The Calais Crisis
Real Refugees Welcome, Migrants "Do Not Come"[1]

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> In times of "crisis" […] we must ask anew: *Who has become a migrant? Which forms of human mobility are classified, or recognized, or disavowed as manifestations of "migration"?* Moreover, it is crucial to ask: *Who does, and who does not, come to be governed as a "migrant"?*
> —The New Keywords Collective, "Europe/Crisis"

> Fear is the anticipatory reality in the present of a threatening future.
> —*Brian Massumi, "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact"*

Thomas Nail opens *The Figure of the Migrant* with the affirmation that "the twenty-first century will be the century of the migrant."[2] In the context of this defining historical instance, I take the New Keywords Collective's invitation to ponder questions of definition and classification as a starting point to engage with the discursive mediation of the so-called migrant/refugee crisis in Europe. I focus on the British context—which intensively mediated the migrant camps of Calais, France as a focal point of threat—critically scrutinizing the key terms that have been deployed in the British political establishment and mainstream news media to shape popular perceptions of migration and refugeeism. My analysis centers on the keyword "crisis," as well as on the bifurcated keywords "migrant/refugee," as these terms constitute key political operators around which political and media discourses proliferate within the discursive field of migration. I focus on Calais as a site of entry to shed light on the specific political and governmental responses these keywords generated, as well as on the ways in which they constituted a series of bordering practices and immigration and asylum regimes.

The intellectual and political orientation of this research takes its inspiration from the work of the New Keywords collective, which is concerned with destabilizing exist-

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1   This phrase is taken from a public address by the president of the EU Council Donald Tusk at a press conference in Athens, March 3, 2016.

2   Nail, *The Figure of the Migrant*, 1.

ing objects and categories of migration, providing a new critical theorization of migration and borders, and producing a counter-discourse in the field of migration. I share the Collective's conviction that migration keywords are more than mere words. Rather, they frame in essential ways the stakes of contemporary migration research, and related debates, policies, and matters of governance. These keywords are key sites of struggle where competing and conflicting political aspirations, projects and practices collide. On the one hand, as suggested elsewhere in the current volume, the "hegemonic discursive formations of crisis"[3] shore up European governmental policies and practices, from intensified border enforcement and militarized police violence to the sweeping illegalization of human mobility as a management strategy. On the other hand, the autonomous movements,[4] practices and mobilizations of migrants and refugees who "appropriate movement and claim space"[5] as they seek safe and promising places to stay in Europe defy borders and contest normative categories of citizenship, national identity, and belonging.

The term "crisis,"[6] which by 2015 had become a more or less standard frame of reference through which to understand the "unauthorized" migratory movements of people across and within the borders of European states, was mobilized to particular effect by British politicians and media to describe the migrant camps of Calais. I take then-Prime Minister David Cameron's 2015 denunciation of the Calais migrant camps as evidence of a widespread migrant crisis as a starting point to examine the epistemic and political work performed by that particular term. Drawing on the work of Brian Massumi, I examine how the keyword "crisis" conjures various temporalities, and how, through their interplay, these temporalities operate on an affective level to simultaneously produce migration as a future threat *and* erase its past, its historicity.[7] In so doing, they legitimize governmental measures that seek to securitize Europe and Britain against migration and to discipline migrants. While my analysis begins in 2015, I am particularly concerned with how this specific moment of crisis was preceded by a longer series of crises that established the affective and symbolic reserve that rendered the 2015 crisis legible as such. I claim that this recursive operation—which in many ways contravenes the very sense of political and historical singularity that crisis as a keyword attempts to impute to migration—works through a logic of preemption (of the threat of migration)[8] to consolidate a new form of governmental power. This logic, through which the vision of migration as an impending crisis recursively constitutes itself, is nowhere more pronounced than in the operations of another of the British media and state's preferred migration keywords: 'illegal.' I argue that the refugee/eco-

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3 De Genova, Garelli and Tazzioli, "Autonomy of Asylum?", 240.

4 De Genova, Garelli and Tazzioli explain that from an autonomist perspective, migration is conceived "in terms of historically specific social formations of human mobility that manifest themselves as a constitutive (subjective, creative, and productive) power within the more general capital-labor relation." ("Autonomy of Asylum?", 241).

5 New Keywords Collective, "Europe/Crisis," 4.

6 My use of the scare quotes around the term crisis is intentional to mark this term as a contested one. I invoke this term throughout the rest of this essay, without the scare quotes but in the same spirit of contestation.

7 Massumi, "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact."

8 Massumi, "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact," 54.

nomic migrant distinction is mobilized by various formations of sovereign power,[9] from the British government to the EU, to "illegalize"[10] migrants as a preemptive measure, and to thus justify their exclusion from the international regime of refugee rights and protection. In other words, I show how the representation of all Calais migrants as potential "illegal" economic migrants by British politicians—a representation circulated and amplified by mainstream newspapers—is the mechanism by which these migrants are discursively and politically excluded from the category of refugee and produced in turn as always already illegal. I also show how this illegality gets attached not only to certain types of mobility, but to specifically (non-white) bodies according to a neocolonialist logic of racial and class hierarchy and differentiation, and produces them as vulnerable and exploitable subjects.

Solve the Crisis! Stop the "Swarm"![11]

The year 2015 marks a decisive turning point in the development of contemporary discourses of migration. Due to the increased pace and scale of migratory movements to Europe during the second half of that year, the EU declared that a vast "migrant/refugee crisis" was underway, and that it threatened Europe's control over its borders, as well as its security, its identity, and its values. As De Genova, Garelli and Tazzioli affirm, "what has been designated unanimously by European authorities as a migration or refugee crisis [...] signals an impasse for the effective and efficient government of multiple cross-border mobilities that is figured as 'crisis' only inasmuch as it signifies a crisis of *control*—a crisis of the sovereign power of the European border regime."[12] This potent framework was expanded to include the northern French city of Calais following an incident in which a few hundred migrants charged the UK-France border barriers during the summer of 2015.[13] Speaking to ITV news in July 2015, David Cameron, then Prime Minister of the UK, expressed that he was "totally focused" on the "Calais crisis," and vowed to address it through various measures, including intensified securitization of Britain's maritime and submarine borders with France, offshore preemption—what Cameron described as "deal[ing] with the problem at the source, that is stopping so many people from travelling across the Mediterranean in search of a better life"—and finally increased domestic immigration enforcement designed to make it "less easy for 'illegal' migrants to stay in Britain." Explaining his rationale, Cameron continued:

> "You have got a swarm of people coming across the Mediterranean, seeking a better life, wanting to come to Britain because Britain has got jobs, it's got a growing economy, it's

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9 New Keywords Collective, "Europe/Crisis," 4.

