

Nomadic Performativity as an Aesthetic Alternative to Communal Acts of Resistance: Dries Verhoeven's 'No Man's Land', Brett Bailey's 'Sanctuary' & Akira Takayama's 'Piraeus/Heterotopia' as Case Studies

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Abstract

The present paper is mainly concerned with the question of “how can a performative situation be established and negotiated outside the walls of a theatre?” To this cause, this study argues for the potential of the ever-expanding notion of Nomadic Performativity, its new artistic disciplines and sporadic insights through a selected milieu of recent non-representational performative ambulatory performances: Dries Verhoeven's *No Man's Land* (2014), Brett Bailey's *Sanctuary* (2017), and Akira Takayama's *Piraeus / Heterotopia* (2017). Framing the way each nomadic performance establishes its performative strategy, the study draws on Gilles Deleuze's and Felix Guattari's 'Spatial Nomadic' theory as a methodological tool to investigate whether the productions at hand can truly essay a new way of 'thinking through practice' , and can sincerely provide an alternative mode of political debate and communal resistance to exclusionary practices and nationalist prejudices of the nation – states against migrants, refugees and asylum seekers. The study reaches the conclusion that the case studies under question disintegrate the notion of space as the physical framework for holding the theatrical experience; illustrate the interconnectedness between the sphere of 'practice' and the sphere of 'thinking'; act as dramaturgical enquiries, reflective practices, ongoing assessments, and genuine articulations of one's relationship to place; and provide a qualitative shift of consciousness that attunes to the mobile spirit of the age.

Keywords: Nomadism — Ambulatory Performances – Site-specific Performances — Dries Verhoeven – Brett Bailey – Akira Takayama

* The present paper explores and assesses the potential of the ‘Nomadic Theatre’ by investigating whether its ambulatory performances can truly essay a new way of ‘thinking through practice’ and can sincerely provide an alternative mode of political debate and communal resistance to the systems that conspicuously influence our thoughts and actions. Thus, this paper draws on the Dutch *Dries Verhoeven*, the South African *Brett Bailey*, and the Japanese *Akira Takayama* as three influential theatre makers, notable visual artists, and globally significant pioneers in the realm of nomadic performances.

Diving into three case studies of their recent contentious performances, namely, *No Man's Land* (2017), *Sanctuary* (2017), and *Piraeus / Heterotopia* (2017) respectively, the present paper thus aims at examining the innovative ways by which the contemporary theatre responds to the globalized times of new digital networking technologies, the possibilities and challenges of mobility, and the globalized, traumatized and fear – ridden experience of migration, statelessness and forced displacement. Apart from framing the way each performance establishes its performative strategy, the study aims at inspecting how the ‘Nomadic’ – as a particular mode or attitude – is concerned with the disturbance or undoing of territories and at scrutinizing the mechanisms, processes and modes of critique, creativity and resistance informed by the nomadic practices under consideration. As such, the present paper draws on Gilles Deleuze's and Felix Guattari's 'Spatial Nomadic' theory - as a methodological tool - to address these nomadic art practices.

Taking Verhoeven's, Bailey's and Takayama's challenging nomadic performances as case studies, this study thus aims at addressing and finding answers to the following research questions: First, in what ways do the selected nomadic performances remarkably stage mobility, physically mobilize the spectator, radically rethink the conditions of the stage, and outstandingly become locales for debates? Second, do the forms of these peripatetic performances echo their contents? Third, does the encounter of theatre and nomadism invite an understanding of larger societal phenomenon and recall multiple facets of contemporary predicaments and crisis? Fourth, what kinds of territories are disturbed, and are in play? and which patterns of de- and re-territorialization (modes of resistance) do emerge in their selected ambulatory performances? Finally, whether the city spectators can now claim a share of

awareness, presence and active being and can potentially become agents of social and political change by their sheer presence in these nomadic practices?

