Menozzi, F

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Fingerprinting: Imtiaz Dharker and the Antinomies of Migrant Subjectivity

This essay offers a reading of poems by contemporary South Asian diasporic poet Imtiaz Dharker as a literary response to the situation of refugees and migrants through a postcolonial experimental poetics. The first part of this essay situates Dharker's poems in the context of current debates on migration in Europe and the technologies of recognition adopted to track the movements of migrants and refugees across the EU. The second part interprets works from her 2009 collection *Leaving Fingerprints* as a poetic resistance against the politics of identity produced by technologies of recognition. The representational strategies adopted by Dharker oppose what might be called "biometric reading" and prevent the creation of a stable sense of belonging through literary writing. Dharker's poems do not offer an overtly discursive engagement with the migration crisis but, in their formal design, these compositions express nonetheless a central antinomy of the postcolonial migrant. Indeed, the play of text and image, and legible and unreadable signs assembled by Dharker mirrors a double bind at the heart of situation of people on the move today: while migrants are recognised and authenticated through forms of differential inclusion and biometric registration, they are at the same time excluded from rights to political membership. Migrants are hence simultaneously included and excluded from national communities. The concluding sections of this essay expand on the aesthetic implications of Dharker's poems and connect them to critical discourses on postcolonial experimentalism and peripheral modernism. The interplay of image and text in Dharker's works suggests a postcolonial reimagining of the poetic figural as expression of the contradictions of peripheral subjects caught in the power dynamics of capitalist globalisation. The conclusion turns to the wider significance of

Dharker's oeuvre by proposing a concept of "peripheral poetry" in order to locate politically Dharker's defiance of the identity model of recognition.

1. *Poetry and the Antinomies of the Migrant*

In her 2004 essay on the concept of global literature, Shu-Mei Shih coins the term "technology of recognition" to describe those "mechanisms in the discursive (un)conscious – with bearings on social and cultural (mis)understandings – that produce 'the West' as the agent of recognition and 'the rest' as the object of recognition, in representation" (Shih 2004, 17). Technologies of recognition operate a displacement through which what is "national in the Third World is turned into ethnic culture during minoritization after immigration" (Shih 2004, 23). These technologies work, according to Shih, by producing a passive migrant, minority, or "ethnic" subject to be coded within forms of epistemic violence, deprived of agency, and captured in projections about culture and identity of which only the "Western" subject holds discursive mastery. Building on Shih's work, the term "technology of recognition" should not just be restricted to discursive or representational mechanisms of subject-production. More literally, this phrase should be extended to the material domain where the bodies of postcolonial migrants are coded and domesticated through a field of biopolitical méconnaissance – the formation of recognisable images through the inscription of migrant and refugee bodies into structures of control.[1] Today, the recognition of the bodies of migrants does not merely concern their coding as object of literary or ethnographic knowledge. It also includes their capture in the "digital borders" of European countries (Broeders 2007), the registration of their arrival, and the regulation of the flow of non-documented subjects across European countries.

The current migration crisis in Europe, in particular, has provoked an increased hyper-visibility of the migrant as a foreign body to be rescued or expelled and kept outside through the territorial apparatuses of border patrol, fencing, and coast-guarding. The biopolitical mis-recognition of migrants involves, on the one hand, the field of population management, the setting up of biometric technologies of identification, refugee camps, reception centres and the "border economies" of the migration industry (Friese 2012). On the other hand, strategies are currently in place to deal with migrants and refugees through what Didier Fassin calls the "politics of life" that takes as its object the "saving of lives" through humanitarian intervention and the turning of the migrant into passive victim (Fassin 2011, 226). As Wendy Brown notes, the current era of intensified global economic exchange has not led to a borderless world or an increased freedom of movement. On the contrary, the erosion of the nation-state has reinforced policies aimed at controlling and selecting, monitoring and bordering the movement of people: "the new nation-state walls are part of an ad hoc global landscape of flows and barriers . . . that divide richer from poorer parts of the globe. This landscape signifies the ungovernability by law . . . and a resort to policing and blockading in the face of this ungovernability" (Brown 2010, 24). In his recent comments on the migration crisis in Europe, Slavoj Zizek (2017) has described a "new apartheid" being created to divide richer, metropolitan countries, from the ex-colonised nations of provenance of today's refugees. The bordering of richer countries, however, is not only enforced through walling and fencing. Far from being limited to territorial infrastructure, borders are today virtual, globalised, and digital. Countries like the UK, for example, have enforced a policy of off-shore bordering by rethinking the border as a tool of "identity management." Borders now function as maps to track and control the movement of people rather than as stable points of transit. As Nick Vaughan-Williams writes, border security now involves creating a "map of activities, such as financial transactions, web bookings, and travel histories . . . compiled

using billions of records from different agencies in order to build up a dynamic profile of individuals or groups" (Vaughan-Williams 2010, 1074).

In this context, the word "identity" can be no more taken as a signifier of cultural negotiation or representational transgression. The fact of being "recognised" as a migrant or refugee does not involve inclusion in a political community or the gain of full citizenship. Rather, recognition indicates the reduction of complex life stories to the identification and management of bodies in movement. Recognition needs to be linked to the biopolitical and digital "technologies of government" (Ong 2003, 6) that regulate the possibilities of inclusion and exclusion, movement, expulsion, deportation and exploitation across the borders dividing richer from poorer countries. Identity is hence the product of technologies of recognition, which turn migrants and minority subjects into passive objects of knowledge, surveillance, biometric coding, digital recording, and population management. The postcolonial migrant, especially the unskilled worker reaching Europe to flee from civil war, natural disaster, or to become relative surplus population, is increasingly defined as a body to be framed and counted rather than a cultural hybrid. Current migrant subjectivities are caught in what might be called a "biometric regime" aiming to keep memory traces of the mobile trajectories of subaltern bodies in flux.[2] In her 2009 collection *Leaving Fingerprints,* contemporary Scottish-Pakistani poet Imtiaz Dharker offers an inventive, experimental poetic response to the biometric regime. In particular, a recurrent theme in *Leaving Fingerprints* verges on the image of the fingerprint, one of the key technologies of recognition of migrants. While *Leaving Fingerprints* focuses on a multitude of thematic constellations, this essay proposes to take the image of the fingerprint as a central figurative element characterising Dharker's formal and stylistic strategies. Yet, in Dharker's poetry, not only does the fingerprint work as poetic form, but it also becomes a communicative resource displacing the expectations of the reader and any supposed identification of subjects or themes. Dharker's work does not

represent the lives of migrants; rather, it physically and literally *embodies* the force-field of identification produced by contemporary technologies of recognition.

