



CHAPTER 9

Geography of Emotions Across the Black Mediterranean: Oral Memories and Dissonant Heritages of Slavery and the Colonial Past

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INTRODUCTION

Every day, news about tragedies and shipwrecks in the Mediterranean are broadcast to our houses through different “black mirrors”—to quote the name of a dystopian TV series dedicated to the relationship between human beings and machines (Garofalo 2017). Yet the real life happening between the two shores appears tragically more dystopian than the sci-fi tv series created by Charlie Brooker: people who flee fighting, war, terrorism, political instability, and famine in African, Asian, and Middle Eastern countries are rejected and turned away by European institutions and Libyan naval forces (De Genova 2010, 2012); several thousands die in the Mediterranean each year (De Genova 2013; Cuttitta 2014); every

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year social sciences scholars reveal an increase in xenophobia and islamophobia in Europe (Alietti et al. 2014; Declich 2016; Grosfoguel 2017); and slave markets have even emerged in Libya (Amnesty International 2017; Elbagir et al. 2017).

These events could be interpreted as signs of a daily and ongoing catastrophe, a disaster that makes imminent the end of the world (Benjamin 1999; Kosellek 2007), especially when we consider the transformation and precarisation of everyday life (jobs, social relations, time, mobility, etc.) into a state of emergency (Butler 2004a, b). Indubitably, the availability of real-time information also contributes to the spreading spatial awareness of the elsewhere and otherness into the public sphere. Donna Haraway's ironic dream of a common language for human beings and integrated circuits (1984) seems to have become a nightmare, at least when we look at the media broadcasts about the refugee shipwrecks. In fact, she theorized the cyborg as space for the renegotiation, reinvention, and re-signification of women: "The cyborg is a matter of fiction and lived experience that changes what counts as women's experience in the late twentieth century. This is a struggle over life and death, but the boundary between science fiction and social reality is an optical illusion" (Haraway 1984, 4).

This was not a failed prophecy, it is a way for Haraway's ideas to cross over. Haraway's writings talk to us about her "here" and "now" yet propose a new insight that can call into question our past, present, and future at the same time. The cyborg—just like Gloria Anzaldua's "mestizia" (1987) and Teresa De Lauretis' "eccentric subject" (1999)—is an intellectual invention able to theorize an entity/subjectivity on the border of Western culture (human being, land, humanity). These devices perform the idea of space and aim to reach a specific goal, as pointed out by Haraway: "liberation rests on the construction of consciousness, the imaginative apprehension, of oppression, and so of possibility" (1984, 4).

My intention in this chapter is to bestow upon intersubjectivity the specific transgressive, out-of-place, floored positionalities of other figurations such as those quoted before, namely those of migrants in Italy. Within the BABE project headed by Luisa Passerini, my research was particularly dedicated to collecting oral memories through interviews with people coming from, or culturally connected with, the Horn of Africa. The chapter will raise questions about what I call the "geography of emotions", an imaginative geography concerning the perception of space, time, and temporalities dealing with shared ideas of the world.

In this case, the role of border (see Mezzadra and Nielson 2013) is not only to split or to connect, to show or to hide: the border is a marker of a liminal space—thought, planned, and made operative to divide and produce dichotomies, to create new forms of exploitation—which is used by migrant and diasporic people to, on the one hand, rethink the configuration of the world starting from more “ambiguous” subjectivities and, on the other, create new subjectivities from unordinary insights and perceptions of the world’s geography.

In the first part of this chapter, this concept of a geography of emotions will be discussed in connection with the debate about the idea of “dissonant heritage” formulated by Tunbridge and Ashworth in 1996, in particular paying attention to dissonant memories in and of Europe, and with reference to reflections by Stuart Hall, Edward Said, David Harvey, and key cultural geographers. In the second part, I will introduce three different interviews in which a geography of emotions about migration from the Horn of Africa (Eritrea, Somalia and Ethiopia) to Europe emerges. The last part will be devoted to proposing a few considerations about the role of intersubjectivity in the production of meaning and a larger reflection on how these geographies of emotions are changing Europe and other territories with a stake in narratives and usages of memory by the interviewees.

Before starting, it is important to point out the vocabulary I will use. I will use the notion of “archive” in the theoretical sense proposed by Ann Laura Stoler (2010). In particular, I am interested in studying how the archive of the Black diaspora in Europe reshapes the private and public memory of the past, specifically those of colonialism and slavery. As Paul Gilroy described it, the slaves’ journey was a “middle passage” symbolic for understanding the experience of transnational black modernity. Like the image of a ship, remembering the boat journey to Europe evokes, through a chronotope, memories, and positionalities between present and past. A set of emotions produces new transnational and intersubjective geographies which disclose a new idea of Europe.