The rationale behind this odd selection is that the researcher has recognized the conceptual creativity, theoretical courage, and rich ideological dimensions offered by such nomadic experiences. Over and above this appreciation, the researcher has sensed that there is something troubling and breath - taking about these nomadic practices: Transposing everything into a constant becoming and defying the expectations of their spectators by their unlikely encounters. Accordingly, it is hoped that this paper would foster awareness of the potency of the 'Nomadic Theatre' for political protest and social change, would offer new angles of understanding the socio-political realities and pressing problems of the stateless, refugees and asylum seekers, and would open doors to re-thinking and re-configuring communal acts of resistance.

* Today's fast-paced society is constantly changing and is marked by two inter-dependent global trends – digitalization and mobility. Growing into unimaginable dimensions and reshaping society, economy and all institutions according to a new set of rules, the digital networking technologies have penetrated the inmost recesses of human existence; and this explains the profound structural transformation in today's societies. Creating a new form of society based on networking, this novelty has overcome historical limits, has changed the patterns and dynamics of people's daily routines, and has provided new capabilities to existing social organizations or networks. Besides, not only has this breakthrough transformed the temporal and spatial boundaries, but it has delivered connectedness in the palms of people's hands, has created new rules of social interaction, and has enormously affected the ideas, identities, decision making and social composition of societies in unanticipated ways.

This quantum leap in the concept of 'Networking' has become crucial in describing new social features. Societies become more and more global than local without time and space limits, and become connected as never before - not by geography but actually by technology. I.e., shared interests- rather than shared spaces- now define this new google culture. Networks become more dynamic, flexible and adaptive to these new digital networking technologies. Informative and communicative technologies have been utilized to serve the purposes of core human longings: knowing, being known and belonging (Sweet

2011: 1284-1286). People are now able to document and express their desires for protest and social change; and to render these technologies their platforms for discussing ideas and experiences, for exchanging knowledge, and for connecting, communicating, knowing and being known by others. Networks of relationships are formed in chatrooms around mutual interests. Friendships are maintained electronically (Williams 2004: 5). In the words of Sweet (2012: 93), "Google Search doesn't just bring facts faster, it brings friends closer." Moreover, place - though still significant as another layer of the complex shape of society- becomes secondary to the 'flows' of information, images and capital that increasingly shape society. Rendered really small in that sense, the globalized world thus becomes connected more than ever with each other. Each person chooses his or her route with a search engine. Everywhere becomes linked to everywhere.

* Proceeding apace with digitalization and closely associated with and reciprocally influenced by globalization, mobility as a liberating way of being , and the figure of the 'Nomad' as an agent of change emerge and advance as new leading paradigms.

As digitalization has been gaining momentum, mobility has equally become ubiquitous, widespread, and omnipresent. This dramatic change and expansion of the range of possibilities and experiences of mobility have triggered a widespread and increasing fascination for all aspects of mobility and processes related to mobility. Becoming the quintessential experience of contemporary life – styles, mobility is usually defined by intensive travel, transport and tourism. However, John Urry and Antony Elliott – insisting on pointing out mobility's 'fundamental' impact on the very constitution of identity and sense of self – claim that:

In this age of advanced globalization, we witness portable personhood. Identity does not merely 'bent' towards novel forms of transformation and travel but fundamentally recast in terms of capacities for movement. Put another way, the globalization of mobility extends into the core of the self. (Mobile Lives 2010: 3)

Bringing a person in contact with absolute freedom and wildness, this form of mobility thus ties in with philosophical reflection which happens best when the

body is in motion and at the right kind of pace. People thus become witness to a mobile - or even a nomadic or navigational- turn in society (Cresswell & Merriman 2011:29), where space has increasingly become charged with temporality, and time gets infused with spatiality, where distance is countered by simultaneity, synchronicity or co-presence, and locations become movement spaces (Nibbelink 2015: 5).

* In tandem with the nomadic life style and condensing the feelings and thinking of this era, the figure of the 'nomad' has become a hero / a popular figure of post modernity among European and US intellectuals. Originally conceived as people without fixed settlement and as embodiments of freedom, independence, responsibility and free floating existence, the nomadic subjects are widely defined as the pastoralists or kind of subjects who are intended to movement, depend on mobility for their livelihood, and shift dwelling places according to their movement (Kwaio Dictionary 1975). Relinquishing all idea, desire or nostalgia for fixity, these nomads – a sort of classless units – have always been part of the European settled populations' obsession with understanding, encapsulating and excluding the 'Other', and have always been framed and represented as sources of wonder and threat to settled populations' order, stability and progress (Peters 2006: 140).

