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‘Here there be monsters’: Confronting the (post)coloniality of Britain’s borders

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Abstract
This article analyses the (post)colonial politics of UK bordering through the lens of monstrosity. Historicising contemporary bordering within colonial-era monsterisations of racialised people and their mobility, we identify four mechanisms through which migrants are constructed and policed as monsters today: animalisation, zombification, criminalisation, and barbarisation. We then examine how the state embodies monstrosity itself through border policies of deterrence and creating ‘hostile environments’. In addition to the instrumentalisation of horror, this entails extending the border’s reach domestically throughout everyday life and internationally through deportation and externalisation measures. We argue these developments embody a new form of state power, depicted as a headless, tentacled Leviathan. Doing so provides insights into monstrosity as a form of liberal statecraft, the local/global diffusion of bordering, the transnationalisation of sovereign power, and the racialisation of citizenship. It also raises important questions about the construction of border violence as a necessary and legitimate monstrosity in (post)colonial liberal societies, the everyday complicity of citizens, and the limits of efforts to humanise monsterised migrants or reform monstrous state institutions. Revealing how within liberal regimes of citizenship and humanitarianism values ‘there be monsters’, we argue, opens space for thinking about abolitionist alternatives in international politics.

Keywords: abolition; deterrence; monstrosity; postcolonial borders; racialisation

Introduction: Monster politics at the border

Read a tabloid or catch a sound bite from one of many anti-migrant politicians or pundits and you get the impression monsters lurk everywhere in Britain’s borderlands. Brutal traffickers, sexual predators, and sinister terrorists are all purported to be lying just across the Channel disguised as refugees, waiting for their chance to invade the United Kingdom (UK).[1] These monsters live above all in the minds of those imagining them, racist fantasies of the (post)colonial nation state and contemporary operations of bordering. Nevertheless, they have real power. They are used to justify the intensification of border security, expansion of police powers, increasing detention capacity, and the criminalisation of all irregularised migrants. They also fuel public prejudices, sometimes with devastating effect. Anti-migrant rhetoric from the government and tabloid press stoked the far right[2] and primed people to accept misinformation that the perpetrator of the Southport stabbings,

[1]Saskia Smellie, ‘Migration narratives in media and social media. The case of the United Kingdom’ (BRIDGES Working Papers 10, 2023).

[2]Mustafa Ahmad, Rosie Carter, Anki Deo, Hermansson Patrik, and Misbah Malik, ‘Stoking the flames: The influence of tabloid press and government rhetoric on far-right anti-migrant engagement’ (HOPE not Hate, 2023).

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called 'the Southport monster' on certain social media channels, was a recently arrived Muslim Channel crosser, leading to reactionary riots targeting asylum seeker accommodations.[3]

Monsters provide a useful conceptual frame for examining the politics of contemporary borders because they are fundamentally tied to questions of how social order and its boundaries are asserted and disrupted. Monsters embody hybridity, difference, and abnormality, and they appear as unnatural entities that should not be, yet nevertheless exist. Their bodies resist being placed into systems of classification and therefore subvert the presumed natural order. Prior to any perceived physical threat, monsters present first and foremost a 'cognitive threat' to shared ways of thinking and knowing,[4] and 'threaten to smash distinctions' through which meaning and subjectivity are created.[5]

It is no surprise, then, that so many monsters are present at the border; borders create monsters. Borders are contingent outcomes of practices of '*bordering*' bound up with processes of '*ordering* and *othering*' which entail the 'ongoing co-shaping and co-demarcating of a socially ordered identity (a we) and a constitutive outside (a them)'.[6] Borders and b/ordering processes therefore create monsters by setting boundaries in space and identity, transgressors of which are demonised. Border monsters, in turn, contribute to processes of b/ordering by establishing and reinforcing the epistemological, moral, and political boundaries of the societies from which they emerge. On one hand, these monsters serve as the constitutive abject against which social norms and subjects are defined.[7] On the other, they 'police the borders of the possible', their grotesque and fearsome forms warning against exceeding the limits of the social, political, and geographical orders beyond which 'there be monsters'.[8]

There has been recent interest in international studies to think questions of othering, dehumanisation, and the economies of violence present in (post)colonial borderlands through monsters.[9] This work focuses primarily on how monstrous depictions of migrants play a central role in constructing subjectivities of (non-)citizenship, and ultimately reinforce racialised borders at personal, regional, and transnational scales. Less explored has been how the monstrosity of bordering itself is mobilised as a state strategy of enforcement, exclusion, and deterrence. In this article, we address this gap by examining the interconnected processes of migrants' monsterisation and border monstrosity, showing how monstrous depictions of migrants fuel monstrous border policy and policing. We argue for understanding the border itself as a headless and tentacled Leviathan monster to capture the horror inherent in border enforcement and depict its dispersed and writhing reach, as well as inspire strategies for resistance and border abolition. In doing so, our analysis of border monstrosity goes beyond accounts of dehumanisation to provide a richer understanding of the racialised violence of contemporary statecraft which includes the mobilisation of hostile environments and the weaponisation of the everyday. As such, our arguments contribute to current

[3]David Lawrence, 'A weekend of unrest: Dozens of protests planned in the wake of Southport' (25 August 2024) available at: {https://hopenothate.org.uk/2024/08/02/a-weekend-of-unrest-dozens-of-protests-planned-in-the-wake-of-southport/}.

[4]Noël Carroll, *The Philosophy of Horror or Paradoxes of the Heart* (London: Routledge, 1990), p. 34.

[5]Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, 'Monster culture (seven theses)', in Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock (ed.), *The Monster Theory Reader* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), p. 40.

[6]Henk van Houtum, 'Beyond "borderism": Overcoming discriminative B/ordering and othering', *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 112:1 (2021), p. 36.

[7]Cohen, 'Monster culture (seven theses)', p. 45.

[8]Cohen, 'Monster culture (seven theses)', p. 46.

[9]For example, Gaia Giuliani, *Monsters, Catastrophes and the Anthropocene: A Postcolonial Critique* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2020); 'Monstrous beauties: Bodies in motion between colonial archives and the migrant and refugee crisis', in Shirley Anne Tate and Encarnación Gutiérrez Rodríguez (eds), *The Palgrave Handbook of Critical Race and Gender* (Cham: Springer International, 2022), pp. 409–28; Billy Holzberg, *Affective Bordering: Race, Deservingness and the Emotional Politics of Migration Control* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2024); Yasmin Ibrahim, *Migrants and Refugees at UK Borders: Hostility and 'Unmaking' the Human* (London: Abingdon, 2022); Claudio Minca, 'Of werewolves, jungles, and refugees: More-than-human figures along the Balkan route', *Geopolitics*, 28:2 (2023), pp. 550–69; Joe Turner, *Bordering Intimacy: Postcolonial Governance and the Policing of Family* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), chapter 4, 'Monsters'.

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debates on the interrelated (post)coloniality and 'more-than-human' dimensions of bordering[10] while indicating the limits of humanitarian border politics based on rehumanising migrant subjects.[11] Here, our analysis of border monstrosity tentatively contributes to the burgeoning border abolitionist theory and practice being developed by academics and activists.[12]

We take the diffused border of the UK as our site of analysis, building on our previous empirical research into its externalised and everyday functions.[13] The UK is a particularly salient case study given the intensity of contemporary debates surrounding migration post Brexit, and the recent state interventions to police the so-called crisis of maritime Channel crossings seen in recent years.[14] However, our focus is not territorially limited to Great Britain. Rather, we emphasise how the UK border exists within an intertwined network of transnational bordering operations, affects wider contours of international border geographies, and relies upon the cooperation of dispersed global actors beyond British sovereignty. We also show how it exemplifies transnational trends in border policies among the world's rich countries in North America, Australia, and Europe.[15] Emphasising this interconnection of securitised and carceral border geographies avoids the methodological nationalism characterising much scholarship on borders and migration.[16] Finally, as a former imperial power, the UK offers us clear examples of how contemporary (post)colonial processes of monsterisation and border policing have historical antecedents.

The article begins by briefly historicising the role of monstrosity in creating and sustaining the global ordering of power and privilege in our (post)colonial present through the enforcement of international border controls. In the second section, we present four mechanisms by which migrants are monsterised today: animalisation, zombification, criminalisation, and barbarisation. While we describe each of these as different forms of monsterisation, our analysis emphasises that they work together to not only discursively ostracise irregularised migrants but also to justify punitive state policies against them. In the third section, we turn our attention to the ways the UK border itself embodies monstrosity as a strategy of deterrence and through the sociolegal construction of hostile environments at home and abroad. We depict the UK border monster as a headless and tentacled Leviathan, a hermeneutic device which we find usefully draws attention to the role of horror in border policing, the UK border's simultaneous local/global reach, its decentralised operation, and how it enlists us all in enacting its everyday and intimate violence. By analysing the UK border's monstrosity we sketch its reach and hold over our societies, selves, and imaginations. We emphasise its global, racialised, and (post)colonial qualities to provide an ethical political critique of liberal humanitarianism which necessitates a critical self-reflection on our own complicity in border monstrosity. In the conclusion, we confront this monster (and our role in animating it) to look towards possible alternatives opened up through a praxis of abolition.

[10]Umut Ozguc and Andrew Burridge, 'More-than-human borders: A new research agenda for posthuman conversations in border studies', *Geopolitics*, 28:2 (2023); Tarsis Brito, 'Between race and animality: European borders, "colonial dogs", and the policing of humanity', *Review of International Studies*, (2024), p. 8; Polly Pallister-Wilkins, 'Whitescapes: A posthumanist political ecology of alpine migrant (im)mobility', *Political Geography*, 92 (2022), pp. 102, 517.