10 De Genova, "Migrant 'Illegality' and Deportability in Everyday Life," 419.

11 The term swarm was used by British Prime Minister David Cameron to describe migrants in Calais in an interview with ITV news in July 2015.

12 De Genova, Garelli and Tazzioli, "Autonomy of Asylum?", 254.

13 New Keywords Collective, "Europe/Crisis," 23.

an incredible place to live. But we need to protect our borders by working hand in glove with our neighbors, the French, and that is exactly what we are doing."[14]

A crisis is defined as "an unstable or crucial time or state of affairs in which a decisive change is impending,"[15] and as such, it seems to demand urgent intervention and immediate action. A crisis thus conjures a particular temporality: even as it demands action in the present moment, it anxiously looks toward and attempts to preempt a potential future catastrophe, some shift that is impending. In "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact: The Political Ontology of Threat,"[16] Brian Massumi insightfully theorizes how this temporality operates and, more importantly, how it gets politically instrumentalized. Massumi argues that while "threat is from the future," it has "an impeding reality in the present."[17] This is because whether the potential danger that the threat anticipates for the future exists or not, a threat *is real* because it is *felt* to be real, in the form of fear. Massumi ties the affective ontology of threat to a new and dominant form of political power: preemptive power. Preemptive power takes threat as its object and preemption as its "operative logic,"[18] justifying defensive actions that are designed to prevent the felt potential (of) threat from actualizing, and to protect public security. Through the production and sustenance of threat, preemptive power creates the conditions that justify its own exercise, and thus, is able to perpetuate itself recursively. The keyword crisis, as mobilized in the discursive field of migration, works in a similar manner. It temporally oscillates between future (the future threat of further or increased migration) and present (the current atmosphere of fear that this threat produces). So situated, crisis becomes affectively operative, galvanizing a sense of collective fear which in turn legitimizes anti-migrant actions that promise collective security. In other words, the discourse of crisis justifies preemptive measures that expand the ambit of state sovereignty, and increase the state's power to govern migrants and mobility. For instance, Cameron, during his interview with ITV, vowed to respond to the crisis by increasing police presence at the border, by further investing in border security, and by erecting border fences at the port of Calais and at Coquelles (site of the French entrance to the Eurochannel). He also promised to pursue illegal gangs that help migrants get to Britain, and pledged to intervene domestically by "throwing out more illegal migrants," passed new legislation that made it more difficult for them to stay in Britain. These mechanisms, dedicated to what Massumi refers to as the "modulation" of the "felt qualities" of the environment, are precisely what give preemptive power an edge over other forms or regimes of power.[19] Put differently, these preemptive defensive measures enable Cameron to modulate the public fear around migration, by reaffirming Britain's power over its borders and over cross-border human mobilities.

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14 Taylor and Wintour, "Calais crisis: Cameron pledges to deport more people to end 'swarm' of migrants."

15 Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Crisis."

16 Massumi, "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact."

17 Massumi, "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact," 53–54.

18 Massumi, "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact," 62.

19 Massumi, "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact," 62.

The discursive operation of crisis relies on various metaphors of pathology and disease. These are used as governmental tactics to demonize migrants, and to thus manufacture the collective sense of fear that needs to be modulated. The epistemic move of associating the term crisis—defined as "the turning point for better or worse in an acute disease or fever; a paroxysmal attack of pain, distress, or disordered function"[20]—to the term migration pathologizes migration by representing it as a disease, fever, or pain attacking the European body, and causing its dysfunction. As the New Keywords collective argues, "the very terms '*migran*t crisis' and '*refugee* crisis' tend to personalize 'crisis' and relocate 'crisis' in the body and person of the figurative migrant/refugee, as if s/he is the carrier of a disease called 'crisis,' and thus carries the contagion of 'crisis' wherever s/he may go. Most importantly, the figure of the migrant/refugee hereby threatens 'Europe' with its incurable and contagious malady."[21] The camps in Calais and their residents were openly represented as a pathogenic threat in some British newspapers. For instance, *The Daily Mail*, the second biggest-selling British daily tabloid newspaper, denounced the Calais camp's "squalid" condition, asserting that it is "rife with disease, violence and prostitution."[22] According to this report, published in August 2016, "Calais jungle [was] at 'breaking point' as number of migrants passes 9000 and camp becomes a 'major health and security risk'." *The Daily Mail* was thus claiming that disease, violence and prostitution were at the very door of Britain, waiting to infiltrate the nation with and through the contagious bodies of the migrants who were seeking to cross the channel from Calais. *The Daily Express* used the same wording to warn that the 9000 migrants in Calais were so dangerous that the camps were a "police no-go zone."[23] *The Daily Express* was thus alleging that the "danger" characterizing the Calais migrant camp was threatening to spread through entire British nation if migrants were to be allowed in. In yet another article, *The Daily Mail* actually claimed that the migrants jumping into lorries going from Calais into Britain were *contaminating* the food products that these lorries were transporting.[24]

These metaphors of pathology and disease are some of the various strategies that proliferate under the discursive regime of crisis, and keep it potent by affectively saturating the environment with a sense of fear. Another effective and pernicious metaphor that Cameron draws on to depict migrants is that of the "swarm." Conjuring the visual image of a large and dense body of insects, Cameron compounds the repellent image of a contagious disease with the equally revolting image of a swarm of insects, thus producing an image of migrants that is intended to invoke visceral and instinctive feelings of disgust and fear. The term swarm was circulated by the mainstream media, intensifying the sense of a crisis in Calais, one that threatened the very body of the nation. The July 31, 2015 edition of the *Daily Mail* displayed on its front page a collection of photographs of "illegal" migrants being arrested by the police across southern Britain under the all-uppercase headline "THE 'SWARM' ON OUR STREETS." Cameron's metaphor, dutifully repeated in the press, is not incidental. Swarm was used in association with migrants by French author Jean Raspail in his infamous 1973

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20   Merriam-Webster Dictionary, "Crisis."

