

## Across the Sea, Around the World: Narrating Metaphors of Migration in Nigerian Cultural Production

Stephen T. Ogundipe

Department of English, Obafemi Awolowo University, Ile Ife

### Abstract

This paper examines migration narratives in Nigerian cultural production by analysing how concepts like Ajala and Tokunbo evolve, spread and become pandemic metaphors of migration in Nigeria. Using Dan Sperber's (1996) conceptual tool of 'epidemiology of representations,' the paper pays attention to the socio-cultural accounts of these concepts, focusing on the critical roles of popular culture in defining and extending the meaning of cultural phenomena. The findings reveal that although Ajala is widely entrenched as a metaphor for a frequent traveller, "Tokunbo" that used to possess illustrious social capital is no longer a badge of honour for returned migrants. Tokunbo has become an extended metaphor for used foreign products, including automobiles, electronics and clothes. Similarly, the study reveals that using these metaphors in the Nigerian context reflects how metaphors make conventional understanding of migration concrete.

**Keywords:** Metaphor, Migration, Tokunbo, Ajala Travel, Nigerian Popular literature

### Introduction

There are many ways to look at the subject of migration. In recent years, a considerable amount of literature has been published on migration discourse within the Nigerian context, including Ikuteyijo (2020), Oniwe (2020), Ugwuanyi (2019), and Ladele and Omotayo (2017), among others. These studies focus on identity crises, gender and racial discrimination, human trafficking and sex slavery. Since the turn of the twenty-first century, studies on how metaphors define and systematically redefine migration have gained much scholarly attention, particularly in linguistic studies. For instance, Taylor (2021), Boswell et al. (2009), Lakoff and Ferguson (2007), Knowles and Moon (2006), Horolets (2003), Ono and Sloop (2002). However, little attention has been paid to the socio-cultural accounts of migration metaphors in Nigerian cultural production. This

study seeks to fill the gap by exploring metaphors of migration in Nigerian cultural production using literary/cultural frameworks.

The paper examines migration narratives in Nigerian cultural production by exploring the two constructs — "Ajala" and "Tokunbo"— as migration metaphors and discusses their shared values in the Nigerian context. It traces how they evolve and spread from one expression level to another, eventually becoming pandemic metaphors for migration in Nigerian society. This effort is to have a broader understanding of metaphors employed in the public discourse in Nigeria.

The data for this study were drawn from the online audio/video of the following Nigerian cultural producers/performers—Adebayo Taiwo Oluseyi (Bembe Aladisa), Azeez Adeshina Fashola (Naira Marley), Ebenezer Obey Fabiyi, and Moses Olaiya Adejumo (Baba Sala). The data were downloaded from YouTube, and the playback method was employed to capture the data accurately. The work deploys Dan Sperber's (1996) 'epidemiology of representations' as a theoretical framework. It modifies the original conception in Dan Sperber's thought because it did not necessarily address metaphors. However, the theoretical tool accounts for the significance of the socio-cultural context in recognising and understanding the migration metaphors under discussion.

Derived from the Latin word *migracionem*, migration in its conventional sense denotes a movement of people over long distances across an international boundary to establish a temporary residence in a host country for a given period (Ahmed, 330). Since Nigeria's independence from the British, many Nigerians have left their homelands for America and Europe because they believe that 'going abroad' is an El Dorado. Although reasons for such movements could be divergent, one of the significant pull factors for migration is the prospect of a better socioeconomic condition and the creative sustenance of family members (Dingle and Drake 2007, 113).

Furthermore, the growing challenges of rising unemployment and limited opportunities available for the teeming young Nigerians have made migration appear the only feasible solution to their fundamental problems. Consequently, young Nigerians are willing to sacrifice all to satisfy their dreams for a better life, including the unnecessary risk of irregular migration by travelling through the Sahara Desert to Europe. The recent decades have witnessed an increasing expansion in going through such a dangerous route of irregular migration.

### **Conceptualising Metaphor**

The Oxford Unabridged Dictionary of English Language defines metaphor as a “figure of speech in which a name or descriptive term is transferred to some object different from, but analogous to that it is properly applied” (Simpson and Weiner 2012, 676). This definition reflects the Aristotelian interpretation, which mainly assigns metaphor to rhetoric and aesthetics.

