

Of Sub-Saharan Clandestine Migration: Emotions, Spectrality and Hospitality in World
Cinema

A Dissertation

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Dedication

To you, my dear Empress Elaine, and our joy, Gio

Abstract

This project analyzes the representation of increased human mobility from Sub-Saharan Africa to Europe in contemporary films. The politicization and control of movement through closed borders, travel documents and anti-immigration laws have relegated the humanity of those concerned to the background. I explore how (would-be) migrants conceive of their journeys across the sea, desert, and transit countries to their desired European destinations. The analysis also considers events on the routes used by these subjects and in the places they go to as well as the impacts of these happenings on them. Given the history of colonialism and its newer forms of neocolonialism and the contradictions of the globalization epoch, Sub-Saharan Africans face systemic obstacles to international movement (owing, for example, to their racial identities and Europe's posturing as a Fortress). Thus, those aspiring to move abroad resort to clandestine migration as a form of protest to the denial of legal access to foreign territories. I argue that this mode of movement evinces both a search for better opportunities (economic, health, safety etc.) and a quest to challenge the asymmetry vis-à-vis the right to mobility as well as constitutes a form of haunting to or in societies of immigration. I contend that the strategies adopted by undocumented migrants, including sea crossing and desert passage, as they are confronted with the securitarian logic of border control forces them to become "invisible" while rendering them susceptible to hostile smuggling and governmental practices that dehumanize them. Given the tensions between unauthorized migration and strict anti-migration control, border surveillance and irregular migrants' journey instrumentalize their in/visibility, making both ghosts of a kind and thereby raising questions of (in)hospitality in transit and host nations alike. Moreover, undocumented migrancy engenders mutable emotions that precede and manifest themselves during and after clandestine passages. To this end, the performance of hospitality – the offering of human solidarity to the Other in need – as ethics can be a process of (re)humanization for clandestines, despite their being uninvited guests.

[Ce projet analyse la représentation de l'augmentation de migration humaine de l'Afrique subsaharienne vers l'Europe dans des films contemporains. La politisation et le contrôle de la mobilité au moyen de frontières fermées, de documents de voyage et de lois anti-migration ont relégué l'humanité des migrants au second rang. J'explore comment les migrants envisagent leurs trajets vers des destinations européennes à travers la mer, le désert ainsi que des pays de transit. La discussion tient aussi en compte les événements qui se produisent tant tout au long de la route que dans les pays d'arrivée et leurs effets sur ces personnes. Les Sub-Sahariens font face à des obstacles généralisés en raison de leur identité raciale et l'attitude rigide de l'Europe à l'égard du voyage à l'étranger. Ceci relève non seulement de l'histoire coloniale mais aussi de la pérennisation du néocolonialisme et des contradictions au sein de l'ère de la mondialisation. Par conséquent, ceux qui cherchent à immigrer ont recouru à l'immigration clandestine pour s'opposer au déni d'accès légal aux territoires étrangers. Je soutiens que cette forme de mouvement montre et la recherche de meilleures opportunités (y compris le travail, les soins médicaux et la sécurité) et une contestation du déséquilibre en ce qui concerne la mobilité. En plus, la clandestinité constitue un phénomène troublant aux sociétés d'immigration. J'affirme que les moyens adoptés par les sans-papiers tels que la traversée maritime et désertique sont confrontés au régime sécuritaire de contrôle frontalier, ce qui les oblige à l'imperceptibilité et les rend susceptibles aux violences et pratiques deshumanisantes de la part des passeurs et des forces du gouvernement. La tension entre l'immigration non-autorisée sous forme de stricte surveillance aux postes frontières d'une part et le voyage des clandestins de l'autre produit une sorte de spectralité (la hantise de « fantômes » des deux côtés) par le biais de leur invisibilité respective, ce qui soulève aussi une investigation de l'accueil. De plus, cette mobilité clandestine engendre une variété d'émotions qui précède et se manifeste pendant et après les déplacements. En conséquence, l'hospitalité – une solidarité humaine envers ceux dans le besoin – donnée aux migrants irréguliers, du point de vue éthique, peut être un processus de (re)humanisation malgré qu'ils ne soient pas des hôtes « attendus ».]

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Introduction

“Can the clandestine speak?” (Mehrez 2002: 52, 57)

Dangerous journeys in search of hope and belonging

My interest in the topic of clandestine migration was elicited by my reflection on the fierce determination of would-be migrants to indulge in unauthorized migration despite its many (known) risks¹. Debates about the appropriate terminology for describing this type of migration have given rise to the use of “illegal migration” since most political actors consider it an illegal act. However, this etiquette is erroneous and dehumanizing in that while a person’s actions can be illegal, as a contravention of law, s/he cannot be illegal (see also Andersson 2014). Moreover, Carling (2007) maintains that migration can be “unauthorized” without being illegal particularly in the case of asylum-seeking entrants. In agreement with Abderrezak’s (2016) proposition of clandestine migration, I use it as an aptly neutral term for naming this form of human movement. Also, I would use other variations such as unwanted, unsanctioned, undocumented, unauthorized, and irregular migration in this work. Indeed, some of these terms are charged with notions of agency, ab/normality etc. but remain more appropriate than the criminalizing “illegal.” Additionally, I use “migrants” and “clandestines” as generic terms in reference to both refugees and those labeled as economic migrants. Using this general terminology helps to

¹In my search for a doctoral research question, I encountered a disturbing news article about a group of African emigrants who had been sniffed out from their hiding in and under vehicles traveling across the Strait of Gibraltar by police dogs. The unsettling images of emaciated and asphyxiated bodies in the reportage elicited several questions in my mind as to why the persons involved would risk their lives in such ways to reach Europe. But for the vigilance of the custom officials, the stowaways may have succeeded in crossing into Spain to live their European dreams. The novelty of the sight and shock from seeing this report has lingered on my mind. This migration-border control binary became an object of my scholarly curiosity as I have sought to understand this occurrence from both the perspective of those who want to leave and that of state authorities who oppose their (irregular) movement.

preclude the distinctions drawn between the two groups which make the refugee's mobility preferable or justified over the economic migrant's in receiving societies. Indeed, poverty and political crises contribute to refugeeism and economic travel thereby leading to cohorts that encompass both groups. As such, this choice aligns with the work's aim to emphasize the foregrounding of the human subject in this motion.

The seeming paradox between clandestines' migratory aspirations and their knowledge about the attendant dangers is succinctly captured in a perspicacious scene in the 2012 film *La Pirogue* directed by Moussa Touré. Comprising medium and medium close-up shots, the scene focalizes the characters, their perspectives, and facial expressions as well as the surroundings (the boat and the sea). Here, three irregular migrants – Lansana, Aziz and Ousmane – discuss their migratory project during one of the narrative's sea crossing sequences. Lansana tells his companions that someone talked all night about “the one boat out of ten that doesn't make it”. On his part, Aziz retorts “So what? If you stay back home, its ten chances out of ten of failing your life.” Lansana agrees, adding that one must be sensible, and then offers a stark verdict: “Even if the engines fail and the tides take us to Brazil and we get there dry as mummies eaten by birds, I won't regret a thing. We have no choice.” The bleak assessment of life outcomes in their countries of origin as a counterargument to their awareness of the potentiality of fatalities in this form of mobility has a poignant visual and epistemic effect. Furthermore, the issue of choicelessness alluded to by Lansana in the face of socioeconomic and political situations that have led them to resort to this mode of travel suggests a sense of victimhood and lack of agency. Nonetheless, this position of having no choice and perhaps the power to act is immediately diffused by Lansana when Ousmane tells him that he speaks like a politician. The former

laughs and rises to demonstrate to his interlocutors how politicians speak. Standing on the side of the boat and gesturing animatedly, he apostrophizes: “You politicians, I have one thing to say to you; I am an African man who decided to inscribe himself in History by his own means... ” to the admiration and applause of his listeners. For the speaker, his actions and declarations constitute a political act. Moreover, his words express a forceful adoption of agency, even if it portends danger, to prove a point or demand recognition. Thus, this address can be read as a response to the infamous Dakar Speech (“discours de Dakar”) in 2007 by former French president Nicolas Sarkozy² in which he stated that “Africa’s tragedy is that the African has not sufficiently entered into history (...) Africa’s challenge is to fully enter history. She must draw on her energy, strength, desire, willingness to listen to and espouse her own history.” As such, Touré’s character points to clandestine mobility as a variedly motivated phenomenon – including looking for better life opportunities and simultaneously being a form of protest vis-a-vis (Western) discriminatory discourses and practices targeted at the African subject.

²In the infamous « discours de Dakar », the then French president, Nicolas Sarkozy, stated that « Le drame de l'Afrique, c'est que l'homme africain n'est pas assez entré dans l'histoire. Le paysan africain, qui depuis des millénaires, [...] ne connaît que l'éternel recommencement du temps rythmé par la répétition sans fin des mêmes gestes et des mêmes paroles. Dans cet imaginaire [...], il n'y a de place ni pour l'aventure humaine, ni pour l'idée de progrès. Dans cet univers où la nature commande tout, [...] l'homme reste immobile au milieu d'un ordre immuable où tout semble être écrit d'avance. Jamais l'homme ne s'élançait vers l'avenir. Jamais il ne lui vient à l'idée de sortir de la répétition pour s'inventer un destin. Le problème de l'Afrique [...] Le défi de l'Afrique, c'est d'entrer davantage dans l'histoire. C'est de puiser en elle l'énergie, la force, l'envie, la volonté d'écouter et d'épouser sa propre histoire. » (“Africa’s tragedy is that the African has not sufficiently entered into history. The African peasant, who for millennia, moves with the times (...) only knows the unending renewal of time around the rhythm of repeated words and gestures. In this fanciful realm (...), there is neither room for human adventure nor the idea of progress. In this universe where everything is controlled by nature, (...) one sits still amid unchanging circumstances where everything seems to be predetermined. One never launches himself/herself into the future. It never occurs to him/her to break the cycle of repetition and dream up a better life. The problem of Africa (...) Africa’s challenge is to fully enter history. She must draw on her energy, strength, desire, willingness to listen to and espouse her own history.”) (Translation mine). See https://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2007/11/09/le-discours-de-dakar_976786_3212.html for a full transcription of the speech. The address which attracted a lot of flak was soon followed by scholarly criticism through publications such as the edited volumes by Makhily Gassama, *L’Afrique répond à Sarkozy. Contre le discours de Dakar* (2008) and Jean-Pierre Chrétien, *L’Afrique de Sarkozy. Un déni d’histoire* (2008) in which the authors decry the racism and inaccuracies in the speech.

The wealth of literary, cinematic, musical, and other artistic depictions on the topic of clandestinity have garnered scholarly attention in humanistic and social science fields including ethnographic and anthropological studies. Most of these critical analyses have focused on the North African sub-region which has been the center of media reports as well as reflections through cultural products. However, an important demographic component of this migratory phenomenon i.e. sub-Saharan Africa(ns) has received less attention. My dissertation seeks to deepen extant research and expand the body of work in the field by investigating artistic productions that feature persons from the south of the Sahara as protagonists rather than as minor figures in a larger representation in undocumented migration narratives. It must be noted that sub-Saharan Africa's shared colonial past with Europe, its poverty and political crises make its citizens susceptible to foreign travel in search of safe havens or opportunities. Besides, the porous borders in the sub-region make movement within the region less challenging than the northerly voyages to the paradisaical Eldorado which have engendered numerous casualties because of stringent laws and mechanisms that obstruct legal migration and yet tightly control unauthorized movement. Consequently, the resulting human tragedies have led to increasing productions across different artistic forms to question and push the frontiers of political action to respect the rights and humanity of these persons.

The geographical, political, and sociocultural reach of this dissertation relates to West and North Africa, the Horn of Africa, and the Western and Central Mediterranean³. These regions and the individual countries concerned have diverse colonial pasts, national histories, current socio-economic and political realities which make for different push and

³Nonetheless, it does not treat all societies, countries, or regions since it is not possible to sufficiently address them wholly with their specificities within the limits of this work.

pull factors in the context of irregular migration⁴. The movements and interactions within this space regarding clandestinity reflects (at times references to pre-colonial), colonial, postcolonial and contemporary relations among the people who dwell therein. In sub-Saharan Africa, France, Spain, Italy, Great Britain, and Belgium are among the main ex-colonial powers that had and have geopolitical and economic ties to various African states⁵. This has unsurprisingly played an important role in the attractions of these countries for would-be (sub-Saharan) African migrants. The history of colonialism as well as the modern-day neocolonialism and globalization that have marked the dominance of the West over these places and their citizenry fosters an attraction for international travel. Thus, the incidence of African migration to Europe mirrors the geopolitical and economic imbalances that mark the linkage between the two continents in the contemporary era. For as argued by Goytisolo, “Immigration will remain inevitable as long as its causes subsist—the monstrous inequality between the North and South⁶.” The absence of equilibrium between the two continents, also as an effect of globalization, underlines the artistic representations and the unique yet connected chapters of this dissertation. This disparity which affects mainly those who are from the southern hemisphere of the globe and their aims of improving their life chances has deadly consequences for most.

Clandestinity is both an act motivated by the desire to improve living conditions despite the potential perils and akin to an objection to the stringent anti-immigration stance of Europe, for example. My hypothesis is that the pushback against unsanctioned migration

⁴I take these distinctive characteristics into consideration in the analysis of the corpus to underline the heterogeneity of the places, subjects, and areas represented with respect to unauthorized migration.

⁵The scope and space of the dissertation as well as this introduction will not allow room for an extensive discussion of these long-standing connections between ex-European colonizers and their ex-colonies.

⁶Goytisolo (2010:215).

from sub-Saharan Africa and the risks of the trajectory place those who partake in it at the interstice between strict border control regimes that disregard their humanity or needs and a liminal demonstration of hospitality toward them as unauthorized newcomers. This results in the difficulty to attract humanitarian solidarity in the spaces they traverse or arrive at and to assert their right to mobility. I will do this by interrogating how recent filmic works draw attention to the challenges inherent in this type of movement and the life-changing influence on those represented in such narratives. In this way, irregular migration cannot be reduced to a statistical occurrence which elides the lives of the subjects concerned.

Of Sub-Saharan Clandestine Migration expands the now received fact that (irregular) emigrants no longer simply aim for destinations based on the linguistic and ex-colonial relations between sending and destination nations⁷. It shows, through an examination of films produced since the turn of the new millennium, that the current ex-centric movement of migrants aims at preserving life: be it from sociopolitical or economic insecurity. However, given the tensions between unauthorized migration strategies and strict anti-migration control, border surveillance and irregular migrants' instrumentalize their in/visibility, making both ghosts of a kind and thereby raising questions of (in)hospitality toward the ghostly migrant subject. This reality produces a gamut of emotions that precede and manifest themselves during clandestine passages. The foregoing is evident in the northward movement from sub-Saharan countries such as Senegal, Mauritania, Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, and Eritrea through northern African nations

⁷This follows Abderrezak's (2016) argument in *Ex-Centric Migrations* that migrants no longer travel only to the countries of their ex-colonial power despite their linguistic affinities.

like Morocco and Libya to Europe. In addition to the colonial past that links the two continents, Spain's, France's, and Italy's locations on the northern shore of the Mediterranean has made them central to the incidence of undocumented migration both as entry points and destination spaces. Additionally, their sponsorship of North African countries to act as migration controllers through partnerships and treaties also impacts the occurrence of this form of mobility. Particularly, the former Italian Prime Minister, Matteo Salvini, and the Far-Right discourses and policies of his era have shaped how we think about and perceive clandestines in general and particularly in relation to Italian society⁸.

The dissertation draws on theories related to emotions, spectrality, and hospitality in tandem with inquiries in academic disciplines such as cultural studies, anthropology, sociology, and ethnography. The scholarship from these fields serve as a basis for understanding the sociopolitical underpinnings within the corpus and thereby forming a foundation for the analysis in the current work. The advanced research conducted in the social sciences complements the humanistic perspectives that have continued to evolve in the study of (ir)regular (im)migration in the contemporary era. A web of social, economic, political and ethical paradigms that shape the experience of the migrant subject evolves from this interdisciplinary axis; an important contextualization that needs attention. This framework will be applicable to different geographical locations and demographic identities where undocumented migration occurs.

⁸According to O'healy (2019), the economic and political transformations around the world after the fall of the Berlin Wall led to Italy assuming a role of an "unwitting host to growing numbers of foreigners" from different places given "its relative prosperity and crucial location in the central Mediterranean..." (1). In so doing, Italy gradually has taken on a new identity as an immigration society, a change from its status as an emigrant country. However, its reception of newcomers remains ambiguous, varying between welcome and unwelcome over the years.

In bringing together the notions of emotion, spectrality, and hospitality, I emphasize the pluridimensionality of the incidence and effects of unsanctioned mobility on those concerned. These include emotional evaluations and impacts, a passage between visibility and invisibility or presence and absence – spectrality –, and encounters which reveal attitudes of welcome or unwelcome toward the unauthorized migrant. The multiple physical and psychological upheavals that mark the migrant subject through the various phases of being a clandestine portends the production of trauma as an enduring psychic relic, especially for those who survive the many difficulties of the journey and stay in the host society. For these reasons, it is expedient to examine the different aspects of the irregular migrant experience to better account for the phenomenon's occurrence and its (human) consequences; hence, the dissertation's treatment of emotionality, spectrality, hospitality, (and trauma).

Cinema, as a mode of cultural representation with its inherent visuality, shares a privileged relationship with the portrayal of emotions, spectrality, and hospitality. For example, given its presentation of human subjects, it simultaneously enables the perception of characters' embodied feelings and elicits emotional responses such as empathy from the spectatorship. This duality is particularly relevant in the context of (clandestine) migration and its filmmaking where those concerned undergo emotively treacherous experiences in their bid to travel overseas. Beside cinema's emotion-expressing and eliciting capacity, it also allows for a visualization of the seen and unseen or the present and absent with respect to what is spectral or spectralized. Furthermore, the filmic medium renders personal interactions and exchanges accessible to ocular perception. Thus, film serves as a potent tool for undertaking the dissertation's research aims. The visual texts' depiction of

migrancy and migrants/refugees seeks to incite ethical reactions that transcend a passive consumption of film aesthetics. Despite the potential for voyeurism in showing human distress, these cultural products focalize the need to bring about change by calling for solidarity towards these persons and a critique of the sociopolitical practices that victimize them. My analysis of these works subtends the filmmakers' thematic and cinematographic choices in view of sensitizing readers and viewers alike about the hardships faced by irregular migrants in accessing countries of immigration.

The study looks to bring the reader's attention to less discussed happenings within the realm of unauthorized migration from Africa to Europe through an analysis of cinematic representations of the journeys. One of such is the experience of transit in North Africa (specifically Libya). These works centralize migrants by showing their reasons for leaving on the perilous journey, their experiences on the route, their reception and living conditions upon arrival on the other side of the Mediterranean. By so doing, they counteract journalistic coverages and political ideas which reduce those concerned to the moment of arrival while eliding their personal and travel stories, hence becoming a faceless mass in the public view. The trajectories depicted in these cultural productions include the Senegalese coast as a point of departure toward the Canary Islands and crossing the Sahara from different parts of the continent to Libya for onward boat travel to Italy. Then, there is the arrival on the shores or port of France and Italy (Lampedusa and Linosa more precisely). Together, these emphasize the multidirectionality of the journeys as well as the varied modes of transport: pirogues, dinghies, zodiacs, and trucks. I posit that the various means of transportation used, the diverse spaces traversed and reached contribute simultaneously to similar and yet different experiences for the migrants involved. In other

words, the events lived by clandestines are not generalized even if there are commonalities whether in Africa or in Europe. The multiple strategies for travel adopted by would-be migrants including sea crossing and desert passage are confronted with the securitarian logic of border control which forces them to become invisible while rendering them susceptible to hostile smuggling and governmental practices that dehumanize them. The examination extensively discusses the evidence of these happenings and how migrants live through the circumstances by claiming their agency, relinquishing it, or losing it in the corpus.

My investigation of visual cultural texts produced in, around and across the aforementioned interconnected spaces of Africa and Europe shows the failings of the globalization epoch to protect some human lives when they attempt to cross borders into different territories. Given that the image of the clandestine has become synonymous with a racial identity, that of the black African⁹, the sub-Saharan faces increased difficulty both intra and inter continentally. The thematic concerns arising from this study relates to both continents and foreground the human subject at the center of social, economic, and political matters. The films discussed in the dissertation comprise the crossing of the Atlantic Ocean, the Sahara Desert, and the Mediterranean Sea to show the eccentricity of migrant routes and journeys in the wake of increased irregular migration. This enables me to tease out the peculiar dynamics at play in the specific locations and with the respective modes of transportation represented in the corpus. The multi-route character of this motion attests to

⁹In the words of Hein de Haas (2008), there is now a “migration-related xenophobia towards sub-Saharan migrants” in North Africa (1306). Besides, they are referred to as “Africain”, “Subsaharien”, “Clandestin”, erroneously making the sub-Saharan African the classic image (prototype) of the irregular migrant (Papadopoulous, 2008:193).

the divergent issues that arise and can be studied along the trajectory. It also results in dissimilar migrant narratives and experiences despite the universality of undocumented migration as a sociopolitical phenomenon. This is evidenced by the thematic organization and analysis across the four chapters of the dissertation.

Examining these works, produced by filmmakers from different nationalities – Senegalese, French and Italian –, fills a lacuna in current scholarship which has tended to be about the Maghrebi hotspot of unsanctioned migration. It also draws attention to the peculiar challenges faced by sub-Saharanans engaging in this form of mobility whereby they indulge in longer voyages and passages through other countries unlike their North African counterparts. The denial of the Global South citizen's right to unrestricted movement despite the promotion of a globalized world puts the irregular migrant from the south of the Sahara at a double disadvantage: locally and internationally. In the same way, those from sub-Saharan nations are doubly confronted with internal (on the continent) as well as external controls in addition to issues of religious and racial or ethnic difference both in Africa and in Europe. One of the dissertation's thesis being that North African states' adoption of anti-migration discourses and practices from their European partners means that the performance of (in)hospitality toward the clandestine is similar in both places. Thus, works dealing with the specificity of this demographic group marks an expansion in the scope of the representation and academic exploration of (im)migration in postcolonial studies be it in literature or media forms.

The corpus under investigation largely present the issue of unsanctioned migration from the perspective of the journeyers. This enables an appreciation of the migrants' view on their clandestinity, the legal frameworks that have denied them access to unrestricted

mobility while illegalizing their movement, the anti-migration infrastructure developed to curb their journey including documents such as passports, visas; data technology like digital fingerprints, surveillance technology and, control mechanisms i.e. detention and deportation. The films emphasize the clandestine as a human subject thrust against various human institutions and non-human technologies that fail to uphold the former's humanity. To survive the many obstacles, one needs to endure the treachery of various procedures which threaten and obscure rather than protect lives. In contradistinction to the statistical imperative of political and media narratives, the filmmakers, whose artifacts constitute the primary sources of the analysis, make a case for discussing unwanted migration as a human phenomenon in which lives are at stake. Put differently, the data-driven migration discourses advanced by political actors in favor of border security are challenged by the centralization of dehumanized migrant figures in the cinematic representations. From this perspective, the irregular migrant figures depicted assume the agency denied them by the state and its authorities by demanding improved conditions for their mobility and treatment in transit as well as receiving nations. To this end, I argue that hospitality to the newcomer represents the (re)humanization of the uninvited guest.

Of Sub-Saharan Clandestine Migration, therefore, puts Francophone, French, Italian and multinational artists in conversation with each other through their works and those of cross-disciplinary scholars studying migration questions. This affirms the increasing interest in the issues at stake but also the ex-centric commonality of the clandestine migrant experience. This enables the inclusion of and access to a wide array of perspectives that show divergent and convergent themes and happenings in terms of sub-Saharan African migrations to the western and central Mediterranean area. Indeed, the

experiences and perspectives across the different spaces are not the same. Meanwhile, the concerted efforts of various nationals from the North and the South including co-productions highlights the collective awareness of the need to bring attention and change to the phenomenon. The unison of these portrayals of a dire reality emphasizes the importance attached to the human subject, as the center of cross border movement, without recourse to elements of distinction. However, with the varied political, racial and religious dimensions of identity being central to our understanding of the incidence of irregular journeys and the reception of those concerned, my analysis will scrutinize the crucial role these play along the trajectory especially in transit and receiving societies. I will therefore look closely at representations of migrant cohort compositions, their treatment by state officials or authorities and individual citizens. These subtleties are key elements in migrants' experiences which distinguish the sufferings of some from others. In effect, although all undocumented foreigners are generally subjected to the same misery, certain personalities face extra violence.

Contrary to Ipek and Phillis' (2018) argument of a paternalistic agenda in migration films which "require European citizens to assume responsibility and make a conscious choice to help the migrants/refugees rather than turn a blind eye to their problems" (2), the ethical response expected from a citizen of a receiving nation is without recourse to identity, status or class. It is a humanitarian responsibility to preserve lives in need. Besides, taking into consideration the spread of anti-immigration discourses, films that create awareness to the plight of the clandestines inevitably have the engagement to reform attitudes. This explains the construction of hospitality themes among protagonists and residents of destination countries. Indeed, the films created for (European) national and

transnational audiences do not guarantee the swaying of opinion, at least simplistically. They contribute to creating awareness, eliciting debates or discussions and breaking myths. Ipek and Phillis (2018) accentuate Loshitzky's (2010) argument of hegemonic films produced by Europeans as those who "act as ambassadors of the disenfranchised" (3). Nonetheless, the argument of hegemonic filmmaking can be countered in different ways:

1. Can the refugees themselves produce cultural texts like films without capital, technology, and the know-how?
2. If they possess the above, will their works be more acceptable (to the European audience) as the migrants' portrayal of their plight and agency?
3. Since Europeans make the films to show the failing of their societies toward the outsider and to appeal to their compatriots for an improved reaction, isn't that effective in getting their attention? Moreover, in certain circumstances, outside voices serve as powerful sources of representing others' suffering. This is the case of irregular migration where the depictions of migrants and refugees by filmmakers from other national and racial origins become useful to bringing attention to the critical predicament of undocumented travelers. Hence, I suggest that these interventions are essential to the cause of unauthorized migrants, who may not have the wherewithal for self-representation, to attract better treatment by political authorities. Meanwhile, Ipek and Phillis are right to call out works in which inaudibility, periphery and passivity are assigned to the migrants who are conspicuously the subjects of the diegesis yet remain less prominent since such representations impact the (show of) hospitality.

Indeed, the transnational corpus underlines the wide interest the topic has garnered over the years resulting in productions by citizens of sending and receiving countries, and in some cases co-productions between the two, especially with the inclusion of former

clandestines who have plied the route. As we will see, the filmic works dedicated to this question form a corpus of social activism as they highlight the many unacknowledged aspects of this movement and those who engage therein. Therefore, the dissertation investigates recent cultural objects that have been produced in response to sociopolitical occurrences as modes of creating awareness and counter-narratives to the popularized versions of these issues. In effect, *Of Sub-Saharan Clandestine Migration* echoes previous research while advancing and introducing new ways of thinking about clandestine migration experiences. It challenges considerations of these journeys as linear events involving departure from one point and arrival at another. Instead, it underscores the circular movement, mobility–immobility dichotomy, the impact of (externalized) border control, national policies, and laws for treating the undocumented newcomer on the subjects portrayed. The dissertation offers new insights into migration studies at the intersection of multiple disciplines in the humanities and social sciences including literary, film and political studies, sociology, law, and public policy.

A spectralization of clandestine migration

Portrayals of unauthorized migrants vacillating between visibility and invisibility have been present in different media, one of which is cinema. Others include fictionalized accounts, graphic novels, and paintings. I examine this phenomenon and the choices, practices and controls that characterize those caught in this seen-unseen nexus. It is however noteworthy that scholarship on these questions is limited, having only been addressed in a few works¹⁰. Peeren’s (2014) *The Spectral Metaphor* explores this subject

¹⁰See for example Squire (2015), Sanyal (2017).

in relation to the underground economy focusing on migrants' labor as servants, janitors, organ donors and taxi drivers which makes them spectral figures who remain socially unseen or unrecognized due to the need to hide and remain anonymous but also through a deliberate attempt to not look at/see them. By demonstrating what agency ghostliness facilitates or precludes in relation to these socially marginalized, she underlines ghostly existence as more a production in the present than simply a return of a past phenomenon.

I expand the spectral experiences of these undocumented migrants to include their journey, encounter with physical and digital borders, their identity, and bodily acts of protest to hindrances to their right to free circulation. *Of Sub-Saharan Clandestine Migration* builds on the emerging literature to further the understanding of the loss of visibility present in undocumented migration (narratives). The ghost of unauthorized migration is not (necessarily) a figure of return but an instrumentalized subjectivity, from an acquired skill or an imposed shadowed positionality in the now/present. This haunting of the spectral migrant results from the universal "distribution of the sensible" with relation to the asymmetrical access to migration between citizens of the Global North and South. For Rancière (2006), the distribution of the sensible "establishes at one and the same time something common that is shared and exclusive parts...based on a distribution of spaces, times, and forms of activity that determines the very manner in which something in common lends itself to participation and in what way various individuals have a part in this distribution" (12). The continuous postcolonial association between the West and countries of the South mirror this allocation of parts and positions and, exclusive spaces between their respective nationals. This is because nationals of global south nations remain in a marginalized position in the face of the ability to move into territories belonging to the

erstwhile colonial powers. By so doing, the ghostly irregular migrant who is an outsider and uninvited to the country of immigration haunts this space through a refusal to accept the paradoxical sensible of the global era in which mobility, both a right and an asset, is constantly restrained.

The attribution of spectrality to the incidence of undocumented migration owes to the interplay between the necessity for in/visibility and non-identity for success in the undocumented migratory project. Becoming spectral in clandestine mobility is a mode of existence that seeks to challenge the anti-immigration measures targeted at certain persons. Despite the importance of individual and national identity, one finds that clandestine crossers are unconcerned and easily willing to give up one identity and or take on another to enable them to migrate without authorization: essentially becoming ghosts¹¹. Such an occurrence leads to thinking about the fluidity of identity (ies) in a space where people are generally thought to have strong attachments to who they are.

In a globalized world of constant circulation of people and goods, passports have become de facto symbols of both identity and a right to mobility¹². Citizenship may involve an exclusive affiliation to a state which confers rights to the members opening various socioeconomic, cultural, and political chances or outcomes. National identity is characterized by notions of development and thus serves as a mechanism of distinction between persons of different nationalities along sociocultural factors like race, skin color among other things. In sub-Saharan Africa, the free circulation policies within the

¹¹Peeren (2014) calls this a “state of dispossession” (4). She also provides an overview of the figurative meanings that the term “ghost” has accrued over the years across different domains such as optics, cinema, biology, metallurgy etc. In the context of unsanctioned migration, I use the notion of the ghost in the sense of a refusal of an individual and national identity which denies the right to mobility and social invisibility.

¹²See for instance Torpey (2000).

ECOWAS sub-region, for example, have made borders more accessible. However, the corruptibility of state officials and weak institutions have led to the manipulation of national borders and, the acquisition and use of travel documents by non-citizens less controllable, a factor to the rise in unapproved immigration on the continent.

The passport, as a symbol of identity, has become one of the devices through which asymmetrical mobility has become widespread. While its possession is expected to give access to international borders, specific national identities portrayed by the passport makes some people more mobile than others. This display of political hegemony and inequality robs (clandestine) migrants of their rights forcing them into non-persons excluded from the environment of law and protection. Admittedly, the right to cross-border mobility mainly falls within the framework of international law and the protection offered by organizations such as the United Nations through the Universal Declaration of Human Rights¹³. However, since countries have sovereignty over their national borders and consider some forms of movement as legitimate and others not, the ability to legally access overseas territories remains at the behest of political authorities in these nations. To travel without prior authorization, then, requires tact and learned modes of operation to circumvent the vigilance of anti-migration control. In effect, a desire to be mobile, for many, culminates in the acquisition of identities that grant such transnational accessibility. For this reason, would-be migrants resort to a manipulation of (their) identities by either possessing a valid or counterfeit passport or destroying it. On one hand, by adopting new identities – acquiring

¹³The 1948 universal declaration of human rights states that: Article 13. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country. Article 14. (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution. (2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

fake travel documents –, unauthorized emigrants become “visible” as they try to enter fortress Europe. On the other hand, they destroy every form of identification in order to be “invisible” to border authorities. This act of de-identification and re-identification is aided by smuggling networks spread across the sub-region that steal and sell original passports to or produce fake ones and other travel documents for emigrants with the aim of entering Europe without approval.

Subjected to legal, sociocultural, and bureaucratic processes that dehumanize and make them the image of undesirability, irregular migrants respond to their depersonalization through acts that make them invisible in order to travel abroad. This game of improvised subjecthood for the purposes of immigration challenges the value of individual and national identity. As makeshift identities enable border crossings, by placing value on the (un)seen than the known (the improvised than the actual), they challenge the authenticity of identity. The performativity inherent in the clandestine subject’s adoption of a ghostly agency that facilitates both transcontinental movement and entry into Europe is a response to the steely structural inhibitions faced by the “outcasts of modernity¹⁴.” Meanwhile, the essence of makeshift identity in transit migration, is underscored by Brigden’s (2016) argument that “the wider range of national identities through which someone can “pass”, the safer a transnational journey becomes” (343). Identity, through the possession of the passport, serves as a tool to cross borders in transit locations while non-identity (not having a passport which inscribes an identity and links you to a country of origin) becomes as important to successfully enter the Eldorado and be able to stay. Hence, the loss of identity is a necessary evil or sacrifice. As Juntunen (2002) has shown,

¹⁴Bauman (2004).

clandestinity starts but never ends because even on the other side of the Mediterranean, one must be invisible to continue living.

The state of a never-ending experience of irregularity means that the undocumented migrant in Fortress Europe must de-identify and re-identify themselves continually. In this regard, the unauthorized migrant is better off without an identity than with one as demonstrated by the burying or burning of their documents before embarking because their destruction conceals a part of, if not all, their identity. Signified by the Mauritanian term for clandestine crossers “siriyan,” a coinage from the word for “secret”¹⁵, this is further underscored by the silence, hiding, and setting out at night that characterizes the crossings. Avery Gordon stipulates, in relation to the specificity of the specter’s capacity to reveal itself either explicitly or implicitly, that “What’s distinctive about haunting is that it is an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known, sometimes very directly, sometimes more obliquely¹⁶”. The dissymmetry in the access to mobility which marginalizes citizens of postcolonial nations is a “repressed or unresolved social violence” that inspires these subjects to resort to the strategic irruption or upsurge into the West known as clandestinity. By counteracting the expected assignation of staying in place (i.e. not crossing transnational borders), aspiring migrants bring out the spectrality of their clandestine presence in European territories. Irregular migrants, then, act as “figures of disturbance¹⁷” and “unwelcome reminders¹⁸” to the effect that “what’s been concealed is very much alive and present, interfering precisely with those always

¹⁵See Anderssen (2014), Juntunen (2002) reveals the use of *hijra sirriya*, “hidden” or “secret” in Morocco, the Cape Verdean expression is *bá gatxód*, “going hidden,” Carling (2001), “burning the sea or the road” is the popular terminology in Morocco and Algeria from the Arabic “*hrig*” and “*harraga*” meaning “fire” and “burners” respectively according to Abderrezak (2016).

¹⁶Gordon (1997: xvi).

¹⁷Peeren (2014:2).

¹⁸Ibid.

incomplete forms of containment and repression...¹⁹” This direct and sometimes subtle haunting per Gordon’s description underpins the advent of irregular migration as a ghostly situation. In this vein, the demand for what is considered a right or necessity by secret appearance or open intrusion into a space where one is unwanted or uninvited highlights this spectrality. Hence, it underlines the haunting produced by the clandestine.

The spectrality and haunting produced by undocumented migrants in their travel and surreptitious dwelling in host societies parallels Fortress Europe’s spectralization of authorized migration through ghostly forms of surveillance that haunt the newcomer. Europe’s investment in human and financial resources through satellites, radars and sophisticated IT systems on land, air, and sea patrols to inhibit migratory movement reifies a panoptical absent-presence on (littoral) borders that continually monitor the arrival of those who are meant to be kept out. The pressure exerted on Italy and Spain as watchdogs for the EU landscape has contributed to the formulation of mechanisms to keep out potential immigrants²⁰. A classic example is Spain’s high-tech border surveillance and control system installed on its coastal border with Morocco known as *Sistema Integrado de Vigilancia Exterior* or Integrated System of External Vigilance (SIVE) to detect and apprehend those who attempt to enter Spain across the Mediterranean. Similarly, the digital fingerprint database, Eurodoc, developed for tracking entrants into the EU area is another measure for curbing migrant (in)visibility. Meanwhile, the mechanism has generated a drastic reaction by clandestines who burn or mutilate their fingerprints to ensure their escape from a system they consider inhibitive to their goals. The self-mutilation here, like discarding the passport and other IDs, is a biological de-identification in view of becoming

¹⁹Gordon (1997: xvi).

²⁰See for instance Abderrezak (2016) and O’healy (2019).

unidentifiable, in effect creating a ghost-like person who can travel freely across borders without limitations. The incineration of identification papers and the mutilation of fingerprints result in taking on a spectral agency that enables the clandestine to oppose and contest the limits of migration control. Thus, unauthorized migration becomes a double phenomenon of specters and haunting involving state power and the clandestine.

Meanwhile, the self-selection that foregrounds the identity/non-identity dichotomy characterizing unsanctioned emigration does not only mirror in/visibility but is appropriated in Fortress Europe's reception of migrants. The treatment of clandestine newcomers at European borders reveals practices that lead to being spectral. This spectrality imposed on the undocumented migrant subject is tantamount to dehumanization. The screening of newcomers after their rescue at sea conceals a process of de-identification and re-identification whereby migrants are assigned numbers as a form of identification instead of their names: a dehumanizing practice which seeks to highlight the number of migrants at the detriment of their humanness. The numerical identification of rescued or intercepted migrants at European borders contributes to the suppression of their humanness leading to the state's continuation of their spectralness. The prolongation of the irregular migrant's non-identity reifies the undesirability that they embody in the eyes of the supposed El dorado and leads to an imposition of social absence on them through confinement.

The construction of holding centers and camps on the periphery of national borders and shores attempts to keep the newcomers away from public view, a practice that leads to their social and physical invisibility from the masses. Italy, for example, has heavily relied on these spaces of containment to fight against the infiltration of irregular travelers into

mainstream society²¹. This results in the absence-presence dichotomy that characterizes the incidence of undocumented mobility. Meanwhile, given the proximity of Italy to the Mediterranean, clandestines have not been deterred from traveling to Italy as a first destination for onward movement or as their final place of settlement despite the constant surveillance. The rising numbers have however been met with fierce border closing policies. Cultural, literary, and filmic productions have depicted these trends in works emanating from Italy, France, Spain, Senegal, the Maghreb among others. Hence, the fallouts from the determination of global southerners to move to the Global North notwithstanding the pushback against their journey constitute a fertile ground for human consequences and scholarly investigation.

From spectrality to (in)hospitality

(Unauthorized) Migrants travel with the expectation of receiving hospitality both in the places of transit and the targeted destination. Still (2005) posits that as a human virtue, “Hospitality ...relates to crossing boundaries (‘Come in, Come in’) or thresholds ...between self and other, private and public, inside and outside, individual and collective, personal and political” (85). Despite the separation between the self and other or personal and political, hospitality serves as a building block for crossing the divide. The evocation of spatial and relational traversal of multiple borders has the potential of blurring identitarian differences. However, this unlimited bridging of several frontiers to bring people together has been met with opposition in the face of clandestinity. The undocumented migrant’s expectancy of welcome finds a justification in the Universal

²¹See for example Campesi (2018), Fiore (2018).

Declaration of Human Rights which makes migration a legal right and arguably in an ethics of human solidarity. In Derrida's (2000) seminal theorization, hospitality is a principle that guarantees that the stranger is not treated with hostility upon entering a new territory.

In her groundbreaking masterpiece, *Postcolonial Hospitality: The Migrant as Guest*, Rosello demonstrates through Derridean ethics of unconditional hospitality, the importance of a kind reception to immigrants, showing the multi-level portrayal of kindness by individuals and the state. Although Rosello's work precedes the current state of migration, this insight has become even more relevant in the debate surrounding contemporary immigration issues, most importantly irregular migration. Clandestine migrants are largely affected by the attitude of welcome espoused by the sociopolitical posture of host societies and their citizens. This is important for thinking about the new image of Europe as a fortress and more specifically about European nations who through their stringent anti-immigration policies are not welcoming toward newcomers. It is equally useful for examining the happenings in North African nations serving as transit sites for travelers on one hand and anti-migration agents for their EU partners. If there is a collective identity of generosity, it is lacking having been replaced by an overarching demonstration of hostility toward the undocumented migrant using strict laws that criminalize clandestine mobility. This criminality attributed to and the invisibility of the undocumented migrant be it as a result of political border surveillance or a self-positionality in hiding have consequences on the agency and perception of the migrant as a human subject meriting ethical performances.

The collection of essays in Thomas Claviez's edited volume, *The Conditions of Hospitality*, explores the various conditionalities that modern societies have generated as a

basis for the performance of hospitality. Following from this, it is useful to examine what necessitates the (un)welcome of newcomers. These considerations include racial, ethnic, religious, and national identities, (il)legal status, length of stay and financial ability of the foreigners. In what I will call *intercontinental hospitality*, I investigate the performance of hospitality to clandestines as continentally foreign others in Europe (see chapter 4). The privileging of certain identities as more desirable to enter foreign territories means that the ethics of hospitality has become a conditional ethos which does not operate by the essence of a person's humanity. That is to say, the welcoming of the undocumented migrant is conditioned by political and sociopolitical factors instead of a recognition of his/her need for solidarity. Put differently, Levinas' postulation of the face-to-face encounter in which the human face "orders and ordains" us into an ethical responsibility to one another in any social meeting is lost in the current management of irregular migration.

Consequently, Goytisolo (2010) maintains that "Immigrants who have reached our shores, having overcome all kinds of obstacles and risked their lives, deserve humane treatment and respect" (215). Nevertheless, in the age of global capitalism, hospitality is a market venture, a commercial commodity involving exchange. Among the ways in which the human has been relegated to the background, Pravinchandra (2013) aptly neologizes the acquisition of the hospitality of citizenship through the offering of a biomedical organ in exchange for a counterfeit passport in destination countries as *hospitality for sale*. This ephemeral acceptability offered by this document-enabled welcome is observable in other temporal recognitions of irregular migrants whose longevity is subject to the non-discovery by state power. I expand this notion of *hospitality for sale* to include underpaid labor

performed by undocumented persons to avoid being denounced and the business of welcoming travelers as guests to be hosted (hospitably).

In a broader perspective, the exercise of hospitality has been monopolized by the state meaning that it is largely incumbent on its agencies and laws to determine the parameters for accepting the Other. The use of camps or detention centers on the periphery of host cities has created a new paradigm of hospitality which involves state actors and the newcomers while markedly precluding the participation of the local people in whose community the foreigners arrive and are hosted. This echoes Derrida's insistence on the welcome of the stranger as a statal function since the inhabitants have mostly become spectators rather than participants. Nonetheless, the space of hospitality in unauthorized migration goes beyond the places designated by the state to include the individual's home although it is streamlined by what is possible within national policies and laws. The notion of labelling²² by the state has an impact on the performativity of hospitality to the newcomer in the destination space. The clandestine migrant is torn between the perception as an "illegal", an economic parasite, a security or medical threat and a genuine asylum seeker or refugee. The latter label, although privileged over the others, must nonetheless meet certain criteria to be a worthy (uninvited) guest. As such McFadyen (2016) delineates the five-fold definition of the genuine asylum seeker in political discourses and policies as: (a) "arrived through legal means with the correct travel documentation and visas", (b) "travelled directly from their country of origin and not have passed through a safe third country", (c) "fleeing due to a well-founded fear of persecution as specified in the Refugee Convention (race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular

²²Zetter (2007).

social group)”, (d) “not driven by welfare benefits or economic aspirations, but rather on seeking a safe haven” and (e) “constitute a minority figure in the world of ‘migrants’” (607-611). This idealization of the acceptable foreigner fails to recognize the breadth of persons who engage in undocumented migration and thus merit hospitable receptions. While completely ignoring the challenges at the origin of and encountered by several clandestines which can change their status from migrant to refugee, this labelling leads to the denial of welcome to many. There is, therefore, a confluence of hospitality and hostility in the reception of newcomers.

The issue of hospitality in unauthorized migration must be expanded to include issues related to the journeys before arrival in Europe. The production of un/welcome in trans-Saharan migration in what I call intracontinental or south-south hospitality looks at the demonstration of hospitality by Global South authorities and citizens toward other nationals. How is this similar to or different from the welcome to strangers in Fortress Europe involving the state and its citizenry: inter-continental hospitality? The performance of hostility against the guest is not peculiar to destination countries as similar experiences are encountered in countries of transit. Prior to arrival on the northern shore of the Mediterranean, the movement of undocumented migrants is confronted with navigating the control mechanisms of Northern African nations who have become proxy border agents for European powers. Migration scholars have pointed out this “walling” of the Mediterranean and Atlantic regions by European governments through legislations, innovations, hard to pass (physical and technological) borders and agreements with Maghreb nations to fortify opposition to northerly mobility²³. Visual artists through their

²³Sassen (2006) and Bensaâd (2006).

productions reflect on the impact of these obstacles to migratory dreams. In addition to this challenge, would-be migrants face the brunt of smuggling networks, known for their profiteering business model at the detriment of the lives of their clients. The externalized European bodies, i.e. North African states, do not offer protection to sub-Saharan journeyers who have been ascribed the image of violators in the view of these watchdogs. In their bid to avert the potential of becoming receiving nations themselves, transit countries on the south of the Mediterranean employ anti-immigration mechanisms like imprisonment and deportation (there is a proliferation of detention centers in countries like Libya) toward transmigrants. They, therefore, have similar pathways and display a striking trend with European immigration control and raise questions of human rights violations.

The extremity of measures formulated to fight the passage of transit migrants results in a self-destruction not necessarily of the transit space but of the suffering people who are first, fellow humans and second, fellow Africans. As such, I suggest that the works dealing with crossing the Sahara region enable an engagement with Derrida's notion of autoimmunity²⁴ (see chapter 2). This deals with the idea that an infected body's immune system expected to develop antibodies to fight pathogens is reversed by the excessive mobilization of the health-restoring antibodies to the sick body's detriment. This overprotective defense which degenerates into a disorder is attributable to control regimes against clandestinity. It is akin to Africa being at war against its own pointing to the disunity within the continent's people. In this sense, it plays a crucial role in (our understanding of) the violent treatment of migrants who move through Libya's territory, for example, and the traumatism this imposes on them. The sociopolitical, economic, and

²⁴Derrida (1998).

psychological ramifications on the people and places involved in the phenomenon has changed how we (should) understand the human migratory events of the current globalized world. The changing views of migrants themselves on the political landscapes they traverse and travel to has cultural and socio-political significance. Their awareness of the implication of receiving countries' in the violence of transit spaces influences their perception of both places and the role of international bodies and agreements in victimizing them.

Of emotions in clandestine migration

The understanding of undocumented migration as a human endeavor merits a study of its emotivity. Given the reasons that lead many to resort to foreign travel and the attendant difficulties that mark both authorized and unauthorized mobility, clandestine migration evinces the emotionality of those who engage in this form of travel. This includes the sentiments provoked during decision-making, journeying and the success or failure of the migratory attempt. It becomes apparent that clandestinity is an emotionally charged activity as feelings are innately human and constitute a response to happenings and circumstances. Thus, be they positive or negative, they incite actions or reactions within the political and sociocultural spheres of life. I choose the concept of emotions (and its synonyms such as feelings or sentiments) as a conceptual framework for my study due to my interest in underscoring the humanity of migrants and refugees. For this reason, emotions unlike affect theory offers a more humanitarian axis and thus humanizes the figures of clandestine migration. While affect theory could serve as an analytical tool here, its abstractedness takes away the focus from the human or migrant. Besides, the debates surrounding what constitutes affect makes it a fluid notion unlike emotions which have a

more generalized cultural and quotidian usage to describe what is felt or displayed as a cognitive or psychic reaction to situations. As such, I insist on emotionality as a humanizing and useful concept for undertaking the present critique.

As an example, the negative emotion of fear has been variously associated with the topic of (irregular) migration to Europe as a sociopolitical, medical, and economic threat. Far Right and conservative political parties have whipped up the pushback against foreigners through the popularization of themes such as “invasion”, “waves”, “human tide” and “flows” to justify anti-immigration sentiments²⁵. Scholars such as de Haas (2008) and Flesler (2008) have called attention to this myth of invasion and “phantom menace²⁶” which has led to protracted victimization of newcomers²⁷. This neglects the feelings of those to whom such discourses are directed and the difficult experiences they undergo on their way to and in the Global North. My decision to analyze the emotionality of unsanctioned migration owes both to this negligence and the importance of uncovering the creative ways that artistic producers have deployed to make this human characteristic of those vilified for their means of foreign travel known. From this point of departure, it becomes clear that migratory decisions and events involve emotional stakes which impact those who (want to) leave as well as those left behind. This allows to reflect on the consecutive happenings from the moment of hitting the road vis-à-vis the mutating emotions lived by voyagers until they attain their goal or otherwise.

²⁵Scholars such as Abderrezak (2016), Hage (2016) have argued against the inappropriateness of these terminologies.

²⁶Lynn and Lea (2003).

²⁷O’healy’s *Migrant Anxieties* has analyzed (through films produced in Italy from 1990 to 2016) anxieties, “unspoken fears and dilemmas” engendered by the increase in immigration to Italy (viewed as a threat to cultural unicity, security, economic opportunities).

Even though the individual chapters of the dissertation deal with specific aspects of clandestine mobility in original ways, emotions are present in the different phases of migrants' journeys. The feelings of sadness and despair that may instantiate the desire to leave are relived during the travel as well as at the end of failed journeys or "successful" ones in the country of immigration. Similarly, the attribution of happiness to migration to the Eldorado may be sustained by journeyers while on the move and upon arrival. Meanwhile, the dangers and difficulties encountered on the trip produce feelings such fear, sorrow and despair thereby becoming sources of trauma for both those who fail to enter their desired destinations and those who manage to, be it stealthily or after being rescued. Thus, the dissertation considers the ways in which migration filmmakers have depicted these issues within undocumented movement between places like Senegal, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Libya, France, Italy, and Spain. Given that these have been conspicuously missing in mainstream media and politics, the filmic narratives uncover the (deeply) personal and private sufferings of those concerned without sensationalizing them for public consumption. These portrayals rehumanize unauthorized migrants by showing how political actions and smuggling networks instrumentalize, criminalize and victimize them. Portraying their emotional states and traumatic circumstances underscores the fundamental humanity of these persons who have been dehumanized by controls and antagonistic discourses that have painted them as villains.

The emotional turmoil and myriad violent experiences in migrancy point to the production of traumatism for the subjects involved. Migration trauma stems from occurrences preceding, during and after travel. Although scholars like Caruth (1995) have theorized trauma as a post-event phenomenon, clandestine migration shows that it can be

experienced prior to, on and after the journey. Thus, the representation of migrants and refugees suggests a link between migratory experiences and memory as embodied by survivors and their remembering of the horrid events they have lived through in their journeys. The situations that force many to leave including war, persecution and economic crises result in psychic effects on them. Also, the happenings en route such hunger, thirst, death, detention, torture, and other forms of hostility encountered result in traumatic experiences that are compounded by post-arrival inhospitality. These form a continuum of psychological consequences which produce traumatized persons. The ways in which these conditions are engendered by actors in undocumented mobility like political power and smugglers on one hand and endured by travelers on the other hand has merited critical attention in academic scholarship. The timely essays in Meryam Schouler-Ocak's edited volume, *Trauma and Migration*, address the traumatization of migrants and refugees from an epidemiological and medical perspective including proposed treatments for survivors. The relevance of this topic requires more investigation as migrants continue to experience increasing forms of violence. This dissertation offers a trenchant analysis of the phenomenon through the prism of cinema focusing on how those concerned are traumatized, their transformation and their resilience strategies in confronting the traumatism in situ and ex situ.