DISSONANT MEMORIES AND IMAGINATIVE GEOGRAPHIES

In this book, all the contributions have analysed what heritage is, who decides what it is and why, and for whom heritage is created. These questions were at the core of J. E. Tunbridge and G. J. Ashworth’s analysis. Their book *Dissonant Heritage* (1996) investigates “how the past

can be used as a resource in present conflict situations" (Johnson 1996, 584). They define dissonance as a condition of "discordance or lack of agreement and consistency as to the meaning of heritage" (Tunbridge and Ashworth 1996, 21). Brian Graham, G. J. Ashworth, and J. E. Tunbridge continued the collaboration in *A Geography of Heritage*, reworking the idea from a new perspective:

This condition refers to the discordance or lack of agreement and consistency as to the meaning of heritage and should not be regarded as an unforeseen or unfortunate by-product. First, dissonance is implicit in the market segmentation attending heritage – essentially place products which are multi-sold and multi-interpreted by touristic and 'domestic' consumers alike; that landscapes of tourism consumption are simultaneously people's sacred places is one of the principal cause of heritage contestation on a global scale. Second, dissonance arises because of the zero-sum characteristics of heritage, all of which belongs to someone and logically, therefore, not to someone else. The creation of any heritage actively or potentially disinherits or excludes those who do not subscribe to, or are embraced within, the terms of meanings defining that heritage. (Graham et al. 2000, 24)

In *Uses of Heritage* (2006), Laurajane Smith, who worked on cultural heritage starting from the theoretical approach proposed by Graham, Ashworth, and Tunbridge, considered heritage as a construct of cultural identities and values in the present. In her book, she used a cultural approach in order to propose a reading of the past as a field where different subjects find meanings for the interpretation of the present. The year after, in 2007, Ashworth, Graham, and Tunbridge reconsidered the idea of dissonant heritage from a global perspective and in a wider sense, proposing to take into account the multiform dimension of heritage in connection with various identities and the ongoing revision and reinterpretation of the past.

Another debate about the relationship between place and heritage opened at the beginning of the 1970s. Human geography tried to propose a new approach to the study of the traces individuals and groups leave on the landscape—the city as mark of modernity. In 1973, David Harvey proposed the concept of "geographical imagination" in order to consider the close connection between narrative production and the meaning of a place:

This imagination enables the individual to recognise the role of space and place in his own biography, to relate to the spaces he sees around him, and to recognise how transactions between individuals and between organisations are affected by the space that separates them. It allows him to recognise the relationship which exists between him and his neighbourhood, his territory, or, to use the language of the street gangs, his ‘turf’ [...] it allows him to fashion and use space creatively and to appreciate the meaning of the spatial forms created by others. (Harvey 1973, 24)

His work animated a vast, years-long debate involving scholars such as Brian Berry, John T. Coppock, William Bunge, Eliot Hurst, and Peter Kropotkin. Harvey’s idea of the geographical imagination is very close to that proposed by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1978) who describes the production of narratives concerning the past which are shared with people who have the same beliefs and cultural background. In particular, he presents imaginative geographies as the outcome of a triangulation of power, knowledge, and geography. Said claims:

It is perfectly possible to argue that some distinctive objects are made by the mind, and that these objects, while appearing to exist objectively, have only a fictional reality. A group of people living on a few acres of land will set up boundaries between their land and its immediate surroundings and the territory beyond, which they call “the land of the barbarians”. In other words, this universal practice of designating in one’s mind a familiar space which is “ours” and an unfamiliar space beyond “ours” which is “theirs” is a way of making geographical distinction that can be entirely arbitrary. I use the word “arbitrary” here because imaginative geography or the “our land-barbarian land” variety does not require that the barbarians acknowledge the distinction. It is enough for “us” to set up these boundaries in our own minds; “they” become “they” accordingly and both their territory and their mentality are designated as different from “ours”. (Said 1978, 54)

Influenced by Foucault, Said, and Soja, Derek Gregory proposed his own idea of the relationship between spatiality and the use of the past and memory. In his *Geographical Imaginations* (1994) and in “Imaginative geographies” (1995), Gregory used the concept of space using Said’s categories. He proposed to move forward the discussion about geography by describing it as “will-to-power” disguised as the

“will-to-map”. For him, imaginative geography is a generalized practice involved in the construction of identity and usage of the Other through the representation of forms of otherness. In reason of this, the production of narrative is based on some aspects Said did not pay attention to, such as anxiety, desire, and fantasy. In a wider perspective, imaginative geography is a specific way to represent non-European subjects, as Said explains:

The imaginative geographies that were used to display the Middle East were different from those that displayed south Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa or South America, for example, and the power of their representations – their effectiveness in devising, informing and legitimating colonial practices – was guaranteed by more than metropolitan assertion. (Said 1978, 454)

