



So many bordered gazes: Black Mediterranean geographies of/against anti-Black representations in/by Fortress Europe

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Floating rubber albatrosses, box-figured crows,
hug the horizon in the bitter cold.

When an island becomes a door, who will answer?

If enough eyes see a body in the water and no hands
reach out to rescue her,

did she really die?

(Emtithal Mahmoud, “Bird Watching on Lesbos
Island”)

Camilla Hawthorne concludes her lecture, “Black Mediterranean Geographies”, with a programmatic call that emerges out of her analysis of the activism of Black Italians: she calls for “more capacious political formations that are not oriented on descent-based, identitarian claims, but rather on shared political visions, intertwined histories of struggles and resistance, and nonlinear diasporic entanglements that disrupt state systems of categorisation” (Hawthorne, 2021). From my perspective, situated on the Aegean border of Fortress Europe (in Athens, Greece), I read this call, and her lecture as a whole in conjunction with her collaborative work as part of the Black Mediterranean Collective, as a radical critique of the bordering of our imagination, the insidious and explicit state control of our vision, the fragmentation of our perception, and the violent foreclosure of our relationships to each other.

“The Mediterranean is once more confronting an important crisis of representation”, writes the Black Mediterranean Collective (BMC, 2021:9). In the summer of 2015, European leaders declared a “refugee crisis”, which framed an explosion of visual discourses centred on the Mediterranean and the lands and people it connects. Seven years on, the terms of this crisis have fundamentally shifted, in line with the “rise in

neo-fascism in contemporary Mediterranean migration politics” (BMC, 2021:11). This crisis of representation is manifold, reflecting the multiple, interwoven senses of “representation”: a crisis of representative democracy interlocked with the crisis phase of racial capitalism; a crisis of the visual, both in terms of phenomenologies of perception (what is visible to us in experience and how our perceptual life is structured by macrologies of race, gender, class, and other naturalised sedimentations of power) and in terms of the reproduction of images (for instance, photography); a crisis of social movements wrought by state-enforced demobilisation through violence and the criminalisation of solidarity, protest, and self-organisation; and a theoretical crisis facing the multiple fields in which Hawthorne positions her timely intervention – Black studies, European studies, geography, migration studies, feminist theory, postcolonial studies. Every crisis, though, is an opportunity for critique – and, in my view, Hawthorne’s work embodies this possibility. Crisis enables a transformation of collective consciousness against the control of our vision and our imaginations as we confront the exigencies and urgencies of the present and, by resisting the self-evidence of the present, as we search for distal utopian horizons to bring into reach.

On the visual level, the state attempts to enforce the terms of the crises that are hegemonically declared. Inversion, fetishisation, objectification, and censorship naturalise the sedimented relations of power that constitute our bodies and/in spaces. These relations of power are material as well as optic, inculcated through colonial visual economies and racialised/gendered regimes of representation of long historical duration. As we have seen over the past 7 years, through the use and control of photography, as well as other means of representation, nation-states have sought to generate pub-

lic consent to the necropolitical management of the refugee crisis, to the undeclared race war against people on the move.

Underlying these crises of representation is a crisis of life and death, waged against people crossing through the Mediterranean (and, increasingly, the Atlantic as well as the northern land borders between Turkey and Greece) into so-called “European space”. In that sense, we might say that in 2015 European leaders declared a refugee crisis in order to “manage” it. To this end, the refugee crisis was conflated politically and aesthetically with a crisis of arrival. That is to say, the proliferation of images of people arriving by sea on the shores of Europe – having survived the crossing – or moving through the Balkans to arrive into central and northern Europe were important in shaping the visual narrative that equated the crisis with survival and arrival. Conflating the arrival of “bodies” with the crisis (whether in hostile or sympathetic representations) means that people on the move landing on European shores became equated with the “problem” to be managed. Humanitarian gazes, complicit in this framing, sought to render the people making the dangerous sea crossings as supplicants needing “aid” in Europe – a framing that was opportune in a moment during which the European Union, Mediterranean nation-states (especially Italy and Greece), the UNHCR, and INGOs sought to establish the infrastructure of a humanitarian economy within the borders of Europe. Hence, humanitarian reason sought to shift the representation of a “crisis of arrival” into a “crisis of reception”. Subsequent policies, legislation, and bilateral agreements entrenched on a sociolegal level what had already become internalised through highly regulated visuals as the objective reality of this “crisis”.

