

The outlawing of the Jewish people in Europe has been followed closely by the outlawing of most European nations. Refugees driven from country to country represent the vanguard of their peoples—if they keep their identity. For the first time Jewish history is not separate but tied up with that of all other nations. The comity of European peoples went to pieces when, and because, it allowed its weakest member to be excluded and persecuted.

Hannah Arendt, "We Refugees," 1943

In her essay "We Refugees," thinker Hannah Arendt refers to a very specific historic situation—the situation of Jewish refugees who fled from Nazi concentration camps and found themselves interned as "enemy aliens" at their various refuges during WWII—and to the very specific history of Jewish experience with German, anti-Semitic racism and persecution. In the concluding words of her essay, as quoted above, she nevertheless opens a space for taking this history and this experience further. The Jewish citizens, she indicates, were not the only victims of that outlawing; their outlawing was the overture to a broad extension of Nazi politics of exclusion and distinction all over Europe directed against all those who were constructed as "Others" on various racist, sexist, and political grounds: large numbers of people were murdered for their homosexual orientation or their political, communist opinions and about 500,000 Roma and Sinti were killed. The *Shoah* and the *Porajmos*, which are the most widely used words for the Roma Holocaust, must be seen as the outstanding incarnation of Europe's deep entanglement with the violent racist Othering of its citizens.

What was designed as a Europe-and-beyond politics of Aryan "purification" and racist "cleansing" turned against the very basis of European conviviality and annihilated all there was in terms of a potential cosmopolitan "comity." From writers Frantz

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Fanon and Zygmunt Bauman as well as from anthropologists Jean and John Comaroff we learn that this internal violence directed against European citizens is also deeply entangled with the legacy of external racist, "civilizational," modernist colonialism directed at imperial subjects "out there."<sup>1</sup>

There are obvious parallels to the current political formation of Europe, a formation which, again, is reviving rather than reversing that history of violent Othering both within and beyond the borders of the European Union, and which, again, turns its back on the current state of a vernacular, globalized conviviality in the European (formal and informal) citizenry, thus, again, acting against rather than drawing on the homemade grounds of a cosmopolitan comity. All over Europe, a renaissance of anti-Semitism and antiziganism as well as racist hostility against incoming migrants and domestic post-migrants can be witnessed and is made the subject of critical analysis.

Arendt, however, does not restrict herself to analyzing the political framework of Othering—as so many analyses of today's Europe do. Rather, she raises the question of the place and the subject of potential political resistance against that framework. Thus, she challenges us to rethink the system from the position of the Other: a turn in perspective privileging the apparent margins over the apparent centers, or—in our words—privileging the moment of the post-Other.

#### The nation-state and the post-Other

Hannah Arendt titled chapter five of her book *Imperialism*, dedicated to the problem of refugees, "The Decline of the Nation-State and the End of the Rights of Man." This

<sup>1</sup> See Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, trans. Constance Farrington (New York: Grove Press, 1965); Zygmunt Bauman, *Modernity and the Holocaust* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1989); and Jean and John Comaroff, "Homemade Hegemony," in *Ethnography and the Historical Imagination* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), pp. 265–295.

formulation—which inextricably links the fates of the rights of man and the modern national state, such that the end of the latter necessarily implies the obsolescence of the former—should be taken seriously.

Giorgio Agamben, "We Refugees," 1995

As thinker Giorgio Agamben analyzes in Arendt's writings on imperialism, there is no doubt an inextricable link between the nation-state and human rights. And more so there is a most palpable legitimacy in aligning the repression of the rights of man with the consequences of the decline of the nation-state, just as history has boldly proven in countless examples.

Without putting the validity of this hypothesis in question it is also worth looking at this binomial of nation-state and human rights through other prisms:

1) In the legendary speech by Frederick Douglass, that former slave and leading figure in the antislavery movement, given on the occasion of the Fourth of July celebrations in 1852, Douglass spouted:

At a time like this, scorching irony, not convincing argument, is needed. Oh! had I the ability, and could I reach the nation's ear, I would today pour out a fiery stream of biting ridicule, blasting reproach, withering sarcasm, and stern rebuke. For it is not light that is needed, but fire; it is not the gentle shower, but thunder. We need the storm, the whirlwind, and the earthquake. The feeling of the nation must be quickened; the conscience of the nation must be roused; the propriety of the nation must be startled; the hypocrisy of the nation must be exposed; and its crimes against God and man must be denounced.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Douglass, "The Meaning of July Fourth for the Negro," speech, 1852. Corinthian Hall, Rochester, New York, 5 July.

