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The Experience of Migration: From Metaphor to Metamorphosis

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_Abstract

In media, political and lay representations of migrants it remains frequently the case that metaphors are systematically used in racist and demeaning manners, though also, occasionally, in positive ways empathizing with the plight of refugees, migrant communities and the sans papiers. In this piece, however, I wish to note the wider, more personal and speculative reasons as to why metaphors are so frequently used and are, it seems, so widely effective in shaping social perceptions. In late modernity, in the affluent north-west some name the migrant through demeaning metaphors in an attempt to deny their anxiety over their inessence and instability, a pushing away of the common and constant transferal in our species' shapeshifting linguistic being of the non-linguistic. I think this with and against the use of metaphors towards a sense of metamorphosis, including through a reading of the pneumatic body in Paul.

1_Inexperience and Anthropophagy

In banal by now media representations of migrants it remains frequently the case that metaphors are systematically used in racist and demeaning manners, though also, occasionally, in positive ways empathizing with the plight of refugees, migrant communities, and the sans papiers.[2] There are varied reasons why this is the case but none of them appear to be accidental, as specialists observe.[3] I am interested, here, in considering the wider, more personal and speculative reasons as to why metaphors are so frequently used that appear to be so widely effective in shaping social perceptions.[4] An understated reason seems to be the most obvious, that is, that metaphors are used because someone has not had the experience that is being metaphorized, first-hand. The motivation in this is often malignant or naïve. A metaphor can create a bridging sense, but more frequently it entails an underlying or direct motive at a negative push-back due to the fear of the unknown or different, ranging from a moral façade as the justification of indifference to the often-violent opposition to the migrant other. In a wider sense, it seems that metaphorizing acts in such moments as a projection of distance and foreignness in the name of a presupposed self-solidity that clings, consciously or not, on the fantasy of an essential, stable, and self-righteous identity. It is a celestial vantage point approach to the 'human.' It attempts to conceal its self-doubt and fear before its very own abjected uncertainty over the absent sign of signs, the unconfirmed essence of human existence. And incurably so, as each and every one of the many attempts that have been made to invest it with such an essence, has been followed by a successful

refutation. The irreparable truth is nobody really knows what or who they are in any essential way. Yet, while there is no essence or destiny to be determined, there is at least one thing human existence can do: notice that this is so.

The word *metaphora* first appears in the fourth century BC in the *Euagoras* of Isocrates.[5] It is perhaps related in this sense that Aristotle in his *Poetics* describes the use of metaphors in relation to things that we lack another name for. Perhaps ultimately, our self-doubt is embedded in our very mode of perception and expression given that the self is in itself a metaphor, consuming anthropophagically the self and the other in the name of one's 'essence, nature or character.' It is, perhaps, of interest that the Attic Greek *idios*, (*ἴδιος*; *idiotēs*, *ἰδιώτης*), which early on means 'one's own' and soon enough 'a person who does not take part in the affairs of the polis,' may be linked to the earlier epic word *edō* (*ἔδω*) meaning to eat, to take in the mouth; later, also, indicating a sense of 'here,' 'presence.' The embeddedness of doubt is indicated further in the Aristotelian distinction between sound and spoken word, whereby is implied a sense or experience of movement or transfer: the spoken word (*phone*) is composed by the sound (*psophos*) with no meaning when it is 'moved' through an indicative sign (*sēma*). Meaning is itself metaphorical, a transferal. Both in the sense of being 'moved' to an elsewhere and in the late modern sense of every word becoming a metaphor since it never corresponds to an objective truth or reality.

Thus, a consequent reason, particularly pertinent to my speculation here, is the increasing insecurity that is caused by the sense that humanity's metaphoric/onomastic identity may be a mere construct, something that can be rendered in doubt and be challenged or, worse, be apparently eaten up (by different dental structures, with varied intentions: migration, the global economy, progressive policy, populism, etc.). The growing fearsome inkling or realization of the absence of an essence or a 'natural' vocation and destiny for humanity, leads anew and even more forcefully to metaphorization. Such an enigmatic existence was known to the ancients (from, for example, Heraclitus to Giambattista Vico and his *Nuova Scienza*, 1725), but in late modernity such fragmenting has become an anxious everydayness, a form of life in constant crisis. As Robert Musil writes in *The Man Without Qualities:*

> For the inhabitant of a country has at least nine characters: a professional one, a national one, a civic one, a class one, a geographical one, a sex one, a conscious, an unconscious and perhaps even too a private one; he combines them all in himself, but they dissolve him, and he is really nothing but a little channel washed out

> by all these trickling streams, which flow into it and drain out of it again in order to join other little streams filling another channel.[6]

I will return to metaphor and Aristotle's definition below, but I would like to note that one could think of migration in ways other than the understandable at first evasive or defensive metaphorical modality (at least in the sense of the metaphoric avoidance or push-back of an encounter with the migrant other, which is to say with a certain degree of 'likeness'). This is not to deny that we are often unable to think without using metaphors. After all, 'language' may be considered itself essentially metaphoric, even the most colossal metaphor of them all. Meanwhile, nor is it to disregard the difference (semantic and not only) between metaphor and migration, but to point to a symptomatic, today, implication of 'change' in both.

It is worth noting that the word migration is etymologically linked to the proto-Italic **migrāō*, the proto-Indo-European **h₂migʷ-* (meaning 'to change' and 'to wander'), from **h₂mey-*, with the Latin *meo* meaning 'to pass or traverse.' In this sense, at least to an extent, metaphor and migration appear to have something in common. In the early Greek literary evidence, the root is linked to the word *ἀμείβω* (*ameibō*), meaning 'to change, to exchange, to cross;' as, for example, met in Homer, *Il*.15.684 with the sense of 'passing from house to house.'[7] It is also worth noting that Kassandra Jackson describes a bronze table among a cache of unusual artefacts discovered in 1899 in Pergamon, as follows: "In each of the triangle's corners is a depiction of a goddess, labelled above with an epithet ('*Διώνη*', '*Φοιβίη*', and '*Νυχίη*') and below with the participle '*ἀμ(ε)ίβουσα.*'" And Jackson continues: "Based on these labels, the figures' attire (chiton and girdle), and the accessories they carry (key, torches, whip, serpent, and sword), the goddesses have been identified as the three aspects of triple Hekate."[8] Jackson, in fact, suggests that the reference to a transition (or phase transition) through the repetition of the word *ἀμ(ε)ίβουσα* (*ameibousa*; 'she who changes'), could refer

> to the change that the theurgist desired his soul to undergo during its ascent to the divine. As the participle is in the active rather than the middle voice, it could suggest that the 'changing' goddess does not only change her own form, as the moon does, but is being called upon for her ability to create change in others. […] Plotinus, for example, mentions *αἱ δὲ ἀμείβουσαι ψυχαὶ* in his *Enneads* (3.2.4.8), while Proclus, during a discussion of *ταῦτα καὶ τῆς Ὀρφικῆς*, explains that "souls change lives (*τοὺς βίους ἀμείβουσιν αἱ ψυχαὶ*) according to certain periods (*In. Plat. rem publ. comm.* 2.338.14)."[9]

While she adds also, with great interest for my purposes, that the verb *ameibō* may also refer to Hekate's traditional role as guardian of the *triodos*, "supervising with her three

visages the place where three roads meet."[10] It is worth keeping this speculation in mind as I delve later to suggest a reading of *metaphora*[11] and migration with regard to metamorphosis.