[11]Nick Vaughan-Williams, '"We are not animals!" Humanitarian border security and zoopolitical spaces in Europe', *Political Geography*, 45 (2015), p. 8.

[12]Gracie Mae Bradley and Luke de Noronha, *Against Borders: The Case for Abolition* (London: Verso, 2022); Sara Riva, Simon Campbell, Brian Whitener, and Kathryn Medien (eds), *Border Abolition Now* (London: Pluto Press, 2024); Martina Tazzioli, *Border Abolitionism: Migrants' Containment and the Genealogies of Struggles and Rescue* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2023).

[13]Thom Tyerman, 'Everyday borders in Calais: The globally intimate injustices of segregation', *Geopolitics*, 26:2 (2019), pp. 464–85; *Everyday Border Struggles: Segregation and Solidarity in the UK and Calais* (London: Routledge, 2022); Travis van Isacker, 'Counter-mapping citizenship: Bordering through domicide in Calais, France', (2020), PhD Thesis, University of Brighton.

[14]Lucy Mayblin, Thom Davies, Arshad Isakjee, Joe Turner, and Tesfalem Yemane, 'Small boats, big contracts: Extracting value from the UK 's post-Brexit asylum "crisis"', *Political Quarterly*, 95:2 (2024), pp. 253–62.

[15]Cetta Mainwaring and Maria Lorena Cook, 'Immigration detention: An Anglo model', *Migration Studies*, 7:4 (2019), pp. 455–76.

[16]Bridget Anderson, 'New directions in migration studies: Towards methodological de-nationalism', *Comparative Migration Studies*, 7:1 (2019).

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I: Making (post)colonial border monsters: Racialising humanity, space, and mobility

Today's nation-state borders are artefacts of European colonial governance which established and enforced a racial hierarchy of the world's people with whiteness at its top.[17] Race and racial difference did not pre-exist the colonial encounter but were invented through it.[18] Rather than reflect natural categories of people based on biological or cultural difference, racialisation was a sociopolitical process to 'discipline humanity into full humans, not-quite-humans, and nonhumans' by reading people's bodies through the lens of colonial ideology.[19] Biological markers, notably skin colour, were considered self-evident bases for social differentiation and used to naturalise and justify hierarchical colonial relations. They also provided a new way to legitimise European domination and notions of superiority in order to govern the rest of the world's people as distinct racial populations.[20]

Constructing a racial hierarchy of humanity entailed creating monsters, not least because any rebellion against or subversion of the colonial racial order was seen itself to be a monstrously violent act.[21] Monsterisation provided the 'ontological ground stabilizing the borders of nations, races, sexes, genders, classes and humanity' within modernity.[22] As Europeans privileged themselves, their appearance, and whiteness to be exclusively human, monstrosity was mapped on to the bodies of racialised Others to disqualify them from humanity. Exaggerated racist fantasies plied by early modern travellers returning to Europe from abroad – 'describing fanged cannibals, one-eyed giants, or headless monopods' who 'by the very nature of their physicality [confounded] any efforts to perceive humanness in the monstrous form'[23] – fuelled colonial imagination and justified the subordination and exploitation of non-European people. Initial fantastical portrayals of 'otherworldly' monsters gave way in later centuries to more 'naturalistic' forms of monsterisation like animalisation and bestialisation.[24] Enlightenment thinkers perceived racialised people as representing a lower, hybrid form of humanity which they argued shared physical and mental characteristics with animals more than 'Man'. In addition to physical traits, purported base instincts towards excessive sexuality, violence, and cannibalism were used to denigrate racialised people and support claims of their bestiality.[25] The animalisation of black women's sexuality especially was key to the monsterisation of racial subjects as their reproductive capacities were perceived to blur the lines between the monstrous hybrid and the fully human.[26]

Alongside hybridity, monsters were also 'defined by their categorical ambiguity and troubling mobility'.[27] Taxonomic fluidity – for instance, the transgression of distinctions between human/animal – rendered monsters 'simultaneously inside and outside', thereby 'disrupt[ing] the politics of identity and security of borders'.[28] However, monstrous mobility could also be physical or geographic as well as subjective or categorical. Colonialism did not just invent a racialised hierarchy of humanity but also spatialised it, dividing human beings into different populations and cultures

[17] Nandita Sharma, *Home Rule: National Sovereignty and the Separation of Natives and Migrants* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020).

[18] George Yancy, 'Colonial gazing: The production of the body as "other"', *Western Journal of Black Studies*, 32:1 (2008).

[19] Alexander G. Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus: Racializing Assemblages, Biopolitics, and Black Feminist Theories of the Human* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2014), p. 4.

[20] Aníbal Quijano, 'Coloniality of power and Eurocentrism in Latin America', *International Sociology*, 15:2 (2000), pp. 215–32.

[21] Giuliani, *Monsters, Catastrophes and the Anthropocene*, p. 87.

[22] Amit S. Rai, 'Of monsters: Biopower, terrorism and excess in genealogies of monstrosity', *Cultural Studies*, 18:4 (2004), p. 539.

[23] Sylvester Johnson, 'Monstrosity, colonialism, and the racial state', *J19: The Journal of Nineteenth-Century Americanists*, 3:1 (2015), p. 182.

[24] Giuliani, *Monsters, Catastrophes and the Anthropocene*, p. 92.

[25] Anne McClintock, *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[26] Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, *Becoming Human: Matter and Meaning in an Antiblack World* (New York: New York University Press, 2020).

[27] Mark Neocleous, *The Monstrous and the Dead: Burke, Marx, Fascism* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2005), p. 19.

[28] Neocleous, *The Monstrous and the Dead*, p. 19.

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and then assigning them to their supposedly proper geographic and historical places. This colonial spatial/racial distribution of the world was naturalised through the notion of blood lineage, leading to the idea of territorially distinct and racially homogenous nations with their respective outsiders and Others.[29] The inhabitants of these territorialised nations were thus required to remain 'in their places', giving rise to the distinction between natives and migrants upon which state immigration controls have since been predicated.[30]

Controlling racialised people's mobility was at the heart of European imperial strategy.[31] From forced enslavement and transportation of people from Africa to the American plantations, to the enclosure of indigenous populations in white settler colonies, to the movement of indentured workers across the empire after the abolition of slavery, the policing of people's mobility was both governed by and in turn helped to constitute the racial, gendered, and sexualised hierarchy of (in)humanity with the 'Anglo-Saxon family' at the top and centre.[32] This governance of mobility has for centuries played a fundamental part in establishing the racist capitalist system that continues to shape the global political economy of racialised inequality today.[33] Movement, particularly of the poor, across national borders was therefore seen not only as out of place, but also as threatening the racial purity of nation states as well as the validity of the entire racial/spatial classificatory scheme. This also applied to Europe's internal borders.[34] The constant mobility of Roma and Jewish people in Europe challenged the naturalness of ethnic groups or nations inhabiting a particular place.[35] Thus, in addition to the racialisation of others, colonial monsterisation entailed a demonisation of mobility itself as a source of racial mixing and cultural impurity threatening the territorialised colonial hierarchy of humanity.

Despite 20th-century formal decolonisation and the nominal renunciation of imperialist racial hierarchies, 'our world remains a "world of races", whether we admit it or not'.[36] Nation-state borders and migration controls are central to the maintenance of racial hierarchies and exclusions of imperialism as the continuing basis of our contemporary (post)colonial international order.[37] Contemporary (post)colonial nation-state borders enforce a global apartheid restricting the movements of racialised poor while facilitating the relatively free movement of the predominantly white, male, and wealthy, entrenching unequal distributions of resources and liveability internationally.[38] While this apartheid is today maintained through enforcing a hierarchy of citizenship rather than explicitly racial categories, the ways national citizenship has been defined and increasingly restricted since decolonisation ensure its effective racialisation.

The UK strongly exemplifies these dynamics by which contemporary political subjectivities and geographies of nation states are 'not only bordered, but also racially and colonially ordered, through the operation of immigration control', ensuring the 'spoils of empire' are retained for the privileged few.[39] Over the past 60 years, UK legislation withdrew rights of mobility and settlement from former colonial subjects while circumscribing British citizenship along racial lines. So-called hostile environment policies and the criminalisation of irregularised entry to the UK

[29]Sharma, *National Sovereignty and the Separation of Natives and Migrants*, p. 101.

[30]Sharma, *National Sovereignty and the Separation of Natives and Migrants*.

[31]Radhika Mongia, *Indian Migration and Empire: A Colonial Genealogy of the Modern State* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2018).

[32]Turner, *Bordering Intimacy*, p. 77.

[33]Gargi Bhattacharyya, *Rethinking Racial Capitalism: Questions of Reproduction and Survival* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2018).

[34]Manuela Boatcă, 'The eastern margins of Europe', *Cultural Studies*, 21:2–3 (2007), pp. 368–84.

[35]Paul A. Silverstein, 'Immigrant racialisation and the new savage slot: Race, migration, and immigration in the new Europe', *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 34:1 (2005), p. 366.

[36]Achille Mbembe, *Critique of Black Reason* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), p. 55.

[37]E. Tendayi Achiume, 'Racial borders', *Georgetown Law Journal*, 110 (2021), p. 445.

[38]Catherine Besteman, *Militarized Global Apartheid* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2020).

[39]Nadine El-Enany, *Bordering Britain: Law, Race and Empire* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), pp. 3–4.

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through the Nationality and Borders Act 2022 (discussed later) are recent implementations of a longer (post)colonial project restricting free movements of populations from Africa and the Middle East.