In an essay published in *Critical Inquiry* (2000), Said focused on the connections between invention, memory, and place. Memory and its representations touch “questions of identity, of nationalism, of power and authority” (Said 2000, 176). It is not “a neutral exercise in facts and basic truths”, but “the study of history, which of course is the underpinning of memory [...] is to some considerable extent a nationalist effort premised on the need to construct a desirable loyalty to and insider’s understanding of one’s country, tradition, and faith” (*ibid.*). Memories of the past are “shaped in accordance with a certain notion of what ‘we’ or, for that matter, ‘they’ really are” (Said 2000, 177). After introducing the *Invention of Tradition*, by Eric Hobsbawm, Said extends the reflection to the use of the past in the public sphere:

My point in citing all these cases is to underline the extent to which the art of memory for the modern world is both for historians as well as ordinary citizens and institutions very much something to be used, misused, and exploited, rather than something that sits inertly there for each person to possess and contain. Thus the study and concern with memory or a specifically desirable and recoverable past is a specially freighted late twentieth-century phenomenon that has arisen at a time of bewildering change, of unimaginably large and diffuse mass societies, competing nationalisms, and, most important perhaps, the decreasing efficacy of religious, familial, and dynastic bonds. People now look to this refashioned memory, especially in its collective forms, to give themselves a coherent identity, a national narrative, a place in the world, though, as I have indicated, the processes of memory are frequently, if not always, manipulated and intervened in for sometimes urgent purposes in the present. (Said 2000, 179)

According to Derek Gregory, “the past is always present, of course, in precarious and necessarily partial forms: it has material presence, as object and built form, as archive and text, and it also haunts the present as memory and even as absence” (Elden et al. 2011, 314–315). In fact, it can be said that the past is always fragmentary and it casts shadows over our own present. In Gregory’s theoretical approach, the usage of the past is constantly reconstructed and interrogated: it is the outcome of what Donna Haraway called “situated knowledge”, the space “in which and through which knowledge is produced” (Haraway 1984, 320). In Gregory’s opinion, that is similar to Haraway’s, every knowledge is produced by someone from somewhere. He adds that conversation is the only way to fuse horizons: the interaction between two subjects and the resulting intersubjectivity is a tool.

Harvey, Said, and Gregory each in different ways tried to find ways in which the past could be considered as a symbolic place where fragments of memory could be gleaned for narratives used to recognize and distinguish the coupled notion of self and Other. They point out how each subject selects and uses part of a public memory for their ongoing own representational process which elaborates a position of the subject in relation with a group and the whole world. This usage of the past is compatible with the dissonant heritages scheme proposed by Ashworth, Graham, and Tunbridge. In this chapter, the idea of imaginative geography will be connected to that of dissonant heritage to consider the geographies of emotions emerging from the interviews collected in the BABE project. Before presenting a few key cases dealing with the Black Mediterranean—the repository of memories from black people who crossed the sea from Africa and the Middle East—the next section will theorize the “geography of emotions” as a tool for interpreting oral memories.

THEORIZING A GEOGRAPHY OF EMOTIONS

In the introduction to their edited volume *Emotional Geographies*, Joyce Davidson, Liz Bondi and Mick Smith affirm their aim to reconsider geography through emotions, since they matter: “They affect the way we sense the substance of our past, present and future: all can seem bright, dull and darkened by our emotional outlook” (2007, 1). These emotional geographies are dynamic, transformed by the age, and typology of relationship. Their goal is to demonstrate that a spatially engaged

approach to the study of emotions is capable of “bringing new insights to geographical research” (*ibid.*, 2). The term “emotional geographies” should not be understood narrowly, though, since emotions slip through and between disciplinary borders. Bondi, Davidson, and Smith clarify that their intention is not to propose another sub-discipline: their concern is to introduce a new question about how emotions could be relevant in defining the spatiality and temporality of certain places. “Much of the symbolic importance of these places”, they state, “stems from their emotional associations, the feelings they inspire of awe, dread, worry, loss or love. An emotional geography, then, attempts to understand emotions – experientially and conceptually – in terms of its socio-spatial mediation and articulation rather than as entirely interiorised subjective mental states” (*ibid.*, 3).

Their work is very relevant in changing the geographic paradigm, introducing emotions as a relevant topic in the study of the space production. The emotional turn, as it was called in the field of geography, involved several scholars who studied emotional experiences such as phobias (Bankey 2002; Davidson and Smith 2003; Davidson 2003), psychotic illnesses (Parr 1999), the relation between anorexia and cyberspace (Dias 2003), and the role of the body in the construction of space (Bell and Valentine 1997; Crewe 2001; Colls 2004). All these scholars, who were influenced by Bondi, Davidson and Smith’s writing, investigate the role of subjects or groups in a sociocultural context.