This scathing blast was aimed at the hypocrisy of the concept of a nation, which dared to commemorate independence and freedom, while keeping and breeding nearly four million humans as slaves. This case is an epitome of the nation-state itself as foundation and catalyst for the subjugation of its "weakest" unit or the exclusion and persecution of its weakest member, to paraphrase Arendt. This example, which is in no way limited to slavery nor to the United States, reveals that the fate of the rights of men is not alone entangled with the decline of the nation-state, but more so with the core values of economic, legal, political, and racial ideology that need the repression of the "weakest" in society so as to legitimize and solidify a constructed system.

While this is not the podium on which to deliberate the strategies through which the suppression of the so-called "weakest" is instrumental—through physical and intellectual exploitation—in the construction of the nation-state, it is worthwhile keeping in mind that the nation-state and the tendency to tread on human rights are hardly antipodal but rather of a parasitic order.

2) It goes without saying that the need/desire to move freely from one place to the other, especially for any nomadic peoples, is a basic right. The right to continually and cyclically or periodically change habitats in search of physical and psychological greener pastures is a right anchored in Article 13 of the 1948-adopted Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country." The evident and pivotal restriction in this equation is the logic of the nation-state. Take for example the case of the Tuareg—a people whose dwelling spaces have been the Sahara and the Sahel regions of Africa. The Tuareg, whose forefathers enjoyed the "luxury" of nomadism encountered the harsh reality of the nation-state upon

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the partition of the region by European colonial power, thus establishing today's borders that make up Mali, Burkina Faso, Algeria, Niger, and Libya. Convolved in the new set-up and network, the Tuareg found themselves lost in the periphery of existence, not accepted or not (feeling part of) belonging to any of the aforementioned states. The consequences are a string of wars and the current paradoxical effort of the separatists in Northern Mali to create a new state for the Tuareg, once upon a time a nomadic people.

The underlying point made here is the fact that not only the decline, but also the creation or conception of the nation-state could easily be seen to be synonymous with tramping on basic human rights.

If one, though polemic it may sound, hypothesizes that the nation-state is a relevant structure through, with, by, and within which "Otherness" is passively or actively constructed, groomed, or supported—be it in the form of a subjugated minority within or the exclusion of those without the framework of the nation-state—then one could postulate that a possible creative political resistance entailed in the position of the post-Other could be to overlook the fictive constructs of the nation as the only binding entity. The post-Other might thereby suggest a fluidity of those very existing boundaries that were for the most part implemented so as to contain and curtail rather than grant freedom or harmony. Thus, if we are all, for some reason, somehow and somewhere the "Other," one could just as well transgress this status in the post-Other.

#### Against integrationism

In the epigraph at the beginning of this text Arendt addresses the question of subversive, critical agency in the realm of "refugees driven from country to country." Refugees, she says, represent

"the vanguard of their peoples—if they keep their identity." Her use of the term "identity" does not, however, refer to the culturalist version of an exclusive ethnicity, a version that has become so dominant in all discourses about neighboring Others today. Rather, she calls for keeping the identity of being a refugee—a refugee from and an activist against the violent Othering of a racialized construction of Jewishness. Keeping this identity, then, directly refers to the other term she uses in her essay, "conscious pariah," which she borrows from literary critic and polemicist Bernard Lazare. The conscious pariah does not try to escape the enforced status of a "social outlaw" by becoming a "social parvenu," the latter referring to an assimilationist venture which Arendt criticizes for being ineffective in changing the fundamental categories of outlawing that could still be revived time and again, also against those who opted for that strategy, as, above all, European Jewish and—less noticed—Roma and Sinti history has so dramatically shown.<sup>3</sup> The option of the social parvenu parallels other forms of creative shifts in identity-performance, which, in fact, can be existential when they allow for the "passing" of racialized borders invisibly. Such tactics of ethno-mimicry and passing are widely used and elaborated on in situated practices of "illegal" border-crossing and in everyday struggles with the ethnic, racialized taxonomy of migrationland Europe.<sup>4</sup>