Contrary to this classical understanding, a metaphor is not just a form of artistic embellishment; it is a basic trope throughout the whole range of language processes. Much of the interest in metaphor typically treat it as central to accounting for our perspectives on the world. As Knowles and Moon (2006, 5) remark, metaphors are essential rhetorical tools that create conventional understandings by connecting phenomena with familiar cultural assumptions and experiences. Also, Lakoff and Johnson (2003, 98) describe metaphor as “experiencing one concept in terms of another.” In this sense, a metaphor may refer to a perspective or frame, a way of looking or made-up words and phrases designed to direct our attention to 'really' important ones (Ritchie, 2006). This understanding of metaphor informs the exploration of “Ajala” and “Tokunbo.”

Although existing studies have established that analysing metaphors could help understand the underlying perceptions behind migration, the critical challenge is that most of them have not adequately drawn sufficient data from sub-Saharan Africa. For example, Knowles and Moon (2006) provide a wide selection of samples to explore metaphors concerning the text, discourse and society but non from Africa. Likewise, Ono and Sloop's (2002) investigation of the many tropes that disempower immigrants entrenched in popular discourse through the media and public debate. Similarly, George Lakoff and Sam Ferguson's (2007) investigation of the discussion of immigration took Africa for granted.

Arguably, there is a paucity of studies on metaphors of migration in Nigeria. Most significantly, research shows that “Ajala” and “Tokunbo” concepts have not been applied to investigate the meaning potentials of migration metaphors. For example, existing studies on “Ajala” have explored the subject from the perspectives of transnational backpacking (Olaoluwa 2019, Abimbola 2016, Adesanmi 2014, and Obono and Obono 2012). Likewise, the dimension of Ayotunde Omobowale's (2018)

engagement of the “Tokunbo” phenomenon is mainly from the perspectives of the second-hand economy in the automotive industry in Nigeria.

### **Theoretical Consideration**

This study is anchored on Dan Sperber's (1996) 'epidemiology of representations,' which explains why some ideas are pandemic and spread quickly, and others are not. Comparing how concepts are applied to viruses, Dan Sperber argues that some ideas effectively propagate in different versions and are like pandemics (1996, 24). According to him, representation plays a critical role in defining cultural phenomena and many versions of mental images that populate humanity.

Dan Sperber's theory proposes four stages of propagating representations from one expression level to another. These degrees of representations include mental, private, public and cultural. The cognitive stage is when ideas are conceptualised in an individual mind to invoke the identity of a subject. The private stage is whereby the target metaphor is conveyed to evoke the source's identity. Next is the public phase, where a subset of these mental ideas is shared by others or form similar mental pictures. The repeated transmission among a particular society/or social group accounts for cultural representations. In this case, members have approximately identical versions of specific mental terms in virtually all cultures and create nearly similar public descriptions based on them (Ritchie 2006, 194).

Sperber's (1996) conception of representations is critically important to this essay because it conveys the possibility of understanding how metaphors are repeated, reused and incorporated into the larger society. Most of the tendencies that characterise Dan Sperber's representations are empirically evident in the transmission of metaphors of migration under discussion. The metaphors are transformed almost every time they are transmitted and remain stable only in certain limiting cases.

### **Narrating Migration in Nigerian Popular Music**

Literary and cultural productions in Nigeria have always responded to the realities of migration. Over the years, Nigerian popular culture has played an essential role in depicting the various challenges and attitudes of Nigerian migrants while abroad and the society's expectations on their

return to the home country. Nigerian cultural productions in literature, feature films, and music have explored migration issues by romanticising or mythologising them. These artistic productions easily influence attitudes concerning migration.

In music especially, Nigerian musicians frequently sing of their experiences after returning from abroad. For instance, other musicians either sing in favour of migration by reflecting on the frustrations of Nigerians at home or discourage emigration, presenting the argument that there is no place like home. One of the Nigerian musicians supporting migration is a hip hop artist, Adebayo Taiwo Oluseyi, otherwise known as 'Bembe Aladisa.' In 2002, he released a single, "Please give me a Visa", which enjoyed widespread media attention in Nigeria:

White people  
 Would you please give me a Visa?  
 To travel out  
 I am tired of this country  
 Would you please give me a Visa?  
 No future,  
 Would you give me a visa?  
 No security,  
 Would you please give me a visa?  
 I don't want to die,  
 Would you please give me a visa?  
 I am tired of this country.  
 Our Governors,  
 I am tired of this country,  
 You Senators,  
 I am tired of this country,  
 White people,  
 Would you please give me Visa?