I would like to shift the attention from subject to subjectivity for the following reasons. Firstly, by using the term subjectivity one can not only map the movement of memory in chronological and spatial terms, but also highlight the production of new temporalities in the history. This allows me to unpack a new geography as elaborated by the subjects during the interview process. Secondly, paying attention to subjectivity would assist in investigating how shared memories of migration and/or diaspora connect places, people, and memories, disclosing another representation, perception, and experience of the world. This double attention for subjectivity can on the one hand show how the mobility of memory precedes the movement of people and is elaborated as a shared memory in a specific group (on a national, ethnic, gender, and/or skin colour basis) with the specific goal of completing and realizing a migrant project. On the other hand, the meeting between two subjectivities maps the geography of a migration anew, especially when emotions are relevant to characterize a place.

With “geography of emotions”, I mean the way shared memories of an emotion connect subjects to a place (such as Lampedusa), crisis situation, or social condition (i.e. refugees or so-called illegals in Italy Europe¹) and the way they affect the intersubjective sphere, reshaping, most of the time indirectly, the canonized geography of Europe. I would like to consider the idea of dissonant heritages from these two different perspectives, as memory processes—analysing the intersubjective field—which deal with human geography as a space of dialogue, connection, and mobility for subjects. Yet the dissonance produced by the meeting of voices will not be defined as a counter-geography (i.e. video artist Ursula Biemann uses this concept in her work), and I have several reasons for this approach. The most important, in my opinion, is about the definition of what is “counter”, who can counter, and how to define this opposition. The category “counter” implies an emphasis on the role of geographies in juxtaposition with a hegemonic narrative. This insight could come from a dichotomous division/production of the world, which ultimately is one of the marks of Western modernity. The concept of dissonant heritages, in this sense, seems useful to show how memory, and heritages more generally, could be used to propose geographies which are not based on ideas of nations or continents, starting from the frontier which reiterates the Westphalian model or using the border as a device to invent a globalized unequal world. The geography of emotions is both a point of view and a method in investigating how (inter)subjectivity—and the use of memory—can reshape places, relationships, and representations.

From a philosophical perspective on the production of space through narratives, it could be useful to look at the relationship between dissonant heritages and the geography of emotions in light of Deleuze and Guattari’s reflections on Kafka, particularly the idea of a *minor literature*, as it is interesting in order to rethink the role of subjectivities in reshaping and re-signifying the idea of Europe and being European. According to Deleuze and Guattari, “A minor literature is not the literature of a minor language but the literature a minority makes in a major language. But the primary characteristic of a minor literature involves all the ways in which the language is affected by a strong co-efficient of

¹I use the formula “Italy Europe” to assign a specific positionality to subjectivities/memories (i.e. Italy as part of Europe), while allowing for the analysis of the oral interviews from a global and transnational perspective.

deterritorialization” (1975, 16). The second feature of minor literatures is that “everything in them is political”. The two philosophers state:

In “great” literatures, on the contrary, the question of the individual (familial, conjugal, etc.) tends to be connected to other, no less individual questions, and the social milieu serves as environment and background. None of these Oedipal matters is particularly indispensable, absolutely necessary, but all “form a unit” in a wide space. Minor literature is completely different: because it exists in a narrow space, every individual matter is immediately plugged into the political. Thus the question of the individual becomes even more necessary, indispensable, magnified microscopically, because an entirely different story stirs within it. [...] What goes on down below in great literature and constitutes a not indispensable cellar of the edifice, takes place here in the full light of day; what is of passing interest to a few over there is a matter of life and death here. (Deleuze and Guattari 1975, 16)

We can consider the official and canonized geography as “great” literature and the geography of emotions as a “minor” one. In this sense, it is possible to assume the geography of emotions as a dissonant heritage *in and of Europe*, coming from non- or new-European people, and dealing with colonialism and slavery. Finally, minor literature “has a collective value”, which is crucial in order to rethink another possible community. Deleuze and Guattari (1975, 17) affirm:

If the writer lives on the margin, is set apart from his fragile community, this situation makes him all the more able to express another, potential community, to force the means for another consciousness and another sensibility.

Read in the context of the topic at hand, this sentence could be reinterpreted in two different ways: firstly, the meaning is elaborated on the intersubjective field; secondly, the writer, or in our case the interviewee, is considered as part of a group of people who glean fragments of memory from a migration/diaspora archive which has been created by decades of migrant experiences and through thousands of narrative processes concerning the geography of emotions.

The next part of the chapter will be dedicated to a specific geography of emotions: that of the Black Mediterranean for people who fled Eritrea, Somalia and Ethiopia or for people born in Italy to parent(s) from the Horn of Africa.