The fingerprint is supposed to *identify* the uniqueness of each human being, to make humans recognisable and trackable. In Dharker's poems, there is a shift: the fingerprint becomes what makes humans *unrecognisable* by testifying to their absence. The fingerprint is revealed by Dharker as an empty signifier unable to convey memory or life. It becomes, from this point of view, a thick and viscose poetic texture blurring the transparency of meaning and interpretation. In its way of signalling absence, emptiness and loss, the biometric element becomes, in the poems, a way of expressing a central antinomy informing the production migrant subjectivities in Europe: while migrants are tracked, identified and registered, their arrival in Europe excludes possibilities of membership and belonging. While *Leaving Fingerprints* cannot be defined as a book fully "about" the experience of migrants and refugees, Dharker's strategy of emptying out poetic textuality through an emphasis on the marks and lines left by the fingerprint on a piece of paper testifies to a fundamental failure of the techniques for recording, archiving and representing migrants, including the very act of literary writing. Indeed, many migrants and refugees still remain what Italian sociologist Alessandro Dal Lago famously termed "non-persons": bodies deprived of citizen's rights, simultaneously invisible and hyper-visible, excluded from Europe's political communities. Dharker's poetry, however, does not offer a thematic or prosaic commentary on the situation of subjects trapped in borderline existences. Rather, Dharker develops an experimental aesthetics which engages with the subject's lack of voice and of belonging as counterpoint to being framed by technologies of identity and knowledge.

The preoccupation with migrant and minority experience in Europe has been a central theme in Dharker's poetry throughout her career, from the 1990s to the present. In her 1997

poem "Minority," Dharker already expressed some of the thematic concerns that have

continued to inform her poetic work for the past decades. In "Minority," Dharker writes:

> I was born a foreigner.
>
> I carried on from there
>
> to become a foreigner everywhere
>
> I went, even in the place
>
> planted with my relatives,
>
> six-foot tubers sprouting roots,
>
> their fingers and faces pushing up
>
> new shoots of maize and sugar cane.
>
>
> All kinds of places and groups
>
> of people who have an admirable
>
> history would, almost certainly,
>
> distance themselves from me (Dharker 1997).

The situation of the migrant is, in Dharker's poetry, not just a theme among others, but rather

a defining quality and a vital aesthetic project. The fact of being a "foreigner" does not just

indicate the fact of living in Britain as a Scottish-Pakistani writer. As Sarah Crown observes,

Dharker is a "definitively diasporic writer (born in Pakistan, she grew up in Glasgow and

now shuttles between Mumbai and London)" (Crown 2009). Similarly, in his study of her

poetry, Hywel Dix remarks that "Dharker belongs to a number of different communities in a

global sense: Indian, Pakistani, British (including but nevertheless distinct from Scottish and

Welsh) and even – as some of her poems portraying transnational feminism make clear –

American" (Dix 2015b, 55). The notion of "diaspora" does not simply indicate migrant communities who have settled in a host country. As James Clifford points out, "the term diaspora is a signifier, not simply of transnationality and movement, but of political struggles to define the local, as distinctive community, in historical contexts of displacement" (Clifford 1994, 308). The diasporic condition does not point to a transitional phase leading to assimilation into a liberal multicultural society. Rather, diaspora expresses a situation of impossible belonging, in which the very fact of settling and reclaiming connections with a homeland is blocked by histories of dispersal and displacement. As Clifford writes:

> Peoples whose sense of identity is centrally defined by collective histories of displacement and violent loss cannot be "cured" by merging into a new national community. This is especially true when they are the victims of ongoing, structural prejudice (Clifford 1994, 307).

Through the experience of diaspora, "foreignness" becomes an ontological position that inhabits the very textuality of Dharker's poems, preventing her from claiming any sort of communal feeling. Even her birthplace, here described metaphorically as "tubers sprouting roots," is seen as distant and radically foreign. Not belonging means, in this context, being an absolutely rootless, diasporic being: not belonging *anywhere,* the migrant subject brings the trajectory of international mobility to a level of existential angst. In the concluding stanzas of "Minority," Dharker encourages the reader to bracket feelings of community and family in order to inhabit the position of the migrant and to assume the radical foreignness expressed by the poem. Dharker's works, from this point of view, do not celebrate the lives of migrants but rather explore the dilemmas of subjects who are unable to claim national or cultural identification as well as what Seyla Benhabib calls the "right to political membership"

(Benhabib 2004, 38). Her poetry offers a stark opposition to the celebration of identity and the politics of recognition at the heart of neoliberal multiculturalism. Instead of performing difference and cultural hybridity, Dharker's poetry encourages the reader to consider the possibility of life beyond the reification of community.

More recently, in her poem "Passport Photo," included in her 2014 collection *Over the Moon,* Dharker turns a document of travel into a polysemic literary image. The poem, as most works from *Over the Moon,* refers to Dharker's husband, poet Simon Powell, who passed away a few years before the publication of the volume. The first, striking element of this poem is that it is accompanied by a drawing by Dharker herself. The drawing is, in fact, not a definite portrait, but rather a set of small dots and short lines that suggest the shape of a human head. The dots are scattered across the page to create an effect of emptying out, rather than filling, the underlying blank with vague traits recalling the face of a man. This might, or might not, be a portrait of Dharker's husband, but there is no caption or explanation. The amount of dots and lines intensifies in the place of the eyes, and creates an effect of depth, a dark intensity of lines replacing a human gaze. The eyes appear to be blackened vaults. The true semblance of the human figure is only suggested and sketched, intimated. The image is highly significant when compared to the title of the companion piece, the poem: "Passport Photo." The image, indeed, seems to be doing the opposite of a passport photo. Instead of identifying the person with certainty, it creates suggestion and ambiguity. Image and poem, taken together, produce a tension, a contrast, as if they were pulling in opposing directions. The poem further explores these contradictions:

You come in to the photo booth, take off your smile,

Untilt your head. As specified, the face

Is straight, here is the signature and the date

That says you are forty, thirty, twenty-one.

A flare, a flash. With each one, the destination

Changes. I watch you grow young (Dharker 2014, 105).