Arendt, however, argues for consciously acting from the position of the social outlaw, which points instead to another Jewish tradition of transferring that ascribed inferior status to

3. Hannah Arendt, "We Refugees" [1943], in *Altogether Elsewhere: Writers on Exile*, ed. Marc Robinson (Boston: Faber and Faber, 1994), p. 119.  
4. See Regina Römhold et al., eds., *Projekt Migration* (Cologne: Dumont, 2005); Transit Migration Research Group, eds., *Turbulente*

*Ränder. Neue Perspektiven auf Migration an den Grenzen Europas* (Bielefeld: transcript, 2007); and Regina Römhold, "Aus der Perspektive der Migration: Die Kosmopolitisierung Europas," *Das Argument* 52, no. 1 (2010), pp. 50–59.

political resistance. Resisting the fatal promise of becoming an assimilated, integrated Other and instead, "telling the truth, even to the point of 'indecentness'" is the advantage of empowerment according to Arendt who writes: "History is no longer a closed book, and politics is no longer the privilege of Gentiles."<sup>5</sup> It is in this sense of adopting and keeping an identity as active members of a political minority resisting nationalism and racism, that refugees represent the avant-garde of "their peoples" in—and beyond—Europe.

Today, we can read Arendt's conclusion as a political claim against "integrationism," pointing in two directions. First, her analysis clearly shows how the promise (and the condition) of "integration" makes use of the assimilated Other to create and stabilize the notion of a "natural," racially unmarked, white self. Until today, constructing an Other that is constantly kept in the waiting position of yet to be integrated—at the culturalized borders of the nation-state and the EU—is constitutive for the supremacy of a national, European majority and its power to define, ascribe, or withdraw cultural standards of "normality." Second, it follows that integration is a trap, seducing those who are its "clients" to enhance rather than act against the politics of their being marked as second-class would-be full citizens. As a consequence, there is no other way out of an inferior minority status than the politicization of minorities.

We would argue, that this form of Othering-by-integration and the political consequences to be drawn from this situation point to acute, current constellations of trans-European, local entanglements. While historically, the colonial Other was integrated into the binary hierarchical relation between "metropolis" and imperial "periphery" across geopolitical distance, this spatial

5. Arendt, "We Refugees," p. 119.

order of "here" and "there" is collapsing because of the past and present of migrations and mobilities. Hence, today, the Other is, according to writer and curator Sarat Maharaj, "in our midst" in Europe as much as anywhere else in the world. Due to that spatial implosion, the significant position of the distant Other has proliferated in a multitude of neighboring minorities vis-à-vis the respective majorities they constitute, including the diverse forms of "irregular" migrations emerging while crossing the new European borderlands, and the presence of postcolonial, post-migrant, post-socialist subjects and citizens as well as "dissident" genders, sexualities, subcultural, anti-neoliberal, post-capitalist political articulations and movements.<sup>6</sup> From that point of view, Europe (as much as all parts of the world) actually consists of a multitude of minorities. Confronting this situation, the dominant politics of integration increasingly have to over-emphasize constructions of an ethnicized, racialized Other in order to still keep up the fiction of national, European, western domination over and distance from culturally inferior, marginalized subjects.

In that paradoxical moment, the figure of the post-Other emerges, a figure still bearing the signs of historical Othering while at the same time representing and experimenting with unknown futures beyond it. In the shadow of the dominant political imagination a cosmopolitanized reality of convivial struggles unfolds, speaking and acting against that imagery. The moment of the post-Other, however, is still in the state of emergence: it unfolds in the everyday practices of the "unconscious" kind when, e.g., the anonymity of urban life allows for infinite examples of everyday cosmopolitan interactions or when students in the classroom "forget" about the ethno-racial

6. See Marion von Osten, "In Search of the Post-Capitalist Self," *e-flux journal* 6, no. 17 (2010), online at: <http://www.e-flux.com/> journal/editorial—"in-search-of-the-postcapitalist-self."

