The Nomadic Ethics

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War, conflict, failed states, prolonged economic violence related to extractive economies and environmental damage, constitute the post cum neo colonial condition of our times. Certain regions and nations entitle themselves to visions of perpetual peace and prosperity, at the expense of other regions and nations forced to endure the political, economic and ecological consequences of this entitlement. It follows, that many forms of mobility are forced, in the sense that they are propelled by inequality and the various economic, political, geopolitical and ecological materialisations of asymmetrical relations of power (cf. Sassen 2014; Reuveny and Allen 2007; Reuveny 2008). Stressing the forced aspect of mobility serves to question the validity of policy narratives that defend a strict differentiation between 'refugees' who deserve international protection, and 'migrants' who are regarded as deportable, or become cheap and precarious labour force (cf. Walters 2002; Anderson 2012).

The category of the deportable, economic migrant, who is criminalised and always suspected as trying to pass as an asylum seeker, is born directly out of the 'gospel of laissez-faire' (cf. Comaroff & Comaroff 2001: 13). It is supported by a narrow and prejudiced definition of violence that disregards all forms of persecution that are not physical. In this liberal framework, the only thing perceived to be standing between a person and the attainment of her life goals is a direct threat to her physical existence. The belief that anyone, anywhere, no matter how punishing their circumstances are, can have a fulfilling lifei (if they try hard enough and so long as they are not killed by a bomb or an angry mob), is of course the other side of the belief that the poor and the destitute somehow deserve their circumstances. The increasing restrictions placed on the mobility of certain people, but not on the mobility of capital or of the high-end professional-managerial class are constituent factors of the modern condition of neoliberal capitalism (cf. Comaroff & Comaroff 2001; Green 2013; Kirtsoglou & Tsimouris 2016). Deportation and Prevention Through Deterrence (Radziwinowiczówna this volume, and Stewart et.al., this volume), are therefore not only technologies of citizenship and manifestations of state power (Agamben 1998, De Genova 2010). They are also structures of the 'thickening hegemony' of millennial capitalism (Comaroff & Comaroff 2001), which is at once global in its aspirations and sphere of influence, and local in its implementation that occurs at the level of the nation-state and its institutions (cf. Sassen 2005).

Liberal policy narratives that refuse to acknowledge the forced aspect of mobility and its relation to economic violence are of course not new at all and certainly not confined to inter-national migration movements. During a Tory conference in Blackpool in 1981, Norman Tebbit (Margaret Thatcher's Secretary of the State of Employment), famously responded to the Brixton riots: "I grew up in the thirties with an unemployed father. He didn't riot. He got on his bike and looked for work and he kept looking for it till he found it".

When we close the focus on the relation between liberal/neoliberal ideologies and work-related mobility, it becomes evident that the movement of workers is both praised as the attitude of the white 'self-made' individual and, at once, chastised as the racialised Other's capricious (and therefore criminal and punishable) violation of the territoriality of the nation-state (cf. Kirtsoglou and Tsimouris 2018). The paradoxical representations of mobility as simultaneously desirable and transgressive are far from accidental. They serve to support global economic, political, racial and gender asymmetries. In this sense, the forced aspect of migration is not at all antithetical to its character as a social movement. Migration is indeed a movement that "enacts the conscious decision of millions of primarily poor people, mostly of the global South, to take their future into their hands – or better onto their feet" (Hamilakis, this volume). It is both 'forced' (in the sense that the root causes of migration are to be found in the "global allocation of roles determined by the world elites") and an action of agency on behalf of those who "refuse simply to become cheap and dispensable labour in the sweatshops of developing countries" (Hamilakis, this volume).