DISSONANT HERITAGES OF THE BLACK MEDITERRANEAN

Several scholars, as we will see below, have used the term “Black Mediterranean” in order to describe the condition of the thousands of people who have made the Mediterranean crossing “illegally”. Innumerable shipwrecks have happened there over the last twenty years alone. More than thirty thousand people are estimated to have lost their lives among the waves between Libya and Lampedusa. Alessandra Di Maio introduced the term Black Mediterranean with a specific meaning: she was interested in comparing the situation of the African diaspora in the United States—as described by Paul Gilroy in his famous *The Black Atlantic* (1993)—with the present and ongoing condition of African people who have fled from North Africa to the south of Europe (Di Maio 2012, 2014). Other scholars focused on these people from the point of view of the controlling systems (Raeymaekers 2014), citizenship and Black Italy (Hawthorne 2017), the legacy of the history of slavery in Turkey (Kayagil 2004) and France (Otele 2018a, b), the epistemological debate about the humanitarian condition (Danewid 2017), and the “politics of policing” (Saucier and Woods 2014, 2015). In previous writing (Proglio 2018, 145), I theorized the Black Mediterranean as “space of representation” for people newly arrived in Europe. This approach aims to map the use of memory in the diasporic context: my suggestion is that we read the Mediterranean as an excess space for signification, moving beyond the dichotomies of national and colonial, Africa and Europe, North and South, progress and backwardness, civilization and barbarism. By “excess”, I “mean that this space, such as others of extraterritoriality to the national and supranational entities, can be used as an empty and meaningless space by non-European people in order to rethink their subjectivities and their connections both with Africa and Europe” (Proglio 2018, 145). The Black Mediterranean is not Europe’s “internal” sea: its space belongs to those who left Africa and Asia permanently without finding a new home, in Europe or elsewhere.

According to several historians, the Mediterranean Sea has been used by colonial nations to represent their interests and as legitimization to conquer North African and Asian territories (Proglio 2017). These narratives particularly represented the Mediterranean Sea as a space through which the white and modern European civilized societies had to act to extend their power, through colonialism, to other territories. This European rhetoric used the theme of the civilizing mission—the White

Man's burden, to quote Rudyard Kipling—in order to justify their conquests. The legacy of this insight on the world outside Europe, and in the Mediterranean basin after the end of the French, Italian, and English empires, originated a politics of border control and a resulting public perception of a line between Europe and the rest of the Mediterranean territories. European countries were and are considered the North and the rest became and remain the South—the multiplication of the border beyond geographical frontiers in Europe, Africa, and the Middle East provokes differential inclusions and several forms of exclusion. If we look at it from another perspective, it becomes clear that European countries still define themselves as North through the invention and production of narratives concerning the South and its multiform representations, just they had before and during the colonial period. From a decolonial point of view, finally, it is possible to talk about the Global South (de Sousa Santos 2016) as a social condition of hundreds of thousands of people both out- and inside the European borders. The markers of this state of exploitation—discrimination, exclusion, and segregation—are intersectionally elaborated by the hegemonic discourse on the basis of race, class, gender, and ethnic group affiliation. This last interpretation will be used in considering and interpreting the geographies of emotions about the Black Mediterranean.

In this chapter, I examine the Mediterranean as a repository/archive of memory for those people coming to Europe from the Horn of Africa, or who culturally linked with it while living in Europe. During my field-work in several Italian contexts (Turin, Milan, Rome, Padua, Bologna, 2014–2018), I collected 70 interviews with first-generation migrants from Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Somalia or second-generation people born in Italy to (mixed) families culturally connected with the Horn of Africa. I have asked my interviewees to talk about their and their family's journey, particularly about the crossing of the sea. My aim was to pinpoint how the memories of this experience—also when experience is not direct but shared in the diasporic community—elaborates new cultural identities and geographic views through emotions. It is possible to consider these elaborations of memory as dissonant heritages due to the interviewees' liminal positionality as non-European black people from Africa. On this basis, emotions elaborate a transnational and diasporic geography which, among other things, proposes other and new representations of Europe. My approach to the interviews was informed by the role of the intersubjectivity, as elaborated by Luisa Passerini (2007), that is to say, to regard

the historical source as being produced in the social exchange between interviewer and interviewee(s).

The dissonant heritage I would like to investigate is related to a past of slavery and colonialism (see Turunen and van Huis in this volume) and could be seen as the source for the reconsideration of the dichotomous European narratives on these topics. This approach questions the discourse around who is considered heir to the European society and who is associated with the rest of the world. It should be added, for the sake of completeness, that this theoretical reflection starts out by considering the “production of space” as the result of the work of borders: the dichotomous division can be explained as the production of categories, based on Europe, between meanings which are part of the Self and meanings which are considered part of the Other. The Black Mediterranean shows a geography of emotions based on the intersubjective field which reshapes this scheme. In fact, black people’s memories of the Mediterranean crossing reuse both the colonial archive and the archive of resistance to the European powers which was active from the heyday of colonialism to the present moment.

ORAL MEMORIES OF THE BLACK MEDITERRANEAN

In this section, I would like to focus my attention on transcripts of the interviews I collected in several Italian cities. As noted before, one of the main topics that emerged during the interviews was the illegal crossing of the Mediterranean Sea. These stories—and of course these oral memories—deal with the horrific experience of migrant crossings and sheds light on a phenomenon that is both invisibilized and hyper-visualized.