taxonomic regime which governs their relations. Such practices are still waiting to be united and made visible. The search for possible common grounds is taking shape situationally at some of the intersections between the posts: e.g., when a post-migrant theater practice, as in the Ballhaus Naunynstraße, Berlin transgresses the restricted space of "ethnic minorities" towards "native" mobile subjects, thus speaking of and for an inclusive post-migrant Germany/Europe/world; or when anti-neoliberal movements get challenged by post-socialist, postcolonial, post-migrant, queer struggles and thus rethink their own nationalisms, racisms, and sexism. Still, in other situations and places these same struggles tend to pass by unnoticed or even tend to turn against each other. One of the pressing questions, according to sociologist Paul Gilroy, concerns how to focus more on and thus support the dissident reality of post-Other conviviality—rather than implicitly contributing to its invisibility by reserving all our efforts to critique, time and again, the power of the dominant discourse.<sup>7</sup>

#### The romantic notion of evanescing

It is worth situating the post-Other or at least the intent to reflect on and quest to comprehend this concept, from the framework of artistic practices. In many ways, artists and art exhibitions have, consciously or unconsciously, tried to tackle the notion of the post-Other by deliberating on the evanescing of the "border" between the "self" and the "Other" in contemporary art. The few examples (with no claim on exclusivity) given below account for reflections of what could be manifestations of the post-Other from a global, local, and personal perspective.

#### The global picture

The much-acclaimed third edition of La Triennale in Paris in 2012

7. See Paul Gilroy, *After Empire: Melancholia or Convivial Culture?* (London: Routledge, 2004).

curated by Okwui Enwezor with Mélanie Bouteloup, Abdellah Karroum, Émilie Renard, and Claire Staebler is an apt example of how art and artistic articulations, on a global scale, deal with postcolonial entanglements. *Intense Proximity* was hosted by half a dozen sites in and around Paris, the main site being Palais de Tokyo, which anchored works of some 113 artists from all corners of the globe. According to the curators the pivotal question or backbone of the exhibition could be formulated as a trial to understand what happens when the distance, the disparity (be it geographical, political, social, economic, or otherwise) between the "metropolis" and the "periphery," between the "here" and "there" collapses. Further, in the curatorial statement "intense proximity" is defined as "the degree of nearness in which cultural, social, and historical identities and experiences share and co-exist within the same space, while exposing the fault lines of cultural antagonism," thereby proposing a possible scenario for the aftermath. With key words like sharing, coexisting, or antagonism that characterize a non-hegemonic space reminiscent of philosopher and social theorist Michel Foucault's concept of "heterotopia," one is tempted to envisage the post-Other as a possible heterotopia where distances dwindle more and more.<sup>8</sup> This space is not necessarily an illusionary context of absolute harmony but maybe of harmonious dissonances, i.e., a space, where the few points of intersection or common denominators between discords is fully appreciated and respected.

To shed more light on the exhibition's ambition to scrutinize the area after the "collapse of distance," one also needs to understand the context within which this project was conceived and realized. Taking into consideration France's colonial history

8. Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," trans. Jay Miskowec, *Diacritics* 16, no. 1, (Spring, 1986) [Originally published in

French, 1984 and based on a lecture, 1967], pp. 22–27.

(which we do not have enough space to elaborate on here), the rise of the right-wing party in France in elections since the early 2000s, the increased xenophobia and nationalism in France's contemporary society, and the fact that the primary reason La Triennale was set up (and that was clearly reflected in the last two editions) was to present only French or French-resident artists, *Intense Proximity* comes in not only as an incentive to reflect on the aftermath of collapse, but is itself an agent by which the barriers put in place between France (the metropolis) and the rest of the world (the periphery) are being destroyed.

Another quite apt example in a particular but also global dimension is the project *Call the Witness* for the Roma Pavilion organized by BAK artistic director Maria Hlavajova in the context of the 54th Venice Biennale in 2011. This project, conceived as a medley of testimonies, an exhibition, performances, and talks in various forms by people from different nationalities and walks of life including artists, politicians, and intellectuals tackled the particular situation of Roma from a historical and contemporary perspective. As a project *Call the Witness* summoned both producers and audience to bear witness to the Roma issue, as stated on the website: "The project calls on Roma artists to bear witness, through works of art, to their communities' struggles as they are caught in the paradox of being at once assigned to the edges of mainstream society and at the center of this society's discriminatory order of control," while bearding the national or even nationalistic structure of representation in the Venice Biennale, by offering "its transnational, even extra-national, character in a modest attempt to counteract the widespread hostility towards Roma communities found across Europe today."<sup>9</sup>

9. Maria Hlavajova, "Introduction," *Call the Witness*, Roma Pavilion, 54th Venice Biennale, Venice, 2011, online at: <http://www.callthewitness.net/Introduction>.