Yet, to return to my more contemporary observation, it seems that metaphors and 'metaphoric migration,' in particular, are not just cognitive or communication devices for a range of representations of one's in/experience (i.e. that one has not had or one finds hard to speak of), but the presupposed general image of cognition itself. Metaphors, interestingly, are often associated with images in the ancient uses, images that one encounters. However, a metaphoric 'post-truth' cognition (as one hears today) appears to be set up so to immediately unlearn, to displace one's encounters. The metaphor, Aristotle says, carries something "before the eyes" (*πρὸ ὀμμάτων*, *pro ommatōn*; *Rhetoric*, 3, 10.1410b33–6), which presupposes, in one reading, the experience of something through the pushing of something else away. The personification of metaphors as visitors is perhaps implied in the word's rhetorical use in *metaphora enim aut uacantem locum occupare debet aut, si in alienum uenit, plus ualere eo, quod expellit*, "for a metaphor ought to occupy/invade an empty place, or, if it enters a foreign one, to be more impressive than that which it pushes/expels/deports out" (Quintilian, *Institutio Oratoria* 8.6.18). Metaphors, in a sense, are remarkable vertigo experiences in more than one way since a *metaphora* is in itself a spatial metaphor for metaphor. To paraphrase Roland Barthes, the ancient soothsayer "speaks the locus of meaning but does not name it," while the modern metaphoric-apotropaic subject "names it but does not speak of its locus."[12] In late modernity, in the affluent north-west some name the migrant through demeaning metaphors in an attempt to deny their anxiety over their inessence and instability, a pushing away of the common and constant transferal in our species' shapeshifting linguistic being of the non-linguistic.

2_*Metaphora*

As it is well known the Western terms of approaching metaphor are derived from Aristotle's conception of metaphor.[13] Metaphor in ancient Greek is derived from the verb *metapherein*, in the sense of moving, transferring. In Plato's *Critias* one finds the sense of moving words between languages or conceptions, from imagination to reality (113a). In Aristotle the first formal definition of metaphor is rendered in the *Poetics* (21, 1457b6–7) as: "*μεταφορὰ δέ ἐστιν ὀνόματος ἀλλοτρίου ἐπιφορὰ*…," "*metaphora* is the

epiphora of the name (*onoma*) of something [to something else]…". The root of *metaphora* is *pher-*/*phor-* that signifies to carry, while the prefix *-meta* tends to signify something that is besides, and more so something that indicates a change. The prefix *epi-* in *epiphora*, as John Kirby notes, "may designate movement over or beyond boundaries," while it also has the sense of something being beside or being an addition.[14] It is no coincidence that *metaphora* and *epiphora* are related to *diaphora*, which emphasizes difference and, in this sense, a new meaning. It is the rhetorical use that gave the ancients and us the more technical sense that metaphor indicates the movement of a use/meaning of a word from a literal sense to a new figurative sense. This scission, however, as presupposed between a literal/familiar being of a word and its figurative being is a construct and, as it will be suggested below, it has always remained open to challenge. I will return to this below though it is useful to keep in mind Friedrich Nietzsche's statement in his lecture notes: "*Es gibt gar keine unrhetorische 'Natürlichkeit' der Sprache an die man appellieren könnte: die Sprache selbst ist das Resultat von lauter rhetorischen Künsten*" ("There is obviously no unrhetorical 'naturalness' in language to which one could appeal; language itself is the result of purely rhetorical arts").[15] It is also worth noting that in 22, 1458a21–23 of the *Poetics*, Aristotle implies a relation of metaphor to strangeness. In addition, Aristotle in *Rhetoric* 3, 10 states: "[S]trange words simply puzzle us; ordinary words convey only what we know already; it is from metaphor that we can best get hold of something fresh."[16] Often a riddle does not have at its heart a striking difference or the threatening unknown, but a likeness; and metaphor, for Aristotle, becomes the rhetorical shifting necessary for the observation of likenesses (1459a7–8) which give an enigma its force. The enigma indicates something new, but intimately so (hence its force).

From the strangeness of a metaphoric word to the stranger on our shores and gates it may be that the distance is not that great. It is worth noting that the sense of 'transformation' or 'carrying across' in a metaphorization indicates also a fairly obvious link to the sense of (migratory) 'movement' that academic studies of migration have more recently placed at the heart of researching migratory phenomena.[17] A seminal work by Nikos Papastergiadis, titled *The Turbulence of Migration*, puts it like this:

> Migration, in its endless motion, surrounds and pervades almost all aspects of contemporary society. […] It is increasingly evident that contemporary migration has no single origin and no simple end. It is an ongoing process and needs to be seen as an open voyage. Departures and returns are rarely, if ever, final, and so it

> is important that we acknowledge the transformative effect of the journey, and in general recognize that space is a dynamic field in which identities are in a constant state of interaction.[18]

In fact, 'turbulence' is in itself a metaphor and one that we could say innovatively takes the place of yet another general theory of migration; it signifies, in Papastergiadis' work, not only a noun that describes the unsettling nature of a course of movement, but also the interconnectivity and interdependency of the multiple and complex factors that affect the so-called modern (migratory) world. Metaphor may indicate, for this reason, that what is taking place is being covered up, an attempt at forgetting or an erasure, before the terrifying sight of strangeness which underneath appearances mirrors our own. In arguing for the better or homoiostatic use of metaphors, Aristotle suggests that one of the key reasons is metaphorization touches a sensitive nerve given that such strangeness is indicated also in the experience of language itself: "[P]eople do not feel towards strangers [*xenous*] as they do towards their own countrymen [*politas*], and the same thing is true of their feeling for language [*lexin*]."[19] In a sense, the strangeness of the experience of one's own (and of another) language is a constitutive layer of the fable of identity (and its extensions: grounds, names, nationality, linguistic familiarity, and so forth). Nietzsche's point can be reread in this light: "The drive toward the formation of metaphors [*Trieb zur Metapherbildung*] is the fundamental human drive, which one cannot for a single instant dispense with in thought, for one would thereby dispense with man himself."[20]

This can be further linked to our metaphoric or linguistic existence through what Julia Kristeva describes when she writes that literature is "a privileged signifier" which enables one to encounter one's outer and inner limits. She writes:

> On close inspection, all literature is probably a version of the apocalypse that seems to me rooted, no matter what its socio-historical conditions might be, on the fragile border (borderline cases) where identities (subject/object, etc.) do not exist or only barely so – double, fuzzy, heterogeneous, animal, metamorphosed, altered, abject.[21]

The strange becoming familiar and the familiar strange in the experience of literature, enabling a calibration of incommensurable qualities, can only be severed from its eternal path of fragmentation and recompositing by violent means installing hard borders, rhetorical, economic, racial, legal, or other. The threat of abjection, the fall into strangeness at the heart of our species' linguistic existence of the non-linguistic, as a 'mere' figuration, is a threat also in the sense of a permanent crisis of knowledge and of the

supposed communicative essence of language as a 'mothertongue.' Our Achilles' heel, 'the speaking animal's' presupposed division between the sensible and the intelligible, marks the horizon of our histories (and of our metaphysics), and attempts to escape its fate through a metaphoric one-way transport from the unfamiliar to the familiar. Thus, despite everything, Achilles' valor is best portrayed in the guise of the lion, rendering visible, as Aristotle writes, an *homoiosis* (likeness) that would otherwise be invisible (*Poetics* 4.5.5, 1459a7–8). In this Aristotelian sense, our functional being is placed in the blur of an oscillation or, as Jacques Derrida said it, an interval,[22] through its figuration of a freshly observed or even radically (en)countered likeness in something else. The presupposition of an imitation, the pure *homoiosis* that Aristotle appears to rely on for his conception of metaphorization, between the intelligible word and the independently real thing that ex-ists, though for the moderns no longer available, frames the mimetic or representational image of thought which runs out of metaphors and becomes more and more catachrestic.[23]

Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in their critique of metaphor, write: "[L]anguage always seems to presuppose itself," in the sense that a given utterance always carries the trace of previous utterances of the same form within it. Utterance, therefore, "does not operate between something seen (or felt) and something said, but always goes from saying to saying."[24] All that is left is not metaphorization, representation, or mimesis but mapping and experimentation. What differentiates mapping from *homoiosis* is, for Deleuze and Guattari, a deterritorialization of signs from one location to another that "is entirely oriented toward an experimentation in contact with the real."[25] In this manner, the dialectic relation or dynamism between the corporeal and the incorporeal remains so that "the order-words or assemblages of enunciation in a given society (in short, the illocutionary) designate this instantaneous relation between statements and the incorporeal transformations or noncorporeal attributes they express."[26] Such dialectics, for Deleuze and Guattari, remain rooted in indirect discourse rather than metaphor or metonymy, which are just effects.[27] In other words, in the place of the old schism, among linguists, between the literal (real) and the figurative (uncertainty or the fear of unreality), one finds the disruption that the radical equation of the observer and the observed effects via the abandonment of both to the membrane-like reality of becoming "an intimate ocean" (Herman Melville).[28] Or, As Behrouz Boochani describes, in *No Friend But the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison*, similarly:

> The ocean has put me on trial
>
> The ocean has confronted me with a challenge
>
> The ocean summoned all the theoretical analyses I had formulated in my conscious mind over the years
>
> The ocean subjected me to conflict
>
> Positioned me as a blindfolded adversary
>
> A rival to death.[29]

This does not lead to some newly fathomed unity or a new scission with an objective reality, since fragmentation remains. In Boochani's words:

> I must confess that I don't know who I am and what I will become. I have interpreted my whole past over and over again. Parts of my past have been unlocked as a result of the death of my loved ones. And, in addition, other parts are frozen; they have become fixed in my mind. As I grow older, the images form into coherent islands, but they never lose that sense of fragmentation and dislocation. Life is full of islands; islands that all appear to be completely foreign lands in comparison to each other.[30]

Theorists of mobility and migration have often described the migrant as a subject or body "in transit,"[31] that is "non-representable [...] unlabeled, untamed, unidentified."[32] Here, I want to engage with the experience of the virtual fragmentation that metaphoricity attempts to conceal, at least in one respect: a fragmentation common to us all, at varied degrees and severity, given that what was once perceived as far-fetched at a theoretical level (constructivism) has for a long time now become a characteristic of late modern (migratory) everydayness. That is, the fact that social subjectivation, the becoming-subject, is coupled by desubjectivization (what Guattari once called "machinic enslavement" whereby the citizen *and* the migrant are no longer political or economic subjects but "dividual" parts and "cogs").[33]

The counter strategy, for Deleuze and Guattari (as earlier for Nietzsche), is a somewhat affirmative nihilism that escapes the conundrum by going through its seemingly shut gate: "The plane of consistency is the abolition of all metaphor; all that consists is Real."[34] Desubjectivation is not a uniform experience, though an experience in common (it con-sists). In late modern societies, the supposed autonomy of citizens and the exclusion, denigration, and discrimination of denizens share more and more common ground, in that 'machinic enslavement' applies to both.[35] 'Autonomy,' 'rights,' 'dignity' are becoming more and more unrealistic, or rather exposed to the exploitation of the presupposed plasticity given the absence of a human essence, that Giorgio Agamben named as the fiction of "bare life."[36] Some may see the source of emancipation and

freedom in the denaturalization, secularization, democratization of subjectivation at the price of a permanent desubjectification. In fact, their aim is to recolonize the space finally accessed by the realization of the absence of any essence, turning it anew into the phantasy of a ground for the reinvigorated exploitation that enables simultaneous gradations of enslavement and pacification between citizens and denizens. There is, however, no pre-*homo sacer* world to which we can hope to return, since the absence of an essence is closely tied to the absence of a center in a functionally differentiated society (Niklas Luhmann). Remnant 'conservative' or 'radical' wishes to the contrary appear so often like some kind of atavism, a nostalgic reminder of what are "lost paradigms,"[37] steeped in a supposedly new civil economy, when it is yet another "governmental technology," i.e. another refusal to sever the bond that binds one to obliterated or lost paradigms.[38] The social openness of what used to be called 'neoliberal capitalism' poses itself as the increasingly digitized and financialized network of all the elements of the 'freedom' that is grounded in such an absence. In this predicament one misreads "liquidity"[39] for openness and invests in it some kind of neohumanist or posthumanist optimism. Meanwhile, "the absence of future has already begun" for the vast majority on the planet.[40]

It is no accident that the increased brutality of the hyper-mobility that characterizes a hyper-capitalist world is bound up with the ruthlessness of the treatment of those desubjectivized migrants who are mobile because of existential necessity. Thomas Nail in *The Figure of the Migrant* writes that:

> The migrant is the political figure of our time. […] In this sense, the figure of the migrant is not a 'type of person' or fixed identity but a mobile social position or spectrum that people move into and out of under certain social conditions of mobility. The figure of the migrant is a political concept that defines the conditions and agencies by which various figures are socially expelled as a result of, or as the cause of, their mobility.[41]

It has been historically and archaeologically shown that migration/mobility is a primary condition of social formation. Before such a constitutive condition one would, in theory, expect a morally open understanding of political formations with access, participation, equality in belonging central to it, yet in modernity technologies of securitized governance and policing of labour-mobility are procured by "the machinations of sovereignty" necessitating a "differential inclusion of mobile populations."[42] Dimitris Pa-

padopoulos and Vassilis Tsianos have indicated that one could in fact re-read "the phenomenon of capitalism via migration," and "sovereignty via mobility" though not towards some kind of romanticization of nomadic being.[43] Similarly in one sense to the presupposed loss of essential identity/nature as a lack that necessitates the metaphor of an identity (in an ocean of metaphoricity), any attempt to counter governance structures and their metaphysics of cognition (even if akin to Deleuze and Guattari's formulation of 'becoming with the world' rather than 'being in the world')[44] appears to have forgotten that the two archaic types of storytellers, as described by Walter Benjamin, 'the resident tiller of the soil' (territorialization) and the 'trading seaman' (deteritorialization), are no longer storytelling.[45] Our storytelling has migrated from the time of coded prophesies (*Genesis* 41:25), to the exposure of the potent realities of the psyche (Sigmund Freud)[46] and, now, to the impotence of the Bloom figure (Tiqqun) that we more and more resemble: "Bloom is the man who has become so thoroughly conjoined with his alienation that it would be absurd to try and separate them".[47] There is no city (polis), but metaphoricity. Perhaps the only way forward is not to get out of our metaphoric vehicles and take a bare footed walk in the garden of Eden, but to drive all the way from metaphor to metamorphosis. After all we are magnetically attracted (secretly or not) to vertigo of the void.