Robert was 42 when I met him in a famous square in Bologna. He escaped from Sawa, the city where young Eritreans spend several years of their life on their military service. He states—during the interview—that Europe is responsible for what is happening in the Mediterranean Sea because “Europe has the capacity to change, while nothing has been done”. In his opinion, “Europe is a great country, better, a great culture”. After listing several reasons for believing in a future of freedom and along the route for reaching Europe (the route connects Libya, Sudan, and Ethiopia), he started to talk about negative matters in which Italy has been involved. “Italy is part of Europe”—he asserted. In this case, the act of belonging to Europe could be interpreted as sign

of civilization and progress, yet, as he says, “Italy colonized Eritrea for 50 years and left the country without doing anything. They [the Italians] owned enterprises and economic businesses: more than 2.000 Italians lived in Eritrea”. He continues changing the topic and returns to the idea that Italy has other responsibilities: “Italy left dangerous chemical waste in the Eritrean soil. And Italy is the country of Beretta, the most used gun in Africa”. These two sentences have to be interpreted from a memory perspective. Both, such as that dealing with colonialism, explain the present situation in Africa as the consequence of a terrible European heritage, of Italy’s occupation of Eritrea. Robert talked about Eritrea as similar to Somalia—there, journalist Ilaria Alpi and cameraman Miran Hrovatin uncovered illegal trafficking of weapons and chemical waste—with Beretta as the arms manufacturer responsible for wars in Africa.

“Africa is not there anymore; it doesn’t exist”: this phrase is connected to Robert’s memory of crossing the Ethiopian/Sudanese border. It is a controversial emotion: he lost his Africa for another world. He continues to talk about the bad things that happened during his journey, such as several corpses found in the Sahara Desert, violence and jails in Libya. After 45 days of waiting, he started the travel by boat to Lampedusa. “I was frightened, but you have no choice. Luckily, I arrived after that first journey”. Crossing the Mediterranean—as he recounts the memory—provokes shifting emotions, from fear to anxiety of expectation. He says:

After Lampedusa, Crotone, a refugee camp. Then, there [...] your expectations were high, because once you arrive in Europe. and then obviously in Italy [...] you expect everything to be positive, but there are so many things missing: the hosting is lacking, even the dormitories were a temporary solution [...] anyway when you see it [...] when you think of the whole journey you’ve made, even if your expectations were very positive, you’re still satisfied with what you find, because you’ve survived a terrible journey.

I met Sonia in a garden in Quartiere San Donato, one of the most popular areas in Bologna. Her father is Eritrean, her mother Italian. She was involved with a group of other Eritrean people trying to help people who had just arrived from Lampedusa. I started the interview asking about her identity. She confessed to me she felt composed of two parts:

one Eritrean and the other Italian. Immediately after this description, though, she pointed out that the two parts do not divide her body or her identity: they constitute part of a unique entity. When we started to talk about European responsibilities in the Mediterranean, she explained: “there is a heritage of the Italian colonial period which is used by institutions to manage the postcolonial condition”. She then added:

We are facing an event of epochal dimensions; probably we do not realize it. It's an event that started so many years ago, it's not going to end in the short term surely, we are trying to plug holes, to find a remedy rather than looking for a broader, long-term solution/view. Starting from this assumption, what moves the European Union in general and not only that – because we have to say that it is the condition of almost all the states that face this type of reception problem; I think of Israel for example – is the principle of non-humanity, that is, a lack of humanity in looking at these people. There is a depersonalization, dehumanization of the human mass that is moving, as if it were a thing, as if it were a process, as if it were [...] I do not know, something not real, something to face like a budget, like a mad cow crisis, I don't know; something [...] against which [...] must be legislated.

Due to this lack of humanity, people are legitimized to be racist, as it “provokes anti-human behaviour”. In her opinion, what is happening in the Mediterranean is “unconstitutional, and it is the consequence of a total indifference from the institutions”. But immediately afterwards, she says: “I am wrong, it is not indifference, it is to face up to this event inhumanly”. In her opinion, the problem is not the immigrant traffickers, because “if there were no the immigrant traffickers, people would find other ways to reach Italy”. The problem is not the so-called new slavery, because—she asserted—“there is no a new slavery”. The depersonalization of these people is the problem. At this point, I asked her what she meant. She replied:

This is not slavery because you voluntarily entrust yourself to a person; you pay the person. It's illegal, but it's called something else; it's not called slavery: you pay a person, there are two consenting entities. I take your money to give you a service – even if you cannot call that a service – I pay to reach Europe's threshold and then, once landed, there is no longer any kind of relationship, there is no relationship of subsistence, it is not slavery.