21   New Keywords Collective, "Europe/Crisis," 20.

22   Sparks, "Calais Jungle at 'breaking point'."

23   Sparks, "9000 Calais migrants want to enter UK."

24   "It is time to end this migrant madness."

novel "Le Camp des Saints" to describe the "attack" of France by migrants from the Indian continent. This racist and violent book, which laments the fall of the native French population and of the Western civilization following the migrants' "invasion" popularized racist and xenophobic terminologies—such "tidal wave" and "swarm"—which are today used in some mainstream media to represent migration. These terms have also gained currency in far-right American and French political circles. The book, for instance, has been cited by far-right politicians such as Marine Le Pen and Steve Bannon to advocate for anti-immigrant measures in Europe.[25]

The discourse of a Calais migrant crisis, bolstered by the various metaphors that have been used by British politicians and by news outlets from the *BBC* to *The Times* to *The Daily Mail* to represent migration and migrants to Europe—from contagious disease and "swarm" to "tidal wave," "flood," "invaders," and "marauders"[26]—performs, to draw on Massumi again, "an operative logic [...] that combines an ontology with an epistemology in such a way as to endow itself with powers of self-causation."[27] That is, these terms epistemologically constitute migration and migrants as a potential threat which is affectively and collectively felt in the form of fear of what migrants "would do" if "they could" access Europe—what Massumi calls "the double conditional"—which in turn, legitimizes preemptive actions that deny migrants access to Europe under the pretext of safeguarding European security. Put differently, these metaphors are mobilized by politicians and mainstream media as techniques to make up crisis as a particular kind of discursive regime which assembles all the migrants in Calais into one nameless, faceless, pathological and threatening mass, producing the figure *migrant* as "the generic identity of a potential threat,"[28] and rendering migrants themselves subject to a mode of preemptive power that is invested in governing migration and securitizing borders.

The discursive regime of crisis not only implicates the future to act on the present, but it also restructures the past by disappearing the historicity of migration. The narrative of crisis indeed invokes a nostalgic account of a mythical past that was supposedly absent of migration, and that was disrupted by the threat of the migration crisis. The language of crisis therefore forecloses the structural nature of exclusion and exploitation that produces the migrant "camp" as an ongoing phenomenon. As Miriam Ticktin argues, the attachment of crisis to a sense and language of emergency "makes [the situation] seem as if it is an exception to an otherwise peaceful order. There is no space to understand causes or histories that might have led to or shaped this moment."[29] Put differently, through an alarmist representation of a momentary border control emer-

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25 Alduy, "What a French novel tells us."

26 The June 26, 2015 edition of the *Daily Mail* warned: "The tidal wave of migrants could be the biggest threat to Europe since the war"; *BBC* used the term flood to describe migrants moving from Italy to Germany or Scandinavia in a June 20, 2015 article on www.bbc.com; *The Times* warns of an invasion of migrants who were forced out from Calais by police force in its June 1, 2018 edition. Speaking to the BBC in August 2015, the UK's Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond described the migrants in Calais as "marauders." Reported by *The Guardian*, "Marauding' migrants threaten standard of living, says foreign secretary," August 10, 2015.

27 Massumi, "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact," 62.

28 Massumi, "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact," 58.

29 Ticktin, "The Problem with Humanitarian Borders."

gency, the discourse of a migrant crisis obscures the structural forces and historic conditions that have shaped migratory movements, and that drive thousands of people to risk their lives as they attempt to cross the Mediterranean to reach Europe. Through its evocation of a mythical past that erases the history of migration, crisis conceals colonial histories, their legacies and enduring effects. For Britain, this means that the Calais crisis belies the reality that Britain is the final destination for many migrants precisely because of the colonial histories that have shaped their language, culture, education, and imagination, and that thus have bound particular countries to the metropole. Crisis also conceals the role of such economic policies as liberalization, deregulation, and privatization—all enforced by Western powers, including Britain, through powerful international financial institutions like the IMF and the World Bank—in contributing to those forms of mass dispossession and forced displacement that drive people to Europe in the first place. Crisis moreover conceals the historical responsibility of industrialized nations, such as Britain, for climate change and its environmental effects (such as crop failure and rising sea-levels) that are driving migratory movements to Europe, especially out of Africa.[30] And finally, crisis conceals the wars—in Iraq, Afghanistan, Syria, Libya, and Yemen to name a few —in which Western powers are embroiled and that are displacing large populations to Europe.

Crisis thus essentially severs the connections between the history of European imperialism and neo-colonialism and contemporary migratory flows. In the specific context of migration to Britain, crisis conceals the role played by Britain in shaping the colonial histories, and the economic, environmental and political forces that drive people to be on the move and to transit through Calais, as they attempt to reach Britain. In other words, crisis conceals the longer history of the Calais camps as an *ongoing* crisis, and displaces Europe's and Britain's responsibility for migratory movements and accountability to migrants by producing migration and migrants "as the de facto human refuse of 'crises' constructed to be strictly 'external' to the presumed safety and stability of 'Europe,' erupting always 'elsewhere'."[31] Crisis replaces Europe's and Britain's implication, accountability and responsibility with a sense of imminent threat, and with an environment of fear that affectively galvanizes populist anti-migrant sentiments and legitimizes various measures taken by European governments to stem migration to Europe, under the pretext of re-instating safety and stability, and restoring a "lost" mythical past, imagined as devoid of migration and migrants.

Further, by concentrating attention on the present moment, crisis not only disregards the past, but it also excludes the future. In times of crisis, there is "no time to think of the past or plan for the future," Ticktin tells us.[32] The preemptive actions that are called for by the crisis—such as the ones promised by Cameron as solutions to the Calais crisis—whether in the form of more borders, more fences, more security, more surveillance, more policing, and more militarization, or in the form of migrant illegalization, incarceration, deportation, or resettlement, do not interrogate or address the structural conditions and forces that underlie contemporary migratory movements.

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30 Africa is one of the areas that is most affected by climate change. For a detailed report on the effects of climate change and its relation to displacement see Kalin, "Displacement Caused by the Effects of Climate Change."