The poem turns the fixity of a passport photo into an opening of possibilities and uncertainties. The "flash" of the photograph does not establish a clear point in time, but rather "the destination changes." In the subsequent stanzas, the plastic walls of the photo booth – reimagined as a sort of cage – are said to "melt" and to open lines of flight that do not offer a stable destination. Instead of pinning down the subject, the effect of "Passport Photo" is to reverse the ability of images to produce a stable sense of identification. The poem concludes with an open question: "how far will you go to look for home?" (Dharker 2010, 105). Home is not a place of birth or residence but rather a destination forever to come. As Amitava Kumar writes in *Passport Photos,* the photograph on the passport "produces a fixed, tamper-proof identity for me in the eyes of the state," acting as a means of surveillance (Kumar 2000, 41). Undermining its own title, Dharker's poem "Passport Photo," taken together with the accompanying image, reverses the optical function of identity and surveillance.

Poems like "Minority" and "Passport Photo" testify to the central questions about identification, mobility and meaning that characterise Dharker's poetry resonance with the lives of migrants and refugees in Europe today. The dilemma of the postcolonial migrant subject, indeed, rests on the double bind of what Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson (2013, 157) call "differential inclusion": the provisional acceptance of migrants in Europe involves their subjection to uneven structures of power aimed at regulating the flow of workforce. *De facto,* this means that in order to be included, migrants and refugees are simultaneously

excluded while being admitted to the territories of European nation-states, not being fully granted the rights of membership and citizenship. Technologies of recognition are the symptom of this paradoxical, differential regime of inclusion that does not simply keep migrant outside Europe, but rather establishes what Nicholas De Genova calls the "obscene" of the scene or spectacle of inclusion: entry is granted to migrants, selectively, in order to increase the exploitation of labour (De Genova 2013, 5).

In this context, the imagery of fingerprinting addresses, on the one hand, a vivid indictment of the dilemmas of the migrant subject, thrown into a state of permanent non-belonging – the state of *being*, rather than having a border, combining constant surveillance with exclusion from membership and privilege (Balibar 2002, 83). On the other hand, however, the recurrence of the fingerprint in Dharker's composition inscribes these dilemmas into the very textuality and figurality of her work, eluding any transparent reading and the fixation of a stable meaning or "identity" through the fractures of visual-textual concatenations. By defining an experimental aesthetic given by the interplay of image and text, Dharker's work reenacts, rather than representing thematically, the dialectic of exclusion and inclusion of migrant subjects. Accordingly, her poetry contests what Nancy Fraser has called the "identity model" of recognition. As Fraser writes, when equated to identity politics, the concept of recognition tends to "reify identity," imposing "an authentic, self-affirming and self-generated collective identity" putting "moral pressure on individual members to conform" (Fraser 2000, 112). The identity model of recognition, writes Fraser, prevents critique and experimentation:

Cultural dissidence and experimentation are accordingly discouraged, when they are not simply equated with disloyalty . . . The overall effect is to impose a single, drastically

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simplified group-identity which denies the complexity of people's lives, the multiplicity

of their identifications and the cross-pulls of their various affiliations (112).

This essay suggests that Dharker dis-figures and fragments poetic textuality in order to

prevent it from working as another mechanism of identity or technology of recognition.

Dharker's experimentations, crucially, juxtapose textual and visual elements, poems and

drawings, in order to prevent the formation of a stable layer of meaning that would re-capture

migrant experiences into yet another apparatus of mis-recognition. The image of the

fingerprint explored in Dharker's *Leaving Fingerprints* becomes, from this point of view, an

expression of the antinomy of the postcolonial migrant and of her fleeting, interstitial

experience glimmering through the biometric regime of modern technologies of surveillance.

2. *Reading against Biometric Reading*

In their contribution to a recent volume on biometric theory, Raghudeep Kannavara and

Nikolaos Bourbakis write:

> Biometrics is the study of methods for uniquely identifying or authenticating humans
>
> based on intrinsic physical or behavioural traits. *Identification* means characteristics
>
> are selected from a database, to produce a list of possible or likely matches.
>
> *Authentication* means that when a person makes a claim that he or she is that specific
>
> person, just that specific person's characteristics are being checked to see if they
>
> match (Kannavara and Bourbakis 2009, 47).

The fingerprint is part of these methods of authentication and identification. As Kannavara and Bourbakis explain, the technology involves using an algorithm to measure the structural and statistical features of a fingerprint in order to produce a normalised image of the patterns that will enable to assess the match.

Imtiaz Dharker's 2009 collection *Leaving Fingerprints* plays with the intended authentication that the term "fingerprint" suggests. In particular, her poems address the physical, material act of fingerprinting in order to raise questions of belonging and displacement. One of the main challenges of reading *Leaving Fingerprints* is that it is not easy to summarise what this book could be "about." In a way, it could not be said to be explicitly "about" the migrant crisis, or any specific topic or event that would give coherence to the collection. The poems included in the book are wide and diverse, addressing fragments of life, disparate situations, and personal memories of the author herself. As Hywel Dix has shown in his excellent overview of Dharker's poetry, for example, *Leaving Fingerprints* includes poems about the question of active choice and destiny, concluding with poems "about fortune-tellers struggling to read the palm of a woman who has many different lives and fortunes to tell" (Dix 2015a, 210). A common element of these poems, indeed, is the failure of apparatuses of communication to capture the fullness of the life of what they attempt to record.

The poems suggest an underlying *unreadability,* a lack of direct referentiality, and a failed transmission of meaning, which in Dharker's poetry becomes a question interpellating the reader. While the poems may refer to episodes in Dharker's own biographical trajectory, the aim of this essay is to avoid finding in authorial biography the unifying element that would work as the interpretative key to unlock the poems and their meaning. Rather, my reading attempts to find an immanent way of interpreting, which digs into the figurative and stylistic elements of the text. In its accent on form, this kind of reading would also, however,

be a sort of materialism, because it attempts to connect the formal gestures enacted by Dharker to the broader project of locating her poems within an era of capitalist globalisation defined by an increased control of the movement of people and an emphasis on identity as a tool of domination. Accordingly, this essay suggests that, while Dharker did not write a book about the migration crisis, the representational devices she adopts reveal dynamics at the heart of the lives of migrants subjected to technologies of identification. The unifying factor connecting the poems analysed in this essay will be, for this reason, the image of the fingerprint, an image both *formal* and *material,* poetic and worldly, that operates as the main knot linking the different elements and poems within Dharker's book, while resisting any cursorily thematic reading.