Our argument is that such racialised administrative b/ordering practices in Britain depend upon constructing border monsters through which mobile racialised people are made into threats to be justifiably and aggressively policed. In this way, border monsterisation contributes to broader practices of racialised statecraft in international politics through the figuration of 'the others, outsiders and threats, against which statehood is articulated'.[40] Such monsters have been drawn from those conjured during the initial colonial encounter, but have since become articulated in response to specific forms of racialised mobility and the moral and security panics which ensue.

II: Monsterisation: Constructing and policing contemporary border monsters

Throughout history, monsterisation – constructing others as dehumanised threats to established sociopolitical orders – has been effective in justifying subjugation, oppression, and even extermination. Exaggerating difference to the point of monstrosity 'has always served as an essential preliminary step toward domination'.[41] By amplifying physiological, social, or cultural differences to the realm of the monstrous, the violence of eliminating monsterised people is perceived to be heroic and justified, rather than monstrous itself.[42]

In this section, we describe four processes of migrants' monsterisation currently at work in the UK: animalisation, zombification, criminalisation, and barbarisation. We show how these processes not only stem from racist colonial tropes, but are key to the continuation of Britain's racist b/ordering today. We draw on a wide range of examples, from rhetoric to legislation, to highlight the feedback cycles between them and how similarly imagined monstrous forms are reflected at different levels of discourse. By doing so, we intend to illustrate the relationship between migrants' discursive monsterisation and the bordering processes intended to interdict and remove them from the UK's territory while limiting their opportunities within it.

Animalisation

In our (post)colonial present, 'notions of animality inform and undergird processes of violence and racialisation at the border'[43] through which racialised hierarchies of humanity are persistently enforced. In the UK borderlands especially, processes of animalisation have been central to the monsterisation of racialised migrants. Perhaps the clearest example is the use of the term *jungle* for migrant camps around Calais, historically a bottleneck for people travelling to the UK without authorisation.[44] The Pashto word for forest لګـنځ (*dzhangal*), originally used by Afghan migrants to describe where they were living whilst attempting to cross the border, underwent a phonetic and semantic translation, becoming the anglicised *jungle* in the early 2000s. Thus, it became imbued with derogatory connotations implied by colonial imaginaries of the jungle as the heart of darkness and the antithesis of civilisation: dangerous, lawless, and inhabited by animalistic savages. The UK tabloid press combined this affective imaginary of the jungle with the existing racist framing of migrants, demonising them as 'not only animals but dangerous predators whose natural habitat

[40]Darcy Leigh, 'From savages to snowflakes: Race and the enemies of free speech', *Review of International Studies*, 49:4 (2023), p. 768.

[41]Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock, 'Introduction: A genealogy of monster theory', in Jeffrey Andrew Weinstock (ed.), *The Monster Theory Reader* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2020), p. 25.

[42]Weinstock, 'Introduction', p. 25.

[43]Brito, 'Between race and animality', p. 8.

[44]Thom Davies, Arshad Isakjee, Lucy Mayblin, and Joe Turner, 'Channel crossings: Offshoring asylum and the afterlife of empire in the Dover Strait', *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, 44:13 (2021), p. 2310.

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was cruel, chaotic, and lawless'[45] to symbolically border their living spaces as outside Europe and the West.[46]

This jungle framing naturalised the racialised dehumanisation of mobile populations living there as animalistic subhumans, portraying their existence as a threat to the British (post)colonial b/order. Animalisation vilified residents of the most famous jungle in Calais in 2015 as unworthy of humanitarian support, sanctioned repression to keep them from overrunning the jungle's geographic bounds, and ultimately justified their final eviction. Constant destructions of jungles in Northern France today are intended to keep racialised migrants living outside, without any semblance of a home,[47] denying them the material conditions which make fully human life possible.[48] At the same time, evictions are consistently framed as humanitarian acts by the French state,[49] supposedly saving migrants from their animalised selves by moving them from the jungle into formal accommodation fit for humans.

The animalisation of migrants persists within the UK as well, for example in Yarl's Wood detention centre, notorious for sexual abuse and high rates of self-harm. Private security guards acting on behalf of the government there were recorded by an undercover journalist saying of detainees: 'They're beasties. They're all animals. Caged animals. Take a stick with you and beat them up.'[50] Spaces of detention are also frequently described as having animalising effects on people inside. Hardmondsworth Immigration Removal Centre and Manston Reception Centre were recently described as 'zoos' where detainees are 'treated like animals'.[51] More than simply rhetorical, these testimonies speak to a fundamental zoopolitical function of state borders which seek, through the material degradation of migrants' living conditions, to '(re)produce sovereign lines of distinction between the "proper" life of the "regular" citizen-subject whose humanity is assured and the "improper" life of the "irregular" migrant whose belonging to humanity is habitually called into question'.[52] In this way, the animalisation of migrants is a key process by which they are monsterised through practices of bordering.

Zombification

The zombie is another monstrous figure through which racialised mobility is portrayed today. During the 2015–16 so-called migration crisis, politicians and journalists alike described migrants in Calais as desperate 'roaming packs', with one article sensationally comparing people attempting to board lorries on the motorways to zombie television show *The Walking Dead*.[53] Even then-Prime Minister David Cameron evoked the threat of a 'swarm of people coming across the Mediterranean' looking to 'break into Britain without permission' to justify increased border security measures and domestic hostile environment policies.[54] The zombification of migrants evokes their status as 'the living dead', surviving in a condition of 'brutal social death' imposed by governmental regimes of

[45]Mireille Rosello, 'The Calais jungle: Mediations of home', NECSUS: European *Journal of Media Studies*, 5:2 (2016), p. 96.

[46]Monish Bhatia, 'Social death: The (white) racial framing of the Calais "jungle" and "illegal" migrants in the British tabloids and right-wing press', in Monish Bhatia, Scott Poynting, and Waqas Tufail (eds), *Media, Crime and Racism* (Cham: Springer International, 2018), p. 190.

[47]Van Isacker, 'Counter-mapping citizenship', p. 139.

[48]Martina Tazzioli, '"Choking without killing": Opacity and the grey area of migration governmentality', *Political Geography*, 89 (2021), pp. 102, 412.

[49]Thom Tyerman, Travis van Isacker, Philippa Metcalfe, and Francesca Parkes, 'Criminalisation and humanitarian border policing in the Channel' (18 November 2022) available at: {https://blogs.law.ox.ac.uk/research-subject-groups/centre-criminology/centreborder-criminologies/blog/2021/10/criminalisation}.

[50]Channel 4 News, 'Yarl's Wood: Undercover in the secretive immigration centre', (2015).

[51]Bail for Immigration Detainees, '"Why should we be treated like animals?" A letter from 21 people in detention' (26 July 2023) available at: {https://www.biduk.org/articles/why-should-we-be-treated-like-animals-a-letter-from-21-people-in-detention}; Vinnie O'Dowd, 'Manston migrant centre like a zoo, says asylum seeker', *BBC News*, (2022).

[52]Vaughan-Williams, '"We are not animals!"', p. 8.

[53]Tyerman (2022), pp. 29–30.

[54]BBC, 'David Cameron: We need to stop migrants "breaking in"', *BBC News*, (2015).

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(post)colonial nationality and state citizenship which borders secure.[55] Their threat is that they represent the mutually constitutive limits of our supposed humanity, bringing into question the stability of the boundaries between political subjects of rights and those cast out of our political systems but who nonetheless remain physically present among us.

Depicting migrants at the borders of the rich north as zombies dehumanises them along familiarly colonial lines, portraying them as a flood of faceless invaders who must be held back lest they breach the fortress walls, devour the national body, and consume its resources. Crofts and Vogl[56] argue migrants' zombification dehistoricises their connections to the countries they are travelling to, allowing them to be seen by citizens as unreasoning creatures motivated purely by greed and glut. However, Giuliani[57] argues it is the undead nature of the (post)colonial migrant-zombie figure that is most threatening as it represents an unwilled reckoning for Europe with the monstrosity of repressed (post)colonial legacies of violence. The conflation of migrant caravans or beach landings with images of zombie hordes unconsciously 'signals the white coloniser's repressed memory of his own past cannibalistic invasions', provoking fear that the past which still haunts him will come back to devour him.[58] The disgust and horror border zombies provoke is in how they embody the decay and violence of our societies which produce them, confronting us with the monstrosity hidden beneath our humanity, historically and in the present.

Criminalisation

Perhaps the most prevalent form of border monsterisation today constructs migrants as criminals. Stark examples in the press include the article declaring 'MONSTERS IN OUR MIDST: Hundreds of migrants who sneaked into Britain are criminals – including murderers, terrorists and rapists'[59] or a recent GB News bit[60] describing a 'rogue's gallery of depraved foreign criminals', 'monsters' which the anchor complains we have a right not to have to live with. Such vulgar descriptions, while hyperbolic, are nevertheless given real power when used as justifications for growing uses of criminal punishments in migration control, and have only become reinforced through the state's increased use of criminal law to govern immigration.

In the UK, migration is increasingly 'governed though crime' whilst criminal justice is 'governed through migration control'[61] in an entanglement labelled 'crimmigration'.[62] Previously civil administrative immigration offences have become crimes whilst enforcement measures, such as stripping leave to remain or deportation, have become additional or alternative punishments for criminal activities.[63] These combined criminal and administrative sanctions have been used interchangeably against the two migrant 'folk devils'[64] of the 'Foreign National Offender' (FNO) and 'bogus asylum seeker'. Both are presented as specifically racialised threats to Britain's social cohesion, economic stability, law, and national security; as abusers of Britain's hospitality; and as totemic of Britain's

[55] Bhatia, 'Social death', pp. 197–8.