It is not incidental that the proliferation of photographic images of people arriving on Lesbos or Lampedusa during this time (2015–2016) supplanted previous images of people having drowned whilst attempting to arrive. If the latter resulted in an international public outcry, the subsequent shift in visual registers giving semantic content to crisis – from death to survival – shifted the public response from outrage at the EU and European states. The outrage generated by viewing images of death (the shipwrecks off Lampedusa in 2013, in which hundreds of people from Eritrea, Somalia, Ghana, and Syria drowned, and the corpse of Alan Kurdi on a beach in Bodrum in 2015) was addressed at the EU and European states held responsible for people drowning in the Mediterranean and Aegean seas. Images of arrival shifted the affective response, from outrage at the regime of borders to the civil society assumption of responsibility for reception of refugees, motivated variously by charity or solidarity. Images of arrival also helped in the recovery of the public image of “Europe” as a benevolent “host” to people fleeing war and persecution. Of course, to the extent that hospitality is always inscribed and underwritten by hostility and relations of dominance, this stance is structured by implicit xenophobia. In addition, an explicitly hostile stance expressing anti-Black, anti-Muslim, anti-Arab, and anti-Asian racism inflected the

struggle over images: the scene of arrival was often rendered as the site of invasion, and the bodies of those arriving were constructed as terrorist threats. Moreover, arrival became inscribed on those bodies, constituting a form of racialisation in which not only hostile representations but also empathetic, heteronormative representations of refugees as “fleeing families” participate. In fascist representations, arrival or the threat of arrival became essentialised as a racial threat: for instance, a photograph depicting thousands of people in the March of Hope through the Balkan route, emblematic of the zeitgeist of “Refugees Welcome”, for some, was also used by Nigel Farage in his Brexit campaign and by Viktor Orbán in his election campaign, emblazoned, respectively, with the words “Breaking Point” and “Stop.” But hostility and hospitality are less counterstances than they are complementary gestures of white supremacy that collude in its reproduction. As the Black Mediterranean Collective astutely argues, “the contemporary framing of the Mediterranean crisis subscribes itself to a historicising, white, and predominantly male European gaze, which continues to frame its excluded others as either ‘charitable subjects’ or ‘uninvited guests’ whose histories and trajectories are consequently erased” (BMC, 2021:11).

Now, 7 years on, as walling, fencing, militarised border guarding, and encampment have become normalised across the EU and other parts of Europe, states and supranational actors have attempted to avert the public (normatively white, male European) gaze from what, once, they reproduced as spectacle. The explicit aims of management shifted (as expressed in the latest revision of the European Agenda on Migration) from reception and relocation to removal: behind the euphemisms like “externalisation of borders” and “readmission to safe countries” are the concrete strategies of detention, deportation, and drowning. As yet another crisis came on the scene (the coronavirus pandemic), under the pretext and cover of the pandemic, states cracked down on the cultures of welcome, solidarity, and mutual aid that emerged in response to the declared crisis of arrival. Refusing their responsibilities to asylum seekers under international law and, indeed, at times suspending asylum processes or making asylum de facto impossible to obtain, European states, including Italy and Greece, have sought to remove people on the move from the territory they arrogate, through routinised pushbacks – including by forcing people onto rafts meant to save lives and setting them out into the open sea, off-shore detention (e.g., so-called “quarantine ships”), border scrambles with other states (also declared as crises), and eviction of people on the move from urban centres and their encampment in camps under permanent lockdown. Photography is forbidden: in camps behind razor wires and walls, in military zones and during police operations, on fenced borders. Still, photographs are taken. When confronted with photographic evidence of its violence and with testimonies from survivors and witnesses, representatives of the state (like the Prime Minister and the Minister of Migration and Asylum of

Greece) will say, “it’s fake news” or “it’s propaganda”. Arrivals, they claim, have been reduced to “pre-crisis” levels; so the problem has been managed.