Migration is also a complex transfer point for relations between global politico-economic forces and the nation-state as the local terrain where those forces operate, and materialise. The state, and supra-state entities like the EU, exhibit both fixing and unfixing qualities. A good number of nation-states today emerged out of large-scale, systematic displacements of populations (see Riggs and Jat this volume; Hirschon 2003). Yet, once established, states draw their power from the construction of sedentary subjects (cf. Kirtsoglou and Tsimouris 2018; Malkki 1992). Sedentarisation obviously transforms people into populations (cf. Foucault 1980), into measurable, governable subjects and a stable workforce. The distinction between the civilised, sedentary citizen and the primitive nomad became an important one in colonial scholarship and it was tightly connected to the construction of racialised geographies that produced political, historical and (pseudo)scientific representations of the pre-modern subject, providing ample justification for colonial 'civilising' missions (cf. Silverstein 2005: 369). The view

that migration was another form of nomadism (ibid: 370) served to construct a specific, racialised representation of migrants, but also of non-sedentary populations like the Jews or the Roma (Malkki 1992). The 'fixing' role of the state in colonial times goes beyond issues of the homogeneity of the imagined community (Anderson 1983). It is directly related to the establishment and reification of racialised geographies of inequality; it is a technology for the production of the Orient and the Occident.

The notion of 'labour migration' –connecting, that is, mobility with the economic order– was developed by international bodies such as the UN, the World Bank, the International Labor Organisation and the Organisation of Economic Cooperation and Development (OECSD) (Silverstein 2005: 370-371). An entire discursive regime, connected to international economic agents and stakeholders, transformed the nomad into a labourer, and rendered her a racialised, gendered, uprooted victim of the manner in which non-Westernised countries supposedly lagged in modernisation (ibid; Kirtsoglou

& Tsimouris 2016). The economic migrant, envisaged as being motivated solely from the material resources of the affluent (capitalist) West, is left to become prey to the 'unfixing' powers of the state. The unfixing state deports, excludes, severs ties, creates transational and transcontinental families; its job is to unmake lives. Much in the same manner that the fixing state produces racialised geographies, the unfixing state creates geographies of risk, equally aimed at safeguarding the global status-quo.

Refugees, asylum-seekers, migrants, forcibly displaced, unemployed, victims of all kinds of violence, racialised and excluded subjects (to name only some of the positions the subaltern occupies) share something in common: they can potentially become agents of disorder by refusing to remain fixed in their preconceived position and by exhibiting immense durability to the 'unfixing' of their lives. When studying subaltern expressions of political, economic and existential disobedience we definitely need to focus on the effects of governmentality: what Hamilakis (this volume) calls the "heterogenous assemblage of material and immaterial entities which coheres to enact legality and illegality". We also need to place our emphasis on the ontological vulnerability of the subaltern as this is accentuated by 'controlled situations of abandonment' (Deleuze 2007: 236; Davies and Isakjee 2015; Muehlebach 2016). 'Controlled abandonment', as a governmental ethos, becomes evident in the manner in which the state outsources its main responsibilities towards categories of citizens and

'non-citizens' to the third sector, while at the same time continues to exercise a tight biopolitical control over them. Across different frameworks that range from hot-spots and camps to austerity-induced poverty, modern states contract in favour of the humanitarian sector while simultaneously bureaucracies protract and become exercised in an ever more marked fashion through persons and things (cf. Foucault 1978; 101; Cabot 2012; Fassin 2011; Hull 2012; Gupta 2012).

The much needed emphasis on power, vulnerability, pain, violence and mourning, remains nevertheless incomplete without the careful exploration of those "unstable conditions that open up new fields of the possible" (Deleuze 2007: 233). The theorisation of the Nomadic Age needs to take into consideration Nomadic Ethics (cf. Braidotti 2012): those "forces of immanence, relationality, duration and transmutation" (ibid: 172) that allow the disobedient Other to carve new avenues of resistance and novel forms of the political.

My call for emphasis on the Nomadic Ethics of the Nomadic Age complements Hamilakis's (this volume) vision of the archaeology of migration. Nomadic Ethics refer to the embodied subject, regarding affectivity as a driving force of change and thus depend on the emphasis on the sensorial/material and affective aspects of journeys (cf. Braidotti 2012: 175-179). The epistemic and counter-archival roles of archaeology are also vital in establishing a nomadic ethical analytical stance that will give prominence to the 'micro-politics of resistance' and the 'webs of emancipatory practices' (ibid: 196). Alongside the assemblage of forces that focus on 'unfixing' the lives of the subaltern, I propose that we also concentrate on the assemblage of affirmative forces that compel

the subject and showcase her 'ontological drive to become' (Braidotti 2012: 175-177), to 'fix' social relations, to heal, to transform and to create novel political figurations and new possibilities of belonging.