3_*Metamorphosis*

Metaphors, fragile and temporary as they are, are often installed as permanent cyphers for the disfiguration of the planetary denizenship. Yet, to paraphrase Paul Klee on painting,[48] migrants insistently 'take humanity for a walk.' If one appreciates that we are the 'humanifying animal' (Ramon Llull), a *faciendum* not a *factum* (Ortega y Gasset), a making (Tim Ingold), painful a realization as this may be, the claim to mastering (and transferring constantly) a static identity, whether individual or collective, remains an illusion that instead of resolving our deep anxiety, inflates it further.[49] It is perhaps ironic that the national identities we fathomed were meant to be an initiation towards a higher goal, and instead their culmination seems to be by now inflatable socially distanced egospheres in interminable civil wars. Nietzsche's aphorism 377 titled "We Who are Homeless," describes migrants as the "children of the future".[50] The children of the future reject both conservative and liberal progress metaphors as self-evident virtues.[51] Agamben has more recently described, following Hannah Arendt's earlier piece "We

Refugees," the novel political issue of our time as being the permanently resident mass of noncitizens within industrial countries (even in their significant disproportion in terms of those resident in the global south who do not cross the border), as well as the plight of the refugees who flee destitution and who have become, as Arendt described them, the 'vanguard of humanity.'[52] Admitting this as a political issue exposes the varied forms of violent management of the mobility of populations through governmental and non-governmental means of depoliticization and desocialization. Lives rendered hardly recognizable, hardly alive, ambiguously present, desocialized, and sentenced to permanent degrees of depoliticized precarity.[53]

To state the obvious: that no particular version of metaphoric authenticity can aspire to universality, in the late nihilist situation in which we find ourselves, does not mean that no one and nothing matters; on the contrary. Yet, Alasdair MacIntyre was right, despite his romanticism, when he suggested in the early 1980s that the language of virtues, telos, and moral authority are merely fragments of a once relatively coherent conceptual scheme that we have now lost altogether.[54] Since such a scheme is not recoverable, our migratory walk can only take place inward, turning us towards the inner metamorphic space of the Anthropokenosis in the time of the so-called Anthropocene (where what is *kainos*, new, in the latter term, coincides with the old).[55] In the Bloom state of a narcotic dormancy, a wilful or naïve reactive blindness, the exposure that migrants mark in us is 'eventualized' (Foucault) as a threat, rendered invisible or decaused. Our induced impotence and cenotic cognition render one's reaction acceptable as inevitable.[56] The use of metaphors, in this instance, operates as a normalizing weapon of decognition and unaestheticization (with doses of pacifying pleasure embalming impotence with a sense of cosy ordinariness).[57]

It is universally recognizable (though many decognize it) that the way out of our aporia cannot be the identitarian-territorialization that was fantasized after the collapse of the Austro-Hungarian and the Ottoman empires following WWI; while we also know that fantasies cannot be easily, if at all, uprooted, not to mention that holding on to such a fantasy can also be a migrant's only remnant of hope. Yet the aporia over this aporia is no longer why we have not re-cognized this, but rather that we have not uncognized it enough. Re-cognizing it would tempt one to compare its absence to a new normal. While thinkers, from Arendt to Agamben, show that what is needed is one or other kind of political counter-action against the neo-colonial depoliticization and pacification of

migrant mobilities to ensure their permanent exploitation, my own interest here is with a futurist speculation. To the long-held opposition between autonomy and heteronomy, a third counter-position to both is that of, to put it somewhat humorously, an *anti-autonomy autonomy* (at least in the sense of not forgetting that giving the law unto oneself can be a painful imposition too). This counter-position affirms the understanding of 'difficult freedom' (Levinas) whereby the need to protect the autonomy of migrants is clear, though as one that is now becoming to be recognized in the field of migration studies also, as a freedom that "is not an abstract, essentialised or absolute autonomy but one that is necessarily limited, constricted, compromised, contradictory and tactical" (Nicholas De Genova, Glenda Garelli and Martina Tazzioli)."[58] Beside the need to affirm the constitutive role of mobility, autonomy needs to be understood autopoietically and thus in its late modern complexity. Migration mobility produces its own changes and modifications, its self-definition and hence its autonomy in an autopoietic sense needs to be understood in the sense that there is no 'pure state' of migration (in the same way that there is no pure state of identity). There is, in addition as a result, no outside to our colonial past and neo-colonial present and their direct and indirect consequences. Migrant mobility, then, forms a "non-rational phenomenon" at the heart of modern identitarian society; one that needs to be understood in its "ecological dimension" rather than as an economic, security or social issue.[59]

The particular sense of an anti-autonomy autonomy that I wish to emphasize here, I call metamorphosis. One sense of metamorphosis that I have in mind is the way in which Deleuze opposes metamorphosis to metaphor. For instance, he writes, redefining metaphor, in *Proust and Signs*: "[M]etaphor is essentially metamorphosis and indicates how the two objects exchange their determinations."[60] Reactive use of metaphors is led by the laziness of populist assertions that stand in the place of thinking against thinking. Metamorphosis is, instead, the taking up of the risky and unstable encounter with what forces us to think.[61] This is not to hypervalorize 'thinking' or 'metamorphosis,' but to give the value that is due to our imagined linguistic being as one of intensity and regeneration in the immanence of shape-shifting words/names; rather than as some outside reality which must be crossed over (or be represented) through metaphoricity. The literary/figurative experience of metamorphosis can be reappreciated when it challenges the presumption of identity *in* language. While many studies of metamorphosis

in the literary context focus on ontological and epistemological or hermeneutical elements,[62] my schematic aim here is to think metamorphosis (with and against metaphoricity) as the name of the sceptic politics of an anti-autonomy of autonomy. In contrast, autonomy via secularisation, democratisation and so forth aims to give the semblance of release and freedom in order to convince the Bloom to give themselves the law, as an ultimate feat of enslavement. In a sense, metamorphosis as I conceive it is intended to describe an outline of a coping mechanism before a daily metamorphic exposure of our shape-shifting, onomastic, nature, inspired by those that bravely cross internal and external borders.

In part, the inspiration for reconceiving this peculiar third-space, in the name of metamorphosis, occurred while I was researching – on the basis of mostly literary evidence – archaic Greek supplication practices, which in one sense precede later practices of seeking refuge. I found myself thinking that:

> [O]ne of the things that are taking place in an act of supplication is a threshold-experience, a crossing or coming of the *hiketēs*, a petition to be given 'another chance', another life in a dynamic and relational manner to others. It is not accidental that the suppliant is often described in terms that are akin to a person without qualities and honour (timē; or conversely one in need of it), one who is experiencing and acting out a self-abasement, through assimilation to the dead, or carrying a look of bereavement[63] (note the evidence of prostration and mourning clothes). The suppliant is, in this sense, a 'figure of distance',[64] a *xeinos*, a foreign element on the limit. The petition of supplication is never some impersonal or formal act, but the utmost intimate experience, which indicates the sphere of 'pure praxis' as the sphere of acts, a sphere we rather misleadingly appear to understand as religion.[65]

What would it mean if one day we thought of the experience of migration as exposing also our experience of metamorphosis, that is, a threshold-experience, a commonality of crossing? An experience to which everyone is entitled in both the particular migratory sense, but also at an esoteric level where micro-migrations take place at every moment of living, transfiguring every proximity with the distance that we share in common. Liminality has been ontologically and politically thought in relation to studies of legal and socio-economic precarity, to describe the experience of existential ambiguity by vulnerable migrant communities in the face of liberal citizenship. Yet, its earlier use within anthropology indicated the experience of transition rituals and cultural rites.[66] A transition moment of life, as Agamben describes it, a moment of life subtracted from the context of individual biography and identity, a 'pure praxis.' This to my mind would be a wider reading of our supplicatory practices (or their increasing eradication), not so

much as a ritual process or a proto-juridical function, but as belonging to the realm that Max Kommerell named 'pure gesture'[67] and that, in this case, could indicate the 'pure possibility' of the ethical dimension of living, the chronotopos of mortality as a threshold metamorphic experience.