All poems in the collection address, in one way or the other, the image of the fingerprint, understood as trace left by human hands as a mark on objects. However, in Dharker's poetry, the fingerprint testifies to the fact that the mark left by the human hand only delivers mute lines and curves; signs that are unreadable and undecipherable. While recognising that other readings of Dharker are indeed valid and possible, this essay addresses how the stylistic element of the fingerprint, a visual-textual concatenation, can express wider concerns at the heart of the historical situation of their production. This practice of reading moves away from the idea of "explaining" poetry through its context, but rather emphasises poetry's ability to address the real by forming a nuanced, complex web of meaning.

From this point of view, my reading explores how a reading of the poems could avoid turning into another apparatus of recognition, hence how critical discourse could do justice to the elusive subjects Dharker is trying to portray. The fingerprint reveals the trace of human presence, but does not tell a story. For this reason, fingerprints emerge, in Dharker's collection, as a symptom of lives caught in transient, vanishing trajectories and unable to find permanent selfhood and homeland. Building on Dharker's own sense of being "foreign" in

contemporary Britain, as she expressed it in her 1997 poem "Minority," *Leaving Fingerprints* echoes a sense of radical homelessness or lack of stable belonging.

Most poems in *Leaving Fingerprint* are accompanied by drawings composed of the lines left by a human fingerprint.[3] The fingerprint becomes, in other words, not just the subject matter of these poems, but also their raw material and textual substance. The act of "leaving fingerprints" is adopted by Dharker as a metaphor for the act of artistic creation: to leave a fingerprint means, in this context, to produce a visible trace of oneself. Being at the same time guiding metaphor, composition material and subject matter, the fingerprint fractures the unity of the poem, constantly crossing the line between sign and content, signifier and signified, idea and matter. It does not assume the role of static formal element, but rather emerges as a force-field of signs in a state of flux, symptomatically expressing what Zygmunt Bauman and David Lyon have called the "liquid surveillance" of contemporary devices of control.[4]

Instead of "illustrating" the poems, the drawings dis-figure and dismember them. Thus, the drawing that accompanies "Leaving Fingerprints," the poem giving the collection its title, turns the lines of a human fingerprint into the shape of a landscape, outlining trees, clouds, and the layers of the earth unfolding beneath the trees. This poem, which occupies a central position as title-giving poem to the entire collection, manifestly revolves around fingerprinting and its relation to questions of identity and recognition. The poem begins with the image of a "frosted landscape":

I know this frosted landscape

Better than it knows itself, its layers

A busy clock of history, still ticking.

Under my feet I feel the trail of the slug

The snail, the earth's deep squirm

Around an anklet or an amulet, a broken cup (Dharker 2009, 49).

The opening stanzas of "Leaving Fingerprints" seem to refer directly to the image presented in the drawing. The fingerprint becomes, quite literally, a "frosted landscape" through which the poet can walk. The enigmatic phrase that introduces the poem declares this by asserting that the poet knows the landscape "better than it knows itself": this uncanny sentence echoes through the poem as a constant shift between landscape and fingerprint. The landscape is not an external environment but an intimate space of interiority; the trace left by the finger on a paper is turned into a complex scene: the mark left by the imprint of the hand becomes layer of the earth, trail of a snail, and object abandoned by unknown inhabitants. The key figure at work here is juxtaposition: the fingerprint has become a landscape, while the landscape is made of the lines of a fingerprint. One term, however, does not replace or substitute the other: both remain visible, contiguous.

"Leaving Fingerprints" was originally created as part of "Ethnographic Imaginings," a project held at the Hastings Museum in Sussex (UK) led by Dharker along with poets John Agard and Grace Nichols. The poets responded to specific objects kept in the museum; in particular, "Leaving Fingerprint" is inspired by an amulet, "Hand of Fatima," which also inspires another poem in the collection.[5] While the object in the museum is a mute specimen supposed to stand in for a wider cultural or historical context, the poem turns the amulet into a complex cluster of significations that stubbornly refuse to assume ethnographic value. Dharker's lines make the object vanish under the eyes of the reader, dissolving its frame of reference in a tenuous web of suggestions that do not achieve the solidity of memory or history. While inspired by the object, the poem does not offer an ekphrasis, but rather

operates as a kind of anti-ekphrasis: it is not "about" the object and does not really offer any description or explanatory resource that would help better understand the museum item. Rather, the poem draws on the poet's response to the object in order to make the object unrecognisable. Instead of describing the item, it ponders on the act of leaving fingerprints as sign of human transience. The poem continues by exploring the enigmatic concatenation between fingerprint and landscape:

> Lost, the names of the ones
>
> Whose fingers made and used
>
> And threw away these things,
>
> Written and rewritten in the calligraphy
>
> Of roots. The worm's heave
>
> And turn delivers messages up,
>
> Scribbled in folds of soil and mud, afterthoughts
>
> That grow to trees, trunks with arms,
>
> Branches with fingers, twigs with nails . . . (Dharker 2009, 49).

The quoted stanzas introduce many complex images: the fingerprint becomes, not only the assemblage of lines that give rise to an imaginary landscape, but also a monument to the fact that the names of those who produced the object in the museum have been "lost." The fingerprint does not tell us the name, but rather only appears to signal the loss of any recognisable attribute. Elements of the landscape are then anthropomorphised. The use of anthropomorphism does not make the poem clearer but rather implies, as Paul de Man notes

in his study on this figure of speech, "an identification on the level of substance" that "freezes the infinite chains of tropological transformations" (de Man 1984, 241). The juxtaposition of landscape and fingerprint, indeed, brings the metaphorical quality of the poem to a level of absolute materiality: the lines of a fingerprint are, at the same time, what the poem is *about,* and the raw material and medium of artistic composition. These lines are compared to written "messages" that are being excavated by a worm – taken to the surface from the inner depths of the earth. The displacement from landscape to fingerprint then reoccurs in the fifth stanza, leading to the conclusion of the poem, in which trees and soil are compared to hands, fingers, and nails. If the fingerprint is what gives humans permanence and survival, indeed, this trace does not convey the names, lives, experiences and histories that compose human existence. The only trace a human can leave is an empty, broken trace, a sign that is only able to deliver itself. By reaching a level of identification of substance, poem and fingerprint signal an interrupted process of communication.

This might be called the paradox of the fingerprint, which Dharker announces in "Leaving Fingerprints" and continues to explore in other poems in the volume. The fingerprint does offer a record and an archive, but only as an empty, frosted, muted archive of lines and curves that are unable to deliver any legible message about the past generations who left the mark. The author of the fingerprint leaves the most intimate, unique element of herself, only in order to realise that the archive of lines of the print testifies to the loss of her presence and story. From this point of view, the paradox revealed by the fingerprint – the trace left by human presence does not convey any legible message – reiterates the antinomy of the differential inclusion of migrants and refugees: including only in order to exclude, the tracking devices which constitute a biometric reading only make the lives and stories of migrants unreadable.