31 New Keywords Collective, "Europe/Crisis," 3.

32 Ticktin, "The Problem with Humanitarian Borders."

These solutions, devised as responses to an event framed as an emergency, "demand a response that moves us beyond politics and into the realm of exception," confirms Polly Pallister-Wilkins.[33]

The Becoming of a Crisis:
From the Sangatte Refugee Center to the Calais Migrant Camps

Contravening the very sense of urgency and singularity that the discursive regime of crisis seeks to create, the crisis in Calais has been intensively recursive. While Calais only became a focal point of the so-called European migrant/refugee crisis in 2015, it has been a place of migration and a transit point for migrants for decades—a disappeared history that intersects with that of another site, Sangatte, that although less known to the public, is equally important in shaping the current "migrant/refugee crisis." Beginning in the 1990s, Calais, a port-town in northern France, emerged as a major hub for migrants attempting to cross from France to the UK where they would seek asylum.[34] In 1999, the French Red Cross opened a refugee center in the Sangatte commune to offer shelter to migrants sleeping on the streets in and around Calais. Pierre Kremer, editor in chief of the French Red Cross magazine *Croix Rouge*, reports that "the presence of the center has elicited the wrath of local residents, who regularly claim that the constant comings and goings of foreigners has led to a permanent insecurity in this region. In fact, no rise in the crime rate has been registered since the center opened."[35] The xenophobic anti-immigrant sentiments expressed by the local population were exacerbated by news media and the political establishment's representation of the presence of migrants in Calais as a problem that required the urgent intervention of the state and the police. The discursive recursivity of an impending crisis was starting to accrete to the Calais site, and a preemptive logic mobilized to govern migration and migrants.

Liza Schuster traces how the Sangatte center and its residents were produced as a public issue in ways that ultimately drove the British government both to close the center and to increase security at the British-French border.[36] Her analysis shows that Sangatte constitutes a complex conjunction of state, corporate, and civil society interests which together manufactured the "problem" of migrant crossing and simultaneously militated against it. Schuster explains that in 2001, the closure of the Sangatte refugee center became an imperative for Eurotunnel at the moment when the UK Labour government announced that both Eurotunnel and cross-channel carriers would be penalized for undocumented migrants stowing away, effectively shifting the responsibility of controlling the borders and preventing the crossing of undocumented migrants to these private companies.[37] Eurotunnel consequently undertook to lobby British opposition parties to fight the Labour government's legislation, and simultaneously worked to mobilize British media into pressuring the government to shut down

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33 Pallister-Wilkins, "The Humanitarian Policing of 'Our Sea'."
34 Fusco, "The Futile Destruction of the Jungle in Calais."
35 Kremer, "Sangatte: A Place of Hope and Despair."
36 Schuster, "Asylum Seekers: Sangatte and the Tunnel."
37 Schuster, "Asylum Seekers: Sangatte and the Tunnel."

the Sangatte center, which continued to attract blame for drawing "illegal" migrants to the area.

"Illegal" is an operative term in the discursive representation of migrants in Calais. The rhetoric of "illegality" draws on the Dublin regulation, an agreement within the EU that forces asylum seekers to apply for asylum in whatever EU country they reach first. Since few migrants arrive in Britain as their first point of entry to the EU, the Dublin Agreement therefore acts as a powerful instrument of illegalization. In other words, seeking asylum in Britain renders Calais migrants *de facto* "illegal." The rhetoric that was mobilized in British political and mediatic speeches to represent and to govern migrants in Calais coded Sangatte as a "migrant attraction"—obscuring its *raison-d'être* as a center providing basic humanitarian assistance to refugees—and coded all migrants as always already illegal because they were not refugees, thus justifying measures to deny them entry to the UK, and to force them out of Calais. The legislative and discursive construction of Calais migrants' illegality was compounded by main-stream media spectacles: journalists were allowed into the channel terminal so they could document and publicize migrants' attempts to "illegally" enter the UK. Schuster reports that during the summer of 2001, Sangatte was prominently featured in British news media: all newspapers, tabloids and broadsheets, supplemented by TV coverage, reported on Sangatte. The *Daily Express* deployed the terminology of war, describing migratory movements to Europe as an "invasion" to support of Eurotunnel's demand for strengthening the border with France; the *Mail* backed a Tory MP's request for a militarized intervention in the form of British troops patrolling the French coast.[38] A sense of threat, produced by this discursive formation, was coalescing, in the form of collective fear, around Sangatte's migrants and around migration more generally.

Not only was Sangatte instrumentalized to advance the economic interests of Eurotunnel and the carriers, but it also became an opportunity to further political agendas. Conservative officials used Sangatte as an example of the Labour government's incompetence in the handling of a migrant crisis during the 2001 elections, promising the British people to make migration and asylum a priority in their political agendas. With the support of all tabloids and some of the broadsheets, various Conservative spokespersons fed the perception that Britain had become the most attractive destination for migrants and asylum seekers because of the Labour government's lax immigration policies.[39] From a refugee center, Sangatte was thus transformed by the British press and political establishment into a symbol of migration and border control politics in Britain, while the migrants it housed were construed as "illegal" subjects causing damage to British businesses,[40] threatening the security and safety of Britain, and abusing its welfare system. "Illegality" was painted onto migrants because they were being figured as economic beings in pursuit of wealth while at the same time siphoning public resources. In other words, "illegality" designated not only a strictly legal category, as defined under the Dublin Agreement, but also an improperly governed

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38 Schuster, "Asylum Seekers: Sangatte and the Tunnel," 510–511.

39 Schuster, "Asylum Seekers: Sangatte and the Tunnel," 513.

40 Schuster, "Asylum Seekers: Sangatte and the Tunnel," 512. As Schuster explains, British companies claimed that the increased cost of security measures, the interruption of transport services caused by migrants' crossings, and the loss of freight business due to the threat of fines were affecting their revenues.

form of capitalist aspiration that was threatening to the dominant social and political order, and that thus needed to be controlled through preemptive action.