[56] Penny Crofts and Anthea Vogl, 'Dehumanized and demonized refugees, zombies and *World War Z*', *Law and Humanities*, 13:1 (2019), pp. 29–51.

[57] Giuliani, *Monsters, Catastrophes and the Anthropocene.*

[58] Giuliani, *Monsters, Catastrophes and the Anthropocene*, p. 31.

[59] Chris Pollard, 'Murderers, terrorists and rapists have sneaked into UK on small boats' (12 July 2023) available at: {https://www.thesun.co.uk/news/21103563/migrants-murderers-terrorists-rapists/}.

[60] GB News [@GBNEWS], '"What about our right not to have to live with these monsters?" Patrick Christys reveals the "foreign monsters" the Home Office has allowed to stay in Britain unencumbered'. https://t.co/gYCwYZXo7U, X, (2024).

[61] Mary Bosworth and Mhairi Guild, 'Governing through migration control: Security and citizenship in Britain', *British Journal of Criminology*, 48:6 (2008), pp. 703–19.

[62] Juliet P. Stumpf, 'The process is the punishment in crimmigration law', in Katja Franko Aas and Mary Bosworth (eds), *The Borders of Punishment: Migration, Citizenship, and Social Exclusion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), pp. 58–75.

[63] Ana Aliverti, 'Patrolling the "thin blue line" in a world in motion: An exploration of the crime–migration nexus in UK policing', *Theoretical Criminology*, 24:1 (2020), pp. 8–27; Alpa Parmar, 'Arresting (non)citizenship: The policing migration nexus of nationality, race and criminalization', *Theoretical Criminology*, 24:1 (2020), pp. 28–49.

[64] Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panic* (London: Routledge, 1972).

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soft touch migration policies supposedly emasculated by human rights legislation. As subjects of moral panic, these folk devils stand in for an array of social, political, and economic crises whose origins in the dynamics of neoliberal capitalism are obscured by a new supposed common sense which scapegoats migrants and necessitates 'an expansive penal and national security state with enhanced powers to deport, detain, surveil and abandon'.[65]

The Foreign National Prisoner became a focus of moral panic in 2006 when 1,023 foreign offenders due for deportation were released from prison, with some going on to carry out further offences.[66] The media and Conservative opposition politicians portrayed this as an existential threat to the nation and its population, evidence of the Labour government's failures, and indicative of the tyranny of European Union (EU) law and human rights legislation endangering the security and identity of the British nation.[67] The foreign national criminal came to represent a crisis of the (post)colonial b/order necessitating increased carceral state violence in the form of detention and deportation to protect the vulnerable national body. In response to this scandal, immigration enforcement was embedded within criminal policing and punishment systems in ways that doubly punish suspects perceived as foreign.[68] This entanglement of migration and criminal policing means racialised suspects are profiled as foreign nationals irrespective of their leave to remain, and referrals for deportation consideration are made automatically for those sentenced to 12 months or more regardless of their substantive Britishness. This emerging 'crimmigration control system'[69] fuses together the most punitive elements of criminal and immigration law while jettisoning pre-existing principles of proportionality, justice, oversight, and safeguarding. Blurring the lines between domestic criminal punishment and administrative immigration control extends the carceral reach of the state inwards and intensifies the domestic policing of racialised populations.[70]

The bogus asylum seeker – another folk devil framed as an illegal economic migrant masquerading as a legitimate refugee – has been a constant *bête noire* for right-wing British media,[71] long conflated with FNOs,[72] and placed at the centre of the Conservative Party's justifications to 'stop the boats'. Despite 90% of people crossing the Channel applying for asylum and the majority going on to be granted refugee status,[73] the government portrays them as illegal economic migrants subverting the UK's laws and 'jumping the queue'[74] of legitimate refugees waiting for relocation. This rhetorical demonisation was legislatively encoded by the previous Conservative government. The Nationality and Borders Act 2022 criminalised the very act of arriving in the UK (as distinct from entering, which requires circumventing immigration control) without valid entry clearance. This made all asylum seekers arriving via irregularised routes de facto illegal immigrants regardless of their claims for protection, equating them with the foreign criminals.

This legislation was framed as a necessary response to the crisis of criminality posed by unauthorised arrivals of asylum seekers, yet in fact produces that criminality. First, it introduces criminal charges for asylum seekers violating immigration regulations, contradicting Article 31 of the

[65]Ida Danewid, 'Race, capital, and the politics of solidarity: radical internationalism in the 21st Century', (2018), PhD thesis, London School of Economics and Political Science, p. 28.

[66]Luke De Noronha, 'The figure of the "foreign criminal": Race, gender and the FNP', in Monish Bhatia, Scott Poynting, and Waqas Tufail (eds), *Media, Crime and Racism* (London: Springer Nature, 2018), pp. 337–58.

[67]Noronha, 'The figure of the "foreign criminal"', pp. 341–3.

[68]Parmar, 'Arresting (non)citizenship'.

[69]Ben Bowling and Sophie Westenra, '"A really hostile environment": Adiaphorization, global policing and the crimmigration control system', *Theoretical Criminology*, 24:2 (2020), pp. 163–83.

[70]Monish Bhatia, 'Crimmigration, imprisonment and racist violence: Narratives of people seeking asylum in Great Britain', *Journal of Sociology*, 56:1 (2020), p. 38.

[71]Ibrahim (2020).

[72]Noronha, 'The figure of the "foreign criminal"', pp. 342–3.

[73]Refugee Council, 'The truth about Channel crossings: Briefing' (2023).

[74]Sam Lister, 'Rishi Sunak: It is "completely ridiculous" for illegal migrants to jump queue' (8 September 2024) available at: {https://www.express.co.uk/news/politics/1868905/Rishi-Sunak-It-s-completely-ridiculous-for-illegal-migrants-to-jump-the-queue}.

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Refugee Convention[75] forbidding states from penalising refugees for their method of entry. It also conveniently ignores the fact no routes exist for most displaced populations to claim asylum in the UK without first arriving on its territory by unauthorised means. This radically closes off access to asylum procedures while reinforcing the public's perception of Channel crossers as bogus asylum seekers. Second, it criminalises by association asylum seekers for their apparent complicity in their own supposed trafficking, for being both victim and customer upholding the business model of organised criminal gangs.[76] Finally, the UK government has specifically targeted people it identifies as boat drivers for criminal prosecution to deter others from making the crossing, despite them being asylum seekers themselves.[77]

These new policies clearly illustrate the crucial role of criminalisation in the monsterisation of irregular migrants in the UK. The moral panic around the intertwined folk devils of 'bogus asylum seekers' and 'foreign criminals' has facilitated the vast expansion of overlapping criminal and immigration policing throughout British society, preserving the rights of citizenship as a racialised (post)colonial privilege of the few.

Barbarisation

The final mechanism of border monsterisation we identify is barbarisation: the portrayal of unspecified 'hordes'[78] laying siege to Western civilisation, threatening to overrun its territorial boundaries and to destroy its political, cultural, economic, sexual, and racial characteristics. In the UK, invasion rhetoric abounds in discourses on migration, including in statements from the country's most senior politicians.[79] The supposedly inherently uncivilised and barbaric nature of migrants fundamentally casts their movements as an invasion, their arrival seen as unassimilable and threatening to overwhelm or eradicate existing ways of life. Previous immigration minister Robert Jenrick succinctly expressed this idea:

> 'Excessive uncontrolled migration threatens to cannibalise the compassion that marks out the British people … those crossing [the Channel] tend to have completely different lifestyles and values to those in the UK and tend to settle in already hyper-diverse areas undermining the cultural cohesiveness that binds diverse groups together and makes our proud multi-ethnic democracy so successful.'[80]

Not only does the reference to cannibalism harken back to the process of zombification, it also starkly evokes discourses of savagery used to justify European colonisation in Africa, Australia, and the Americas. This common trope was applied to the undifferentiated mass of non-European subjects within imperial cultural and political discourse which expressed the colonisers' 'fear of being engulfed by the unknown … projected onto colonized peoples as their determination to devour the intruder whole'.[81] This conception was forged from the violently sexualised, racialised, and gendered paranoia of imperial conquest in which it was feared that white civilization would be 'devoured' and destroyed by the 'savage other'.[82] In our (post)colonial present, these racist horror tropes have been stuck to the bodies of non-European migrants who are perceived as consuming European society and replacing European culture.

[75] Melanie Gower, 'Article 31 of the Refugee Convention' (House of Commons Library, 2021).

[76] HM Government, 'New plan for immigration: Policy statement', (2021).

[77] Diane Taylor, 'Ibrahima Bah was sentenced to nine years for steering a "death trap" dinghy across the Channel. Was he really to blame?', *The Guardian*, (2024).

[78] Noronha, 'The figure of the "foreign criminal"', p. 201.

[79] BBC, 'David Cameron'; Jill Lawless, 'UK minister under fire for calling migrants an "invasion"' (26 July 2023) available at: {https://www.independent.co.uk/news/suella-braverman-ap-robert-jenrick-rishi-sunak-charlie-taylor-b2215109.html}.

[80] Rajeev Syal, '"Values and lifestyles" of small boat refugees threaten social cohesion, says Jenrick', *The Guardian*, (2023).

[81] McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, p. 27.

[82] Brito, 'Between race and animality', p. 15.