Brighter futures? Safer or curbing (clandestine) migration

Despite travel experiences and encounters of clandestines within transit spaces and host societies being the most discussed themes of *Of Sub-Saharan Clandestine Migration*, all the chapters evoke the future of this form of movement and that of potential migrants as a concern for both filmmakers and characters. As migration tragedies continue to rise

due to the animosity and criminalizing discourses directed at those who enter new spaces without authorization, discussions and efforts to ensure safer travel or prevent irregular migration go on unabated. Among others, visual artists highlight and continue to show ways in which (unauthorized) migrants are pushing for improved access and better treatment by addressing these concerns. The representations invite the viewer to reflect on the problematics of unsanctioned migration beginning with the conditions that incite several persons to resort to it, the perils of the journeys and the fallouts from encounters these travelers have with government authorities, smugglers and other citizens during their movement.

The dangers of and carnage caused by sea travel as well as the return of failed migrants are ways some films adopt to conscientize potential irregular migrants (see chapter 1). In chapter 2, the perils of the desert passage, smuggling and state violence in transit migration through the eyes of migrant survivors call out the failure of governments and international organizations to ensure the safety and protection of lives on the route. Those concerned express a desire that no one else should undergo such misery. The harsh living circumstances and hostile conditions in which migrants dwell are redirected into their decision and preference to return home as a strategy for dissuading others from taking the road (see chapters 3 and 4). However, given the inevitability of human movement across borders, the question of precluding clandestineness or making it safer becomes even more essential.

The immigrant's "success" and the capacity to remit those left behind as well as mediatic images of European life entice the latter into becoming desirous emigrants. As people are attracted by these realities, dissuading them from embarking on the perilous

journey to fortress Europe in order to achieve sometimes basic but other times lofty dreams of making a fortune becomes almost an impossibility. To this effect, Carla Calargé asserts that “if we are to change the discourse around clandestine immigration, we ought to frame it in a new way that does not activate the European paradise, the immigrant-conquistador, the adventure of the border crossing, or the perils of the sea.”²⁸ Some of the films’ protagonists demonstrate the practicality of stopping clandestinity by changing the phenomenon of the migrant’s lie²⁹ to proactive awareness creation.

The corpus under investigation in *Of Sub-Saharan Clandestine Migration* have attracted academic and social attention through their sociopolitical impact especially in Europe and the United States, commercial fortunes and recognition in film festivals or awards. To this end, they have been analyzed from different literary, filmic, artistic, and theoretical prisms within postcolonial and migration studies. Besides, many of them have received critical acclaim by critics and viewers from different walks of life leading to widespread praise. Indeed, they have become part of an archive of migrant experiences that throw light on the many unknowns of those who have been simultaneously criminalized and marginalized even in and by discussions that mainly concern them.

As I further an evolving field, I adopt terminologies and sometimes utilize neologisms as a way of orienting my analysis and guiding the reader through the existing perspectives I echo and the new ones that emerge from the discussions. My approach comprises a blend of Western and African scholarship as a reflection of the Afro-European migratory questions at stake in the dissertation. By looking at both sides of the

²⁸ Calargé (2015: 9).

²⁹ Sayad (1999, 2000).

Mediterranean divide, I suggest that a comprehensive examination can be realized in relation to both worlds pertaining to migrant experiences. Admittedly, I draw largely on theories produced in the West that enable the investigation of the political and societal matters at the heart of clandestinity. However, this does not lead to perpetuating a hegemony or skewing the interpretation in favor of the West. Through the texts I examine, I will show the multi-faceted human responses and impacts of current migration trends in furtherance of cultural media productions that advocate socio-political transformations over the cultural and geopolitical landscape of mobility in the globalized era. More so, the voices and views of the migrant figures in the works examined are inscribed in the criticism and in opposition to larger debates.

Among the contributions of this dissertation, I hope it will show the ways in which the stringent immigration controls and the unwavering desire of emigrants, for economic and asylum reasons, have initiated a wealth of fictional and non-fictional portrayals of the challenges that have ensued from this opposition. While the mediatic and political commentary on the occurrence of unauthorized border crossings have labelled those involved as lawbreakers, invaders and parasites of the economic resources of countries of immigration thereby robbing locals of opportunities, this belies the difficulties and structural inhibitions that have pushed many to resort to such arduous journeys. In other words, the denial of the exercise of the right of mobility for economic and security purposes and the legal protection afforded by both the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Refugee Convention to certain populations of the world is unacknowledged in many political and media debates that seek to influence public opinion. Again, the anti-migrant

views generated by these discourses fail to address the sufferings and human right abuses encountered by migrants who want to possess and use a natural and political right.

Literary and cinematic studies tend to follow thematic or generic or other organizational patterns. The methodology may influence and or be influenced by the choice of primary texts. In this way, fiction and non-fictional works are discussed separately or together. In this study, I adopt a thematic approach to grouping and analyzing the filmic texts. The combination of documentary, documentary fiction and fictional films aligns with the variety of representational forms produced in clandestine migration narratives. Additionally, some themes have been portrayed in specific genres but not others. Thus, the deliberate uniting of these genres enables a broader perspective on the issues at stake in *Of Sub-Saharan Clandestine Migration*. Also, the selected films are based on real happenings, media reports and statistical data which have been fictionalized or documentarized, sometimes featuring the real persons who experienced them.

Without claiming to offer a holistic coverage of the clandestine migration endeavor from the point of departure to that of arrival at the chosen destination, the work nonetheless covers various stages of the journeys. As such, the organization of the dissertation attempts to mirror the many facets of this movement, paying attention to the issues arising within each stage. The first chapter situates the formation of the migrant dream owing to the different socioeconomic and political conditions faced by those who desire to leave, and sea travel as emotionally charged aspects of clandestinity. This is followed by a discussion of transit through nations around the Sahara Desert and entry into European destinations as well as settlement: departure-transit-arrival events and consequences. The third and fourth chapters analyze the welcome and stay of those who reach the northern shores of

the Mediterranean. Although each chapter is dedicated to specific thematic concerns, all the chapters share linkages that relate to the overarching issue of clandestine migration between sub-Saharan Africa and Europe as a human venture.

Chapter 1, “Migratory Emotionality” investigates the migrant’s dream situated between a search for an improved livelihood and the potentiality of death. Furthering Mazauric’s reflections on the migrant’s dream and Ahmed’s notion of the *happy object*, I argue that the decision to travel abroad clandestinely reveals an emotional evaluation of migration as a key to happiness. By analyzing the Senegalese film, *La Pirogue*, I demonstrate the pre-mobility and sea crossing emotional experiences of would-be migrants as important aspects of understanding the phenomenon. Constructing oversea journeys as sources of happiness inevitably sets up for disappointment as the failure to attain the preconceived (mythical) paradise results in despair and shame. Moreover, it has a toll on (the emotional relationship between) those who leave and those left behind.

Chapter 2, “Migrants in Transit” examines the multifaceted transactions – smuggling, negotiation, buying and selling, and interactions between undocumented people – that advance clandestine migrancy. In juxtaposition with Urry’s concept of “interdependent mobilities”, I show how migrants navigate (transact) the interchanging states of mobility (being on the road) and immobility (waiting) inherent in their movement as well as their relations with smugglers. My reading of *Mediterranea* and *Come un uomo sulla terra* demonstrates migration in transit as a multi-transactional procedure by which migrants attain their goals. However, the violence-rife treatment of migrants and refugees at the hands of smuggling and state actors in the spaces traversed invites us to consider the human and psychological impact it has on those concerned.

Chapter 3, “The Spectralization of Clandestine Migration” evokes the dichotomy between in/visibility and non/identity. I argue that the clandestine subject’s recourse to spectrality, effacing the self to become ghostly, evinces the main mode of unrestrained mobility. Drawing on Rancière’s the distribution of the sensible and the uncared, I show that the undocumented migrant’s self-transformation into a specter to cross borders challenges the universal “wrong” that assigns and restricts mobility in the era of globalization. Reading two films, *Fire at Sea* (Italy) and *Clandestin* (France), I posit that the spectralization of irregular migration is a bipartite phenomenon involving would-be migrants and state power, particularly anti-immigration authorities. The use of highly sophisticated surveillance technology for border control, mediatic portrayals (radio) of undocumented migrants as well as the latter’s enacted ghosthood enforce an absence-presence with haunting effect on themselves, power, and society.

Chapter 4, “Intercontinental Hospitality” deals with the unauthorized migrant’s infiltration into the society of immigration which is interspersed with an expectation of hospitality. I propose the concept of intercontinental hospitality to study South-North moral and socio-political engagement with the subject. Can the uninvited guest, a specter as the preceding chapter argues, merit an ethical reception? I analyze two Italian films, *Terraferma* and *Mediterranea* using Derrida’s reflections on hospitality to show the confluence of hospitable and hostile acts and, mechanisms toward the uninvited guest in destination spaces. Furthermore, the unapproved migrant may “purchase” hospitality by expending his/her physical strength(labor) to the benefit of the host country, what I term as *hospitality for sale*.

Chapter 1: Migratory Emotionality

“Everybody wants to be happy. There is probably no other goal in life that commands such a high degree of consensus.” ([Frey and Stutzer, 2002: vii] quoted in Ahmed, 2010:1).

Introduction

An interest in understanding (clandestine) migration as a human phenomenon merits a study of its emotionality (the emotions³⁰ involved) in decision-making, traveling as well as the failure or success of the journey. The reading of news, novels and the consumption of digital media relating to this subject arouse feelings toward those concerned and the occurrence. Examples include the supposed fear inspired by migrants who are perceived as invaders and sources of contagion in the imaginary of destination countries³¹. While the aforementioned has received scholarly interest, the emotional experiences of migrants (and refugees) have been less discussed. The description of migrant vessels by the Moroccan and Spanish press as “boats of death”, “boats of shame”, “*pateras of despair*”, “floating tombs”³² inscribes a range of emotions pointing to feelings evoked by clandestine migration, albeit negative. This emotive typology relating to the means of transportation used by clandestine migrants can be expanded to include *boats of hope*, *pateras of happiness* to underscore the optimism and positivity these travelers attribute to their journey. Besides, some of them successfully cross the sea into Europe to chase their dreams although many die or are arrested, jailed and deported. To this end, I

³⁰I use the term “emotion(s)” in this chapter in its basic meaning as the characterization of a person’s state of mind, mood or reaction to situations and interactions which may be perceived through facial expressions, body language and gestures. To avoid repetition, I would use words such as feeling(s), sentiment(s), affective reaction or response as variations or synonyms of emotion (s).

³¹See Flesler (2008), Loshitzky (2010), Calargé (2015).

³²Belghazi (2007:88).

analyze the issue of migrant or migratory emotion through Moussa Touré's 2012 film, *La Pirogue*³³. Sara Ahmed's concept of *happy objects* which encapsulates physical and cultural elements onto which sentiments are projected to serve as sources of happiness for people offers a scope for investigating the attribution of a messianic or panaceaic status to emigration by means of embodied feelings. Hence, by putting the film in conversation with the notion of *happy objects*, I argue that (would-be) unauthorized migrants navigate a range of emotions – before, during and after their journeys – which have individual, familial and other relational effects on both those who leave and those left behind. In this way, the affective evaluations prior to leaving and the emotional impact of events during and after their trajectory concretize migration's emotive mutability and transformational essence. As such, I examine the pre-departure preparatory, sea passage and end-of-travel occurrences to show the work of emotions in this form of human mobility.

I choose film as the primary mode of enquiry for the present study due to the emotional affordance of visual culture/cinema. The depiction of characters on screen with next to real life stories enables a reading of feelings elicited in the diegesis. Although many films have depicted undocumented migration and the sea crossing experience³⁴, *La Pirogue*'s dedication to the subject stands out since more than two-thirds of the film takes place on the boat and sea. It also shows us the pre-departure and post-return events. As a result, the narrative presents an extensive coverage of and character evolution during the

³³Fofana and Madigan's (2017) comparative study of *Harragas* and *La Pirogue*, broaches the film's evocation of emotion in the characters and events, and the elicitation of viewers' emotional reactions.

³⁴See for example Fofana and Madigan (2017) who put together a chronological overview of films that deal with the sea crossing in some form.

journey which brings it closer to real life, albeit fictional³⁵. As aptly hinted by Fofana and Madigan (2017), Touré approaches the topic of clandestinity with an attention to the real by “... using documentary techniques, to convey more intensely a sense of lifelike immediacy to viewers. Such techniques undercut the use of artificial patterns, special effects, the montage of fantastic or artificial scenes, for instance, or the use of elements that could potentially estrange and distance viewers from the object; instead, every aspect reminds viewers graphically of their immediate daily lives and realities” (782). Hence, the film’s portrayal of “flesh-and-blood characters” enables the possibility of reading the depiction and incidence of emotions in migrancy.

The vivacity of the crossing in *La Pirogue* is emotionally charged (for the migrants) and charging (for the viewer). Moreover, the film’s subtitle, *Goor Fitt*, which is also the name of the vessel used by the migrants has attracted reference to the boat as a filmic character (Desjardins 2013:51; Klawans 2013). The meaning of the name (“man of courage”, “who has no fear”) read together with the journey as well as the media’s taxonomy of boats of despair, boats of shame instantiate a reading of clandestine migration as an emotive venture requiring scholarly attention. Additionally, the boat in this context is a space of multiple and alternating emotions: hope and despair, happiness, and sadness. Like its predecessor, Merzak Allouache’s *Harragas* (2009), the film’s portrayal of the interactions and sufferings of clandestine migrants exposes viewers to less commonplace images about the phenomenon. Moreover, the sea route utilized in *La Pirogue*, the Atlantic

³⁵For Weissberg (2012), the director creates “flesh-and-blood characters.”

Ocean, presents an alternative yet complementary course to the more popularized Mediterranean route.

A plot summary of the work under investigation is useful here. Moussa Toure's *La Pirogue* is a filmic adaptation of the 2008 novel, *Mbëkë mi*, by Abasse Ndione. It recounts the story of a group of 31 African migrants who leave the Senegalese coast from Dakar to the Canary Islands (Spain) in search of better life opportunities. Comprised of both young and old men, there's only one woman among this multi-ethnic (Hal Pulaar, Fulani) and multinational (Senegalese, Guineans) cohort motivated by the promise of an Eldorado. The narrative follows Baye Laye, the protagonist, who lives in a fishing community which is now facing dire economic challenges due to the unproductivity of their main source of livelihood. As a result, many of the inhabitants have left for Europe to create wealth and acquire properties while those left behind have become prey to smugglers who facilitate undocumented journeys to Spain. Bourbi, the smuggler, and Lansana, his recruiter, need a captain to lead their clients on a pirogue across the Atlantic Ocean. As an experienced fisherman, Baye Laye is offered the job with perks including a free passage, payment for his services and money for his wife's upkeep while he is away. Wary of the dangers involved, Baye declines the offer but shockingly finds out his friend, Kaba, another fisherman and his own younger brother, Abou, have agreed to leave with the pirogue. His attempts to dissuade them from embarking on the journey are unsuccessful and thus he finally gives in to serve as captain despite his wife's opposition. Having sorted out the logistics and financial bargain with Bourbi, Baye assisted by Kaba sets off for Spain at night on the boat. When day breaks, Lansana discovers Nafy, a woman from their community, who had stealthily made her way unto the pirogue without prior approval or

payment. Lansana agrees to allow her to travel with the group after Baye's intervention and to serve as the cook after some deliberations. During the passage, some migrants share their reasons for leaving, their hopes and fears. Meanwhile, when they meet a group of migrants stuck at sea, they decide against helping them. Contrary to the smooth crossing until now, they encounter a rainstorm which results in casualties turning the mood of optimism in the pirogue into pessimism. As the journey proceeds, they face more challenges – shortage of food, water and gas. Worn and despondent, the survivors are rescued by the Spanish Red Cross from the Canary Islands and repatriated to Senegal. The film ends when Baye and Abou arrive home as the former presents an FC Barcelona jersey to his son.

The critical attention garnered by *La Pirogue* is evidenced by the varied and continuous readings it has been subjected to. Hogarth (2018) has discussed the cinematic adaptation of the novella, *Mbëkëmi*, and the film's questions on "migration and solidarity in Senegal and West Africa" through the incidence of ethnic-linguistic and religious conflicts among the characters (31). Despite perceiving migration as a "happy object", a unifying target, the fissures, disagreements on linguistic, ethnic, national affinities only serve to underline the humanness, differences as well as unsuitability of the project as their sole way to upward social mobility. Similarly, Gott (2018) argues that the film "questions the desire to leave Africa and considers the ethical dilemmas facing those who undertake the journey" while providing "images that the European public generally does not see except in sensationalised media accounts" (146, sic). Garane (2014) argues that the film has an anti-migration message while Dima (2013) focuses on the boat, semiotically, as a link between the colonial and postcolonial periods whereby it represents the fragmentary

and shifting identity of the postcolonial space. The boat is then a temporary space of fantasy which gives a false hope. Meanwhile, the maritime crossing has become a “modern and disquieting evocation of the transatlantic “Middle Passage” creeping at the doors of Europe” (Palladino 2014: 221). The present analysis furthers the existing studies on the film to show the embodiment of emotive responses of irregular migrants to their recourse to clandestinity.

I read the cinematic text through the lens of emotion theory by drawing on the insights of Sara Ahmed’s (2010) *The Promise of Happiness* where she develops the notion of *happy objects* and Catherine’s Mazauric’s (2012) idea of migration dreams. The chapter puts these in conversation with literary, critical, ethnographical, anthropological and cultural studies of mobility to examine the construction of migration as a search for happiness, its impact on individual and family life through the prism of emotions, both those existing and provoked. In its evocation of emotions – achieving aspirations – how is this promise thwarted in the case of boat migration, specifically the sea passage? Does it set it up for disappointment? While the terms of “affect” and “emotion” (feeling) remain central to studies of feeling, they have been applied differently across academic disciplines. By taking up the term “emotion” as the basis of the critique in this chapter, I acknowledge the significance of “affect” in my analysis of feelings. Nonetheless, I am not intending a psychoanalytic reading of the corpus under investigation (although it is not unrelated to study). I use emotion, also, because of its quotidian usage which accounts for the aims of this chapter. My interest lies not in an affective reading but instead in investigating the construction of migration as a happy object through its/the promise of happiness and the resulting feelings engendered by events and within migrants during their passage as well

as those left behind. In addition, affect theory's abstractness dehumanizes rather than humanizes the subject. As such, it does not support the human-centeredness of the current study. Meanwhile, given that emotions are not static – they can replace or be replaced by one another in response to the environment, a physical or psychic/cognitive occurrence – the migratory experience evokes different feelings.

Migration and emotion

Why migration and emotion? The etymology of “emotion” from the latin *emovere*; to agitate, to move (out) implies a movement within or of the self toward an external expression. Thus, Damasio (2000) stipulates that “It is through feelings, which are inwardly directed and private, that emotions, which are outwardly directed and public, begin their impact on the mind...” (36). This inward-outward movement can be related to the physical phenomenon of migration. The linkage between human movement and emotion demonstrates the connection between inner processes and outward events. By bringing the two forms of mobility together, intracorporeal and extracorporeal, the migrant body exemplifies a gamut of cognitive, sensorial, and somatic motility. In other words, the actions and sentiments we witness of mobile subjects is the demonstration of inner processes in relation to outer events, what Plantinga (2018) calls a “concern-based construal” (43). Accordingly, emotions such as happiness, fear and hope are the result of an appraisal based on a concern within a specific situation. Drawing on Mazauric's (2012) tripartite notion of migratory dream based on opportunity, media images and imagination, migration acquires an affective appeal on individuals. The desire to improve living conditions through the attainment of material goods, the influence of television representation of wealth and the envisioning of a better elsewhere involve the elicitation of

emotions that spur action. Through this, migration becomes an emotionally charged endeavor comprising hope, happiness, despair, and fear.

The appraisal of one's current situation in a given space in comparison with an imagined place – unknown yet known – owing to others' experiences and narratives crystalizes in emigration as a sought-after ideal or object in the sense of Ahmed's (2010) understanding of *happy objects*. If for Layard (2005:6), "Happiness is feeling good, and misery is feeling bad", then it follows that the abandonment of a sociopolitical space considered to be unproductive in pursuit of a desirable place through human mobility is (equally) an emotional quest for happiness, feeling good which is a yet-to-achieve state. Much so, Ahmed's (2004, 2015) question, "what do emotions do?", serves as a useful backdrop for demonstrating and analyzing individuals' desires of moving to new horizons. For (would-be) migrants, emotions incite action – the decision to leave their present environs –, express their reaction to the in/ability to move or succeed in their migratory project as they wish. However, her assertion that "emotions should not be regarded as psychological states, but as social and cultural practices" merits scrutiny (2015:9). Contrariwise, they proceed from both mental and sociocultural sources as argued by Plantinga (2018) in that emotions are "both individual and communal, both psychological and social" (162-3). While some emotional states may be societally generated, it does not take away the personal psychic experience of feelings. The primary interiority of emotion is communicable through acts: facial, vocal, and other physical means. It then becomes social; what Ahmed (2004, 2015) calls the "sociality of emotion" as it can move around between several persons. For would-be migrants, the personal and the social push them to take risks, to be hopeful of prospects that are currently lacking.

In *The Promise of Happiness*, Sara Ahmed (2010) underscores the subjective definition of happiness whereby a person may say he or she is happy or not and “how feelings are attributed to objects” (14). Within this self-interpretation, the subject projects sentiments onto a phenomenon, an object that serves as a source of happiness, what is termed a *happy object*. For the cultural theorist, this construction of happiness revolves around three elements: affect, intentionality, and evaluation. I argue that (im)migration attracts this etiquette as a *happy object* for many people around the world who have the urge to travel overseas. This leads back to Mazauric’s (2012) threefold migrant dream where “the pleasures of wealth and the desires of the poor”³⁶ meet. The potential migrant is attracted by the fortune promised by the envisaged destination country associated with an image of prosperity. He or she, then, demonstrates an intentionality about embarking on a journey to access this promise, being happy about it. Thinking of the Eldorado/migration reveals its “promise of happiness, as ...what follows if we do this or that” i.e. if I emigrate, I will be happy, making it proximate to satisfaction (14). It is admittedly an imagined feeling of accomplishment based on the possibility of possessing materiality – money, cars, jobs etc. The willingness to leave the country of emigration owes to an evaluation of the place to be left behind and the one to migrate to, making the latter a good object to be happy about (of happiness).

Migration is, therefore, a “happiness means” considered to be a route to reaching the contentment of improved livelihood. As a means for making the potential traveler happy, it involves a futuristic temporality in the sense that the feeling of satisfaction will follow the action of moving elsewhere. This may indicate an underlining assertion of

³⁶Badiou (2008: 38).

freedom to realize this objective. Meanwhile, can everyone access this object, in the same way? Ahmed has suggested that “The freedom to be happy is premised... also [on] the freedom *to* identify with the nation as the bearer of the promise of happiness” (137, emphasis original). The foregoing argument echoes why migrants identify European countries such as France, Italy and Spain as the bearer of the promise of happiness they long for. However, not all persons may benefit unrestrainedly from the supposed freedom to happy. Although, the individual may attribute the promise of happiness to a specific nation, other than theirs, the inaccessibility to legal migration channels deny the exercise of this liberty. Unauthorized migration, in this case boat migration, is an innovation of the happiness means. The (good) feelings toward mobility is one way of judging unapproved movement as a means of socio-economic liberation. Despite the awareness of the dangers of sea migration, the positive value attributed to crossing to the other side (the North) makes the imminence of danger livable, even desirable, owing to the promise of green pastures. Thus, the suffering at sea is only a sacrifice to be paid for the imagined benefits to be reaped. Nevertheless, this happy object is not always attainable as typified by failed migration. In this sense, happiness as an expectation, an image tied to the future simultaneously “provides the emotional setting for disappointment ...” when it is impossible to arrive at the coveted destination (Ahmed 2010:29). This is evident in the experience of clandestine crossing which reveals contrasting feelings leading to (irregular) migration’s loss of its initial value as a messianic enterprise.

Thus, it is apparent that the gap between the aspiration to migrate and the possible attainment of happiness evokes multiple emotions in unauthorized migrancy. Undocumented sea crossings have accounted for several thousands of deaths and untold

hardships leading to the creation of neologisms such as “seametry” (Abderrezak 2018) and “migrant graveyard” (Vice 2015). Meanwhile, how do we account for the emotions lived by clandestines before, during and after journeys? Given the mutability of the emotionality involved in the various stages of clandestinity, a multifaceted framework that addresses this changeability provides an apt prism for the present analysis. Drawing on Griffiths’ (1997) theorization, Jasper (2006) distinguishes categories of emotions such as “urges” which are “physical impulses that demand our attention...until they are satisfied” including hunger and thirst; “reflex emotions” which are “quick to appear and to subside” like fear, joy, sadness, surprise etc.; “affects”, “positive and negative clusters of feelings, forms of attraction or repulsion” – love, hate, respect, trust etc.; “moods” which “operate primarily as *filters* of perception, decision, and action” and “moral emotions” which “express explicit principles” or “mere intuitions...never fully articulated” like compassion, outrage, shame, pride etc. (16-17). While Jasper’s typology does not succeed in neatly categorizing (all) emotions distinctively, it nonetheless offers an analytical point of reference as there is no singular theory capable of capturing the scope of emotions. In relation to undocumented mobility, the notions of reflex and moral emotions including joy, fear, sadness, and shame are particularly pertinent. They reflect the changing responses of boatpersons to their migration project during their preparation, travel, and the aftermath. In what follows, I will show how the irregular migration venture reveals a multitude of emotions experienced by travelers, motivated by the quest for happiness in new territories in Touré’s film. The above classification is useful in analyzing the narrative and characters’ reactions in different circumstances.

***La Pirogue* and emotionality: the happy object and its elicitation of emotion**

Would-be migrants embody the emotivity of clandestine migration as a tension-filled phenomenon which draws on their thoughts and feelings. This is because those who decide to leave are faced with a decision-making process that reveals an emotional evaluation of their current circumstances, what they seek to attain overseas and the dangers or struggles that (will) mark the journey. *La Pirogue* exemplifies this observation in its opening sequence by appropriating the physical, social, and psychological characteristics of a sporting event to foreshadow what the future boatpersons are confronted with. The narrative begins with a traditional Senegalese wrestling bout well attended by the film's local community. It later becomes apparent they are experiencing an economic downturn which may explain the large attendance at the game. The fighters engage in ritual preparations as they are cheered by the jubilant spectators. On the sidelines, Kaba (following Bourbi's signal), who unknown to his friend Baye had agreed to leave on the pirogue, talks the latter into accepting Bourbi's, the smuggler, proposal to not offend him. Baye retorts "I've said no, 10 times". Meanwhile, Abou, Baye's younger brother chats conspiratorially with Lansana, Bourbi's recruiter. This opening sequence has interpretive influence on the reading of ensuing events in the film as it almost serves as a microcosm of the film. Scholars have discussed this enigmatic beginning of the narrative in different ways³⁷.

³⁷See for instance Fofana and Madigan (2017) who argue that "The wrestling match establishes with subtlety the economic neediness of the little fishing village off the coast of Dakar. People who had always depended on fishing for their livelihood are now compelled to explore other sources of income, including wrestling" (787).

Drawing on the opening wrestling sequence's intertextuality with Aminata Sow Fall's novel, *L'Appel des arènes*, and Djibril Mambéty's film, *Touki Bouki*, Garane (2014) reads it as the film's valorization of "Senegal as a land that has not forgotten its past" (182). For Hogarth (2018), the film's beginning hints at the subsequent tensions on the sea during the crossing. More than just a souvenir of the past and giving clues about the disagreements to come, it reveals the emotional and interrelational conflicts (to be) experienced by the characters before, during and after the trip. The movement of the camera between the jolly crowd (who have come to have fun, i.e. looking for happiness), the wrestlers (in their frenzied ritualized preparations and subsequent fight) and the discussion between recruiters and would-be migrants creates an analytical web. The celebratory audience depicts the existence of a kind of happiness that Baye, Kaba and Abou currently aspire to. In contradistinction to the elated spectators, the three characters have a moody, contemplative appearance heightened by the conversation on irregular migration which underscores the yet-to-have happiness juxtaposed to them in the sequence. Their different perceptions about the phenomenon, especially Baye's refusal to leave as a clandestine migrant despite his discontent with the economic difficulties, concretizes their individual emotional and cognitive attitudes.

Meanwhile, like the fighters who take frantic steps, aided by marabouts, to ready themselves for the contest, the potential undocumented migrants need preparatory measures and will undergo a comparable battle (the sea crossing) where not all win i.e. survive. In other words, the means to accessing the desired happiness is obstacle-laden. Just as the rituals performed do not necessarily guarantee both wrestlers success, we can infer that not everyone will succeed despite their preparations and desires. The sequence's

ending portrays the dissipation of the crowd's excitement due to the brevity of the fight as one of the wrestlers win. The ephemeral celebration suggests that the promise of happiness may be short-lived if not elusive. Incidentally, Baye is a fan of the losing wrestler which results in him returning home downhearted. It is plausible to read the loss and Baye's arrival to his house in sadness as a prophetic portrayal or foreshadowing of the film's ending due to his failed attempt to enter Spain clandestinely; I will return to this later.

The opposition between happiness and sadness remains an important framework throughout the story. Sadness about the individual's present circumstances incites a search for better opportunities that bring about happiness. So, what is the causality of a happy feeling toward migration? In the context of *La Pirogue*, joblessness, economic difficulties, arguments by recruiters/smugglers and the perceived "success" of immigrants predisposes the would-be migrant to accepting traveling overseas as the only solution to local challenges. Put differently, the desirability of migration stems from its attributed promissory image of a better life in other horizons. This is because the myriad aspirations of accessing healthcare, education, better paying jobs have become synonymous with mobility to the Global North. For example, while returning from the wrestling match, Bourbi calls Baye to a discussion where he asks the latter about his earnings for spending 3 days at sea and then proposes to give him 750 euros and 500000 CFA for his wife's upkeep if he serves as captain on the pirogue (since Adama, the initial captain refused to go) and a free passage to Spain. By questioning the profitability of Baye's profession, the smuggler directs him toward what is considered to cause happiness: migration. To echo Ahmed's (2010) words, "...being pointed toward happiness suggests that objects are associated with affects before they are even encountered" (27). In this vein, the interlocutor

does not need to experience at first what he is pointed to before admitting its emotive impact. As such, the protagonist is impacted by the positive value already ascribed to the phenomenon suggested to him as a solution to his predicament. Baye's facial expression during this conversation shows on one hand, the sadness he feels about the unproductivity of the fishing business and on the other, his fears about the dangers of boat migration, despite its supposed benefits.

The emotivity of migrancy has an external dimension through the pressures exerted by personal, familial, and social relations which may result in a psychological tangle in the subject. This is evidenced by the internal and external struggle that Baye faces when despite his consistent refusal to take the boat, his friend, Kaba, and brother, Abou, point him to the messianism of migration. The protagonist is initially surprised to learn from Bourbi that his friend, Kaba, had already accepted to leave and would serve as his deputy. When Baye confronts him about hiding his intentions, the latter says: "There's no one left here, no more fish. They all left. What can we do here? Nothing lies ahead of us." The negativity communicated in his description of the desertion of the place and the absence of fish – for food and earning a living – points to a state of sorrow as shown on his face. The pervading hopelessness in his words; "no one", "no more", "nothing", which depicts misery enhances the emotional appeal of migration on the would-be migrant, creating a pleasurable sensation in his imagination (of the experience ahead). His discourse creates a bleak assessment of the local community in juxtaposition with where "they all left" to, i.e. Europe.

Moreover, the setting of this dialogue is significant not only for the two characters but also the reading of the scene. Baye and Kaba sit on the dunes between two colorful

boats while another is anchored on the sea in front of them. There is no activity on the sea or on the beach. The appearance of these elements in the different shots of the scene, as a backdrop to the characters' lamentation, emphasizes their emoting quality on the two friends. This imagery emblemizes the current unproductivity of the fishing business and thus, points to sea migration as a form of survival. The stationary fishing boats have lost their economic utility but could be repurposed in the search for new horizons. The fact of having the discussion on a deserted beach while surrounded by unused boats plausibly suggests the alternative of boat migration. In different terms, there is a psychological framing and influence of the image in the sense that in inferring from Kaba's analogy; they know the sea, they have vessels which are no longer providing for their livelihood but can take them elsewhere on the "borderless" sea. Although a fisherman like Baye, he envisages playing soccer in Europe to acquire his papers/legal status. To substantiate his stance, Kaba resorts to an argument about emigrants who have acquired wealth and properties: "The ones who've left have all built houses." Gesturing, he says "Omar N'Doye built that one although he hasn't been there for long." Kaba's emotive yet logical argumentation emphasizes the view that foreign travel is a sine qua non for ameliorating their fortunes. The prosperity of those who have left, instantiated by their material properties in the neighborhood, lends credence to the necessity of leaving; affirming migration as a means to happiness and as having a social influence. In other words, in addition to the financial precarity of the filmic locale, the perceived "success" of immigrants predisposes the would-be migrant to accepting traveling overseas as the only solution to local challenges. This phenomenon creates a societal pressure and an extrinsic value which becomes difficult to ignore or escape from.

This sociality of migration and its emotional quality of impacting people, to join the bandwagon, is further demonstrated by the main character's interaction with his younger brother, Abou. This episode serves to highlight the heightening mental and cognitive tension that the protagonist lives through as he tries to hold his own against the attraction of undocumented mobility. Baye, now pensive after the chat with Kaba, returns home to see his wife, Kiné, and son, Bouba. It is not clear if he is convinced or not although a neutral may expect him to remain adamant and go against the grain. When he tells her about Bourbi's proposal, she insists that "We've already discussed this. I don't want you to leave." In affirming her opposition to the clandestine venture, she expresses a sad look to her husband. Kiné's response challenges the positivity ascribed to irregular migration through the displeasure portrayed by the shot of her face. Like her husband, the phenomenon's socialized affective quality is unconvincing to her. Meanwhile, Abou arrives and she tells Baye that he lost his job for being constantly tardy. Abou's job loss makes him a prey for the predatory recruiter as he is offered a place on the boat for free. Referring to the opening sequence where Abou talks to Lansana during the wrestling match, the camera shows him in a cheerful mood which can be read as him having accepted the promise of migratory happiness as a way out of his current idleness. When Baye asks what he had been discussing with Lansana, Abou angrily replies, "Like everyone, I'm off to Europe. I'm taking the pirogue. Even if not this one, the next." Although Abou is initially angered by his brother's pestering questions, he is probably incensed in equal measure by his unemployment status. His response echoes Kaba's argument that everyone is leaving, and he would be no exception. Given his present joblessness, it is no surprise that he is convinced about migrating to Europe to find better prospects. However, to dissuade his

brother, Baye says “I don’t want you to go. If someone must go, it’s me... You have neither wife nor child, you can’t understand.” Without further explication, this declaration sounds contradictory at first stance since it could be interpreted as saying that he should travel because he is married with a child. On the contrary, Baye is suggesting from a traditional perspective that as the older of the two, he is best suited to travel and provide for the rest of them. Meanwhile, he reasons that he could not leave due his family situation. Abou counteracts the explanation for refusing to migrate with the same family rationale. He says, “They need you more there than here”, hinting at the importance of remittances for those left behind³⁸. Indeed, remittances and capital (intensive) projects realized by returnees affirm a certain lucrative essence of emigration. That notwithstanding, there is a conflicting perception of the role of family in migratory motivation here. On one hand, migration is conceived as a barrier to family life. On the other hand, the family’s economic fortunes can be enhanced by overseas travel.

The familial motif in choosing undocumented migration holds an important place in the narrative as well as the sentimental effect it has on decision-making for those who leave. It underscores the fact that the choice to travel abroad involves considerations that go beyond the self to include present and desired future relations that are perceived to benefit from the success of immigration. Abou’s reasoning that family life should be a motivation rather than an inhibition to traveling since both the married and unmarried can go is substantiated by one of Kaba’s aims for migrating in the scene after the brother’s discussion. On his way to play soccer with friends, Kaba stops by a water pump where

³⁸Senegal is one of the top recipients of remittances not only in Africa but the world. According to the World Bank April 2019 migration and remittance report, it is the fourth highest receiver in Sub-Saharan Africa. For this reason, Vives (2017) states that “...international migration is a family business- encouraged, sponsored, and benefitting migrants’ close and extended families” (182).

Nafy works as an attendant to fill his bottle and says to the latter: “I’m leaving; to succeed, become rich and build a house, several stories tall. I’ll marry you.” From this, the suggestion is that anybody could go – married or unmarried and for similar or different reasons. The young bachelor can marry from the fortune to be made while the husband can provide for his family in the homeland. Kaba’s smiling visage, enhanced by his bright eyes and day light, in this scene underscores the happiness that the dream of migration procures for those whose every desire is tied to the promise of the Eldorado. Prior to this declaration, he has looked long faced at the hopelessness of the village life. In fact, it is the first and one of the few times he appears happy in the film. Nafy, on the other hand, seems amused and perhaps embarrassed or rather unmoved by his words as the other female bystanders laugh while Kaba runs off.

To be promised marriage is a source of joy but it being premised on the success of clandestine migration and declared in front of others may be less so. I offer two interrelated readings of the events in the scene and their possible effects. First, Kaba’s excitement about the prospect of making a fortune in Europe and returning to marry Nafy, who we see for the first and only time before the pirogue’s departure, may have an emotional influence on the latter who also becomes attracted by the happy object. While the onlookers’ laughter may be out of joy for the potential couple or a mockery of the unreliability of the basis of the promise, Nafy is attracted by this and resolves to travel herself to make a living and provide for her children. Second, her controlled smile can be interpreted as the demonstration of her undisclosed plans, at least to Kaba and the viewer, to leave. As we learn later, she is a widow and a mother of two who lost her husband because of the sea passage in the past. Thus, it is probable that Nafy had already decided to migrate and so

was unmoved by her suitor's promise of marriage. The possibility of her prior decision and preparation is concretized by her declaration during the crossing that she has a job in Paris. If so, the ladies' chortle can be read as their ridiculing of Kaba's ignorance and as a derision of the belief that undocumented migration is a masculinist venture and women can only stay at home and wait. Nonetheless, what is common to the above interpretations is the socialized and emotive value of migration.

The decision to embark on an irregular migration journey is construed as an act of bravery. Being brave, in this sense, suggests a mastery of the fear inspired by the treachery of traveling on the sea with unworthy vessels and being vulnerable to the dangers that may arise. Put differently, choosing the path of courage to migrate clandestinely involves an emotive reaction to the societal pressure that emanates from the conception of migrancy as a means to attaining socio-economic happiness. In this regard, the brothers' conversation in the film marks the questioning of the would-be clandestine's fortitude. Abou declares that Baye is simply afraid and needs to be a man. The latter reasons that Lansana is offering his brother a free passage to force him (Baye) in to accepting to be captain to which Abou retorts, "You don't have a choice." Both characters' reference to emotional qualities are significant for at least two reasons. Abou associates clandestine migration with bravery and masculinity. For him, his brother's refusal to acquiesce to travel on the pirogue is suggestive of weakness and a lack of manliness. In other words, boat migrants are those who master their fear by exhibiting manly attributes. For Baye, the recruiter's offer to his sibling is an emotional blackmailing strategy. The protagonist admits to an affection of this occurrence on him due to his care and protection for Abou. The suggestion is that emotions are central to migration decisions even if one is not fully persuaded by the benefits or the

means of travel. Furthermore, Abou's insistence on choicelessness relates both to the importance of migrating to supply the family's needs and the demonstration of virility. In effect, this verbal exchange between the brothers has far-reaching consequences on the main character's evolution. The argument of providing for family from abroad and the evocation of fear as well as the emotive concern for the brother's safety challenge Baye's resolve to stay home.

It is arguable that the various discourses – being pointed toward happiness – advanced to Baye by Bourbi, Kaba and Abou have psychological effects on him and thus, results in his subsequent resolution to depart with the pirogue. It is noteworthy that this choice engenders feelings that affect the relationship he has with his wife. The protagonist's initial opposition to unsanctioned migration as a solution to his economic challenges affirms that not all consider emigration necessary, at least in the beginning. However, the arguments and Abou's questioning of his courage seems to have spurred him into changing his mind despite his rejection of the dangerous maritime venture of transporting human lives. This change of mind has emotional and relational impact on him and his family, especially his wife, Kiné. While having dinner, Baye's melancholy prompts his wife to ask if he wants to leave. His lugubrious face can be interpreted as either sadness about leaving his close relations or an exteriorization of his feelings about the dangers of sea travel or a constellation of both. By arguing that he is a fisherman's son and knows the ocean well, he signals his resolution to leave. In effect, his reply reverberates Kaba's assertion that their fishing experience, having been at sea for a month makes the 7 days voyage to Spain a surmountable task. The assertion is that the principal character has been convinced by the arguments of the others giving credence to the sociality of migration as a

happy object. Meanwhile, the unhappy Kiné disagrees and suggests going to China instead since “Europe is going through a crisis.” Since she does not state whether he should go to China by sea migration or not, her proposition does not clearly reveal if she is altogether against clandestine migration or just going to Europe. As such, her proposal presupposes that it may be better to go China because of its economic rise and relation to the Global South, and by extension easier to enter legally since its visa requirements may be less stringent.

Nonetheless, the emotional toll of the impending participation in irregular mobility on the couple is evident when Baye tells Kiné what she says she has dreaded hearing: “I’m leaving.” The mood becomes despondent and there is an almost mechanical lovemaking scene (like a choreographed romance) revealing the tense emotions between them. This silence-dominated scene and the camera’s focus on the couple’s visible expressions portrays their dewy-eyedness. The palpable sentimentality of their face underscores the fact the not all families support the undocumented migration project. Without any verbal exchange, they slowly lie down on the bed while a portrait of the couple smiling together appears in the frame, replacing the erstwhile gloomy mood. The figuration of an image showing Baye and Kiné happy here, as they disappear from the camera’s view, indicates the loss of this bliss owing to the imminent departure. Dima (2013) rightly argues that the lack of erotism in the amorous action emphasizes Baye’s attachment to his homeland and family (157). Contrary to the socialized celebration of migrating as a mode of accessing happiness, (clandestine) movement usurps the family’s joy even if their economic difficulties cannot be ignored. This assertion is supported by at least two scenes in the film. First, when Baye prepares and leaves the house for the journey. A sad looking Kiné helps

Baye put amulets on and tells him not to forget their son's (Bouba) jersey. There is an emotional disconnect between the couple since this is not an exuberant moment of separation. Although the same can be said about traveling partners, the dangers of this journey and the wife's disagreement with the husband's decision heighten the sorrowful look on Kiné's face and her conduct. Besides, the absence of warmth and contact between them emphasizes a deepening distantiation that portends misfortune. She posts a grief-stricken visage while pouring water in front of the doorstep for Baye to cross over and subsequently when he walks over a broken egg outside the gate for spiritual protection. Her mournful expression as the protagonist leaves deepens the sense of fear as well as the loss of the family's bond and presages the hardships, and failure of the journey. Second, when he returns home from the aborted trip. Upon Baye's return to the house, the camera shows Kiné staring fixedly at him while standing at the doorstep in the same way she was pictured when he left. Baye stands by their son and Abou gazing at his wife. The scene is strikingly forceful in that, unlike the characteristic ebullience attributable to reuniting couples, neither partners looks cheerful or excited about seeing the other nor attempts to approach the other. This emotional scene recalls the distance and tension between them prior to the departure. This affirms the assertion that the clandestine adventure has a (negative) sentimental effect on the family's life in that it destroys if not weakens the stability of their relationship.

Concurrently, the spread of the estimation of migration as a happiness means is neither local nor national but an international phenomenon. As a result, *La Pirogue* portrays its transnational nature through the composition of the cohort. A group of 10 boat migration candidates recruited by Lansana arrive from Guinea to join the pirogue for the journey.

Meanwhile, another group, Fulanis, has been waiting for a week to depart and are told by Lansana that they will be leaving in 48 hours. The multinational and ethnically diverse contingent underscores the expansiveness of the desire to migrate on the African continent. Despite their multifaceted differences, they are attracted toward the same happy object: migration and happiness. Consequently, mealtimes, singing, dancing, crying, and storytelling moments forge emotional connections between them even if there are commonalities and disagreements. The national, ethnic, and linguistic tensions which also mark their association situates their experience with the real, suggesting characteristics of normal human interaction involving people of multiple backgrounds. Nonetheless, the bond formed by the common goal is realized by the means of transportation: the boat (pirogue). The vessel then acquires emotive quality in the sense that it creates a community for attaining the promise of migratory happiness. What follows is an analysis of the boat journey and the emotional experiences evoked in the migrants' quest.

Obstacles to a happy object and vacillating emotions

Having established the attribution of the label of a happy object to migration, let's turn our attention to the specific goals of the migrants represented in Touré's film. Highlighting these motivations and expectations of the boatpersons enables a discussion of the opposition between the sentiments evoked by their optimism toward their journey and those engendered by the impediments they face. Among their objectives, Kaba aims to play football and hopes to be welcomed by some white Lebou, members of his ethnicity, in Brittany³⁹. Abou tells Samba, the leader of the Hal Pulaars, he is a musician who plans to

³⁹The dream of African youths in football has been represented in works such Fatou Diome's novel, *Le Ventre de l'Atlantique* (2003), Baru's graphic novel, *Fais péter les basses, Bruno!* (2010) and Suridh Hassan's film, *Soka Afrika* (2011).

join a band in Paris. Samba encourages the former by asserting that he will succeed due to his determination. On his part, Samba tells Abou he has an address in Andalusia where they will be working in the fields⁴⁰. Although these could be reductively viewed in some spheres as would-be migrants' idealized hopes, the above point to talent and less sophisticated labor demands in Europe. Aziz, holding a picture of his daughter, says he is leaving for her and to find a prosthetic device for his amputated leg due to a boat accident at sea. Nafy is leaving to provide for her two children after their father's death. Another migrant says he is going to live with his brother, a legal resident working as a mechanic in Norbonne, France. The variety of reasons for which these characters migrate emphasize the economic objective characteristic of such movements. That notwithstanding, we learn of less mediatized or discussed reasons such as medical care and family unification. Of significance is the fact that the protagonist does not communicate any substantive reasons for migrating or any plans for when he arrives in Europe. This underscores his reluctant acceptance of the venture since he did not want to leave.

However, the myriad goals invested in mobility as a means of attaining socioeconomic opportunities materialized by money, cars, houses but also medical wellbeing are confronted to what Badiou (2008) identifies as “the brutal division of human existence into regions separated by police dogs, bureaucratic controls, naval patrols, barbed wire and expulsions” (38). In the fiction of a connected world where capital is supposedly globalized, humans are multiply divided. If migration is a human right protected by international law and its pursuit for some may be coterminous with upward social mobility,

⁴⁰Vives (2017) states that the demand for cheap immigrant labor in the agricultural and hospitality industries made Spain an attractive destination for would-be migrants in the early 2000s.

what is the obstacle to its promise of happiness? The regime of nationhood, border(s) controls and visa restrictions are among the barriers to the realization of this aim. The story of the 31 boatpeople is that of an aspiration which runs counter to the current understanding and management of national borders in the wake of increased movement. The desires of those in the Global South conflict with the policies of migration in the North. It follows then that not all persons are free to be “happy” through mobility. Statelessness, a condition of becoming non-identifiable with a national origin through the burning of identification documents has become a common leitmotif in irregular migration narratives. (I explore this more in the chapter 3 on ghostly migrants).

Yet, clandestine migration as an alternative to circumvent political impediments in the way of fulfilling dreams echoes Ahmed’s (2010) argument that “the very obstacle to happiness is what allows happiness to be sustained as the promise of the good life: as if happiness is what we would have if that thing did not get in the way” (32). In this vein, for the would-be migrant, the absence of strict visa application requirements would inevitably result in an unrestrained access to happiness. To this end, Calargé (2015) pointedly remarks that the proliferation of discourses and policies to dissuade potential migrants contrarily serve as a motivation for aiming to attain their perceived European paradise. According to her, “if we are to change the discourse around clandestine immigration, we ought to frame it in a new way that does not activate the European paradise, the immigrant-conquistador, the adventure of the border crossing, or the perils of the sea” (9). In other words, migrants construe the anti-immigration policies and border controls designed to inhibit them as obstacles to their pursuit of the good life. This, however, does not preclude them from creating fun moments out of the blockades intended to inhibit their determination to move.

The undocumented migration journey reveals would-be migrants' emotional reactions to the geopolitical hindrances to their pursuit of happiness. This comprises reflexive emotions that alternate between positivity and negativity in view of happenings and perspectives shared by the travelers. For instance, the migrants in Touré's film engage in criticisms interspersed with humor-inspiring words and actions in opposition to the political obstacles they face in their migratory desires. During the maritime crossing in *La Pirogue*, a migrant burns his ID while holding a Spanish book bearing Spain's flag on the back. It is unclear whether it is a grammar book or a dictionary. However, the incineration of his national identity and the devoted study of Spanish concretizes the severing with one form of documented identification and adopting another through the acquisition of language to facilitate his potential entry and stay in Spain. By attentively focusing on the two activities, he demonstrates his determination to succeed without leaving anything to chance. To this end, another migrant, Ousmane, explains to the others (and the viewer) that the burning of the ID is to avoid expulsion or deportation when arrested adding that "you have to burn your blood." Yet, another adds jovially that he had been asked for so many documents by the French embassy in his attempt to acquire a visa that he had a whole suitcase full and the staff spent the whole day checking them. This satiric anecdote attracts laughter from the others and Lansana retorts, "this is why I chose you for my Boeing", referring to the trip on the pirogue. The lighthearted conversation criticizes the stringent bureaucratic immigration policies that hinder access to legal migration channels for many Global South citizens resulting in the recourse to boat migration. The humorous moment does not only contribute to the bonding between the characters but also enables the viewer to recognize the positive feelings shared at different phases of the trip.

As they chat and play board games, their entertainment shows that these journeys equally include fun times rather than absolute gloom because of the known dangers. Admittedly, the cheerfulness is not constant as events and comments may disrupt it. In a quintessential example, the migrants' good-humored chatter is truncated by Aziz's words. In contradistinction to burning identity documents, he maintains that "I'm keeping my papers. If they find my body, I want them to bury me home." Although, this will not happen as his corpse is thrown into the *seametry* as we will see later, his declaration has instant emotional impact on the others. They are taken aback by the bluntness and pessimism of the statement as the camera shows their bemused faces looking at one another. Consequently, the pleasurable mood changes into a somber one of silence. His admission and awareness of the possibility of arrest, death and return constitute an unwanted truth for the others who would rather be optimistic. This scene epitomizes Jasper's (2006) notion of reflex emotions which appear and subside quickly. The experience of joy through the satire of migration policies is almost immediately curtailed by Aziz's frankness which elicits surprise and sadness. By this, individuals experience the clandestine journey as a reflexively emotive phenomenon where feelings vacillate in response to arising circumstances.

The mutability of sentiments marks the continuous evaluations that clandestines make of both their perception of migratory happiness and the difficulty of accessing societies of immigration. The constant optimism-pessimism divide that pervades their reflections and discussions underscores the variety of emotions that they experience during the journey. In one scene onboard the pirogue, Lansana says one of the migrants talked all night about "the one boat out of ten that doesn't make it", revealing the journeyers'

awareness and consideration of the possibility of not arriving safely or attaining their goal although they would not be perturbed by it. Refusing to entertain the thoughts of a potential failure for which one should not attempt the sea passage, Aziz retorts “So what? If you stay back home, its ten chances out of ten of failing your life.” The perspective advanced here deepens the bleakness of life outcomes that migrants associate with their countries of origin which inevitably makes their target destinations paradises that offer better chances. In other words, immobility is a choice for unhappiness and socioeconomic stagnation. Lansana agrees with Aziz, adding that one has to be sensible since for him, “Even if the engines fail and the tides take us to Brazil and we get there dry as mummies eaten by birds, I won’t regret a thing. We have no choice.” The metaphoric image of vulnerability created by these words, “dry as mummies eaten by birds”, is highlighted as preferable to being immobile hence the rejection of remorse. Put differently, what is regrettable is staying back rather than suffering as an undocumented migrant.