In a poem titled "Capturing the Latent," Dharker further explores the materiality of

the fingerprint and its complex relationship with the question of memory and subjectivity.

The poem articulates a dichotomy between two kind of substances: on the one hand, the

liquid, watery, disappearing element determined by the sweat of the finger pressing on the

surface. On the other hand, the fixity of the trace left by the finger, the left-over, the

inscription that remains. The poem's opening stanzas describe this contrast:

> Take something that changes constantly,
>
> Say water. How could you ever hope
>
> To replicate the way it feels?
>
> So too with the fingerprint. Don't
>
> Imagine it is fixed. The supple skin
>
> Will alter it, the trace of sweat or
>
> Lipid, the wet, the push, the slip,
>
> All these can shift the way
>
> The friction ridge meets wall or tabletop.
>
> Technology alone
>
> Can never hope to reproduce
>
> The butterfly smudge. Before you grasp
>
> It, it will disappear (Dharker 2009, 101).

Dharker's poem addresses the insufficiency of the fingerprint as a technology of recognition.

Her poem draws on the dichotomy between liquid and solid, vanishing and permanent,

fleeting and fixed, and spells out the limits of fingerprinting by insisting on the physicality of the act, the imprint that originates the "text" left by the finger on the surface. This act, Dharker writes, is never successful, never complete, always unable to capture the fullness of the lines and ridges that make each human finger so unique and complex. The fingerprint is traversed by a liquid element that deletes the print in the very process of pressing and inscribing it. The "digital" element is composed of print and sweat, lining and blurring, dry and wet elements that make the composition ultimately unreadable. This poem reimagines the fingerprint as the "friction" that puts finger and surface in contact while, paradoxically, keeping them forever apart.

Fingerprinting is redefined, rather than as a means of surveillance through biometric identification, as a state of friction produced by the interplay of wet and dry elements, of lines and fluxes, appearances and disappearances. It aims to fixate something that changes constantly, a perpetual motion that epitomises the complexity and historicity of human life. This complexity is called by Dharker "the latent," as if life itself were the unknown and unconscious side of the trace left by a fingerprint on a piece of paper. The state of latency, here, is determined by the very fact of exceeding the representational possibilities of the fingerprint as stand-in of an unique human being. The first message enclosed in "Capturing the Latent" has to do with the reframing of human life as the latent presence forever evading the technology of recognition symbolised by the fingerprint.

"Capturing the Latent" might also suggest a specific way of thinking the human and, more specifically, human life, as it could be suggested in Dharker's poetry. Dharker's concept of the human, here, does not refer to biography, life narrative, knowledge about a subject, or individual existence. The elusive field of latency that techniques of recognition fail to capture might resonate with the Deleuzian notion of "a life," as a field of pure immanence, a plane of virtuality, where the virtual does not mean something unreal or

fictional, but rather "something that enters into a process of actualisation by following the plane that gives it its own reality. The immanent event actualises itself in a state of things and in a lived state which bring the event about" (Deleuze 1997, 5). In his compelling reading of Deleuze, Giorgio Agamben redefines this plane of absolute immanence as a form of "contemplative life" that would break down dichotomies between subject and object of knowledge, organic and inorganic, vegetative and animal, inside and outside (Agamben 1999, 233). The immanent event of contemplative life redefines human existence as a space of pure potentiality that remains ungraspable and unattributable, a field of indetermination even within the actualisation that gives it form. This kind of "contemplative life" is at work in Dharker's emphasis on human life as elusive, vanishing and forever un-captured presence. While technologies of recognition attempt to frame and fix individuals, the "immanent event" of a life is forever lost and constantly eluding any apparatus of capture. Dharker's notion of human life, from this perspective, emerges as unrepresentable plane of immanence escaping the reach of techniques of identity and representation.

In the drawing that accompanies "Capturing the Latent," fingerprint lines encircle a blank space in which the faded image of a face appears. This is a feminine face, folded and embraced by fingerprint lines as if they were a veil. Importantly, the face is not depicted in any detail, but only suggested, sketched in a soft, phantasmatic design in stark contrast with the strong marks of the fingerprint, bold and thick on the page. The fingerprint does not merely appear as a limited form for capturing the latency of a life in flux, but also as a play with shapes and lines that gives the illusion of having identified a "someone," in this case a Muslim woman. This meaning is not given by the lines of the fingerprint, because these lines, by themselves, are unable to carry any specific meaning about the personality, religion, story, character, abilities of the person they identify. However, while these techniques of identification do not offer a complex and full picture of their subjects, they create the optical

illusion of a human shape. The biometric technology, in other words, does not simply refrain from representing the subject, but produces a mis-recognition of the subject, assuming that a person can be contained by the data set used to identify her. The biometric reading of the fingerprint is here revealed as a field of fantasy, a méconnaissance by which an image appears only through an illusory projection, a screen that metamorphoses the empty lines left by the finger. Taken together, the two poems considered so far, "Leaving Fingerprints" and "Capturing the Latent," show that fingerprinting works by creating the illusion of a subject while in fact only transmitting empty lines devoid of meaning, intimating a field of contemplative life that does not emerge as such through the composition. The biometric mechanism used to identify humans in their most unique and unmistakable physical trace does not tell anything of them. Life is flux, an elusive plane of immanence that slips through the blanks and intervals of the print.

3. *Disturbances of the Work: Dharker and the Poetic Figural*

In her review of *Leaving Fingerprints,* Sarah Crown points out what she perceives to be a limitation of the collection. According to Crown, while the overall sense and unity of the book is given by the guiding image of the fingerprint, this unity tends to dissolve when each poem is considered individually. As Crown writes:

> Unfortunately, though, this integrity is only clearly visible in the overview. Consider the poems individually, and the picture tends to dissolve. Sometimes meandering, occasionally overblown . . . they lack the purposefulness and drive of the grander narrative (Crown 2009).