When it becomes difficult to state the obvious, to name violence, to see what is right in front of our eyes – despite attempts to keep it from view, to get us to avert our gaze – when every utterance, every representation circulates in an economy structured by censorship, this is a crisis of representation. But who is this “we” who has an obligation to watch what has systematically been hidden from view? What is crucial is that this “we” is not a naturalised collectivity already given to us by state power. Thus, how we constitute this “we”, which Ariella Azoulay has termed the “citenry of photography” (Azoulay, 2008), is a political question converging with that with which Hawthorne concludes her lecture. How do we resist the totalisation of representations in times of crisis against and beyond the bordering of our subjectivities by states and capital? This collective subject, who has the responsibility to watch (Azoulay, 2008) and listen to photographs (Campt, 2017) is, perhaps, the collective subject Hawthorne evokes at the end of her lecture: created out of “shared political visions, intertwined histories of struggles and resistance, and nonlinear diasporic entanglements”, seeking to “disrupt state systems of categorisation” (Hawthorne, 2021). The “citenry of photography”, as I understand it, is crosscut by and seeks to refuse the violence of national citizenship, as well as its privileges. Some of us experience this racist, gendered border violence directly, on our bodies; others, benefiting from privileges of racialised citizenship, move through borders (and in bordered societies) with ease and do not experience their violence. All of us are viewing (when we should be watching) photographs: alone, together. Azoulay (2008) makes a distinction between looking at and watching photographs, noting, “[p]hotographs don’t speak for themselves. Alone, they do not decipher a thing. Identifying what is seen doesn’t excuse the spectator from “watching” the photograph, rather than looking at it, and from caring for its sense” (Azoulay, 2008:25). Rather than looking at photographs through the ossifying gazes we inherit and reproduce, we must disrupt normative frames of meaning by taking responsibility for the ongoing injustices they represent.

Anti-Blackness suffuses the normative gazes that states attempt to naturalise through their control of borders, including the borders that structure vision. Globally and in European societies in particular, anti-Blackness is a deep structure of racial capitalism, which is institutionalised in migration policies and fully internalised in ordinary perception. Dionne Brand has powerfully articulated how the abduction and forced migration of enslaved Africans through the Door of No Return in transatlantic slavery “transformed us into bodies emptied of being, bodies emptied of self-interpretation, into which new interpretations could be placed” (Brand, 2001:93). What is crucial, both for acts of perceiving representations and for acts of collectively gener-

ating representations – in social movements against borders, in a fundamentally anti-Black world – is that we neither reproduce the divisions border regimes depend upon (including the racial categories of white supremacy) nor fallaciously pretend these divisions are not material or real. Both are representational risks with which no-border movements tarry, as they seek to effect coalitions and relations of horizontal solidarity among people whom the nation-state system, racial capitalism, and heteropatriarchy consign to differential fates. What does this mean for no-border movements? I believe it underscores the importance of interrogating racism and sexism and homophobia and transphobia – and, more generally, a taken-for-granted heteronormativity universalising the colonial/modern binary gender system – as these articulate capital and state power. Moreover, no-border movements have the potential to constitute a “we” that, in its utopian moments, prefigures collective liberation and, in its pragmatic moments, confronts the epistemic oppression that “speaking for” people on the move entails. To quote the Black Mediterranean Collective’s crucial insight: “This ontology of ‘spoken for’ subjects reproduces a strong, forensic epistemology that simultaneously displaces the point of view of the living, and replaces the memorialisation of the death” (BMC, 2021:12).