Moreover, the notion of choicelessness as a motivation for migration evoked in various conversations by the travelers points out that choosing to leave is in fact construed not as an option but a deliberate acceptance of the only way of survival imposed on the potential burners. Here, one wonders the significance of Brazil as an alternative for the migrants. One plausible reading of its mention is the desire of the migrants to leave the African continent at all cost since they consider it as unsupportive of their dreams. Another interpretation is the economic rise of Brazil as a member of the BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India, and China) which has prospects. Also, Brazil can be a transit space for migrants aiming to reach the United States. Thus, for any or a combination of these reasons, Lansana’s assertion shows a geoeconomic and geopolitical calculation linked to obtaining the sought-

after happiness promised by migration. Further to this, when Ousmane tells Lansana that he speaks like a politician, the latter laughs and rises to demonstrate to his interlocutors how politicians speak. Standing on the side of the boat and gesturing animatedly, he says “You politicians, I have one thing to say to you; I am an African man who decided to inscribe himself in History by his own means...” I argue that his criticism is applicable to leaders of both sending and receiving nations. In many ways, African politicians have failed to develop their national economies and amenities to sustain the livelihoods of the citizens. These conditions have undeniably incited the spate of emigration to find what lacks at home. Conversely, several non-African leaders have continually formulated strategies to impede the mobility of Global Southerners to the North.

To this end, the explanation of irregular migration as the subject’s own terms of entering History is an assertion and use of political agency that challenges the national and globalized technologies – mechanisms, policies etc. – of obstructing the right to movement. This entry into History – dead or alive – to possess the right to be *happy* underlines the resoluteness of these characters (I analyze this political view of clandestine migration in chapter 3). Despite the political claims made by the speaker, the excitement and laughter generated by this performative declaration shows another moment of reflexive emotion – joy – among the boat people. The cheers and applause evident in this scene underscore the migrants’ delight at speaking to power through their own initiative. The pleasurable experience here also points to the hope of succeeding in their journey to possess happiness. By ending the conversation on this gleeful note, the fear and pessimism relating to boats that do not arrive safely mentioned at the beginning of the scene is effectively cast aside.

The sea passage fully captures the viewer's attention in a way that connects us to the characters and the palpable emotions they express during the trajectory. The vacillation of these feelings highlights the undulating psychological turmoil that the irregular migrant subject is exposed to. Garane (2014) postulates that "the director skillfully manages to create the illusion that we, the viewers, are also passengers on this arduous journey... through close-ups where the camera brings the viewer into the pirogue..." (186). We are not necessarily brought in as fellow passengers, but our emotions are aroused by the images and events we see, inciting our empathy and compassion for them amid the various hardships encountered. An example is the first sequence of the sea passage which begins the morning after the boat's departure at night. Lansana counts the migrants and finds there is an unregistered passenger while calling out names of the paid migrants. To everyone's surprise, Nafy Talla, whom Kaba had promised to marry upon succeeding in Europe, uncovers her disguise and admits she has no money to pay for her passage. As a stowaway in a clandestine journey, the irony of the situation creates an awkward moment of humor and fear. Not being on the smuggler's manifest (i.e. documented) as a passenger allowed on the vessel, her actions constitute a *mise en abyme* of the undocumented within clandestinity. The viewer may laugh at the fact that the recruiter has been outsmarted just as he is looking to circumvent immigration authorities. Given that irregular migration is an innovation against the demands of approved mobility, underpinned by documentation, Nafy's stowaway attempt questions the moral and legal authority of Lansana to subject her to scrutiny and punishment. Additionally, her presence counteracts the view that clandestinity is a preserve of males. That notwithstanding, Nafy's usefulness seems to be reduced to a patriarchal order: cooking for the men and the advances made at her by

Lansana. More so, her infiltration into the pirogue generates a series of emotions; first the discovery incites surprise because she was not expected to be there both as a woman and as an unregistered passenger. Given that surprise is a transient emotion, the camera then shows Lansana is angered by Nafy's conduct and threatens to throw her overboard resulting in the latter's frightened facial expression. The courage shown by Nafy to enter the pirogue is dealt a blow by the threat of losing her life, a condition which evokes sorrow. However, her predicament attracts the sympathy of others who come to her defense. Consequently, a calm atmosphere prevails after Baye and Kaba intervene on her behalf and she promises to pay for the journey from an impending job opportunity in Paris.

The successive appearance and disappearance of these emotions is testament to the multiple emotional changes elicited by the sea crossing project. In a later scene when Lansana tells her in a seductive tone that she has impressed him because this is not an adventure for a pretty woman like her, she quizzes whether they are all not leaving for the same reasons. Moreover, she refutes the recruiter's accusation that she came onto the vessel with a man's help by insisting that she took her chance, unaided. The recruiter's masculinist language shows sexism as a barrier to the mobility and happiness the group aims for. Meanwhile, the refusal to have women on the boat is because they are said to be unclean; a state which is perceived to endanger others (Vives 2017:186). Being attributed the label of risk means Nafy becomes a source of fear. Her intrusion means she is considered a source of bad luck – the same misfortune they sought to protect themselves from. Her presence, for many of the male migrants, triggers fright and the potentiality of failure. Thus, after they have encountered storms and other hardships, she is rescued by Baye and Abou when two of the men attempt throwing her overboard, blaming her to be their bane. *La*

Pirogue portrays the female character as an object of male interests both amorous (the antagonism between Lansana and Kaba because they both like her) and disgruntlement (blamed as a source of bad luck) who nonetheless survives the hostilities and shows fortitude to become a life saver. As Hogarth (2018) aptly writes, “Significantly, it is this same female who eventually attracts the attention of the Red Cross and thus occasions the rescue, a maternal saviour among the survivors” (36, sic). Despite undergoing the emotional torture that she is subjected to by the others amid the collective difficulties, her role of cooking to feed the men and holding out for help demonstrates her motherliness and emotional tenacity by the end of the narrative.

The prominence of the reflexive emotion of fear in Touré’s film, whether it is expressed orally or through visible forms of conduct, cannot be overemphasized. After the discovery of Nafy as a stowaway at the beginning of the sea crossing, the camera shows a mentally-ill migrant, Yaya, who shouts to communicate his fright. Meanwhile, Aziz who has a physical impairment in his leg and can be considered a sick person retorts “we’re all afraid.” The latter’s response suggests that all clandestine migrants are cognizant of the apprehension inspired by the mode of travel, but they keep it in check. In effect, the normalcy of the fear experienced means it must be interiorized and mastered instead of shown publicly. Thus, although afraid, one remains courageous like the film’s subtitle, *Goor Fitt*, suggests. *Goor Fitt*, variously translated as man of courage or fearless man, read in conjunction with the titular boat indicates that only the brave can undertake undocumented migration. As such, in a future scene when Yaya yells, “I want to go back”, he is gagged to prevent further screams. The almost unanimous acceptance of this act by the group affirms the argument that fear must be unspoken once the decision to leave is

made and the journey is underway. Meanwhile, his intermittent outbursts and exteriorization of trepidation are prophetic in the sense that although the crossing has been smooth thus far (they sleep calmly in the pirogue, some play board games, others chat, yet others listen to radio, Samba reads passages probably from the Koran), the trip will be catastrophic. The trope of sick characters in migration narratives as well as mentally-impaired characters in African literary and cinematic productions as intelligent and clairvoyant is telling here. When Yaya's screams become unbearable, the others agree to give him sleeping pills, which unbeknownst to the group, is a peppermint. This revelation captured in an aside to the viewer creates an episode of humor. The spectator is moved to laughter at this event as a way of relaxation amid the building tensions.

However, *La Pirogue* suggests that the attempt to dominate the feeling of fear by interiorization may not always be successful. Indeed, extrinsic events challenge the mental fortitude and courage of the boatpersons. In this case, the meeting with a migrant boat stuck at sea for 5 days without food or water for its occupants and, which Baye and co decide to abandon generates emotional responses that reinforce the discounted fear of the dangers of the maritime passage. When the shipwrecked migrants shout for help to Baye and his group, Lansana, insists that "it is not our problem. It doesn't concern us" and decides against assisting them despite the protests from some members of his cohort. According to Dima (2013), this moment for Lansana's group involves a mathematical choice between a 100% chance of dying while trying to save the others or folding their arms and continuing their journey (158). Thus, the importance of survival is contrasted with the ethics of helping those in danger at sea in the decision to abandon the distressed boat. I suggest that this constitutes a lack of "moral emotions" such as solidarity on the part of the migrant group

toward others like themselves. This attitude points to the saying, “each one for himself” which if adhered to as espoused by them undermines would-be migrants’ expectation of assistance and hospitality in destination countries.

If the protection of one’s own life and interests supersedes that of others’, humanitarianism loses its appeal. However before speeding off, Abou is moved by the desperate calls for aid and shows compassion by diving into the sea to rescue the castaway. His insufficient swimming skills almost make him drown but for Baye’s intervention. This episode raises the possible question of agency in the face of ethical intervention. Abou’s poor knowledge of the sea and swimming may be argued as metonymic of the clandestines’ inadequate capacity to save the shipwrecked passengers. Gott (2018) writes that “Such a desperate gesture underlines the danger inherent in assisting others in this context. To share water might lead to one’s own death” (146). While this may be true, the generalized lack of effort in assisting those in need portrays a betrayal of humanity. Having sped off, the camera shows Abou, recovering from the shock, staring at Baye in gratitude for saving his life and the remaining migrants in a pensive or otherwise sad demeanor. Abou’s wild-eyed visage is telling of his panic as well as his disbelief at his older brother’s continuous affection for him despite the former’s disrespect of the latter, leading to Samba’s ensuing advice to Abou that one must respect his brother. For the larger group, the slow-motioned close-up shot of their faces reveals the emotional reflections of the characters perhaps having recognized their error in abandoning endangered lives at sea.

The camera’s focus on their individuality marks not only their personal responsibility in the event but also their vulnerability as undocumented migrants who are susceptible to a similar fate. Nonetheless, the ethical and emotional agency of the event is

later used as a blackmailing mechanism against Baye by some migrants after they face difficulties. According to them, they are suffering because they did not help the distressed boat. However, Abou defends Baye saying he cannot be blamed for anything because there was nothing they could do for the trapped migrants. Baye casts a grateful look at his brother in recognition for his intervention. This approbatory glance reveals intense uncommunicated emotions between the two brothers who have come to appreciate the importance of each to the other's life or survival. Significantly, this scene marks a reality check for the migrants who by now begin to accept the potentiality of fiasco, hence producing fear.

Furthermore, the presaging expression of fear by Yaya and the encounter with the distressed boat enhance the narrative's portrayal of the danger and failure that the irregular migrants run against as well as the emotive impact on them. About the midpoint into the film, Samba goes into a trance where he sees dry, leafless baobab trees, dry grass, and ground. Fofana and Madigan (2017) argue that this is nostalgic of the unproductive homeland left behind as it is "triggered by his fear of failing" since the whole village is counting on him to succeed (790). Similarly, Hogarth (2018) reads Samba's trances as "hallucinatory visions of a baobab, the iconic, prehistoric 'tree of life' found in a wide variety of African countries and which is considered to symbolize survival and solidarity against the vicissitudes of existence" (35). For this reason, he argues that these "visions of solidarity are contrasted to the slow disintegration of the passengers and their relations" (35). These assertions, while acceptable, do not consider other elements in the visions and their timing in the narrative with respect to the project undertaken by the subjects. It is

(more) plausible to interpret this scene as a futuristic vision of the mirage of a paradise that the migrants associate with happiness.

The imagery of relatable elements such as the baobab tree present in the trance influences its understanding for Samba. The fruitlessness of the trees, symbolic of the failure to achieve results, hints at the futility of the journey. Upon regaining consciousness, Abou tells him, “In a few days, we’ll be in Spain: paradise.” In his response, a dispirited Samba tells Abou; “Where we’re going is no Paradise.” His counteracting of the young man’s characterization of the destination country sustains the argument that the trance indeed is a revelation of an ineffectual quest. To this end, whether they arrive in Spain or as the journey ends in casualties and repatriation, there is no attainment of a paradise in the adventure. Abou’s jolly facial expression with which he speaks is contrasted with Samba’s gloomy and disappointed look. Here, the goal of the perceived happy object turns out to be unattainable. This is further demonstrable with Samba’s second trance. After the rainstorms and deaths, he has another vision while sitting atop of the pirogue. In the beginning, he sees the fruitless, leafless baobab trees in a bushy area; a recollection of the first one. This is followed by a herd of cattle, without a shepherd, moving in a desert area with no sign of grass for grazing. These images enhance the idea of a vain project whereby the migrant group is comparable to the cattle in search of pasture where they find none. The absence of a shepherd who leads the herd can be read as the migrants’ lack of a credible source of hope to acquire an inexistent fortune. In other words, the basis of their perception of the country of immigration as a paradise is questionable. Hence, we can analyze how the feeling of hopelessness and despair concretizes itself in the migrants’ travel.

Changing fortunes: desperation, grief, and mourning

Negative emotivity supplants the optimism of clandestine subjects during the sea passage due to the succession of difficulties encountered. These life-threatening events truncate the feeling of happiness attributed to the aims of the journey and the determination to muster courage. One of the most emotive sequences of the film occurs just before the hour mark into the diegesis. The camera begins the shot at night as Kaba holds a lamp while moving through the quietly seated migrants. We hear loud sounds of waves and (raging) storms outside of the frame. This way of focusing the scene sustains the tensions created by the unfolding danger. The palpable fear-struck expressions on the travelers' faces underscores the turbulence they are encountering. The unspoken fright they experience at this point challenges their resolve to internalize their fear. Through indexing, the camera then shows the boat sailing through a rainstorm interspersed with shouts of distress: "God help us! Allah the merciful." They are drenched by the heavy rain as it floods the vessel. The intensity of the downpour in the dark and the pirogue's movement through the sea waves creates a dizzying effect. While some begin to vomit, others pray frantically. The filming of the sequence in darkness presents a background which enhances the feelings of fear. Since the dark inspires uneasiness or panic, it's juxtaposition with the rainy storm heightens the migrants' disquietude. Thus, the hope of successfully crossing into Europe is hampered by the infiltration of a collective survival-based anxiety relating to the un/expected mishap. Gibbs's (2001) argument about the sharing of feelings among proximate subjects is useful here. For her, "Bodies can catch feelings as easily as catch fire: affect leaps from one body to another, evoking tenderness, inciting shame, igniting rage, exciting fear – in short, communicable affect can inflame nerves and muscles in a

conflagration of every conceivable kind of passion” (1). While Gibbs’ observation refers to affect, it is applicable to the discussion of emotions in this context. The communicability of fear is tangible in this sequence as it spreads through the migrants on the boat. Although not all emotions may be easily passed from one person to the other, the characters in the film are all impacted by the tumult in the same state of fright and anxiety. As such, despite the popular “Barca ou Barsakh” slogan (Spain or death), the passengers are afraid of dying and neither making it to Europe nor seeing their family again. In effect, the prior awareness of the risk of death does not sustain the courage or fearlessness needed (as hinted by the subtitle and Aziz’ arguments) to arrive at the destination.

The sadness provoked by the incidence of death instantiates an atmosphere of gloom that furthers the spread of negative sentiments due to irregular migrancy: grief and agony. The casualties resulting from the storm include Kaba, Ousmane, Richard and Aziz whose passing become signifiers of the concrete exposure to death and produce sorrow among the clandestine cohort. Corpses sharing the same space with the survivors not only epitomizes the closeness between the aim of preserving life through mobility (which I term “biomigration”) and the destruction of life in this movement (which I call “necromigration”) but also spreads the unwanted feelings of sadness and fear in relation to migrancy. The proximity of the horror makes for a brutal experience with an unsettling impact on the group. This produces grief and requires mourning among the migrants as some shout in despair calling out the names of the dead while others cry⁴¹. So how do these subjects come to grips with the loss and pain they are faced with in a journey that is

⁴¹The emotional reaction to this permanent loss results in what Riegel (2003) calls “work”, i.e. “the psychological, social, cultural processes of mourning” (6).

supposed to lead to happiness? Although Derrida's *The Work of Mourning* focuses on mourning friends, it has useful insights for analyzing the events in *La Pirogue* which includes not only friends (Baye and Kaba) but also family (a migrant father and son) and people who have become acquaintances through the goal of migration. As he stipulates, "When one works *on* work, on the work of mourning, when one works at the work of mourning, one is already, yes, already, *doing* such work, enduring this work of mourning from the very start, letting it work within oneself, and thus authorizing oneself to do it, according it to oneself, according it within oneself, and giving oneself this liberty of finitude, the most worthy and the freest possible" (2001:142, emphasis original). Therefore, for Touré's characters, the pain of loss and the memories of the departed function as an emotive relic and reinforces the work of mourning toward an outward expression. In effect, to mourn, the remaining migrants accord themselves the psychological, social, and cultural duty of grieving (the perishing of) their companions. That notwithstanding, the emotional labor involved raises a question of duration, especially under the prevailing circumstances. In Freud's *Mourning and Melancholia*, mourning is a time-limited process, *decathexis*, which should take no more than 2 years to complete the emotional withdrawal to the loss after which one falls into melancholia. The filmic time and migration project would seem to enable the characters to overcome the grief quickly thus not becoming melancholic, in the Freudian sense. However, it becomes clear that this may be far from measurable, if not attainable in the context of the story. As we will see later, the continuous challenges, multiple deaths and failure of the passage points to the possibility of trauma for the survivors.

Since the *seametry* has become the final resting place for many failed migrants, the migrant boat has become synonymous with a coffin, even if temporary given that bodies are not buried with it. The imagery of the propinquity between life and death in the boat as a means of transportation and containing bodies whether living or lifeless echoes a passage from Mahi Binehine's novel, *Welcome to Paradise*, where a clandestine migrant mother and her child lie under a boat to protect the latter from the cold while waiting to depart. As the narrator recounts: "Yes, that boat covering living souls made me think of a giant coffin, a bottomless box open to the shades below. I saw the earth pregnant with a mother nursing her child, life and death joined in the same, lonely silence (p.26). While the vessel's positive utility is highlighted, its undesirable role in undocumented migration cannot be detached from its image. In Touré's film, the pirogue, of hope, becomes a deathbed, the space for laying in state and receiving last respects and the facilitating sea, a graveyard. Samba leads prayers for the dead, when day breaks, and their corpses are thrown into this maritime grave. As Chambers (2005) aptly writes about the dumping of the departed in the ocean, "Their bodies rest on the seabed, unconsciously contributing to the solidifying of the sea, transforming a site of transit into a mounting barrier" (324). It is noteworthy that contrary to Aziz' desire, his body will probably never be found or returned to his country which also denies him a proper burial. As irretrievable bodies, the mourning in their honor is limited to the present and only as much as may be possible to the mourners.

Thus, the absence of (any extensive) oration beyond the prayers echoes the words of Derrida (2001) in that "...the image commonly used to characterize mourning is that of an interiorization (an idealizing incorporation, introjection, consumption of the other..." (159). The survivors' work of mourning is reflected by an inward-looking reaction toward

the eclipsed lives and highlighted by their sad demeanor. Consequently, the setting for mourning in *La Pirogue* may not be conducive for the complexity of the work required since although the survivors are mourning the loss, they simultaneously need to ensure their safety and arrival at their destination. As such, right after the ephemeral “funeral and burial”, they begin clearing the flooded boat as some sit in silence. Even so, the memories of the deceased are evoked as Aziz’ crutch, a symbol of his disability and reason for migrating, and Ousmane’s postcard to his wife and son are found among the debris. In addition to their grief, the sorrow and quietude of the survivors is indicative of the creeping sense of despair about reaching their paradise. For example, when Lansana hands the postcards to Nafy, a widow and mother who lost her husband in a similar circumstance, she is unable to hold back her tears as she reads them. The externalization of her grief through tears emphasizes the impossibility of speech here. For as Derrida (2001) posits, “Speaking is impossible, but so too would be silence or absence or a refusal to share one’s sadness” (72). Hence, caught between the speaking-silence opposition, weeping enables a resolution of the aporia for the mourner.

Witnessing so many deaths effectively entrenches the feeling of despondency in many clandestine subjects despite the determination of some to persevere in the quest of migratory happiness. The veiled persistence in the face of grief and the onset of fright positions the irregular migrant in an emotional struggle with the self and the group. In what can be read as a suppression of the performance of mourning and an attempt to raise the declining morale of the cohort, Lansana breaks the silence and demands that they continue the journey. Samba intervenes by asking if they have enough fuel to sail on but Baye, having lost his GPS, insists that the boat must be drained before a decision to move is made.

Once the boat is cleared, they resolve to sail toward the coast after Mor premonitorily pours cold water on any inclination of going to Brazil. In his words, “Now, it’s over. We are doomed. In any case, we are all going to die.” This premonition is underscored by the breaking down of the engine as they sail on and Samba’s second trance which deepens the sense of despair. The collectivization of a damned fate erodes any individual glimmer of courage and hope. It is apparent that the enduring psychological impact of the succeeding difficulties means that even the most ardent proponent of the project loses emotional stability and becomes inconsolable. Consequently, Lansana bursts into a fit of tantrums blaming himself for organizing such a tragic journey. His demonstration of moral emotions; the compassion and feeling of grief for the lost lives portrays him in many ways as an atypical recruiter.

It is arguable that the desperation from the tragedy experienced and the emotional toll on the group have transformational effect on the worldview of the migrant characters. This is demonstrable through Lansana’s (a trafficker and clandestine migrant) sentimental reaction to the happenings. What we know about smugglers and recruiters is that they generally do not embark on these trips with the migrants. As such, Lansana’s travel with the group is a departure from the norm. Given that the classical smuggler is absent from these maritime passages, he does not show any concern for the humans involved. The financial reward from organizing the itinerary precludes any value for life beside facilitating the migrants’ dreams. To illustrate this point, we can refer to the dismissal of Baye’s protests to Bourbi that neither Lansana nor the Fulanis recruited have any sea experience which makes it dangerous to travel with them. However, Bourbi is dismissive of this concern and insists that the most important thing for him is that Lansana finds people

for the business. Contrary to this indifferent attitude, Lansana shows remorse for this ill-fated adventure due to being emotionally affected by the carnage and struggles arising from the trip. His (initial) characterization as a self-serving (ex. He makes sexual advances at Nafy having agreed to let her stay on the boat after threatening to throw her overboard), money-loving (he insists on receiving the would-be migrants' payments before anything) and cantankerous (he has frequent arguments with the others) villain who has no regard for humanity is effectively attenuated by his emotional breakdown at the carnage portrayed in the narrative. This phenomenon humanizes him as his participation in the journey enables him to recognize the sufferings and sympathize with those who perish.

The consistency of the undocumented migrants' emotional upheavals threatens their humanhood and inscribes a normalcy of loss and unhappiness. The sorrow and fear of failure gradually invades the atmosphere as the migrants cast distressful looks at one another after running out of food and water. The camera shows Nafy in the dark beheading Yaya's fowl for food and the blood for quenching their thirst (some drink while others refuse preferring to lament their predicament in silence). The recourse to this form of nutrition marks the dehumanizing extent that the group goes to sustain themselves in a treacherous space. This distressing event underlines the unhappy feelings expressed on their faces which suggest their vulnerability and helplessness in the face of hardships. In addition, the killing of the fowl, the only nonhuman form of life in the boat, tellingly heralds the unfolding doom as the others discover Yaya's lifeless body and look on quietly. When the camera moves away from them, it films the sea and begins a sequence showing the exhausted migrants in a sequence of internal monologues about personal and sometimes general issues (I would return to this later). Here, there is no mourning for the deceased

probably due to their weariness or simply the need to focus on the remainder of the journey. The lack of mourning for Yaya elicits a parallel between himself and the fowl whose death is ungrieved, non-grievable. This equally presages the subsequent deaths as an unsurprising event where human lives perish just like animals.

For instance, when the camera shows the daytime, we see several dead bodies lying in the boat including Lansana. Abou picks up the recruiter's Senegalese ID and then removes the key necklace from the corpse's neck. He wakes Baye up to inform him about the deaths including Mor who suicidally dived into the sea. As the survivors gather around the remains in the boat, the Fulani leader mourns his son in tears, kneeling over his corpse with a cowrie talisman. In the African context, the death of a son constitutes a huge loss given the pride of parents in their male children and the expectation that they will become breadwinners of their family. Hence, Derrida's (2001) postulation that "...death takes from us not only some particular life within the world...but, each time, without limit, someone through whom the world, and first of all our own world, will have opened up in a both finite and infinite-mortally infinite- way" enables us to understand the progenitor's dispossession (107). For the parent, the passing of the son underscores the deprivation of pride and provision, material and immaterial. Moreover, burying the son contradicts the traditional expectation that the child will bury the father. Thus, when Abou attempts to hold him back, Samba tells the former to allow the father to ululate. As Riegel (2003) convincingly argues, "Mourning is complex, emotionally necessary, and has the aim of providing for the mourner much-needed consolation in the face of pain" (8). The father's obligation to the work of mourning necessitates an apostrophe. His oration, in Pulaar, over his son's lifeless body is incomprehensible to the viewer. Nonetheless, his address to the

dead is the externalization of his grief over the loss. We can agree with Derrida (2001) then that for mourners at the graveside (here the seamestry), “With tears in their voices, they sometimes speak familiarly to the other who keeps silent, calling upon him without detour or mediation, apostrophizing him, even greeting him or confiding in him” (200). The feeling of grief, although not always communicated with words, asserts the privacy of confronting the pain but the possibility of socializing the experience.

In *La Pirogue*, mourning is both a personalized and a collectivized process that is rendered public by the means of cinema to the viewer. The spectator can then participate in this emotional articulation of the loss. In a call-and-response scene after these deaths, the remaining survivors engage in a dirge-like song to express their agony. Abou sings of his next meeting with his princess. Samba laments about his farm and livestock while Malang sings about the youth’s solitude and joblessness. As such, the grief-stricken faces’ collective mourning through singing helps them console one another. The internal monologues and the elegiac call-and-response sequences underline the enduring grief experienced by Touré’s characters. In a final fatal blow, the Fulani leader who mourned his son is found dead. The succession of deaths encountered suggests that the mourners are hardly completely consoled or overcome the pain. This lingering anguish effectively curtails the hopefulness of the group and concretizes their despair, forcing them to denounce their own actions. The circumstances of demise and the possibility of mourning afforded as well as performed asserts the insufficiency of the specific time and space which points to a risk of trauma that the survivors (may) deal with long after the occurrence. The closing sequences of the film showing the sorrowful faces of the survivors can be read as inclusive of the haunting effects of the carnage they witnessed. If this holds true, the

Freudian expectation of concluding the work of mourning may be immeasurable if not evasive.

Elusive happiness, hope(lessness) and the shame of return

The turmoil endured during the passage engender a sense of disillusionment given the original perception or acceptance of the construction of migration as a means to happiness. More importantly, the undocumented migrants' physical and emotional reaction – sorrow, grief, sadness, despair – to the dangers, hardships, and the lost lives in the quest for better prospects force a reexamination of the happy object and the journey. This occurs in one of the emotionally heavy sequences during the death and mourning moments which features a series of internal monologues involving those who have survived the tumults until now. These monologues reveal the emotional states of the characters through their expression of a glimmer of hope, despair, regret, sorrow, and disenchantment. While sleeping on top of the boat, Baye internalizes an address to his wife; “Kiné, you cannot imagine the suffering... the death... the thirst... the hunger.” By internalizing an apostrophe, his words constitute a recollection and an acknowledgement of her prophetic warnings about the dangers of the project. The unsatisfied urges of thirst and hunger as well as the grief elicited by the numerous deaths underpin his emotional frailty. The address, therefore, is a plea for pardon for jeopardizing their family's stability in search of a utopic dream. For his part, Abou says: “Baye Laye, I really want to succeed in music. You must forgive me.” The expression of remorse for attempting to migrate clandestinely depicts a moralizing recognition of a fault. Nonetheless, this declaration points to a continuous hope for achieving his aim of becoming a musician. It is plausible to argue that the diction employed shows the desire to migrate is not completely abandoned despite the

sufferings encountered. Hence, it may still be reconsidered in the future until the dream of excelling in music is achieved. Next, Nafy muses: “Darling, I can’t stop thinking of you. I see us with both children again. I pray we’ll make it through.” The velleity communicated by her words portrays a form of hopefulness amid the pessimism resulting from the difficulties encountered. Knowing that her husband died in a similar journey, Nafy’s discourse underlines a psychological state which combines loss and hope. The suggestion is that the lingering grief for the late husband and her desire to fend for their children have formed a cluster of feelings in her. Samba also reflects: “We know neither the river, nor the sea, nor Spain. How can we succeed? I am lost. The whole village was counting on me.” This instantiates an admission of a faux pas due to the lack of experience with the sea as the vector of reaching an unknown destination. The failure of the journey also means he has disappointed an entire village whose members are expectant of his success. The burden of letting down others increases the sadness of being disillusioned by the promissory object. The Fulani leader broods over the trip: “I’ve left my country, Guinea, where life is hard. I will look for work, but it won’t be easy.” This rumination demonstrates a sense of retreating to the country of emigration in spite of its economic challenges although the desire to leave was due to the same difficulties. In other words, although the unsuccessful migrant expresses dejection at the inability to reach the country of immigration, the homeland does not inspire hope for the future. In an expression of contrition, a young migrant, Mor, agonizes: “We live in a precarious situation. The young think the pirogue is the solution. Mother, I ask for your forgiveness.” Similarly, a guilt-stricken Lansana turns over in his mind: “I can no longer see the horizon, the dream money, the money of happiness...Forgive me.” Coupled with their sorrowful visages, their words evoke the

promissory quality of (undocumented) migration for fulfilling economic dreams and then denounce its validity. By asking for forgiveness, they concretize their remorse through self-reproach but also highlight the socioeconomic precarity of the countries of origin which pushes the youth into taking to boat migration. While these are personal and private to each character, the accessibility given to the viewer into their psyche collectivizes their evaluation of the migration venture. As mentioned above, these inward-looking “confessions” complements the call-and-response scene as part of the necessitated work of mourning and consolation which continues to endure.

Meanwhile, the failure to attain migratory goals deepens feelings of disappointment and reveals the unsuccessful migrant’s sense of shame owing to deportation and returning without a fortune. In the closing sequence of the film, the camera shows Nafy lying atop of a wooden platform of the pirogue when she hears a Spanish Red cross helicopter flying over the sea and waves at it in distress. The others are so weak they are unable to shout except to gesture. The Red Cross rescues them in their pirogue and takes them to the Canary Islands where they are covered in blankets and helped into the border post. Despite not showing any cheerfulness, the rescue affords them a respite from their desperation and perhaps the slightest hope of residing in Europe since in certain instances unauthorized migrants receive amnesty and can regularize their status. Although liminal, in some respect, the goal of reaching the Spanish territory is realized but not under the desired circumstances with the possibility of long-term stay and procuring wealth. We know this as the camera then shows title cards indicating the subsequent expulsion of the seven survivors two weeks

after their rescue while an Air Senegal airplane descends unto a tarmac⁴². Repatriation is an emotionally devastating experience for those who have risked their lives to reach new horizons which, in spite of their best efforts, remain inaccessible to them due to their mode of entry. The negative feelings engendered by this denial is portrayed by the languid movement and forlorn facial expressions as the migrants enter the camera's frame.

The emotivity of the shame of return due to the failing of irregular migration creates a feeling of rejection and disorientation for the unsuccessful clandestine. At the airport, the deportees are met by officials dressed in suits who hand them sandwiches and 10,000 CFA each without any exchange of words. The absence of dialogue in the scene, besides precluding the returnees from telling their stories, earmarks the difficulty they will face in reinserting themselves within the community they left behind. The indifference of the men, likely government representatives, and the moodiness that encompass the encounter between them and the returned migrants do not show any positivity, acceptance, or warmth about coming home. The mutism and the atmosphere of unwelcome can be read as an emotional punishment for the repatriated. It is possible that the political authorities consider the engagement in irregular migration and the succeeding deportation of citizens as a smear on the country's reputation hence the stern posture toward the boatpeople. This further underlines the suspicion of the returnees toward their "hosts". Just as they are not offered any explanation for the pittance given them during their reception, Samba dissuades his companions from eating the sandwich without giving reasons. Instead, emotions become the mode of communication used by these survivors. The unhappiness from their failed

⁴² The use of the state-owned airline, Air Senegal suggests the Senegalese government may have brought them home as part of repatriation agreements.

migration is compounded by the lack of care and attention demonstrated by the homeland. Consequently, Samba calls out to Abou and hugs him affectionately, an evidence of the relations and solidarity built over the period, however treacherous the journey has been. As they return to their respective communities, Abou, Baye and Nafy leave together in a taxi while Samba and his folk board another. Here again, they do not speak to one another as each looks sorrowful and in thoughts as they potentially wonder about their next line of action.

The emotional discomfort caused by unsuccessful immigration and the attendant unhappiness means that some may be less willing to completely abandon the project. For to do so may leave those concerned in a state of social stigmatization and a sense of unfulfillment. The brothers' return to the community exemplifies this unwillingness for some to let go of their dream of going to the Eldorado. Once in their town, Baye goes to buy an FC Barcelona jersey for his son⁴³. The seller recognizing Abou asks him, "Weren't you supposed to leave?" to which he answers "soon." Abou's response which falls short of admitting to the failed attempt at immigrating suggests that he will be back to sea migration soon⁴⁴. As shown by Hernández-Carretero and Carling (2012), return, despite the reasons behind it, represents a huge loss, both economic and psychological (410). The loss of financial investment and the psychological burden of facing one's ilk without the promised wealth is evidence of ignominy. The admission of the non-fulfillment of a venture conceived as a path to happiness and upward socio-economic mobility elicits shame hence

⁴³Hogarth (2018) posits that "The film suggests that one can be interested in Barça (the Barcelona soccer team) from afar, without having to risk one's life in an attempt to migrate to Spain" (36).

⁴⁴See also Garane (2014: 188) who argues that perhaps Abou may "take Lansana's place as a handler." Considering that he takes Lansana's ID card and removes the key pendant from the neck of the latter's lifeless body, Abou signals his newfound status as a potential recruiter for future journeys given his own determination to succeed in the phenomenon.

his tactful reply. The feeling of humiliation is a moral emotion which borders on self-pride and thus the unsuccessful migrant is unwilling to become a laughingstock by revealing this fact of nonsuccess. Moreover, this scene subtly evokes the popular Senegalese migration slogan, “Barca ou Barsakh” (Barcelona or Death) in the sense that the would-be migrant will stop at nothing until the aim of reaching Europe has been attained. In addition to the plausible reading of this scene as a refusal to disclose the failure because of the shame of not succeeding like others, there is also evidence to the effect that Abou is determined to realize his dream of going to Europe at all cost. In the pre-departure exchanges with Baye, he hinted that even if he does not take the current pirogue, he would certainly be on the subsequent one. Additionally, in his internal monologue, Abou insists on his determination to succeed in music (given he wants to join his friends’ band in Paris). By juxtaposing the purchase of the jersey of the Barcelona football team and Abou’s hinting at a departure in the near future, the aforementioned slogan is implicitly understood as an unwavering cognitive and psychic aspect of those who desire to migrate regardless of near-death experiences in previous attempts.

The transformational impact of clandestine migration through the various emotional upheavals experienced is not limited to boatpersons. Indeed, the shame of the forced return deepens the relational and emotional distance between those who leave and those who are left behind. This is the case of Baye and his wife, Kiné, who opposed the undertaking of the clandestine journey. In the concluding scene, the brothers walk silently and dejectedly home. They exchange searching glances owing to the failure as Baye pushes the gate to enter their house. The intermittently probing looks point to the unspoken quest for words to explain their coming back and the torrid events they witnessed. Without

recourse to blame, the complicitorial stare at each other concretizes the sentimental sharing of responsibility and a conciliatory process. Meanwhile, Bouba, his son, runs out to meet Baye and receives the locally-bought jersey. For Dima (2013), the return of the brothers is not a failure but a beneficial return because the son's happiness at the receipt of the jersey, although not the original, shows us not only that the dream of the Eldorado is perhaps false but also the family's happiness is complete (157)⁴⁵. While this reading is possible, it is not entirely accurate. While the importance of the brothers' safe return home and Bouba's joy at receiving the coveted shirt cannot be overemphasized, the family's happiness is far from being achieved. Unlike the son who runs out excitedly to meet the father, Kiné stares blankly from the door of the room while the brothers gaze at each other as the film ends. By showing no form of happiness at seeing each other while wearing discontented looks, the family's unity and joy have not been accomplished. In fact, the gloomy expressions present here are reminiscent of the mood and feelings depicted following Baye's decision to leave which underscores the affective detachment at play. If as Dima (2013) suggests that the dream of the Eldorado is false, it is the very falsehood that has threatened the family's peace. The resultant loss cannot simply be restored with even an inauthentic product representative of the real space in question (Barcelona, Spain) which incidentally has not been reached. Furthermore, the physical distance shown between them and the absence of an emotional connection between them plausibly suggests that there remains some reparation required; remorse, apology, and forgiveness to ensure the family rediscovers their erstwhile bliss. As such, Baye's apologetic internal monologue may

⁴⁵Garane (2014) offers a similar conclusion in that "While the voyage was certainly a disastrous failure, the return home of Baye Laye, his brother Abou, and the others can be viewed as a kind of victory. For the survivors and the film itself thereby send the message to the world's policy makers that something more must be done immediately to alleviate the conditions that lead to clandestine migration..." (189).

require externalization to lead to the restitution of his home. Consequently, the emotionality of undocumented migration has far-reaching consequences for individuals who undertake the journey and their family relations.

Conclusion

Having taken up Palladino's (2018) call for opening up mobility studies since "Migration is about those who leave, as well as those who stay behind, those who seek to move but fail, and those whose movement is hindered; ... to account for other stories to gain a fuller understanding of migration" (86), this chapter has analyzed a less popular mode of inquiry into irregular migration: the issue of emotions. Through an analysis of Moussa Touré's *La Pirogue*, it becomes apparent that the motivations for (clandestine) migration involve emotional evaluations, personal and social, which construct it as the means to a paradisiacal happiness. The societal pressure emanating from the wealth acquired by successful immigrants coupled with local economic difficulties faced by those who want to leave make undocumented migration an attractive venture: a happy object. However, the film enables a reexamination of the widely held view that "...international migration is a family business – encouraged, sponsored, and benefiting migrants' close and extended families" (Vives 2017:182). It becomes clear that not all families support (unsanctioned) migration and equally not all reap benefits since some are adversely impacted in their relations.

Despite the positivity that those who leave attribute to their course of action, they experience a gamut of emotions that have transformational impact on them, their worldview, and relations. The feelings elicited in the maritime passage show a mixture of joy, hope, fear, sadness, and despair which challenges the initial optimistic view of

clandestine migration for many. For example, the incidence of death and the deprivations of food and water engender sorrowful experiences. The demise of several boat people demands the work of mourning which nonetheless is incomplete and thus may produce enduring trauma for the survivors. In addition, the shame of return as a deportee and the determination of success in the Eldorado perhaps suggest that some survivors would not be deterred from trying again while some may face emotional obstacles to resettling in their societies. The chapter elicits questions for future research into how families are impacted and how they heal the wounds after the experience of sea migration. Additionally, how do those who fail to cross successfully reintegrate into their original society? Are they forever out of place like (returning) immigrants who for Sayad (1999) become doubly absent? Is the return to clandestine migration inevitable? What is government's intervention for such deportees – psychological, economic help for them?

Chapter 2: Migrants in Transit

“All societies produce strangers; but each kind of society produces its own kind of strangers, and produces them in its own immitable way” (Bauman 1997:17).

Introduction

With the ever-present mediatic portrayal of migrants looking to reach Europe, the focus on the moments of arrivals: migrants in overcrowded rickety boats, wearing life jackets as they are rescued by sea patrol or humanitarian workers have remained the dominant images. This in many ways has resulted in limited attention to migrant journeys before the crossing of the sea. The present study is concerned with the pre-boat stage: thus, the journey before the journey. Given that undocumented migration is a non-linear function between points of departure and arrival, the many processes and relations that streamline it merit critical attention. Studying the journey enables an examination of happenings although it presents challenges and limitations in terms of methodology (and ethics) due to its secretive, arduous, and circuitous nature⁴⁶. As such, ethnographic and anthropological studies have addressed the issue of transit migration and smuggling more than literary and filmic studies due to the empiricism involved in investigating them within the migratory process. Retrospective narrative approaches have been used to document what is otherwise impossible to portray from firsthand knowledge⁴⁷. These works have shifted the heavy focus of critical scholarship from migrant suffering at borders and in destination societies to include transit experiences. Similarly, non-fictional accounts of irregular (transit)

⁴⁶See for instance BenEzer and Zetter (2015), Bridgen and Mainwaring (2016).

⁴⁷Collyer (2010), Khosravi (2011), Kushner (2012), BenEzer and Zetter (2015), Bridgen and Mainwaring (2016).

migration occurring in different geographical locations have depicted the phenomenon⁴⁸. Thus, the chapter builds on studies of the journey (of irregular migrants) as a narrative⁴⁹ by analyzing migrants' movement in transit and their recounting of experiences as well as the impact on them during and after the journey by reading Jonas Carpignano's *Mediterranea* (2015) and Andrea Segre et al.'s *Come un oumo sulla terra* (2008). Being a way through which outsiders gain understanding into migrants' personal worlds, Gardner (2002) convincingly argues that these "...narratives reflect history, experience and meanings, and help shape them" (27). Thus, the stories recounted, and the memories shared by those concerned become an analytical resource for meaning making about the socio-political mechanisms that determine and affect their selves and mobility dreams.

As European borders continue to be expanded to the southern side of the Mediterranean through development aid, cooperation and migration control agreements with North African countries, the fortification of frontiers and obstacles experienced by would-be migrants are on the rise. Since sub-Saharanans engaging in irregular migration must transit through these externalized European border-nations, their journeys have been fraught with increased difficulty. Against this backdrop, the varied and mutable motivations, discontinuities, speed and direction of movement witnessed in the study of migratory patterns counteract the idea of invasion and incessance inherent in metaphors such as "flows" and "waves" used to describe the occurrence of unauthorized migration. For most clandestine migrants aiming to enter Europe by crossing the Mediterranean,

⁴⁸Caroline Moorehead's, *Human Cargo: a Journey among Refugees* (2005), Sonia Nazario's *Enrique's Journey: The Story of a Boy's Dangerous Odyssey to Reunite with His Mother* (2007), Fabrizio Gatti's *Bilal sur la route des clandestins* (2008), Serge Daniel's *Les Routes Clandestines* (2008), Paul Kenyon's *I Am Justice: A Journey out of Africa* (2009), Oscar Martinez's *The Beast: Riding the Rails and Dodging Narcos on the Migrant Trail* (2014).

⁴⁹See for instance Gardner (2002), BenEzer (2015), Kaytaz (2016), Brigden and Mainwaring (2016).

transiting through other sub-Saharan African countries, the Saharan desert and North Africa constitutes a precursor(y) (backstory) with myriad experiences. Reaching the point of embarkment in Libya or Morocco is a survival-laden trajectory that involves strategies to ensure continuity.

I argue that migration in transit is a domain of multifaceted transactions targeted at advancing the aims of migrants to reach destination countries. I use the term “transaction” to refer to the processes of smuggling, negotiation, buying and selling, and interactions between people during migrancy. In analyzing the multiple operations mentioned above, I will take into account undocumented persons’ encounters with smugglers on one hand and on the other hand, state agents of migration control whose work is strongly aided and influenced by Euro-political financial support and policy direction. While people handlers recruit, help clandestines to travel by circumventing legal processes and trade them at times, police forces – representatives of state power – collude with smugglers to maltreat the latter’s clients through dehumanizing practices like detention under poor conditions. The violence-rife treatment of migrants and refugees at the hands of these actors will invite me to consider the human and psychological impact it has on those concerned.

The study of clandestine migrancy through the prism of transit elicits an attention to the various ways by which travelers undertake the journey. From physical movement to the use of telephonic and internet tools to connect with people and places, journeyers utilize human and non-human resources to advance their migratory agenda. Hence, John Urry’s (2007) notion of interdependent mobilities offers a scope for investigating migrants’ negotiations of the different aspects of their travel as they advance and stop. Urry’s interdependent mobilities refers to the multiple forms of moving including corporeal

displacement of persons and objects as well as digital technologies of communication across distances. Owing to the nature of unauthorized migration travel, the workings of smuggling networks and governmental anti-migration forces on the paths they take, diverse mobilities become essential to clandestines as they navigate their motion and times of waiting during the trajectory. I choose the term, interdependent mobilities, as a conceptual framework that addresses the host of practices that are relevant to study clandestine migration. Carpignano's film exemplifies the notion of interdependent mobilities in its portrayal of the different mechanisms employed by undocumented persons to facilitate their travel across borders and the desert toward Europe. As emigrants use digital and telecommunication tools such as the internet to access information about their desired destinations in addition to their physical movement, they engage in interdependent mobilities. In *Mediterranea*, Ayiva and Abas patronize a service center when they make a stop in Libya where the former calls his sister back home and his uncle in Italy. The latter surfs the internet and looks through pictures and videos of compatriots in Italy. Additionally, Urry's terminology enables an examination of how these processes of mobility used by migrants form an integral part of their northward movement and contribute to their migratory success. Thus, reading the film through this lens affirms migration in transit as a multi-transactional procedure by which migrants attain their goals.

Meanwhile, migration in transit is not a smooth sail for those who engage in it despite the myriad strategies that unsanctioned emigrants and refugees employ. In fact, the outlawing of undocumented border crossing means that they face high stakes of being maltreated by trafficking networks, criminals and even by forces of order upon arrest. The emotional scars produced by these treacheries of transit events owing to the violence

suffered by clandestines can be analyzed through the framework of trauma. Trauma, here, refers to the psychological injury that lingers after undergoing life-threatening or distressing incidents. The notion of trauma presents an analytical foundation for examining the embodied costs that remain on the minds of those who survive irregular migrancy. Indeed, migration trauma can stem from occurrences preceding, during and after travel. Although scholars like Caruth (1995) have theorized trauma as a post-event phenomenon, clandestine migration shows that it can be experienced prior to, on and after the journey. The situations that force many to leave including war, persecution and economic crises lead to psychic effects on them. Also, the happenings en route such as hunger, thirst, death, detention, torture, and other forms of hostility encountered result in traumatic experiences. These form a continuum of mental consequences which result in traumatized persons. The ways in which these conditions are engendered by actors in undocumented mobility like political power and smugglers on one hand and endured by travelers on the other hand merits critical scholarship. In *Come un omo sulla terra*, the sexual and, physical abuse and torture – while in detention – of the film’s characters cause trauma in them as evidenced by the recollection of the happenings upon arrival in Italy. Thus, Segre et al.’s narrative allows us to analyze and show migrants’ and refugees’ traumatic reaction to the hostility unleashed on them during transit. My study of the visual text calls attention to the enduring effects of the horrid realities undergone by the unauthorized international traveler who traverses other lands.

The chapter’s examination of transit journeys proceeds in two parts. In the first part, I examine how migrants navigate (transact) the interchanging states of mobility (being on the road) and immobility (waiting) inherent in their movement as well as their relations

with smugglers on the journey by reading Jonas Carpignano's *Mediterranea*. In the second part, I demonstrate how witnessing caters to the issues of the violence of smugglers and the state as well as the production of trauma in Andrea Segre et al.'s *Come un uomo sulla terra* through the testimony of (migrant) survivors. It becomes apparent that transit migrants have different experiences of going through the Sahara and North Africa. The films produce images of the desert passage while revealing the economization of the trajectory as well as the embodied human consequences. *Mediterranea*'s specificity within narratives of clandestine migration is its representation of movement in transit, especially across the dreaded Sahara Desert. Other films such as *Terraferma* (2011) and *Fire at Sea* (2016) have hinted at the desert crossing through the accounts of those who have arrived on European shores. This approach is given further attention in Andrea Segre et al.'s documentary film. Despite appearing several years ago, the scholarship on its contribution to the study of migration issues has been limited⁵⁰. The film's novelty, in contradistinction to *La Pirogue*'s (2012) and *Mediterranea*'s (2015) focus on the sea and desert crossing respectively, lies in its attention to the Sahara Desert passage and happenings in the region, particularly Libya, as the journeyers make their way to destination countries in Europe.

Whereas *Mediterranea* takes a fictionalized approach to portraying the real-life experiences of the characters (former clandestines), it is limited to their relations among themselves and smugglers. On the other hand, Segre et al.'s representation of transit migration enables an analysis of the encounters with security forces, dealings with smugglers, the circularity of journeys and the violence-driven use of detention as enforced

⁵⁰Clò (2011), Clò, Ferme, O'Healy and Verdicchio (2016) and Fiore (2018) are among those to have studied it.

immobility. Among the documentary's scholarly study, Triulzi's (2015) analysis focuses on the archiving of the survivors' memory within the Archive of Migrant Memory project. In her analysis of Segre's works within social activism, O'Healy's (2015) discusses *Come un uomo sulla terra*'s contribution to the growing body of migrant testimonies and its avoidance of "sensationalizing images that sometimes characterize humanitarian discourse" (416). Also, Teresa Fiore (2018) has analyzed the film's visual and linguistic denunciation of the notoriety of Libyan detention centers in contemporary migration. My intervention echoes these analyses of the documentary, expanding them to include an examination of the trauma-producing hostility present in the events of the traversal owing to anti-immigration controls. Among the extant scholarship on *Mediterranea*, Paynter (2017) reads it as an autobiographical testimony which blurs the fiction-reality divide. Given that several of the actors are migrants and nonprofessional actors who reenact their experiences through the filmmaker's camera, she asserts that it "complicates the idea of witness" (662). O'Healy's (2019) study focuses on the acts of immigrant resistance as countermapping. Thus, she argues that by recasting the 2010 Rosarno riots, *Mediterranea* "effectively shifts the conventional image of the immigrant as a victim to one of agency and active resistance. In other words, it presents its viewers with images of immigrants' "anger, revolt, and empowerment" that undercut the tropes of victimhood" (219). My reading attends to the film's nuancing of the canonical perception of the smuggler as a villainous criminal and the migrant as a powerless victim (without agency) to show the various transactions undertaken by the latter for migratory success.

Transactions in Transit in *Mediterranea*

Carpignano's 2015 documentary fiction, *Mediterranea*, is a semi-biographical enquiry into the migratory experiences of its protagonist, Ayiva Seihon, from Africa to Italy. Inspired by the 2010 violent clashes between immigrants and locals in the Italian town of Rosarno, the narrative recasts the trajectory of a group of irregular migrants and their interaction with Italian society. The film opens with a truck load of goods and travelers at night in an unnamed place in Burkina Faso. Many are desirous to leave but not all are allowed on board. The camera follows the journey through the desert in the truck and then by foot into Algeria where the would-be migrants live in a makeshift camp while awaiting to be taken to their destination by smugglers. Tired of waiting and the difficult conditions of the transit center, the clandestines agree to travel to Tripoli where they can be aided across the Mediterranean. A gang attacks and robs them in the Libyan desert as well as kills a member of the group. In Libya, Ayiva calls his uncle, Ousman, in Italy to send him some money for the sea crossing. Meanwhile, the paid smuggler refuses to travel with them and Ayiva, who has no seafaring experience, volunteers to be the steersman of the boat. While sailing, the engine malfunctions amid a sea storm causing some to drown while others are rescued and sent to a reception center. They are then given a 3-month residence permit during which they need to find job contracts to obtain their permanent documents. Ayiva and Abas go to Rosarno where Ousman and other African immigrants live. One of them, Mades, finds lodging for the newcomers in a derelict structure serving as home to other migrants and a job as harvesters on a citrus farm. Despite being poorly treated and underpaid, Ayiva, the father of a seven-year-old daughter, Zeina, accepts the conditions since he can remit his daughter and sister as well as in the hope of landing a job contract to

regularize his stay. However, the tensions between the immigrants and the inhabitants degenerate into violence resulting in loss of lives and destruction of property. Abas, who is one of the victims of the armed conflict, learns that he could get a year's humanitarian visa but Ayiva declines and states that they would rather return home. At the end of the film, Ayiva is seen at the party of his boss' daughter where he is invited for a drink by the host.