In this song, "Please give me a visa," Bembe Aladisa appeals to European embassies in Nigeria to grant him a visa to travel out of the country. In making his passionate appeal, the artist laments the breakdown of critical infrastructure and the difficulties that daily confront Nigerians. He appeals to the political leadership, "governors", and senators to alleviate the

problems. The artist appears to have lost every hope in declaring "no future" and that the only remedy is emigration to Europe.

The song enjoyed increasing attention when it was repeatedly aired on Nigeria's Radio and Television networks in 2002. It aligned with the teeming unemployed youths seeking greener pastures outside the shores of Nigeria such that it became a catchphrase for them. This unprecedented campaign for migration through the mass media attracted the attention of the former president of Nigeria (1999-2007), Olusegun Obasanjo. He later directed the Federal Ministry of Information to stop broadcasting the song on the Nigerian airwaves. Speaking on his motivation for the song in an interview, Adebayo Oluseyi declares:

We need not deceive ourselves, in Nigeria today, how many families can afford three square meals in a day, how many families eat a balanced diet, how many families can afford good qualitative education, the fact is that what we are seeing is what inspired me, what is around us is what I sing, I cannot say we are okay while we are hungry.  
<https://megaiconmagazine.com/bembe-aladisa-resurrected/>

Another Nigerian musician who propagates migration as an alternative to living in hardships in the country is Azeez Adesina Fashola (Naira Marley), a controversial Nigerian hip-hop singer. In 2018, he released an album titled "Japa" that alluded to the aspirations to emigrate from Nigeria:

Owó tollgate yẹn	The toll fee
Owó tollgate yẹn	The toll fee
Mi ò ní lẹ̀ san (mi ò ní lẹ̀ san)	I will not be able to pay (I will not be able to pay)
I'm on bail	I am on bail
I'm sorry mi ò ní lẹ̀ lọ (mi ò ní lẹ̀ lọ)	I am sorry, I will not pay
I am on the run o, catch me if you can	I am on the run, catch me if you can
Jápa jápa, jápa lọ London	Japa japa to London
Jápa jápa já wọ Canada	Japa Japa to Canada

Jápa Jápa, já wọ Chicago  
Jápa jápa, já lọ sí Africa

Japa Japa to Chicago  
Japa Japa to Africa

Jápa is a Nigerian street slang derived from the Yoruba language, meaning 'to be on the run.' Inspired by the trending street slang of Japa, Azeez Fashola popularised it in a song titled Japa, extending the meaning to emigration, "Jápa Jápa to London, Jápa Jápa to Canada." To "Japa" in this song suggests that the motive to emigrate is not driven by economic survival but because he wants to flee from justice and prosecution.

In the above song, the artist alludes to the Nigerian government's arrest and release on bail for his notoriety and controversial endorsement of anti-establishment activities. The lyrics suggest that since the artist is on bail, he is absconding to Europe to escape prosecution. He calls on the police to catch him if they can. Although the artist does not directly promote migration in this sense, his fans interpreted it as an endorsement of migration.

In contrast to the illusory hope of migration, Adekunle Kosọkọ Gold discourages emigration, as illustrated in a remarkable single titled 'Ire':

The grass is greener on the other side  
That is what I thought before I took the ride  
I burned my bridges, so I never look back  
But if I had known  
The life I was searching for is looking me right in the eye, oh  
If I had known the life, I was searching for was already my own  
Ire bẹ nílẹ (Ire, ayọ)  
Ire, ire, ire  
Ire, ire, ayọ

The grass is greener when you water the ground  
That is what I found when I took the ride  
I realised the mountain I've climbing is nothing but sand, oh  
I didn't know I already had the answer  
No, I didn't know  
For if I had known (If I had known)  
The life I was searching for was looking me right in the eye, oh

If I had known the life, I was searching for was already my own  
Ire, ire, ire (Ire)  
Ire, ire, ayọ

Sharing his personal experience, Adekunle Gold remarks that those who are seeking "greener grass" elsewhere only end up being disappointed. He encourages his fans seeking greener pastures in Europe to look inwards in Nigeria and discover themselves; according to him, there is a blessing at home.