Struggles against borders in the European context often trace their lineages to anti-fascist, anti-capitalist, anarchist, and anti-authoritarian movements but less often to anti-colonial and anti-racist movements. In this connection, it feels important to point out that the “neo-fascism in contemporary Mediterranean migration politics” (BMC, 2021:11) has many guises across what is conventionally understood as the political spectrum; like white supremacy and heteropatriarchal ideologies, it is not exclusively the currency of self-declared fascists, the extreme right, ethnonationalists, or neo-Nazis. Perhaps white European citizens can less easily recognise fascism in the technocratic discourses of neoliberal Europe than in the explicitly racist, anti-Black, anti-Muslim, anti-Roma, and anti-Semitic (and simultaneously homophobic, transphobic, and misogynistic) discourses of “sovereign ‘strongmen’ who have arisen in this epoch of crisis capitalism” (BMC, 2021:11). For all its hand-wringing and expressions of “concern” for the rise of “illiberal”, “draconian”, and “authoritarian” politics within Europe, the EU funds and orchestrates a veritable race war at the borders of Europe, together with a range of national governments which avow various political allegiances and orientations, including commitments to liberal democracy (which are incompatible with conventional understandings of “fascism”).

Whilst people on the move are violently attacked, tortured, and killed, migration scholars seem to have difficulty naming this a race war. The EU has constituted a dedicated military force charged with overseeing and coordinating national militaries, coastguards, and border police in their bordering projects, namely Frontex, which seeks over the next 5 years to increase nearly 10-fold the number of people it employs

(from 1400 currently, in 2022, to 10 000 by 2027). Civil society search-and-rescue operations, human rights monitoring, and investigative journalists in the Mediterranean report on the violent collusion between national coastguards and border police (on all sides of the sea and land borders), Frontex, and NATO, as well as paramilitary border hunters. Yet this violence is still overwhelmingly understood as an exception to the “rule of law”. The massive encampment and incarceration projects based on racialised citizenship are naturalised in research decrying “reception conditions” but not the very existence of camps, detention centres, and borders themselves. Migration scholars tend to reproduce the self-representations of EU and other European democracies, even as they critique aspects of the migration regime. For instance, the dubious division between so-called “economic migrants” and “refugees”, ascriptions of “vulnerability”, or carceral discourses around “trafficking” are uncritically reproduced as racialised/gendered background assumptions even in critical migration studies. For instance, what goes unquestioned in studies of migration management infrastructure, such as the hotspot mechanism instituted in Italy and Greece in 2016, is that asylum processes have the goal of offering “protection”, rather than expediting deportation on newly proliferating grounds. These notions, lifted from EU policy documents in myriad studies, lend academic legitimacy to the manufactured hellscape of hotspots, such as the infamous Moria camp (and its successor Moria 2.0, on the firing range at Kara Tepe) on Lesbos. An analysis of anti-Black racism and coloniality in European migration studies would allow reflection on the anti-Blackness and coloniality not only of migration regimes but, also, of the axioms of migration studies itself. As the Black Mediterranean Collective argues, the field lacks “a systematic analysis of racism and anti-Blackness as *integral* to the dynamics of trans-Mediterranean migration, exclusion, and differential incorporation” (BMC, 2021:15).