Massumi incisively asks: "How can a preemptive politics maintain its political legitimacy given that it grounds itself in the actual ungroundedness of affective fact? Would not pointing out the actual facts be enough to make it crumble?"[41] The response seems to be no. As Schuster's study highlights, the number of asylum applications to the UK had actually decreased in 2001, contradicting the discourse of emergency and threat that was entrenched in the migration debate. And yet, following mounting pressure—from Eurotunnel, the Conservative Party and the media—the British Home Secretary David Blunkett pressed the then-French Interior Minister Nicolas Sarkozy to close the Sangatte Red Cross center, describing it as "a magnet for illegal immigration into Britain."[42] The center was shut down in 2002, and while Britain took in a portion of the center's residents under a "burden-sharing agreement" and France took in another portion,[43] the British government introduced a new bill aimed at tightening the nationality, immigration and asylum system. In defence of this bill, Blunkett stated that the government's aim is not to create "Fortress Britain" but to break the image of Britain as "soft touch."[44] The bill's aim was thus to restore the British people's confidence in Britain's territorial sovereignty, its border enforcement system, and its immigration and asylum regime. Put differently, the bill's aim was to reinforce the mechanisms that modulate the collective atmosphere of fear around migration. The manufacturing of the "threat" of migration in Sangatte legitimized the intensification of border control in the Calais region. The agreement between France and Britain indeed entailed an increase in the number of French border police across the channel's ports, and the extension of Britain's immigration control across the border to France.[45] What took place around Sangatte prefigured, and uncannily anticipated, the next moments of crisis in 2009 and 2015, thus marking the recursive nature of the Calais Crisis. The structure of this crisis, far from being singular and totalizing, is highly repetitive, and it is precisely its recursivity that acts as the enabling condition for an ongoing but constantly mutating politics of preemption, and a self-sustaining preemptive power.

The rhetoric of migrant illegality (and its association to threat) which had shaped the representation of Sangatte in the early 2000s resurfaced in 2009 to mediate the representation of migrant camps in Calais, and quickly came to dominate the debate around the politics of migration, border and asylum control policies in Britain. The closure of Sangatte's refugee reception center in 2002 did little to slow the arrival of migrants to and the passage of migrants through Calais. The center's residents relocated to the surrounding area, and new migrants continued to arrive, with the hope of crossing the border to Britain. Smaller, temporary camps started emerging around Calais, one of which expanded dramatically despite French authorities' sporadic attempts to demolish the shelters and disperse their inhabitants. This site came to be known as the Calais "jungle." Like the Sangatte refugee center, the Calais migrant camps became a

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41 Massumi, "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact," 55.

42 Travis, "Britain to accept 1200 migrants in Sangatte deal."

43 *UNHCR News and Stories*, "Last Groups to Leave for Britain As Sangatte Closure Looms."

44 "Blunkett Closes Asylum 'Loopholes'."

45 Travis, "Britain to accept 1200 migrants in Sangatte deal."

flash point of political interests and a signifier of a larger politics of mobility control.[46] When in 2009, French riot police bulldozed the informal settlements and rounded up their dwellers, sending adults to detention centers and minors to shelters in Eastern France, French Immigration Minister Eric Besson justified this operation by declaring that Calais was not a humanitarian camp, but a base for human trafficking and illegal migration.[47] His claim was supported by the British, who this time refused to take in any migrants yet did not hesitate to instrumentalize this event, emphasizing Britain's commitment to the prevention of illegal migration and human-trafficking. Home Secretary Alan Johnson expressed his "delight" about the camp's closure, and stated that Britain would not be forced to take any "illegal" migrants: "genuine" refugees would have to apply for asylum in the country from which they accessed the EU, while non-genuine refugees would be returned home.[48]

The distinction between a refugee and other types of migrants is rooted in the definition set forth by a United Nations treaty, the 1951 Refugee Convention, which today constitutes the key legal document forming the basis of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' (UNHCR) work.[49] This document codifies the rights of a refugee at the international level, who is defined as "someone who is unable or unwilling to return to their country of origin owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group, or political opinion."[50] The asylum seeker is described as a person waiting to be recognized as a refugee (but will not necessarily be recognized as such), while the economic migrant is defined as a person who "normally leaves a country voluntarily to seek a better life. Should she or he elect to return home they would continue to receive the protection of their government."[51]

At the outset, the UNHCR terminology defining the distinction between a refugee, an asylum seeker, and an economic migrant elicits questions that shed light on the problematic assumptions and implications of such normative categories of differentiation and classification. For instance, given the complexity and entanglement of migratory patterns and motivations, is it even possible to categorize migrants into tidy, mutually exclusive groups? Can a migrant not be simultaneously displaced by unrest in their home of origin *and* have economic motivations as well as desires to ameliorate their situation? How are the conditions in the home country determined to be "safe" or not for someone's life or freedom? Does not economic disaster and catastrophic climate change constitute a threat to one's life? Does not war, internal strife, or conflict undermine one's economic well-being? Is war not an economic phenomenon? Nicholas De Genova, Glenda Garelli and Martina Tazzioli shed light on the role of the fault lines between the category of "migrant" and that of the "refugee" in constituting the crisis in Europe, particularly the manner in which migrant management policies and humanitarian responses are premised precisely on the exclusion of economic migrants from discourses of hospitality and tolerance, and from rights and recognition structures.

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46 Rygiel, "Bordering Solidarities," 1.

47 Allen, "Alan Johnson praises French raid on Calais 'Jungle'."

48 Chrisafis and Siddique, "French Police Clear the 'Jungle' Migrant Camp in Calais."

49 UNHCR, "Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugee."

50 UNHCR, "Convention and Protocol relating to the Status of Refugee."

51 Definition retrieved from the FAQ of the UNHCR website.

De Genova et al. problematize this "customary governmental partition" and its "exclusionary juridical reification and rarefication of the status of refugee" by affirming that "every act of migration, to some extent—and in a world wracked by wars, civil wars, and other more diffuse forms of societal violence, as well as the structural violence of deprivation and marginalization, perhaps more and more—may be apprehensible as a quest for refuge, and migrants come increasingly to resemble "refugees," while, similarly, refugees never cease to have aspirations and projects for recomposing their lives and thus never cease to resemble "migrants."[52]

The distinction between refugee and asylum seeker performs the same work, since the very term "asylum seeker," argues the New Keywords collective, "is always already suggestive of a basic suspicion of all people who petition for asylum within a European asylum system."[53] In other words, migrants are all guilty, until they prove their worthiness and deservingness of European protection, which is a rare occurrence, because as the New Keywords collective further adds, "the European asylum system routinely and systematically disqualifies and rejects the great majority of applicants, and thereby ratifies anew the processes by which their mobilities have been *illegalized*."[54]