Notwithstanding, successive governments in Nigeria have always endeavoured to discourage Nigerians from emigrating. In the 1980s, the military regime produced a public enlightenment video to prevent overseas migration. Titled "Andrew, I am checking out," the public enlightenment clip dramatically captured the frustration of Nigerians about the near-collapse social infrastructure. It depicted a fully dressed young man holding a suitcase and preparing to travel out, and a colleague persuaded him to stay back. The young man with the briefcase declares:

No light,  
No water  
I am checking out  
Out of this gaddem country.

The other persona in the advertisement appealed to the man holding the suitcase (Andrew) to stay back in the country, drawing attention to the limitless opportunities available in Nigeria. Although Andrew did not eventually travel in the clip, "Andrew" became a metaphor for those who saw migration as a rewarding option. The subtle message of the TV commercial is that Nigeria would overcome the challenges and inadequacies mentioned by Andrew.

### **Discussion of Ajala and Tokunbo Metaphors**

Ajala and Tokunbo are proper names originating from the Yoruba ethnic group in southwestern Nigeria. While Ajala is a given name for boys, Tokunbo is unisex. The practice of naming is a universal process that differs from one society to another. Although some consider proper names merely identification marks, studies have shown that names communicate more than markers of identity or label but indirectly convey various

information (Arua 2021, Chiluwa 2013). Personal names have a robust socio-cultural bearing beyond mere identity in many African societies. Names reflect the view of life, personal philosophy and life experiences.

Tokunbo means 'from overseas' or 'from across the sea,' which suggests contact with international mobility. The Oxford English Dictionary listed Tokunbo as coinage from a Nigerian language, describing it as a Yoruba name often given to a child born in a foreign land. It also denotes an encounter with civilisation or modernity. It is frequently given as a personal name to someone born or conceived in Western countries. Sometimes, the name is given to someone born in Nigeria but conceived in Western countries, or one of the parents is a citizen of a Western country. This picture suggests Tokunbo as a hybrid person with interwoven cultures. This outlook echoes Homi Bhabha's idea of hybridity, which expresses how seemingly opposite cultures relate to negotiating a new unique identity. The centre for the expression of the new identity is a newly constructed space that lies "in-between," at the "threshold of the border," which is the "beyond" (Bhabha 1994, 1). The mixing of cultures could also bring the challenge of ambivalence. While the one bearing "Tokunbo" enjoys special social status as a product of mixing two cultures, 'being to' or 'coming from abroad', the person could also "inhabits a state of neither one, nor the other, but something in between" (Bhabha 1994, 217) in terms of culture.

The history of Tokunbo's name could be directly traced to the contact with the Portuguese in the fifteenth century by Nigerians living along the western coast and developed further under colonisation by the British colonialists. As Ayokunle Omobowale (2018,115) remarks, "the name conveyed an elitist status on bearers and their families," presenting them as bearers of Western civilisation. In popular imagination, therefore, Tokunbo as a persona is believed to have 'international' because of the circumstances of birth, which is perceived to confer obvious economic advantages on the bearer. Nowadays, such widely held belief does not fit. This myth could have accounted for Moses Olaiya's dramatisation of the 'Tokunbo' persona in his weekly hilarious television drama, *Alawada*, on the then Western Nigeria Broadcasting Service (WNBS/WNTV) and later Nigerian Television Authority, Ibadan.

Moses Olaiya (1936-2018) was a veteran Nigerian comedian and dramatist popularly known as Baba Sala. In the play "Tokunbo," Baba Sala

travelled to the United States of America on a short visit. Being a non-literate character, he could not cope with the culture, food, social norms and the weather. His patriarchal attitude towards his host's wife, who happened to be an American, prompted his early return home. On arrival, the returnee began to mimic American accents and lifestyles, which were precisely inaccurate. He introduced himself to well-wishers who visited him as 'Tokunbo' and publicly requested that it should be added to his name as a title. The comedian conceived 'Tokunbo' as a self-conscious identity to demonstrate that he had 'been to' (travelled abroad) by this form of address. This decision is because of the perception of social prestige associated with travelling abroad and the kind of honour reserved for returnees in Nigerian society. The celebration of returning travellers from abroad highlights the significance of culturally embedded values for the prospect and experience of arrival. For example, the joy of returning from a short pilgrimage to either Saudi Arabia or Israel is frequently celebrated with an ecstatic rendering of welcome songs and dancing.