Salem was 24 at the time of the interview. She was born in Eritrea in a small countryside town not far from Asmara. She arrived in Italy with her parents and lives in Bologna. She is part of an Eritrean association fighting the Eritrean regime from Europe, a group that is part of the constellation of political parties called the opposition. She felt melancholic remembering her country and house. When we started to talk about migration from Eritrea to Europe, she began by saying: "Here, all are responsible and no one is responsible". She continues with a Biblical image: people such as Nero "all want to wash their hands. Then, if you pay attention, the countries involved in this human trafficking are Ethiopia, Eritrea, and Libya: three countries colonized by Italy. In my opinion, several things are due to the condition in which Italy left these countries – think, for example, of the frontier between Eritrea and Ethiopia which was the reason for a war". The condition of instability is for

dirty interests: you don't care if a human being dies in the desert or at sea, because on the television news they don't say: "Ah, poor people, these persons are dying"; No, they say: "These people are invading our country. I will say that if they die in Libya, I do not care about this: the important thing is they do not come to Italy, do not enter Europe! That gives me the opportunity to reflect on the situation... if 10.000 black people die, I don't care about this; if a French man dies, you start a war".

I asked her about the meaning of this last sentence, if she was referring to the terrorist attack on the Charlie Hebdo office, to which she replied:

Yes, I was. Now makes it easy to say: "There are many, we do not know where to put them, this one and that other". If you had properly behaved from the beginning, if you did the border as it should... Instead, you acted like you were not interested in this situation, you arrived, you have done what you wanted to do, your own choice, but then you're gone. Who cares if ethnic groups come into conflict with each other. Now that problems start to arrive at your house, you change your behaviour.

I would like to compare these three transcripts from the perspective of the geography of emotions. To start with their similarities, all three use cultural memories of past—concerning colonization and slavery—in order to describe the present situation in which the crossing of the Mediterranean Sea presents a physical and symbolical border. In this

sense, it is also possible to consider them as so-called “postmemories”, as they belong to generations of black people since the times of colonialism and slavery (Hirsch 2012). Robert experienced the terrible journey from Libya to Europe via Lampedusa; Sonia and Salem, however, had two different positionalities (the first was born in Italy, the second in Eritrea). In all these cases, talking about the Mediterranean crossing provokes a sort of double-consciousness: on the one hand, memory of slavery and colonialism are used to describe the postcolonial conditions in both Africa and Europe; on the other hand, the process of belonging to and recognizing of the “Self” in a group is marked by skin colour, place of origin, and ethnic group identification. Furthermore, that “being part” of a group which is not only European is characterized by a sort of “movement of emotions”. By this I mean the process through which memory is used to describe a mobility from different times and conditions: from colonial Africa to postcolonial Europe. This process of moving from emotion to emotion in describing both colonial past and postcolonial condition is an analogue to that of migration and crossing borders. Robert’s remembered fear when he recounted the journey and the Mediterranean crossing was replaced by hope (and delusions) about a future in Europe. Sonia moved from worry over the conditions of her people in Eritrea to rage over the dehumanization and depersonalization of migrants. For Salem, then, melancholia over losing her country changed to anxiety and rage over a world where black people are not considered equal to white ones. These movements of emotions are part of a geography elaborated in the intersubjective field.

Each subjectivity proposed a representation closely connected with positionalities, experiences, identities. In the case of Robert, for example, the Black Mediterranean represents the disappearance of Africa—“Africa is not there anymore, it doesn’t exist”, he said—and the appearance of a new unique scenario: Europe as place of duplicity and ambiguity, where he converges hopes and finds disillusionments and frustration. Robert reuses the image of Africa as a dark continent—which owes much to the colonial archive of the likes of Rudyard Kipling, Emilio Salgari, and Jules Verne—to give relevance to the process of invisible bodies becoming hyper-visible when they arrive in Europe. He has discussed the loss of his homeland and his betrayed expectations about a dream called Europe in terms of the visibility regime. In order to give power to his dejections, he used two images, one of Italy’s colonial domination and one of its postcolonial presence in the Horn of Africa: the Italian use of gas during

the Ethiopian war and Beretta's arms manufacturing. According to his geography of emotions, Italy is part of Europe: it is a nightmare that started in the past, before his birth, and has now reached him after having swallowed his ancestors.

Sonia, on the other hand, uses European categories to describe how institutions consider "migrants" as aliens without applying the international legal categories for humans. We can consider her geography as marked by two words, one overlapped by the other: human beings and dehumanized people. The body is the territory of her reflections: a body which has been created by the colonial power; a body as a place of resistance to power during colonialism and in the postcolonial condition. It is always a black body: it is not the object of European people's desires and fears; it is a subject of self-narratives, cultural identities, and positionalities which elude narrative cages and domain practices such as those about categories and the colour, ethnic, race and gender divisions formulated by European discourses. For instance, Sonia asserts to be half-Italian and half-Eritrean, clarifying that she has a unique identity. Starting from this point of view, her analysis of what happened and is happening in the Mediterranean is directly connected to the categories reformulated by the colonial archive: who is human and who is not. In doing so, she has pointed out some connections in terms of continuity—she feels angry about the persistence of power relations—and discontinuity—when she asserts that contemporary migration is not like slavery, she associates black bodies with a self-agency.