Finitude, from its Latin root *finis* can signify either 'limit' or 'a last state.' The place of a terrifying, to be sure, but also a life-giving, threshold experience, limitless and imperfect that forms our way of being, an ethos. As noted by Edward Soja in a different but related spatial context given the also spatial experience of crossings: "[W]e are, and always have been, intrinsically spatial beings, active participants in the social construction of our embracing spatialities."[68] This spatiality conceived as an anti-autonomous autonomous self-construction can be thought as the place of metamorphoses through threshold-experiences. The experiences of migrants who have crossed borders at great cost and who in a sense live or die at the border, whether literally or by being forced to become a border near-permanently, suggest that becoming a crossroad in order to live[69] can be one day (re)connected with the time-space of metamorphosis as the common human experience. The sense of the self in its Western conception is inevitably associated with epistemic and colonial violence, displacing, among other things, this commonality.[70] Colonialism like the 'old science' posed and exploited the chasm between the terrestrial and the celestial. Instead, the 'new science' declared that we are corruptible and heliocentric. We are all undocumented, walking the earth as a transhumance, literally 'across earth,'[71] but some of us have extracted violently an identity out of colonizing this void, while stopping others from crossing over. Metamorphoses (such as those of migrants) remind us of our violent past erasures and expectedly many react violently to push back or even ban metamorphosis.[72] "Behold, I have conveyed to you what you must not know, although you have heard it" (Apuleius, *Metamorphoses*, XI, 23).

The pain of the obvious informs our metamorphic being. *Metamorphosis* from the Greek *morphē*, form, *eidos* (though the occurrence of the word is 'late,' recorded for the first time in the geographer Strabo)[73] indicates a change of shape, leading to the loss of an earlier form, which is replaced by a new one. Sovereignty or Kyriarchy[74] interjects and regulates or even withdraws the very place of such migratory shapeshifting, exposing, ironically, what its worst fear is. These transfers of meaning and changes of form are, in a sense, based on a presupposed pseudo-primary source (a common

colonized body, to speak schematically) from which they diverge and free themselves, though in divergent directions. The western body calls it 'freedom' but cannot practice it, the colonized body practices it, but cannot 'call' it.

Long before it became a biological concept (Jan Swammerdam 1637–1680), metamorphosis emerged in antiquity and most famously in Ovid's epic poem *Metamorphoses* where a series of metensomatoses are described, a theme common in ancient mythology and literature (and already central in Homer). The metamorphosis motif in Ovid (who experienced exile in the latter part of his life, 8 CE, when writing the *Metamorphoses*) has been at times described as indicative of a philosophical doctrine proximate to the Pythagorean system of continual becoming or metempsychosis;[75] though this remains doubted given the many differences with the traditional tales of metamorphoses. I am using metamorphosis, here, however, more in the sense of a passage of traversal, echoes of which I sense in diverse writings: 'a sudden disadhesion' (Henri Michaux)[76], *Schwellenkunde*, a science of thresholds (Benjamin), the place where one encounters the poetic space of an estrangement (Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe).[77] Metamorphoses may seem an unlikely modern companion to our normative violence and migrant ejections, but already in, for example, the ancient Greek and Roman literary context it was via metamorphoses that norm, normalcy, and transgression were invested.[78] In my earlier research with regard to archaic supplication practices I raised also the following hypothesis:

> The threshold-experience of the suppliant leaves the realm of everyday life and enters the realm of a real exception or emergency to use the modern trope, but what is found in that realm is the topos of the common sacred realm (the source of ethos). For mortals (in need) [and more generally] there is only ethics, as a being-in-the-medium of language, as well as being-in-the-gestural, non-linguistic devices. In situations of extremity the place of ethics (ethos) can be shown to be the place of a threshold where the gods forbid equally the killing or ritual sacrifice of the suppliant. Could it be, in this sense, that the archaic suppliant is the Greek figure of the (pre-)*homo sacer*? This is an obvious allusion to Agamben's work on the exceptional Roman legal paradigm of *homo sacer* (who could not be sacrificed in a religious ritual, but who could be killed with impunity). In a sense though, the archaic Greek pre-*homo sacer*, the, let's name it, *hieros anthrōpos*, […] is not identical to the Roman paradigm. The *hieros anthrōpos*, the suppliant, can neither be killed, nor ritually sacrificed with impunity.[79]

Sovereignty is a technique of communication for the governance of repetition, gesture or pure praxis is instead a decreation. Outside of religious experience, we remain in the shadow of guilt and the soothing repetition of habit, rendering metamorphoses a difficult experience to perceive. Self-actualization (via a plunge into non-being, per Frantz

Fanon) or Gloria E. Anzaldúa's spiritual activism, for instance, ring offbeat and transcendentalist at the time of the complete reversal of Terence's dictum in the fittingly titled *Heauton Timorumenos*, of which Montaigne was fond: "*Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto*", or "I am human, and I think nothing human is alien to me." With our knowing and acting separated from our being and becoming, it appears almost impossible to sense our metamorphic intensity. Our permanent temporariness entices, reactively, violence and 'hotspotization,'[80] (where the temporary becomes a permanent mark), anything that will not expose us to the integral metamorphic energy that we are.

This is, in an idiosyncratic way, what I heard when the phrase "I can't breathe" became iconic, tragically, once more this year. It reminded me of the pneumatic loss in which we live and of perhaps the most significant in this tradition metamorphic ethos. The word *πνεῦμα* (*pneuma*; in Latin *afflatus* or *spiritus*) with its broad ancient meanings signifying 'wind' (Sophocles, *Oed. col.* 610–13), 'breathing' (Hippocrates), 'living', "breath of life" ("*πνεῦμα βίου*", *pneuma biou*, Aeschylus, *Pers.* 507), associated with the divine (Hesiod, *Theog.* 29–34; Plato, *Phaed.* 262D) was placed decisively at the heart of a soteriological ethics by Paul, a migrant amidst the Greek diaspora. It is in Paul that *pneuma* is also associated with *gnōsis* (*γνῶσις*, knowledge) and crucially with the mind/intellect (*νοῦς*, *nous*), rendering Christian religion as a *λογικὴ λατρεία* (*logikē latreia*), meaning a non-cultic, ethical worship. Paul, perhaps, echoes Menander when he states that the divine spirit or intellect (*εἴτ' τοῦτο πνεῦμα θεῖον εἴτε νοῦς; eit' touto pneuma theion eite nous*) saves (fr. 482). Earlier, in, for example, Aristotle *pneuma* did not receive a specific description beyond the significant connection to the idea of a vital heat (*Gen. an.* 2.3.736b35–737a1) which steers life (and that, it is worth noting, given my purposes, is also considered essential to movement – *Metaph.* 8.1.1042b1–35). It is the Stoic understanding of the *pneuma* that perhaps Paul was familiar and partly influenced by.[81] The Stoics use the term *σῶμα πνευματικόν* (*sōma pneumatikon*; pneumatic body) to describe the nature of God and to crucially note that while his body is finite, his other ether-like body (the *pneumatikon*; *αἰθερῶδες* [*aitherōdes*] in Origen)[82] is the *hēgemonikon* (the steering part).[83]