In 2015 – 2016 approximately one million asylum seekers crossed from Turkey to Greece in the hope of continuing their journeys towards Germany, France, Sweden and other Northern European Countries. The majority of them managed to reach their destinations. Many –too many– lost their lives in the process. As a result of the EU-Turkey deal, some are stuck in Greece, and over two million remain in Turkey, unable to leave, should they want to. As part of an ESRC/DFID funded project, called Transitory Lives I conducted fieldwork in Lesvos, Athens and Piraeus during the critical months between September 2015 and December 2016. Immediately following the implementation of the EU-Turkey deal, some seven

thousand refugees were transported from the Aegean islands to the port of Piraeus, the biggest port in Greece and a space historically associated with trauma and displacement.

The Piraeus port is an historical, spatiotemporal hot-spot of what Kourelis (this volume) calls 'the long durée of forced migrations in Greece'. In 1922, following Greece's defeat in the Greco-Turkish war of 1919, nearly one million refugees arrived in Piraeus from Asia Minor. The end of the war was sealed by the Treaty of Lausanne that commanded the exchange of populations between Greece and Turkey in favour of respective ethnic homogenisation (cf. Hirschon 2003), much in the same way as it happened during the India-Pakistan partition, although of course at a significantly smaller scale (see Riggs & Jat this volume). The 1920s refugees were Greek-speaking and Christian Orthodox. In every way it mattered, they were 'Greek' and yet, the conditions of their reception by the Greek state were similarly punishing to those of the 2015-16 refugees. The 1920s refugees were also forced to occupy abandoned sites near Piraeus, or to disperse around Greece, frequently in the very same areas that contemporary refugee camps are being established (cf. Kourelis this volume).

Many descendants of the Asia Minor refugees were affectively mobilised by the circumstances of the 2015-16 displaced, identified with them and exhibited various non-hierarchical forms of solidarity. George and Stasa were a couple who lived in Drapetsona, near the make-shift camp at the Piraeus port. Both of refugee descent, every other day, and all weekends they came to the port and took one large family (sometimes two small ones) back to their house. The families had a chance to have a proper bath, to wash their clothes and to eat around the table with George and Stasa. Importantly, many of them, and as far as the language barrier permitted, had the opportunity to learn from George and Stasa about the 1920s stories that slowly began to spread around the camp. More and more refugees started contextualising themselves in the material and historical (archaeological) dimensions of the port. "Do you mean that all those houses and blocks of flats I can see from here were once refugee shanties?", Mustafa asked me pointing to the surroundings with his finger. "Yes", I replied to him and after popular demand, I found a few videos and visual material of the 1920s' refugees in Piraeus. Nur

shook her head. "Piraeus has always been a place for refugees" she exclaimed. We looked at more pictures I found over the internet, some of them contemporary, of old, 1920s refugee houses that still stood in certain parts of the city as 'material

traces and remnants of interrupted lives' (cf. this volume: Hamilakis, Riggs & Jat, Pistrick & Bachmeier). "Look", Ahmed said, "but they made it. This is where they started from, just like us, and look at them now. They made it. Didn't they?"

Ahmed's question, directed to me, felt a bit like the rope of a life-ring. I spared him the ugly details: the manner in which the 1920s refugees were discriminated, placed right next to the newly forming industrialised zones and transformed into cheap labour for the 1920's factory owners. I did not tell him the long story of the 'engines of Greek economic development' (as Greek school history books often call them in an objectifying manner), and I did not tell him about their persecution and criminalisation they suffered as leftists, trade-unionists and political dissidents in later years. I cut the long story short, placed half a century into a mental parenthesis, and opted for affirmation. "Yes, they made it", I replied. "Most of them made it just fine". Ahmed downloaded some of the old photos into his mobile. He also took some photos of the tall blocks of flats and placed them in the same folder. "I will keep this", he said. "Every time I feel discouraged I will turn into those photos to remind me of things that can be actually done".