In *Travel as Metaphor*, Van den Abbeele argues that travel transcends “seeing exotic places and cultures” (1992: xiii). This is because there are events that make up the ontology of any given journey⁵¹. For him, it also constitutes “a zone of potential loss or profit” beyond being a story or a narrative (1992: xvi). This postulation underscores traveling as a sphere of interrelation between space and the effects of action or happenings therein on subjects being neither exclusively positive nor negative. This characteristic duality of the voyage suggests that journeyers are faced with inevitable uncertainties despite their motivations and means of motion. However, the specificity of clandestine migration as a realm of opposition to the political control over mobility renders this form of travel peculiarly challenging. The mode of travel through sovereign borders aided by smuggling networks requires tact for success although there are no guarantees. With respect to this phenomenon, Brigden and Mainwaring (2016) maintain that “The journey, as an experience with indeterminate beginnings and ends...encompasses imagined journeys before migration, journeys from countries of origin through countries of transit to destination, as well as deportation journeys” (244). In this sense, clandestine mobility

⁵¹BenEzer (2002) defines journeys as “highly intensive events, which are registered as a distinct period and experience within the life history of the individual” (199).

rejects a linear trajectory since it incorporates multiple forms and directions of movement across setting and time. Collyer (2010) refers to this as “fragmented migration” – that is to say journeys “broken into a number of separate stages, involving varied motivations, legal statuses and living and employment conditions” (275). To this end, a multifaceted framework for understanding this type of motility is useful for analyzing undocumented (transit) migration.

The varying conditions of traversing different geographical locations (including motivations, statuses, finances, jobs) means that travelers adopt many resources to facilitate their voyage. In doing so, how do transit migrants navigate travel to maximize the capacity for profit and mitigate the probability of loss? After their proposition of a “new mobilities paradigm⁵²”, John Urry (2007) delineates five interdependent mobilities that produce social life and interactions across distances:

the *corporeal* travel of people for work, leisure, family life, pleasure, migration and escape, organized in terms of contrasting time-space patterns ranging from daily commuting to once-in-a-lifetime exile; the physical movement of *objects* include food and water to producers, consumers and retailers; as well as the sending and receiving of presents and souvenirs; the *imaginative* travel effected through the images of places and peoples appearing on and moving across multiple print and visual media and which then construct and reconstruct visions of place, travel and consumption; *virtual* travel often in real time transcending geographical and social distance and forming and reforming multiple communities at-a-distance; *communicative* travel through person-to-person messages via personal messages, postcards, texts, letters, telegraph, telephone, fax and mobile (2007: 47; 2012: 4-5. Emphasis original).

⁵² Sheller and Urry (2006).

Admittedly, some of these mobilities – especially the physical movement of objects and the imaginative, virtual and communicative forms of travel – are not exclusive to transit migrants since those who remain in their countries of origin or other places utilize them just like those who hit the road. Examples include remittances and shipments of goods by immigrants to their home countries, individuals’ dreams of overseas travel which are sometimes initiated and or enhanced by media consumption and internet use as well as communication modes across distances. Nonetheless, the physical mobility of people and of objects (goods and money), imaginative travel (daydreaming, imagination), travel through virtual spaces (internet, TV) and (the mobility of information through) communications have become key components of migration between sub-Saharan and northern Africa. (Transit) Migration is a corporeal travel which involves both mobility and immobility. Its relation and linkage to temporality and spatiality contrast the time spent in movement and stasis as well as the accessibility of the geographies traversed. Whereas some spaces may be navigated with less constraints resulting in less time spent, others may require more effort and thus involve more time. The vagaries of the journey mean that migrants need other forms of mobility and connectivity as the trajectory vacillates between mobile activity and passivity due to reasons such as border controls, arrest and detention, smuggling procedures, and possession or lack of economic resources. In this case, strategies employed by the movers to overcome moments of inactivity due to obstacles to the continuation of the journey constitute an “escape.” This phenomenon, then, thrives on obtaining and using resources that advance the attainment of the migration dream. Following from this, the interconnectedness of the human, non-human and technological mobilities in Urry’s (2007) theorization can (effectively) support the study as well as the

cause of those involved in this form of migratory movement, particularly the trans-Saharan locomotion.

Carpignano's *Mediterranea* opens with would-be migrants' preparations at the point of departure at night in an unnamed town. An analysis of this opening sequence affirms and uncovers new aspects of undocumented migration. The temporality of the journey's beginning in the darkness marks the necessity of hiding and invisibility that is characteristic of clandestine mobility. Moreover, the event is further shrouded in ambiguity as the lack of clarity or information about the geographic location of the migrant group lends itself to conjecturing in relation to the national origin of some of the people involved. As scholars have shown, the commencement of journeys is sometimes unclear given the different circumstances of individual travelers⁵³. Some begin their trajectory as nomadic settlers moving from place to place before the irregular venture whereas others set off from their home country. In the film, there are two truckloads of people and bags while Ayiva, whom we later discover to be a recruiter, tries to organize the seating on the vehicle by assigning the would-be migrants to the different trucks. Meanwhile, some of the passengers register their opposition by insisting there is not enough room to accommodate the newcomers who want to leave. First, the infusion of persons and bags depicts the increasing trend of the impossibility of some subjects to move without being in the midst of goods. Put differently, irregular migrants have resorted to stowaway in cargo trucks to be able to cross borders surreptitiously. This is a fallout of the globalized era where capital and products have become more mobile than certain identities. As a result, there seems to develop an interdependence of mobility between the animate and the inanimate. Second,

⁵³See for instance Brigden and Mainwaring (2016).

this moment of exchange and selectivity marks an important aspect of clandestine migration in that, not all the people who want to leave are able to, albeit for different reasons. Hence, their urge to depart (for those who may be denied a spot on the truck) like the others is inhibited by the recruiter's inability to accommodate them on the already overloaded lorry. In so doing, the denial of a chance on the vehicle means that these desirous persons have been rendered involuntarily immobile despite their efforts to join the bandwagon. In other words, although overcrowding of travelers is a common feature of this mobility, it belies the fact that many are still unable to travel as they wish.

The above scene affirms a combination of the corporeal travel of people and the movement of objects in undocumented migration. Abas brings a bag of 9 shoes to Ayiva to be sold to the travelers for 600 CFA each, adding that it includes 3 leftovers from last time. The act shows an awareness of the potential needs of the migrants and the potentiality of creating wealth during the journey. Here, the voyage presents an opportunity for business transactions for those with knowledge of the trajectory. Knowing the treachery of the desert geography and the need for financial resources during transit, the current voyage constitutes an opportunity for the protagonist to gain materiality by providing goods for probable consumers on the road. Besides, Abas' words show that this is a recurrent practice which nonetheless suggests their failure to successfully migrate to Europe. Put differently, the evocation of leftovers from a previous trip emphasizes a prior attempt at the passage (although we are not told about the preceding ones) and the cyclical mobility-immobility nexus that several clandestines live through. This fact, nonetheless, positions Ayiva at an advantage over the others. In other words, past travel has equipped him with experience and wisdom for succeeding in this sphere of social activity as we will see. It corroborates

Van Den Abbeele's (1992) postulation that travel offers a zone for multimodal profit(making). In his words, "... just as travel poses the danger of loss so also does it propose the possibility of gain (whether this gain be in the form of greater riches, power, experience, wisdom, or whatever)" (xvii). It is evident that the main character's actions proceed from the privileged perspective of familiarity with the trip and its prospective benefits.

The potential of gain is demonstrated, for example, by the conduct of sales after the departure. When the trucks make a stopover in the desert, the occupants descend and sit or lay on the ground to rest. It is, however, unclear whether the truck stops due to a mechanical fault or a decision to take a break. Meanwhile, the group is subjected to enduring the weather conditions; be it in the heat or cold conditions of the environment. Substantively, Ayiva is filmed in a close-up with a massive sand dune of the desert to his side as he moves around and offers the shoes on sale to the migrants (men and women). By now we know it is not a masculinist venture as the men in *La Pirogue* sought to argue. The business conducted here affirms the recognition of the needs of travelers and the opportunity for economic gain owing to the potential of travel and experience. The viewer deduces that this is a brisk business that is characteristic of the passage. In reference to Urry (2007) on the mobility of objects, the retailing of shoes involves a physical movement of objects: in this case, from retailer to consumer. From this, clandestine transit migration reveals the existence of an informal economic sector⁵⁴. As such, trading by members of the cohort constitutes another aspect of the financial market generated by this form of movement beside the transactions of smugglers. The camera's panoramic movement which situates

⁵⁴See also Andersson (2014) on the business operations within undocumented migration.

the travelers within the depth of the desert shows their subjection to the environment and the difficulty of escape. In other words, the vast lifeless site offers no alternative for their need for the wares presented to them by Ayiva. As a result, although according to Abas the shoes cost 600 CFA each, Ayiva prices them between 3000 and 4000 but only manages to sell at 2000 and 1000. Despite the seeming bargain for the buyers, the seller fleeces them since the no-man's land they find themselves in gives the former no choice. Additionally, this is a testament to the need to raise money to continue the journey but also the profiteering characteristic of the phenomenon. The voyage subjects those with little or no knowledge of the environs to the whims and caprices of those with experience.

The unsuitability of the geography for human life and the travelers' project is hinted by their depiction in contrast to the arid land. The migrants' helplessness in this location is underlined by the vastness of the space which seems to "consume" them. As the truck moves after the stopover, a high-level camera framing combines a high angle shot and an extremely long shot to situate a group of clandestines walking in the desert. In portraying them from this perspective and depth of field, they appear like icons, transformed into non-human figures against the stony and hilly range of the desert. The imagery underscores the threat of the surroundings to their humanity and survival. This inspires the spectator's sympathy toward them. Furthermore, it can be read as a premonition of the danger (to be) faced subsequently by Ayiva's group. In the same scene, the main character is shown in a medium close-up shot sitting on the bags atop the truck while looking at those on foot. The point-of-view shot through the protagonist's eyes emphasizes the menacing reality they are confronted with. Yet, his determined-looking visage highlights an awareness of this risk and the courage necessary to pass through the immense uninhabitable setting. Meanwhile,

proceeding with the trip involves movement and stasis thereby requiring the adoption of interdependent mobility strategies to keep the dream alive.

Dis/continuities of transit

Transit migration, particularly for trans-Saharan migrants is not a straight-line movement from a place of departure to the desired destination⁵⁵. The journey is marked by vertical, horizontal, cyclical progression as well as inactivity or immobility for varied reasons. Despite the discontinuities portrayed in *Mediterranea*, there are no official controls such as border checks, police arrests or detention that inhibit the mobility of the travelers. For example, after the initial departure of the trucks, a title card indicates their arrival (on the desert) in Algeria and subsequently in Libya. Given that we later learn that Ayiva and Abas are from Burkina Faso, it is presumable that they took off from there. If so, the absence of any narrative regarding a passage through either Mali or Niger seems to be a filmic choice which however has interpretative effect. This is because passage in these countries is unavoidable when heading to the shores of the Mediterranean. The suggestion is that the suppression of travel through those locations during the trajectory can be read as being unimportant hurdles or that they are overcome with less difficulty. Meanwhile, movement from the Nigerien city of Agadez into Algeria is popular in ethnographical studies and has been reported to be a no mean task⁵⁶. The migrants' accession to the transit spaces in what looks to be borderless places shows them to successfully escape the vigilance of political management that restrain their progression. Carpignano's film seems

⁵⁵Scholars such as Collyer (2007), Carling (2007), Lucht (2012), Schapendonk (2012) and Andersson (2014) have documented and analyzed the non-linearity of these journeys through their anthropological and ethnographic studies.

⁵⁶See for instance Schapendonk (2012) and Andersson (2014).

to show that the crossing of several national borders may sometimes be less eventful than others. This suggests that persons or groups plying the Sahara Desert may not necessarily have the same experiences. Moreover, in spite of the stoppages along the journey, the migrants do not have extensive contact with the local population. Apart from their interaction with the different smugglers in the traversed areas as well as Ayiva's and Abas' use of a money services center, there are no encounters between the journeyers and the citizens. This seemingly filmic choice does not allow for an analysis of inter-group relations that have been documented in ethnographic and anthropological studies of this type of migration.

Even though political government control is absent in this depiction, the voyage is not devoid of the characteristic interruptions faced by migrants. That notwithstanding, the film effaces the sense of time for waiting and traveling. Put differently, despite the stoppages on the road, there is no concrete evidence of how long migrants remain passive or are moving. However, the literature shows that times vary between hours to months, even years⁵⁷. In fact, the narrative under consideration seems to portray the journeyers (as being mostly) in motion as they find means to circumvent the periods of discontinuation. Of the film's opening twenty-two minutes dedicated to transiting, there appears to be an almost equal number of minutes (about eleven) between travel and staying put. This contradicts studies that have shown more periods of immobility than mobility⁵⁸. Moreover, apart from the physical movement in transit to attain their destinations, migrants engage in other forms of mobility – i.e. nonhuman – to curtail the moments of stagnancy and

⁵⁷Kaytaz (2016) notes that these journeys are "... constituted of long periods of immobility punctuated by shorter instances of travel" (285).

⁵⁸Ibid

simultaneously sustain their migratory motive. These mechanisms echo Urry's (2007) typology of interdependent mobilities. Given the discontinuity of the voyage, "communication hubs" such as money transfer stores and internet cafes have become important resources for transit migrants to make stopovers, connect with those in their countries of origin or the country they are emigrating to and, access (new) information about the locations traveled and their destinations (Schapendonk 2011, Schapendonk et al. 2015). The foregoing underscores the relevance of communicative travel to undocumented travelers as the following analysis shows.

The presence and use of communication hubs facilitate migrants' connectivity with their social capital during transit. When the truck arrives in an unnamed town (where the migrants off), the camera shows Ayiva in a money transfer center sending 2000 CFA to Burkina Faso, plausibly the profit realized from the sale of shoes⁵⁹. He calls the recipient, his sister Aseta, and asks her to spend it slowly while expressing hope of better remittances as the journey continues and the challenging conditions improve. This presents an interesting dimension whereby would-be migrants remit their relations left behind during their journey. The literature shows that those on the move usually require supplementary funds from their relations during transit⁶⁰. Additionally, the other known practice is that successful migrants support those who remain in the sending country or in transit with remittances. As an example, upon arriving in Libya, Ayiva calls his uncle Ousman in Italy to inform him that they are in Sabha. He then requests some funds since they lost all their money during a robbery attack on the desert. This episode evidences immigrants' support

⁵⁹As mentioned earlier in relation to Van Den Abbeele's postulation, travel has afforded Ayiva "greater riches" from his business transactions with the co-migrants.

⁶⁰de Haas (2008), Andersson (2014).

to clandestines in their journey northward. The sending of funds to those left behind in the country of origin and the receipt of funds by transit migrants constitute a movement of objects in the spectrum of interconnected mobilities of transmigration. Thus, *Mediterranea* introduces a new or rather unpopular occurrence about the movement of money (objects) during migratory trajectories to show its multidirectionality in the domain of the trans-Saharan passage: at one point, Ayiva sends money to Aseta; at another, he requests money from Ousman. Also, Ayiva's phone conversations with Aseta and Ousman during the time of stoppage evidences communicative travel and its resourcefulness to the journey. Importantly, the telephonic exchange with Ousmane in Italy, ensures connectivity to the receiving nation where the protagonist aims to reach. Sharing messages and information that aid the migrant during the trip contributes to lessening the effects of passivity and informs the subject's mobility (needs and access).

In addition to communicative travel in communication hubs, transit migrants utilize imaginative and virtual travels during periods of stasis. The connectivity of the internet enables both imaginative travel and virtual border crossings for yet-to-arrive migrants, what Michael Gott terms "Crossing 2.0". Despite the physical absence from Europe, the digital crossing attenuates the momentary immobility due to the stoppages encountered on the journey and keeps the migrant dream alive. This is achieved by travelers' use of social media platforms where information and images about the El dorado are easily accessed by those attracted by its promissory happiness. During the time at the money transfer store, Abas surfs the internet. He looks at Facebook with excitement over pictures and videos of Mades, a compatriot who lives in Italy whom they will later meet in Rosarno, partying with women.

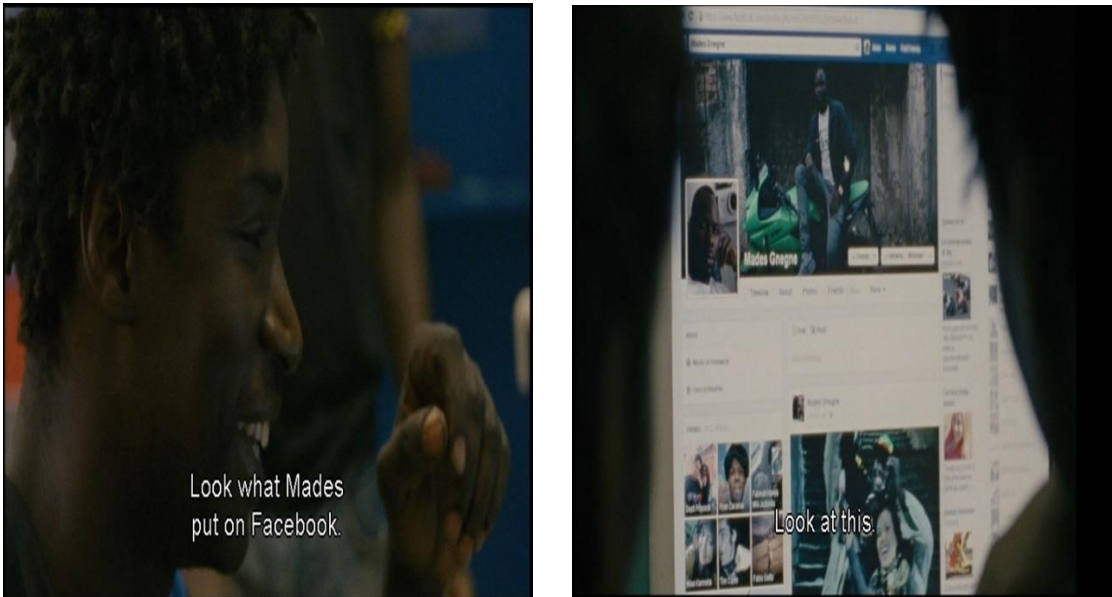


Figure 1: Abas' face lit up with glee as he and Ayiva look over Mades' Facebook page in *Meditarranea*.

Unlike the (day)dreaming associated with imaginative travel, his consumption of the visual media presents him with tangible images of the space he desires to reach. The audiovisuals give a glimpse of the wealth and entertainment that Abas longs for in his quest to enter Europe. Abas' imaginative travel through the photos and videos is corroborated by Ayiva who says in his phone conversation with Aseta that Abas is dreaming of being with European girls. The close-up of his face shows him laughing heartily at the image of the dreams he has of the El dorado: the paradisaical success. In relation to Abas' imaginative travel, the internet enables him to traverse the physical environment he is in to digitally connect beyond borders to the destination country via social media. To this end, transiting also presents moments of connecting virtually to Europe and sustaining the dream of paradise. Thus, being on the move demonstrates closeness to the attainment of migratory

goals and the digital affordance of the internet enables the would-be migrant to feel a proximate relation to the desired destination even if in a moment of discontinuance. In effect, transit migration depicts a realm of interdependent mobilities between the corporeal, imaginative, virtual, and communicative while migrants waver between mobility and immobility. Since this form of travel is largely mediated by smuggling networks, it is important to consider the relations between travelers and the facilitators of the trajectory, the subject matter of the next section.

Smuggling, Interrelations and, braving the desert and sea

Contrary to the monolithic negative mediatization of the role of smuggling rings in irregular migration, the film enables us to nuance the portrayal of smugglers by paying attention to specific circumstances and individual differences: first casting them in a positive light and then demonstrating their ruthlessness and how these variations affect their clients. The (potential) undocumented migrant perceives the trafficker as the bridge that connects him/her to his/her dream land and life. From the polysemous French equivalent “ *passeur*” which translates as ferryman or (people) smuggler, the clandestine guide can be either a catalyst or an antagonist to journeyers’ aims. This ambiguity or duality impacts the success or failure of the migrant project. The period of transit is one of the key moments that reveal the ambivalence of the facilitator and the impact of his (as trafficking tends to be a male-dominated endeavor) (in)actions on the cohort. While in Algeria, a member of the smuggling ring addresses the group of migrants in a room. He tells them, referring to Ayiva who is seated in the back, “As my colleague told you, I can help you find a job and you can save money to pay for the continuation of your trip.” The men respond that they will think about it. Here, the smuggler presents himself as a helper and

facilitator rather than a profit-driven villain. Since the continuation of the trip requires supplementary funds to be paid by the travelers, informal and temporary work enables them to become mobile after a period of immobility in transit. In effect, his offer to help the clients to find a job forms part of the service industry created within the illegal business of unauthorized border crossing. This echoes Davy's (2017) argument that smugglers play multiple roles including acting as "recruiters, facilitators, coordinators and organisers (*sic*), transporters and guides, and service providers." (7). Such services comprise temporary lodging, finding work, getting (fake) travel documents and bribing officials to facilitate passage for the clientele.

Additionally, this scene reveals the multi-stage organization of the voyage where different actors have specific responsibilities along the chain. Ayiva's role as the recruiter who transported the group from Burkina Faso ends within this new jurisdiction controlled by the facilitator superintending the Algerian territory. Thus, Davy (2017) rightly opines that "The work of the smuggler often involves organising (*sic*) transport, transporting the migrants across the national borders, and liaising (*sic*) with the smuggler on the other side of the border to facilitate the transfer of the migrant for travel on the subsequent leg of the journey" (12). The transition into a new smuggler's territory continues the service provision of these networks. Once on the other side and in time of passivity, the subjects require an abode. As mentioned, makeshift settlements for housing migrants during their trans-Saharan crossing is one of the service provisions of smugglers⁶¹. For the film's cohort, they are lodged by the Algeria-based facilitator who offered to get them jobs to

⁶¹Boubakri (2004) and Papadopoulou-Kourkoula (2008) show that smugglers house migrants in "gouna" – safe-havens – while awaiting departure.

save money in anticipation of resuming the journey. This can be said to constitute a show of hospitality to the travelers given that they are not abandoned to their own fate due to their lack of funds. Although it is arguable that this is not entirely an ethically motivated action given that the smuggler does so as part of his economic relation with the clients, it is helpful for the migrants. However, such accommodations are less than acceptable given their over-crowdedness for maximizing profit. Moreover, the limitations on what smugglers can provide to their clientele cannot be overemphasized, owing to the clandestine business model they run and the large number of people they smuggle through sovereign borders.



Figure 2: Migrants sleeping in a transit center in *Mediterranea*.

As shown in the above shot, the lodging where the migrants are “hosted” is a clustered venue with less than ideal living conditions. The crowded sleeping area here, males and females saddled together, creates the image of a mass burial site as the bodies lay down intermixed. This imagery points to the sufferings that travelers must endure in the course

of their journey. Besides, it shows the migrants' strategic acceptance of a loss of agency to their helper(s) in order to attain their goal. The camera's slow movement panning across them creates a sense of lifelessness. In effect, it emphasizes the fact that the environment does not support human living and the desire of clandestines to be in motion. Instead, it represents what has become an inevitable venue of waiting for undocumented migrants but which they do all in their ability to leave with any help they find.

The fusion of travelers and traffickers in the same group belies the imbalance of power at stake in this phenomenon. While Maher's (2018) argument that "defining the human smuggler as distinct from the migrant may be inaccurate, as "many 'smugglers' are in fact migrants who facilitate illegal travel" (38)⁶² holds some veracity, this stipulation risks stigmatizing migrants by establishing a connection between migrancy and human trafficking. In fact, not all migrants are smugglers or vice versa given the varied interests, capabilities and resources possessed by these groups within the migratory context. Therefore, despite smugglers sometimes being migrants, trafficking and migrancy remain fundamentally distinct in relation to who engages therein and what they do. Indeed, the fact that some migrants operate as smugglers does not conclusively justify a generalized label of being the same. Like Lansana in *La Pirogue*, Ayiva as a recruiter is also a fellow traveler to Europe although with limitations to his agency. This is evidenced by the scene where he is addressed by the new facilitator who takes over from him. The Algeria-based smuggler pays him a wage for bringing the cohort but bars him from counting the money immediately. When he discovers the meagre amount paid him, Ayiva is unsatisfied. This

⁶² See also Lucht (2012) and Baird and van Liempt (2016).

occurrence underscores the uneven power play between the protagonist and his “superior” who underpays him.

Given the unpredictability of smugglers’ inconsistencies, negotiations and parallel planning by irregular migrants help the latter to maintain their mobility. In Ayiva’s moment of disappointment, he is approached by two men who tell him they have contacts in Tripoli, Libya. Among their reasons, they argue that they cannot stay and work. Besides, it will take at least two months to save enough money to continue the journey. Additionally, their contacts in Tripoli won’t wait for them that long, meaning they will lose their seats on the boat to Europe. “We cannot take that risk”, they insist as they promise Ayiva a ride on the boat if he helps them to get to the Libyan capital. The latter confidently assures them that he can take them through the desert to Tripoli but demands two places, for himself and Abas. This sequence gives insight to many workings of transit migration events. First, there is the need for negotiation and strategizing to keep moving. It is evident that the two men are unwilling to be immobile for two months before taking the road again. Their antidote to the unwanted situation is by reaching out to the facilitator, Ayiva, and striking a deal that will ensure their continuity. This demonstrates, to borrow Achilli’s (2018) words, the possible “patterns of cooperation and mutual support” between [some] smugglers and travelers (78). The cooperation and support here exist between the cheated main character and the involuntarily immobile travelers. Ayiva’s involvement in the smuggling network gives him increased access to movement and earns him the trust of others who want to pursue their journey. In this regard, we learn that migrants sometimes need to find new ways to move on when rendered static by their lack of funds.

Therefore, movement in transit evinces parallel planning. The two men show that though migrants move together, individuals and sub-groups have their own arrangements and strategies to advance their journey. In this case, having already acquired room on a boat from Tripoli to Italy, they secure their continuous motility which circumvents the potential for sustained immobility. Besides, they refuse passivity by not succumbing to the *modus operandi* of the Algeria-based smuggler who wants them to stay and work before they can proceed further. Thus, their action counteracts Brigden and Mainwaring's (2016) finding that "Migrants themselves view stopping, waiting and containment as part of the journey to be endured" (407). In effect, some migrants, like in Carpignano's narrative, do not accept waiting as a necessity. Instead, they perceive continuous movement as the sure way to succeed in their endeavor. Contrarily, those who do not have the means to continue are obliged to stay and work or until they receive funds from family home or in Europe to continue. Migrants' dislike for slowed movement or involuntary immobility is epitomized by Abas' and Ayiva's excitement when they know that they can move on from the transit center: Ayiva shouts with excitement that "we're gone" which disturbs those sleeping.

Meanwhile, the vehicular transportation of irregular migrants is complemented with footslogs before undertaking the sea crossing. The trek in this territory occurs under the supervision of smugglers and portrays the operation of their networks as mentioned above: that is to say, different persons handle distinct legs of the voyage. Importantly, walking through the Sahara's geography reveals a combination of "technologies" that facilitate motion through it. They involve both the guidance of the facilitator, objects, and resources available to those concerned within the conditions of the space. These are determinant in streamlining travelers' access to places, speed, and comfort in mobility as

the arid environment presents various obstacles to journeyers. According to Urry (2007), “The walker combines with an array of general and specific technologies that enable walking to different places, at different speeds, in different styles. These technologies include footwear, other clothing, places of rest, paving and pathways, other means of movement, places to walk to, rules and regulations about movement and access...” (65). Although Urry’s stipulation relates to his study of walking mainly in urban locales, it is applicable to the trans-Saharan passage.

Clandestine migrants’ pedestrianism on the desert requires footwear, other clothing, pliable pathways, points of rest when possible and following the rules or guidance of smugglers that are expected to ensure their smooth movement. Therefore, having resolved to proceed with the trajectory, Ayiva and the others prepare for the desert crossing on foot when day breaks. Several of them cover their heads with shirts or pieces of cloth tied around them suggestively to protect themselves from the wind and dust of the surroundings. Combined with the footwear sold to some of them earlier by Ayiva, these images create an iconography of clothing and dressing suitable for traversing the “sea of sand”⁶³. To put it another way, these technologies allow walking in the desert. Before departing, a smuggler addresses the migrant group and introduces them to Mano, a guide who will lead them to Tinel – a border town between Algeria and Libya. The smuggler insists they must strictly follow Mano’s instructions without fail. This echoes Urry’s (2007) idea about the importance of “rules and regulations about movement and access.” It is plausible to say that following strict rules in this treacherous spot is paramount to ensuring

⁶³Arangio et al. (2015) poetically refer to the desert as a “sea of sand.” This terminology brings to mind as well as draws similarities with the sea which has been a main pathway for irregular migrants. The term also evokes the dangers associated with sea crossing as present in this landscape although they may be dissimilar in how they are experienced by travelers.

the safety and protection of the travelers by the handlers since they know the environs best. This scene then underscores the multiple, yet specific roles played by operators within smuggling chains. Here, the cohort comes under the mandate of Mano whose operational jurisdiction spans the desert to Tinel. Wielding a gun, he leads them up the stony hills of the desert and through the plain land as the camera shows them filing through the sand. When Abas wonders to Ayiva how they would know Mano is leading them in the right direction, the latter explains to the former the mechanics of crossing the desert in order to know your bearings and get to the right location: “You repeatedly aim for specific points to reach.” Ayiva’s conduct and experience as a failed migrant cum recruiter makes him a reliable and knowledgeable companion to the others. As shown by scholars such as Urry (2012), Hodgson (2012), Kaytaz (2016) and, Brigden and Mainwaring (2016), (prior) journey enables the acquisition of skills and demonstration of abilities. This explains Ayiva’s privileged position as a knowledgeable migrant cum recruiter.

Yet, these technologies – human and non-human – do not necessarily preclude the (un)predictability of the dangers of moving through the inhabitable desert. The transit migration across the Sahara is illustrative of the risk of “irreparable loss” related to a voyage. As Van den Abbeele (1992) argued about four decades ago, “... if there is an insecurity or anxiety associated with travel, it is that insecurity associated with the menace of irreparable loss” including money, life, sanity (xvii). This argument remains relevant for contemporary events in that, the loss of cash and life has become synonymous with undocumented mobility in transit spaces. In this vein, the film’s (almost) violence-free portrayal of the trans-Saharan passage does not last as it is curtailed by an aggression on the travelers. While climbing up a hill as directed by Mano, they are attacked by armed

men who hit them with the grip of guns, force them over to face the ground, and search their bodies and bags. Their protests result in the killing of a male migrant. The irreparable loss, here, includes death, loss of finances and the physical as well as psychological impact of the violence unleashed on them. At this turn of events, the spectator wonders whether this was a set up or accidental. Besides, it is unclear whether the attack occurs at Tinel, meaning the end of Mano's jurisdiction which might explain why he does not go up the hill with them or intervene on their behalf. Nonetheless, studies and accounts by migrants who have plied the desert show that such attacks can be either planned in conjunction with smugglers or the singular act of mercenaries and terrorists lurking in these areas⁶⁴. Whatever the origination of the aggression is, the enduring impact on the persons cannot be overstated.

In this regard, a few comments about the subject matter and the cinematographic techniques in this sequence is useful for our reading. The filming of the events alternates between sound and silence as well as regular and accelerated motion. At the beginning of the onslaught filmed at a normal pace, the most prominent sound is the shouts of the frightened migrants which then fade out as silence fills the diegesis. We hear their moans during the robbery as the perpetrators assault and order the victims to surrender their money. This is replaced by an accelerated camera movement in capturing the happenings. The accelerated filming emphasizes the urgency and nervousness characterizing the event. When the protesting migrant is shot by the attackers, the sounds of the desert winds blowing create a feeling of dizziness and drown out the tears of the woman grieving over the corpse as the aggressors drive off. As such, we do not hear the words or crying of the mourners

⁶⁴See for instance Kaytaz (2016).

unlike in *La Pirogue* where the expression of grief is accessible to the viewer. In a sense, this represents (a depiction of) the survivors' internalization of the horror they have just witnessed which remains unknowable to any spectator. Perhaps, it is only through their recounting of these occurrences after the trip that the pain or trauma experienced becomes known or tangible to a third-party.

Nonetheless, just like in *La Pirogue*, mourning is momentary since those who perish must be abandoned and the journey proceeds. In a tracking shot as the camera moves right, we see the dead body as the others continue the voyage. The distance between the body and the survivors highlights the abandonment and the open grave that the desert landscape has become in the wake of undocumented mobility. Consequently, the neglected cadaver then represents a marker of the corporeal ordeals of migrants to future travelers plying this "inhospitable geography"⁶⁵. As aptly stipulated by Brigden and Mainwaring (2016), "Death in the desert without proper burial is, perhaps, the ultimate form of immobility: stranded physically or spiritually along a clandestine route as an anonymous body" as "bodies act as a reminder to others" (421). It is arguable that the circumstances of the journey in this space does not allow the travelers to attend to a befitting burial for those who perish. In fact, the failure to bury the dead here points to a reduction of the failed migrant to nothingness. Meanwhile, unlike the corpses thrown into the sea during marine and maritime crossings which no one else sees, the Sahara's solidity does not cover up the dead but renders them as visible signs of irreparable loss.

⁶⁵Ellison (2015).

Ultimately, surviving the precarity of the desert marks the conclusion of a major step in migratory success but also presents another hurdle for migrants who must deal with the vagaries of unscrupulous smugglers. After the attack, the group walk dejectedly up the hill and the camera cuts to show Ayiva and Abas seated by the street in Libya while eating sandwiches. This shot demonstrates the incidence of immobility as it pertains to clandestine migration. As such, it underlines the interchanging activity/passivity dichotomy lived by those concerned. With the terrestrial passage over, the migrants gather around a campfire on the beach at night in preparation for the sea crossing. They are met by a new coordinator responsible for ensuring their maritime voyage. However, they would be left to their fate to sail to the northern shore of the Mediterranean. “This boat doesn’t leave the beach unless one of you navigates it. I need a captain even if you don’t like the idea”, the smuggler announces to their disappointment as he refuses to embark on the risky sea crossing with them. Effectively, this declaration breaks the traveler-facilitator relationship which has been somewhat cordial until this point. The suggestion is that there is disregard for the human lives involved once the smuggler has received payment for the service.

The alternating close-up/shot reverse shots (of faces) between the fear-stricken migrants and the stern looking smuggler highlights the imbalance of power between the clients and the service provider. Having entrusted their journey into his hands, the smuggler’s composed posture as opposed to the migrants’ agitation and protest portrays the ruthlessness of the former in the face of endangering the travelers’ lives. Moreover, the surprised-looking migrants are depicted as unaware of the practices of smugglers who send-off clandestines on inflatable vessels without any experience(d) (hand). This is potentially a breach of their agreement and the migrants’ confidence as will be argued by

some vociferous men in the group. They protest their disagreement as one of the men remonstrates, “You have to take us, sir. We paid you. You have to steer the boat.” The laudable assertion of agency, here, to demand that the handler fulfills his responsibility to them remains a velleity due to the power possessed by him in this domain. Being foreigners and without proper documentation, the migrants are subjected to the caprices of the smuggler who can weaponize their insecurities against them. It is plausible to suggest that migrants may be able to ensure smugglers’ commitment by delaying payment until services are rendered. Furthermore, the refusal of the smuggler to sail with the group creates a period of immobility involving uncertainty and anxious waiting contrary to the aspiration of the cohort. Meanwhile, the varying attitudes demonstrated by the different handlers in the narrative affirms the impossibility of a standard profile of a “smuggler” given the complexities in individual and network dynamics⁶⁶. Conclusively, whereas some smugglers may be callous, others may not be as ruthless.

That notwithstanding, the dereliction of duty by the facilitator engenders discord and threatens the already fragile harmony built on a common goal between migrants. Like the marine crossing in *La Pirogue* which reveals wrangling among the cohort, the terrestrial experience shows moments of disagreement even though the voyage in the film under consideration depicts fewer instances of conversation or dialogue among the travelers. In *Mediterranea*, conflicts include when Ayiva shouts, “we’re out of here. I got this” and his phone rings in the middle of the night as a woman registers her displeasure at the transit center. The male-female banter recalls what transpires in *La Pirogue* although in

⁶⁶See also Achilli (2018, 87) for a similar argument about the diverse profiles or conducts of traffickers which makes them distinct, one from another.

Carpignano's film, the source of disagreement is not based on a superstitious belief that women portend bad luck for the journey. Instead, the gender, national and linguistic differences surface when the group is left to their fate by the negligent handler. Subsequent to the expostulation against the smuggler's non-performance of responsibility, an English-speaking female migrant offers to take charge of the boat since no one else wants to. However, when her proposal is translated to the French-speaking fellows, she is quickly shut down by the male migrant who insists it is the smuggler's duty to transport them across the sea. It is arguable that the refusal to allow her to steer the boat is due to her gender without showing recourse to her capacity to perform the task or not. This rejection and the communication barrier between the woman and the others create a moment of tension as they trade insults at one another. These occurrences fragilize the concord and diversity of the group. Meanwhile, Ayiva volunteers to sail the boat but his suggestion is met with disagreement. Given that he is a Burkinabe, they argue that he has no knowledge of the sea or sailing.



Figure 3: Ayiva at the beach before the sea crossing in *Mediterranea*.

Following a jump cut, the camera shows Ayiva alone at the beach looking at the vast sea, alternating between a medium shot from his back against the backdrop of the desert and a close-up of his face contemplating the immense water body. The juxtaposition creates a feeling and an image of, for the protagonist and the viewer respectively, the metaphor of being between a rock and a hard place. On one hand, the enormous desert lies behind him with all the obstacles surmounted as well as the motivations for leaving his country. On the other hand, the promise of happiness lies beyond the unknown waters of the Mediterranean which he and the others must cross, albeit without experience or help. Thus, the close-up of his visage demonstrates the coalescing of the inner tensions he is faced with. It is plausible to suggest that this is potentially applicable to the other members of the cohort. Moreover, since returning constitutes failure and shame, it is unsurprising that he decides to brave the unpredictable crossing. Consequently, despite the threats of boycott, the migrants take their destiny in their hands toward Europe. In the subsequent scene, the migrants are shown boarding the dinghy with Ayiva at the helm. Decisively, taking on the responsibility of navigating to the Eldorado is an effect of the negligence of smuggling agents. Importantly, while this phenomenon poses a major risk to the voyagers, it also presents them with the opportunity to acquire and demonstrate skills. In effect, assuming this duty enables them to evade the otherwise involuntary immobility they will be subjected to and the resulting failure of attaining their migratory aspirations.

It is evident that the transit migration journey from Sub-Saharan Africa through North Africa involves multiple forms of mobility accessed and utilized by northbound migrants. Clandestines thrive on the interdependence of mobilities – physical, imaginative, virtual, communicative – and technologies, human and non-human, to navigate the

different obstacles that mark their movement across spaces and borders in their northward movement to European destinations. The multi-modal transactions at stake in transit requires financial resources, tact, and negotiations among travelers and with facilitators to ensure continuity and success. However, the work of smugglers in the form of migrancy shows an unpredictability of support and negligence that risks both the lives and dreams of irregular migrants. Moreover, the ambivalence of handlers and their relationship with persons involved in this mode of travel produces life-threatening events that may have enduring physical and psychological consequences on the latter. The next section of this chapter deals with this question through the lens of accounts rendered by “successful” migrants and refugees who have experienced the trans-Saharan passage.

Recounting Transit in *Come un uomo sulla terra*

Come un uomo sulla terra documents the harrowing account of six men (Mimi, John, Tsegaye, another Tsegaye, Dawit, Negga) and three women (Fikirte, Tighist, Senait) from the Horn of Africa (Ethiopia and Eritrea) who travelled through Libya to Italy without proper documentation. Now living as recognized asylees in Rome, the nine persons rememorate the origins and different phases of their experiences. Structured around an interviewer, Dag – a co-director of the filmic project – , who himself plied the route before the others, the interviewees take turns to share their specific motivations for departing their countries, their treatment by smugglers and the Libyan police, their detention and dehumanization as objects of commerce in the underground business of undocumented migration in the region. They reveal the spiral of hardships, exploitation and violence which occur on the blind side of or are ignored by officialdom in discourses and the management of increased clandestine mobility. Aided by images and footages from

previous works on the crossing of the Sahara Desert, the filmmakers also include news reels, interviews with political and international organizations like Frontex to portray the protagonists' tales as well as to show the implication of African and European authorities in the misery lived by these persons. It becomes apparent that these survivors face a conflict between retelling their traumatic experiences and a desire to call attention to the on-going atrocities faced by transmigrants.

Transit migration is a phenomenon of personal experience which becomes known through testimony. Owing to the secrecy involved in its occurrence, the happenings on the route are best known and told by the principal actors therein. Thus, its subjectivity requires an acceptance by those concerned to communicate it to others as a form of testimonial. Almost three decades ago, Felman and Laub (1992) highlighted the essence of witnessing as “un projet d’adresse” (a project of addressing) (38). The address inherent in testimony underscores an interaction between the self and others or a public. As a speech act, the speaker or writer engages in an experiential sharing which has been fundamental to the production of knowledge regarding personal and collective hardships as well as psychoanalytic studies of trauma. It follows then that testimony constitutes a recounting of the past in a present moment to an audience, immediate or remote, specific or imagined. To echo Marquart’s (2011) proposition, “Witnessing narratives, whether oral or written, play crucial roles in transmitting the horrors of atrocity to those who are fortunate enough not to have experienced them” (148). If the spectator or reader is lucky to not have lived such events, s/he is nonetheless faced with the moral difficulty and empathy evoked by both those who speak and what is recounted. In fact, oral witnessing presents a strong corporeal presence and a stimulating aural effect owing to the immediacy of the narrative

and the narrator. The inherent interpellation of the testimony also transforms the addressees into eyewitnesses and earwitnesses, even if only after the fact.

Consequently, bearing witness becomes an important part of migrant agency and (re)humanization after undergoing inhumane treatment although there is a potential exposure to voyeurism. Clandestine migration has become one of the fertile sources from which individuals relate their trajectory. Brigden and Mainwaring (2016) rightly conclude that “The journey leaves physical, emotional and psychological traces in its survivors” (247). The embodied effects and scars from plying treacherous routes where irregular migrants undergo dehumanization renders them victims. These persons become the spokespersons or in Shemak’s (2010) words, “Asylum Speakers” who tell of the untold hardships encountered during travel and make a case for improved mobility rights and regulation. As such, Hesford (2011) aptly stipulates that “To find testimonial narratives and images of suffering simultaneously empowering and voyeuristic is not, however, to remain undecided about their role, but rather to recognize their complex rhetorical dynamics” (115). This complexity, the friction between empowerment and spectacularization, underscores the embodiment of these accounts as inevitably public to attain the necessary impact: sensitization and change, albeit the inalienable risk. To concur with O’Healy (2015), the absence of images related to the violence unleashed on clandestines in *Come un uomo sulla terra* mitigates “...the risk of spectacularizing human distress as an object of voyeuristic consumption” (415). That is to say, the focus on the persons without staging their pain as a spectacle emphasizes their humanness. Hence, the experiences, although distressful, have become a part of them and need to be (re)told to assert their humanity in the process of healing.

Witnessing demands a process of remembering and a deliberate effort to communicate meaningfully to an audience. For Triulzi (2015) then, “To narrate one’s story implies not only the capacity to ‘think back’ on one’s own experience, but in some way to objectify and restore order to it, to make it communicable with the outside” (440). Migrant and refugee survivors assume this no mean task to enable others make sense of their ordeals. In the context of undocumented migration and specifically this analysis, the documentary film embodies the object of remembrance and enables its communicability with the public for the purposes of creating awareness, seeking justice, and driving change⁶⁷. This corroborates Guillén Marín’s (2018) suggestion that “Documentary takes the real as a starting point so the real can be more easily contested and new ways of representation can develop” (4). The contestation of reality through this mode of filming leads to Bruzzi’s (2006) characterization of documentaries as performative acts marked with fluidity and instability. Undocumented migration experiences constitute “the real” which is both represented in a new way, by centralizing the voices of survivors, and contested by Segre et al.’s camera as well as their interviewees. To this end, there is an “...experimenting with an aesthetics of knowledge...⁶⁸” whereby the producers of migration information are now the (erstwhile) marginalized within the public sphere. This affirms the non-fixity and openness of the documentary mode that underpins the testimony of the participants. In effect, this achieves what Ardizzoni (2013) describes as “a successful form of counter-discourse” (312). In this regard, migrants (re)claim their subjecthood and

⁶⁷Renov (1999) has maintained that the documentary has transformational power on society in representing the real and historical images.

⁶⁸Guillén Marín (2018: 9).

visibility through testimony by recounting their stories and sharing perspectives on events that affect them and future travelers in opposition to political and media depictions.

Although personal testimony's reliance on memory, its limitations and attendant controversies have been highlighted,⁶⁹ it remains a useful resource in accessing and analyzing clandestine migration issues. Its susceptibility to the "well-known weakness and vagaries of misremembering, omission, embellishment and selectiveness⁷⁰" nonetheless may (not) be (ir)resolvable due to the privacy of the happenings (that the events are known to only the one who tells it) which sometimes cannot be crosschecked against other records or sources. This fact in no way invalidates personal oral accounts. Besides, several persons' witnessing which reveal the same information or themes can corroborate claims by individuals. Consequently, the documentary film's "programmatic⁷¹" ability of organizing interviews on a broad scale helps to alleviate (if not all) some of the shortcomings of personal life stories⁷² and make the interviewees reliable narrators. The issue of credibility is equally aided by the inclusion of news and other sources of information as evidence.

The setting of the interviews, the Asinitas Onlus – an educational center – while being a place for the refugees' learning (they learn Italian, to draw, to design/make clothes), takes on a new value through the documentary. The film projects it as a site for learning

⁶⁹See for example Hammerton (2017), also for previous discussions.

⁷⁰Ibid (2017:12).

⁷¹Richards (2010) cited in Hammerton (2017) advocates for a programmatic gathering of evidence to ascertain the accuracy of oral history.

⁷²*Come un uomo sulla terra* is the first full length documentary within the Archive of Migrant Memories and Zalab's partnership "...to favour self-expressive forms of migrants' voices for the necessary rebuilding of their identity after arrival" (Triulzi (2015:431). As such, Triulzi (2015) explains that prior to filming, there were extensive "discussions with and among the migrants as to the aim and scope of the documentary, the desire to expose Libyan and Italian brutalities aimed travelling migrants, and the modalities of distributing the film and its benefits" (442). Admittedly, these preparatory steps have the potential of mitigating and or enhancing some of the pitfalls of oral accounts. However, the merits and demerits of this mechanism are not the focus of this analysis.

about them, their individual and collective stories made possible through their acquisition of the Italian language⁷³ and the directors' camera. Meanwhile, the school's kitchen – an undecorated scene with a plain background – where the protagonists cook, eat, and sit to chat belies the agony and past misery weighing on them. There is, as O'Healy (2015) has argued, "...a sharp distinction between the innocuous domesticity of the school kitchen, so reassuring in its everyday banality, and the horror implicit in the stories recounted in that space" (424). In effect, the opposition between the physical environment and the verbal enunciation that occurs herein underlines the fact that survival and settlement in a new place that seemingly depicts a path to the common or return to normalcy does not paper over the horrific memories that linger on their minds and the sense of degradation they feel. Hence, unlike *Mediterranea*, *Come un uomo sulla terra* demonstrates that the brute force evident on the way to host societies may be more common for some than for others.

The bearing of witness enables the subjects of the documentary to demystify the monolithic received knowledge about their status and motives. As a law graduate, Dag explains that his decision to emigrate was due to the governmental manipulation of the legal system and the ethnic politics practiced in his native Ethiopia. His motivation for leaving classifies him not as an economic migrant but as an asylum seeker/refugee who flees the social injustices of his country; a less recognized or mediatized migratory motive which is brought to the fore through his testimony. Subsequently, when Dag interviews the Asinitas Onlus' learners, his question, "what was life like for you before the journey?", elicits several answers that reveal the multifaceted reasons for the interviewees' migration.

⁷³In the Derridean notion of hospitality, the guest's access to the host's language (here, the host society's) enables him/her to make a request for welcome (The question of reception and hospitality is discussed in detail in Chapter 4). In this regard, the interviewees' capacity for self-expression and attracting an ethical response follows from having learned the Italian language.

Contrary to discourses and depictions that detach irregular migrants from their pre-travel livelihood by situating them only within the context of unauthorized border crossing, Dag's phrasing allows the respondents to reflect on their past lives in juxtaposition to their current conditions. In this way, it also draws the viewer's attention to this important aspect of their lives for a holistic appreciation of their tales and present circumstances. According to Senait and Mimi, a female and a male respectively, they lived peacefully until they were forced to depart due to the Eritrean-Ethiopian war. In Senait's words, "We had no choice. Even with our neighbors, relations were difficult." Mimi says, "...it wasn't just a personal thing but also seeing how other people suffered. I was forced to leave because of the situation in my country; it wasn't my choice. Yes, that situation made me go away...". Both personalities express their journey as a form of escape from a life-threatening circumstance which left them with emigration as the only choice, if not solution. In their articulation, they emphasize the opposition between loss – including family, a home etc. – and redemption, the preservation of life by flight. The conspicuous absence of a targeted country of refuge in their submissions can be read as their prioritization of being able to reach safety rather than a desired destination, although Italy becomes their final point of arrival. However, Tighist, a woman, recalls in reference to Libya that "I heard there were good work opportunities there and that you could even earn enough for your family...that's why so many people go there...Yes, I thought I could earn some money." In contradistinction to the preceding characters who set off in search of refuge, Tighist admits her economic motivation for travelling to Libya to make a fortune⁷⁴. The variety of travel purposes revealed through their self-expression draws attention to individual specificities

⁷⁴Libya's oil wealth and the demand for cheap manual labor in sectors such as construction work have attracted many African nationals to emigrate there in search of jobs.

as well as the fact that transit nations, in this case Libya, are sometimes envisaged, at least initially, by some undocumented migrants as destinations.

Decrying A Web of Smugglers' and State Violence

The survivors' testimonies unearth the historical and geopolitical underpinnings of their sufferings in transit during clandestine mobility. The power dynamic of which transmigrants have become victims has its foundations in a long history. Contemporarily, the exercise of the political right to move between different countries and regions is linked to centuries of relations that have evolved, albeit asymmetrically. At the beginning of the documentary, Dag alludes to the precolonial interaction between Italy and Libya (and the Horn of Africa) as a possible origination of his narrative. In a voice-over, he declares: "I think I should start telling this story from about a hundred years ago when our great-grandfathers met each other...because of the war, when Italy tried to invade Libya first...but now, I'll start this story from the sound of the train." This contextualization of the documentary and its subject matter within the continuum of longstanding historical precedents and current political relations sets the tone for an analysis of their impact on the currency of migration and control involving the northern and southern shores of the Mediterranean. Even though Dag chooses to begin the account from the present, postcolonial moment, the embedded relics from the past in the neocolonial globalization era underline the unequal political agency wielded by the two sides presently.

The precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial encounters between the two continents, Africa and Europe have resulted in enduring relations despite the sociopolitical, cultural, and economic advantages as well as disadvantages. Scholars such as Achille Mbembe (2001) and Pheng Cheah (2008) have demonstrated the continuous detrimental impact of

these influences on the black continent whose leaders remain malleable in the hands of their counterparts and institutions in the global north⁷⁵. This, however, does not suggest that African states and their leaderships are absolved of their own engagement in the oppressive mechanisms they employ (because they are simply following orders) in dealing with border securitization against migrants. The reasons accounting for the interviewees' migration to and through Libya contrast with geopolitical arrangements developed to stem their journey without recourse to these motivations. Notwithstanding the fact that the departure of several of them arises from life-threatening conditions that are recognized by international conventions and treaties such as the 1951 Geneva Convention, the diplomatic accords between transit and destination nations have rendered them culprits of an illegality despite the legitimacy of their movement⁷⁶. The peculiarity of Libya of having not signed the Refugee Convention facilitates its stringent border management given it has no legal obligation to fulfill the provisions for protecting the lives of refugees, for example.