Pneuma in Christian scripture and theology indicates the Holy Spirit (*Rom.* 1.4) which in Paul was understood as soteriologically regenerative (*Tit.* 3.3-6). The pneuma is life on account of a righteous way of life or the righteousness of an ethos (*τὸ δὲ πνεῦμα ζωὴ διὰ δικαιοσύνην*; *to the pneuma zoē dia dikaiosynēn*; *Rom.* 8). The one who

wishes to be saved is to 'walk in the Spirit' (*Gal*. 5.16; 25) or 'according to the Spirit' (*Rom*. 8.4). Paul places the Spirit in the *nous* for, the salvation to come, the post-resurrection corporeality of the future, is a transformation (a metamorphosis). A metamorphosis that takes place by renewing one's *nous* (the noetic, metamorphic, mind): *μεταμορφοῦσθε* [*metamorphousthe*] *τῇ ἀνακαινώσει* [*anakainōsei*] *τοῦ νοός* [*noos*] (*Rom.* 12.2). The Holy Spirit can be understood here as a visitor, a migrant, a breath, a breathing space, our pneumatic body.

The first *anthropos* "Adam" is "a living soul" (*ψυχὴν ζῶσαν*, *psuchēn zōsan*, 1 *Cor.* 15.45; *Gen.* 2.7 LXX), which Paul understands as eschatologically present, through Christ, whom he calls "the last Adam" (*ὁ ἔσχατος Ἀδὰμ*; *ho eshatos Adam*, 1 *Cor*. 15:45). And, in this sense, Christ is a "life-giving spirit" (*πνεῦμα ζῳοποιοῦν*; *pneuma zōopoioun*). The Holy Spirit in the "inner man" (*ὁ ἔσω ἄνθρωπος*; *ho esō anthrōpos*) enables the experience of a regenerative (metamorphic) becoming day by day (2 *Cor*. 4.16).[84] The place of the inner human being is the *nous* (the power *–potentia–* of the metamorphic intellect): God's law is served *τῷ μὲν νοΐ* (*tō men noi*) in/with the metamorphic mind (*Rom*. 7.25).[85] For our linguistic being of the non-linguistic, threshold-species as we are, salvation only comes through metamorphoses in the pneumatic body. In the pneumatic body metaphors do not transfer us from the material to the intellectual (or vice versa), as materialisms and idealisms would pose, they point instead to the metamorphosis that our species becomes in order to live, from the start, at the threshold between the so-called material and the intellectual. Out of its original natality the migrant is the coming enspirited, risen, body at the threshold of the linguistic being of the non-linguistic.

_Endnotes

[1] This essay was made possible thanks to the loving support of my family, Emilie, Rémi and Félix.

[2] Metaphors are also used in institutional processes, including in courts; see, for example, Keith Cunningham-Parmeter, "Alien Language: Immigration Metaphors and the Jurisprudence of Otherness," in *Fordham Law Review* 79 (2011), 1545.

[3] See, for example, Jonathan Charteris-Black, "Britain as a Container: Immigration Metaphors in the 2005 Election Campaign," in *Discourse & Society* 17 (2006), 563–581; Andreas Musolff, "Migration, Media and 'Deliberate' Metaphors," in *Metaphorik.de* 21 (2011), 7–19. In a wider perspective, see the seminal work in metaphor studies by George Lakoff & Martin Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By*, 2nd edition (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2003 [1980]) and Paul Ricoeur, *The Rule of Metaphor: Multi-disciplinary Studies of the Creation of Meaning in Language* (London: Routledge & Keegan Paul, 1978).

[4] Most disturbingly the excruciating metaphors of, for example, an 'invasion' by a 'mass/hoard/swarm' of dehumanized, objectified migrants through what appears, for some decades now, to be an increasingly spectacular systematic manipulation, effecting a 'culture'-forming, conception-convening, nationalist/populist desocialization (across the political spectrum, including in reactive leftisms).

[5] William B. Stanford, *Greek Metaphor: Studies in Theory and Practice* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1936), 3.

[6] Robert Musil, *The Man Without Qualities*, Vol. One, transl. by Wilkins E. & E. Kaiser (London: Pan Books, 1979), 34.

[7] C.f., s.v. *ἀμείβω* in Georg Autenrieth, *A Homeric Dictionary* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1891).

[8] Kassandra Jackson, "'She Who Changes' (*Amibousa*): A Re-Examination of The Triangular Table from Pergamon," in *Journal of Roman Archaeology,* 25 (2012), 456–474, here: 455.

[9] Jackson, "'She Who Changes,'"466.

[10] Jackson, "'She Who Changes,'" 467.

[11] The word *metaphora* first appears in the fourth century BC in the *Euagoras* of Isocrates; William B. Stanford, *Greek Metaphor: Studies in Theory and Practice* (Oxford: B. Blackwell, 1936), 3.

[12] Roland Barthes, "The Structuralist Activity," in: *Critical Essays*, transl. by Richard Howard (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1972), 213–220, here: 219.

[13] For the Aristotelian theory, see Richard G.E. Lloyd, *Demystifying Mentalities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 14–38; and Richard G.E. Lloyd, *Aristotelian Explorations* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 205–222. For the Classical sources in general, see Heinrich Lausberg, *Handbuch der literarischen Rhetorik*, 4th edition (Stuttgart: Steiner Verlag, 2008), 558–564 and the recent outline by Anna Novokhatko, "Metaphor (*metaphorá*), Ancient Thories of," in *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greek Language and Linguistics*, ed. Georgios K. Giannakis (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 275–278.

[14] John T. Kirby, "Aristotle on Metaphor," in *The American Journal of Philology* 118.4 (1997), 517–554.

[15] See his 1872–73 lecture notes "Darstellung der Antiken Rhetorik," in *Gesammelte Werke*. (München: Musarion, 1922 [1874]) 5:287–319, here 298. See also Sarah Kofman, *Nietzsche et la métaphore* (Paris: Galilée, 1983).

16 Aristotle, "Rhetoric," in *The Works of Aristotle*, ed. William D. Ross, transl. by W. Rhys Roberts (Oxford: Claredon Press, 1946/1952), 1410b.

17 See, for instance, Timothy Cresswell, *On the Move: Mobility in the Modern Western World* (New York & London: Routledge, 2006) and John Urry, Kevin Hannam and Mimi Sheller, "Editorial: Mobilities, Immobilities and Moorings" in *Mobilities* 1.1 (2006), 1–22.

18 Nikos Papastergiadis, *The Turbulence of Migration* (Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2000), 4. It is interesting that Papastergiadis notes (via John Berger) that metaphors are less abstract than theory, rendering them both necessary and more temporary. On the poetic role of metaphors I am reminded also of this passage in Shelley: "Their [the poets; TZ] language is vitally metaphorical; that is, it marks the before unapprehended relations of things and perpetuates their apprehension, until words, which represent them, become, through time, signs for portions or classes of thought, instead of pictures of integral thoughts; and then, if no new poets should arise to create afresh the associations which have been thus disorganized, language will be dead to all the nobler purposes of human intercourse." In Percy Bysshe Shelley, *A Defence of Poetry*: *Essays, Letters from Abroad, Translations and Fragments*, Vol. I. (London: Edward Moxon, 1840 [1839]), 1–57, here: 5.

