.
40. 'For min del har det vært en flott reise. Jeg har møtt fantastiske folk som kan bli en mulighet for Norge. Hvis de får sjansen.'
41. 'Da må du ønske dem velkommen. For du klarer ikke å skape fred i verden eller å avskaffe fattigdom. Men du klarer å si "velkommen".'

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