While foreign capital has remained essential to postcolonial economies, the socio-economic and political consequences that ensue from it positions their citizens under the influence external domination, even if indirectly. More specifically, in the present case involving Libya and Italy, the human costs arising from such interrelation, in spite of the seeming benefits in other sectors, in the realm of mobility management have been bloody.

⁷⁵These include bodies like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund; the latter's structural adjustments programs in the postcolonial world have raised a lot of questions about their usefulness to the countries involved.

⁷⁶Article 31(1) of the 1951 Geneva Convention stipulates that "The Contracting States shall not impose penalties, on account of their illegal entry or presence, on refugees who, coming directly from a territory where their life or freedom was threatened in the sense of article 1, enter or are present in their territory without authorization, provided they present themselves without delay to the authorities and show good cause for their illegal entry or presence." Also, Article 13 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights maintains that:

- (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state.
- (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

The diplomacy and movement of capital between the global north and the global south have created a violent biopolitical regime that demonstrates a national structure of inhospitality toward uninvited guests in the North African hotspot of migratory mobility. Belghazi's (2007) remark that Morocco, for example, "appropriates the security discourse on illegal migration deployed by European powers, and implements the policing and strategies dictated by those powers..." is applicable to Libya's handling of migration control (88-89). As we will see, Libyan authorities' treatment of unauthorized journeyers is a response to the dictates of Italian policies and support which is not lost on clandestines. For instance, in recounting their mobile detention⁷⁷ in airless containers as they were moved from prison to prison in Libya, John says "it is said they came from the Italian government...They were a gift of the Italians to Libya." The supply of this resource for transporting intercepted persons traversing the Libyan territory toward Italy (and Europe) underscores the privileging of punishment and the disregard for the lives concerned as the interviewees reveal the crowdedness, suffocation and their feeling of hopelessness in the deadly vehicle.

The inclusion of newsreels of engagements between the Ghaddafi and the Berlusconi administrations as well as subsequent Italian governments in relation to funding for migration control in the documentary gives credence to the migrants' suggestion or awareness of Italian implication in their predicament. Thus, John's assertion is supported by information from an image of Ghadaffi and Berlusconi with the words: "Roma furnishes Libya with motorboats, off-road vehicles, buses, wet suits, 12000 blankets, 6000 mattresses

⁷⁷To expatiate this contradiction, Fiore (2018) writes that "The container is the epitome of an oxymoron: detained on the move, the migrants are imprisoned while they continue to be forcibly re-located in an almost endless sequence of arrests and releases" (58).

and 1000 body bags.” The provision of these items effectively concretizes the assignment of anti-migration duties to the borders of Libya. To echo Pérez’s (2015) apt words, “By pushing the frontiers to the Southern Mediterranean shores, they have converted those countries in the Maghreb region into ‘agents of repression “by proxy”’ (223). Furthermore, the foregrounding of the two political leaders with smiling faces comes in stark contrast with the portrayal of the gloomy visages of the now asylees who serve as evidence of the atrocious fallout of their diplomatic pact.



Figure 4: Interviewees filmed with news information in *Come un uomo sulla terra*

The framing of the above images of the survivors by the side of inscribed texts or newspaper clippings in the documentary to attest to the Libya-Italy migration control efforts can be read as an indication of the consequence of these policies. In other words, they are the victims of political power’s tight grip over borders to the detriment of humanity. The biopolitics inherent in the geopolitical treaty includes the arrest, imprisonment, and maltreatment of clandestines in holding centers like the notorious

Kufrah prison, also funded by Italy. The acceptance of foreign aid and the adoption of such a modality of anti-immigration control fall within Derrida's (1998) notion of autoimmunity: the self-destructivity against immunity. This reversal or breakdown of the processes of immunization exposes the body to destruction by itself. It is arguable that in the realm of clandestine migration, African states ruin the self-protection they offer to the citizenry by receiving and acquiescing to external modes for territorial and internal control. Here, Libya's failure to sign the Refugee Convention coupled with such bilateral agreements for being watchdogs for ex-colonial powers ensures a non-commitment to the deontic necessities of migrant and refugee protection. This translates into practices that demonstrate the lack of an ethics of hospitality toward newcomers with economic consequences as well as long-lasting physical and emotional scars.

The migration control role of countries on the south of the Mediterranean and the ambiguous role of the people smuggler dehumanizes the undocumented traveler in transit as an object of power and financial gain. Belghazi (2007) argues that there is a four-fold concentric division of the world whereby Turkey, North Africa and ex-Soviet Union countries are assigned to control irregular transmigration, as a "cordon sanitaire" for Europe (90). This responsibility of serving as "eternalized borders" of Europe has dire consequences on persons transiting through the above geographical locations. Hence, Arangio et al (2015) have rightly described the trans-Saharan space as the hell of the twenty-first century. In their words, "If Auschwitz was the hell of the twentieth century, then migration routes running from the sub-Saharan regions and the Horn of Africa to Europe through the Libyan territory are candidates for the hell of the twenty-first century. It is the hideous traffic of human beings which has many aspects in common with the

deportation of slaves, miserably practiced in sub-Saharan Africa until the nineteenth century” (6). The characterization of this migratory path as hellish owes to the perpetration of inhumanity that travelers witness. Furthermore, these intra-continental obstacles faced by undocumented migrants have the potential of producing trauma as evidenced by the testimonies of successful crossers. Thus, what is the impact of ethnicity, religion, economic gain, foreign influence, and national sociopolitical reaction on the happenings in the Sahara region with respect to the management of clandestine migration? I interrogate these questions through the prism of survivors’ stories.

Given the generalized antagonism targeted at irregular migrants owing to the security discourses advanced by destination countries, the interviewees’ travel experiences to and through Libya depict hostile attitudes and mechanisms. The compliance with dehumanizing surveillance practices also reveals the state’s operation of a nationalized paradigm of ill treatment toward foreigners. This produces traumatized persons, victims of both the national migration management violence and the ruthlessness of smugglers who take advantage of the political autoimmunity created. With the aid of a map and prerecorded images, and videos of the desert passage in trucks⁷⁸, the filmmakers visualize the narrated trajectory for the viewer, alternating between the accounts and audiovisuals. The spectator becomes privy to the treachery of the journey without it being spectacularized to him/her due to the absence of vivid pictures showing the migrants in the act. Despite this, the interviewees are confronted with the tension between testifying and the recollection of the troubling experiences. The camera’s framing of the respondents in

⁷⁸O’Healy (2015) and Clò et al (2016) reveal that these footages were borrowed from the filmmaker’s earlier documentary *A sud di Lampedusa* which shows Libya’s migration management aided by the politico-economic influence of Italy.

closeup and medium close-up shots of faces reifies the (emotional) discomfort and struggle in verbalizing unforgettable experiences. The acceptance to bear witness to their suffering simultaneously conflicts with the inherent publicization of personal dehumanizing memories (through the documentary medium), thereby underscoring the threshold of the private and public in testimony. Meanwhile, embracing the challenge, they recount the obstacles faced during the different stages of the journey. As they take turns to relate the desert crossing to Libya, the viewer learns of the overcrowding of vehicles and the consequent starvation, unbearable heat, sickness, threats at knife-point and gun-point by smugglers, abandonment, sexual harassment, extortion as well as physical and sexual abuse suffered by the journeyers. These revelations draw in the spectator who empathizes with them. The unlivability of the treatment meted out to them and their perception of it is summed up by Negga, a male interviewee, who maintains that it is "... terrible...the most awful journey I ever made." His diction highlights the dreadfulness of the experiences and pushes the imagination of the public to the extremity of the turmoil they have survived.

The accounts of the asylum speakers point to a state-involved exploitation of transmigrants travelling through Libya. Dag, in an off-screen voice, avers at the end of the description of the desert passage that, "That was the violence of the Libyan traffickers, but we still didn't know what it meant to fall in the hands of the Libyan police." This declaration suggests on one hand, that journeyers may be unaware of the extent of maltreatment that unfolds on the way and on the other that, the state's migration control comprises worse forms of dehumanization than those exhibited by smugglers. That notwithstanding, the survivors explain that the Police, representatives of political power, collaborate with people handlers. According to Mimi, "The police know Mohammud very

well. When they arrest you, they already know which intermediary has got you through: Muhammad, Aziz or Mohammed. It's not clear but if Muhammad dispatches three pickups, he makes sure one is seized." The testimony rendered here makes known the mediation role of recruiters in the nation's anti-migration technology. There emerges the intentionality of a practice which both sustains the objectification of irregular migrants in the hands of smugglers and their instrumentalization in the hands of law enforcers in the "migration infrastructure"⁷⁹. Thus, the ambiguity of the smuggler as a facilitator of migratory dreams and an exploiter who endangers travelers' lives is again underlined through this entrapment.

These happenings within Libyan borders function on an underground economy that demeans the personhood of those affected by the trade. Undocumented migrants are trapped between an almost never-ending passage between smuggling networks, holding centers, repatriation, and sale – like goods – for the express return into the hostile conditions developed by individual and state actors. This vicious cycle of commerce in arrested clandestines between police and smugglers evokes memories of the colonial past⁸⁰. In opposition to the transatlantic slave trade where locals sold off their compatriots to slaveholders mainly for export but also for domestic service, the illegal trafficking economy built on the paradoxical union of border control and people smuggling feeds off extorting monies from migrants and their families⁸¹ in a swirl. The ever-present demand and supply created by the players in this sector means that those who fall prey wander

⁷⁹Xiang and Lindquist (2014: S142), Anderson (2014).

⁸⁰Fiore (2018: 57) makes a similar argument about the underground migrant economy in Libya.

⁸¹Beside the filmic portrayal, mainstream media has brought attention to this occurrence. A 2017 CNN documentary uncovered this grim reality in which irregular migrants are reduced to commodities at a cost of \$400.

between trafficking, detention, expulsion, and reinstatement into the predatory conditions connecting Libya, its prisons, and Sudan. Explaining the booming market and the eagerness of persons to buy and sell, Fikirte discloses that it is not impossible for migrants in this plight to be bought since "...Trading is their job. They buy you for 30 or 35 dinars [20-25USD] then ask you to pay 400 dollars to take you to Tripoli. But then in Ajdabia, you get stopped and you must pay more. And if you can't, you get tied up or given to the police who arrest you again." The profitability of detention and sale of irregular migrants produces a continuing system of profiteering at the detriment of the safety of the lives concerned.

The execution of state violence on these persons via slapping, beatings, and their condemnation to uninhabitable surroundings in holding centers that inhibit the maintenance of hygiene constitutes the state's approach to stemming irregular migration through its borders. The treatment in detention further shows the state-sponsored hostility and violation of human rights experienced by the interviewees. John's provocative statement, "Do courts exist in Libya? Never seen any or heard of them" markedly exposes the lack of judicial provision and the protection of rights for undocumented foreigners within the territory. An offscreen voice corroborates John's observation, adducing that "We were arrested in Benghazi and even without asking our names, they put us in jail", resulting in overpopulated prisons. By standing in front of and looking through a wire fence, Dag brings to the spectator's mind the imagery of forcefully being put behind bars and the immobility it imposes on irregular migrants. The act of detention without giving a hearing to those apprehended affirms the generalized criminalization of undocumented migrants as invaders and lawbreakers. Besides, it is an infringement of international legal frameworks

that protect migrants and refugees such as the Geneva Convention. It goes without saying that the legal and ethical expectations of hospitality within countries of immigration is nonexistent here (in transit).

If ethnic, racial, and religious belongings have been sources (of critique⁸²) for receiving countries' maltreatment and pushback against migrants, a similar phenomenon is observable in transit experiences. This form of the state's hostility is moderated by public order officers' operation of a faith-based repression. Although the journeyers are Africans, their identification as Christians, highlighted by their wearing of crucifixes and the refusal to remove them when ordered to, results in a religious tension with their "hosts" given that Libya is a Muslim-dominated nation. There is a reversal of the European anti-Islam sentiments towards foreigners to an anti-Christian perception of invasion. In Libya, Negga recalls the police saying, "You Ethiopians want to pass through here to get to Israel and destroy us." Also, Tighist says they were called Jews while Fikirte witnessed the beating and sodomy of a boy, with a greased broomstick, because of his name, Israel and who developed mental problems as a result. The "you" versus "us" religious opposition takes precedence over any shared African or racial identity and underscores the antisemitic antagonism toward the transmigrant. Despite admitting the temporary passage of the migrants, the state's representatives advance a securitarian logic underpinned by an unfounded fear of religious threats to justify their inhospitality to the travelers. The foregoing suggests that ethnic and racial affinities may not ensure the safe passage of foreigners in transit. Consequent to the above experiences, it is inevitable that survivors

⁸²See for instance Rosello (2001), Flesler (2008), Dal Lago (2009), Agier (2011), Calargé (2015) and on discussions of the role of race and religion in migration management practices in destination countries.

bear in general psychological and in some cases physical scars. For this reason, the next section discusses the incidence of trauma as evidenced by the testimony of the documentary's participants.

Surviving Transit and Trauma

Trauma and migration have a dual connection: trauma from events leading to migration and traumatic experiences during travel⁸³. In *Come un oumo sulla terra*, the economic woes and security threats that initiate emigration and the incidents on the way to the destination country constitute sources of trauma for the emigrants. The traumatism from the loss of family, and a stable home or familiar environment as well as that of the biopolitical brutality of trafficking and detention entrenches the haunting memory of irregular mobility. Thus, Matek (2018) maintains that trauma and migration are “continuous processes rather than finite stages...” given that the physical completion of the journey is succeeded by longer lasting “psychological ramifications” (129, 131). Evidently, the recollection of traumatic events produces emotional pain in the present beside the initial unpleasantness of the actual occurrence. As argued by Caruth (1995) “... the traumatic event is not experienced as it occurs, it is fully evident only in connection with another place, and in another time.” (8-9). This spatio-temporality of trauma is characteristic of (narratives of) clandestine migration survivors after their journeys. Rightfully so, Lindert et al (2009) and Hansson et al. (2012) have shown the social and psychiatric disorders experienced by such persons when they arrive in destination countries. In a similar vein, Masocha and Simpson (2012) have argued that protracted stays

⁸³See for instance Schouler-Ocak (2015) who makes a similar argument about the interrelatedness of trauma and migration.

in holding centers have contributed to psychic issues in migrants. The construction of these detention facilities to restrict the mobility of persons for unspecified amounts of time has become a major feature of irregular migrants and the resulting traumatic impact.

Consequently, transit migratory trauma is an effect of global capital's neocolonialism which aligns with Fanon's evocation of the methodical production of colonial trauma in *Black Skin, White Masks*⁸⁴. In this sense, the violence-induced migration management which results in the suffering of transmigrants is a structured phenomenon akin to the colonial domination of subjects. I am not suggesting that this works exactly like the imposition of colonial power. Rather, it is in the form of what Bensaâd (2006) calls "repression by proxy", an external force that underpins local systems and practices (16-17). National political praxis serves as the intermediary between what European authorities want to achieve and the mobility of global south citizens. To this end, they experience this not as individualized targets but as a political governance principle aimed at members of a group – those who cross borders without proper documentation. As such, Cheah's (2008) suggestion that "Colonial trauma is not hidden, forgotten, or repressed" can be applicable to migration-related trauma (197). Since the latter is borne out of specific and continuous socio-political practices rather than single occurrences, its causality and effects are neither concealable nor subdued from memory. Besides, the horrors lived by these persons are compounded by the stigmatization they face through their perception as invaders and lawbreakers rather than victims of state brutality even when they arrive in destination countries.

⁸⁴Following Fanon (1952), Cheah (2008) writes that colonialism is marked by a "structural" or "systemic" trauma because its unceasing or continuous character arises from the oppressive processes of a structure or system that is imposed on a subject that is forced to inhabit that structure or system" (196).

Rememorating the different experiences is testament to the enduring impact on the participants in the documentary. In addition to the earlier discussed happenings, Tighist reflectively recalls: “We are in the middle of the Sahara Desert. They gave us food when they wanted. They called us Jews.” Shaking her head, she adds, “It’s awful, it makes me shudder, I’d rather not talk about it.” She bows her head and then raises her gaze to the camera saying, “Really, I’d rather not talk... I wish nobody ever again had to go on such a journey!” and bows her gaze. The recollection of the deprivation of food, a necessity of humanity, and the antisemitic labelling as proof of the hostility toward them marks the psychological effect it continues to have on the speaker. The intermittent silence and refusal that she adopts becomes a means of protest but also of emphasizing the unutterable affliction. The words “awful”, “shudder” and the nonverbal gestures of shaking her head and bowing her gaze overtly underline both the agony and the repulsion of the torment. Additionally, they earmark the feeling of shame at the demeaning treatment that reduced them to nonpersons, to borrow Dal Lago’s (2009) term. Similarly, Fikirte says “I don’t want to remember all this. I know what I went through all along. I can’t anymore but I want it to be exposed. I want to say that as a woman, I’ve suffered greatly. In Libya, a woman gets no respect. On top of enduring all the hardships of a journey like that hoping for a better life,” with tears in her eyes, “in Libya you are exposed to violence and abuse. I say this not because I seek pity but, in the hope, that a solution can be found for everyone who’s there, going through this ordeal.” Her refusal to recall this past suggests not only her incorporation of a resilience strategy but also a condemnation of the loss of human dignity that this epitomizes. Coupled with her emotional breakdown, the tension between knowing and keeping the events to oneself and the need to share them is resolved by the declaration:

“I can’t anymore but I want it to be exposed.” Shedding tears is an outward, nonverbal expression of the inward feeling of sadness and dealing with the traumatism. Moreover, the repugnance at the traumatic memory of their transit migration experiences is not limited to a personal decrying of the events but more importantly a clarion call for political intervention to protect current and future irregular migrants.

The testimonies of Tighist and Fikirte further portray a gender dynamic in the violence present in transit. In as much as men suffered afflictions like their feminine counterparts, the spate of female molestation and objectification cannot be overemphasized. The latter’s instrumentalization into objects of sexual pleasure by both smugglers during the desert passage and police officers in detention centers leaves them with unhealed physical and mental wounds. This is aptly emphasized in the words, “I want to say that as a woman, I’ve suffered greatly. In Libya, a woman gets no respect.” Sickened by these memories, they express frustration and bitterness at the lost time during which they could have had children. Moreover, they are convinced that the occurrences have denied them a normal life which results in their feeling of depression and insanity. As an example, Fikirte tells the story of her pregnant Eritrean friend whose features were twisted due to rape by police and her belly poked with a baton for having “...a little Jew in your belly and you go to Italy, and then to Israel to fight the Arabs’.” Being subjected to the life shattering experience of rape, religious antagonism and racial slur produces physical and psychological agony for the individual as well as the fellow travelers in whose memory these linger after the fact. Furthermore, other forms of corporeal maltreatment shared by the participants point to enduring misery. Subsequently, the survivor’s body becomes an

evidence of the excruciating experiences compensating for the absence of images⁸⁵. In her own case, Fikirte recollects, concerning the Libyan smugglers, that “In Ajdabia, they tied me up because I had no money. They held me like that for 9 days...with my arms.” She shows the scars from her clotted veins due to the abuse. The severity of being tied up for over a week communicates a dehumanization that remains unforgettable given the memory of its scar. This bodily testimony serves as a reminder of the traumatic past as the camera moves from the arms and shows a close-up of her gloomy face owing to the remembrance of this horrid event.

The witness narratives also reveal a range of resistance and surrender strategies adopted by transmigrants in the excruciating circumstances in situ. These include individual and group decisions in acceptance or defiance of the situation. According to Tighist, some of the men wanted to commit suicide by hanging themselves as the women dissuaded them by saying, “if we must die, then we should die together.” The resort to suicide may be either a mode of renunciation due to the unbearable agony or a protest to the torture. Significantly, the women’s intervention and consequent collective response of both living to brave the difficulty and dying together nuance their endurance of and opposition to the misery. In effect, remaining alive concurrently marks forbearance and hanging on to hope as well as remonstrance. Common death, then, becomes an implicit illocution as the last resolve of protestation. Subsequently, the detainees’ resort to self-expression in the holding centers becomes a means through which the viewer learns of the impact of the brutality on the subjects’ viewpoints and attitudes toward the world they were

⁸⁵See also Fiore (2018) who states that “...the scars that in some cases it has left on the bodies of the migrants, compensates for the lack of images and footage of the actual experiences being recounted” (58).

confined to. For instance, Mimi recalls some graffiti on the walls of the prison which concretize personal reactions: “My homeland, please forgive”, “If emigrating is so terrible, give me death”, “Whatever happens is for the good”, “If someone kills your father, do not take revenge: leave him in Kufrah with no access to money.” These perlocutionary graffiti, also as testimony, show the specific migrants’ fortitude, regret, storytelling (they tell their own stories within and on the walls of the jail) and resolutions in the face of hardship.

The writings of the travelers echo the internal monologues of the surviving clandestines in *La Pirogue* where they reflect on their mobility choices and the ensuing hardships as analyzed in Chapter 1. Admittedly, the origins and contexts of the sufferings differ in the two works: the perils of sea travel in *La Pirogue* as against the dangers of desert crossing and the systemic violence in *Come un oumo sulla terra*. Here, the first two expressions communicate a sense of despair that simultaneously suggests the acceptance of a personal responsibility in the predicament, i.e. the decision to leave. While the first shows a remorsefulness toward the country of emigration, the second seeks refuge in death as a form of escape from the cruelty of transit experiences. The preference of death to the exercise of the right to migrate for economic or socio-security reasons underlines the overwhelming impact of anti-migration hostility on the subject. This is further enhanced by the fourth scribbling to the effect that the Kufrah prison embodies a site of exacting revenge and punishing capital crime. By extension, this affirms the modus operandi of criminalization on which border surveillance now works. Nonetheless, the third phrasing strikingly demonstrates a sort of resignation, even stoicism in confronting the torment. Even though the statement may show optimism, the words emphasize a fatalistic attitude

resulting from their helplessness. Hence, the variety of perspectives affirms the scope of responses to the traumatism engendered during transit.

In addition to the conviction of the documentary's participants about the necessity of making known the happenings, they develop schools of thought on the operation of geopolitics and, more specifically, the management of clandestine travelers. The myriad effects, including psychological and economical, of the recounted experiences (re)shape the perspectives of the survivors on transit and destination countries. Scholars such as Kaytaz (2016) and Brigden and Mainwaring (2016) have shown the transformational impact of the journey on migrants' worldviews. Toward the end of the documentary, Dag sums up the differences between travel and receiving spaces using the analogy he developed from an anecdote during his childhood where he saw a cat eating one of her kittens – the weak ones die to let the strong ones live. Thus, Dag explains that, "If we manage to get here, they give us a permit to stay. You get status recognition once you are here. But while you are there, it's a contradiction." The comparison presented in this outlook attributes biopolitical and necropolitical dimensions to the treatment of undocumented persons. In other words, transit migration is a realm of the survival of the fittest where letting die, even if anti-migration systems are not designed to kill, takes precedence. The ability to withstand the torture translates into a biopolitical recognition of the worthiness to live; hence the attribution of asylum or refugee status in countries of immigration. Further, Dag's viewpoint introduces a criticism of Italy's response, as an example, to the predicament of arrivals. Having displaced borders to the south of the Mediterranean with discourses, treaties and the supply of control materials, there is no attention to the dehumanization that journeyers are subjected to within transit zones. In

fact, the interest in these persons only resurfaces when they brave all the obstacles to disembark on the northern shores of the Mediterranean Sea. However, the traumatic events they live in transit continue to reveal their effect on their minds and selfhood.

Conclusion

The notion of testimony and its affordances provide a framework for studying the experiences related by the documentary's characters. While the reliability of oral accounts has been debated, it nonetheless presents a viable modality for learning about migratory phenomena that occur outside of most of the public's view. The filmmaker's incorporation of audiovisual elements from the spaces described as well as historical and news materials substantiates if not all, some of the claims made by the interviewees. Importantly, migrants' testimony hinging on interviews puts them on the center stage and creates personalized history that is lost in other forms of reportage: statistics, news, political commentary. Therefore, bearing witness reveals the motivations for emigrating, experiences in transit countries, trauma, and the resilience of or strategies migrants adopt to deal with their ordeal in situ and ex situ. Although images of the violence meted out to the persons are not included in the documentary, their verbalization and gestural actions make known the devastating effects of state machinery on them. The cycle of physical and sexual violence and human rights abuse has been shown to be characteristic of the Sudan-Libya route, mainly used by Ethiopians, Somalis, Eritreans⁸⁶.

From the foregoing discussion, it is arguable that testimony may not guarantee closure to the migration ordeals lived by survivors. However, it has a therapeutic effect on

⁸⁶See for example Davy (2017).

the subjects' psyche and enables the insertion of their voices in larger debates as they break the chains of socio-political and discursive marginalization. For these persons, sharing their stories equally seeks to attract official attention to the unknown treachery within transit sites where border crossing management has become a criminalizing and commercial economy. As such, it is undeniable that migrant/refugee testimonies have a bearing on the perception of hospitality or its absence toward them in the places they travel through and to. The inhospitality uncovered through the accounts in *Come un uomo sulla terra* reveal a concerted powerplay uniting, in this case, Libya and Italy against the mobility aims of those concerned. For Fiore (2018), this shows "the increasing awareness of the co-implication of Italy in operations based in Libya" (54). In the interviewees' narratives, they demonstrate an awareness of Italy's sponsorship of Libya's fight against clandestine migration which they contrast with the later recognition of their political asylum only after they have survived the brutality and crossed the Mediterranean.

Libya's economic benefits in geopolitical partnerships with Italy and smugglers' gain from undocumented migration deepen the victimhood of the migrants who become the center of a web of competing interests which reduce them to sub-humanity. This reality leads to the barefaced autoimmunization of hardline border securitization and xenophobia endured by clandestines. Subsequently, there is a rupturing of the much-touted African unity founded on racial and or ethnic similarity and solidarity which supposedly could ensure a humane treatment of the Other. In fact, the use of detention, physical violence as well as religious difference and antisemitism in the space traversed results in trauma and affects the perspectives of the sufferers. Meanwhile, as argued by Pedersen (2015), although casualties tell the impact of violence, other less visible effects may be witnessed

in traumatized persons; a phenomenon that needs scholarly attention. As such, the reception and treatment of those who survive these atrocities require careful attention to remedy their conditions.

Furthermore, one of *Come un uomo sulla terra*'s important contributions relates to Dag's interviews with government officials such as the then outgoing EU Commissioner and later Italian Foreign minister, Franco Frattini, and the director of Frontex, Ilkka Laitinen, at the time of making the documentary. This provides a rare moment of interrogation of officialdom in the documentary by the ex-migrant who uses his personal experiences as a basis for demanding action into the Libyan cruelty. This insight calls for further research into how resettled migrant survivors without formal technologies like filmmaking (can) speak to authority in bringing attention and solutions to the sufferings encountered en route to the Global North. Thus, other modes of bearing witness which while centering migrant voices succeeds at speaking to power will be essential to clandestine migration studies.

Chapter 3: The spectralization of clandestine migration

“a clandestine ... is the new figure of the trickster, the anti-hero who deceives customs officers, dissimulating his presence, thinking up survival tactics, who lives feeling alien both to his native land and the host country. His presence almost takes on the nature of a sign, the token of a double threat” (Beneduce 2008: 522).

Introduction

Several studies on the phenomenon of unauthorized migration toward Europe have focused on the causes of this movement and the reception or experiences of the foreigners from an ethical point of view⁸⁷. It is equally important to investigate the mechanisms utilized by unauthorized persons to outwit the denial they face in accessing overseas territories. As borders are closed through cumbersome bureaucratic procedures, like tedious visa application processes and guarded frontiers, that have been adopted with the insidious objective of curbing regular migration, aspiring travelers seek new ways of circumventing such obstacles. Aristide Zolberg (1999) observed at the turn of the 21st century that “affluent countries are determined to keep out most of the world’s population and, despite musing about loss of control over their borders, effectively achieve this objective” (1276). The targeted populations for exclusion are mainly low-skilled or unskilled people who are generally perceived as economic parasites on the resources of these nations with better economic opportunities and thus better life outcomes.

The closure of European borders to citizens of countries located in the Global South has deepened an already existing asymmetry of mobility in which citizens of the Global

⁸⁷See for example Rosello (2001), Flesler (2008), Calargé (2015), Abderrezak (2016), Carling (2017), Campesi (2018), Fiore and Ialongo (2018).

North have more privileges when it comes to international mobility. Meanwhile, the tactic of cleverly inhibiting unwanted foreigners from emigrating has resulted in the unthought of consequence which is the propensity of resorting to clandestine migration. The stringent anti-migration laws do not suffice in turning away individuals obsessed with an Eldorado which wants to have nothing to do with them⁸⁸. The impregnability of Fortress Europe for entry leads to would-be migrants' adoption of strategies that support their mobility aims as an opposition to the predicament of being denied the right to free movement. These include an instrumentalization of their physical and national identities into becoming unidentifiable subjects for the purposes of remaining invisible⁸⁹ to and undetectable by anti-immigration authorities. Since clandestine movement thrives on hiding, the secrecy and invisibility required for successful clandestinity means that (potential) travelers destroy all forms of identification that both individuate and link them to their countries of origin.

Despite commentaries on the dichotomy of visibility and invisibility⁹⁰ which surrounds this movement of persons, the effacement of the self⁹¹ through the destruction of personal and citizenship markers, which has become the *modus operandi* of clandestine migrants, has led to the establishment of a link between them and the notion of the ghost⁹².

⁸⁸See also Wihtol de Wenden (2017) on the effects of the closing of Europe's borders on clandestine migration. She aptly shows that such a mechanism has led to the end of circular migration whereby immigrants are able to travel between their countries of origin and of immigration. Instead, when migrants succeed clandestinely, they no longer want to leave for fear of not being able to return to Europe.

⁸⁹I use "invisible" in the sense of what lies outside the line of visual perception either because it is hiding or cannot be identified due to the concealment of what distinguishes it from others.

⁹⁰(The tension between) "visibility" and "invisibility" as used here and hereafter in the chapter revolves around the play between what can be seen and what cannot be seen. Starting from this basic premise of the everyday usage of the terms, I will nuance them in the context of my reading of the corpus and the phenomenon of undocumented migration.

⁹¹What I term the effacement of the self refers to the deliberate suppression and concealment of elements of personal and national identification such as fingerprints, ID cards and passports as a new form of subjecthood. This status has on one hand, an agentic value in the sense of enabling certain actions and on the other, denies the ethical recognition of the persons in question.

⁹²Peeren (2014) refers to this as a "state of dispossession" (4). She also provides an overview of the figurative meanings that the term "ghost" has accrued over the years across different domains such as optics, cinema,

By purposely rejecting these important dimensions of the self, those concerned take on a new, even if temporal, identity thereby blurring the bridge between the human and non-human, the seen and unseen, the known and unknown. This underlines the existence of clandestines as spectral figures going to and living in spaces of immigration⁹³. Since the ghostly condition – of non-personal and non-national identity – aids travelers to attain their migratory dreams, they perceive it as a more useful tool for them than the negativity of marginalized citizenship or personhood in the context of irregular migration. From the foregoing, this chapter explores the notion of spectrality, essentially ghostliness, in two films: *Clandestin* (2010) by Arnaud Bédouet and *Fire at Sea* (2016) by Gianfranco Rosi. By putting the two filmic texts in conversation with theorists of spectrality such as Avery Gordon and Jacques Rancière's concepts of the distribution of the sensible and the uncounted, clandestine migration can be read through the lens of a specter, having ascertained unauthorized travelers as taking on attributes of the idea of the ghost that haunts the West, particularly Europe⁹⁴. They haunt in the sense that they enter spaces where they are uninvited, unexpected and insist on being a part of, at a time when they are thought to be indefinitely confined to their places of origin. Put differently, this haunting arises from a revolt against the geopolitical hegemony over the right to cross-border journeys which assigns and restricts access to mobility in the context of globalization.

biology, metallurgy etc. In the context of unsanctioned migration, I use the notion of the ghost in the sense of a person's refusal of an individual and national identity which denies the right to mobility and social invisibility.

⁹³Immigration designates the fact of settlement in another country. Thus, countries, spaces and societies of immigration as used in this chapter and in the dissertation refer to the places that migrants target or arrive.

⁹⁴The use of this expression is inspired by Marx's and Derrida's usage. For Marx, in his *Manifesto of the Communist Party*, the specter is a futuristic phenomenon in relation to communism. In Derrida's analysis in *Specters of Marx*, the specter comes from the past rather than the future, hence his notion of hauntology. However, in the present analysis, the specter of irregular immigration situates itself in the present while blurring the temporal demarcation between the past, the present and the future.

The currency of the films in the era of the state repression of migration shows on one hand, how the (aspiring) migrant⁹⁵ who is perceived as undesirable and unwelcome in the destination country obliges or instigates the gaze of power through a form of absence-presence, i.e. being there but refusing to be seen. On the other hand, the films reveal how political power is equally spectral by means of the surveillance of the marginalized newcomer's presence. The ghostly mode of life or operation of undocumented migrants suggests that they are knowledgeable about the ubiquity of sociopolitical structures of control in Europe which constantly monitor their motion, thereby haunting them. Concurrently, state power demonstrates an awareness of the ghostly in/visibility that characterizes the clandestine and amplifies it by consistent territorial monitoring. Thus, the specter of the undocumented foreigner produces a certain uncanniness in the works under investigation. The continuous appearance or apparition of unauthorized migrants within the European space where they are largely unwelcome underscores their troubling presence. The two films, *Clandestin*, a fiction and *Fire at Sea*, a documentary (fiction), foreground an analysis of the issue from different but complementary perspectives through their visualization and concretization of the phenomena discussed.

The study of clandestine migration through the prism of spectrality is a relatively new area of critical enquiry. Since the spectral turn of the 1990s marked by Derrida's seminal work, *Specters of Marx*, which blurred the temporal distinction between past, present and future, the notion of the ghost has garnered attention in scholarly analysis across multiple humanistic disciplines. This extrapolation accentuates Blanco and Peeren's (2010) argument that "the ghost has become an increasingly appropriate metaphor for the

⁹⁵ I use "migrant(s)" in the broad sense of individuals who travel from one country, usually theirs, to another.

way marginal populations...haunt the everyday, living on the edge of visibility and inspiring a curious mix of fear and indifference” (xiv). The ubiquity of clandestine migrants around the world who are faced with the need to travel and live daily as shadows rather than human bodies/lives makes haunting an everyday phenomenon beyond the dominant view of phantoms as supernatural forces. The contrasting views held about these persons stem from the racial and politico-economic discourses propagated by xenophobic authorities that attribute risks of contamination, sociocultural and medical, to them. It is therefore not surprising that there is a fusion of like, dislike, apathy, and empathy toward the foreign citizen. Peripheralized by these regimes of anti-immigration, they have become ghosts, “symptoms, points of rupture that insist their singular tale be retold and their wrongs acknowledged” (Luckhurst 2002: 542). For their wrongs to be acknowledged, scholarly analysis, literary and filmic productions have sought to throw light on these conditionalities. Accordingly, Esther Peeren’s *The Spectral Metaphor* (2014) has focused on undocumented migrants as figurative ghosts in the underground economy of EU nations. Their labor as servants, janitors, organ donors and taxi drivers make them spectral figures who remain socially unseen or unrecognized due to the need to hide and remain anonymous but also through a deliberate attempt to not look at or see them. By demonstrating what agency ghostliness facilitates or precludes in relation to these socially marginalized, she underlines ghostly existence as more a production in the present than simply a return of a past phenomenon. In its currency, Peeren (2014) postulates that “the specter emerges as a figure of radical alterity concretized as the guest, foreigner or immigrant” (11). I expand the analysis of migrants’ spectral characteristics and experiences to include their journey, encounter with physical and digital borders, their identity, and bodily acts of protest to

hindrances to their right to free circulation. Contrary to the erroneity of the myths of invasion propagated against the arrival of the undocumented migrant, I argue that s/he enters the territory of immigration to correct a wrong, to co-possess rights, space and resources as well as to be humanized through hospitality. In other words, the clandestine traveler through the agency of ghosthood is a political subject who thrives on refusal.

Arnaud Bédouet's film, *Clandestin*, recounts the story of a 17-year old Mauritanian boy, Salif, who stows away in search of his older brother, Abdou, in France. For some time, the family in Mauritania who have had no news from Abdou decide to send his younger brother to look for him. In possession of only a photograph of his brother, Salif arrives in a small fishing boat in a coastal town where he obligates a Parisian family returning to the capital to transport him in their car. Upon arrival in Paris, his only way of survival is by continually hiding or running from the French police while searching for Abdou. Needing to remain invisible himself, he pursues his search unsuccessfully into an immigrant neighborhood inhabited mostly by Africans who nonetheless do not know his brother. He spends his time on trains, albeit without purchasing a ticket, and roaming the streets. When he is attacked by unknown assailants, a Malian family decides to offer him a roof over his head. The father of the family, Mohammed, helps Salif to contact a friend who supplies him with wares to sell on the streets, a business he fails to succeed at due to the constant need to elude police arrest. While in Paris, he meets a young Moroccan undocumented migrant, Idriss, who then helps him to find menial jobs to enable him to meet his basic needs. However, Idriss dies after falling from a storey building under construction on the site where they both work as laborers. When the police arrive on the scene of the accident, they arrest Salif and he is deported to his home country at the end of the film. Meanwhile,

before his departure, he is informed by a French woman whom he had solicited to help him find Abdou that his brother is in jail for drug trafficking. Salif, therefore, returns to Mauritania empty-handed and shamefaced.

In Gianfranco Rosi's *Fire at sea*, the film depicts the journey and reception of undocumented people (mostly refugees⁹⁶ of African and Syrian origin) on the Italian island of Lampedusa. The sea has become the primary escape route for these persons who have been forced to flee their countries. The title cards at the beginning of the film show that "in the last 20 years, 400,000 migrants have landed in Lampedusa with an estimated 15,000 deaths." The presentation of these numbers provides information about the stakes of the repeated occurrence. Located about 60 kilometers from the coast of the African continent, the recurrent arrival of migrant boats on Lampedusa's shores underlines its importance as a landing stage for irregular migrants from different parts of the world. The story is related from both the point of view of the newcomers and of the islanders. Though principally centered on the arrivals, the film's protagonist, Samuele, is a 13-year-old resident of Lampedusa who prefers hunting to fishing, the mainstay of the locals. His innocence and unawareness of the happenings on the coast is projected to mirror that of the larger population who seem to know little to nothing about the phenomenon. The island's only doctor, Dr. Bartholo, and the coast guards are among the few islanders who encounter the boatpeople. Meanwhile, the narrative points to persecution, hunger, and death as some of

⁹⁶Although refugees constitute a specific group of persons who are politically and legally defined and distinguished from other foreign travelers generally called migrants, I would use the generic terms "migrants", "clandestines" and "clandestine migrants" to refer to all the subjects of the corpus without distinction between them. This aligns with clandestine migration as a domain which encompasses both unsanctioned refugee and emigrant (the one who leaves his country to settle in another) travel. Also, the choice underscores the fact that persons belonging to both categories journey together, using the same strategies and subjected to the same treatments in many cases. Besides, refugees' aim of finding safe places to live improved lives is similar to the classical migrant's goal of border crossing to find better opportunities. Thus, both look to make connections with other spaces and use the right to mobility.

the reasons informing the decision of the asylum seekers to emigrate to Europe. However, their journey in overloaded rickety boats is fraught with thirst, hunger, death, and imprisonment as recounted by them. Many deaths and sick people are recorded as they arrive on the Italian coast. They are subsequently subjected to screenings and housed in a reception center without any form of contact with the local community, and thus little communication between the two groups.

The distribution of the sensible, the uncounted and spectrality

Since the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the United States, the issue of security with relation to the danger associated with the foreigner has been heightened in discussions about global mobility. As Berry Tholen (2010) has argued, free circulation has been limited in view of protecting national security. However, this restriction mainly affects racial and national identities which are construed to invoke risk or contagion in western imaginary. Therefore, since access to cross-border movement has been restricted, especially from the global south to the global north, would-be migrants have resorted more and more to clandestine migration to achieve their goal. This situation can be contextualized and analyzed through the prism of Jacques Rancière's distribution of the sensible. For the French philosopher, this concept refers to

...the system of self-evident facts of sense perception that simultaneously discloses the existence of something in common and the delimitations that define the respective parts and positions within it. A distribution of the sensible therefore establishes at one and the same time something common that is shared and exclusive parts. This apportionment of parts and positions is based on a distribution of spaces, times, and forms of activity that determines the very manner in which something in common lends itself to participation and in what way various individuals have a part in this distribution. (2006: 12).

In effect, Rancière's framework revolves around the axes of relation and separation. In other words, this interrelation between different parts of the same implicitly assigns roles, space and agency to the actors involved. Furthermore, he argues that prior to Aristotle's statement that a "citizen is someone who *has a part* in the act of governing and being governed", there is "another form of distribution... that determines those who have a part in the community of citizens" (the emphasis is in the original, 12). This holds true for the present analysis where the distribution of the sensible is applied to the set of universal relations between citizens of the world in the era of globalization. The continuous postcolonial association between the West and countries of the South mirror this allocation of parts and positions and, exclusive spaces between their respective nationals. In other words, westerners and non-citizens of the West have been separated by access to free movement across sovereign borders. Consequently, nationals of global south nations remain in a marginalized positionality in the face of the ability to move into territories belonging to the erstwhile colonial powers. Following de Certeau's (1994) and Sayad's (1999) assertion that postcolonial subjects, immigrants and refugees, inherently shoulder the history shared by their countries of origin and receiving nations, Beneduce pointedly adds that these migrants "are always telling us about History, about borders imposed by force, about strange laws and topographies, about distant, but not forgotten, humiliations" (2008: 511). The twenty-first century management of human mobility between states is alternatively a neocolonial reality that has safeguarded histories of domination, oppression, and racial antagonism. The colonial past of inequality and repression is, socio-politically albeit with subtlety, carried over into the globalized era in the relationship between ex-masters and subjects. To agree with Bourdieu and Wacquant (2000), in the present age,

“the relation of the emigrant to his homeland is likewise invisibly overdetermined by decades of conflictual and asymmetric relations between the two countries he links” (174). Thus, the contemporary distribution of the sensible perpetuates the historical dynamic of privilege and supremacy that refuses to treat all persons equally irrespective of national or racial belonging.

This dissymmetry in terms of identity, mobility, and agency in the geopolitical structuring of the contemporary world has led to the postcolonial subject’s interiorization of his/her position and subjecthood as undesirable in the North. However, the fortress-like character adopted by countries in the northern hemisphere to push back against foreigners as those who have no part (“uncounted” in Rancière’s terminology) in this utopic paradise incites the latter to find ways to demand and have an equal part in the sensible⁹⁷. Here, the sensible refers to equality in access to the right to movement and the right to settle or seek better living conditions or fortune anywhere one desires despite his/her national origin. The uncounted, who have no part, are either dispossessed of speech or their voice is rendered inaudible in the sensible shared with the speaking subjects, citizens who have a right not only to speech but also to visibility, i.e. to be seen socio-politically. Indeed, in the context of migration, those who have no part cannot successfully enter the fortress (in their marginalized subjecthood). However, the specificity of the uncounted is her/his revolting character by which s/he opposes the status assigned her/him. For Rancière, this opposition by the one who has no part concretizes itself through acts of “politics” that

⁹⁷The awareness of the continuity of this political reality underlines Bourdieu and Wacquant’s (2000:174) postulation that “Every migrant carries this repressed relation of power between states within himself or herself and unwittingly recapitulates and re-enacts it in her personal strategies and experiences”. To this end, Beneduce (2008:522) aptly opines that “it is obvious that modern individuals construct themselves with reference to rifts, prohibitions and splittings”.

destabilize the existing unequal order of interrelation and demands the respect of his/her voice. According to him,

“Politics exists because those who have no right to be counted as speaking beings make themselves of some account, setting up a community by the fact of placing in common a wrong that is nothing more than this very confrontation, the contradiction of two worlds in a single world: the world where they are and the world where they are not, the world where there is something “between” them and those who do not acknowledge them as speaking beings who count and the world where there is nothing” (*Disagreement*, 27).

Although Rancière does not speak about undocumented migrants in his reflections, the quest to claim an equal part to the sensible between Europeans and other national identities (would-be migrants) underscores the incidence of unsanctioned migration. This approach can be said to espouse the will to emancipate one’s self from a yoke of inequality. Clandestine migration, as a political activity, stages the confrontation of these contradictory worlds in a single world; the conflict between the “police logic” that “distributes bodies within the space of their visibility or their invisibility and aligns ways of being...doing...” and the “egalitarian logic” that “disrupts this harmony through...achieving the contingency of equality, neither arithmetical or geometric, of any speaking beings whatsoever” (*Disagreement*, 28-29). This results in politics or the political activity which Rancière calls “the contradiction of two worlds in a single world” instantiated by “those who have no right to be counted as speaking beings” (27). The conflict thus opposes “the world where they are and the world where they are not, the world where there is something “between” them and those who do not acknowledge them as speaking beings who count and the world where there is nothing” (*Disagreement*, 27). It is obvious that the term, clandestine migrants, does not designate any specific identity. What it does, however, is to clearly

demarcate the belonging to a group of the uncounted who are making known a *wrong*. Membership in this collective brings into view “the mode of subjectification in which the assertion of equality takes its political shape” (*Disagreement*, 39). It is essentially the transformation of identities, those who have no part, in an “inegalitarian distribution” into a community that recasts the interrelation between people and space in the *perceptible*. In this way, new ways of being and of conduct⁹⁸ are imagined by the subjects who subsume the revelation of the wrong.

Spectrality subtends politics since they both possess some capacity to reveal what is hidden or invisible due to a sociopolitical *wrong*. For Rancière, politics “...reconfigure the space where parties, parts, or lack of parts have been defined. Political activity is whatever shifts a body from the space assigned to it or changes a place’s destination. It makes visible what had no business being seen and makes heard a discourse where once there was only place for noise” (30). Thus, spectrality and politics have similar pathways and display similarities in rendering what has been concealed perceptible albeit differently. For this reason, clandestine migration incorporates strategies that oscillate between visibility and invisibility. This mode of operation vacillating between what can be seen and what escapes ocular perception forms the nucleus of the irregular migrant as a specter. For as Jacques Derrida (2002) opines in *Spectrographies*, “A specter is both visible and invisible, both phenomenal and nonphenomenal: a trace that marks the present with its absence in advance” (121). From this proposition, the specter through his “invisibility” which disrupts the visibility of social order challenges the contradictions inherent in power.

⁹⁸Rancière argues that political dispute/subjectification “decomposes and recomposes the relationships between the ways of *doing*, of *being*, and of *saying* that define the perceptible organization of the community, the relationships between the places where one does one thing and those where one does something else...” (*Disagreement*, 40-emphasis original).

This results in the former's troubling presence. Nonetheless, Giorgio Agamben stipulates that spectrality is a posthumous way of life when he writes that "Spectrality is a form of life, a posthumous or complementary life that begins only when everything is finished. Spectrality thus has, with respect to life, the incomparable grace and astuteness of that which is completed, the courtesy and precision of those who no longer have anything ahead of them" (475). Contrary to this unidimensional view of a posthumous subjecthood, the specter of clandestine migration is not limited to the spiritual agency of the dead.

Indeed, there are many cases of haunting instigated by the countless deaths caused by the dangerous maritime or desert crossing. However, the "apparition" of migrants in several instances relates to living beings who either physically efface themselves from the public scene to escape surveillance or are dehumanized and made invisible by political and security systems of migration control. It is noteworthy that the self-effacement of the individual is aimed at claiming a part to the sensible, i.e. possessing and using the right to movement within the global village that the world is thought to be today. Avery Gordon's insightful exposition on spectrality is useful here. She demonstrates that the specificity of the specter's haunting lies in the capacity to reveal itself either explicitly or implicitly. Gordon (1997) writes that "What's distinctive about haunting is that it is an animated state in which a repressed or unresolved social violence is making itself known, sometimes very directly, sometimes more obliquely" (xvi). Taking this into account, the dissymmetry in the access to mobility which marginalizes citizens of postcolonial nations is a "repressed or unresolved social violence" that inspires these subjects to resort to the strategic irruption or upsurge into the West known as clandestinity. This direct and sometimes subtle haunting per Gordon's description underpins the advent of irregular migration as a ghostly situation.

To echo Tuck and Ree's (2013) apt remark, "Haunting is both acute and general; individuals are haunted, but so are societies... Haunting doesn't hope to change people's perceptions, nor does it hope for reconciliation. Haunting lies precisely in its refusal to stop... For ghosts, the haunting is the resolving, it is not what needs to be resolved. Haunting aims to wrong the wrongs..." (642). Clandestinity is a refusal to cease moving by appropriating ghostly attributes and demanding a resolution in host societies. It is precisely a mechanism to upset what is a form of wrong. In this vein, the quest for what is considered a right or necessity by secret appearance or open intrusion into a space where one is unwanted or uninvited highlights this spectrality. Hence, this underlines the haunting produced by the clandestine and the aim of this study.

From the foregoing, the undocumented migrant is a troubling figure which perturbs the conscience and space of the West. Pietro Deandra's (2015) remark that "the image of the ghost carrying an alterity which haunts western monolithic social and ideological constructions" (491) aptly describes the perception of the unsanctioned foreigner. The spectralization of their movement, the refusal to accept the current distribution of the sensible, means that the undocumented subject haunts at a time when s/he is unexpected to be visible in the face of the proliferation of anti-migration policies and control. In the words of Avery Gordon (1997), "the whole essence ... of a ghost is that it has a real presence and demands its due, your attention. Haunting and the appearance of specters is one way... we are notified that what's been concealed is very much alive and present, interfering precisely with those always incomplete forms of containment and repression..." (xvi). Therefore, contrary to the expectation of ceasing to move, the potential migrant continues to remind state power of his/her desire to escape "containment and repression" by appearing

continually. This persistence concretizes Derrida's *visor effect*, "the ability to see without being seen", by which the clandestine, aided by the adopted status of im/materiality, forces the gaze and attention of power toward him/her to demand his/her due to be mobile. The relationship between the two displays an exchange involving seeing and being seen. In other words, the irregular migrant and power both act in ways to make the other aware of their physical or noncorporeal presence. To this end, I will analyze the corpus in tandem with the above theoretical framework to illuminate the subjectivity of the clandestine.

Border control technology and spectrality in *Fire at Sea*

The fight against transnational movement, particularly unauthorized by the host country, has resulted in the militarization of borders. This security measure is also founded on the criminalization of crossing sovereign territories without the necessary documents. To achieve this objective of militarized borders, there have been huge investments in advanced information technology systems. These high-tech border control mechanisms include the Integrated System of External Vigilance (popularly known as SIVE) between Spain and Morocco and, The European Border and Coast Guard Agency (otherwise known as Frontex) which is responsible for control and management of borders within the Schengen area. Given that borders concretize the presence of authority⁹⁹, Berry Tholen (2010) has maintained that the technological innovations have given rise to the institution of "e-borders" or digital borders. Henceforth, these digitized frontiers reinforce national power and political authority by enhancing territorial control. Consequently, Peter Maurits (2015) argues that the use of language, the digitalization of border surveillance and

⁹⁹Chambers (2008).

agencies like Frontex erase the visibility of migrants and reduces them to ghosts who have a digital presence but are physically absent. He maintains that "...in the process of the digitization of borders, migrants...are digitized too. The contemporary migrant, in other words, is a *digital migrant*" (515, the emphasis is in the original). For this reason, the digital migrant loses his/her corporeal reality in the eyes of power. Besides, the digitalization of the border makes power omnipresent which allows for both a disciplinary and a biopolitical approach to the management of bodies looking for access to European countries clandestinely. This ubiquity of state authority makes it a spectral presence, which haunts under the guise of securitizing the national space which Vicki Squire (2015) has labelled as an "*absent-presence*" of securitization. The high-tech/sophisticated system reproduces Bentham's panopticon which enables power to have a ghostly form to effect control. By means of this mechanism, power does not need a corporeal presence to surveil or protect its space and is able to ensure that through this digital invisibility, the subject of its gaze does not escape its vigilance. In response to this, the irregular migrant largely embarks on the maritime crossing into the society of immigration at night since s/he is obliged to avoid being detected by the monitoring system. Thus, the obscurity that surrounds the clandestine movement makes the subject phantom-like, a state of being which reifies their invisibility vis-à-vis the surveilling gaze.