Contemporary anti-Black racism has been formed by processes of long historical duration that are defined by and define mobility and place. Thus, the aim, as I understand it, of Black Mediterranean Geographies in the current conjuncture is not simply to intersect “Blackness” with “people on the move” or to recognise or acknowledge that institutionalised hostility and border violence against people on the move draws on repertoires of anti-Black racism. The theoretical paradigm that Hawthorne proposes in her lecture goes deeper to challenge how anti-Blackness suffuses foundational categories of thought: body, space, and race. In their introduction to their germinal edited collection, *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place*, Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods identify three dilemmas in thinking about space and race that constitute what they term “bio-geographic determinism”, a way of thinking or imagining that makes Black geographies unknowable: first, geographic determinism, the construction of “black bodies inherently occupying black spaces”; second, the reduction of Black geographies to flesh, “the body as the only relevant black geographic scale”; and third, the

abstraction or de-mattering of Black geographies to devices of imagination, “metaphoric/creative spaces, which are not represented as concrete, everyday, or lived” (McKittrick and Woods, 2007:7). The consequence of these habits of thought wrought by white supremacy is that “race, or blackness, is not understood as socially produced and shifting but is instead conceptualised as transhistorical, essentially corporeal, or allegorical or symbolic” (McKittrick and Woods, 2007:7). By what violent conceptual and perceptual acts, then, does Blackness get equated with the particular and with “nuance” (Harris, 1990) whilst simultaneously being constructed as fungible (Spillers, 2003; Hartman, 1997) – mired in place and yet perpetually out of place (Mohanram, 1999) – whilst whiteness is constructed, simultaneously, as universal, mobile, and yet an exclusive property, defined by the right to exclude (Harris, 1993)?

Hawthorne’s lecture points to a much-needed critique of migration studies as reproducing anti-Black racism through its failure to confront anti-Black racism at the heart of the global regime of borders but, also, in extractivist migration circuits of “differential inclusion” (Sharma, 2006), such as the exploitation of African agricultural workers to harvest Italian tomatoes, some of which are exported to their countries of origin, like Ghana (Auvellain and Liberti, 2014). Hawthorne points out that although “the majority of the people arriving to Italy via the central Mediterranean route were Black immigrants from sub-Saharan Africa (and, in many cases, with direct (post)colonial ties to Italy)”, anti-Black racism has not figured in European migration studies and public discourses as “an essential part of the story” of the so-called refugee crisis post-2015 (Hawthorne, 2021). At the same time, Hawthorne notes that “there was often an unsettling tendency to uncritically impose the geographies of the Middle Passage upon what was happening in the Mediterranean” (Hawthorne, 2021), for instance by “juxtapos[ing] the famous diagram of the slave ship *Brookes* . . . with aerial shots of migrant boats in the vast blue of the Mediterranean. What work do these visual comparisons do, and what analyses do they elide?” (Hawthorne, 2021). As someone who was urged by an editor to make this comparison in an article on photographic representations of the refugee crisis, I appreciate Hawthorne’s urging us to think about the limitation of “visual comparisons”. I am not sure if “comparison” best describes the intentional act of perception of a representation (an act of looking that is sedimented by relations of power), which itself reproduces other representations. What I mean is that the relationship between a photograph and a woodcut print from the eighteenth century has already been forged in and through the visual economies of anti-Blackness before any comparative claim between the two is made. What is significant here is that both the photograph and the woodcut, though using dehumanising strategies of representation, become the visual anchor for calls, respectively, for the abolition of slavery and for open borders. The pamphlet *Description of a Slave Ship*, published in 1789 by the Society