### The local picture

In 2010 the British-American artist Doug Fishbone released an unusual feature-length film titled *Elmina*. Produced with the support of the Zabudowicz Collection and Arts Council England, the film has so far been widely screened in art venues like the Tate Modern in London, Stedelijk Museum Bureau Amsterdam, Zentrum für Kunst und Medientechnologie Karlsruhe, and most recently SAVVY Contemporary in Berlin. *Elmina* bears a conventional storyline of love intrigues, power struggles, economic manipulations, and, as in many movies, a main hero who steps in as a wise and good guy. The quintessence of the film is a racial issue, which is constantly kept in the background. What makes the film unusual is neither its setting in Ghana, nor its melodramatic nature that is in line with West African cinema and especially Nollywood-style narration and dramaturgy—always furnished with an extra dose of hyperbole. In the midst of this all-black movie, centered around a land dispute and questions of globalization where everybody speaks Twi, Pidgin English, a strongly accented Ghanaian English, or some other local language, a white guy appears. Apart from the color of his skin, which at first sight irritates the viewer, his quotidian articulations, behavior, way of speaking, and eating habits are just like those of the other actors. This oddity, this lack of acknowledgment for his skin color that is never a topic in the film, challenges and opens another window of perception through which to consider racial and postcolonial discourse, insofar as the intention to create “color blindness” and dissolve the racial gap among the “Others” is concerned. This act questions the limits of representation and color politics by creating a utopia of neutrality in color, or at least a fictitious space within which everything else plays a bigger role than the color of one’s skin. Taking into consideration the fact that people of color still have enormous difficulties in occupying positions other than those of the cleaner, refugee, or terrorist in theater productions or movies in Europe, and being

aware of the fact that “Blackfacing” is still on the agenda in many theaters (see *Ich bin nicht Rappaport* by Herb Gardner, performed at Schlosspark Theater Berlin in 2012 and 2013), one might comprehend Fishbone’s film as an effort to compose a state of “post-Otherness.”

### The personal picture

The personas Brian O’Doherty and Patrick Ireland are just two of the main characters through which O’Doherty, the Irish conceptual artist, has revealed his eclectic skills. Born in 1928 in Ireland, trained as a medical doctor, most accredited for his 1976 publication *Inside the White Cube: The Ideology of the Gallery Space*, and very much respected as an art critic in New York too, O’Doherty is also responsible for one of the most startling identity-performances in modern art history. As a consequence of the 30 January 1972 shooting of 13 unarmed civilians on the streets of Derry by British soldiers (Bloody Sunday), O’Doherty staged a performance later that year in Dublin, *Name Change*, where he, in a ritual, changed his identity and transformed himself into Patrick Ireland. This one of a kind, one-man political agitation was ceremoniously reversed on 20 May 2008 at the Irish Museum of Modern Art in Dublin, thereby paying tribute to the progress for peace in Ireland. As this is not the place for a biographical report on O’Doherty it is worth focusing on the three other identities in his repertoire. These alter egos include Sigmund Bode, Mary Josephson, and William Maginn, which added to O’Doherty and Ireland, sum up to five successful and assiduous personae. Reflecting on the choice of his alter egos one witnesses O’Doherty’s keen interest in understanding the multiplicity of the Other in the self in the spatiotemporal contexts of “here” and “now.” Transcending, for example, the otherness of gender (Josephson) or that of culture and nationality (Bode), O’Doherty assembles multiple,

distinguished characteristics, feelings, or social connotations, thereby redefining the subject as an embodiment of the "I" and the "you," the "here" and "there," or at least the reflection of Other. This appropriation, this even physical occupation of the other identities, as well as this romantic idea of the evanescent of gender, cultural, social, and personal differences could even be suggestive of a playground for the post-Other.

#### On cosmopolitanization

Is art a specific playground for the "romantic notion of evanescing," while social and cultural scientific inquiry is restricted to a "realist" analysis of hegemonic structures and discourses of power? How can we think beyond and transcend the borders between the two domains of knowledge production—and at the same time learn from each other?