While this is perceived as a shortcoming of the book, there might be something more in the lack of "integrity" and of "purposefulness and drive of the grander narrative" shown by specific poems. *Leaving Fingerprint* does not aim to create any sort of "grand narrative" about migration, identity or place. Instead, the poems in the collection resist the formation of an integrated narrative. The dissonance at the heart of the book emerges when poems are not considered individually, but in conjunction with the drawings of which they are companion pieces. The complex juxtaposition of image and text gives Dharker's poems what Theodor Adorno would call a "disturbance of the work": the inability of the poem to find closure, stable meaning, coherence and technical "achievement". Adorno adopted the term "disturbance of the work" in his chapter on Schoenberg in *Philosophy of Modern Music*. The phrase indicates an unsolvable contradiction between the specific elements of a work and the totality of the work itself, preventing any "lasting resolution" that would give the work coherence and closure (Adorno 2007, 22-23). In Dharker's case, the contrast between visual and written element, along with the tension between specific poems and the whole collection, creates such "disturbance."

From this point of view, the fingerprint becomes the poetic space where the textuality of poetry is torn apart and reassembled, experimentally, in a way that prevents any stable totalisation. In his pivotal work on visual poetry, Willard Bohn explores the ambiguities produced by the interplay of image and text in the poetic composition, in a way that seemingly resonates with *Leaving Fingerprints.* Bohn explains:

> Where visual poetry differs from ordinary poetry is in the extent of its iconic dimension . . . Visual poems are immediately recognisable by their refusal to adhere to a rectilinear grid and by their tendency to flout their plasticity. In contrast to

traditional poetry, they are conceived not only as literary works but also as works of art (Bohn 2001, 15).

Dharker's poems are, to an extent, visual, because they need to be *seen* as well as *read,* and because they display an iconic dimension. They have, undoubtedly, a typographic disposition on the page that adds a visual, iconic element to the written page. A poem like "Seal", for example, is distributed on the page so that the lines form an oval shape that might suggest a seal, where lines are replaced by words. However, the insertion of drawings alongside the poems dismantles and dismembers the unity of the visual poem by showing that verbal elements – words – and visual elements – lines – are exchangeable parts of a plural assemblage resisting full integration. The drawings fracture and extend the poems. Instead of unity and self-containment, Dharker's works testify to a destructured space of figural expression traversed by lines of flight and libidinal economies that are irreducible to the textual element.

The visual is not an additional level of meaning, but rather what Jean-François Lyotard terms the "figural," a force field that traverses, disrupts and off-balances the resources of textuality, breaking apart the inscription. The figural space "surrounds" discourse while the text also "harbours this space within itself" (Lyotard 2011, 50). The figural reveals a textual viscosity and an opacity that links discourse to the unconscious and the sensory: it indicates that reading is not a disembodied activity but that it rather involves the gaze and an economy of desire. The fingerprint discloses this figural space traversing Dharker's poems: it reveals that writing and drawing are, at the bottom, two modes of expression sharing the same substance. As Lyotard comments, writing, the letter, "is an unvarying closed line; the line is the open moment of a letter that perhaps closes again elsewhere . . . Open the letter, you have the image, the scene, and magic" (Lyotard 2011,

264). By disclosing a figural space inhabiting literary writing, Dharker's drawings incorporate verbal elements and prolong the literary space into an elusive, shifting force-field that disorients the reader. Thus, in the poem "Seal," the fingerprint appears both in the writing and the drawing. The poem, indeed, states: "My thumb upon / your clay, my spirals and yours / may be mismatched" (Dharker 2009, 14). The drawing incorporates the phrase "still standing" into the image of a tree made of fingerprint lines. The arboreal branches, roots and trunk turn into a stream as they move downwards, into the interior layers of the earth. The solidity of the tree – "still standing" – is betrayed by a fluid substance that takes the place of the soil. Standing on a stream, the tree transforms the fingerprint into an image of contrasts: the tree and the stream, earth and water, top and bottom are opposing poles of a space traversed by multiple lines and forces.

The figural dimension of Dharker's poetry contributes to a rethinking of the stakes of postcolonial experimentalism, as it has been debated in the last few decades. The concept of postcolonial experimental poetry emphasises at least two important aspects. Firstly, it suggests that formal innovations in poetic expression are intimately linked to international processes of colonial domination, cultural contact and exchange, diaspora and migration. As Jahan Ramanzani writes in his pivotal work on transnational poetics, although "creolization, hybridization, and the like are often regarded as exotic or multicultural sideshows to literary histories of formal advancement . . . these cross-cultural dynamics are arguably among the engines of modern and contemporary poetic development and innovation" (Ramanzani 2009, 3). The experimentalism of postcolonial poetry, in other words, registers social realities of cultural traffic, influence and mobility. Ramanzani signals this aspect by focusing on how transnational poems, while being "'lyric' in being compressed, self-aware, and sonically rich, they also evince . . . dialogism, heteroglossia, and hybridization" (2009, 4), terms usually adopted to describe prose rather than poetic composition. According to Ramanzani,

postcolonial poetry is inherently hybrid, creole, heterogeneous, mixed and innovative because it voices key aspects of the condition of postcoloniality. Ramanzani notes that poetry becomes, in the hands of postcolonial writers:

> . . . a language that can mediate seemingly irresolvable contradictions between the local and global, native and foreign, suspending the sometimes exclusivist truth claims of the discrepant religious and cultural systems it puts into play, systems forced together by colonialism and modernity (Ramanzani 2009, 6).

This awareness also affects how poems are read and interpreted: instead of being restricted to the realm of the biographical or of authorial intention, the project of a postcolonial experimental poetics highlights the social and political unconscious of poetic textuality, emphasising that literary forms are condensed social formations expressing deeper structures of feeling and political struggles. From this point of view, this essay suggests that postcolonial experimental poetry demands new modes of reading and interpretation, moving away from a reading that would reduce the worldly dimension of the text to a question of illuminating authorial biographies or wider historical conjunctures as *themes* or *content* of the poems. Instead, poems such as those included in *Leaving Fingerprints* suggest a textual materialism enabling the analysis of how *wider historical trajectories are subtly inscribed in poetic form.*

A possible way of locating Dharker's poetry within discourses on postcolonial poetry would be to emphasise that her poems are an explicit resistance to identity and identification. Her work offers a direct contestation of mechanisms used to identify human subjects and to reduce them to knowledge or a repository of information. In a way, Dharker's experimentalism is a anti-identitarian poetics that does not offer a narrative, a message or a

content to be deciphered. Dharker's poetry shifts the question, from asking what the poem would be "about," to a different kind of interrogation, where the aim of reading becomes how to interpret whilst doing justice to the elusiveness of the life expressed and intimated in the poems. Instead of reducing poems to authorial lives, literary reading would need to be a way of echoing lives inscribed and engraved within the text.