Figure 5: A view of the border surveillance system in *Fire at Sea*



Figure 6: A closeup shot of the surveillance radar in *Fire at Sea*

About four minutes into the narrative in *Fire at Sea*, the camera shows the satellites and radar manned by the coastal guards in Lampedusa. This image of surveillance recurs over time in the diegesis. The focus on these technological forms of border security and

migration control affirms the panoptical digital presence of state power through which it monitors movement into its frontiers. Being shown even before the viewer sees newcomers attempting to enter the country and its recurrence in the film underscore authority's constant outlook to preventing the coming of uninvited persons. In what appears to be a call for rescue, there is an exchange between a clandestine group stranded at sea and a border official. The officer asks: "how many people?" while a male voice retorts with "250 people" as we overhear desperate cries in the background. When the coast guard asks repeatedly about their position, the voice answers "we beg you please... in the name of God." We later discover that the boat drowned resulting in many deaths¹⁰⁰. Subsequent to the vocal exchanges, we see a light searching the sea and then the camera cuts to the monitors at the border post. The conversation filmed with the surveillance system as a foreground emphasizes the privileged security dimension that is at the forefront of dealings with incomers. The absence of persons in this sequence portrays the spectrality of both state power and clandestines despite their engagement, although the former's presence is maintained through the digital border mechanism. Furthermore, the lingering images of the radars, a helicopter and a patrol vessel on the sea reinforce the consistent watchfulness of the monitoring apparatus on the littoral frontier.

The digitalized presence of authority through surveillance creates a hierarchy of spectral agency between power and irregular migrants. Although they exude different forms of in/visibility, the vulnerability of boatpersons in the treacherous space of the sea makes them susceptible to the surveilling gaze. As such, in a later sequence, there is another distress call from a boat transporting between 130 and 150 people who face the danger of

¹⁰⁰Deaths on the Mediterranean beaches have become a common feature of clandestine mobility. See Pieprzak (2007) and Abderrezak (2016) for more detailed discussions of this phenomena.

drowning to Italian maritime authorities. We hear a probable feminine voice calling out to a coast guard to save the group from perishing. This mayday call, like the initial one, (for help) reinforces the hierarchization which supports the expectation of rescue from the authority that possesses the capacity to do so: sovereignty. It undoubtedly possesses what Derrida (1994) calls the *visor effect*, that which “looks at us and sees us not see it even when it is there” (6). In effect, it operates through a panopticon structure that monitors the territorial waters, borders and those attempting to cross the nation’s frontiers. Here, sovereign power in the shape of satellite surveillance manifests this agency as it sees boatpeople without it being seen. Thus, the irregular migrant is inscribed into the controlling gaze of a disembodied power through technology. Though the clandestine does not see who is looking at him, he is aware of that presence which makes him its object of vision.

This dissymmetrical visual relationship reveals the secrecy of the undocumented boatperson. In other words, the hiding tactic employed is no longer concealed from sovereignty. To echo Derrida’s postulation, “This spectral *someone other looks at us*, we feel ourselves being looked at by it, outside of any synchrony, even before and beyond any look on our part, according to an absolute anteriority... and asymmetry, according to an absolutely unmasterable disproportion.”¹⁰¹ The spectral someone who looks is power, to the extent that even before setting out on the journey, the surveilling gaze is anterior, in place to monitor the would-be migrant’s movement without limitation. The “us” is applicable to the undocumented cohort who are mastered by the asymmetrical and asynchronous digital form of political authority realized as unsurmountable walls. Though

¹⁰¹Derrida (1993, 1994: 6-7, the emphasis is in the original).

they do not see this gaze, the boatpeople are aware of its (im)material presence on the coastal border and its obstructiveness to their entry. Nonetheless, if access to the territory is controlled by this force, it equally can preserve life. This consciousness is instantiated by the call for rescue by the seafarers to an unseen power who can save them from losing their lives. In both scenes, the use of expressions such as “we beg you”, “we have small children. Please, can you help us?”, “in the name of God” and “have mercy” by the unauthorized migrants (those who do not have a part or right to speech) marks the beginning of their entry into dialogue with power. The exchange between the migrant’s voice and the coast guard shows that the latter’s interest is limited to controlling and keeping out “intruders” from the border. The tranquil and authoritative voice of the officer in contrast to the cry of pain from the migrant voice leads to the conclusion that the former is used to such happening. This almost lack of urgency to respond to the plight of the boatpeople is heightened by the guard’s insistence on administrative formalities like numbers at the expense of the lives at risk.



Figure 7: A view of the digital monitoring system in *Fire at Sea*

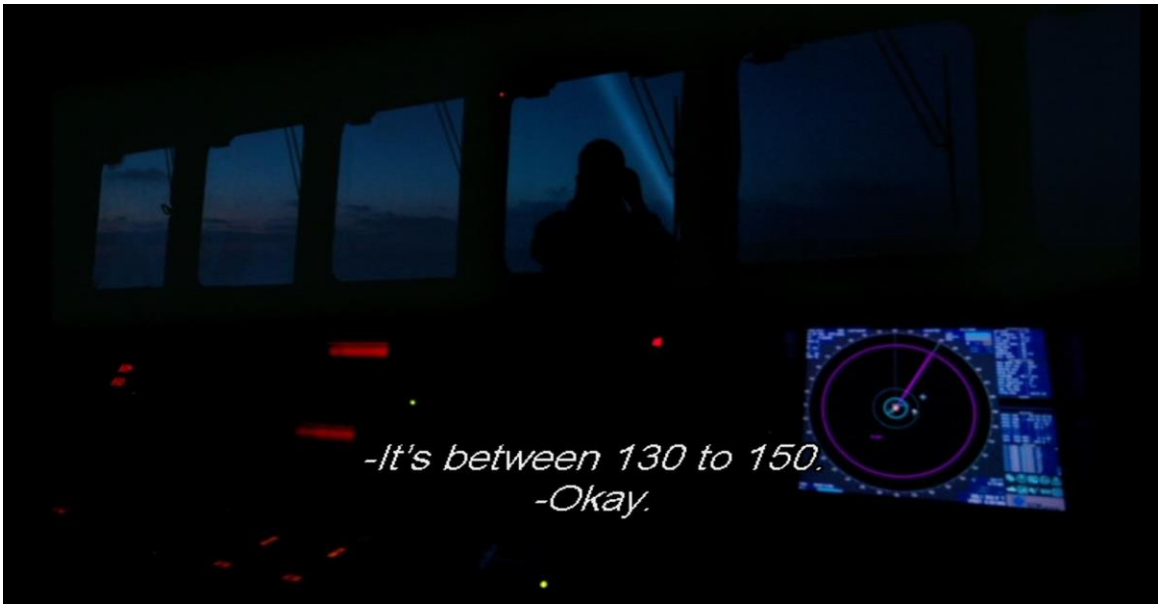


Figure 8: The camera contrasts the migrant voice with the surveillance technology in *Fire at Sea*

The camera's focalization on the immaterial voice of the person, calling out for help, without a corporeal presence transforms her into a virtual or digital being who is only perceived through the surveillance system. The superimposition of the image of the control center and the migrant voice underlines the spectrality of the clandestine. The dark screen foregrounds the lights which gives a panoptical effect of the migration control apparatus. Power, then, manifests itself as a perpetual presence like the panopticon to ward off the unsanctioned traveler from entering. This situation affirms Deandra's (2015) remark that "the spectralizing of immigration controls produces an effect of spectralization" (499-500). In other words, the digitization of surveillance systems being invisible in their operation possess the properties of the ghost which makes control over bodies a spectral phenomenon. Consequently, the undocumented migrant is obliged to appropriate the nature of the specter in his/her appearance to be able to evade detection by the anti-migration monitoring device. Moreover, information about and communication with the "intruder" is

digitally mediated resulting in the absence of physical contact. Evidently, the ghost-like state of the migrant is a direct effect of the digital surveillance instituted to foreclose the crossing of the border. Additionally, since ghosts are generally associated with darkness, the film's cinematographic techniques emphasize the spectral effect of these technologies on unapproved migrants.

The effacement of the clandestine's corporeality is maintained by mediatic coverage of irregular migration. In the film, after the capsizing of the first distressed boat following the mayday call, there is a radio news broadcast that reports the event only in terms of the numbers. The newscaster reports that 250 undocumented migrants were found on the beach among whom 34 had died leaving 206 survivors. The news of this tragedy is presented as a minor news item which has only an informational value for its audience. Indeed, these people are reduced to numbers without any further information to assert their personhood. This concretizes Jenny Wills' (2007) "anonymous corporeality" in reference to refugees and migrants represented as abject bodies. During the broadcast, the camera shows Maria, one of the islanders, in her kitchen preparing a meal. When she hears the news, she empathizes with the victims by saying "poor souls" since she has no physical contact with them. Her only source of information is the image portrayed by the spectral radiophonic voice which reports the occurrence. This recalls Jeffrey Sconce's argument that "sound and image without material substance, the electronically mediated worlds of telecommunications often evoke the supernatural by creating virtual beings that appear to have no form" (248). Here, the boatpersons' formlessness and virtual presence in a radio news broadcast maintains their invisibility as specters who have no place in the space concerned.



Figure 9: Maria cutting up vegetables while listening to the radio in *Fire at Sea*

The radio creates a ghostly effect through the “presence” of the journalistic voice that informs that listener. This digital present-absence carries along with it a second form of ghostliness relating to the corpses and survivors found on the beach. In the words of Alessandro Dal Lago, “Obviously, those who drowned cannot be interviewed by the press, but also the survivors don’t count, their testimonies are disqualified as the testimonies of *clandestini*, of non-persons” (247). This observation aptly describes the fate of the 206 migrants who survived the drowning and can speak for themselves, yet they are denied access to speech due to their undocumented status. This refusal of oral expression falls with the distribution of the sensible where those who do not have a part are rendered mute or inaudible and deepens their spectrality in the face of state authority since the ghost has no language-producing ability. Dal Lago further states that “This strategy of suppression robs the drowned even of the chance of being remembered. If they were considered mere irritations, inconvenient bodies when alive, once dead [the clandestines] become simply

cadavers with no history, identity, or biography” (247). If the dead lose their place in memory, the survivors become victims of seclusion like Agamben’s *homo sacer* epitomized by living in containment under the guise of reception centers. *Fire at Sea* portrays a notable feature of the transition of the undocumented migrant into a sacrificial subject without an important value of life. Prior to being confined to living in the camp, the clandestines are treated as nameless and faceless beings through numeration of their bodies in a manner suggestive of thingification. The assigning of numbers to persons instead of being identified with their names does not only dehumanize them but also *ghostifies* them as virtual entities that only have cognitively representative referents. This is because, all over the database system in which they are counted, these persons are reduced to statistics, denying them corporeality and visibility.



Figure 10: One of the unsanctioned migrants given an identification number in *Fire at Sea*

Ghosts in a camp

In the context of unapproved migration, the island of Lampedusa has become the site of multiple anti-migration control agencies (Nick Dines et al., 2015). This space of surveillance raises the question of the treatment of boatpeople as in the case of *bare life*. In Agamben's philosophy, *bare life* is produced from the denial experienced by the *homo sacer*. This is the one excluded from political existence and has therefore become a disposable life who has no legal rights or protection from harm. This exclusion permits the death of the subject without any judicial consequences given that s/he is outside the law. The suspension of rights (human and political) can be applied to the uncouneted, the undocumented, in their encounter with border authorities who have been entrusted with the task of preventing the entry of any *homo sacer* into the nation. The notion of bare life can be applied to the global distribution of the sensible i.e. the implicit manner of distinguishing between those who belong to the nation and those who do not. The creation of reception centers as part of the fight against unsanctioned migration points to the marginalization of undocumented migrants as spectral figures who have no part in the governance of the nation as citizens. To echo the words of Sarah Sharma (2009), the camp as a non-place is "not merely concerned with surveillance and techniques of normalization (panopticon) but pro-active risk management and control through banning (banopticon)" (137). This apt description of the baring of the life of undocumented migrants excommunicated to the margins of the country of immigration stresses the suspicion held toward them. Put differently, this space "already assumes the criminality of the migrant, loiterer, or the terroristic essence of a brown body" (Sharma, 2009:138). The suggestion is that by putting these subjects away from public view, essentially rendering them spectral or invisible, the

threat they personify can be nipped in the bud. This corroborates Isin and Rygiel's (2006) assertion that "Camps function as reservation zones where the rights of subjects can be suspended as a first step in stripping away their status as political subjects in order to render them as abject" (197). Becoming apolitical, abject and without rights marks the effective transformation of the human (a political subject) to the non-human (loss of political rights) as evidence of the attempt to cross the dividing lines of the distributed sensible.

The camp is, thus, the site of invisibility par excellence in the management of unauthorized migration. Michel Agier (2011) has argued that the location of these so-called centers on the threshold of countries symbolize the rejection of undesirables – the accursed ones (*homo sacer*). Similarly, Esther Peeren (2014) maintains that "these subjects are concentrated in tightly controlled spaces of exclusion in which their lives are definitely subjugated to the power of death and their existence is characterized by terror, constant uncertainty and unfreedom. In their utter vulnerability and exposedness, they suffer social death" (69)¹⁰². This reality echoes Derrida's words in that "...the expulsion and deportation of so many exiles, stateless persons, and immigrants from a so-called national territory already herald a new experience of frontier and identity..." (101). The resultant normalization of expulsion and detention without respect of the human rights of irregular migrants in camps condition them perpetually in a state of exception. Being in the position of *the scared man*, the clandestine is also a specter confined to the interstice of the outside and the inside. For although s/he may be present on the exterior, s/he must remain invisible and absent from the interior to remain ghostly. His/her otherness is reinforced by the ambivalent external space which is both open and closed and assigns him to difference.

¹⁰²Social death refers to the expulsion from humanity altogether, formulated by Mbembe in his *Necropolitics*.

In *Fire at Sea*, the migrants who survive the sea crossing to arrive on Lampedusa's shores are restricted to a camp secluded from the larger society. In effect, this sequestration prohibits any form of contact between most of the islanders and the newcomers. Besides some of the residents such as Maria, who heard the news about them on the radio, the coast guards and Dr Bartholo, who examines them medically, the irregular migrants' presence is spectralized by the absence of interaction with the local population. Therefore, although they exist in the sociopolitical conscience of the island, they are physically cut off. It is useful to mention Maria Oikonomou's (2018) insight that "...the only trait of the specter which can be assigned to the migrant and also to the image of migration is the specific phenomenology of not being there- the migrant as a reduced or 'poor' specter, as a specter with next to no attributes or properties" (2). Her intervention serves to delineate the deliberate attempt by power to render clandestine migration and its agents spectral. This echoes Derrida's (1996) visible in-visible, that is "an invisible of the order of the visible that I can keep in secret by keeping it out of sight (90)¹⁰³. Applying this to the camp, the quarantining of the undocumented migrant in a supposed reception center makes them unseen although they would be probably seen without such seclusion.

Since these subjects have been "hidden" on purpose, they belong to the order of the visible in-visible. To concretize this argument, Isin and Rygiel's (2006) insight is useful in that the politics of containment in migration control means that "the zones, frontiers, and camps of our time are *abject spaces*, spaces in which the intention is to treat people neither as subjects (of discipline) nor as objects (of elimination), but as those without presence,

¹⁰³Derrida delineates two forms of invisibility in *The Gift of Death*: a visible in-visible, "an invisible of the order of the visible that I can keep in secret by keeping it out of sight" and an absolute invisibility which "falls outside the register of sight" (90).

without existence, as inexistent beings, not because they don't exist, but because their existence is rendered invisible and inaudible" (184). Put differently, state power weaponizes the space of the camp to make the irregular migrant in-visible, through the intentional shrouding of the subject (in secrecy) to preclude his perceptibility. Thus, clandestines, kept in camps, become those "without presence, without existence and inexistent beings" by design. This visibly in-visible subject is a disempowered figure in the sense of Clifford's (1963) *social invisibility*¹⁰⁴. In other words, the camp conforms to Peeren's (2014) idea of the spectral metaphor of the undocumented migrant founded on "dispossession", "social invisibility", "expendability" and "lack of agency" (75). Consequently, the irregular migrant as a ghost who cannot be perceived optically by the masses persists in the anonymity or the present-absence that the political "common" (the sensible) assigns to him/her.

My reading of invisibility and the irregular migrant's spectrality seeks to illuminate both state power's rendering him unseen and the clandestine's own forms of objection that affirm his agency to appropriate tactics of in/visibility. In this perspective, clothing is an instrumentalized materiality that reveals the undocumented migrants' humanity amid wanting to be invisible on one hand and being made invisible on the other hand. Garments as a marker of identity and personhood have been documented in films such as Chus Gutiérrez's 2008 film, *Retorno a Hansala* and Sylvain George's 2010 documentary film, *Qu'ils reposent en révolte (Des figures de guerre I)*. In *Retorno a Hansala*, the clothes of deceased Moroccan migrants who attempted entering Spain clandestinely become the tool of identification to find their village and their families. The attires, though belonging to

¹⁰⁴See also Fullmer, Shenk and Eastland (1999).

persons who are dead, serve as a material representation in their (physical) absence. In other terms, the clothes bear a haunting effect that connects the object to the subject to give human form to the absentee.



Figure 11: Clothes hanging on a fence in the camp in *Fire at Sea*

Visualizing life in the abject space of political control in Rosi's *Fire at Sea*, the camera pans around the camp and shows a welded fence with clothes hanging on it. The outfits are spread about on the metallic wall and cast shadows within the space of the camp. The centering of the clothing reverberates the absence of bodies which highlights the invisibility of the inhabitants of the camp and therefore creates a form of ghostliness. On the other hand, the persons in the space appear as silhouettes in the corners of the frame making them unrecognizable as individuals. Their positionality in the action framework instantiates them as an indistinguishable mass of bodies precluded from perception. In other words, the shadows cast by their materiality symbolize their figurative ghosthood. I argue that, the clothes become the only form of identification as a sign of human life within

the context of the detention center. This strikes a resemblance with a scene from Sylvain George's 2010 documentary film, *Qu'ils reposent en révolte (Des figures de guerre I)*, where a piece of clothing hangs on the barbed-wire fence in Calais' jungle. This evocative image of a figure of absence whose apparel is left behind as evidence of his subjecthood brings home the point that the physical border is only as much as able to stop material possessions of the clandestine subject. In George's film, it is not clear whether the clothing belongs to a migrant or refugee on the run who managed to get away while leaving it behind or that it was intentionally put up as a sign of protest and evidence of life in the jungle.

In *Fire at Sea*, one wonders about the implication of the fence given that the site of containment is by default an enclosed structure which forecloses entry and exit except such granted by power's mandate. Accordingly, the location of the barrier on the inside of the camp introduces another layer of control through its mirroring of (external) borders. It portrays the obstructive presence of anti-immigration surveillance. The suggestion is that the sequestered undocumented traveler, besides being transformed into a visible in-visible subject, is also surveilled to prevent him/her from going beyond the boundaries set for him/her. The metallic wall is to serve as a reminder of the political presence that is streamlining mobility. Additionally, the hanging of the camp-dwellers' clothing on this wall concretizes the effects of the unequal distribution of the sensible that forces them into invisibility by denying them the opportunity to assert their mobility rights. More so, the clothes, as signs of human life, placed on the fence marks a graphic representation of the exclusion of clandestines and their constant confrontation with borders within and without host societies.

Clandestin and spectrality: in/visibility, de-identification and living as a specter

Clandestinity involves an interplay between the migrant subject's spectral characteristics as a form of and a loss of agency. That is to say, the undocumented person's stealthy mode of traveling comprises an act to challenge the control over free movement, but it simultaneously marks his/her powerlessness as a human subject in the face of political border management. Bédouet's film foregrounds this phenomenon through the search of an undocumented migrant by his brother, Salif, who himself arrives illegally in France. This brings to the fore two sides of the spectral migrant: one who travels as a ghost and one who lives as a ghost in the society of immigration. To realize his objective, Salif hides severally in or under trucks following his arrival at a French port and when he gets to Paris. As a clandestine from Mauritania, it is imperative to refer to the national terminology used to describe this journey: "Siriyan" formed from the word for "secret"¹⁰⁵. In other words, unsanctioned migration is construed as a secret activity which concretizes the subject's recourse to invisibility not only for entry into the destination country but equally the way of life to lead there. Meanwhile this "secret" has an existential dimension, national and racial identity-wise, owing to the foreigner's otherness to the space s/he desires to enter. As such, Derrida argues that "The secret isn't just something, a content that would have to be hidden or kept within oneself. Others are secret because they are other" (162). Hence, the unauthorized traveler's movement in secret then, in the Derridean sense, becomes a doubling up of his/her otherness as s/he originally does not belong to the country of immigration: thus, the one is essentially a secret and travels secretly. This takes

¹⁰⁵Andersson (2014), Abderrezak (2016).

advantage of the current distribution of the sensible in which the foreigner is considered absent because s/he has no part to the European territory.

Hiding is, therefore, the unsanctioned migrant's springboard to escaping from detection by anti-migration state authorities. Consequently, Salif manages to avoid being caught by customs officials who control entry into and exit from the port during their patrols by concealing himself either in or under stationary or moving vehicles. The ability to remain undiscoverable during this time underlines his transformation into a ghost i.e. an invisible presence. Despite the attentive gaze of these guards, the spectral migrant overcomes the borders meant to keep out the foreigner and continues to haunt the fortress. This haunting is explained not only by the subject's non-European identity, but also his absent-presence aided by his spectral capability or action. We can look, for instance, at how he obliges the Parisian family he meets to transport him to the French capital. Having asked if he could travel with them, the man retorted that there was no room left in the car because they were transporting a table despite the woman's willingness to grant the request. Salif turns away and gives the impression that he has accepted this refusal. However, while loading the car, the couple's young son calls the father's attention to a "strange" sight which the latter discovers, much to his chagrin, to be Salif, who had entered the vehicle surreptitiously. The apparent momentary acceptance of the denial serves as a reminder of the would-be migrant's presumed disposition toward the European fortress which refuses access into it. Nonetheless, the obstinate determination which results in the stealthy movement across borders shows that one would be wrong to think that there is consenting to the putative rejection. Hence, the camera shows Salif waiting in the car to be sent to his destination. This scene recalls that in Ismaël Ferroukhi's *Le Grand Voyage* where an old

woman in black attire enters and sits in the car of strangers (a father and a son) who are driving from France to Mecca without their approval and remains there in spite of the son's insistence that she leave the car. Her momentary disappearance from the car and reappearance to the strangers, despite their attempts to force her out, inscribes her with spectrality and has haunting effects on the two men. In effect, these scenes underscore the facticity of the aspiring migrant's refusal to be left behind, to be denied participation in the opportunities offered by foreign travel.



Figure 12: Salif, seated like an apparition in the car, as discovered by the child and his father in *Clandestin*

This unfamiliar face to the young boy displays a troubling presence which has transgressed a space to which it does not belong. The child's facial expression, marked by fright and distress, accentuates the ghostliness of the subject in view. Although Salif is briefly known by the father due to their earlier encounter, his self-imposition on the family's property creates a nervous reaction from the owner. At the same time, the positionality of Salif in the car, sitting in the middle of the backseat, and in the center of

the camera's frame between the two gazes accents the complexity of unsanctioned migration as an infiltration of territories where one is unexpected to be (seen). On one hand, being in the back, the undocumented subject seems at first sight to inherently accept a position of second order to be a part of this space he "originally" does not have a part to. On the other hand, the medial position he commandeers suggests that he is calling for attention toward his self-marginalization as an "unknown" presence. However, there is a concurrent staging of the controlling gaze and the irregular migrant's outsmarting of same. Having gained access without being detected by the surveilling eye, Salif can only now be looked upon by the prevailing power, in this case the owner of the car. Further to this, the frame's metaphoricity underpinned by the question of invisibility can be read as a microcosm of the clandestine migrant's secretive and (sometimes) forceful entry into the country of immigration where s/he haunts both specifically and generally.

As Marko Juntunen (2002) demonstrates, clandestinity begins but does not end because the undocumented migrant is obliged to remain imperceptible in the host country. In Paris, Salif learns about the "secret" lifestyle of other Africans living there. The necessity of being invisible to succeed in unauthorized migration encourages the migrant to destroy all forms of identification which link them to a national identity¹⁰⁶. The destruction of these documents is aimed at making it difficult if not impossible for security agencies to deport clandestines when they are discovered. When Salif meets Mohammed, a family man who seems to know the migrant community well and temporarily agrees to take him in, the latter advises him to burn his identity documents. This suggestion is supported by another undocumented migrant from Morocco, Idriss, who later becomes

¹⁰⁶Andersson (2014), Abderrezak (2016).

Salif's friend and guide to survival. In his words, "Tu dois savoir bien les règles. Déchire tes papiers ! On ne doit rien savoir sur toi-ni étudiant, ni ton âge" [You have to know the rules well. Rip up your papers! Nothing must be known about you- neither as a student nor your age] (translation mine). The young man heeds the advice and the camera shows him tearing his Mauritanian identity card.



Figure 13: Salif shreds his ID card to conceal his (national) origin/identity in *Clandestin*

Evidently, the unauthorized migrant is willing to abandon his or her documented identity to become unidentifiable and, in the process, blur state power's gaze on him/her as well as control of his/her right to mobility and settlement where s/he desires. The emphasis on self-effacement as a rule for survival in the film echoes a passage from Mahi Binebine's 1999 novel, *Welcome to Paradise (Cannibales)*, in which an irregular migrant ruminates on the rules for success in the host society for (future) clandestines. He opines, "learn how to become invisible, disappear into a crowd, hug the walls, avoid eye contact, speak only when spoken to, bury our pride and close our hearts to humiliation and insults, throw our

switchblades in the gutter, learn to keep in the background, to be nobody: another shadow, a stray dog, a lowly earthworm, or even a cockroach. That's it, yes, learn to be a cockroach" (72). The emphasis on the necessity of knowing how to lead this way of life is evidenced by the repetition of the verb "learn". In this context, learning evokes the adaptation to a new reality and the transformation of the self into nothingness. This suggests that the subject concerned is not conversant with the lifestyle however it has become necessary for the accomplishment of the goal of clandestinely entering and staying in the fortress to which one is denied (easy legal) entry. Therefore, invisibility, the act of becoming spectral is the main asset for continued existence as an unauthorized migrant. This is corroborated by words and expressions such as "invisible", "disappear", "keep in the background", "be nobody" and "shadow" which underline ghostliness. Being a specter then, the clandestine migrant can see without being seen by others since he avoids every form of perception and contact with the world around him. Moreover, the erasure or self-denial of human emotional characteristics like pride, humiliation, insult, and shame underscores the spectral migrant's self-effacement to become less human, simply a "shadow", precisely a ghost. By this dehumanization or depersonalization, s/he can exist on the margins of society without encountering power's controlling gaze. The link established between the undocumented migrant and animals such as a stray dog, an earthworm, and a cockroach points to the lowness of this migratory condition of invisibility. This appropriation of animalistic characteristics concretizes the individual's loss of humanness and personhood. In other words, the irregular migrant – a ghost – occupies the lowest rank of the social order and must carefully negotiate the space s/he finds her/himself in to avoid being crushed in the crowd.

As I have argued, clandestinity is not a passive subjecthood as there are multiple acts of protest to assert one's agency, however limited it may be. Beside the popular incineration of passports and other forms of national identification, there are equally bodily forms of personal disidentification such as the obliteration of fingerprints with razors in response to the digitization of frontiers and surveillance. In *Qu'ils reposent en révolte*, an Eritrean refugee, Temesghen, scrapes off the skin of his fingers to erase his biometric/biological prints. In a poignant tirade, he explains the essence of the act:

Survive! We have to survive in Europe. This is virus, HIV virus you know, this is virus in Europe. If it was possible to cut this one and throw it and bring another hand, I was doing that. But it is not possible. Just burning my hands. I don't know what happens to my hand. They are making us slaves, you know, slaves of [their] own country, by this fingerprint. They destroy our life. We can't go. We can't change our life.

Given that applicants for asylum and undocumented migrants over the age of 14 years are required by law within the EU to have their fingerprints taken to ascertain their entry and subsequent movements across the European space¹⁰⁷, the erasure of fingerprints, a tool for biometric identification, enables the irregular migrant to become invisible to digital or technological borders. Put differently, invisibility or spectrality is thus achieved through the self-denial of bio-recognition, identity, and classification in favor of gaining migratory and identarian fluidity synonymous with the ghost. In Temesghen's view, to disfigure his fingerprint is to refuse the slavery of biometric identification and digital border surveillance which streamline who can move and to where. To echo Sanyal's (2017) words, "The destruction of a "self" in its official biopolitical inscription, as digital marker of

¹⁰⁷European Dactyloscopy (Eurodac) is the EU's fingerprint database system for taking and checking the prints of asylum seekers and undocumented border-crossers into the European Union. As a centralized technological unit of the European Commission, it enables the automatic crosschecking of fingerprints to determine initial points of entry or illegal movement into new countries.

identification, is the price of survival and flight toward another becoming” (17). The survival and another becoming alluded to here underline the spectral character that the irregular migrant metamorphoses into to challenge the current *sensible*. In other words, the aim of this disfigurement which renders the person indecipherable to border technology, underscores the subject’s determination to claim and execute the right to movement without impediments. To emphasize this perspective, Sanyal (2017) maintains that “the erasure of fingerprints is not conducted in the name of a right to be *seen*¹⁰⁸, but in the name of the right to disappear”, the right to be spectral and mobile yet illegible and unhindered (20). This is corroborated by Tuck and Ree’s (2013) assertion that “Erasure and defacement concoct ghosts; I don’t want to haunt you, but I will. (643). Being seen means falling under the gaze of surveillance and power’s restrictive control over mobility. However, invisibility, identity-lessness and statelessness, *au fantôme*, circumvent dividing lines, separating walls and rigid borders to enhance movability for the undocumented migrant. This unrecognizable subject then eludes arrest, detention, and deportation.

Meanwhile, Papadopoulous and Tsianos (2008) argue that this persona falls without the regime of rights since the spectralizing act of effacing fingermarks constitutes “a voluntary ‘de-humanization’ in the sense that it breaks the relation between your name and your body. A body without a name is a nonhuman human being; an animal which runs. It is non-human because it deliberately abandons the humanist regime of rights” (227). While this characterization is apt for understanding the “neo-identity” of the undocumented migrant as a stateless being, ascribing animality to him takes away his agency and authenticity as a force of opposition to power structures. The auto -de-humanized self does

¹⁰⁸The emphasis is mine.

not fall outside the realm of rights for it is for the express possession and use of the right of free movement that he accepts to be ghostly. Consequently, the separation between name and body is a concretization of the breakaway from any static classification which inhibits the enjoyment of cross-border mobility. A nameless, unidentifiable body that cannot be linked to a prejudiced racial, national, religious or economic origin is the passport to fortress Europe and by extension the globalized world.

The survival of the clandestine subject in the host society depends on the capacity to live ghostly i.e. being in the background and avoiding being seen. In *Clandestin*, Idriss provides Salif with important details on how to remain invisible to authorities, particularly the police. To enact the skills of invisibility learnt, the camera shows Salif and Idriss in the middle of town among a crowd in which no one seems to notice them. Although they are physically present among the people, the latter's apparent unawareness or ignorance of their presence sustains their spectrality. They appear as simple apparitions who are imperceptible to the ordinary person except for the police who have a keen interest in fishing them out. When they see a group of policemen approaching, Idriss leaves Salif and takes a position at a distance to observe the demonstration of invisibility by the latter.



Figure 14: Salif passing through police officers who do not “see” him in *Clandestin*

Indeed, Salif succeeds in passing through the forces of law and order who do not “see” him. The officers’ gazes are directed away from him in a manner that effaces him from their purview. His movement between them without any “physical” contact with them highlights his ghostliness and the spectral effect created by this absent-presence. In this manner, Salif fulfills Akira Lippit’s (2005) notion of avisibility. The controlling gaze makes him an avisual subject since although “presented to vision, there to be seen, the avisual image remains, in a profoundly irreducible manner, unseen. Or rather, it determines an experience of seeing, a sense of the visual, without ever offering an image [...] All signs lead to a view, but at its destination, nothing is seen. What is seen is this absence, the materiality of an avisual form or body” (32). Hence, in this space, the clandestine successfully conducts himself as a shadow that is unnoticeable by the surveilling eye. As representatives or symbols of power, the gaze of the police and the spectral migrant’s ability to escape it point to what Derrida calls a “theatricalization of ghosts”¹⁰⁹. However, this can be read as either an intentional blindness or simply a refusal on the part of the police to see when the migrant hides and does not engage in any acts of dissensus – disrupting order or the sensible. Lippit’s (2005) avisibility as a negated presence in that while the subject is pristinely visible – by reason of his corporeality – he proves artificially imperceptible by a deliberate misrecognition echoes Fred Moten’s (2003) reading of invisibility. According to Moten (2003), “The mark of invisibility is a visible, racial mark; invisibility has visibility at its heart. To be invisible is to be seen, instantly and fascinatingly recognized as the unrecognizable, as the abject, as the absence of individual self-consciousness, as a transparent vessel of meanings wholly independent of any influence of

¹⁰⁹ Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, p.51.

the vessel itself' (68). As a clandestine migrant, Salif is denied the meaning of his physicality as a human subject and made to be unnoticeable, without any visible significance on his surroundings.

Nonetheless, the unrecognizability of Salif exhibited by the police demonstrates another form of the visor effect of seeing without being seen which becomes suggestive of a form of empowerment for invisible living for the irregular migrant. In other words, Salif becomes the one who sees and is not seen although he is there. Despite the negation and non-acknowledgement of his individual consciousness by the agents of sovereignty, he acquires a new phenomenality that enables his co-possession of the country of immigration. Thus, contrarily, by juxtaposing this scene with other scenes where Salif and other undocumented migrants are chased by the police for hawking in front of a public building, the importance of invisibility becomes even more striking. This is because when they show themselves on the public scene by engaging in commercial and other unapproved activities, they open themselves up to be seen and controlled which results in arrest and subsequent repatriation. However, by attentively choosing modes of operation and livelihood which reinforce their secrecy, they can remain indiscernible if not ignored for not possessing any material value. The suggestion is that the self-effacement and ghostliness of the clandestine to demand a part to the society of immigration may be the accepted mode of action in the eyes of state power who either *does not see* or practically ignores the presence of the undocumented person when s/he is "invisible" in public. Therefore, while demanding his/her due by drawing the attention of power toward him/her, the irregular migrant continues to find ways to circumvent surveillance mechanisms.

The missing irregular migrant, photography, detention and ghosthood

Photography in Bédouet's film depicts another aspect of the undocumented person's spectrality. It invokes the in/visibility dichotomy within clandestinity by opposing a photographic presence to a corporeal absence. It serves as a stand-in for the subject who cannot be seen either because they are hiding or have been put away from the public space. At the beginning of the narrative, Salif arrives in France with the photograph of his brother Abdou, an undocumented immigrant living in Paris, whose family have had no news about for some time. The photo serves as the only form of memory and of identification for the missing brother. Although he is physically absent from the film's narrative space (as he does not appear), Abdou's presence manifests itself through the picture in Salif's possession. The photograph is both a fixed object and a fragment which survives the being to become "a certificate of presence" (Barthes 1981:87). For Derrida, this is a virtuality which produces an appearance by rendering it ghostly. It then follows that the photo has a spectral function which ensures that the presence of the subject (in this case, Abdou) continues to occupy Salif's conscience as well as the narrative thread. In watching the film, the spectator wonders where Abdou might be since his absent-presence foregrounded by the mystery surrounding him has an influence on both the protagonist and his development. Given that Salif's journey to France as an irregular migrant was informed and guided by the picture, it creates an anachronic temporality. This is because, the photo precedes Salif's arrival in France and remains the main source of inspiration for carrying out the search for his brother. The protagonist's constant possession of the photograph highlights its spectral force which stirs him as a ghostly migrant who while living clandestinely has the task of finding another phantom subject. Moreover, Abdou's spectrality through his picture is

reinforced by the Parisian migrant community in Barbès who claim they do not know him. Their ignorance of him can be read as underlining his existence as a ghost in the host nation since no one is aware of his whereabouts.

Furthermore, the immaterial or non-physical presence of the specter does not alter its visibility. As demonstrated by Derrida, “the specter is first and foremost something visible. It is of the visible, but of the invisible visible, it is the visibility of a body which is not present in flesh and blood. It resists the intuition to which it presents itself, it is not *tangible*” (115, the emphasis is in the original). Similarly, the photograph which personifies Abdou’s body maintains his captivating in/visibility through its intangibility. On the same tangent, Peeren (2014) is right to posit that “missing persons can exert a powerful haunting force on those searching for them” (144). The missing subject has an enigmatic character for the one looking for them since there is no possibility of ascertaining their whereabouts or what might have happened to them. This produces anxiety which perpetuates a fixed memory of the person concerned since the evanescent. The uncertainty surrounding the missing person, whether alive or dead, makes him elusive to concrete knowledge. The corresponding spectrality evoked by their absence is not a form of avisuality but may belong to the order of the visibly in-visible. The missing person’s relationship with time and space belongs to the unknown, a dissymmetrical present-absence as he is captured in a past, static temporality and an unidentifiable setting like in the case of Abdou.

Consequently, for Gillian Rose (2007), photographs – serving as a presence of the absent – “participate in complex relational geographies of memory, desire, love and loss...and grief” (57). The memory Salif has of his missing brother, premised on the picture, is that of a successful immigrant in France who is the breadwinner of his family in

the homeland. The supposed fortune acquired that is depicted in the image points out the loss and grief suffered by Abdou's relations in his absence. Not receiving any remittance or news from him emphasizes the scope of distress and sorrow that his memory through the photograph reveals. To this end, the location of the picture (where it was taken) and its use by Salif is worthy of commentary. The photo materializes Abdou's desire for socioeconomic success in France. By posing for the shot in front of a house and a car, which likely do not belong to him, the image symbolizes the attainment of the financial dream, one of the motivating factors for Afro-European migration. This represents an act of agency and migratory dream in that, the scenery provides an insight into his defiance to possess material wealth despite his unbelongingness to the country of immigration. Simultaneously, it is representative of the souvenir his family has of him which due to his disappearance markedly enforces a deep feeling of loss and grief for them.

Nevertheless, the photo serves as evidence of the lie of the immigrant¹¹⁰ and the form of haunting it represents to others. In the image, Abdou is seen standing in front of a car and a big house which portrays a glorious image of the settled migrant's life in France when in fact most clandestines live in deplorable conditions. For this reason, Mohammed asks Salif, "if the house belongs to him, why doesn't he give you the address?" This pertinent question challenges the conviction of Salif who believes his brother has acquired such wealth but he refuses to accept the possibility that neither the house nor the car belongs to him. This disagreement shows the troubling effect that the immigrant's lie has on the unapproved migrant who is attracted by a myth (an absence) which he believes as truth (a presence). In his bid to hang on to the hope of finding Abdou, Salif displays the photograph

¹¹⁰For Abdelmalek Sayad (2000), the lie of the immigrant is the utopian image of Europe created by returning immigrants to their fellow citizens back home.

on the windshield of the car which serves as a sleeping place for him and other undocumented persons. This act further deepens the photograph's symbolism of the figure of the spectral migrant who is without corporeal presence but only limited to a cognitive awareness of his personhood by some who may know him or are affected by his predicament.

However, there is a larger implication of this consciousness that affects the clandestine migrant community. As argued by Peeren (2014), "some missing people exert an affective force that affords them, or at least the shadows cast by their felt absence, great social and political impact" (183). The affective potency cum socio-political impact of Abdou's disappearance is doubly underlined by his positionality as a clandestine migrant and a missing person which alerts others to the potential of experiencing a similar predicament. The posting of his image in shared or public spaces extends the uneasy curiosity about him and creates a collective mental image and social awareness of this absence. While the missing person is generally linked with a victimhood of innocence where s/he might have been abducted or killed, the irregular migrant lacks this attribution of irreproachability and rather leads to several possibilities that point to his guilt. And yet, the disappeared is a disempowered subject who cannot speak. He might be dead, in prison for crimes committed, in police custody or in a detention center awaiting deportation since he resides in the host country illegally. This existential uncertainty is best described as the price to pay for being an unauthorized migrant in the fortress.

The detention of unwanted migrants, like their seclusion to camps, places them within the continuum of invisibility and spectrality i.e. becoming unseen. In the final sequences of the film, we discover that Abdou is doing down time in a Parisian prison.

This resolves the puzzle of his absence but enables us to raise questions about the undocumented migrant's juridical experiences and how it concretizes his spectrality. Like the logic of the camp's reclusion, the prison cell is a masking tool that denies the subject social visibility and human right. To exert control and reduce immigration risks, detention has become the de facto mechanism for managing irregular border crossing and to underscore state power's hardline approach. Malloch and Stanley (2005) argue that immigration detention serves to allay citizens' fears of the security dangers posed by unwanted foreigners. As I have suggested earlier, detention in the management of clandestine mobility is effectively relatable to the Derridean notion of the visible in-visible since it is the purposive hiding or confinement of the undocumented person. Besides, the institution of imprisonment to deal with illegal/criminal activity in the 18th century has served to enact a form social/civil death since for Simon (1998) it intertwines rights and liberties on one hand with prejudice and oppression on the other. Despite Hannah Arendt's (1976) argument that the internment camp is "the only place which the world had to offer the stateless" (287), in the case of Abdou, he is a suspect of crime and an undocumented migrant who is in jail. As such, his detention may be said to be both for what he has done (a crime) and his socio-political identity (an undocumented migrant). Indeed, the commission of a felony even by a citizen in the modern state is subjected to incarceration and thus, he cannot be excluded from the same punishment. However, it is plausible to suggest that being an unwanted foreigner in breach of sovereign laws complicates any reading of the situation. Incarceration for an undocumented migrant who is suspected of dealing in drugs has a dual functionality. Since he is without the requisite immigration documents, he is a candidate for jail given the outlawing of unauthorized border crossing

by countries like Italy and France. Simultaneously, engaging in the illicit trade of drug trafficking is an illegality which is punishable by downtime. Thus, Abdou's invisibility in the entirety of the diegesis reverberates the biopolitical exertion on the clandestine subject as one to be unseen and is a reminder that "something is missing"¹¹¹."

Moreover, the ghostliness of the irregular migrant through self-effacement and the political mechanisms by which s/he is rendered invisible complicate the subject's accession of juridical processes and protection. It is not clear if Abdou has access to legal aid or not, but we do know from the narrative that others in the community are unaware of his condition. Thus, within the context of immigration control and deportation in international law whereby the Returns Directive¹¹² streamlines detention procedures including establishing detainees' access to legal representation, contact with family relations and consular authorities of their country of origin, it is safe to suggest that Abdou does not benefit from these provisions. Bédouet's film does not shed light on the process of his arrest and detention which leaves room for speculative analysis of the situation. If as we know the clandestine migrant to destroy documentations of national identity such as passports and ID cards to remain untraceable and "undeportable" by power, then it is acceptable to suggest that it may be impossible to contact consular officials of his country of origin and subsequently his family since Abdou may not possess any form of identification to facilitate it. It is equally admissible to argue that the irregular migrant would prefer the invisibility offered by prison cells to the shame of repatriation to his/her country. Meanwhile, since Derrida suggests that the in-visible/hidden can be revealed

¹¹¹Gordon (1997:15).

¹¹²Returns Directive was promulgated in 2008 by the European Parliament for the harmonization of the conditions of deportation of foreign nationals residing in European countries without proper documentation.

through an operation, we discover Abdou's predicament through a French woman whom Salif asks to find the former. To see Abdou, she tells Salif that she told the judge handling his brother's case that he was part of a group of migrants to whom she taught French. Without dwelling on the fact that she lied to be able to see the prisoner, her action – though only limited to revealing the whereabouts of the detainee without necessarily leading to his release and thereby complete social visibility – is tantamount to the operation of uncovering that unmask what is hidden from sight in Derrida's theorization.

Yet, there remains a difference between Abdou's detention (being in an undocumented status and crime) and Salif's deportation (as one who simply crossed borders without permission) to be explored. After finding out about his brother's predicament, Salif has his own encounter with the forces of order. The camera shows him at a building site where he and his clandestine migrant friend, Idriss, have been working as laborers. When Idriss falls from the edifice under construction and dies, Salif is enjoined by his coworkers to leave the corpse before the police arrive. His failure to heed this advice results in his arrest and subsequent deportation to Mauritania. As the workers run off at the approach of the officers of law, Salif adamantly mourns over the dead body of his confidant. I suggest that mourning instantiates a moment of vulnerability, becoming visible and asserting one's humanity for Salif. The pain of losing a friend forces him to let go of his protective guard of hiding in place of his humanness to grief over the loss of another person. Alternatively, the ghostly migrant who has either effaced his human identity or been rendered invisible by power's controlling mechanisms must remain dehumanized, incapable of expressing carnal attributes or characteristics. On this wavelength, we can emphasize the disposability of the undocumented migrant whose death may be unmourned.

The prescription to abandon Idriss' body points to the expendable waste represented by the loss of life of an irregular migrant¹¹³. It is suggested that he no longer merits human sympathy except to be thrown away into a grave as a closure to his invisible materiality – lost to sight and humanity forever. For Salif, by withdrawing from the scene – being in flight –, the undocumented foreigner may be able to maintain his surreptitiousness or ghostliness and as such escape detection by security agencies. Hardt and Negri (2012) are therefore right to affirm that “Most often, flight involves not coming out into the open but rather becoming invisible. Since security functions so often by making you visible, you have to escape by refusing to be seen. Becoming invisible, too, is a kind of flight. The fugitive, the deserter, and the invisible are the real heroes (or antiheroes) of the struggle of the securitized to be free” (38). Put differently, the irregular migrant must not show himself (present) in matters that revolve around legality since he is first in contravention of the law of entering sovereign borders without express permission. When a clandestine migrant is made visible to the security apparatus, the subject becomes a candidate for expulsion from the territory of immigration. This marks a difference in the circumstance surrounding Abdou's detention and Salif's arrest and later repatriation. Consequently, the latter's summary detainment and removal are the evidence of the failure to remain in flight and circumvent the oppression of securitization.

¹¹³Dal Lago (2009) and Abderrezak (2016) have demonstrated that the corpses of unsuccessful migrants become simply refuse to the society of immigration. They are at best an environmental nuisance.

Conclusion

The appearance of the unsanctioned migrant in the form of a ghost manifests itself in diverse ways as discussed here. The foregoing analysis has explored the relationship between the visibility and invisibility which surround the clandestine migrant in *Fire at Sea* and *Clandestin*. Through this reflection, unauthorized migration manifests itself as a spectral phenomenon which haunts Europe. To borrow Avery Gordon's (1997) words "The ghost is not simply a dead or a missing person, but a social figure... The ghost or apparition is one form by which something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there to our supposedly well-trained eyes, makes itself known or apparent to us..." (8). The ghost of unauthorized migration is not (necessarily) a figure of return but an instrumentalized subjectivity, from an acquired skill or an imposed shadowed positionality in the now and present. This haunting of the spectral migrant results from the universal distribution of the sensible with relation to the asymmetrical access to migration between citizens of the Global North and South. For as Tuck and Ree (2013) observe, "Haunting is the cost of subjugation" (643). The ghostly irregular migrant who does not have a part to the country of immigration haunts this space through a refusal to accept the paradoxical sensible of the global era in which mobility, both a right and an asset, is constantly restrained.

The clandestine migrant's invisibility revolves around a life of concealment, stealth and perseverance in a space he has no part to but remains "...a phantom, a secret form of life, a life formed around a secret, around the pursuit and preservation of a secret" (Lippit 2005: 7). Moreover, the undocumented foreigner must confront anti-migration control systems and be able to evade such mechanisms to enter the host society which underpins the resort to spectrality. On one hand, the (would-be) migrant appropriates the invisible

character of the ghost by destroying forms of identification, hiding, and travelling in the night to avoid being detected by border authorities. On the other hand, surveillance technologies on national frontiers render the unsanctioned traveler spectral. The proliferation of digital monitoring systems makes border control a ghostly presence which haunts the voyager and thus, the latter is obliged to efface his/her corporeality to outwit the watchful gaze of power. The correlation between the respective absent-presence of the irregular migrant and anti-migration supervision reifies the spectralization of clandestine migration.

Additionally, in *Fire at Sea*, the seclusion of undocumented migrants to camps without any form of contact with the local population, when they are intercepted or rescued by coast guards, maintains their ghostliness (present-absence). Despite their physical presence, they are rendered absent by this quarantining. Alternatively, the necessity of the unapproved foreigner to learn to be and remain invisible in the destination country is further emphasized in *Clandestin*. Thus, the spectral in/visibility is displayed through the clandestines' experiences and the functioning of sociopolitical structures for managing the border. The image of the undocumented traveler in the media and his photograph are also tools that perpetuate the immateriality that has become synonymous with him. As a result, the ghost of the unauthorized migrant produces a haunting effect (even an uncanniness) in the corpus under investigation. Indeed, the insistence on the exclusion of migrants from entering is unable to prevent clandestinity. Hence, Maurits (2015) opines that "... 'Fortress Europe' becomes a gothic castle haunted by a presence that refuses to obey the repressive logic of an inside and outside" (518). Thus, spectrality and the ensuing haunting of (irregular) migrants portends the continuation of unsanctioned migration as protestation.

Chapter 4: Intercontinental Hospitality: irregular migrants and the conditions of welcome

“but there is no custom of hospitality here, we do not need guests” Kafka’s *The Castle* (1998:12).

Introduction

The unauthorized migrant’s entry into the society of immigration to live an improved life is interspersed with an expectation of hospitality. The dispossession resulting from leaving one’s country and family, expending finances, becoming “invisible¹¹⁴” as well as the challenges of clandestine journeys¹¹⁵ provides a basis for the show of solidarity to irregular migrants as a fundamental humanitarian support. To interrogate the relationship between the migrant and the country of arrival or immigration as a function of hospitality, it is important to interpret the concepts of foreignness, and the performance of hospitality. By this, I mean, who is the foreigner? How and where is s/he welcomed? What parameters are set for her/his welcome into the new space? Marciniak and Bennett (2018) stipulate that “...foreignness is critically aporetic – undecidable and unstable... In our current historical moment, foreignness is increasingly an operative word that functions as a warning, a worry, a threat, or, indeed, an impasse. And foreignness is a term of unequal value, by all means not a universal term” (1-2). In spite of the aporia of foreignness, Rosello (2001) is right to suggest that there is no global citizenship. The failure to appreciate the non-universality of the term has simultaneously privileged its application to certain identities and marginalized others. Particularly, in the era of increased mobility across frontiers, some foreignness is acceptable, even preferable to others. The tourist is desirable as an outsider while the migrant/refugee of racial otherness is renounced.

¹¹⁴See chapter 3.

¹¹⁵See chapters 1 and 2 for discussions of these experiences.

This discrimination owes to a misrecognition or misunderstanding about these subjects, as Marciniak and Bennett have pointed out, in that they “were just inhabitants of specific societies and cultures and have *become* refugees [clandestines, undocumented] and thus have *become* foreign through various modes of escaping from war zones, political strives, upheavals, or postcolonial hardships” (6, the emphasis is in the original). In other words, their foreignness is circumstantial, born out of necessity rather than an existential category that denies them human recognition. Two key places of encounter are the national border and the citizen’s home. Both spaces inevitably presuppose the existence of an inside(r) and an outside(r): two entities that interact through crossing or mobility¹¹⁶. In the sphere of human movement, it is the outsider that traverses (into) the territory of the insider. The sovereign authority of the host over the guest’s safety, protection, and ability to use resources means that the latter’s experience of welcome reflects on the reputation of the host as hospitable or hostile¹¹⁷. For the present study, I analyze two films, Emmanuele Crialesi’s *Terraferma* (2011) and Jonas Carpignano’s *Mediterranea* (2015) drawing from Derrida’s seminal theorization of hospitality to engage with the question of South-North moral and socio-political engagement with the undocumented traveler. It becomes apparent that hospitality is variously conditioned in the incidence of clandestine migration. As such, can the uninvited guest – a specter as the preceding chapter argues – merit an ethical reception? Does s/he deserve the host society’s humanitarian response despite being “invisible” and/or foreign?