Social-cultural anthropologist Arijun Appadurai has criticized the social and cultural sciences for their retrospective preoccupation with analyzing the past as a "trajectory" leading to the present and to an anticipated future.<sup>10</sup> Here, we find the legacy of a western, modernist version of creating "evidence." Against that scientific legacy, Appadurai puts forth "hope" and "aspiration" as cultural facts that need to be explored and analyzed. According to him, it is the aspiring desires that inform everyday cultural and social practices rather than the obvious constraints of these practices that should attract our attention more than they do so far. This would imply a shift in perspective; instead of only looking at the borders set by nationalist, racist politics of exclusive integrationism, we should also look at the rather invisible, but constant transgressive moves of diversely interested subjects in their practiced imagination of possible other

lives.<sup>11</sup> This perspective shifts the attention to unseen, unknown, but lived heterotopias in the middle of exercised power. The "detention camp" in the European borderlands is an extreme example; while the camp would be the exceptional space of "bare life" par excellence from an Agambian point of view, it can also be portrayed as a heterotopian space of mutual communication, solidarity, and accumulation of border-crossing expertise.<sup>12</sup> The anthropological practice of ethnography has revealed this dimension, for example, in the work of sociologists Ethnima Panagiotidis and Vassilis Tsianos, part of the research group for the transdisciplinary project Transit Migration, on camps in Greece, where detained "illegal" migrants are set free after three months and told to move outside Greece in "any direction."<sup>13</sup> This example points to the fact that borders, past and present, are never the total institutions of closure that they are held up to be. Rather, borders produce their own respective modes of porosity and thereby reflect the impact of other interests (of the economy) and constraints (the overwhelming financial costs of "properly" determining and returning "illegal" migrants). In Europe today, borders are no longer fixed topographical entities; rather they are ambivalent regimes, which react on rather than set limits to the tactics and the expertise of those who move within and across them.<sup>14</sup>

A complex view on "borderland Europe" would include the analysis of discursive, epistemological political power—and, simultaneously, the acknowledgment of destabilizing counter-movements of diasporic, dissident, decentring, (post)migrant

<sup>10</sup> Arijun Appadurai, "Thinking beyond Trajectory," in *Futures of Modernity: Challenges for Cosmopolitical Thought and*

*Practice*, ed. Regina Römhold et al. (Bielefeld: transcript, 2012), pp. 25–32.

<sup>11</sup> See Arijun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

<sup>12</sup> See Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998).

<sup>13</sup> See Ethnima Panagiotidis and Vassilis Tsianos, "Denaturalizing 'Camps': Überwachen und Entschleunigen in der Schengen Agilis-Zone," in *Turbulente Ränder: neue Perspektiven auf Migration an den Grenzen Europas*, ed. Transit Migration Forschungsgruppe (Bielefeld: transcript, 2007), pp. 59–88.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*



everyday practice.<sup>15</sup> The basis for such a multidimensional perspective would have to be ethnographic, that is a collaboratively organized, practice- and actor-oriented approach to the current cosmopolitanization of reality and the collapse of former colonial, Cold War geopolitical certainties giving rise to both enforced nationalist, Eurocentric, and racist Othering from the former "center," and to enforced vernacular convivial cosmopolitanisms among post-Other subjects from the former "margins." Can we converge our artistic and scientific methodologies for grasping, making visible, and supporting these struggles?

This issue is excellently addressed in the film *Jaurés* directed by Vincent Dieutre and presented at the Berlinale in 2012. Here, the story of a clandestine gay relationship is told by way of looking out of the window of the Parisian apartment in which the couple meets. The film was made after the end of that relationship from footage that was taken by Dieutre as a sort of side activity during the times he stayed at the apartment—a great example of the "serendipity" of ethnographic fieldwork, of finding something without looking for it. Only afterward, Dieutre took the raw film material to reconstruct the story of a group of young "illegal" migrants from Afghanistan who created for themselves a clandestine home under the bridge across the street. In the film, the view across the street becomes the dominant image, while the "inside story" of the couple in the apartment is only indirectly referred to by way of dialogic cutaways between the director and actor-photographer Éva Truffaut. Visually, the interior of the apartment does not come into view at all. The film thus creates a parallel story of two neighboring but very different modes of clandestine post-Otherness. While the young migrants have to expose their lives largely in public,