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Two contemporary embodiments of the migrant-barbarian figure are the 'evil people smuggler' and the 'foreign rapist'. As we mentioned previously, the criminalisation of irregular migrants (especially asylum seekers) is justified by breaking the business model of people smugglers who are connected to but appear as a ruthless aberration of the foreign criminal. The uncivilised inhumanity of these 'organised criminal gangs' who manipulate and exploit vulnerable people is made clear in incessant references to 'evil people smugglers' whom the government blames for 'loss of life and huge costs to the UK taxpayer'.[83] Stripping those same 'vulnerable people' of their rights once in the UK, denying them access to modern slavery protections, or even planning to forcibly deport them to Rwanda are seen as justified interventions and ultimately humanitarian measures to 'deal a major blow to the people smugglers and their evil trade in human cargo'.[84]

Contemporary discourses about evil people smugglers directly reference traditional (post)colonial narratives of slavery and abolition, portraying smugglers as uncivilised foreign barbarians against whom the British state must act forcefully to protect European civilisation from practices supposedly at odds with liberal modernity. Today, modern slavery is framed as 'an unwanted import from lawless and "uncivilized" regions of the world'.[85] Within this discourse, irregularised migrants are upholding the business model of this so-called evil trade and so are thereby complicit in their own exploitation. By contrast, some British politicians – such as Theresa May, who amplified the UK's 'hostile environment' policies and promised to reduce net migration to the tens of thousands as Home Secretary while championing victims of modern slavery[86] – attempt to cast themselves as abolitionist heroes rescuing the most vulnerable. In doing so, they perpetuate a convenient liberal fairy tale which obscures the structural drivers of displacement and the role of Western border regimes in necessitating irregular migratory routes for many seeking to overcome global inequalities of insecurity and poverty.[87] Of course, this simplistic moralism cannot account for the complexities of the role people smugglers play in both facilitating and exploiting people unable to access legal migration routes, nor the ambiguities of agency and coercion in contemporary migration.[88]

The second pervasive figure of the border barbarian is the so-called foreign rapist evoked in many media and government justifications for the deportation of foreign national prisoners. Despite the majority of FNOs targeted for deportation having convictions relating to minor immigration or drugs offences, sensationalist accounts of sexual violence dominate public representations of FNOs as monsters who abuse the asylum system, human rights law, and family rights in order to evade justice.[89] These tropes powerfully incite moral panic by tapping into long-standing (post)colonial anxieties about the threatening hyper-sexuality of racialised men, revealing how central gender and sexuality remain in the construction of racialised subjects.[90] Indeed, as postcolonial and feminist scholars have long pointed out, 'the intimacies of "family" and the politics of "race" are inextricable'[91] and have played interlinked roles in the historic formation of state power, European colonial expansion, (post)colonial nation-building, and bordering. Under European imperialism, bourgeois ideals of family were a means of legitimising notions of white

[83] Priti Patel, 'UK and Rwanda migration and economic development partnership' (26 July 2023) available at: {https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/home-secretarys-speech-on-uk-and-rwanda-migration-and-economic-development-partnership}.

[84] Priti Patel, 'Global migration challenge', *Hansard, House of Commons* (19 April 2022).

[85] Julia O'Connell Davidson, *Modern Slavery* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan UK, 2015), p. 11.

[86] Ayushman Bhagat and Joel Quirk, 'Do we really need a Global Commission on Modern Slavery?' (9 September 2024) available at: {https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/beyond-trafficking-and-slavery/do-we-really-need-a-global-commission-on-modern-slavery-theresa-may-modern-slavery/}.

[87] Davidson, *Modern Slavery*, pp. 5, 12, 208.

[88] Davidson, *Modern Slavery*, p. 208.

[89] Noronha, 'The figure of the "foreign criminal"', pp. 348–51.

[90] Noronha, 'The figure of the "foreign criminal"', p. 349.

[91] V. Spike Peterson, 'Family matters in racial logics: Tracing intimacies, inequalities, and ideologies', *Review of International Studies*, 46:2 (2020), p. 178.

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supremacy and demarcating racialised difference, while the family itself became an important site for enforcing state authorisation of il/legitimate descent and inheritance according to sexualised and racialised notions of blood.[92] As such, sexuality and gender are sites where the racialised anxieties of the integrity of national borders repeatedly play out.

In the UK, the border is mobilised to defend against suspicious and monstrous intimacies deemed threatening to the heteronormative racialised national order.[93] Individual acts of sexual violence therefore appear to epitomise the barbaric threat posed by racialised so-called foreign criminals more generally while exposing the British state's inability to secure against them. The British state routinely rejects the genuineness of relations involving non-citizens based on Eurocentric conceptions of what a modern family looks like, identifying them as sham marriages and those engaged in them as nefarious criminals.[94] Overlapping with discourses around forced marriage and radicalisation, this policing of intimacy intersects with the racialised monsterisation of specifically Muslim populations portrayed as terrorists and members of Asian grooming gangs to be denied citizenship, detained, and deported.[95] Racialised societal anxieties over cultural and demographic changes resulting from immigration overlap with 'fantastical' portrayals of 'the figure of the Muslim' as 'the pre-eminent "monster" in our news media'[96] whose otherness is epitomised by a propensity towards sexualised violence 'motivated by a patriarchal, misogynistic culture and backward, barbaric religion'.[97] Thus extending the carceral reach of the border into increasingly intimate spheres of society is justified in the name of protecting the national family from the sexual barbarism of the monsterised foreign other.

In this section, we identified four mechanisms by which racialised border subjects are constructed as monstrous and subsequently policed through policy and rhetoric. Attending to the process of monsterisation, and not just monsters, shows bordering to be a 'practice of statecraft' and not simply a reaction to the presence of 'foreign others'.[98] Border monsters are a product of the modern (post)colonial nation-state system while at the same time their construction through processes of monsterisation is integral to maintaining its gendered, sexualised, and racialised hierarchies of humanity as well as segregated political geographies. In the next section, we shift our gaze away from the monsterised migrant to consider the state's 'own monstrosity in defending its borders'.[99] We argue that, in addition to monsterisation, the UK border also functions through embodying monstrosity itself in the form of a headless, tentacled Leviathan.

III: Border monstrosity

The UK's border security policy has long been governed by the logic of deterrence which aims to disincentivise unauthorised migration by making 'countries of destination and transit as unappealing as possible'.[100] Deterrence involves mobilising fear of danger or punishment to coerce people to change their behaviour. In the UK, this is achieved through strategies criminalising unauthorised routes of arrival, holding carriers legally liable, reducing avenues for asylum, installing security

[92]Peterson, 'Family matters in racial logics', p. 190.

[93]Turner, *Bordering Intimacy*, pp. 103, 134.

[94]Georgie Wemyss, Nira Yuval-Davis, and Kathryn Cassidy, '"Beauty and the beast": Everyday bordering and "sham marriage" discourse', *Political Geography*, 66 (2018), pp. 151–60.

[95]Turner, *Bordering Intimacy*, p. 137.

[96]Nadya Ali and Ben Whitham, 'The unbearable anxiety of being: Ideological fantasies of British Muslims beyond the politics of security', *Security Dialogue*, 49:5 (2018), p. 402.

[97]Ella Cockbain and Waqas Tufail, 'Failing victims, fuelling hate: Challenging the harms of the "Muslim grooming gangs" narrative', *Race & Class*, 61:3 (2020), p. 5.

[98]Roxanne Doty, *Anti-Immigrantism in Western Democracies: Statecraft, Desire and the Politics of Exclusion* (Abingdon, Oxon, New York, NY: Routledge, 2003).

[99]Liam Connell, 'Crossings, bodies, behaviours', in Emma Cox, Sam Durrant, David Farrier, Lyndsey Stonebridge, and Agnes Woolley (eds), *Refugee Imaginaries: Research across the Humanities* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2020), pp. 170–1.

[100]Ville Laakkonen, 'Deaths, disappearances, borders: Migrant disappearability as a technology of deterrence', *Political Geography*, 99 (2022), p. 5.

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infrastructure and barriers around transport hubs, and funding violent policing of the French coastline, as well as limiting access to the labour market, sociopolitical rights, welfare, and basic necessities for people without regularised immigration status. Since 2010, the expressed aim of UK border policy and immigration legislation has been to construct everyday life as a 'hostile environment' for irregularised migrants. Introducing requirements to prove citizenship or immigration status to access work, housing, healthcare, education, open a bank account, get married, obtain a driving licence, or access welfare, the hostile environment policy attempts to make life in the UK unliveable for irregularised migrants by 'targeting the very tools they need to conduct a life here'.[101] The hostile environment policies and laws created a 'culture of fear'[102] to dissuade people from coming to or remaining in the UK without regularised immigration status as well as to compel the compliance of ordinary citizens, employers, landlords, National Health Service (NHS) staff, teachers, and registrars, among others, with the new regulations, effectively deputising them in the enactment of immigration enforcement.[103] In doing so, these policies 'dramatically diffused the immigration system across the breadth of society'[104] and turned its attention away from the frontier towards those already inside the national territory and included within its structures.

The horror of these measures gained publicity in 2018 with the Windrush scandal. This saw predominantly older generations of British citizens who came to the UK from former Commonwealth countries in 1960s and 1970s, often as children, by virtue of changing regulations and new hostile environment policies, forced into nightmarish scenarios of destitution and homelessness, with some barred from life-saving NHS medical care, subjected to detention and deportation, and separated from their families and communities.[105] Personal testimonies demonstrated how pervasive border hostility had become and how social support and welfare systems were weaponised for border enforcement with clear racially discriminatory results, wreaking intimate harms on people's lives. Yet what was usually overlooked in coverage of the Windrush scandal, focused primarily on the application of hostile environment measures on racialised British citizens, was how normalised these harmful policies are when used against irregularised migrants. Indeed, in recent years, the deterrent border agenda against so-called illegal migrants has only expanded.