for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, included a print of “Plan of an African Ship’s Lower Deck with Negroes in the Proportion of Only One to a Ton”, which was “the most famous, widely-reproduced, and widely-adapted image representing slave conditions on the middle passage ever made” (Wood, 1997:212; see SEAST, 1789). The photograph I believe Hawthorne is referring to in her lecture is entitled “Rescue Operation”, taken by Massimo Sestini from a helicopter, which reproduces the framing, point of view, and arguably the cultural agenda of anti-slavery visuals, arguably illustrating Marcus Wood’s “central premise... that the task of explaining why the middle passage was represented the way it was bears not only on the past but also on the present” (Wood, 1997:212). Sestini’s “Rescue Operation” depicts people on the move, predominantly Black people, on a boat 25 km from the Libyan coast, prior to being intercepted by an Italian navy ship in Operation Mare Nostrum in 2014 (see World Press Photo, 2015). This photograph was shot from a helicopter, locating the spectator above the subjects of the photograph. This point of view reproduces and normalises a military perception of humans as “targets”, whether of guns or cameras. It puts the viewer of the photograph – presumptively the citizen – in the position of authority, surveilling the seas, whilst locating the subjects of the photograph in a subordinate position, subject to state control, surveillance, visibility, or extinguishment. The refugees in the crowded boat photographed by Sestini were identified through Operation Mare Nostrum (OMN), a military-humanitarian operation of the Italian government, which deployed sea vessels, helicopters, and aircraft to monitor and control “migration flows” in the Mediterranean Sea in the aftermath of the Lampedusa shipwrecks. OMN was replaced by Frontex’s Operation Triton in 2014 and Eurosur – the EU’s sea and land surveillance system using drones. What perhaps echoes in “comparative” viewing of the two images (encouraged by the framing of the photograph by the photographer) is the objectification of the people rendered as anonymous bodies, as Wood argues, “an abolitionist cultural agenda which dictated that slaves were to be visualised in a manner that emphasised their total passivity and their status as helpless victims” (Wood, 1997:212). The comparison between these two images, then, as inopportune and problematic as it may be for myriad other reasons, tells us something about how people on the move – in particular when they are Black Africans – are objectified by the various racialised gazes to which they are subject: the military-humanitarian gaze, the gaze of photographers, and the gaze of “empathetic” or “hostile” viewers of photographs of the refugee crisis, all of which embody white supremacy.

Hawthorne points out the limitations in attempts to make sense of the Mediterranean refugee crisis as a sedimentation of histories of anti-Black racism focussed on geographies of the Middle Passage and plantation slavery whilst being equally critical of the “geographical sleight of hand” through which “slavery [is constructed as] something that

happened ‘out there’ in the Americas” (Hawthorne, 2021). White European efforts abound to airbrush slavery from the history of European empires, both in their colonies and in their metropolises, to excise from the historical record their participation in slavery and plunder. Indeed, these ahistorical and ageographic disavowals bolster a “post-racial” (Boulila, 2020) or “non-racist” view of contemporary European societies (Lentin, 2018), by locating racism “elsewhere” in time and place. Hawthorne critiques analytic moves to superimpose the Black Atlantic on the Black Mediterranean. She surveys influential Black feminist theories which demonstrate how the plantation and the Middle Passage have been key to producing “modern ontological systems of categorisation and hierarchisation that continue to determine value and access to full ‘humanness’” (Hawthorne, 2021) and the “ungendering of Black flesh” (Hawthorne:9). At the same time, Hawthorne offers a nuanced critique of comparative approaches that elide the specificity of the historical emergence of the Black Mediterranean by assuming that analyses in Black studies developed of the “plantation-based racial chattel slavery” and its afterlives “can be stretched” to other geographies, such as those that materialised in Africa or Europe or between Africa and Europe. The Black Mediterranean cannot function either as the prehistory to European conquest, transatlantic slavery, and the Black Atlantic or as the contemporary analogue of these historically and geographically determinate processes.

I want to argue that we can no longer approach the Black Mediterranean as a (now defunct) precondition for a racial capitalist order centred on the North Atlantic. Nor is it sufficient to approach the dynamics of the contemporary Mediterranean as merely derivative of Black Atlantic afterlives of slavery. Instead, it is urgent to study the *ongoing* reproductions of the Black Mediterranean in the present, along with all of its ongoing, nonlinear articulations with the Black Atlantic (as well as the Black Pacific and the Black Indian Ocean). (Hawthorne, 2021)