Through a serendipitous meeting with George and Stasa, Ahmed (and other refugees in the makeshift camp) became active part of an archaeological project of building webs of affirmative practices. Through sensorial engagement with the material surroundings, and through building important –however fleeting– affective ties of solidarity, they became witnesses and protagonists of a multi-local, multi-temporal, multi-ethnic, history of endurance. The discursive and narrative traces of 'unfixing', 'interrupting', destroying and desocialising lives were thus transformed into a counter-archive of resilience that offered opportunities for self-affirmation. Piraeus has always been a port of refugees –as Nur pointed out– but refugees somehow managed to overcome the assemblage of life-destructive forces. The descendants of some of them were embodied 'memory boxes' (cf. Pistrick & Bachmeier this volume) and living proofs of the possible, the feasible, the attainable. Refugeeness, often became in Piraeus a timeless space and a status of bonding; an alternative, multi-local, multi-religious, multi-ethnic homeland; a micro-vision of new political possibilities.

We are fighters. We need to fight for ourselves. Don't sit here and wait for others to do something little for you…. Jamal is giving a speech in the middle of the makeshift camp. He is prompting fellow refugees to resist the conditions that construct them as passive victims and recipients of humanitarian care. Many listen to him carefully. Others nod affirmatively. This is almost a daily discussion.

Sometimes it is more heated, sometimes statements are phrased in an 'as-a-matter-of-fact' way. It always starts at lunch time, when everyone has to queue to have their papers stamped in order to get their ration of food. The food is usually the same: potatoes, rice or pasta. Now and then there is meat, but meat gets usually thrown away out of fear it might be pork, or pork-contaminated.

"See? Queuing, just as if we were animals waiting to be fed", Razan exclaims and continues:

"Are we here in order to be fed? Of course not! But this is what they do. They make you queue for food in order to forget the real aim of the journey. Queuing three times a day gives everyone something to do and keeps them from thinking too much. And then, there is of course the money. Each stamp is money. This is how the catering company gets paid. I've heard somewhere that the catering company gets 10 Euros per refugee a day. Why don't they give me 10 Euros a day? I would eat like a king with 10 Euros per day. But I suppose everyone is determined to earn something on the back of the refugees".

Refugee camps are certainly assemblages of human and non-human entities, material and immaterial structures, which coagulate to compose states of exception, exclusion, desocialisation and institutionalisation (Agamben 1998 Butler & al Namari this volume). Frequently theorised through Augé's (1995) concept of non-places, camps are seen as spatial and bureaucratic technologies of 'unfixing' human socialities (cf. also Agier 2011). Tracing the history of camps in colonial times and subsequently in the Nazi regime (Malkki 1995, Netz 2004; Minca 2015), scholars, inspired by Agamben (1998), note that camps are 'topologies of power', spaces of exception and spatial, biopolitical technologies of sovereign exclusion (Millner 2011, Minca 2015). Camps are spaces where the forcibly displaced are transformed and translated from risky and unknowable matter out of place, into knowable and governable subjects (cf. Foucault 2004; Malkki 1995; Vaughn-Williams 2015, Tazzioli 2013; Ticktin 2011).

As Agier (2011) discusses however (cf. also De Genova 2011; Butler & al Namari this volume), camps can also be contexts of resistance and refusal. The makeshift camp at Piraeus was a markedly political space. Refugees organised themselves and engaged in different forms of political struggle: they marched, refused to be relocated to remote camps around Greece, demanded that they remain visible and even attempted to occupy Syntagma square (the most central and evocative Athenian square opposite the Greek Parliament). Most importantly, Piraeus was a

space for politicisation. Refugees discussed among themselves, reflected on their rights and encouraged each other to resist. They organised rudimentary but solid committees that remained decidedly 'mixed', composed of Syrians (who were prioritised in the asylum process) as well as Afghans, Kurds and other nationalities who were regarded as largely deportable. Those committees attempted to articulate demands and to negotiate with the authorities on behalf of all the displaced, thus throwing into disarray –even temporarily– the hierarchies of eligibility imposed by the state and the EU. Some refugees, like Ali, even managed to get connected to local, Greek political parties and to push the refugee agenda through more official fora.