In Northern France, for decades since the British–French agreement to operate juxtaposed border controls on each other's territories, there has been a continuous policy of deterrence aimed at people trying to cross the Channel without authorisation, most seeking to claim asylum.[106] This policy similarly involves creating everyday life as a hostile environment for irregularised migrants through the segregation of public space; repeated police harassment; and denial of food, clothing, hygiene, and shelter to maintain conditions of destitution, homelessness,[107] and 'exhaustion'[108] in the belief this will dissuade people from remaining in Northern France or continuing their efforts to cross the border. Alongside increased border security infrastructure and police funded by the British government, recent years have seen more people killed as they resort to crossing the Channel by boat.[109] Fear of border violence and the threat of death are here mobilised as part of a deterrent agenda to pre-emptively dissuade people from seeking asylum in the UK, thereby externalising the reach of British border enforcement.

[101] UK Border Agency, 'Protecting our border, protecting the public: The UK Border Agency's five year strategy for enforcing our immigration rules and addressing immigration and cross border crime' (2010), p. 18.

[102] Anne McLaughlin MP, in Wendy Williams, *Windrush Lessons Learned Review* (House of Commons, 2020), p. 219.

[103] Melanie Griffiths and Colin Yeo, 'The UK's hostile environment: Deputising immigration control', *Critical Social Policy*, 41:4 (2021), pp. 521–44.

[104] Griffiths and Yeo, 'The UK's hostile environment', p. 523.

[105] Williams, *Windrush Lessons Learned Review.*

[106] Tyerman (2022).

[107] Van Isacker, 'Counter-mapping citizenship'.

[108] Marta Welander, 'The politics of exhaustion and the externalization of British border control: An articulation of a strategy designed to deter, control and exclude', *International Migration*, 59:3 (2021), pp. 29–46.

[109] Alarm Phone, 'The deadly consequences of the new deal to "stop the boats"' (9 August 2024) available at: {https://alarmphone.org/en/2024/01/28/the-deadly-consequences-of-the-new-deal-to-stop-the-boats/}.

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In 2021, the British government enacted the 'New Plan for Immigration' with deterrence a central pillar.[110] This plan included strategies, many never enacted, to mobilise fear in pursuit of the government's agenda to 'stop the boats', including pushbacks or floating barriers in the Channel; incarcerating asylum seekers on faraway islands; warehousing them in deliberately diminished conditions in container camps, barges, cruise ships, or ferries; arresting and prosecuting irregular migrants wholesale; deporting them to Rwanda or other 'third countries'; denying refugees and their families the chance to ever receive British nationality; and barring irregular migrants from protections against 'modern slavery'. This frenzy of policy proposals had a performative rationale,[111] their hostility signalling to potential migrants the futility of seeking asylum in the UK while signalling to domestic audiences the government's intention to get 'tough' and 'take back control' of the border.[112] At the same time, they entailed expanding the border's carceral infrastructure with new quasi-carceral[113] so-called reception, processing, and accommodation centres opened in former military bases and barracks. They also grew the for-profit detention estate across the UK and in Northern France where a planned new centre near Dunkerque is to be built, partially with British funds.[114] Combining deterrence with extended carceral infrastructures, we argue, monstrosity is mobilised as a strategy of (post)colonial bordering through which the UK border comes to embody a tentacled Leviathan.

The border Leviathan

Hobbes' *Leviathan* attempts to reconcile liberal arguments for legitimate political sovereignty with an authoritarian vision of state power through the genre of horror.[115] In Hobbes' 'horror story', an all-powerful sovereign 'garners consent to tame monsters and bring peace to society' by becoming 'a new monster: Leviathan' whose 'visible power combines terror and awe in its artificial person, thereby compelling people to follow the law'.[116] For Hobbes, the terror of the state binds people together in a singular, territorially limited, humanoid national body with the sovereign at its head to protect citizens from their own monstrous humanity. In contemporary UK bordering, the state mobilises monstrosity in its performative deterrence policies but also in how the horror of border violence is made flesh: viscerally enacted upon people's bodies through restraint belts,[117] handcuffs, and 'pain-inducing techniques' used in the detention estate and during deportation flights[118] or through everyday 'slow violences'[119] of malnutrition, depression, and shame to which people without status are subject.

Here the 'terror of the mundane and quotidian' effects of bordering are bound up with the horrors of the (post)colonial regimes of truth which make such violence 'socially necessary and socially

[110]HM Government, 'New plan for immigration'.

[111]Lucy Mayblin, Mustafa Wake, and Mohsen Kazemi, 'Necropolitics and the slow violence of the everyday: Asylum seeker welfare in the postcolonial present', *Sociology*, 54:1 (2020), pp. 107–23.

[112]Priti Patel, 'Home Secretary Priti Patel speech on immigration' (9 September 2024) available at: {https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/home-secretary-priti-patel-speech-on-immigration}.

[113]Sophie Cartwright, 'Quasi-detention: The expansion of dehumanising border spaces' (9 September 2024) available at: {https://blogs.law.ox.ac.uk/border-criminologies-blog/blog-post/2022/10/quasi-detention-expansion-dehumanising-border-spaces}.

[114]Calais Migrant Solidarity, 'The state launches its call for tenders to build a CRA in Dunkirk' (9 September 2024) available at: {https://calaismigrantsolidarity.wordpress.com/2023/10/21/letat-lance-son-appel-doffre-pour-construire-un-cra-a-dunkerque-the-state-launches-its-call-for-tenders-to-build-a-cra-in-dunkirk/}.

[115]Elisabeth Anker, 'The liberalism of horror', *Social Research: An International Quarterly*, 81:4 (2014), pp. 795–823.

[116]Anker, 'The liberalism of horror', pp. 799, 804–5.

[117]Mary Bosworth, 'Use of force: what is it like and what is at stake?' (9 September 2024) available at: {https://blogs.law.ox.ac.uk/border-criminologies-blog/blog-post/2024/05/use-force-what-it-and-what-stake}.

[118]Corporate Watch, '2022 UK charter deportations: A balance sheet' (26 July 2023) available at: {https://corporatewatch.org/2022-uk-charter-deportations-a-balance-sheet/}.

[119]Lucy Mayblin, Mustafa Wake, and Mohsen Kazemi, 'Necropolitics and the slow violence of the everyday: Asylum seeker welfare in the postcolonial present', *Sociology*, 54:1 (2020), pp. 107–23.

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tolerable'.[120] Many contemporary UK border proposals mirror practices of transportation, push-back, and extraterritorial detention implemented by former Anglo colonial states. These include Canada's 'turn back' of Indian subjects of the British Empire in 1914,[121] Australia's 'Operation Sovereign Borders' in the 2000s,[122] and the United States of America's long-standing policies of maritime interdiction in the Caribbean.[123] The recycling of racist carceral practices innovated by British settler/penal colonies against (post)colonial migrants to Britain shows how they boomerang across historical periods and geographical spaces, revealing the continuing 'coloniality of power'[124] shaping British citizenship and the 'enduring colonial fantasy'[125] borders are mobilised to uphold. Furthermore, the carceral reach of the UK's border extends into France, the EU, and beyond, for instance via bilateral prisoner transfer agreements with Albania and Nigeria,[126] as well as memorandums of understanding with Rwanda[127] and Albania[128] to 'fast-track' deportations of asylum seekers. In this way, the UK border is truly global, relying on (post)colonial cooperative arrangements with other states and opaque practices of 'shared coercion'[129] to prevent departures, criminalise arrivals, and effect removals in line with the objective to deter people's autonomous mobility.

However, unlike Hobbes' vision of a towering humanoid monster that rules through the terror of punishment, the UK border Leviathan is not an apparatus constructed over and above the population, but rather works by embedding its tentacles deep within everyday life of society. The body politic is not that of the sovereign figurehead imbued with authority by the consent of its subjects, but rather the seething mass of the population within which the border interjects itself to govern the conditions of liveability through their interrelations and circulation.[130] This 'biopolitical border'[131] manifests as a different kind of monstrosity, one in which the institutions, spaces, social relations, and communities that make a liveable life possible are twisted into tools of border enforcement aiming to make life unliveable for an entire section of the population. This border Leviathan is more like a writhing octopus, its movements 'at once multidirectional and slippery',[132] its form constantly shifting and changing, spreading its tentacles out like John Bull in the famous

[120]Saidiya Hartman, *Scenes of Subjection: Terror, Slavery, and Self-Making in Nineteenth-Century America* (New York: WW Norton & Company, 2022), pp. 2; 8.

[121]Sharma, *National Sovereignty and the Separation of Natives and Migrants*, pp. 76–7.

[122]Adrian Little and Nick Vaughan-Williams, 'Stopping boats, saving lives, securing subjects: Humanitarian borders in Europe and Australia', *European Journal of International Relations*, 23:3 (2017), pp. 533–56.

[123]Katherine H. Tennis, 'Offshoring the border: The 1981 United States–Haiti agreement and the origins of extraterritorial maritime interdiction', *Journal of Refugee Studies*, 34:1 (2021), pp. 173–203.

[124]Quijano, 'Coloniality of Power and Eurocentrism in Latin America'.

[125]Davies et al., 'Channel crossings'.