and at the same time succeed in keeping their identities invisible—an ambivalence documented by the voyeuristic view of the camera—the clandestine privacy of the gay couple is not exposed to exterior views, nor to the view of the spectator of the film, at all. The vulnerability of that privacy, and the paradox of the clandestine lover who is at the same time a husband and father and works for an NGO supporting refugees, is addressed in the commentary but does not enter the visual dimension of the film. There is no communication across the borders that the film addresses, nor are there any comparisons made between the two stories told. Both spatial occupations end before the visually reconstructed documentary starts. Both practices thus represent temporary, evanescent heterotopias. In such ways, the film addresses the hierarchical relationship between the one and the other mode of transgressing the national, heteronormative regime of Othering. But at the same time, the film opens an apt space for imagining common grounds between these clandestine, post-Other practices. It thus provides a thought-provoking, cosmopolitanizing juxtaposition in both anthropological and artistic terms.

Maharaj has pointed to the "intuitive" capacity in contemporary visual arts and drama to address the "unknown" as the Other of rational knowledge. By drawing on subaltern modes of knowledge production, art challenges and transgresses the "binary structure of thought that is based on the confrontation of opposites (bad versus good, man versus woman, black versus white, compatriot versus foreigner, etc.)."<sup>16</sup> This "irrational" approach provides, indeed, a productive provocation for scientific thought,

<sup>15</sup> Étienne Balibar, "Europe as borderland," in *Projekt Migration*, ed. Regina Römhold et al. (Cologne: Dumont, 2005), pp. 202–214.

<sup>16</sup> Sarat Maharaj, "Summary of An Unknown Object in Uncountable Dimensions: Visual Arts as Knowledge Production in the Retinal Area," a presentation by Sarat Maharaj, in *Or*

*Knowledge Production: A Critical Reader in Contemporary Art*, ed. Maria Hlavajova, Jill Winder, and Binna Choi (Utrecht: BAK, 2008), pp. 132–141.

especially in anthropology, where the self-defining interest in the Other of western modernity has resulted in self-reflexive, post-colonial criticism about western entanglements with colonial Othering. While there is, of course, no way back to a naive interest in essentialized "difference," the question of how to address and make space for "difference"—or alterity—as a critical intervention against hegemonic homogenization emerges as an unsolved task from that revised past.

Here, the more extraordinary, counter-experimental rather than strictly empirical methodology of artistic knowledge production can open up new ways of collaboration. In anthropology, the principle of "serendipity" and the methodology of "juxtaposition" can be seen as similarly "subversive" and neglected modes of knowledge production in the world of rationalist, western thought. Both approaches stress the possibility of coming across the "unknown" of other experience and thought in the field of ethnographic research, and the possibility of juxtaposing the apparently unknown with the apparently known. In anthropology, this has been a major resource of the discipline's former claims to be a protagonist of cultural critique.<sup>17</sup> Today, however, the complexities of reflected entanglements with the postcolonial/colonial politics of Othering stand against an easy renaissance of that legacy. For addressing the post-Other—as already pointing to a space beyond that legacy—we might have to get back to these methodological tools and revise them for new reflexive use. The aforementioned examples of artistic juxtaposition within an experimental playground of the post-Other all point in that direction.

17. See Michael M.J. Fischer and George E. Marcus, *Anthropology as Cultural Critique: An Experimental Moment in the Human Sciences* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).

Jaurés poses the important question of how these experiments may speak to each other. Since there is still a very existential difference between the post-Other experience and articulation of literally excluded migrants, refugees, minorities, and the desire to "become minor" or the self-minorization of dissident political, cultural, and sexual movements from within the dominant neoliberal, European, white mainstream—a difference that still needs to be acknowledged and addressed while at the same time looking for possible common grounds of articulation. One such possibility, as proposed by filmmaker and writer Trinh T. Minh-ha, is to not speak about but to "speak nearby," that is to solidarize with other experience and thought without colonizing it.<sup>18</sup> A first step towards "speaking nearby" could be a heightened awareness of parallel modes of post-Otherness.

This text is a co-authored composition of thoughts and propositions, the result of a written exchange on the subject between a theorist and a cultural producer.

18. Nancy N. Chen, "Speaking Nearby: A Conversation with Trinh T. Minh-ha," *Visual Anthropology Review* 8, no. 1 (1992), pp. 82–91.

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