¹¹⁶See also Ballesteros (2015).

¹¹⁷See also Shryock (2012).

This chapter argues, through my examination of the two films, that the clandestine migrant faces an ambivalent reception in Fortress Europe which vacillates between welcome and unwelcome. This ambiguity results from the combination of political and legal limitations on who can host and who can be hosted within the state's borders. This is complicated on one hand by the perceptions of (un)desirability and threat toward the racialized irregular migrant and on the other hand, by the profitable and legal acceptance of tourists which makes hospitality a commercial entity. Indeed, the clandestine, an unwanted guest, lives within a range of conditional and unconditional practices of welcome which underscore the ambivalences toward him/her. As such, the undocumented migrant is forced to the peripheries of the country s/he enters where s/he must negotiate different obstacles including discrimination, xenophobia, and economic exploitation to attract acceptance, albeit temporally. Thus, the chapter shows the complexities of the confluence of hospitable and hostile acts toward the uninvited guest in destination spaces. Furthermore, my reading of *Mediterranea* lends credence to the suggestion that just as the tourist pays for hospitality, the unapproved migrant may "purchase" hospitality by expending his/her physical strength (labor) to the benefit of the host country, a form of "hospitality for sale". Pravinchandra's (2013) *hospitality for sale* encapsulates the acquisition of the hospitality of citizenship through the offering of a biomedical organ in exchange for a counterfeit passport. Due to the temporality of the citizenship, rights and acceptability enabled by the fake passport, this kind of hospitality is ephemeral, its longevity is subject to the non-discovery by state power. I expand this notion of hospitality for sale to include on one hand the commercial welcome offered to tourists (i.e. the business of hosting desirable guests) and on the other hand, the underpaid and unregulated labor

executed by clandestines to ensure their temporary stay as well as the employment requirements for regularizing their residency in the host society.

The films I have chosen to analyze in this chapter were produced by filmmakers who have expressed their pro-immigration stance in their response to the political reactions toward foreigners within Europe, particularly in the context of undocumented migration. *Terraferma* and *Mediterranea* display the directors' proposition for the acceptance of Otherness by engaging the spectatorship in a critical reflection on the phenomenon as an ethical imperative. These narratives create not only an awareness but also constitute a call to action to both state actors and individuals toward the plight of irregular migrants. Ballesteros (2015) has analyzed the prevalence of the nuclear family in nationalistic formation in *Terraferma*. She writes on the filmic message that "tolerance has to be cultivated within the family's structure as a first step to achieving a broader communal and supranational acceptance of Otherness" (169-170). Similarly, Pastorino (2017) argues that *Terraferma* portrays the coming of age of a country in the wake of unauthorized mobility. Among the critical acclaim of Carpignano's *Mediterranea*, Paynter (2017) reads it as an autobiographical testimony which blurs the fiction-reality divide. Given that several of the actors are migrants and nonprofessional actors who reenact their experiences through the filmmaker's camera, she maintains that this "complicates the idea of witness" (662). O'Healy's (2019) study focuses on the acts of immigrant resistance as countermapping. Thus, she argues that by recasting the 2010 Rosarno riots, *Mediterranea* "effectively shifts the conventional image of the immigrant as a victim to one of agency and active resistance. In other words, the film presents its viewers with images of immigrants' "anger, revolt, and empowerment" that undercut the tropes of victimhood" (219). Furthering these studies, I

analyze the encounter between the irregular migrant and the state as well as citizens through the prism of hospitality to reveal the multiple conditionalities that streamline welcome and unwelcome of the outsider.

My readings resonate with Derrida's reflections on conditional and pure hospitality to include new dimensions of the intricacies of such ethics contemporaneously. The human self, I contend, is a sine qua non of solidarity. However, as we will see, her/his acceptance into the space of the host is marked by multiple insufficient conditionalities: moral law, political law, race, money, employability, destitution, and sickness. I propose a systematic analysis of the diegesis to unpack the intricate limitations and affordabilities of the human body or life in the face of the multi-layered ethical attitudes in relation to clandestine migration. The films under investigation underscore the foregoing musings on the meeting between the stranger and the local by presenting the attitudes of the latter toward the former. Since migration can be unauthorized without being illegal¹¹⁸, as it is aimed at improving life chances, acceptance remediates the long-held erroneous perception of the foreigner as a physical, medical, sociocultural, and economic threat. I maintain that the state's openness to alterity serves as the turning point of the stranger's fortunes. Thus, humanity rather than financial agency, racial/national identity and legal status must be the determinant for hospitality. This concretizes the fact that migration is a universal human right which is not founded on race, citizenship, or mode of travel. To echo the words of Holmes and Castañeda (2016), "Individuals, families, and communities have been driven out of their homes by economic desperation that is politically produced-that is, they have been forcibly displaced by material factors other than war and temporally limited natural

¹¹⁸Carling (2007).

resources, but nevertheless produced by political forces” (17). This insight resonates with the films in the current corpus in that, clandestines are neither outrightly represented as refugees fleeing (political) violence or persecution nor as economic migrants. Besides, irregular migrant cohorts have been a mixture of collective and individual circumstances. Hence, in the filmic framing, the narratives do not engage in depicting any “hierarchy of deservingness”¹¹⁹ among the undocumented migrants – voluntary and involuntary – where the latter may be considered more deserving than the former.

On Hospitality

The concept of hospitality traces its origins to religiosity in Greek mythology. Homer’s *Odyssey* portrayed hospitality as sacred or sacrality whereby Zeus, the protector of guests, exemplifies the notion of *xenia* by welcoming travelers with generosity¹²⁰. Meanwhile, it is also a human virtue of religious piety. As such, it continues to have a moral perception to it¹²¹. Bulley (2015) has echoed Still’s (2010) postulation of hospitality as an “everyday practice” which is easily overlooked and thought of mostly in times of violence or catastrophe affecting lives. The frequency of undocumented migration in the globalized era and the subjects’ expectation of the receiving society’s welcome aligns with the everyday perspective of hospitality as an ethical response to other humans. Being a quotidian experience, it involves the agency of the host, a certain ability to open up to another subject. The power of hospitality then comprises the recognition of the other’s humanity and as worthy of it¹²². Since Immanuel Kant’s *Perpetual Peace* which proposed a cosmopolitan right of hospitality, the French philosopher, Jacques Derrida’s theoretical

¹¹⁹Holmes and Castañeda (2016: 19).

¹²⁰Papastergiadis (2013).

¹²¹See also Friese (2010).

¹²²Cheah (2013: 58).

writing on the phenomenon has been influential for scholarly analysis. For him, hospitality is ethics (1999, 2001), “ethicity itself, the whole and the principle of ethics” (1999a, 50). Stating hospitality as ethics and ethicity maintains its embedded humanitarian dimensions as the basis of human interaction and respect. By this, encounters between migrants and host spaces become grounds for experiencing this form of humane exchange. Nonetheless, Derrida (2005a) distinguishes between conditional and unconditional hospitality, two different ethical notions that are inherently conflictual in and of themselves as well as incompatible and perhaps competitive. Without one being superior to the other, the two forms instantiate a tension between legality and morality. The conditional relates to setting limits which streamline the framework of interaction while the unconditional remains unlimited. Gideon Baker (2010) has termed this ambiguity as “undecidability.” However, Baker’s postulation involves the tension between unconditional and conditional hospitality on one hand and hospitality and intervention on the other since “...with hospitality it is the other who comes while with intervention it is the host that goes forth” (98). Axiomatically, hospitality and intervention are two sides of the same coin with respect to the meeting between the guest and the host upon the former’s arrival.

Given that unconditional hospitality epitomizes an unlimited offer to the other, it simultaneously courts the danger of hosting both good and bad guests. It also postulates the necessity of infinite resources, the lack of which may in effect limit the number of people to be welcomed. Derrida’s prescriptive practice of unconditional hospitality posits that we “say yes to *who or what turns up*, before any determination, before any anticipation, before any *identification*, whether or not it has to do with a foreigner, an immigrant, an invited guest, or an unexpected visitor, whether or not the new arrival is the citizen of

another country, a human, animal, or divine creature, a living or dead thing, male or female.” (2000b, 77 the emphasis is in the original). For Derrida, then, hospitality is a right of the foreigner to be welcomed irrespective of his identity or origin. The impracticability of this ideal practice is not lost on anyone. Conditional hospitality, on the other hand, involves the setting of limits, selecting who merits and who may be offered a fixed welcome. Derrida argues that this “belongs to the order of laws, rules, and norms- whether ethical, juridical, or political at a national or international level” (2005a, 173n12). Similarly, Emmanuel Kant’s considerations on hospitality espouses conditionality and limitation to preclude not only the host’s potential encounter with a dangerous guest but also that of being dispossessed of his/her property. Making distinctions among who may be offered hospitality to stem the risk of expending all resources or endangering the host calls into question its ethicality and potential for discrimination. Nonetheless, for Kakoliris (2015), there is no pure hospitality. Instead, every act of hospitality bears an inherent hostility, hence the term, *hostipitality*; a neologism coined by Derrida in his admission of the impossibility of absolute hospitality but also the etymological commonality between hospitality and hostility. It follows then that conditions and limits are quintessence of the phenomenon. However, the common factor of the human being should supersede any determinations of the performance of hospitality. By this, hospitality cannot simultaneously elicit hostility. Nonetheless, the experiences of irregular migrants as they relate to new spaces show that *hostipitality*, the combination of hospitality and hostility, remains an unpleasant reality.

Furthermore, the question of hospitality is (sometimes) linked to linguistic abilities whereby the guest is expected to communicate with the host. Language can therefore

become an obstacle to the acceptance of the newcomer. This barrier is formulated by Derrida and Dufourmantelle (2000) thus: “The foreigner who, inept at speaking the language risks being without defense before the law of the country that welcomes or expels him; the foreigner is first of all foreign to the legal language in which the duty of hospitality is formulated, the right to asylum, its limits, norms, policing, etc.” (15). Asking for hospitality in a language that is not one’s own puts the guest at a disadvantage when s/he cannot clearly express the reasons of arrival and her/his needs. To this end, along with Derrida and Dufourmantelle (2000), one wonders what if the guest “was already speaking our language, with all that that implies, if we shared everything that is shared with a language, would the foreigner still be a foreigner, and could we speak of asylum or hospitality in regard to him?” (15). Nonetheless, in the global era, a common language has proven insufficient for welcoming the Other. For Cheah (2013), hospitality in the globalized era “is synonymous with being part of a world that is increasingly becoming borderless” (57). The supposed border-lessness of the global space does not efface identity and difference among subjects. In fact, there continues to be markers of separation despite the political and economic discourses that seem to promote a united world. Europe offers a classic example of de-bordering the interior of the continent while entrenching its external frontiers to keep out foreigners perceived as parasites.

It is therefore expedient to consider hospitality in the words of Shryock (2012) as “a shared language of human interaction, a first link between Others, a medium of greeting and exchange. Its status as a first and shared language is enhanced by the fact that it is always a second language as well, one spoken to outsiders, newcomers, and total strangers” (S22). Rather than being asked for, I maintain that it is to be performed as a quintessential

sign of human solidarity. This perspective echoes Irigaray's (2013) proposition of *reciprocal hospitality* which "would better suit our multicultural era" instead of a "unilateral and condescending gesture toward one more destitute than oneself..., as a sort of charity toward someone in want" (43). According to her, it would be proper to have a participation between two subjects acknowledging their co-existence. This may sometimes be challenging since it brings together two people with different agencies in specific moments. The refugee/migrant who comes into a different space can only offer so much in exchange for the welcome that may be extended to him/her. However, the mutuality of hospitality acknowledges the existence and respect of human difference. The specific phenomenology of international relations and international law streamlining the reception of foreigners, particularly refugees and asylum seekers, focuses on hospitality as a primary domain of sovereign power. However, Rosello (2001), following Derrida, brings hospitality to the level of the individual as host which sometimes sets the citizen and the state at odds as the following analyses adduce. Since the "actual acts of hospitality can be conceived as spatial and affective relational practices¹²³", the interrogation of hospitality unravels the interrelation between ethics, power, and space. In the following examination of the filmic corpus in this chapter, the spatial and affective relations of undocumented migrants with destination countries shows the persistence of welcome and unwelcome attitudes that are shaped by political law, moral codes, employability among others.

¹²³Bulley (2015: 2).

The clandestine migrant versus tourists and the conditions of hospitality in *Terraferma*

Emmanuele Crialesè's *Terraferma* recounts the story of an Italian family confronted with the issues of tourism and clandestine migration on the Island of Linosa. Filippo is a 20-year old who lives with his unemployed widowed mother, Giulietta, and his grandfather, Ernesto, with whom he works as a fisherman. After a memorial service for her late husband, Pietro, Giulietta informs her son and father-in-law about her decision to leave the island to find better opportunities since she currently only works 2 months in a year. She would rent their house to tourists for the summer and use the income to fund their relocation. Although the two men disagree with leaving Linosa, Giulietta and her son prepare their home to accommodate vacationers. Filippo recruits three young Italians about his age: Stefano, Marco and Mauro to lodge in their house. Meanwhile, while fishing on the Mediterranean, Ernesto and Filippo see a group of boatpeople and they inform the coast guard. The harbormaster tells them not to approach the migrants but wait for a patrol boat to rescue them. However, Ernesto who is a proponent of the maritime code which requires saving those endangered at sea decides to help the undocumented travelers when they ask for help. He dives into the water to save a pregnant woman with her son and is obliged to take them to his family's house since there is a national law against individual intervention. Following the incident, the male inhabitants who are mainly fishermen are divided in their opinions about the contradiction between respecting the law of the sea and of the land in the wake of irregular migration. Filippo, who has been unaware of the law, is devastated when their boat is confiscated on accusation of transporting tourists without a license and aiding clandestine migration. Giulietta who helps deliver the woman of a baby girl declares

to the woman that she must leave after resting and eating. Consequently, when Filippo sees other boatpeople at sea who swim toward his boat while giving Maura a tour at night, he declines to rescue them. The subsequent events have a transformational effect on him while his mother and grandfather prepare to send the guest family on their way, probably to Turin where the woman wants to join her husband. When they return home from the port upon seeing the vigilant Carabinieri, Filippo singlehandedly takes the guest family to the beach and sets them off on the sea.

The pushback against irregular migration and the resulting human cost points to an unwelcoming posture toward the uninvited guest. Would-be migrants' braving of the dangers of sea travel marks their contestation of this atmosphere of rejection, an action which nonetheless engenders fatal consequences. The conditionalization of hospitality as a function of legality and political control leads to these destructive effects on those who challenge the refusal to accept certain persons across national borders. For example, *Terraferma's* opening sequence begins with a closeup of an empty net cast into the sea. When the camera shows the surface of the sea, Ernesto and Filippo pull a huge catch of fish while their boat is hit by a piece of wood which destroys the propeller. The Arabic inscriptions on the log suggest it might be a relic of a capsized migrant boat. This symbol of undocumented migratory tragedies at sea underscores the denial of entry to the uninvited foreigner as a marker of unwelcome. The scene also encapsulates the tensions between the sea as a source of livelihood for some and for others, a passage to attaining their dreams of improved living conditions on the northern side of the Mediterranean, yet at the same time a place of destruction. Besides, it gives a glimpse of the confrontation between clandestine migration, fishing as an economic activity and its laws, and national policies in the fluid

space of the sea and its environs. Since statal laws privilege other forms of movement like tourism, the irregular migrant has fallen outside those who attract hospitality even if they succeed in entering the new society.

The incidence of unauthorized migration and tourism as two forms of mobility where the former unlike the latter is politically frowned upon in Europe impact the performance of welcome to persons involved in both forms of movement. The clandestinity-tourism opposition foregrounds the place of the human subject in the spectrum of political and economic interests in the sphere of cross-border travel. In this way, it offers a point of departure for discussing the contrasts in the reception of newcomers in the present analysis and in undocumented migration in the modern era. About a quarter of an hour into the film, after a memorial procession in honor of her late husband, Pietro, Giulietta informs her son, Filippo, and her father-in-law, Ernesto, about her plans to paint their house and rent it out to tourists for the summer so that she could start a new life with the proceeds since fishing on the island is no longer profitable. Partaking in the tourism industry – providing housing to holidaymakers – becomes a lucrative way to earn the funds to enable Giulietta to start a new life. She explains to her son, “We have to leave this island ... I want you to see other things...different, new things. I want you to talk to different people. Wouldn’t you like that?” to which Filippo retorts, “I don’t know.” Here, the openness to the stranger occurs out of financial necessity, essentially offering, *hospitality for sale*. Notably, the aim of preparing the house is to host the invited guest, the tourist, rather than the irregular migrant. This strikes an opposition with the arrival of the undocumented person who refuses to be kept out of the group of welcomed foreigners.

The commercialization of the citizen's home suggests that it is not a place of welcome for irregular entrants. This reverses the general perception of the home as a domestic space unlike the hotel where services are monetized. Thus, Giuletta's transformation of her home into a capital-generating site in exchange for hospitality serves as a harbinger of the loss of the home's accessibility to pure humanitarian ethics. Besides, although the place is prepared, opened for the arrival of the foreigner, it is with the expectation of a financial exchange, a reciprocity, not for charitable purpose. After renting out their house to tourists, Giuletta tells Filippo about moving to the Sicilian city of Trapani where her cousin lives and there is an abundance of jobs. In response to the latter's protests, she explains that she only works 2 months in a year on the island cleaning houses for tourists, hence "Sweetheart, we have no choice." The evocation of having no choice than to migrate circles back to one of the leitmotifs of irregular migration. When both the opportunities at home are scarce and access to legal movement are limited, clandestine migration is no longer a choice but the way out for those who engage therein. Her reasons for leaving Linosa, which she considers an economically deficient place, in search of green pastures is no different from clandestine migrants fleeing economic hardships, wars and persecution in their countries to find opportunities across the Mediterranean. Admittedly, her potential movement is internal (from one part of Italy to another) whereas the would-be migrant must cross national borders, as a foreigner. Nonetheless, the common denominator despite their origins is the aim of ameliorating their livelihoods. As I will argue subsequently in the chapter, this makes her understand the Ethiopian woman's desire to offer better opportunities to her family when the latter relates her arduous journey.

Unlike the clandestine, the tourist seems to elicit an unrestrained acceptance by the host. In line with offering a profit-driven welcome, Giulietta and Filippo clean and reorganize the house while the community cleans the beach to make it a befitting vacation location, if not more appealing, for the intended guests. These preparations and the willingness to allow strangers to lodge in her home despite the potential risks falls tangentially within the scope of pure hospitality. For, absolute hospitality demands that the guest is one who is uninvited, unexpected, not foreseen and totally unknown to the host. Here, although the tourists are unknown, they are expected and foreseen. The film's cinematography enhances this expectation of the tourists. The camera's slow movement creates suspense in the spectatorship by showing the opening of a vault-like structure which concretizes the expectancy of something important, i.e. the vacationers. This is heightened by the seamless coming together of the islanders and the invited visitors when the camera shows tourists existing the ferry's doors. Beside the renovations in the house, there is a vociferous advertising of the space, its amenities and services by Filippo and his mother to attract the tourists. The camera shows a competitive marketing campaign by several persons, with placards to publicize their offers, looking to recruit some of the holidaymakers into their homes, prepared in advance of their coming. It is plausible to infer that the islanders have a longstanding interest in the capital-generation of the (seasonal) brisk business in their community for which they all want to maximize the opportunity. In effect, the desirability of the tourist is inscribed as a socially and politically accepted phenomenon since there is no hindrance to his/her arrival.

Nonetheless, it is noteworthy that the quasi-hospitality embedded in tourism is a conditional form which is premised on the reception of subjects who can pay for their stay

and do not have any intention of settling beyond the limits of their welcome. The vacationer is an “invited”, expected or foreseen guest who may not necessarily be known to the host. The competitive advertisement for attracting tourists into homes shows the willingness to accept a caliber of strangers into the hosts’ home. The decision to be hospitable to the tourist (who knows if the tourist does not bring a risk?), probably the European national, the rich, makes this hospitality conditional and conditioned (on identity or wealth) since there is a target group envisaged to be welcomed. In other words, the human subject is not the primary focus of this acceptance but the national origin and economic agency of the individual that inform the choice of the host to open her space up for entry. This echoes Derrida’s (2002a) remarks that “if I welcome only what I welcome, what I am ready to welcome, and that I recognize in advance because I expect the coming of the *hôte* [guest] as invited, there is no hospitality” (362). In this postulation of the welcome of the foreigner, the expectation of tourists who Giulietta will put up with in her home situates her action out of the domain of (Derridean pure) hospitality. Given her readiness to accept the Other in advance, i.e., knowing that the purpose of their travel is for pleasure, and preparing for this specific guest, undoes the ethical purity therein. Indeed, when Filippo brings in a group of young Italian holidaymakers; Stefano (from Arezzo), Marco (from Padua) and Mauro (from Milan), she opens her home to them for a specific time. Meanwhile, her initial frustration at their inability to get vacationers turns into anxiety about satisfying the tourists’ expectations regarding the lodging. This anxiety is opposed to her frustration at hiding clandestines from the police who would incriminate her for supporting unauthorized mobility. Arguably, this brings to the fore the economic power of monetizing hospitality while illegalizing individual aid. Essentially, the welcome offered to the guests for the

contracted period borders on time, legality, and financial capability. They are only staying for the summer; they have valid travel documents (passports and visas) and they are paying for the host's kindness and services. Put differently, this reception is for sale. Is the host both only willing to accommodate for a while and in so far as there is economic gain? Taking into consideration the fact that it is those who are willing to part with a sum of money to boost local economic activities, who come for pleasure and do not plan to prolong their stay are the idealized guests here, it is plausible to argue in the affirmative in response to the foregoing question. Besides, political authorities' discourses oppose the tourist, as an expected stranger, to those seeking refuge or to make a fortune, planning on protracted stays albeit having the potential to contribute economically through their labor upon settlement as my analysis of *Mediterranea* will reveal.

In this arena, then, irregular migrants despite their conditions and what they are fleeing are perceived as unworthy candidates of hospitality. Overall, this can be read as a metaphor or national allegory in terms of the expectancy of tourism revenue as against those who come in because they can't "afford". The question of economic agency in relation to boatpeople is not a matter of lack but a complex web of ability, possibility, and obstacles. This is because these undocumented travelers pay so much to travel agents, mostly smuggling networks, to facilitate their journeys to Europe which is an indication of their wherewithal. Moreover, in many cases, these persons spend a lot of resources on the cumbersome visa acquisition requirements and procedures, which result in large denials, before resorting to clandestinity as an alternate route to circumvent officialdom and bureaucracies that inhibit the right to move freely. In the case of refugees, fleeing war, persecution and other forms of violence, there is hardly the possibility of following legal

channels to travel to the Global North. However, the same expectation toward the tourist is not applicable to the irregular migrants who arrive by sea. There is no form of positive anticipation of their arrival for which any preparations for welcoming them into the state is made. If there is any concern toward them, it is that they must be prevented from entering the nation since they have no place in the “paradise”.

The limits and crime of hospitality¹²⁴

Crialesse’s infusion of clandestinity within the context of tourism, as I have argued thus far, foregrounds the confrontation between politico-economic realities and humanitarianism in destination countries. Since tourism is promoted while undocumented migration is fiercely opposed by governments, those who engage in either forms of mobility face different, even contrasting, reactions at and within national borders. For instance, Linosa together with Lampedusa and Lampione form the Pelagie Islands although Lampedusa and Linosa have been largely present in the coverage and debates on irregular migration to Italy. Simona Wright’s (2014) description of Lampedusa as containing “oppositional realities”, being “both a place of leisure and of suffering” aptly applies to *Terraferma*’s portrayal of tourist and unauthorized migrant experiences in Linosa (777). It is a haven for tourists, an economic space for residents interested in tourism and its benefits but an arena of untold hardship for the irregular migrant. In the bloom of the tourism business, Ernesto and Filippo see a group of boatpeople during their fishing and call the

¹²⁴An Italian saying “un’ospite è come un pesce. Dopo tre giorni puzza”, that is to say “a guest is like a fish. After three days, it stinks” sets the limits of welcome (qtd in Friese, 2004: 70). To this end, the good guest knows when not to overstay his welcome since the prolongation of hospitality becomes an albatross which degenerates into the host’s hostility. This conditionality of receiving the other has telling effects on the experiences of (clandestine) migrants who unlike tourists have intentions of settling for a longer time in the destination country.

coast guards. They are instructed not to approach them and wait for a patrol vessel. The undocumented migrants ask for help as some swim toward their boat. Filippo helps the young men into the boat while Ernesto, who insists that he has never left anyone at sea, dives into the sea to rescue a pregnant woman and her son. They head to the shore to avoid being found out by the patrol team where the males run off leaving the woman and her child with their rescuers who take them in. Soon after settling down, the woman goes into labor and is aided by her hosts to deliver a baby girl. Ernesto's and Filippo's rescue of the boatpersons marks their offer of an unrestrained hospitality to the group as humans in danger. By immediately attending to the needs of the strangers without recourse to their national or racial identity and the legality of their arrival, the two men emphasize the humanity of those in need and the ethical action of intervention. However, this show of solidarity to endangered persons occurs against the generalized and politicized illegality of individual aid to unauthorized entrants at the national border.

As such, the sequence marks a dramatic turn of events as various laws and perceptions of hospitality clash owing to what is permissible or illegal. This positions the clandestine newcomers at the junction of welcome and unwelcome since their presence generates debates about ethics, legality and their deservingness of help and acceptance. This evokes the migrant-tourist opposition which makes one preferable to the other. Thus, when the tourists come calling on Filippo who had promised to take them on a boat tour of the island, Ernesto agrees to take them to prevent their invited guests from knowing about the uninvited strangers. As the woman thanks Giulietta for her help, she declines and famously declares with anger, "Now you rest, eat and then go", to which the undocumented acquiesces. The host's words set the limits of the hospitality she is willing to offer to the

unexpected guest. Notwithstanding the fact that she does not ask the woman any questions, it is not an absolute welcome of the unknown foreigner. Instead, it reveals the hostility embedded in the temporary reception accorded to the intruder. The provision of a place for rest and of food are critical markers of hospitality toward the guest. Nonetheless, the demand for immediate departure points to an unwelcome attitude which shows the unwillingness to entertain the Other beyond these limits. Indeed, although the tourist is also hosted for a specific time, it does not come by imposition as is the case with the undocumented migrant.

Commenting on the above scene, Ipek and Phillis (2018) argue that “The African refugee mother whose name and country of origin are never spelled out in the film epitomizes precarity and victimhood, not only because she is a pregnant single mother but also because she is silent and submissive throughout the entire interaction with her saviors” (9). However, since Derridean hospitality promotes the welcome of the Other without asking her name or place of origin, the omission of these personal details from the film emphasizes this ideal of hospitality as not having to be based on such information. The most important aspect to be considered is her humanity and life in danger which supersedes any form of identity, personal or national. Additionally, her silence and submissiveness, rather than being outright victimhood without any capabilities, point to an instrumentalized agency with multifaceted implications. Although the status of refugee confers victimhood, her submission to her hosts is in exchange for hospitality (food, water, and shelter) since the master of the home has power over it and could deny her entry. Moreover, her quietude evokes the linguistic dimension of the guest’s search of hospitality in a foreign language. It is apparent that the clandestine migrant speaks and understands a little Italian but does

not make any requests beyond accepting the offer of the hosts. Additionally, this quasi-muteness is also explained by Giulietta's initial hostility toward her in the poignant words, "Eat, sleep and go" which play an instrumental role in the irregular migrant's conduct. Knowing the limits imposed on her welcome by the host, it is plausible to suggest that silence and obedience serve as evidence of good conduct that may help prolong her stay. After all, being quiet and not demanding anything from her benefactors beyond accepting what she is offered enables her to demonstrate her appreciation and to shed the etiquette of an invader who has intruded the space of the host to lay siege. While this attitude may be interpreted as being supplicant and lacking agency, it is most importantly the hallmark of a (true) guest.

Furthermore, the space in which the uninvited guest is hosted marks the limits of her/his acceptance into a place in which s/he is unwanted. The freedom or lack of liberty to occupy a livable space in the destination society underpins the migrant's positionality between hospitality and hostility. Here, the clandestine mother and her children are concealed in the garage where the host family now reside since renting out their living quarters to the tourists. The darkness of the hideout emphasizes the invisibility necessary for the irregular migrant to live in the host society. As unwanted guests, they cannot be visible even in the home where they are treated to an ephemeral welcome. However, there is a certain sharing of hardship between the Italian and clandestine families who live in the garage's space while the tourists occupy the comfort of the house. Although Giulietta's decision to give out her home to strangers for financial rewards and lodge in the garage transforms them into guests in the periphery of their house, their association with the undocumented migrants endangers all of them at the hands of power. This is demonstrated

by the unease the Italian hosts live through to keep the clandestines hidden and Giulietta's insistence on sending them away.

The freedom to welcome and accommodate tourists without incurring the wrath of immigration authorities deepens the uneasiness surrounding the encounter with the unexpected Other who is perceived as an intruder and a lawbreaker. Giulietta and her kin as well as the clandestine guest become insecure, victims of the state's violence and at the same time criminals: the Ethiopian woman for illegal entry, the Italian family for abetment and breaking the law against individual aid to the undocumented foreigner. Meanwhile, the unassertiveness of the uninvited stranger and the shared commonality of motherhood foster a bonding which wins the heart of Giulietta and she becomes friendlier to her guest. In a subsequent scene, when the baby is alarmed by Filippo's fit of rage after the sequestration of their boat, she cuddles and puts the child to sleep upon crying to the admiration of the mother who says, "she smells your hands, she was born with your hands." To show her appreciation, the woman decides to name the infant after Giulietta since the latter held her first and the baby acknowledges her scent (as that of the mother). For Ipek and Phillis (2018), this act of naming doubly underlines the name of Giulietta while the mother's remains in oblivion. While this reading is plausible, the naming can be read as the guest's reciprocation of kindness to her host within the limits of her own agency.

The offer and acceptance of hospitality, however limited, marks the humanitarian linkage between the host and the guest. The intimate exchange and expression of gratitude between Giulietta and the newcomer serves as an icebreaker while underlining their common humanness with similar struggles and desires for themselves and their families. It paves the way for the beneficiary to share her story and 2-year journey from Ethiopia

through Libya where she was subjected to multiple rapes which resulted in her pregnancy. Her account sheds light on her son's dislike for his newborn sister who is the fruit of the atrocities he witnessed. In the meantime, the new birth – a symbol of life and newness –, the recounting of suffering and the quest for an improved livelihood bond the two mothers. This moment underscores the idea of the guest who must explain their request for hospitality. The unexpected guest answers for her arrival, explaining the reasons for crossing the threshold of the host's space (Friese 2004: 67). Here, the host can relate to the mother's urge to seek better opportunities for her family just as she wants to do for her own family. Hence, there is a conditional hospitality as Giulietta empathizes with the Ethiopian woman's plight as a victim of circumstances including single motherhood. In other words, an absolute welcome is impossible when the host is oblivious of her guest's predicament.

To this end, the solidarity that develops between them is an effect of the in-depth awareness of the Other's pain. If Giulietta only reluctantly accepted to provide food, water and shelter for a night at the beginning of this encounter having acquiesced to Ernesto's adherence to the (unconditional) law of the sea, she now willingly provides the same benefits but cannot hide her guests for long. Despite hearing about the family's journey, Giulietta, although Ernesto disagrees, wants to report to the Carabinieri as the right thing to do. When the woman tells her in a supplicant expression of gratitude and sisterhood, "You are blessed. You saved me. Now, you are my sister", Giulietta insists that she has to leave. In her own words, "the law says I can't help you. If I do, they'll jail me." Even though she explains to the mother the difficulty involved in travelling to Turin where she wants to join her husband, Giulietta wants her guests to go. From the foregoing, we can absolve the Italian family of some blame and implicate the state as the source of such

hostile attitudes as precaution by the citizenry whose hospitality has been criminalized. The threat of the Italian police to both families – the Italian and Ethiopian – suggests that not welcoming or shielding the clandestine migrant is being law-abiding. The hovering around of the gendarmerie means that taking the risk to hide the irregular migrants may not be a permanent solution and thus attenuates the hostile effect of Giulietta’s words, “rest, eat and go.” Knowing that she warms up to the refugee woman over time during their encounter, her initial cold attitude appears as an effect of the fear of the authorities’ retribution. This leads us to the tensions between politics and humanitarianism in the performance of (in)hospitality.

Nature ethics vs politics and economics: confrontation between the law of the sea and of the land, and tourism

The hospitality-hostility nexus present in the experiences of clandestine migrants evolves from the incompatibility between political and moral laws as well as personal views about the foreigner. As an example, individual rescue efforts have been increasingly important in unauthorized migration, albeit polemical, given the refusal of state actors to intervene, preferring to legislate against irregular entry and any assistance given to the undocumented traveler. This bipartite ambiguity over the presence of the undocumented and his/her search for a new space casts the subject between practices of welcome and rejection. The securitization of the border through the presence of coast guards and technology, and the corresponding nonchalance about the *human waste* from migrant deaths and hardships epitomizes the hardline approach to migration management and the

value placed on the life of the Other¹²⁵. National laws barring the saving of human lives, in this case irregular migrants at sea is at odds with the ethical imperatives of groups such as fishermen. In *Terraferma*, despite his liminal ability to welcome the Other, Ernesto insists on the human solidarity at the heart of his profession as a fisherman which mandates him to rescue those in precarious conditions on the sea. Meanwhile, this perspective contravenes political will and thus, his vessel is confiscated by the police. The anti-migration policies that criminalize human mobility, even if without proper documentation, and penalize the dissident inhabitant who breaks the law to protect human lives complicate the incidence of hospitality. Following Ernesto and Filippo's saving of the boatpeople including the refugee family they host, they are accused of criminality. This incident has a transformational effect on Filippo who until now was unaware that individual interventions are illegal. According to the police, the boat is seized for transporting tourists without authorization and facilitating clandestine migration. One wonders if the seizure would occur if they had not rescued undocumented migrants and had only carried the tourists. It is plausible to suggest that the motivation for the confiscation is their intervention in clandestinity with the issue of the permit serving as a pretext. It is noteworthy that they had not set out with the tourists when the police arrive to question Ernesto about taking migrants on his boat and failing to report to them. In the police chief's words, besides not having a permit for carrying tourists, Ernesto is guilty of "an even greater breach of the law; aiding and abetting illegal immigration." In his defense, Ernesto quizzes, "What about the maritime code? ... Should I make them die?". These questions reveal the stark difference between the preoccupations of sovereign power and the ordinary citizen. While

¹²⁵See also Heller and Pezzani (2017).

the latter is concerned with the preservation of life, the former is committed to law enforcement even if it results in the loss of life.

In this light, there are implications of the illegality of individual intervention on the attitude of the citizen toward the foreigner. Even those who are open and hospitable toward the stranger may be forced to act inhospitably as they attempt to obey the law to avoid losing their freedom and sources of livelihood. The unauthorized migrant becomes a double victim; he is denied access by the state and becomes inimical to the willing citizen who now faces the brunt of the law for the former's sake. Crialesse's film points to this phenomenon by showing that Filippo's subsequent (change of) attitude is an effect of this condemnation of the national as a lawbreaker and an accomplice of clandestinity after their boat is seized by the police for saving clandestines. Due to his anger at his family's victimization, he subsequently refuses to help other boatpeople. The initial reaction to this conduct is to condemn his action as hostile and lacking the ethics of humanitarianism that values life. While this argument is right, it is nonetheless complicated by the fact that it is borne out of fear and or anger at both the migrant and state authorities. Filippo's fear stems from the punishment he and his family risk being condemned to when the police discover that they rescued undocumented foreigners into the island. His angry reaction may be due to the frustration of losing their property and income when they first helped other foreigners. The complexity at the core of these events and the factors considered underscore the conditionality of hospitality to the undocumented in that the host may be most comfortable to receive the Other when there are no or less risks that threaten his own rights and safety in relation to national authorities.

Thus, as aptly argued by Cheah (2013), "...the host must be sufficiently powerful and secure in itself, in the sense of having enough confidence and being at home with itself, to welcome and endure the other's entry..." (70). The host is a master who has control over the space of hospitality, the home or the nation. In this vein, it is not possible for one who does not possess the mastery of a territory to make good on his willingness to welcome the stranger as an ethical duty. This quintessentially underscores the powerlessness of Ernesto who although is committed to respecting the law of the sea to save undocumented migrants is not fully able to demonstrate his hospitality due to political power's control over the island. While he has jurisdiction over his house and his boat which may be used to help the stranger, the surveilling and legal authority of the state supersedes his individual mandate and desire. Moreover, the initial threshold – the border – (to be) crossed by the clandestine migrant remains under political power's prerogative which has outlawed the entry of the subject concerned. In this regard, Ernesto neither has the power nor the security to endure and protect the foreigner. In other words, the citizen may be a secondary host whose confidence in opening his home to the Other is dependent on the hospitality of the state as a primary host whose frontiers need to be traversed as the first point of welcome to the outsider. The suggestion is that residents are likely to be at home with themselves, although not in all cases, to replicate the state's openness to accept the stranger as a humanitarian responsibility when the laws on clandestine migration enables them rather than incriminates them as abettors of an illegality.

The state's antagonism to aiding the uninvited guest shapes the conduct and views of citizens about welcoming the stranger. While some individuals may insist on the humanitarian necessity of helping the newcomer, others may prefer abiding by the dictates

of national laws which in some cases may be used to justify racialized negligence of the unwanted foreigner. Consequently, there is a meeting of the fisherfolk after the boat seizure episode to lament the incident and the economic challenges as well as the politico-legal changes affecting the lives of the filmic community. Through this, the spectator experiences the diversity of opinion on hospitality and irregular migration. Undoubtedly, any discussion around welcoming the foreigner evokes contrasting perspectives based on our worldviews. To borrow the words of Rosello (2001), “The concept of hospitality is bound to generate conflicts and passionate arguments” (6). The divergence of opinion in the determination and practice of relating to the Other opposes proponents of humanitarianism, traditional laws of fishing, the respect of state bureaucracy, rule of law and national policies, racial supremacy and xenophobia, and economic interests. The multifaceted variety of views makes the reception of the stranger a source of conflict that threatens on one hand the stability of the host community and on the other, the society’s interaction with the guest. *Terraferma* situates this debate on hospitality in the discussion among the townsfolk where the male islanders, mainly fishermen, discuss the outlawing of rescuing undocumented migrants at sea. While the older men, led by Ernesto, argue that it is their duty to rescue the boatpeople, a younger man (probably middle-aged) argues that despite the law of the sea (maritime ethics/ law), he can’t save Blacks in danger on the sea. He states that though his father taught him to save lives at sea, he has to teach his children to change course when black skins are in the water. Here, there are at least three contrasting points of view at stake: the law of the state that bars helping irregular migrants, the law of the sea that necessitates saving endangered lives and the question of the (un)worthiness of the racialized Other as a subject who merits welcome.

Through the admittedly gendered discussion on clandestine migration and welcoming the foreigner, there is a suggestion of a generational difference to the understanding and practice of hospitality. Given the different standpoints advanced by the older man Ernesto, the middle-aged man and the younger man, Nino, there is an indication of a conflict of generations which divides along the lines of the law of the sea, the law of land and race, and economic interests espoused by the generational spokespersons, so to speak, of the different age groups respectively. Is the elderly more concerned about humanitarian solidarity than the others, the young? Are the youth primarily capital-driven to the detriment of valuing human life? Who can blame the young for being economically driven in a world where hospitality has been monetized and racialized? However, as one of the older fishermen argues that the law barring individual rescue is against the fishermen's code: "These new rules are against ours. We live on a reef in the middle of the sea and must respect the law of the sea. It's always been so and has to stay so", the push for the maritime ethics cannot be fully realized by the proponents of solidarity with clandestines.

In effect, the oppositional laws which are espoused by different persons reveal the misrecognition of the undocumented person as a human, thereby circumscribing him/her into experiencing varied forms of hostile and hospitable reactions. The tension between the two laws – humanitarian and political – recasts the debate on conditional and unconditional hospitality in one breadth and the duty of the citizen and the moral human being in another. They belong to two sides of the same coin. The moral responsibility of the subject as a fisherman aligns with unconditional hospitality in that the human life in danger is the most important value at stake. The individual then must save the stranger without recourse to

any political laws or the identity of the one concerned. Conversely, conditional hospitality and the citizen's responsibility to obey the nation's laws work in tandem. In other words, the one faced with the decision to rescue boatpersons must only do so within the legal limitations allowed by the state. This takes the merit of welcome from the life of the human to the conditions set by power, in this case where it is illegal to help the clandestine.

These ethical and political conflicts which the community faces at individual and collective levels are complicated by the racial dimension or the racialization of ethics espoused by the remarks made by the fisherman opposed to saving Black lives. Germane to his argument is that, there cannot be an unlimited offer of acceptance to Otherness, particularly in reference to a race that he considers inferior or underserving. Although, this perspective seems to link with a non-absolutism of hospitality, it propagates a far-reaching conditionality where the foreigner becomes a victim of his racial identity and is thus positioned before a pendulum-like form of hospitality between biopolitics (letting live) and necropolitics (letting die). Consequently, the racial Other is placed outside humanitarianism/ humanitarian law and the politics of the receiving nation since he is not a citizen. The foreigner who is not of the same race is seen as a life unworthy of preservation neither to be helped by respecting ethics nor breaking national laws. This postulation of welcome makes the Black undocumented migrant a *bare life* to be sacrificed without any consequences. Put differently, other irregular migrants may merit hospitality by letting them live while their Black counterparts are a target group for death.

Yet, the demise of many boatpeople on the beaches of destination countries is another aspect of the debate. The impact of this carnage is contested in humanitarian and political discourses which are opposed to each other. For economic actors, clandestine

migration is a barrier to economic activities. One young fisherman argues that “instead of fish, we fish live bodies and a lot of dead ones.” His argument suggests that the deaths of the undocumented in the sea is a cause of their low fishing yields does. Similarly, Ernesto’s son, Nino, declares his opposition to welcoming unsanctioned migrants to the island who he perceives as an impediment to his business. He argues that the clandestine arrivals are bad publicity for the tourism industry. As one who is interested in tourists and runs a business that caters to the latter, the irregular migrants are a nuisance to his commercial environment. While his perspective underlines the economic conflict generated by the notion of hospitality toward the uninvited guest, there is an implicit presupposition in his argument that the corpses of these foreigners are preferable to their lives. Thus, Ernesto retorts to ascertain if their drowning and death (for refusing to rescue them) would be good publicity. This exchange underlines the necropolitical attitude directed toward the racial Other as undeserving of welcome. Nino’s concern suggests that the boatpeople are not worthy guests who should be saved and allowed to be seen in the society. Implicitly, they are subjects to be controlled and disposed of through death: after perishing at sea, their corpses can be easily discarded and thus wiped off the public scene to keep it attractive for holidaymakers. As bare life, the clandestine is a sacrificial lamb who has neither rights nor is worthy of solidarity. The question that remains then is: is the foreigner to be sacrificed when his rescue is seen as a contravention of the law?

The invited guest as host and example to the master of the space of hospitality

Due to the legal frameworks that condition the reception of clandestine migrants in host societies, these persons continually remain between hostile and hospitable practices involving state actors and individual citizens. The hour mark into the diegesis underscores

the deep tension between natural and man-made laws as well as the plight of the uninvited guest who is cornered between dehumanization and (re)humanization. By this, the positionality of the clandestine, between hostility and hospitality, is underlined. When Filippo goes out with Maura on a tour of the island with another boat at night, he is overwhelmed by the sight of a group of undocumented migrants in the sea swimming toward them and strikes the hands of some who try to climb into the boat with an oar. His guest as well as the spectator is viscerally shocked by this violent action which jeopardizes the lives of the boatpeople. However, to Maura's amazement, Filippo declines her suggestion of reporting the incident to the Carabinieri to get help for the irregular migrants. Ipek and Phillis (2018) concur with Ballesteros (2015) who argues that "the scene exposes Filippo's panic and confusion, and above all, contributes to reinforcing the myth of the immigrant invasion" (169). While this suggestion is acceptable, a plausible reading of the scene (taking into consideration the fear of the Carabinieri and the frustration of losing his family's boat after being accused of aiding criminals) is that Filippo's refusal to rescue the drowning clandestines is not simply about panic and confusion as well as the "myth of the immigrant invasion". It is also about the dilemma of respecting the law of the land while breaking the moral code of the sea, the latter which has no criminal implications for him. In other words, the citizen, Filippo, chooses to be hostile to the unwanted guests to avoid political incrimination.

Meanwhile, the scene depicts tourists, first through the character of Maura, as not just fun-loving people who do not want to see or care about other humans in suffering. As such, the expected guest – the tourist – becomes an important player in defying the negative imagery associated with the undesirable migrant and humanizing the latter. Her emotional

breakdown at the violence meted out to the undocumented migrants and Filippo's refusal to get help for them casts her in a humanitarian light. Although a guest herself, she solidarizes with the endangered foreigner who is rejected by the host. Besides, her refusal to say goodbye to Filippo at the end of her stay concretizes her disappointment at his conduct and a disapproval of hostility to the clandestine, a phenomenon that will have an impact on his actions in the final sequence of the film. Moreover, this ethical characterization of the holidaymakers is enhanced by their reaction to the sight of unauthorized travelers. The morning after the incident, Filippo wakes up exhausted on the beach to see bodies of boatpersons, potentially those he abandoned, while the tourists entertain themselves. In a unanimous movement, the vacationers go toward the uninvited guests to help them. The tourists are portrayed humanely as the camera shows them attempting to resuscitate the bodies on the beachscape. The slow movement of the camera creates a choreography of solidarity through the mixture of white tourist bodies and black migrant bodies. The close-up shots show the proximity between the tourists and the newcomers in their common humanity through the close contact of their physique. Although they are both guests in Linosa, the tourists' privilege of being invited guests enables them to act as temporary hosts to the undocumented migrants.

Thereby, their momentary acts of hospitality are opposed to the hard stance of the host society against unauthorized entry, even in precarious situations. Thus, while they pour water on the migrants' faces and into their mouths as well as rest the latter's heads on their laps in an act of solidarity and hospitality, the Italian police impress upon the former to abandon the bodies. This scene epitomizes the willingness of individuals who are inclined to aid the Other but are faced with the obstacle of state power's anti-immigration

posture. Hence, the act of “protecting” the holidaymakers from what they themselves do not perceive as a risk underlines the paucity of heavy-handed security measures aimed at the undocumented guest. To borrow Bauman’s (2004) words, the abandoned bodies concretize walls of inside and outside: the citizen and tourist opposed to the unauthorized traveler, alive or dead. Consequently, the deceased are denied the opportunity to be mourned in recognition of their humanity while survivors are characterized as criminals to be punished rather than helped.

The vacationers’ humane treatment of the boatpeople ridicules anti-(irregular) migrant discourses of contamination and undeservingness. These politicized perspectives meant to efface their social visibility through vested interests that relegate them to absence result in the inconsistency in reception practices. The attempt to conceal the presence of the clandestine subjects him/her to unwelcome in the host’s territory. However, the tourists’ individual intervention mocks the consistent effort to assure them that there are no undocumented migrants on the island and Nino’s argument that undocumented arrivals constitute bad publicity for tourism. For example, during his intervention at the discussion following the confiscation of Ernesto’s boat, Nino insists that “We live on tourism. Tourists don’t like seeing these half-dead illegals as they enjoy their vacation. Those people pay and want peace and quiet.” Moreover, when two male tourists who witnessed the sequestering of Ernesto’s boat ask him about reports of clandestines landing on the beach, he categorically denies it and insists that the seizure was due to Ernesto not having a license to transport tourists. He adds, “illegals don’t land here anymore. Here, there’s just fish and fabulous seabeds” and then quickly proceeds to announce a tour and entertainment

activities for the vacationers to diffuse his uneasiness about the topic of discussion¹²⁶. In fact, this exposes the propagandist agenda disseminated by the state and xenophobic individuals. More so, the garments worn by the officers of the law – gloves and medical masks – depict the protection of the self from the suspected contamination of the Other. This stringent measure of separation from the foreigner as one bearing an inherent threat is evident in films like Gianfranco Rossi's docufiction, *Fire at Sea*, where the coast guards who rescue boatpeople are covered in protective garment while carrying out physical and medical screenings on them. Additionally, as state actors wearing these items, they perpetuate the state's position of securitization and border protection from the outside. In effect, there is hostility toward the unexpected stranger even after welcoming them through rescue. The overemphasis on security and the apparent apathy simultaneously concretize the exemplariness of humane deeds as depicted by the tourists. The distance between the Carabinieri, clad in protective wear, and the migrant bodies compared with the closeness between the tourists and the migrants disproves the erroneous suspicion of impurity through contact with the uninvited Other.

It is evident that the sufferings of the unexpected guests and the hospitality of the temporary hosts (the holidaymakers) may or may not reform attitudes toward the former. As an example, Nino chooses to continue with his tourism business without much attention to the events that have transpired. However, when Nino tells Filippo that they need to clean the beach after the bodies are abandoned, the latter refuses and dives into the sea as a sign of regret, grief and sadness from his actions and witnessing the extent of loss. As such, Pastorino (2017) aptly reads this as part of Filippo's own initiation into understanding the

¹²⁶Whereas his intent is to project a prosperous image of the island, his words counteract the earlier arguments that the arrival of boatpeople has decreased fishing yields.

law of the sea which takes the form of a pacification of and reconciliation with the sea after refusing to aid the migrants whom he abandoned at sea. As suggested by Pastorino (2017), “... symbolically, the action of diving into the water, represents his way of making peace with the sea’s pre-symbolic order” (169). To expand on this initiation, I suggest that the conduct of the tourists who are perceived as not wanting to see clandestines also impacts the experiential knowledge of Filippo. As guests who offer hospitality to other strangers, however liminal, their action is an exemplary learning experience for the young Filippo.

Subsequently, the signs of life he sees at the bottom of the sea – toothbrush, toothpaste, ID cards, shoes, slippers, wallet, books (probably a Koran and a Bible) etc. – reveal, to him, the extent of human carnage resulting from the denial of intervention to boatpeople. Through this, Pastorino (2017) rightly postulates that Filippo realizes “that no matter how foreign, a human being cannot be thrown back in the sea or turned in to the police (an action that would yield a similar outcome by providing incarceration or repatriation)” (168). Hence, this experience constitutes a learning curve on hospitality for Filippo in that the human subject is the most important condition for receiving the uninvited guest. Thus, this sequence involving the boat ride, the denial of rescue, the bodies that wash ashore and the different reactions of the police, the tourists and Filippo enable a discussion of human solidarity which demystifies power’s misconceptions about the encounter with the unexpected stranger. Afterall, the holidaymaker is humane and concerned about the Other’s wellbeing, and so should the host be. More so, the sequence highlights the range of hospitable and hostile practices that the irregular migrant confronts in the search of a place and acceptance in Fortress Europe.