Moses Olaiya's appropriation of 'Tokunbo' as an honorific title also satirises Nigerians' obsession for titles because those who have them consider themselves privileged and want to be addressed as such. Precisely because the television comedy enjoyed primetime on the only national television station in Nigeria in the 1970s, the media tremendously assisted in spreading "Tokunbo" as a metaphor for returned migrants in western Nigeria.

Furthermore, the name Tokunbo undergoes mutation during the beginning of Nigeria's economic downturn in the 1980s. Several automotive assembly plants in Nigeria had shut down because of Nigerians' relatively low purchasing power. However, several Nigerians desire personally owned vehicles because of the inadequacy of public transportation in the country. This development led to the importation of used cars from Europe as an alternative to the new ones, which were relatively far cheaper than the new ones. To have a name for these used foreign cars, Tokunbo was transferred from the source domain of a person onto the abstract target domain of an automobile, retaining the semantic markings of the target domain. Thus, it became a national metaphor for used cars. In the late 1980s, however, "Tokunbo" experienced a reconstruction from being a concept generally used for people from overseas to used foreign

automobiles, vehicle spare parts, electronic/electrical and other used goods imported from Europe.

Foreign used cars are widely patronised across socioeconomic groups in Nigeria. In the last couple of decades, these used automotive patronage has tremendously grown because of their relative affordability. The used state of the cars paradoxically evoked their immediate and frequent maintenance, which subsequently translated to the massive demand for spare parts and components. This critical need for spare parts consequently led to importing foreign used automobile parts for the growing used vehicles. This development naturally extended the Tokunbo meaning to foreign used spare parts imported from Europe.

In Nigeria, “Tokunbo spare parts” enjoy high quality and standard status compared to the imported new ones from Asia, generally perceived as unreliable. Hence, the foreign used automobile spare parts are frequently overpriced than the brand-new products from Taiwan and China.

Furthermore, the Tokunbo phenomenon provides consumers with access to various foreign items and materials, including clothes, electrical/electronics, footwear, household, refrigeration and tyres. This development marked the institutionalisation of “Tokunbo” as an alternative consumption practice by the economically disadvantaged Nigerians. Tokunbo items afford the less economically empowered Nigerians to access and own goods, which otherwise might have been the exclusive preserve of the elites.

In recent years, the importation of used foreign items has become a thriving economic venture. Many Nigerians patronise one piece of a foreign used item or the other. Tokunbo as a metaphor for used consumption practice has become a pandemic metaphor in Nigeria. In addition to the markets for used foreign automobiles, spare parts for cars and electronic/ electrical items, several Nigerians trade in second-hand clothes, which attracts enormous patronage from low- and middle-income earners.

In appropriating Dan Spender's theory to the discussion, a systematic progression of the Tokunbo metaphor is deductible. The Tokunbo metaphor begins as an ethnic name commonly given to children born overseas that is first transformed from a person's name to an ordinary object, an automobile. It is then repeatedly appropriated for foreign used vehicle spare parts, electronic/electrical items and used household goods

imported from Europe. Therefore, the Tokunbo metaphor has become “established” throughout Nigeria and is now retransformed as a metaphor for Nigeria's thriving alternative consumption practice—Tokunbo's second-hand' imports.

There are different thriving markets for used foreign items in diverse locations in Nigeria. For example, it is common to find 'Tokunbo auto mart', “Tokunbo spare parts market”, Tokunbo clothes/shoes market” and “Tokunbo electronic market”. Thus, the Tokunbo second-hand economy enables access to goods that consumers directly consider essential for experiencing modernity. The metaphor, Tokunbo, whether the concept is used for human beings or materials, conjures migration and internationalisation.

### **Ajala**

Like Tokunbo, Ajala is also a proper name when considered literarily, meaning victory at last. It has a history nurtured in Nigerian cultural production. It is commonly deployed as the metaphor for a global traveller or a frequent traveller in Nigeria. The analogy, 'Ajala travel,' draws on the story of a Nigerian backpacker, Moshood Olabisi Ajala, between the 1950s and early 1960s, who extensively travelled to several countries between the late 1950s and early 1960s (Ajala, 1963).