In this connection, Hawthorne poses some crucial questions about how plantation slavery may be conceptualised transnationally, neither “reducing its relevance to a matter of bio-genealogical kinship [*n*]or... rendering it little more than a vague metaphor for anti-Blackness in general” (Hawthorne, 2021). This is connected to Hawthorne’s deeper, germane critique of provincialising versus universalising moves in Black geographic scholarship and in vernacular geographies of anti-Black racism. She observes that “the field of Black Studies is more institutionally established in the United States than it is in Europe, which has shaped the economies of knowledge production about the Black diaspora that some Black European scholars have come to controversially term “African American hegemony” (Hawthorne, 2021). (Incidentally, similar claims are made by

European scholars about African American feminists' "hegemony" in intersectionality studies. The ascription of "hegemony" to scholars who are internally colonised within North American white settler states and marginalised within Anglo-American academies is, to put it mildly, jarring in both instances.) Whilst rejecting diffusionism, Hawthorne's lecture prompts deeper reflection on how ideas and activist practices circulate, "touch down" (Browne and Nash, 2019–2020), and get taken up across geographies.

In this connection, her discussion of the transnational Black Lives Matter movement is illuminating. Suggesting "we shift our focus to understand Black Lives Matter itself as a diasporic resource that is shared back and forth across different diasporic sites – and specifically, in this case, across the Black Atlantic and the Black Mediterranean", Hawthorne seeks to displace framings of "Black Lives Matter *going global*", which have the tendency to "elide the work Black Italian organisers had been undertaking for over a decade – movement work that sometimes, but not always, was explicitly connected to Black American mobilisations" (Hawthorne, 2021). Especially in light of the European Parliament's resolution that "Black Lives Matter" in 2020, whereby parliamentarians denounced racism and discrimination, no-border activists retorted to nonperformative (Ahmed, 2006) European institutional and corporate statements that "Black Lives Matter also in the Med". In light of this, I would question Hawthorne's empirical claim that "[t]he language of abolition has not yet been taken up as a framework for action in these Black Lives Matter mobilisations" (2020). Calls for the abolition of Frontex, which Hawthorne cites as evidence of an emergent abolitionist consciousness (Hawthorne, 2021), continue decades-long anti-detention and anti-prison struggles in the context of border abolitionist (no-border) movements. The broader point, however, is that through such comparisons (which, elsewhere in her article, she rejects), little space is left for an explicitly internationalist orientation in abolition struggles, which rejects the bordering of social movement imaginaries to nationalised geographies. This is not just a question of "borrowing" or "circulating" terms and concepts but rather of forming internationalist coalitions of struggle against the normative bordering of the world and of our communities of concern. Internationalism discerns both the specificities of local struggle – often waged by diasporic communities – and their interconnection against globalised regimes of rule.

Continents are racial concepts. Through logics of anti-Blackness embodied in colonial processes of long duration, the Mediterranean is rendered representationally non-Black in the European imaginary and materially anti-Black in European migration politics. What is suppressed by European anti-Blackness is that Mediterranean geographies are, and have always been, "multiracial", not in virtue of recent, postcolonial migration but long before the institution of the postcolonial nation-state system that seeks to control mobility through the imposition of borders to expunge Blackness

from Europe – or to enclose Blackness within exploitative regimes of labour migration and asylum. Hawthorne's lecture prompts reflection on what is metaphor, what is analogy, and what is catachresis in representing the Black Mediterranean. I began this brief commentary by quoting part of Emtithal Mahmoud's poem, "Bird Watching on Lesbos Island" (Mahmoud, 2016). Mahmoud makes powerful use of a metaphor, to speak back to power, as she tries to make sense of incomprehensible loss, devastation, and survival against an Aegean horizon. Yet, when analogies substitute for geographic or historical analysis, they occlude more than they reveal. As intersectionality suggests, analogies tend to do violence to both terms in the analogy: both that which is positioned as already known and that which we seek to know through the act of comparative juxtaposition. Confronting the horizon over an aqueous cemetery; a violent border; and a space of transhistorical, transgeographic Black survival and resistance, Hawthorne's "Black Mediterranean Geographies" refuses the violence of so many bordered gazes.

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