A second aspect at the heart of postcolonial experimental poetry concerns the fact that this rubric cannot be restricted to those authors who explicitly adopt a hybrid, creole style, cannibalising European literature and appropriating western modes of writing into peripheral contexts. In her important response to Ramanzani's theory of the "hybrid muse," Priyamvada Gopal observes:

Contra Ramanzani . . . the "breaking" and "remaking" of English, while an integral part of poetic and linguistic experimentation . . . is too differentiated a process to be subsumed under the rubric of "hybridity" . . . the innovative dimensions of a literary text cannot be identified simply by identifying it as a hybrid in language and form . . . even self-conscious poetic experimentation with English and multilingualism . . . not only differ radically in form and content but do so in symptomatically specific ways. (Gopal 2012, 183)

While testifying to a social consciousness of transnationalism and cultural exchange, postcolonial experimental poetry needs to account for different poetic currents and for specific postcolonial histories that partake of both postcolonial and experimental qualities. These traditions and histories should not be grouped under a generalised notion of "hybridity" functioning as all-encompassing synonym of "the postcolonial." Postcolonial experimentalism should be extended to include authors, texts, and modes of reading that

cannot be defined as hybrid, and that do not align with the logic of liberal multiculturalism

that often undergirds the celebration of cultural and linguistic creolisation. In contrast with

the reduction of postcolonial experimentalism to a pre-given set of stylistic choices, Lee

Jenkins notes in a recent essay that poetry "that may be defined both as postcolonial and as

experimental comprises a broad aesthetic and chronological spectrum, extending from Walt

Whitman's mid-nineteenth-century language-experiment through twenty-first century African

American performance and slam poetry" (Jenkins 2017, 153).

Instead of adding a "hybrid" or "postcolonial" or "multicultural" touch to the Euro-

American canon of avant-garde poetry, works such as Dharker's *Leaving Fingerprints*

explore the radical entanglements of the postcolonial and the experimental in shaping the

poetic expression of a global modernity defined by differential regimes of mobility,

migration, and dislocation. The category of postcolonial experimentalism, hence, necessarily

regards a wide range of forms, contexts, authors, histories, experiences and locations, and

should not be reduced to a question of formal innovation, hybrid expression or literary

vanguardism. A postcolonial concept of experimentalism need not be merely derivative or

adaptive, but rather account for the variety of experiences and strategies adopted by poets to

represent the complexity of the postcolonial condition. It does not reiterate what Neil Lazarus

has aptly called the "fetish of the West" as hegemonic critical referent (Lazarus 2002). As

Lee Jenkins observes, "postcolonialism and experimentalism are the twin engines of

twentieth- and twenty-first century global modernisms," and have given rise to a

"transnational poetic countertradition that is as diverse in its praxis as it is expansive in its

geographical reach" (Jenkins 2017, 163).

Dharker's postcolonial experimentalism derives neither from vanguardism of form

nor representational subject. Instead of being aligned with the Eurocentric canon of

modernism or the postcolonial ideology of hybridity, Dharker's experimental poetics consists

in a specific interpellation of the reader, who is called to give the poems meaning while avoiding to turn them into means of identification. The key experimental question concerns the production of expressive forms able to capture human life without acting as technologies of recognition. This entails a poetic form that would use the relation between visual and written in order to dis-identify the subject and to interrogate the differential inclusions of the spectacle of identity. The image of the fingerprint hence emerges as epitome of this poetic exercise rather than mere thematic signpost of what the poems are "about." From this point of view, the question of "experimental poetry" can be taken, following Ann Lauterbach, to indicate those compositions that oppose an idea of poetic form as "static and reified" and rather articulate "an invitation to create new ideas of coherence, where boundaries are malleable and permeable, so that inclusion and exclusion are in unstable flux" (Lauterbach 2005, 10). Instead of achieving closure, experimentalism involves the assemblage of fragments, "clusters . . . molecular structures, collaborations, artifacts" (Lauterbach 2005, 11). Experimental poetry can be seen as a radical restructuring and remapping of poetic space aimed at breaking the reification of form. This mode of representation operates on a molecular as well as a molar level, producing new assemblages, lines of flight and apertures. Dharker's poetry resonates with Lauterbach's idea of reimagining poetic textuality as an assemblage of fragments and clusters, deconstructing the closure of the text. However, it also translates this conception of literary writing into a poetic materialism that eludes a stable positioning within the categories of experimentalism and the postcolonial, remapping literary creation in opposition to the reification of identity, culture and tradition. In her comments on the relationship between tradition and experiment, Joan Retallack notes:

> Tradition gives us navigational coordinates but topographies are changing even as we
> pick up our instruments to determine where we are, have been, might have been....

Who we are, might be, is every bit as much in flux. It's common to think of identities

and traditions as useful limiting structures, points of departure from the known

(Retallack 2003, 97).

Dharker's work performs a creative destruction of the politics of identity and outlines a

figural space irreducible to fixed "navigational coordinates" of the traditions that inform her

authorial biography. If, as Joan Retallack observes, experimental poetry entails a

"conversation with the unintelligible" (97) that impedes closure and fixed meaning-making,

Dharker's turn towards the "unintelligible" involves a constant undermining of the meaning

of her own poems through the use of drawings as enigmatic companion pieces.

It is impossible to ascertain what Dharker's poems are really "about" because the

immediate object of the poem – the fingerprint – also appears as enigmatic *sign,* as an opaque

medium rather than legible message. This constant shift, detournement and disturbance gives

Dharker's poem an experimental quality that plays with the boundaries of human body and

printed page, questioning the very act of writing poetry by reframing it as the imprint of mute

corporeal traces. These stylistic strategies, however, cannot be detached from the material

realities of global modernity and the attendant regimes of control of mobility and neoliberal

subjectivation.

4. *Conclusion: Peripheral Poetry*

Leaving Fingerprints offers a poetic reflection on the technologies of recognition that

regulate the differential inclusion of migrants in contemporary Europe. Dharker reimagines

fingerprinting as a creative act that eludes the authentication and identification produced by

biometric techniques. In her poems, fingerprints make a person unreadable and non-

recognisable rather than creating the illusion of a stable form of belonging. While these poems centre on the fingerprint as literary leitmotiv, a key question opened by these works has to do with the wider political and social significance that Dharker's experimental poetics may bear. The poems in themselves do not offer any discursive message but rather disrupt and complicate the relationship between writing and image and between poetic form and ideology.