Born in 1928 in Accra, Ghana, Olabisi Ajala and his parents later relocated to Lagos, Nigeria, while he was an infant. He attended Baptist Academy, Lagos and Ibadan Boys High School. In 1952, he departed Nigeria for the United States of America to study at the University of Chicago. At the university, he conceived the idea of travelling, which made him abandon his studies as a medical doctor. He first embarked on a lecture tour of the United States on his bicycle while adorning African native dress on his journeys. According to his memoir, *An African Abroad* (1963), he began his one-person odyssey in 1957, travelling from the United States of America to Canada, Britain, Australia, India. He later returned to Nigeria in 1967 and practised as a freelance journalist / public relations consultant. In the 1970s, Olabisi Ajala was a publicity agent for some Nigerian musicians, including Ayinde Barrister and Ebenezer Obey. He died on 2nd February 1999,

Although the account of this man's travels was documented in his memoir, *An African Abroad* (1963), the popular music entrenched him in the

imagination of Nigerians. Ebenezer Obey, a foremost Nigerian Juju musician, first promoted the name 'Ajala' metaphor in his gramophone LP, 'Board Members,' produced in 1972. The lyric goes thus:

<i>Alájalá mi</i>	My Ajala
<i>omọ olólá</i>	Son of an honourable person
<i>Alájalá mi, okọ Alhaja Sadé</i>	My Ajala, husband of Alhaja Sade
Ajala travelled	Ajala travelled
All over the world,	All over the world,
Ajala travelled,	Ajala travelled,
Ajala travelled,	Ajala travelled,
Ajala travelled,	Ajala travelled,
All over the world.	All over the world.
	(Obey LPDC 38)

Ebenezer Obey's song text portrays Ajala as a globe trotter, "a traveller worldwide." Although the above text is merely repetitive and lacks specific details of Ajala's journeys "all over the world," Ebenezer Obey performs the song in the tradition of praise-singing of patrons and panegyric, celebrating the wealthy, eminent persons. African performers mostly rely on the patronage of the rich to enhance their living. This patronage system is sustained by rendering encomium on eminent persons.

The Ajala travel song became 'popularly pandemic' through the music of Ebenezer Obey because of the Juju music's predominance in the Nigerian popular culture in the 1970s.

Ebenezer Obey's praise song indirectly introduced the persona into the public domain as a global traveller, and this impression resonated with the Nigerian populace in the 1970s. Although Ebenezer Obey sings in Yoruba, the fact that the musician deliberately rendered the Ajala text in Nigeria's official language, English, absolutely made the song nationally comprehensible.

Similarly, another veteran Nigerian musician, Sikiru Ayinde Barrister, also paradoxically validated Ajala's travel story when he quarrelled with the man. Ayinde Barrister emphatically chastised Olabisi Ajala for his mode of travel, singing that "it is nothing but penury that made one ride a bike around the world". He later reversed himself after mediation.

## Conclusion

The substance that can be extrapolated from the preceding discussion is that popular production repeatedly plays a significant role in spreading and disseminating metaphors. Both metaphors of migration in Nigeria have sprung from popular culture, and they are widely dispersed as an "epidemic of representations" through the influence of the mass media. The two migration metaphors—Ajala and Tokunbo were disseminated both in the media and through the media. The cultural producers positively reinforced these metaphors through their musical productions shared to the public domain. From our reading of Dan Sperber's theoretical postulation, the mental images of the two metaphors—Tokunbo and Ajala—were first introduced and transformed by the cultural producers into public representations and then retransformed by the audience into metaphorical expressions.

The two metaphors of migration, Tokunbo and Ajala, positively reflect internationalisation. They are not used for illegal forms of migration and human trafficking. While 'Ajala travel' is used primarily for people out of admiration for their frequent international travels, it has also become a metaphor for tourism and travel business in Nigeria. Tokunbo, which initially provides a mental representation of a returned migrant, appears recently as material objects of foreign use. It now relates to objects used in a foreign land, automobiles, clothing, refrigeration, electrical, and vehicle spare parts. It is also an embodiment of access to goods that most Nigerians directly consider essential for experiencing modernity. The metaphors, Tokunbo and Ajala, whether used for human beings or materials, have become widespread among Nigerians. As Sperber (1996,25) remarks, such widespread and enduring representations are paradigmatic cases of cultural representations. Furthermore, these mediated metaphors contribute to shaping our understanding of migration.

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