Lastly, Salem's geography of emotions is based on identification by skin colour. The body becomes the tool around which a specific geography is built for black people—both on the African side of the journey and the European one. Salem's gaze shows how the difference between these two positionalities involves both life and death—because the value attributed to (the end of) a life differs. According to her recounted memories, the genealogy of power relations has built a world centred on white people and Europe. She is melancholic remembering her country. This feeling could be interpreted, as in the case of Robert, as a sign of delusion. Differently to him, though, her "journey" does not involve physical movement or migration. Hence, this is a double sort of sign: on one hand it makes evident her membership of the black diasporic community; on the other, she expresses her deception about being born in Europe without being considered properly European because she is

black. In order to explain her disappointment, she uses the image of Nero washing his hands to describe how white Europeans were and are reacting to the shipwrecks and deaths in the Mediterranean. The reactivation of this public and popular image is, in this context, characterized by the responsibilities of former colonial countries with regards to the ongoing maritime disaster. In this sense, Nero is a symbol that brings my analysis to the colonial imaginary of the Italian Empire and the myth of Rome. According to Salem's attribution of meaning to this trope, Nero has been re-signified, moving from the disaster that occurred in Rome to another in the Mediterranean: it is used by those who, like Salem, want to underline the real, violent face of the civilized Europe and its heritage in Africa.

If we move to the topic of diversities, we may consider dissonant heritages as multiple ways in which the archive of memory (see Trakilović and van Huis in this volume) concerning colonialism and slavery is (re)used during these interviews. From a theoretical point of view, there are two, or perhaps more, archives at work during this process or scrutinized by the interviewees. It is possible to highlight a variation in the reproduction of narratives on a specific theme. For instance, the Black Mediterranean has several facets that are all part of the same matter, with many voices trying to use them as the basis of self-trajectories, positionalities, personal and collective imaginaries, experiences, and cultural backgrounds. As I said before, each geography of emotions can engender a narrative. Hence, there are several dissonances in this work of voices and subjectivities: (a) a dissonance in terms of the individual and intersubjective re-signification of memories of the past (colonialism and slavery) in order to describe the postcolonial condition in Europe; (b) the dissonance of emotions and geographies mobilized to describe the movement of memory and bodies across the Mediterranean and in Europe; and (c) the dissonance of narrative exchanges between two or many archives of memory, of dialogic connections and interactions concerning subjectivities.

CONCLUSIONS

I started this chapter analysing the idea of dissonant heritage from an intersubjective perspective. Before applying this interpretation to the collected interviews, I introduced the notion of the Black Mediterranean.

As argued above, the Black Mediterranean is an excess space of (re)signification used “to reinvent the individual and collective condition of refugees and asylum seekers in Europe” (Proglia 2018). From a global perspective, this excess space of signification allows for imaginative geographies marked by the role of emotions. In this perspective, the Black Mediterranean does not only involve the Mediterranean region or remembering the crossing, but also other geographies between Europe and Africa, past and present, white and black. It is important to make it clear how every subject uses memory to elude cartographic borders, proposing other representations of the space through their subjectivity. Finally, from an intersubjective point of view, the Black Mediterranean is at the same time a way to use memories of the past to take up new positionalities in Europe and in the context of diasporas and the evidence of how several subjectivities—through their emotions—are changing the face of Europe.

In the cases studied here, dissonant heritages are based on two different practices. Firstly, archives of colonialisms and slavery are re-used by diasporic and black subjectivities to produce narratives and practices against border devices in the Mediterranean. Salem’s use of the story of Nero—and her re-elaboration of the story of Rome as a symbol of decadence—is extremely efficient. Secondly, other archives—which have been elaborated by resistances to the European power relations in- and outside its borders—are scrutinized for memories which are able to support new ways of opposing and fighting European racialized narratives. This is the case proposed by Sonia: she considers her identity unique and autonomous. The accessibility of these different archives results from the liminal position of the interviewees and always has strategic uses in opposition to categories produced by racial discourses in Europe.

These geographies of emotions point out the complex system of elaboration of space based on self-positionalities. The usage of specific images indicates a set of perceptions of the relationship between Self and Europe. From this point of view, each personal and collective life trajectory is described through a set of emotions. Focusing on the Black Mediterranean as a space of self-representation—in relation to the interviewer’s subjectivity—it is possible to move from the description of migrations to the state of the subjectivities in Europe. Analysing these movements of emotions makes it possible to show how new identities are reshaping the canonized geography of Europe, beyond frontiers, boundaries, and borders.

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