19 In Aristotle, "Rhetoric 3.2," in *The Complete Works of Aristotle*, ed. Jonathan Bames, transl. by W. Rhys Roberts (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1984) 1404b, 8–15.

20 Friedrich Nietzsche, "On Truth and Lying in an Extra-moral Sense," in *Friedrich Nietzsche on Rhetoric and Language*, eds. & transl. by Gilman Sander L., Carole Blair and David J. Parent (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 251.

21 Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, transl. by Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982), 207–208.

22 See, for instance, Jacques Derrida, "The Interval and the Supplement," in *Of Grammatology*, ed. and transl. by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 195–199.

23 Jacques Derrida, "White Mythology: Metaphor in the Text of Philosophy," in *Margins of Philosophy*, transl. by Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 207–271, here: 255.

24 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, transl. by Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 76.

25 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 12.

26 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 80–81.

27 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 76–77.

28 See François Zourabichvili, *Deleuze: une philosophie de l'événement* (Paris: PVF, 1994).

29 Behrouz Boochani, *No Friend But the Mountains: Writing from Manus Prison*, afterword and transl. by Omid Ofighian (Sydney: Picador, 2018), 155.

30 Boochani, *No Friend But the Mountains*, 454–455.

31 James Clifford, "Diasporas," in *Cultural Anthropology* 9.3 (1994), 302–338, here: 321.

32 See Dimitris Papadopoulos and Vassilis Tsianos, "The autonomy of migration: the animals of undocumented mobility," in *Deleuzian Encounters: Studies in Contemporary Social Issues*, eds. Anna Hickey-Moody and Peta Malins (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 234.

33 Félix Guattari, *Chaosmosis* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1995), 16–17.

34 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, 69.

[35] See Thanos Zartaloudis, "Elements of Movement-Controls in Post-Sovereign Governmentality," in *The Ashgate Research Companion to Migration Theory and Policy*, ed. Satvinder Singh Juss (Farnham, UK: Ashgate Publishing, 2013), 661–687.

[36] See Giorgio Agamben, *Homo Sacer*: *Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, transl. by Daniel Heller-Roazen (California: Stanford University Press, 1998).

[37] Niklas Luhmann, "Paradigm Lost: On the Ethical Reflection of Morality: Speech on the Occasion of the Award of the Hegel Prize 1988," in *Thesis Eleven* 29.1 (1991), 82–94.

[38] See Michel Foucault, *The Birth of Biopolitics: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1978–1979* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008), 296f. On the notion of 'technologies of government,' see also Michel Foucault, "The Ethic of Care for the Self as a Practice of Freedom, " in *The Final Foucault*, eds. J. Bernauer and D. Rasmussen (Boston, Mass.: MIT-Press, 1998), 1–20; and Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality, eds.* Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon and Peter Miller (Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1991), 87–104.

[39] See Zygmunt Bauman, *Liquid Times: Living in an Age of Uncertainty* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2007); and Zygmunt Bauman, *Wasted Lives: Modernity and Its Outcasts* (Cambridge and Malden, MA: Polity Press, 2004).

[40] On Günther Anders, see, for instance, Jason W. Alvis, "Transcendence of the Negative: Günther Anders' Apocalyptic Phenomenology," in *Religions* 8.4 (2017), 59.

[41] Thomas Nail, *The Figure of the Migrant* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2015), 235.

[42] Dimitris Papadopoulos and Vassilis Tsianos, "After Citizenship: Autonomy of Migration, Organisational Ontology and Mobile Commons," in *Citizenship Studies* 17.2 (2013), 178–196, here: 181.

[43] See the essays in *Mobile Commons, Migrant Digitalities and the Right to the City*, eds. Nicos Trimikliniotis, Dimitris Parsanoglou and Vassilis Tsianos (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015); see also Dimitris Papadopoulos and Vassilis Tsianos, "After Citizenship: Autonomy of Migration and the Mobile Commons," in *Citizenship Studies* 17.2 (2013), 42–73; Sandro Mezzadra and Brett Neilson, *The Border as a Method or, The Multiplication of Labor* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2013) and Laura Zanfrini, *The Challenge of Migration in a Janus-Faced Europe* (London: Palgrave Pivot, 2019).

[44] See Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, transl. by Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 169.

[45] See Walter Benjamin, "The Storyteller: Reflections on Nikolai Leskóv," in *Illuminations*, eds. Walter Benjamin and Hannah Arendt, transl. by Harry Zohn (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968).

[46] See, for example, Sigmund Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents*, ed. and transl. by James Strachey (New York: Norton, 1961 [1930]).

[47] Tiqqun, *Theory of Bloom*, transl. by Robert Hurley (Berkeley: LBC Books, 2012), 20.

[48] See Paul Klee, *Pedagogical Sketchbook*, transl. by Sibyl Moholy-Nagy (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1960), here: 16: "An active line on a walk, moving freely, without goal. A walk for a walk's sake. The mobility agent, is a point, shifting its position forward."

[49] Ramon Llull, *Selected Works of Ramon Llull (1232–1316)*, vol. I, ed. and transl. by A. Bonner (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1985); José Ortega y Gasset, *History as a System and Other Essays Toward a Philosophy of History* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1961); Tim Ingold, *Making: Anthropology, Archaeology, Art and Architecture* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2013); Tim Ingold, *The Life of Lines* (London: Routledge, 2015).

50 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science: With a Prelude in Rhymes and an Appendix of Songs*, transl. by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1882/1974), 338.

51 Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 338.

52 "Refugees driven from country to country represent the vanguard of their peoples," in Hannah Arendt, "We Refugees," in *The Jewish Writings*, eds. Jerome Kohn and Ron H. Feldman (New York: Schocken Books, 1943/2007), 264–274, here: 274.

53 See, for example, Nicholas De Genova, "Migrant 'Illegality' and Deportability in Everyday Life," in *Annual Review of Anthropology* 31 (2002), 419–447; Alison Mountz, "Where Asylum-Seekers Wait: Feminist Counter-Topographies of Sites between States," in *Gender, Place & Culture* 18.3 (2011), 381–399; and Leisy J. Abrego and Sarah M. Lakhani, "Incomplete Inclusion: Legal Violence and Immigrants in Liminal Legal Statuses," in *Law & Policy* 37.4 (2015), 265–293.

54 Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2nd edition (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984 [1981]).

55 See Claire Colebrook, "We Have Always Been Post-Anthropocene: The Anthropocene Counterfactual," in *Anthropocene Feminism*, ed. Richard Grusin (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 1–20.

56 See, in another context, Didier Fassin, "The Endurance of Critique," in *Anthropological Theory* 17.1 (2017), 4–29; and the introduction and the essays in *A Time for Critique*, eds. Didier Fassin and Bernard E. Harcourt (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019). With regard to thinking the causes see, for instance, Douglas S. Massey et al., *Worlds in Motion: Understanding International Migration at the End of the Millennium* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998); and Emma Haddad, *The Refugee in International Society: Between Sovereigns* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008). See also the concise critique of the recent Global Compact of Refugees that fails to address the genesis of refugee flows, by Bhupinder Chimni, "Global Compact on Refugees: One Step Forward, Two Steps Back," in *International Journal of Refugee Law* 30.4 (2018), 630–634.