The foregoing analysis and experiences of the young protagonist shape our reading of the last 15 minutes of the diegesis. The final sequence of Crialese's film, although debatable, has been largely read as the moment of Filippo's coming of age when he finally steps out of the shadows of his grandfather, Ernesto, the proponent of the law of the sea to act, singularly, on his own conviction. This reading requires more commentary beyond his self-realization as an adult since the action has implications for the clandestine migrants' lives and the question of hospitality. The sequence begins with Ernesto, who borrows Nino's van with the pretext of going to the hospital. Although not quite the same as the biblical equivalent, the guest family have their last supper with their Italian hosts before being led to the port. Even though by this point, Giulietta has become friendlier toward her guests, her initial declaration, "rest, eat and go" becomes prophetic as it nears fulfillment. The silence during the meal creates a sorrowful atmosphere of an impending undesirable denouement. It is initially unclear what their intention is when they hide the Ethiopian family in the van. However, as they drive off to the port, the spectator understands that they are "helping" their momentary guests to leave the island, potentially to go to mainland Italy. However, they are deterred by the surveilling presence of the police and return home. In a dramatic turnaround, enhanced by the filmic technique of a close-up of Filippo's face and a cut, the spectator is alarmed by the abrupt decision of Filippo to speed off with the van with the guest family while Ernesto and Giulietta got off. Scholars like Pastorino (2017) and, Ipek and Phillis (2018) argue that this is a marker of Filippo's decision to break the law, his maturity and redemption from guilt. However, O'Healy (2016) has questioned the lack of agency and subjectivity given to the refugees since their consent is not sought

before being “aided” to leave Linosa. I further her interrogation in suggesting that Filippo’s actions endanger the guests more than facilitate their passage.

His decision and execution of the act despite the presence of the border authorities suggests he may be more concerned with getting rid of the strangers than protecting them from the state. There is an element of frustration and anger embedded in the desire to complete what his mother and grandfather started. Notwithstanding his seeming repentance after seeing the bodies of those who drowned, it is plausible to suggest that the continued menace of the police for helping undocumented migrants is to be resolved by sending the strangers away. Hence, the welcome afforded to the uninvited guests cannot be long-lived as it portends a risk. Besides, the lack of clarity surrounding the final shot where the camera pans down on the boat on the Mediterranean suggests that the woman and her children may have left Linosa only to be wandering on the sea without attaining their goal of a haven and reuniting with the husband. In fact, the desire to reach Turin should not be universally subsumed within every action that seems to put them on the road without subjecting such occurrences to scrutiny. To this end, Ortiz-Ceberio and Rodriguez’s (2016) argument that the shot – accompanied by the French band Noir Désir’s 2002 song, *Le vent nous portera*, – communicates “a sense of an open, boundless world; a world in motion where border controls cannot contain the changes that are occurring” gives a utopic interpretation of the events (90). Owing to the entrenchment of borders on the Mediterranean, particularly, in Italy, it is safe to argue that there is no positive light at the end of the tunnel for the clandestine migrant family. Indeed, the newcomers remain in the spiral of welcome and unwelcome that those who engage in this form of movement are confronted with in Fortress Europe. Put differently, being refused acceptance by state authorities in Linosa due to their

unauthorized entry and forced to take to the Mediterranean, although aided by their temporary host, emphasize the unending state of ambiguity that surrounds their encounter with the receiving society between hospitality and hostility. In effect, the acceptance of the irregular migrant is marked by conditionalities instead of the primacy of their humanity and need. As a result, they fail to attract the solidarity that will ensure their stay within European borders.

Searching for and transacting hospitality in *Mediterranea*

Carpignano's 2015 documentary fiction, *Mediterranea*, is a semi-biographical enquiry into the migratory experiences of its protagonist, Ayiva Seihon, from Africa to Italy. Inspired by the 2010 violent clashes between immigrants and locals in the Italian town of Rosarno, the narrative recasts the trajectory of a group of irregular migrants and their interaction with Italian society. The film opens with a truck load of goods and bodies at night in an unnamed place in Burkina Faso. Many are desirous to leave but not all are allowed on board. The camera follows the journey through the desert in the truck and then by foot into Algeria where the would-be migrants live in a makeshift camp while awaiting to be taken to their destination by smugglers. Due to the difficult conditions in the transit center and being tired of waiting, the clandestines agree to travel to Tripoli where they can be aided across the Mediterranean. A gang attacks and robs them in the Libyan desert as well as kills a member of the group. In Libya, Ayiva places a call to his uncle, Ousman, in Italy to send him some money for the sea crossing. Meanwhile, the paid smuggler refuses to travel with them and Ayiva, who has no seafaring experience, volunteers to be the steersman of the boat. While sailing, the engine malfunctions in the midst of a sea storm causing some to drown while others are rescued and sent to a reception center. They are

then given a 3-month residence permit during which they need to find job contracts to obtain their permanent documents. Ayiva and Abas go to Rosarno where Ousman and other African immigrants live. One of them Mades finds lodging for the newcomers in a derelict structure serving as home to other migrants and a job as harvesters on a citrus farm. Despite being poorly treated and underpaid, Ayiva, the father of a seven-year-old daughter, Zeina, accepts the working conditions so that he can remit his daughter and sister as well as succeed in landing a job contract to regularize his stay. However, the tensions between the migrants and the inhabitants degenerate into violence resulting in loss of lives and destruction of property. Abas, who is one of the victims of the armed conflict, learns that he could get a year's humanitarian visa but Ayiva declines and states that they would rather return home. The film ends while Ayiva is at the party of his boss' daughter where he is invited for a drink by the host.

It is arguable that the clandestine migrant's experience of hospitality or the lack of it is linked, in a first instance, to the encounter with state borders as the initial point of contact with the destination society. In other words, the conditions of accepting the outsider into the space of the nation are set by border management practices. Carpignano's filmmaking enables us to analyze differences between borders and their crossing on the African continent and into Europe, specifically Italy. The film's opening sequences retrace the journeys through the Sahara Desert and the sea. The movement from Burkina Faso into Algeria and then Libya is shown through the insertion of title cards which indicate the current location of the travelers. On one hand, the Algerian border is shown as a vast land in the desert while the migrant truck moves into the nation. We see the truck's lights in the background after which the migrants are seen resting on the desert. On the other, Ayiva

and Abas are pictured seated by the roadside in front of storefronts in Libya. The absence of physical structures that mark the traversal into the new spaces shows the porosity of their frontiers which facilitates (undocumented) mobility. Indeed, the facility of crossing borders does not suggest that such spaces are hospitable to foreign travelers. Conversely, the Italian border is portrayed as a solid structure which requires permission for entry into the nation by the title card which indicates the arrival of the boatpeople in the country. When the migrant boat's engine malfunctions amidst a sea storm, they are rescued by Italian maritime authorities who take them to a reception center¹²⁷. The filmmaker does not provide any indication of their port of entry and how they get into Mainland Italy. However, the camera shows the migrants in white and blue track suits standing in an open space foreclosed by a building with high walls. These high walls underscore the solidity and physicality of the frontier including the bureaucratic procedures which streamline who can be received into the nation and by extension, the performance of welcome to them.

The enclosure concretized by the three walls in the camera's frame and the emptiness of the adjoining space projects the temporariness of serving as a hosting site despite the structural impediment it represents. It symbolizes the management of hospitality toward the foreigner. Commenting on such locations, Hom (2015) observes that it is "paradoxically, both a space of statelessness and a space where Italian state power operates in full force" (89). As a state facility controlled by its functionaries, the treatment of the migrants in the reception center instantiates the policy direction of the destination country. The rescue of the boatpeople and their subsequent housing in this space honors

¹²⁷This may be one of the *Centri di prima accoglienza* (Centers of First Welcome) which was established by Articles 9 and 10 of the Legislative Decree No. 142/2015. For an extensive discussion on the establishment and evolution of reception and detention centers as well as the treatment of migrants therein in Italy, see Hom (2015) and Campesi (2018).

the 2006 Search and Rescue Convention and portrays a renewed commitment to protecting endangered lives. When the undocumented migrants are allowed entry as opposed to being repatriated, the state demonstrates an ethics of welcome. Rightly so, the camera shows Ayiva and Abas at a train station, having left the center to find a contact, Ousman, in Rosarno. It is plausible to suggest that between *Terraferma* (2011) – where clandestine mobility is absolutely controlled through patrol, rescue and, deportation – and *Mediterranea* (2015) – where boatpeople enter for a limited period –, Italy shows an improved attitude to the management of unauthorized entry as the boatpeople can integrate the society beyond the walls of the rescue center through the logics of containment and dispersal (Campesi 2018). While containment determines admissibility, dispersal is premised on relocation of the admitted into small communities for integration.

However, the welcome of the unexpected guest, although granted access into the host society, is conditioned on a temporary stay. In this vein, Ayiva informs Ousman that they have been accorded a three month stay in Italy, analogous to Hom's (2015) idea of "living in a tenuous present" given the uncertainty of what lies ahead (89). The brief residence permit is a sign of the host's hospitality to the uninvited guest. It is noteworthy that the narrative does not provide any insights into the preconditions or reasons for according the migrants this permission. The omission of these details concerning the unexpected arrival does not however point to the demonstration of Derridean pure hospitality. Instead, this can be read as a conditional offer whereby the guest is limited to a period of welcome after which he is obliged to leave. This phenomenon shares similarities with Giulietta's declaration in *Terraferma*– "rest, eat and go"– although in this case, the conditions are set by the state who receives the foreigners. The welcome given then cannot

be said to be an absolute form of hospitality as it is conditioned by the guest's departure when the limits have been exhausted.

The irregular migrant's search for hospitality places him/her within a tenuous mode of existence when the country of immigration's offer of welcome is liminal. Like the host society's transitory acceptance of the newcomer, Ousman, Ayiva's uncle who sponsored his trip to Italy does not accommodate him and Abas. Instead, they are taken to a slummy migrant camp by Madès, one of their friends. One wonders the reasons behind Ousman's inability or refusal to host his invited guest since the diegesis does not supply any evidence to explain this occurrence. Does he have no or limited resources to take care of him? Is it the case of each one for himself or an expectation that the state is the only host? Like Giulietta who offered a temporary abode for her uninvited Ethiopian guests, Ayiva's uncle treats them to a meal and offers them advice on their stay in Rosarno. This ephemeral reception raises questions about the host's agency and performance of hospitality to his kindred. Is he a host, given that he is a foreigner although he has been domiciled in Italy for a longer period than the newcomers? Cheah's (2013) argument about the importance of sufficient power and security of the host to welcome a guest is instrumental and may explain or attenuate Ousman's failure to take Ayiva in. The suggestion is that he does not possess the confidence and capacity to support the stay of the guest. This is underscored by the fact that the spectator neither sees the specific housing unit he lives in nor knows about his employment status as evidence of possessing a space and the means for accommodating the undocumented migrant. Hence, the newcomer remains in a continuous search of long-term acceptance in the new society.

The conditions of hospitality to the undocumented person means that to be accepted for a prolonged stay, new requirements must be met. We learn of this through Ousman's discussion with Ayiva and Abas. Ousman advises that they need to find a job contract to regularize their residency and acquire proper documentation although the three months given them are insufficient to do so. The evocation of the job contract emphasizes the linkage between economic contribution and access to a long-term hospitality and, settlement in the country of immigration. This echoes my use of the term "hospitality for sale" to characterize the unapproved migrant's purchase of hospitality by working in the host society. The sale of welcome in exchange for employability underlines the absence of a pure ethics of hospitality which recognizes the humanity of the stranger. In other words, the undocumented newcomer must give their labor to be able to receive permanent authorization to reside in Italy. Although short stays are allowed hence the 3month grace period accorded the surviving boatpeople, the time-bound welcome is contrasted with the fully employed foreigner's right to longer settlement. If we believe Ousman's words, there is an underlying suggestion that there is an intentionality premised on the foreknowledge that one is unable to acquire residency within the 3-month period. If so, this time-limit hospitality encapsulates the transient embrace of the unexpected Other.

This liminal hospitality is concretized through the struggles of Ayiva and ilk after they are left to their own fate at the Rosarno center with harsh living conditions. Abas is particularly unhappy with the squalor of the environment. They are obliged to fend for themselves although they are without the requisite documentation to earn a decent living. Rosarno is an agricultural and commercial town in southern Italy – located in the region of Calabria – where fruit cultivation (citrus, olive) is a major economic activity. The town is

also known for the operation of drug rings and other criminal organizations. Due to the need to provide for themselves and to find employment contracts to facilitate the regularization of their residence, the undocumented migrants become an easy prey for business actors who profit from their precarity to sustain the informal labor sector. Hence, they find a job as citrus pickers from which Ayiva remits his sister and promises subsequent remittances. However, he lies about his living conditions saying the residence hosts 5 people and is twice as big as what is back home¹²⁸. It is arguable that the state in this case de-monopolizes the exercise of hospitality in that by allowing the unauthorized migrants to integrate the society and gain access to jobs, the burden of hospitality becomes a shared responsibility of the citizenry. This argument is plausible to the extent that the erstwhile reclusion to camps of undocumented persons is replaced with the social visibility of clandestines who now become members of the local community and participate in its economy. However, these persons are only guests who do not enjoy the same privileges as residents and lack the protection of their lives and economic rights.

Meanwhile, the connection between finding a job contract and being given residence permit nuances the characterization of the (undocumented) migrant as an economic parasite. Scholars such as de Haas (2008) and Carling (2017) have discussed the pushback against migration due to the accusation of the foreigner as an economic competitor to the citizen. Nonetheless, it becomes apparent that the stranger is sometimes expected to demonstrate their desirability and suitability to be accepted through their employability. Although this transaction is different from tourism where the vacationer directly pays money to be welcomed by the host, the offering of a service by the migrant

¹²⁸This falls within what Sayad (1999) terms the immigrant's lie.

to a local business is premised on the commercialization of welcome. The confluence of economic contribution – to be made by the guest to the host society – and hospitality/integration – to be granted by the state – depicted by *Mediterranea* belies the parasitism attributed to the Other. In fact, this profitable reciprocity means that hospitality is conditional and conditioned by the stranger's ability to partake in the capital development of the destination nation. Put differently, the subject's humanity and circumstance may not be enough to access the (absolute) help of the host.

The conditionality of welcome which hinges on labor opens undocumented migrants to hostile acts since on one hand, they are viewed as competitors and threats by some locals and on the other hand, they are obligated to accept demeaning treatments in their bid to earn acceptance. In this regard, although they are cheated and underpaid by their employer, Ayiva, unlike Abas, is determined to continue working. This commitment to work is influenced not only by the need to earn a living but also the responsibility of providing for his 7year old daughter, Zeina, who lives with his sister in Burkina Faso as well as the need to earn a job contract to protract his residency. This underlining difference in their attitude toward the working conditions shows that family ties in the country of emigration and the need to send money to those left behind play an important role in the docility of undocumented migrants to endure unfavorable circumstances. This resoluteness and acceptance of low-paying yet long working hours jobs is linked to the primacy of masculinity. The inability to take care of their families constitutes a loss of virility for male unauthorized migrants. Joblessness connotes weakness given the toll it takes on their manly pride before their family and other relations. This is heightened by their reduction to invisible beings hiding from law enforcement authorities while searching for jobs to

regularize their immigration status. With no source of livelihood to provide for their families, they become emasculated (Abderrezak 2016). This throws light on Ayiva's decision to misinform his sister about the living and work conditions he is faced with. His acquiescence to what the host society offers is no different from the Ethiopian woman's submissiveness to the terms of welcome imposed by Giulietta in *Terraferma*. As family-engaged subjects, they are desirous to provide improved livelihoods to their kin by instrumentalizing their agency in compliance to the new space. Thus, compared with Ayiva, Abas is a younger man who has no familial responsibilities in Burkina Faso. He is primarily concerned with making a fortune and leading a lifestyle likeable to what he sees others portray on social media. As a result, he does not hide his disenchantment with the utopic paradise he envisaged before arriving in Europe and the exploitative labor circumstances he is confronted with. As such, even as a temporary guest, he does not seem to be liked by his employer as Ayiva is.

The liminality of hospitality offered through temporal residence maintains the partial welcoming of the undocumented person. By so doing, the clandestine is forced into a race against time to secure employment at all cost as the only basis of attracting the host society's long-term welcome. As such, by dint of hard work and the determination to obtain his legal documents, Ayiva lands another job with Rocco, an Italian farmer, who according to Mades is sincere and will help to get his papers. While working in Rocco's house, the employer invites Ayiva and another worker to a meal with his family. Through their interactions, the family learns about Ayiva's 7-year-old daughter, Zeina, who is likely a peer of their daughter, Marta. The cordiality and congeniality surrounding the discussions underscore the harmony in their relationship as hosts and guests. Since the offering of food

is an important aspect of the performance of welcome to the guest, this invitation momentarily breaks the employer-employee divide to earmark the solidarity between people with different forms of agency: the citizen and the foreigner. That notwithstanding, the notion of a transactional hospitality, rather than the fact of a shared humanity, underlies this relationship. As if to explain why Ayiva and his coworker deserve their place at the family's table, Rocco tells his kin that "These guys really work hard enough". This telling declaration speaks volumes of the selectivity at the heart of who is an acceptable visitor. In other words, the kindness shown to the strangers is conditional and conditioned. Significantly, the host's hospitality to Ayiva and his colleague is a by-product of their hard work on the farm and not because of their condition as equal subjects or persons (in need).

The assertion of the migrants' working credentials concretizes a trade-off between economic relevance and hospitality. The commercial importance of the clandestine migrant to the (underground) economy is again evoked by Rocco at the end of the harvest season. When he asks where Ayiva will go next, the latter says "nowhere". In other words, the migrant worker outlives his usefulness when the seasonal labor of fruit harvesting is over. Rocco then proposes to find Ayiva a job at Marta's birthday party although it is not clear what he will be doing. In the closing sequence, we see Ayiva at the party where he is invited by Rocco for a drink. Rocco's offer, while seeming helpful to the foreigner who needs a job to sustain himself and family home, simultaneously emphasizes the continuous exploitation of migrant labor in informal and less paying sectors. He cannot find a good paying employment that will ensure his legal status. Thus, the conditional hospitality offered him essentially keeps him in a limbo between menial, poorly paid jobs and limited residency. To echo O'Healy's (2019) proposition, "despite the demonization of the figure

of the irregular migrant in the global North, it is in the interest of the economy that the flow of migration from the global South be manipulated, accelerated, or slowed down rather than genuinely impeded” (223). Otherworldly, the undocumented laborer remains preferable to the rights-possessing worker as underlined by the above scene. By the same token, the reception of this stranger inscribes him/her at the intersection of welcome and unwelcome. Indeed, s/he is accepted for the economic utility s/he offers rather than being fully embraced in the host society.

The uninvited guest’s plea for hospitality does not always yield the expected results as s/he is subjugated to a vicious cycle of exploitation that underlines (some citizens of) the receiving country’s refusal to fully integrate her/him into its fold. To this end, when Ayiva asks Rocco to help him get a work contract to enable him to acquire a residence permit, the latter recounts the struggles of his grandfather and ilk as immigrants in New York where they labored to support one another but gained nothing. He concludes that “that’s how people should do it: help one another.” This profound statement about helping one another underscores the expediency of solidarity in human relations. It comes as the film’s prescriptive message of being hospitable to the Other. However, what is the extent of helping one another? Rocco proceeds to give Ayiva a 50 Euro bill while remarking “You are a good worker, Ayiva. You handled yourself well.” Praising Ayiva in this way suggests that the good migrant worker is the one who accepts to do underpaid tasks without complaint. Meanwhile, this “good conduct” may not suffice to regularize one’s papers. Consequently, it is unclear what Rocco’s discourse means in light of his refusal to grant Ayiva’s request. Is there a presupposition that since he has helped to a point, it is up to others to “share the burden?” Does he suggest that it is incumbent on newcomers to help

one another albeit being guests and limited with possibilities, since that is how his grandfather and family survived in the US? To borrow O’Healy’s (2019) words, Rocco’s pronouncement “reveals the hollowness of his hospitality and his ongoing collusion with a system of profit making based on the subjugation and exploitation of the weakest, most precarious members of the labor force” (223). By pointing Ayiva to inter-migrant support as a form of hospitality while admitting the usefulness of the guest’s labor, the host’s comments inscribe Ayiva in an exploitative relation (to Italy). Shirking the responsibility of helping his guest beyond their economic association, as a validation of the newcomer’s humanity and need, Rocco highlights the limits of an already conditional welcome toward the foreigner.

In the face of this ethical failure, the members of the clandestine migrant community create their own forms of connections to face their challenges. Effectively, the kindness of the stranger, in the sense of a common fate in difficulty, becomes important for the multinational group occupying the margins of the host society. The migrant cohort consists of different African nationals: Ghanaians, Burkinabes, Nigerians and Moroccan who help one another and solidarize to overcome their common challenges. For example, Mades gives some money to Ayiva and Abas to enable them settle upon arrival and helps them find a job. Ayiva helps his colleagues at work and intervenes when there are misunderstandings. Undoubtedly, the social capital they benefit from in sharing a space and resources is crucial to their survival. This breeds a strong sense of community and belonging among them as victims of the same circumstances: uninvited guests in search of better life chances and hospitality. Therefore, beside the dinner at Mama Africa’s, the group entertain themselves at the Rosarno center with music and chatter after the day’s

work to attenuate their plight. These cherished moments constitute the few scenes in the film where the irregular migrants are portrayed to be happy. It is suggestive then that the networks created through this socialization help to diffuse the feeling of unwelcome.

Welcome as humanitarianism

The hospitality-hostility dichotomy to which clandestine migrants are confronted also reveals differences in how particular persons in the host society relate with the outsider. In this vein, the reception of the unwanted newcomer in specific circumstances challenges the transactional conditionality ascribed to it in some instances as the above analysis has demonstrated. This affirms the current chapter's argument of the ambivalence of migrant encounters with the spaces they enter, thereby varying their experiences in ways that emphasize their vacillation between desirability and undesirability. In the context of individual citizens' performance of hospitality to the foreigner, Carpignano's film presents Mama Africa as one of the locals who facilitate the settlement of the migrants. At first sight, it is striking to meet the old Italian woman preferring to be called Mama Africa. Arguably, this nomenclature may be construed as a symbol of socio-cultural imperialism to show supremacy in "mothering" the African migrant in need. Contrary to espousing any form of superior racial, national identity or Europeanness that might infantilize the Other, the name evokes the negritudinal characterization of the African continent as a woman and a mother. The adoption of such a name as a white person enables her to bridge not only the racial and national divide but more importantly to emphasize the human commonality between herself and the strangers as the basis of hospitality. The maternalistic reference, albeit in this instance more personified than negritude's literary and cultural idealization, is reified by her words to the guests. At a dinner organized for the unauthorized migrants

in her house, she proclaims, “I’m happy to hear you call me Mama. Because you left your mothers at home, I am happy to welcome you.” This declaration is to be interpreted as her affirmation of the migrants’ humanity as persons who need care and affection. In the absence of their biological mothers, she assumes a motherly role to comfort them during their integration into a foreign society.

Unlike the essentialized maternity of Africa, her relatability to the foreigners faced with dire circumstances creates a sense of belonging and desirability of the latter. Effectively, Mama Africa fills the void of a mother to care for the irregular migrants since as Beneduce (2008) points out, “attending to a clandestine’s sufferings, worries and needs, as well as his desire for freedom, means recognizing the loneliness and fragilities of our own condition...” (522). Here, the recognition shared between the individual host and her guests derives from acknowledging the Other’s precarity as being as human as herself. Additionally, the mealtime creates a deep sense of community for the migrants and their host. This is evidenced by the humorous exchanges they share as opposed to the gloom surrounding the clandestines when they are filmed in the encampment or the citrus fields. Opening her home as a space of hospitality to the uninvited guest and entertaining them fulfills Derrida’s pure hospitality. Although they are neither her compatriots nor tourists with documentation, she accepts them as humans who need motherly care. Meanwhile, it is important to note that the state’s permission to the foreigners to live in Italy for 3 months provides an enabling environment for this demonstration of humanitarianism. This contrasts with the pervading circumstances in *Terraferma* where boatpeople are not allowed into the community and thus, one cannot help clandestines since it is tantamount to abetment of crime which influences Giulietta’s attitude. Nonetheless, Mama Africa is

unable to support them beyond what her finite resources allow. However, in contradistinction with Rocco who welcomes Ayiva due to his hard work, Mama Africa emphasizes their personhood and present predicament as reasons for deserving her hospitality. Effectively, the same migrant figure confronts different attitudes of acceptance for contrasting reasons in the destination country.

The varying reactions to the presence of the undocumented migrant shows the absence of a common ethical response to the uninvited guest. The disparities in individual attitudes to the reception of the foreigner as discussed with the examples of Rocco and Mama Africa subtends the fact that the larger community's welcome to the Other is not forthcoming. As Friese (2010) aptly concludes, "Without being rooted, without reference and without the political participation of the local arena and its various actors, renewed concepts of hospitality and transnational justice will remain a merely normative-moralistic academic exercise" (336). This insight is useful for discussing the experiences of the migrants depicted in *Mediterranea*. Despite the state's allowance of residence for the unauthorized travelers, the lack of local participation inhibits the performance of welcome to the Other. Although Mama Africa and the Italian teacher empathizes with them and Rocco offers them a job, there is a dearth of interaction between other residents and the migrants in the narrative. The rootlessness and absence of wider involvement are contributing factors to the deterioration of relations between guests and hosts¹²⁹. In *Mediterranea*, the migrants are evicted from the Rosarno center by the police due to the

¹²⁹Comparatively, Germany's governmental propagation of *Willkommenskultur* (culture of welcome), though ephemeral, under Chancellor Merkel's open-door policy during the 2015 refugee crisis is an exemplary demonstration of the national acceptance of otherness. Although the policy and initiative received a lot of flak from far-right politicians, it created a generalized atmosphere of tolerance and a German identity of hospitality for refugees/migrants.

complaints of some anti-immigration locals who wanted the newcomers out of their neighborhood. When the clandestines return to occupy the building, they are arrested in a police swoop and later released. Subsequently, there's a report of the killing of two black people and as the migrants protest their treatment, they are pelted by the locals with stones, and bottles pushing the former to destroy cars and buildings¹³⁰. This deterioration of intergroup relations underscores the effect of a lack of unified acceptance of the Other. The suggestion is that the antagonism portrayed in the film results from the lack of a national agenda and community-based participation in the integration of newcomers. Thus, the strangers remain between peripheral demonstrations of hospitality and widespread hostility.

The perceptions of migrant undesirability and threat as well as the accompanying xenophobia result in volatile encounters which place the clandestine outside an unreserved show of solidarity. Consequently, the violence degenerates when the riot police intervene by spraying tear gas. As Ayiva and Abas attempt to flee from the scene, the latter is attacked by a group of locals who beat him. Abas and the other casualties receive treatment at Mama Africa's where they learn that Abas could get a year's residence permit on humanitarian grounds. However, Ayiva declines the suggestion and says they will return home. This moving scene raises questions about the clandestine migrant's treatment as a human subject. When does humanitarianism become an ethical value; is it in the most vulnerable

¹³⁰These sequences recollect the 2008 killing of immigrant farmhands in Rosarno and the ensuing uprisings in 2010. The Rosarno incidents are an escalation of changes occurring in towns in the Calabria region with respect to unauthorized migrants. The demographic and economic issues within the area have led to tensions between locals and newcomers (who have been relocated to these parts in the government's management of migrants). Nikunen's (2016) empirical research in Badolato, a town located about 2 hours to the northeast of Rosarno, demonstrates the distant and tense relations between the two groups which affect the livelihood and wellbeing of the foreigners.

circumstances or for compensation to the ailing body? Ticktin's (2011) investigation of how ill-health serves as a means of acquiring immigration documents (and rights) using France's 1998 illness clause in the Conditions of Entry and Residence of Foreigners shows the rise in illness permits (compared with granting asylum). Abas does not need to tell tales of suffering to elicit compassion toward himself. His bodily injuries from the physical assault are testament to his life-threatening predicament which nonetheless attracts him a temporary performance of acceptance i.e. to stay for a fixed period and leave. The interplay between the Other, immigration and the ethics of hospitality is resolved by a recognition of palpable frailty threatening life. Given this phenomenon, there is a contradictory reaction toward the irregular migrant since one of the reasons for the pushback against clandestinity is based on the medical or health unsuitability of the foreigner. To borrow Ticktin's (2011) words, "with humanitarianism as the driving logic, only the suffering or sick body is seen as a legitimate manifestation of a common humanity, worthy of recognition in the forms of rights..." (98). This recognition simultaneously shows the deprivation of migrant working bodies whose labor drives underground economies. The difficulty of the subject to obtain legal status as an unapproved migrant or through employment ridicules ill-health as providing a privileged possibility for attributing prolonged, yet finite residency rights. Abas' case of being offered a year's humanitarian visa shows the insufficiency of personhood to attract long term welcome: even his injury is not enough. Comparing the initial 3-month permit to the 1-year humanitarian visa, this can be read as "a form of care that...entails *selling* one's suffering, bartering for membership with one's life and body" (Ticktin 127, emphasis original). Meanwhile, the question of impoverishment is subtly subsumed under the gravity of sickness. Therefore, the uninvited guest does not escape the

conditionalities of reception s/he is subjected to in the destination space. Indeed, this figure of otherness remains between welcome and unwelcome.

The equivocal experiences of the undocumented migrant, at the interstices of acceptance and pushback, which fail to underscore his/her humanity and ethical deservingness lead to a deepening divide between the foreigner and the host country. The final sequence of the narrative speaks volumes about Ayiva's disillusionment with the paradise he sought to find which nonetheless refuses to accept him as another human worthy of being there. During a skype call with his sister, Aseta, and daughter, Zeina, who dances with excitement to Rihanna's 2011 song, "We Found Love", Ayiva breaks down to tears. The closeup shot reveals the contrast between his emotions and that of his family. While he is saddened by the difficult encounters as an undocumented migrant, Aseta and Zeina are depicted in joy. The insertion of the song in the scene creates an oxymoronic denouement which summarily highlights the contradiction between its lyrics (as the desire of the migrant to find a haven) and Ayiva's real experiences. In effect, the protagonist did not find love in a foreign land. Given that Aseta and Zeina appear happier, it is plausible to suggest that the homeland becomes more appreciable since, to borrow the song's lyrics, "we found love in a [erstwhile] hopeless place" which was left behind in search of a supposed prosperous land. Meanwhile, this may be nuanced since despite Ayiva's declaration that they prefer to return home, the closing scene shows him in a cheerful mood at the Fondacoros' party for their daughter, Marta, where Rocco invites him for a drink. In agreement with Chouliaraki (2013), "an other-oriented morality, where doing good to the other is about our common humanity and asks nothing back" has receded in "the emergence of a self-oriented morality, where doing good to others is about 'how I feel'" (3). This

implies an inclination of self-centric, nationalistic, and indifferent ideals to the detriment of ethics and biopolitical relations. The widespread rationalization of anti-immigration discourses has resulted in the diminishing of personhood or humanity as the motivation for accepting the newcomer. Hence, hospitality may be purchased or transacted rather than offered to the human who un/expectedly shows up. This leaves the unwanted foreigner between a circuitous range of denial and approval despite the right to migration and his/her expectation of welcome in countries of immigration.

Conclusion

Juridically, Article 13 of the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights guarantees the “right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state” and “the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country”. Although the article is silent on the settlement in another country, the right to leave one’s country presupposes the right to enter and reside elsewhere. Besides, the 1951 Geneva Convention’s provision of protection for refugees and unauthorized entrants in search of better living conditions corroborates the legal requirement of and their expectation of welcome toward them. Additionally, from a moralizing perspective, I concur with Wilcox’s (2009) argument that “affluent, liberal democratic societies are morally obligated to admit needy immigrants as a partial response to real world global injustices, such as poverty and human rights violations” (813)¹³¹. Since, it is a fact that the (post)colonial relations between the North and South have impacted the happenings in sending countries which contribute to northward movements, it is expedient that receiving societies accept

¹³¹See also Breytenbach (2009) and Goytisolo (2010) who advance the moral argument of acceptance as a mode of repairing the ill-effects of globalization on (undocumented) migrants from the Global South to Europe.

the newcomer as an ethical solution to their vulnerabilities. Hospitable receptions that validate the humanity of the stranger despite their form of mobility reifies the democratization and respect of human rights.

Thus, hospitality moves from a legal realm (in relation to international law) to encompass a form of ethical, moral, and sociopolitical reparation that rehumanizes the dispossessed subject. Challenging governmental supremacy on immigration, Abizadeh (2008) postulates that “Anyone who accepts a genuinely democratic theory of political legitimation domestically is thereby committed to rejecting the unilateral domestic right to control and close the state’s boundaries” (38). From this postulation, the state’s loss of jurisdiction over the acceptance of foreigners in the management of (im)migration may result in the liberalization of hospitality to the Other at the level of the individual to enhance distributive justice and humanitarian solidarity. However, the realism of the democratization of the right over the state’s borders by breaking political authority’s monopoly over this domain is debatable, if not questionable. Instead, a solution that may be less prognostic lies in the formulation of border and migration management policies that recognize the human commonality between the citizen and the outsider as well as the natural and legal right to move of all persons. In this way, those who cross international frontiers are no longer treated as unwanted persons who are demeaned through hostility.

Consequently, Friese’s (2004) pertinent questions: “Does one need guests? Does hospitality concern exclusively the one who is needed?” evokes the exercise of welcome as a humanitarian ethic that rests not on invitation but shared humanness, especially in the era of increased mobility (68). Based on economic abilities, legal status, racial identity and morality, the foreigner – invited or expected – legitimatizes his/her deservingness of

hospitality in a new space. By promoting tourism and illegalizing clandestine migration, hospitality retreats into a commercialized and racialized entity where “the one who is needed” carries a privilege of movement and acceptance. Thus, this has consequences for the undocumented foreigner who must demonstrate his/her quest for integrating the society. Accordingly, I have shown that the reaction to the unexpected guest does not unfold by one reasoning. The management of the contemporary irregular migrant rests on a multiplicity of conditions – national laws, traditional codes and humanitarianism, economic productivity, employability, and sickness. Nonetheless, these “prerequisites” have proven to be singularly inadequate for facilitating the integration of the clandestine migration into the destination country.

As national laws criminalize individual intervention toward clandestines, hospitality based on moral codes is equally illegalized making the adherent of traditional laws and the irregular migrant lawbreakers and victims of political power. By treating the unauthorized migrant as an “illegal” subject, an outcast despite the universal right to mobility, power exemplifies legal entry as a precondition for hospitality. Yet, the examination of conditional and unconditional hospitality in the two films, *Terraferma* and *Mediterranea*, allows for a less simplistic but multidimensional, and more nuanced analysis of their performance toward the foreigner. Despite the generalized depiction of the boatperson as an economic parasite, his unregulated but dedicated labor becomes a source of acceptance in the underground business sector of the destination country. Similarly, long-term welcome, i.e. acquisition of legal status, is attributable to the Other because of his/her suitability for employment; otherwise stated, “hospitality for sale”. Ironically, there is a parallel recognition of the suffering of the uninvited guest. While in *Terraferma* the

citizen solidarizes with the body in pain, state power does not certify its legitimacy as deserving hospitality. The insistence on the politico-legal breach of sovereign borders by unauthorized entry denies the subject political and human rights in the realm of the state. Meanwhile, *Mediterranea* changes the status quo by unraveling the acknowledgement of the sick body as worthy of humanitarianism, although to be conditioned by time limits. The combination of these practices situates the uninvited guest's encounter with the host society at the interplay between welcome and unwelcome.

Given the fallacious perception of Otherness as racial, sociocultural, and medical contamination, the localization of hospitality through the involvement of community residents is one way to promote welcoming and integrating the Other. The importance of family and the home to the welcome of the stranger in the two films highlights the familial reason behind some clandestine migrants' journeys and the impact of tolerance from the host family on them. Starting from the national political level with pro-immigrant policies, the locals can be central actors in facilitating the experiences of foreigners among them. Although this does not necessarily guarantee positive migrant experiences, its potential for improving their social and inter-relational conditions cannot be ignored. The crossing of boundaries between guests and hosts creates humane and welcoming interactions between them. Even for the purposes of tourism, the acceptance of the racial Other can be a tool for marketing societies as hospitable to foreigners. Yet, can there be absolute hospitality? Hospitality is pure to the human but limited by the host's agency, resources, and political environment. There is no hospitality without limits hence Kakoliris' (2015) insistence on hospitality. This, however, cannot be the basis of selectivity among guests by means of race, ethnicity, religion, nationality, or financial capacity. Even if hostility is embedded in

hospitality, receiving the Other (particularly in need) must respect the subject's fundamental human rights of personhood and of movement. As such we can concur with Fine's (2018) proposition of cosmopolitan solidarity as a form of action "oriented to what we have in common as human beings, to a human complexity that is irreducible to a single category, to an engagement with other cultures that declines to turn difference into a capital Difference" (370). In other words, the ethics of hospitality may engender human solidarity across different identities and locations.

The lack of narrative closure in both films which leaves the undocumented migrants in "uncertain worlds" – the Ethiopian family in *Terraferma* is last seen on the sea suggestively heading toward Mainland Italy while in *Mediterranea*, Abas is bedridden and Ayiva is at a birthday party – earmarks the incertitude about the fate of current migrants and boatpeople in host societies. The awareness created, and the sociopolitical reflections and changes envisioned by these works indicate that continuous research is needed to ascertain the progress being made with respect to reactions to unauthorized migrants in the Global North. What remains to be interrogated is how individual citizen's support for humanitarianism and ethical commitment to the Other influences the state's position on the management of unauthorized border crossing. Forgacs (2015) shows two distinctive features of Italy's reaction to increased human mobility among other European nations. First, a general political consensus on securitization as the right policy. Second, a widespread anxiety of Italy's susceptibility to undocumented migration due to its geographical location. Given that the state's legal and policy posture streamlines attitudes toward the outsider as evidenced in the readings of the filmic works, we can ask: when personal convictions to traditional codes of accepting the Other are threatened by

governmental policy, how can the individual's performance of hospitality be sustainable? I suggest that a combination of legalistic, moralistic, and democratic arguments can collectively aid the cause of the uninvited guest. Future studies must investigate these postulations to increase extant knowledge about the reception of the unauthorized migrant in different geographical settings.

Conclusion

“Haunting is both acute and general; individuals are haunted, but so are societies... Haunting doesn’t hope to change people’s perceptions, nor does it hope for reconciliation. Haunting lies precisely in its refusal to stop... For ghosts, the haunting is the resolving, it is not what needs to be resolved... Haunting aims to wrong the wrongs...” (Tuck and Ree 2013:642).

In this dissertation, I have undertaken an examination of the portrayal of increased undocumented human movement between Sub-Saharan Africa, North Africa, and Europe in films produced in the last two decades. In this investigation, I have shifted the focus from the North Africa–Europe binary which has been well documented across various fields including literature and cinema. My focus on sub-Saharan migrant figures in unauthorized migration does not preclude these spaces from the work given that the Maghrebi and Mediterranean regions constitute inevitable routes in this form of mobility. Nonetheless, by this de-centering, I have drawn attention to the south of the Sahara which is an important region of clandestine migration departures to Fortress Europe. This also aligns with the growing prominence of other destinations like the Canary Islands and Italy (different from the erstwhile centers based on colonial and linguistic affiliation) in the artistic expressions examined and echoes Abderrezak’s (2016) notion of ex-centric migrations. The eccentricity of contemporary migration means that migrants do not always use social capital in host societies. Instead, they become a new community that relies on the collective support of its members to navigate the barriers of their new environs.

Meanwhile, how do clandestines conceive of their journeys to foreign lands without receiving proper documentation, in the face of anti-migration control mechanisms and the

dangers of the modes of travel available to them? What is the response of people and authorities in the places they move through and where they desire to settle? Taking into consideration the different facets of the incidence of clandestine migrancy – the pre-departure, journeying, (non) arrival and post-arrival stages – it becomes apparent that it is a multidimensional phenomenon that has far reaching consequences on those who leave. Therefore, the study has attempted to reflect on theoretical notions that help foreground an analysis of the various dimensions of migration as a human activity. It has engaged with scholarship in literary, cinema, critical theory, cultural, ethnographical, and anthropological studies, and philosophy. In thinking through the concepts of emotion, spectrality, and hospitality in relation to clandestine mobility, the humanity of the migrant/refugee figure occupies the central place in the understanding of the incidence and impact of clandestinity.

The works discussed bring to the fore the push factors in sending countries as well as the pull factors in receiving societies which underlie the occurrence of clandestinity. This underscores migration as an innately humanistic venture as argued by Chamoiseau and Glissant (2007) and thereby explicates the aspirations of the would-be migrant. The narratives provide a view of migrants' vision of Africa as retrogressive to their goals and Europe as possessive of what can ameliorate living conditions and life outcomes. What stands out from the onset in these cultural productions and my analysis of them is the strong perception of mobility to countries on the northern shore of the Mediterranean as a solution to familial, financial, security and health needs of individuals on the African continent. Despite the geopolitical imbalance, within the globalization era owing to colonial histories, postcolonialism and neocolonialism, which has restricted the migration rights of citizens

of non-western nations, the migrant/refugee figures in the corpus demonstrate a refusal to accept this asymmetry: their movement constitute a form of haunting to their destinations.

The visual texts that constitute the corpus under consideration reflect a careful selection of depictions (by artists from an array of national origins – Senegalese, French, Italian, Ethiopian) that represent the variety of experiences of clandestine migration in multiple spaces and by different persons. This enables the inclusion of and access to myriad perspectives that show divergent and convergent themes and happenings in terms of sub-Saharan African migrations to the western and central Mediterranean area. The films' aestheticization of reality by which they offer counter-narratives not only to the sensationalism of mediatic portrayal but also to political discourses depicting migrants as a numerical, faceless and large mass of invaders also construct the migrant's aspiration and counteract sociopolitical commentaries and mechanisms of control that vilify him/her as an invader/intruder in the other's space. In this way, we can reflect on the varied ways in which those who attempt to cross international borders are forced to deny their corporeality or identity or are dehumanized by political structures that deem their movement as unwanted or illegal.

The cultural texts I have discussed evidence the centrality of the human subject in clandestinity who is nonetheless sidelined by the political interests of former colonial powers. In complementary ways, the films throw light on the dispossession of the migrant figure from the South who desires to enter territories on the northern shore of the Mediterranean. In the commentary they provide on the neocolonial and globalized era's assignation of difference to the non-western citizen as an unwanted presence in the West, they show the clandestine migrant's determination to possess and use the right to mobility,

both as a natural propensity and a solution to local challenges. The filmmakers and the characters presented in these works maintain that international border crossing must not be criminalized from a legal perspective or impeded due to racial or religious affiliation. The artistic productions also offer a critique of the extension of European borders through cooperation with African governments to curb the northward movement of persons. These portrayals decry the violence and inhumanity that pervade the control regimes operating against undocumented mobility in transit as well as receiving countries. In addition, they show that the expression of solidarity to those who traverse frontiers without proper documentation is an ethical response that must be performed to those in need, in spite of their mode of arrival. Put differently, offering hospitality to the clandestine can be conceived as reparational and rehumanizing to the repressed foreigner.

Undocumented migration implies the consciousness of a disadvantaged status and the decision to brave obstacles which portend the risk of loss, suffering, death, or rejection at the point of arrival despite the seeming promise of a haven at the end of the trajectory. It is inaccurate to assume, as may be expressed in media or political domains, that irregular migration occurs without an appreciation of the dangers at stake or that those concerned are simply lured into taking rickety boats across the sea or ocean in search of green pastures by smuggling networks. I have shown that individuals make the decision to leave based on an evaluation of their socioeconomic conditions vis-à-vis the prospects of living abroad. This echoes Ahmed's (2010) notion of the *happy object*; here it is the fact that (im)migration is attributed with the promise of happiness – a life of happiness. As such, the resolution to depart is an emotive experience which presages more emotional upheavals during the journey itself. The challenges related to unauthorized migrancy and the failure

to attain migratory dreams, while not new – given they have been present in many literary and cinematic productions – , the emotional impact these have on those who undertake the journey is explicitly thematized in films like *La Pirogue* and *Come un uomo sulla terra*. The treachery of sea crossing which includes starvation, thirst, drowning and death as well as the violence and dehumanization in transit locations engender emotions such as fear, despair, and sorrow.

Despite the supposed promissory happiness of unsanctioned migration for many undocumented migrants, the artistic works analyzed in the dissertation present it as a disenchanting experience for those who engage in it. Their disillusionment stems from the hardships endured during the crossing of the sea or the dessert passage, the failure to enter receiving countries, and encounters with host societies where they suffer rejection or inhospitality. Instead of the ameliorative conception of the European Eldorado that incites the acceptance of risking one's life, the cinematic productions show the dehumanizing treatments at the hands of power structures in the global South and Fortress Europe as well as demeaning choices that irregular migrants are forced to take to seek a part to the West and the emotional toll these occurrences have on them.

Irregular migrants use a range resources to advance their migratory agenda. The artistic corpus' depiction of clandestine migration from the viewpoint of migrant and refugee figures reveals the interconnectedness of human and electronic forms of mobility present in their movement. In the case of Sub-Saharanans who traverse several spaces before crossing the sea, transit (migration) is a central feature of their migrancy whereby they negotiate moving and stopping on the road. It manifests as a multi-transactional phenomenon which involves the corporeal displacement of persons and objects as well as

the use of digital technologies such as the internet and the telephone to communicate across distances and to access information about their destinations as they move. This mobile interconnectivity employed by undocumented persons to facilitate their travel across borders and the desert toward Europe enables continuity in their northward movement. These multifaceted transactions – negotiation, buying, selling, telecommunicating and interactions between people – underscore the interchanging states of clandestinity i.e. between mobility and immobility.

Another dimension of transit shown in the films is irregular migrants' engagement with smugglers and encounters with governmental anti-migration forces on the paths they take. The nature of unauthorized migration travel necessitates the recourse to smuggling networks that aid clandestines to pass through the dangerous Sahara Desert and to escape arrest by state authorities. Nonetheless, the narratives convey the profit-driven motives of trafficking rings in which they collude with state agents (police officers) to dehumanize migrants by reducing them to objects of commerce in a vicious cycle of detention and sale. Not only do traffickers make money from recruiting undocumented persons to send them to Europe but they also buy them from police raids thereby inscribing these persons within a spate of progression and retrogression vis-à-vis their mobility objectives.

Documenting the inhumanity of the treatment meted to clandestine migrants within the anti-migration and smuggling nexus created along the trans-Saharan route presents a vision of the violence-dominated posture of actors within the space against those concerned. The human cost and psychological impact of being subjected to a spiral of physical, sexual, and racial aggression results in traumatic memories for those who survive. This renders clandestines' testimonies about their transit journey to destination societies an

important mode of accessing personal experiences related to their travels and the hardships endured. The shortcomings of oral accounts do not foreclose on witness narratives as a potent source of knowledge about their predicament and giving agency to those victimized by the militarization of borders and xenophobia. Instead, witnessing, though it may not give closure to their ordeals and even risks being spectacularized or voyeuristic, amplifies the voices of survivors and breaks the chains of socio-political and discursive marginalization. For these persons, sharing their stories equally seeks to attract official attention to the unknown treachery within transit sites where border crossing management has become a criminalizing and commercial economy.

The persistent movement and hiding strategies used by the undocumented evinces ghostliness. The notion of spectrality explored in this dissertation establishes a linkage between the ghost – a non-human entity which can appear unexpectedly –, and the visibility/invisibility paradigm that characterizes the clandestine migrant. The unsanctioned migrant manifests as a spectral phenomenon which haunts Europe by repeatedly challenging the political obstacles formulated to preclude the entry of unwanted Others. This haunting of the spectral migrant results from the universal distribution of the sensible with relation to the asymmetrical access to migration between citizens of the Global North and South. The ghostly irregular migrant who does not have a part to the country of immigration haunts this space through a refusal to accept the paradoxical sensible of the global era in which mobility, both a right and an asset, is constantly restrained. As Gordon (1997) stipulates, “The ghost is not simply a dead or a missing person, but a social figure...The ghost or apparition is one form by which something lost, or barely visible, or seemingly not there to our supposedly well-trained eyes, makes itself

known or apparent to us...” (8). The ghost of unauthorized migration is not (necessarily) a figure of return but an instrumentalized subjectivity, from an acquired skill, a deliberate choice of suppressing markers of personal and national identification, or an imposed shadowed positionality in the now and present.

The diversity of ghostliness involves the clandestine migrant’s life of concealment and perseverance in a space he/she has no part to but remains “...a phantom, a secret form of life, a life formed around a secret, around the pursuit and preservation of a secret¹³².” Moreover, the undocumented foreigner’s determination to evade anti-migration control systems in the host society underpins the resort to spectrality. On one hand, the (would-be) migrant appropriates the invisible character of the ghost by destroying forms of identification, hiding, and travelling in the night to avoid being detected by border authorities. On the other hand, surveillance technologies on national frontiers render the unsanctioned traveler spectral through digitized mechanisms. The proliferation of digital monitoring systems makes border control a ghostly presence which haunts the voyager and thus, the latter is obliged to efface his/her corporeality to outwit the watchful gaze of power. The correlation between the respective absent-presence of the irregular migrant and anti-migration supervision brings out the spectralization of clandestine migration. Furthermore, the practice of detention and confinement of rescued or intercepted unauthorized newcomers in host societies perpetuates their invisibility as specters who are rendered socially absent from the public view. The foregoing has an impact on the ethical reactions toward the clandestine, as an uninvited guest.

¹³²Lippit (2005: 7).

Despite the legal provision of migration rights under international conventions like the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and the Geneva convention, the performance of hospitality toward the unauthorized migrant and refugee involves a mix of welcome and unwelcome. This shows that national authorities have failed to honor the terms of these protective legislations. The ambivalent reception is premised on the view of the (unexpected) newcomer, usually the racial Other from the Global South, with suspicion of contamination. By promoting tourism and illegalizing clandestine migration, hospitality retreats into a commercialized and racialized entity where “the one who is needed” carries a privilege of movement and acceptance thereby sidelining the undocumented foreigner who must demonstrate his/her quest for integrating the society. This reaction to the unexpected guest is multirooted. In other words, the management of the contemporary irregular migrant rests on a multiplicity of conditions – national laws, traditional codes and humanitarianism, economic productivity, employability, and sickness. As such, the boatperson’s bastardization as an economic parasite, for instance, is ameliorated by his/her unregulated but dedicated labor which becomes a source of acceptance in the underground business sector of the destination country. Meanwhile, these “prerequisites” have proven to be inadequate for facilitating the integration of the clandestine migrant into the destination country.

As national laws criminalize individual intervention toward the undocumented, hospitality based on moral codes is equally illegalized making the adherent of traditional laws and the irregular migrant lawbreakers and victims of political power. By treating the unauthorized migrant as an “illegal” subject, an outcast despite the universal right to mobility, power exemplifies legal entry as a precondition for hospitality. Nonetheless, the

crossing of boundaries between guests and hosts, as a form humanitarian solidarity, creates humane and welcoming interactions irrespective of identity or origin. This echoes Fine's (2018) proposition of cosmopolitan solidarity as a form of action "oriented to what we have in common as human beings, to a human complexity that is irreducible to a single category, to an engagement with other cultures that declines to turn difference into a capital Difference" (370). As such, hospitable receptions that validate the humanity of the stranger despite their form of mobility reifies the democratization and respect of human rights. In this way, hospitality moves from a legal realm (in relation to international law) to encompass a form of ethical, moral, and sociopolitical reparation that rehumanizes the dispossessed subject who arrives without proper documentation.

In effect, clandestine migration reveals the continuous othering of the racially and nationally (citizenship-wise) different subject who due to the neocolonial fundaments that mark geopolitical relations between former colonial powers and now independent states continue to assign the latter's citizens under the etiquette of undesirability. A common denominator in the films studied is the vision of the Other by the migration management apparatus in transit locations and in Europe. Migration texts that depict irregular border crossing have presented the arrival of the undocumented foreigner in Europe and their reception by or relations with nationals or authorities. While the corpus reflects this trend, the present study suggests that a look into inter-migrant relationships during travel and the treatment of clandestines by those who share similar racial identities with them will further extant knowledge about unauthorized migration.

In addition, the awareness created, and the sociopolitical reflections and changes envisioned by the works analyzed in the dissertation indicate that continuous research is

needed to ascertain the progress being made with respect to reactions to unauthorized migrants in the Global North. The films demonstrate that the state's legal and policy posture streamlines attitudes toward the outsider. Therefore, I suggest that a combination of legalistic, moralistic, and democratic arguments can collectively aid the cause of the uninvited guest and render the performance of hospitality sustainable in the era of increased undocumented migrancy. Consequently, the carnage resulting from the recourse to irregular mobility can be abated.

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