The indeterminacy of these definitional exclusions, bound by the framework of international law which reduces the complex and multi-causal contexts in which people move, operates as a form of power that is crucial to the virtual politics of crisis and to the manufacturing of fear. This indeterminacy is both discursively and politically leveraged in anti-migration debates and actions, as it enables states to govern migrants through the "illegalization" of undesirable forms of mobility. In Calais, the discursive distinction between "genuine" refugees and "non-genuine" refugees creates on the one hand, a category of tolerable/legal migrants who would be given access to Europe, and on the other hand a category of undesirable/"illegal" migrants who can and should be turned back. This, of course, is mere justificatory discourse, since according to the Dublin regulation, there are no instances where migrants could be treated as refugees or asylum seekers in the whole of the zone for crossing between Britain and France. The UNHCR's institutional and juridical framework thus leaves power in the hands of nation-states to categorize migrants and to draw the line between "genuine" refugees who are deemed worthy and deserving of protection, and other migrants who are not. As Daniel Trilling affirms, "international law aims to protect refugees while allowing states to retain control of their borders—but the definition of 'refugee' status is political, and subject to a constant struggle over who is deserving and who is not."[55] By leveraging the exclusion of migrants from the UNHCR's structures of protection and rights, the British government is able to bypass the principles of non-refoulement[56] and non-penalization for illegal entry that underpin the 1951 Geneva Convention (a UNHCR binding law),[57] as well as to evade its duty/responsibility to provide refugees

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52 De Genova, Garelli and Tazzioli, "Autonomy of Asylum?", 242.

53 New Keywords Collective, "Europe/Crisis," 16.

54 New Keywords Collective, "Europe/Crisis," 16.

55 Trilling, "Five Myths About the Refugee Crisis."

56 The principle of non-refoulement protects refugees from being returned against their will "to a territory where he or she fears threats to life or freedom."

57 The parties that ratified the Convention and/or the Protocol are obliged to carry out its provisions. As host governments, they are responsible for protecting refugees, and are expected to cooperate

with basic rights. Daniel Trilling elaborates on the various technologies deployed by states to block asylum seekers from accessing the EU:

> "In theory, refugees—who have the right to cross borders in search of asylum under international law—should be exempt from these [border] controls. But in reality, the EU has tried to prevent asylum seekers from reaching its territory wherever possible: by closing down legal routes, such as the ability to claim asylum at overseas embassies; by introducing penalties for transport companies that allow people to travel into the EU without the correct documents; and by signing treaties with its neighbors so they control migration on the EU's behalf. And within the EU, an agreement called the Dublin regulation forces asylum seekers to apply in whatever country they reach first."[58]

The 2009 destruction of the migrant camps in Calais—a culmination of the escalating tensions around migration politics—received significant media attention. Johnson's statement was reproduced by mainstream British media, including the *BBC*, *The Daily Mail*, *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian*, *The Independent*, and media images of the camps' demolition and of the arrested migrants were widely circulated,[59] reinforcing the narrative of migration as illegal and threatening in British public opinion. Echoing representations of the Sangatte refugee center and its residents of the early 2000s, the 2009 migrant camps in Calais became the object of the exercise of preemptive power. And yet, similarly to 2002, the dismantling of the migrant camps did not alter the pattern and intensity of migration. Migrants started gathering again, and migrant camps sprang up, eventually resurrecting the Calais "jungle" into the "new jungle."[60]

At the height of the so-called "European migrant/refugee crisis" in 2015, Calais once again occupied a significant place in British mainstream news outlets and in the discourse of the British political establishment. The language of crisis, extended from the broader European migrant crisis to the specific site of Calais, helped justify another spectacular destructive intervention by the French government.[61] The operations began in 2016, when French police forces and demolition workers—"cleaners,"[62] according to French officials—descended onto the camp site to destroy migrants' makeshift homes and to dispose of their meagre possessions, supposedly bringing migrants' presence in Calais to an end.[63] The bulldozing of the migrant camps in Calais staged

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with the UNHRC. As the guardian of the Convention and its 1967 protocol, the UNHCR maintains a watching brief, intervening when necessary to ensure that the rights of refugees are protected and respected.

58 Trilling, "Five Myths About the Refugee Crisis."

59 Rygiel, "Bordering Solidarities," 1.

60 Rahman-Jones, "The History of the Calais 'Jungle'."

61 The destruction of the Calais camp was in fact far from exceptional, in the context in which France regularly defies its own laws on providing territories for "gens du voyage" (such as the Roma or Tsigane) by bulldozing and destroying encampments. The destruction of the Calais camp is both a 'border spectacle' and continuous with France's perpetual razing of those who move within its territory.

62 Jones, "Calais 'Jungle': Demolition of Massive Migrant Camps Begins."

63 Martina Tazzioli talks about French authorities' tactic of "taking migrants' terrain away," where terrain is understood both as the actual ground they inhabit, but also their rights. In "Calais After the Jungle."

what Nicholas de Genova calls a "border spectacle:" that is, the use of the border as a theatre for the spectacle of law enforcement that renders migrants' "illegality" both visible and natural.[64] Images of the evicted migrants, of the camps' destruction and its before and after, and of the French policemen in action were widely, and generally uncritically, circulated by global news media—from *CNN*, *BBC*, and *the New York Times* to *Euronews* and *AlJazeera*. These were the representations of a "global" migration crisis being effectively managed by the French and British governments.

Calais (and Sangatte before it) has thus been the center of political and media attention for sustained periods of time. Its repeated feature in political discourses and in ominous headlines amplified the affective performance of threat, effectively transforming the threat into an "ambient thickness:"[65] the crisis. That is to say that the Calais crisis was already well underway by the time it coalesced in 2015 as a so-called political or sociological crisis. 2015 was in effect a re-animation of previous crises-in-the-making that built off each other, and affectively charged a repository of images and sites that culminated into a deliberately manufactured migrant/refugee crisis. The anticipation of the crisis as an affective state, then, provided "ungrounded" grounds for border securitization projects and migration/asylum control regimes, and enabled Britain (and the EU more generally) to extend its sovereignty over territory and people.