57 See Anne McNevin, "Political Belonging in a Neoliberal Era: The Struggle of the Sans-Papiers," in *Citizenship Studies* 10.2 (2006), 135–151.

58 See Nicholas De Genova, Glenda Garelli and Martina Tazzioli, "Autonomy of Asylum? The Autonomy of Migration Undoing the Refugee Crisis Script," in *SAQ: South Atlantic Quarterly* 117.2 (2018), 239–266, here: 243.

59 See Claudio Canaparo, "Migration and Radical Constructivist Epistemology," in *Crossings: Journal of Migration and Culture* 3.2 (2012), 181–200.

60 Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs: The Complete Text*, transl. by Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003), 48.

61 Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 139.

62 See, for a critique, Kai Mikkonen, "Theories of Metamorphosis: From Metatrope to Textual Revision," in *Rhetoric and Poetics* 30.2 (1996), 309–340.

63 See Fred S. Naiden, *Ancient Supplication* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 282.

64 See Manuela Giordano, *La Supplica. Rituale, Istituzione Sociale e Tema Epico In Omero* (Annali dell' Istituto Universitario Orientale Sezione filologico-letteraria, Quaderni III, 1999), 17.

65 See Thanos Zartaloudis, "Hieros Anthropos – An Inquiry into the Practices of Archaic Greek Supplication," in *Law and Humanities* 13.1 (2019), 52–75.

[66] See the classic Arnold Van Gennep, *The Rites of Passage* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1960); and Victor W. Turner, *The Forest of Symbols: Aspects of Ndembu Ritual* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1970).

[67] See Max Kommerell, *Geist und Buchstabe der Dichtung. Goethe-Schiller-Kleist-Hölderlin* (Klostermann Rote Reihe 31, 1940); see, further, Giorgio Agamben, "Kommerell, or On Gesture," in *Potentialities. Collected Essays in Philosophy*, ed. and transl. by Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 77–85.

[68] Edward W. Soja, *Third Space: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-And-Imagined Places* (Malden, MA/Oxford, UK: Blackwell, 1996), 1.

[69] Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987), 194–195; see also Gloria Anzaldúa "Border Arte, Nepantla, el Lugar de la Frontera," in *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, ed. Ana Louise Keating (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009), 176–186.

[70] I have in mind here Aimé Césaire's remarks in "Discours Sur La Négritude," in *Poésie, Théâtre, Essais Et Discours*, ed. Albert James Arnold (Paris: CNRS Éditions/Présence Africaine Éditions, 2013 [1987]), 1588–1593.

[71] See Letizia Bindi, "Take a Walk on the Shepherd Side: Transhumant Narratives and Representations," in *A Literary Anthropology of Migration and Belonging – Roots, Routes, and Rhizomes*, eds. Cicilie Fagerlid and Michelle A. Tisdel (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), 19–46). See also on the early Greek context of transhumance and nomos, Thanos Zartaloudis, *The Birth of Nomos* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2019), 121-150.

[72] Zygmunt Bauman, *Strangers at Our Door* (Malden, MA/Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016).

[73] See, generally, Richard Buxton, *Forms of Astonishment – Greek Myths of Metamorphoses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009).

[74] Referring here to the term coined by feminist theologian Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza that influenced Behrouz Boochani, and whose poetic shadows cut my text. With warm thanks to David Herd for introducing me to Boochani's work and for the inspiring conversations.

[75] A survey of the literary evidence was made in Heinrich Dörrie, "Wandlung und Dauer. Ovids Metamorphosen und Poseidonius' Lehre von der Substanz," in *Der Altsprachliche Unterricht* 4.2 (1959): 95–116.

[76] Henri Michaux, *Miserable Miracle*, transl. by Louise Varèse and Anna Moschovakis (New York: NYRB, 2002), 171; though I should note that in contrast to Michaux my sense here is not towards a search for a 'more physical' or 'real' language. See, also, generally Henri Michaux, *The Space Within*, transl. by Richard Ellmann (London: Routledge, 1952).

[77] Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Poetry as Experience*, transl. by Andrea Tarnowski (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999). Benjamin describes the threshold as a zone of passage (*Übergang*), a place, among else, of transformation in Walter Benjamin, "Das Passagen-Werk," in *Gesammelte Schriften, ed.* Rolf Tiedemann, vol. 5 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1971–82), 1025. On Benjamin's notion, see Gary Smith, ed., *Benjamin: Philosophy, History, Aesthetics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1989).

[78] See Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* 160-161; and also the different approach in Paul M.C. Forbes Irving's classic *Metamorphosis in Greek Myths* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990).

[79] See the last section of Zartaloudis, "Hieros Anthropos."

[80] See Aila Spathopoulou and Anna Carastathis, "Hotspots of Resistance in a Bordered Reality," in *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 38.6 (2020), 1067–1083.

81 See the exceptional study by George H. van Kooten, *Paul's Anthropology in Context: The Image of God, Assimilation to God, and Tripartite Man in Ancient Judaism, Ancient Philosophy and Early Christianity.* Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament 232 (Tübingen: JCB Mohr/Paul Siebeck, 2008).

82 Origen, *Commentary on John* 13.21.128 [=J. von Arnim, *Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta* (SVF) 1054 (Leipzig, 1903–05)]. Origen is referring to the Stoics describing the body of God as corruptible but pneumatic, like ether and characteristically so in his soul's reasoning capacity.

83 It is of interest to note that with regard to supplication practices the scholiast Eustathius on *Il*. 1.427 suggests that the importance of the head lies in its representation of the *hēgemonikon* (*ἡγεμονικόν*), decisiveness, to which the suppliant appeals; see Naiden, *Ancient Supplication*, 47, who notes that the head is also known for its use in nodding to indicate agreement or approval and as a seat of generation.

84 A Platonic notion that Paul would have been familiar with; see Walter Burkert, "Towards Plato and Paul: The 'Inner' Human Being," in *Ancient and Modern Perspectives on the Bible and Culture. Essays in Honor of Hans Dieter Betz*, ed. Adela Y. Collins (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1998), 59–82.

85 It is no accident that the subject of metamorphic myth is most often a human being and it is mediated through a divine agency. It is also worth noting given my purpose here that metamorphosis is frequently used as a metaphor itself for adopting a new role or a change and its relation to metaphor is, in fact, a key theme most notably in Nietzsche's treatment. On the complex ramifications of this, see Jacob Burckhardt, *Griechische Kulturgeschichte* (Berlin: W. Spemann, 1898–1902), who discusses the 'primitive' aspect of ancient Greek religion and discusses through a rich typology the many possible factors that may have shaped the Greeks senses of metamorphoses; Harold Skulsky, *Metamorphosis: The Mind in Exile* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1931), a remarkable early analysis focused on the literary sources from Homer to Woolf which among else asserts the autonomy of 'mind' in its transformations on 'personhood' and what it means to be 'human'; and Christian Zgoll, *Phänomenologie der Metamorphose. Verwandlungen und Verwandtes in der augusteischen Dichtung, Classica Monacensia*. Bd. 28 (Tübingen: G. Naar, 2004), who, among else, by examining the reception of metamorphosis in Augustan Rome and its poets, discusses the key point in the transformation of depicting and thinking metamorphoses in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, where the emphasis shifts to the continuity between the human existence and the metamorphosed self as opposed to the earlier, arguably sudden and rapturing manner of metamorphosis.