Dharker's opening of the poetic text to multiple assemblages, displacements and molecular structures mirrors a central aspect of the experience of modernity understood as a global phenomenon, and could be interpreted as the poetic expression of the peripheral regimes of mobility produced by the global expansion of capitalism. This reading would imply that postcolonial experimental poetry does not only oppose the technologies of recognition. It also symptomatically expresses the experience of global modernity as it is lived from the margins, the interstices and the peripheries rather the centre.

From this point of view, a reading of Dharker's poetry as form of postcolonial experimentalism resonates with Benita Parry's notion of "peripheral modernism," understood as the expression of the coexistence of multiple layers of experience within the history of the global expansion of capital. As Parry writes in her important essay, "Aspects of Peripheral Modernisms," the history of the expansion of capitalist modernity at the periphery has produced a literary form expressing "the juxtaposition of the mundane and the fantastic, the recognizable and the improbable . . . the legible and the oneiric, historically inflected and mystical states of consciousness" (Parry 2009, 39). Parry continues:

> Such proximity of discordant discourses and discrete narrative registers, can be seen as aesthetic forms that transcend their sources . . . becoming abstract significations of

the incommensurable and the contradictory which are concurrent in the material and

cultural worlds of a periphery. (39)

While Parry's reflections mainly refer to prose works produced at the periphery, far from the

"core" countries of Europe and North America, some aspects of "peripheral modernism" can

also shed light on the life of migrants in Europe today. Dharker's poetry manifests some

aspects of what Parry calls "peripheral modernism," but it inscribes the features of peripheral

modernism as inherent, visible and tangible quality of poetic textuality. The juxtaposition

between presence and loss, memory and forgetfulness, visible sign and legible line, defines

the space of Dharker's poetry as a space of contrasts and tensions that reiterate the wider

dynamics at the core of the current mode of capitalist globalisation. Indeed, while, on the one

hand, capitalism intensifies mobility by forcing people to move away from countries in the

South, the capitalist system also blocks freedom of movement of people and re-territorialises

national divisions in order to regulate the movements of labour. This paradox lies at the heart

of what Slavoj Zizek has recently termed the "political economy of refugees." As Zizek

argues, the current migration crisis in Europe cannot be detached from the dynamics of global

capitalism and neocolonial intervention that continue to affect local economies in the Global

South. Postcolonial migrants arriving in Europe are in fact peripheral subjects forcibly

displaced by the poverty, slavery, civil wars and military interventions determined by

capitalism as a global systemic force. As Zizek points out, global capitalism involves a stark

division between richer countries at the core and nations of the Global South, whilst the

logics of capitalist globalisation continues to force millions to escape peripheral nations and

attempt to reach Europe as a "cheap precarious workforce" (Zizek 2017, 52). From this point

of view, postcolonial experimental forms may be seen as the expression of the founding

contradiction of global capital, at the same time territorial and deterritorialising, forcing

people to move and yet subjecting their movement to a state of perpetual biometric surveillance. The "print" or mark left by human beings only witnesses the fact that the subject has vanished, as vividly expressed in another poem from *Leaving Fingerprints, "*Her footprint Vanishes," where Dharker writes:

> She disappeared without a trace,
>
> They said. If there were footprints
>
> On the sand, the sea got there
>
> Before anyone saw and wiped
>
> Her off the face of the earth (Dharker 2009, 23).

One of the main themes of Dharker's collection of poetry is the inability of the mark of identification to capture the presence of the subject. The print survives as unreliable, obscure, partial object. The fingerprint is what *prevents* human beings from recognising each other rather than establishing an inclusive community. Dharker's stylistic strategy plays with the work of signification by disturbing the closure of poems through the addition of drawings that complicate, expand, and often contradict the text of the poems. These stylistic devices give rise to an experimental poetics that captures the situation of peripherality at the heart of contemporary global capitalism. Drawing on Benita Parry's notion of "peripheral modernism," Dharker's poems might be seen as an example of a "peripheral poetry," defined as a postcolonial mode of representation that reflects the experience of modernity as an unequal economic system regulating human mobility on a world scale. Dharker's poetry does not address this historical conjuncture thematically, and prevents a mode of reading that would reduce her poems to be "about" global capitalism and its de-territorialising logic. Rather, Dharker's peripheral experimentalism inscribes these dynamics in the words, lines

and bodies traced on the pages of her collection. Her poems show and signify these wider mechanisms but they do not identify them; Dharker's poetry, ultimately, refuses to become another technique of identification. By juxtaposing discordant registers of visual and verbal representation and by opening up the space of the poem to a multitude of layers of meaning, Dharker speaks from the position of the displaced, the "non-person" (Dal Lago 2009) that inhabits today's Europe as an invisible presence irreducible to the dichotomy between self and other, Europe and the non-European, native and migrant. Dharker's peripheral poetry expresses, in this way, a central predicament that informs the life of those subjected to the regimes of differential inclusion and immobility characterising the era of economic globalisation.

Notes

1 The concept of "biopolitical méconnaissance" is formed by joining Foucault's notion of biopolitics, understood as management of bodies and "regulations of the population" (Foucault 1998, 139), to the Lacanian term "méconnaissance," which indicates a mistaken knowledge of the self at work in the imaginary register. Taken together, these two words might indicate the process through which migrant bodies are technologically identified and monitored while not being recognised as full citizens enjoying the rights of membership of a nation-state.

2 Current regulation of the European Parliament and the Council of the European Union has established a EU-wide fingerprint database for the identification of asylum-seekers, also proposing to include facial images and digital photos as "additional biometric identifiers." These technologies aim to monitor movements, otherwise invisible, across European nation states. https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/policies/asylum/identification-of-applicants_en

3 Dharker is also an accomplished visual artist, who held solo exhibitions in India, Britain, USA and Hong Kong. A selection of her drawings can also be accessed on her personal website:

http://www.imtiazdharker.com/drawings

4 Drawing on Bauman's theory, Lyon defines liquid surveillance as "the reduction of the body to data and the creation of data-doubles on which life-chances and choices hang more significantly than on our real lives and the stories we tell about them. It also evokes the flows of data that are now crucial to surveillance" (Lyon 2010, 325). Biometric technologies epitomise this "liquid" aspect of surveillance in contemporary Europe: borders are not reducible to solid infrastructures and walls, but also constitute networks, flows of data and databases that monitor human mobility everywhere, both across and inside the states of the European Union.

5 More information on this project can be found on the museum's website:

http://www.hmag.org.uk/learning/imaginings/

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