Economic Migrants: The (Not So) Generic Identity Of A Potential Threat

Returning to David Cameron's interview on Calais, his strategic use of the term "illegal migrants" to represent all Calais' migrants—a term circulated by mainstream media who also speak of the "bogus," "fake," and "non-genuine" refugees of Calais—operates through a preemptive logic. His speech stigmatizes migrants in the social imagination by asserting that all migrants in Calais are frauds[66] and passing for refugees to reach Britain, and take advantage of its economy, take jobs away from British citizens, and abuse its welfare services, which is why they should not be let into Britain, or should be kicked out of Britain if they are already there. Cameron thus discursively and politically produces migrants as "illegal" in order to preempt the potential effects of their presence in Britain and to justify their exclusion. This exclusion mechanism is part of a larger European discourse that serves to justify increased governmental interventions in the management of cross-border mobilities, and to solidify the European border regime. During a press conference held in Athens in March 2016, the European Council President Donald Tusk warned "all potential illegal economic migrants": "Do not come to Europe. Do not believe the smugglers. Do not risk your lives and your money. It is all for nothing."[67] Through this discursive process, the keyword "migrant" itself

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64 De Genova, "Migrant 'Illegality' and Deportability in Everyday Life," 436.

65 Massumi, "The Future Birth of the Affective Fact," 62.

66 In its formulation, the UNHCR attributes intentions of fraud or deceit to economic migrants, as it uses the juridico-legal term "bona fide" to distinguish between on the one hand, "genuine" refugees who are seeking refuge (with earnest intent), and on the other hand, economic migrants ("non bona fide," or "bogus" refugees) who are deceptively seeking refuge. The UNHCR's framework thus enables the assignment of moral values to the motives of migration.

67 Chadwick, "Donald Tusk tells economic migrants: 'Don't come to Europe'."

is rendered fraught, and is used as a discursive mechanism of illegalization. As the New Keywords collective explains, "in the discourse of the 'migrant crisis,' it would seem that the term 'migrant' in fact refers exclusively to 'illegal' migrants, and therefore is profoundly implicated in the rendering of 'migration' as inextricable from a global/postcolonial politics of class and race."[68]

The "economic migrant" (or "migrant") is thus far from a neutral category. The narrative of threat—to Europe's safety, economy, security—that this category mediates is attached not only to certain types of (undesired) mobilities, but also, and especially, to Black and Brown bodies. In 2015, British Foreign Secretary Philip Hammond plainly revealed the association of a European migration crisis with Black bodies when he said, during an interview with the BBC:

> "The gap in standards of living between Europe and Africa means there will always be millions of Africans with the economic motivation to try to get to Europe. So long there are large numbers of pretty desperate migrants marauding around the area, there always will be a threat to the tunnel security [in Calais]. We've got to resolve this problem ultimately by being able to return those who are not entitled to claim asylum back to their countries of origin."[69]

According to Hammond, if Europe were to "absorb millions of migrants from Africa," it would not be able to "protect itself" and preserve "its standard of living and social infrastructure." Hammond's discourse represents all economic migrants to Europe as poor Africans, and all Africans as a potential threat to the European Body. Black bodies are "always already weaponized," affirms Christina Sharpe, as the narratives of Black bodies as carriers of danger, disease and disaster that were entrenched during slavery persist to this day and are manifest in the ongoing criminalization of Black bodies.[70]

Another carrier of threat to the European Body is the Muslim male body (see Zablotsky, this volume). Associated to the threat of terror, Muslim male bodies, in the post-9/11 geopolitical world order, are also always already weaponized, and framed as the object of the War on Terror. The association of migration to the threat of terror, and thus to the Muslim body, is nowhere clearer that in the 2016 Ukip Brexit referendum campaign poster "Breaking Point: the EU has failed us all." This anti-migrant poster was a call to action for the British people to reclaim the UK's borders by voting Brexit: "We must break free of the EU and take back control of our borders" read its sub-headline. The poster comprises an image of a queue of mainly non-white migrants crossing the Croatia-Slovenia border in 2015, where the only prominent white person is hidden by a text box, as pointed out in *The Guardian*.[71] Challenged about the poster, UKIP leader Nigel Farage asserted that the photograph used was "undoctored," and argued, in defense of the poster's message:

> "[…] frankly, as you can see from this picture, most of the people coming are young males and, yes, they may be coming from countries that are not in a very happy state, they

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68 New Keywords Collective, "Europe/Crisis," 16.

69 Perraudin, "'Marauding' migrants threaten standard of living, says foreign secretary."

70 Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 16.

71 Steward and Mason, "Nigel Farage's anti-migrant poster reported to police."

may be coming from places that are poorer than us, but the EU has made a fundamental error that risks the security of everybody [...] They are coming from all over the world. If you get back to the Geneva convention definition, you will find very few people that came into Europe last year would actually qualify as genuine refugees. We have just had—in the last two weeks, the Dusseldorf bomb plot has been uncovered—a very, very worrying plan for mass attacks along the style of Paris or Brussels. All of those people came into Germany last year posing as refugees. When Isis say they will use the migrant crisis to flood the continent with their jihadi terrorists, they probably mean it."[72]

By discursively conflating migrants with "jihadi terrorists," Farage's discourse construes all migrants to Europe as potential "terrorists," and thus as a potential terror threat that should preemptively be dealt with, through anti-migration policies and measures that are justified as anti-terrorist ones. While Farage's discourse aims to stoke a reactionary populist backlash to migration and to enlist the support of nativists for the Brexit campaign, this discourse is indicative of the broader European migrant crisis' preemption logic which entangles anti-Blackness and Anti-Muslim rhetorics with Anti-Migrant views and policies to produce a collective sense of threat embedded in the legacies of slavery, and saturated with the lingering fear of post-9/11. Refugees and migrants are refigured as suspects, as part of a "security crisis,"[73] and represented as potential terrorists that are seeking to infiltrate the space of Europe.[74] Within the political formation of preemptive power, *Migrant*, as the "generic identity of potential threat" thus takes on specific qualities: *Migrant* is illegal. *Migrant* is poor. *Migrant* is Black. *Migrant* is brown. *Migrant* is male. *Migrant* is Muslim. *Migrant* is terrorist. *Migrant*, is produced as an illegalized, racialized, classed, and gendered identity, attached to Black bodies and Muslim Brown bodies who are always already figured as threat, who are represented as a danger to the European body politic—its security, standards of living, and social infrastructure—and who are imagined as Europe's "breaking point," and must thus be preemptively apprehended, detained, rejected, expelled.