[126]Adelani Adepegba, 'Nigeria–UK prison exchange fails to take off eight years after MoU' (31 October 2022) available at: {https://punchng.com/nigeria-uk-prison-exchange-fails-to-take-off-eight-years-after-mou/}; Ministry of Justice, 'Press release: Government strikes deal to remove more Albanian prisoners' (19 April 2022) available at: {https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-strikes-deal-to-remove-more-albanian-prisoners}; 'UK and Albania agree groundbreaking new arrangement on prisoner transfers'(23 July 2023) available at: {https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-albania-agree-groundbreaking-new-arrangement-on-prisoner-transfers}.

[127]Home Office, 'Memorandum of understanding between the UK and Rwanda' (26 July 2023) available at: {https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/memorandum-of-understanding-mou-between-the-uk-and-rwanda}. *Although a key Conservative policy between 2022 and 2024, the Labour government immediately abandoned the policy of removing asylum seekers to Rwanda when taking power in July 2024 before anyone was forcefully removed there.

[128]Home Office, 'UK and Albania pledge rapid removal of those entering the UK illegally' (31 October 2022) available at: {https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-and-albania-pledge-rapid-removal-of-those-entering-the-uk-illegally}.

[129]David Scott Fitzgerald, 'Remote control of migration: Theorising territoriality, shared coercion, and deterrence', *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 46:1 (2020), pp. 4–22.

[130]Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–76* (New York: Picador, 2003).

[131]Claudio Minca et al., 'Rethinking the biopolitical: Borders, refugees, mobilities…', *Environment and Planning C: Politics and Space*, 40:1 (2022), pp. 3–30.

[132]Sarah Fine, 'Monsters, Inc.: The fight back', in *The Shifting Border: Legal Cartographies of Migration and Mobility. Ayelet Shachar in Dialogue* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2020), p. 11.

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1882 *Punch* cartoon characterising British imperialism, but also inwards into everyday intimate spaces and interactions.

The UK border Leviathan's tentacles slither into the backs of police vans and custody suites, court rooms and prison cells, immigration removal centres and short-term holding facilities, on the decks of Border Force boats in the Channel and in the so-called reception centres in Dover port and Manston, the cabins of deportation planes, and the asylum seeker hotels and dispersal accommodations, as well as the diverse carceral spaces of other countries' border and prison regimes. They extend into our cities and homes in the ever-expanding hostile environment of hyper-surveillance for migrants,[133] into registry offices where relationships are scrutinised, or human resources checking someone's right to work share code, university seminar attendance monitoring, or at a hospital reception where health surcharge assessments are made. The border Leviathan's tentacles pursue people relentlessly but also lie in wait, slithering out of mundane bureaucratic procedures or hiding around street corners in the form of a random police encounter. All are independent yet interconnected, in their own ways latching on to, processing, and releasing the people they touch, but working in concert to secure the border monster's hold over our lives.

This becoming monstrous of the everyday is central to the UK's hostile environment agenda of deterrence, the 'dismantling' of 'infrastructures of liveability' for irregularised subjects contributing to a wider strategy of governing migration 'through mobility' as much as containment and expulsion.[134] Here, the quotidian and mundane become key sites for the diffused enactment of border harms and the restructuring of social life according to racially discriminatory hierarchies of belonging.[135] Ordinary people in everyday situations find themselves tangled up in these appendages of border enforcement, their routine practices taking on new significance and effect animating the Leviathan. The pervasive complicity of regular citizens in the irregularisation and policing of their neighbours in society at once renders the operations of the border monster seemingly inescapable but also opaque.[136] The power of hostile environment policies does not derive from some central all-seeing sovereign but rather manifests in the messy disjointed and discriminatory ways they are enacted by the landlord refusing to rent to non-British tenants to avoid the hassle of bureaucracy, teachers and registrars reporting students or couples to the Home Office fearing penalties for non-compliance, a speculative traffic stop. Each encounter can act as the tip of a tentacle operating independently of centralised command like those of an octopus, which then pass people on to others, on and on again in a disorienting tumult of bureaucratic dead ends, legal limbos, and locked gates. It is hard to see where the tentacles begin or end, where the source of a decision lies, or to whom an appeal can be made.

The border Leviathan is not only tentacled but also 'headless' and in itself nothing more than 'a monstrous cadaver' which finds life only through everyday borderings undertaken by a myriad of citizens and institutions, 'the entire carcass … brought to artificial life by the motions of the human beings trapped inside'.[137] We are all caught within the body of the border Leviathan and are complicit in the policing of the racialised boundaries of British citizenship. Whether individually we support or oppose the monsterisation and policing of migrant subjects, those of us with citizenship or secure status in the UK are constantly required to police the border in our everyday lives, our work, even our intimate family relations by performing our belonging in the correct ways and by scrutinising the belonging of others.

Our depiction of the UK border as a tentacled, headless Leviathan provides useful insights into how the embodiment of monstrosity and mobilisation of horror, as well as the monsterisation

[133]Migrants' Rights Network, 'The digital hostile environment' (9 September 2024) available at: {https://migrantsrights.org.uk/projects/hostile-office/the-digital-hostile-environment/}.

[134]Tazzioli, *Border Abolitionism*, p. 10.

[135]Wemyss, Yuval-Davis, and Cassidy, '"Beauty and the beast"'.

[136]Tyerman (2022), p. 75.

[137]Fredy Perlman, *Against His-story, Against Leviathan!* (Detroit, MI: Black and Red, 1983), p. 27.

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of non-citizen subjects, is a central strategy of state power today; how racialised bordering practices, logics, violence, and carceral spaces are increasingly diffused throughout everyday life and abroad; and how ordinary citizens become complicit as nodes in the opaque network of border enforcement. This, in turn, has political implications for how we might respond to and challenge border violence and harm, in particular highlighting the limitations of humanitarian modes of opposition.

Humanising the border Leviathan?

The UK's monstrous border policies are often ascribed by their critics to specific politicians (especially recent Home Secretaries) who are portrayed as their demonic creators. In this way, the cruelty of the UK's deterrent border policies is personalised and equated, for example, with 'the utter monstrosity of a Priti Patel' herself.[138] This routine attribution of monstrosity to a woman of colour in a position of power reflects the long-standing demonisation of female agency in (post)colonial patriarchal societies.[139] However, perhaps the performative relish with which Patel embraced and sought to enhance the monstrosity of the UK border could also be understood as a calculated response to members of her xenophobic nationalist audience suspicious of her family history of migration and her status as a racialised woman in power in Britain. It is therefore noteworthy that her successor, Suella Braverman, also a woman of colour from Indian immigrant parents, continued Patel's trend of enthusiastically proposing gratuitous punishments aimed at 'stopping the invasion on our southern coast' and referring to planned Rwanda deportations as her personal 'dream' and 'obsession'.[140]

Focusing on individual politicians' supposed monstrosity is, however, limiting. While the Priti Patels of the world certainly hold responsibility for the violent dehumanising border policies they introduce, it is a mistake to see these as entirely the creation of cynical Conservatives or anti-immigrant Brexit ideologues. Many recent anti-migrant policy ideas, including the automatic deportation of new arrivals prior to considering their asylum claims, have been circulating around the Home Office for decades.[141] Indeed, the 'hostile environment' agenda is frequently attributed to Theresa May as the prime architect when in fact it originated within the Home Office under the previous Labour administration. The discourse of demonic politicians individually accountable for monstrous border policies reproduces the familiar Hobbesian myth of Leviathan as the body politic with a sovereign head, misattributing where power lies and how bordering operates in diffused and everyday contexts according to its own logics.

As critical security scholars have shown, evolutions in disciplinary technologies have themselves shaped perceptions of insecurity, threat, and necessary police interventions for border security bureaucrats.[142] Alongside this, there has been an expansion of transnational interconnected 'bureaucracies of control' which increasingly govern migration in ways that create a 'new distribution of power' that cannot be understood using a traditional conception of sovereignty as embodied in the territorially bounded state.[143] This does not mean state power is waning. Rather, this deterritorialisation of border policing within and beyond national frontiers constitutes an extension of governmental power and networks of control over populations. However, it does mean

[138]Christina Sharpe and Alexis Pauline Gumbs, 'On water, salt, whales, and the black Atlantics' (12 June 2022) available at: {https://thefunambulist.net/magazine/the-ocean/on-water-salt-whales-and-the-black-atlantics}.

[139]Corey Melancon, 'American Medusa: the perpetuation of a patriarchal society', (2021), PhD Thesis, Rutgers University.

[140]Nadine El-Enany, 'Sunak has learnt nothing from asylum seeker's death' (9 September 2024) available at: {https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/manston-immigration-centre-death-asylum-seekers/}.

[141]Patel, 'Global migration challenge'.

[142]Didier Bigo, 'Criminalisation of "migrants": The side effect of the will to control the frontiers and the sovereign illusion', in Barbara Bogusz, Ryszard Cholewinski, Adam Cygan, and Erika Szyszczak (eds), *Irregular Migration and Human Rights: Theoretical, European and International Perspectives* (Brill Nijhoff, 2004), p. 65.

[143]Bigo, 'Criminalisation of "migrants"', p. 69.

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that politicians' sovereign claims to harness the border monster for their own ends are an illusory performance of power. Therefore, it is not sufficient to simply remove and replace demonic politicians. Instead, we must confront how the spirit of (post)colonial racism continues to animate modern society, and how tentacles of global/everyday bordering bind us into complicity with ongoing monstrosities of border violence.