My observations here – a bitesize of what the complex and rich context of Piraeus was about- are not meant to deny or downplay the cruelty of the humanitarian model. Piraeus was saturated with an ethic and an aesthetic of eligibility (cf. Cabot 2013), with

hierarchies of deservingness and cruel bureaucracies enacted through persons and things (cf. Cabot 2012; Schofield this volume). It was indeed an outgrowth of neoliberalism where rights were being displaced even faster than persons (cf. Soto this volume). Witnessing, recording and making others 'feel' the violence of camps (cf. Coelho this volume) is certainly an important counter-archiving endeavour (cf. Stewart et.al., this volume). At the same time however, it is also important to record all those bigger and smaller acts of resistance. This kind of counter-archive of the minutiae of disobedience is an essential exercise in nomadic ethics.

Analysing camps as political spaces and spaces of politicisation is not about redemption, or romantisation of some revolutionary aesthetic. It is about the conscious efforts of refugees, to resist their reduction to bare life, to exist as social actors and to challenge hierarchies. These efforts were sometimes (proportionally) grand acts, like the short-lived attempt to occupy Syntagma square. Some other times, they were discursive manifestos of political aetiology (cf. Kirtsoglou 2006) that questioned the role of the 'authorities' and the transparency of reception system processes. Yet, other times they were sensorial events: impromptu dinners cooked on the side of the camp, the salad carefully served on plastic plates, instances of commensality that turned the displaced 'guests' into powerful hosts. Hands that constantly invited the anthropologist to join companies of refugees inside their allocated spaces in the large UNHCR tents opened up worlds of possibilities. Carefully folded blankets and sleeping bags were transforming into low sofas, coffee boiled on small camping-gas gadgets

filling the space with its distinct aroma, small plastic bottles were carefully cut and filled half-way with water to make perfect ashtrays. Oranges, seeds, or candy brought as gifts from visitors and served as treats from the hosts completed the atmosphere of the visit. Those visits, organised and carried out primarily –but not exclusively– by the refugee women in the camp were healing, affirmative instances of sociality, almost always seasoned with funny stories. Like that story of the middle-aged lady who had to queue for half an hour in one of the few toilets provided in Piraeus while a few young girls in front of her took their time making themselves up. "Hurry on with that make-up you fools! I can't hold it forever!", Rima recounted the incident laughingly to the amusement of everyone present.

We laugh, but there is always this time of day when pain hits you like a hot bullet alongside the realisation that you are a refugee, that the chances of seeing your mother ever again are slim, alongside the knowledge that your family is dispersed all over the globe. A refugee… it feels like being a feather in a storm; going where the wind takes you, full of sorrow for the past and hope for the future, eager to make friends –they feel like family– at every step of the way.

Ahmad, Jamal, Nariman, Rima, Abdulrahman, Amira and the other refugees I spoke to in Piraeus kept promising me and each other 'proper dinners' in 'real homes' when 'all this is over'. Till then however, they persistently refused to become saturated with destruction. The refugees in Piraeus endured. They resisted, fought and remained

disobedient. They mocked the forces that attempted to unmake their lives, to reduce their subjectivities, to transform them into bare bodies. The refugees in Piraeus kept their memories and their hopes carefully, at all times. They kept them in plastic, waterproof cases alongside their unusable passports and their registration papers. They kept them in their belts, inside pouches of mixed spices –"food tastes so awful here! Thank God for the spices I brought from home. I have them on me in the entire journey; right here. Can you believe it"? Hopes and memories were kept in the intricate ways in which scarves were folded around heads, and in nearly everyone's wonderfully stubborn resistance to become unfixed by the state, or to remain fixed behind borders.

The Nomadic Age –so profoundly marked by violence, interruption, pain and loss- is primarily the age of the nomadic ethics of migrants and refugees, and of the affirmative politics of social life that persists despite all odds.

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i My argument here should not be read as a criticism of the work of Rapport 2012, as Rapport does not claim that anyone can, but rather that anyone ought to be able (and free) to pursue their life project. In this sense, many of the conditions he sees as necessary for the safeguarding of individual freedom are compatible with my thoughts despite our different starting points.