    And yet, the migration and border control regime is not one of exclusion only. As Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson argue, this regime is one of *differential inclusion*, which selects and filters migrants according to a capitalist logic to *include* their labor power as a commodity in global labor markets under new conditions of accumulation, exploitation and domination.[75] Their argument echoes Nicholas de Genova's assertion that "some [migrants] are deported in order that most may remain (un-deported)—as workers, whose particular migrant status may thus be rendered 'illegal'."[76] The intent of illegalization is not solely deportation; it is the creation of a condition of deportability that renders undocumented migrants more vulnerable, and thus more exploitable as cheap and disposable labor.[77] In other words, the deliberate attachment of the terms "crisis" and "illegal" to certain bodies and types of mobilities enables European

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72   Steward and Mason, "Nigel Farage's anti-migrant poster reported to police."

73   De Genova, Garelli and Tazzioli, "Autonomy of Asylum?", 256.

74   New Keywords Collective, "Europe/Crisis," 6.

75   Mezzadra and Neilson, *Border as Method*.

76   De Genova, "Migrant 'Illegality' and Deportability in Everyday Life," 439.

77   De Genova, "Migrant 'Illegality' and Deportability in Everyday Life," 439.

states to rearrange (or rather cement) labor relations under conditions of late capitalism, according to a neocolonial logic of racial and class differentiation and a neoliberal logic of market forces. Through various technologies of migration governance, European states transform migrants into a vulnerable, exploitable and expandable source of labor, thus creating a transnational flexible (and non-white) labor commodity at the disposal of market forces. *Migrant* is thus not only a socio-political identity, it is also an economic one. *Migrant* becomes cheap disposable labor.

Calais constitutes an ideal case study in the ways in which the figure of the migrant is discursively, politically and affectively manufactured as a threat, as well as illegalized, and rendered vulnerable, deportable and exploitable. Calais, as a site, thus holds potential for subsequent research on how Calais migrants, as unruly economic figures that are undisciplined by the global division of labor and the transnational circulation of capital, are subjected to economic regularization, and transformed into a pool of cheap labor and made available to European labor markets, to help redress the Eurozone economic crisis. Calais also constitutes a site of crisis of the European project itself, as it was not only produced as a symbol of the larger European migrant/refugee "crisis," but, as a "crisis within a crisis." (Im)migration is indeed a pillar of the Brexit campaign, and the securitization of borders is meant to protect Britain against the "threat" of not only migrants, but the threat of Europe as well.

The affective reality of threat, felt in the form of fear, and its transformation into an ambient thickness, is enabled by the discursive regime of crisis, and its intensely recursive structure. The regime of crisis is sustained through the discursive and political forces of mediatic and political speeches which mobilize keywords such as "crisis," "refugee/migrant," and "illegal" that produce *migrant* as the new identity of potential threat, and justify new preemptive anti-migrant governmental measures. These new enactments of sovereignty point to the emergence of new political formations—preemptive power key among them—that seek to control cross-border human mobilities through various strategies and technologies. And yet, the material implications (on the lives and subjectivities of migrants) of the recursive nature of crisis, and the political and discursive forces of this new power formation, are countered by the autonomous force of migration, and the recursive persistence of migrant encampments. As journalist and asylum researcher Alex Fusco asserts, "It hardly needs to be said that sending in police to forcibly expel inhabitants and backhoes to demolish the structures will have no effect on patterns of migration. Desperate people wanting to get to the UK will continue to flock to Calais. And if not Calais, Dunkirk. And if not Dunkirk, then the next patch of French coastline that offers a viable launching point for crossing the channel."[78] Since 2016, migrants have indeed been setting up temporary camps in and around Calais, Dunkirk and elsewhere in Northern France as they continue to attempt to cross the channel to the UK.[79] Calais, then, is both a border spectacle *and* a site of persistence. It is a site for a challenge at the very heart of the language of crisis.

"A social wave is a transportation of social force […] A wave transports a qualitative change or *social force* of solidarity or collective disruption" says Thomas Nail.[80] Nail

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78 Fusco, "The Futile Destruction of the Jungle in Calais."

79 Bulman, "The Lost Childhoods on Britain's Doorstep."

80 Nail, *The Figure of the Migrant*, 125.

identifies a form of counter-power, invented and deployed by migrants (historically and in the current historical conjuncture), as an alternative to the conditions and techniques of social expulsion to which they are subjected. Deploying an aqueous metaphor, Nail poses an alternative to the pejorative use of the term "flood" in media and political discourse, offering instead the image of the "wave" to characterize migration as a unified (yet heterogeneous), unpredictable, irregular social force of solidarity and disruption that overflows dominant territorial, economic, political and juridical orders. This turbulent collective social force challenges the hegemonic categories of differentiation and classification that frame our conceptions of cross-border mobilities and migrants, and limit our imagination of how these could be thought/represented/perceived/acted upon otherwise. By accepting these distinctions and the value/rights they assign to migrants' lives and motivations, we indeed contribute to the production of "economic migrants" as "illegal" migrants, and in so doing, we sanction the violence, both epistemic and material, that is performed in the name of these categories. The social force of migrants brings to light the relations of inequality, violence, and exploitation that these categories conceal, and that are embedded in, and constituted by, the global system of migration management. The social force of migrants de-reifies these categories which operate pervasively—and define the dominant discourse on migration—to appear to us as natural, normal, common-sensical, ahistorical and necessary, and unsettles their definitional exclusion which constitutes the very essence of the language of crisis. The social force of migrants is in excess of the discursively constrained sociopolitical and economic identity of the migrant, and of the regime and techniques of cross-border human mobility control. It is also in excess of the humanitarian logic of care, and the liberal discourse of human rights. This turbulent collective social force demands a radical rethinking of mobility, migrants, territory, and belonging, from the perspective of migrants and of migration, which produces the state, and not people on the move, as a crisis.