Relatedly, critics of current UK border policies argue for reforms that would seek to 'humanise' them by introducing humanitarian initiatives for displaced people, humanitarian critiques of border violence, and reformist approaches to especially monstrous border policies to bring them in line with international human rights law or popular notions of Britain's progressive ideals. One example is the call for more safe and legal routes to oppose accelerating trends of border securitisation along with the deaths, injuries, and suffering it creates. The stance of many liberal charities, this approach argues for the expansion of resettlement schemes and the creation of humanitarian visas as a new pathway for accessing asylum in the UK. As the humanitarian charity Help Refugees put it, 'safe and legal routes' provide 'an alternative … better, kinder and more human response' to the 'hostile legislation' of the UK government.[144]

In this formulation, the monsterisation of migrants is countered with their humanisation as victims, and the monster of border security is contrasted with the vision of the state as paternalistic protector. This strategy doesn't seek to fight the monster but to humanise it by replacing monstrous policies with kinder, more human ones in the hope the beastly state can be harnessed for benevolent purposes. Nor does it fundamentally challenge the logics of dehumanisation by which racialised and criminalised subjects are depicted as monsters in need of policing. Rather, the state and border remain central to monsterising and policing some populations, like the supposed ruthless criminal trafficking gangs, in the name of saving others. Indeed, the UK government consistently argues its harsh deterrent border policies are necessary to enable a humanitarian response to those in genuine need of protection, and that border policies must be 'fair but firm'.[145] Humanitarian strategies to humanise the monster end up reinforcing the border, legitimising the state's authority to enforce it, and becoming complicit in its policing of racialised and criminalised populations.[146] As shown by the conviction of asylum seeker Ibrahima Bah[147] for manslaughter and facilitating illegal entry after the boat he was driving capsized and four people drowned,[148] recent UK legislation precisely seeks to redefine humanitarian victims as monsterised criminals, revealing the line between the two to be an arbitrary result of state decision-making.

Furthermore, calls for more humanitarian management of refugee movements extend the tentacled reach of the border Leviathan while legitimising its power to define, divide, detain, and deport people identified as undeserving of humanitarian protection. As we have shown previously, the hostile environment is constructed through transforming humanitarian systems of asylum, welfare provision, and human relations of love and community into the very tools of deterrence, becoming tentacles of the border Leviathan in whose operation many of us become complicit. This points us to the limits of a humanitarian political response to the monstrosity of (post)colonial borders because the liberal understanding of humanity on which it is premised remains framed within the parameters of the national citizen subject that itself is a product of (post)colonial b/ordering. Liberal humanitarianism and border monstrosity are as intertwined and inextricable as monsters are with the humans who create them. As Vaughan-Williams[149] reminds us, 'abstract notions of "the human" always already rely on those excluded from that frame' and therefore strategies of re-humanisation repeatedly risk reproducing the logic of monsterisation that enables (indeed

[144]Tyerman et al., 'Criminalisation and humanitarian border policing in the Channel'.

[145]HM Government, 'New plan for immigration', p. 41.

[146]Tyerman et al. (2022).

[147]Internal communications released in response to Freedom of Information Request FOI2024/02562 by Isaac Abraham show the Home Office deliberately removed the fact Bah is seeking asylum from its social media publicity following his sentencing, showing how discursive and legislative criminalisation work in tandem.

[148]Taylor, 'Ibrahima Bah was sentenced to nine years for steering a "death trap" dinghy across the Channel'.

[149]Vaughan-Williams, '"We are not animals!"', pp. 8–9.

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requires) border violence. To challenge the border Leviathan, therefore, we must first confront the horror of our own monstrosity, scrutinising ourselves, our subjectivities, our societies, to find here too 'there be monsters'.

Conclusion: Embracing monstrosity and border abolition

This article has traced the 'monster politics' of the UK border. First, we described the centrality of monsterisation to the creation of the racialised, gendered, and sexualised (post)colonial world order before examining specific mechanisms of migrants' monsterisation enacted through UK bordering policies: animalisation, zombification, criminalisation, and barbarisation. We then showed how monstrosity itself is mobilised as a strategy of bordering through policies of deterrence and the creation of hostile environments in society for irregularised migrants. Recent UK border policies involve performances of horror and the expansion of carceral networks domestically and internationally, embodying a state power that is diffused and embedded in everyday life, turning the institutions, spaces, and ordinary relations between subjects into border encounters. Rather than the traditional Hobbesian understanding of the state as a humanoid Leviathan monster with a sovereign head, we instead characterised the UK border as a headless, tentacled Leviathan. Doing so centres important insights into the pervasiveness of bordering in the everyday and the mundane complicity of ordinary citizens in enacting the racial politics of the British state and its global and domestic reach, as well as the limits of humanitarian opposition to border monstrosity and monsterisation. By way of conclusion, we propose that analysing UK b/ordering through monstrosity contributes to growing border abolitionist thinking in international politics. While a full elaboration is beyond the scope of this article, we tentatively suggest embracing monstrosity to be a necessary part of a praxis of border abolition.

Recent years have seen emerging articulations of an analytics and practice of border abolitionism among scholars and activists drawing inspiration from prison abolitionists.[150] They argue that, alongside unjust systems of criminal policing and incarceration, the laws, institutions, and enforcement of immigration control and national citizenship also need to be abolished. In other words, debordering and decarceration are both necessary to build a more just and equitable society for all. Importantly, abolitionist praxis has two mutually reinforcing dimensions, 'not just tearing down, but building anew'.[151] On one hand, abolitionists deconstruct and 'demythologize' 'the material and political conditions' according to which borders appear 'natural' and 'necessary' features of society,[152] revealing them instead to products of imperialism, racism, and violence. In the process, border abolitionists identify practical steps to dismantle border infrastructures, to bring about 'changes in the here-and-now that can reduce the power and permanence of borders'.[153] On the other hand, they construct radical alternative visions for society, 'dreams of a borderless future'[154] which can guide us in 'creatively exploring new terrains of justice'[155] and envisioning the 'radical remaking of social relations, socio-economic systems, and political structures'.[156] Our analysis of border monstrosity contributes to this abolitionist project in several ways.

Foregrounding how horror is inherent in strategies of deterrence and the construction of hostile environments, our analysis of monstrosity denaturalises borders by revealing the racialised violence required to continuously produce them as political realities. It also uncovers how monsterisation of non-citizen subjects as threats to society is a conjuring trick which obscures, justifies, and necessitates the border Leviathan's own monstrosity. And, by showing how humanitarianism entrenches the logics and extends the reach of the border Leviathan, the frame of monstrosity

[150] Riva et al., *Border Abolition Now*.
[151] Riva et al., *Border Abolition Now*, p. 1.
[152] Riva et al., *Border Abolition Now*, p. 3; Tazzioli, *Border Abolitionism*, p. 4.
[153] Bradley and Noronha, *Against Borders*, pp. 15–16.
[154] Bradley and Noronha, *Against Borders.*
[155] Angela Y. Davis, *Are Prisons Obsolete?* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2003), p. 16.
[156] Riva et al., *Border Abolition Now*, p. 1.

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makes the case for an abolitionist politics beyond the humanity/hostility binary that dominates public debate and academic discourse on borders and migration. Such an abolitionist politics, we suggest, should be one that *embraces monstrosity* as both a tactic of resistance and a method for articulating new political imaginaries and building alliances beyond a bordered world.

Embracing monstrosity firstly requires recognising our role in perpetuating the harms of bordering. We must confront how many of us committed to border abolition are nevertheless mired in intersecting systems of racialised, gendered, and sexualised privilege and inequality, not least by virtue of our citizenship status. Border abolition requires us to acknowledge how many of us continue benefiting from and reproducing the ongoing conditions of border monstrosity even as we struggle against them. Here too we must interrogate the ways in which our complicity in the mundane everyday operations of bordering is central to how deterrence through the monstrous creation of hostile environments works. This need not lead us to see borders as inevitable and inescapable. Rather, it offers a vantage point from which to identify opportunities to disrupt, resist, and roll back the border regime, for example, through acts of refusal or non-compliance with state policies which co-opt us into its border surveillance and enforcement apparatus. By locating the border Leviathan's tentacles in our everyday lives, we can begin to identify here and now concrete steps towards a broader horizon of border abolition.

Secondly, embracing monstrosity creates space for the imaginative work and coalition building required to bring about the radical change to social, economic, and political systems border abolition entails. Monstrosity belongs to the genres of horror and speculative fiction which have long inspired emancipatory reimaginings of political ways of being and living beyond the constraints of white, Western, state-centric, and juridical configurations of 'Man' and the 'Citizen'.[157] Centring monsters offers unique insights for abolitionists to consider because they embody 'a desire and world-upending claim that is not currently recognized in the social orders that gave rise to them'.[158] Without fetishising the radical political potential of marginalised subjects, paying attention to dynamics of monsterisation and monstrosity reveals the limits of our current social political orders. Here too we often find experiments in living otherwise and attempts at building alternative social relations beyond the (post)colonial nation state.

As Weinstock reminds us, '[t]he monster threatens, but also promises liberation – a liberation that itself can seem threatening'.[159] Embracing monstrosity, we suggest, is necessary for creating abolitionist visions of the future and developing the coalitions and alliances to get us there. It entails accepting the radical alterity of a world without borders and owning the threat it poses to end the modern world as it is currently b/ordered. It means embracing the power of horror and being honest that abolishing racist hierarchies of global border apartheid requires making the darkest anxieties of the governing status quo a reality: ending white supremacy, losing control of our borders, and accepting the ungovernability of people's freedom of movement. These supposed nightmares may turn out to be less monstrous than continuing to stave them off while at the same time offering valuable opportunities to build solidarity across borders' divisions by becoming monstrous together.

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[157] Weheliye, *Habeas Viscus*, pp. 125, 136–7.
[158] Jackson, *Becoming Human*, p. 36.
[159] Weinstock, 'Introduction', p. 20.

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