Those scattered beyond the boundaries of the city have long been the subject of puzzlement and fantasy by those within its walls, as well as a metaphor for ways of being in the world. (Peters 2006: 141)

* This figure of the nomad involves one of the central, political, cultural, humanitarian and social issues of our time, namely, migration. Another typical trait of the modern era, migration is an act and a process of moving from one point to the other. A form of being / doing, migration necessitates wandering, changing of place, transformation and adaptation. It conjures images of people on overcrowded boats, of people trying to jump on board lorries, of dead bodies floating in the sea and of places left behind, turned to wreckage, and of refugee camps (Glossary on Migration 2004).

An investigation of the causes of human mobility shows that it is often a response to social, economic and political forces that expel vulnerable people

from their homes. People migrate for disparate reasons. Leaving the places where they grew up, crossing borders and seeking to rebuild their lives in different countries, some uprooted persons are forced to flee war, armed conflicts, political unrest, persecution, human rights' violations, hunger, extreme poverty or natural disasters. Others - not always fleeing danger - may leave their countries in search for better living conditions or employment opportunities. These journeys- which all start with the hope for a safer and better life - can however be full of danger, fear and setbacks: Some migrants may risk falling prey to human trafficking and other forms of exploitation; some may be detained by the authorities as soon as they arrive; while others may face daily racism, xenophobia and discrimination. Moreover, these uprooted persons -whether migrants, refugees or asylum seekers, creating in every member state of the European community a set of foreign 'sub-cultures'- come to be perceived in times of crisis as the 'others', the foreigners, and the scapegoats- accused of all urban ills.

Borne witness to multiple facets of crisis (social, political, financial, and cultural) that have defined the second decade of the 21st century, many urban centers in the European South become increasingly restrictive upon the reception of refugees and asylum seekers, and put forward several legal frameworks, policies and legislations that encourage distancing than interaction and social cohesion (World Migration Report 2003). Athens – a city of remarkable diversity as well as contradictions – has witnessed an increasing fixity and rigidity upon its border lines as well as concomitant limits on mobility with regard to migration and citizenship. Hence, it has been identified as a crisis – ridden landscape of unemployment, homelessness, refugee mobility and despair.

In a capital like Athens, where social and cultural divide is geographically and psychologically pronounced, the overriding gloom of deep economic recession is aggravated by the migration crisis of 2015 and the unemployment rates that have reached as high as 50 percent among the young Greeks and one third of the country's population living beyond poverty line. Receiving large inflows of migrants from central and Eastern Europe following the collapse of the communist regimes with a large number of migrants from Albania, Athens has also received the highest percentage of irregular migrants and asylum seekers from North Africa, the Middle East, South Asia and elsewhere. These mass influxes of irregular migrants- who view Greece as the major gate way to

the European union- end up being exiled, stranded or discarded (Migration in Greece 2014).

Appearing catastrophic for the local economy, and becoming equated to syndromes of mistrust, prejudice, intolerance and fear, these refugees and asylum seekers are detained in remote camps, centers and hotspots that threaten the very notion of civil society, resonate with the territorial fragmentation experienced during the colonial era, and render these refugees' lives dire and unbearable (Diken 2004: 83-106). Located in areas that are physically apart from society where they experience social exclusion, financial and legal limitations on mobility, study and work, these migrants thus feel like prisoners leading "a life in a permanent state of exception and [in] detention centers into which they are forced without trial" (Diken 2004: 83). Denied any legal status, future perspective, or possibilities for making a meaningful start on a new life, and deprived of their freedom and agency to negotiate their positions, these refugees and asylum seekers thus become psychologically affected.

* In a world that seems constantly on the move and with the previously-mentioned tremendous technological advances , also come tremendously transformative changes and mega shifts in the domain of theatre; especially during the last two decades. Evolving in close parallel to such societal developments, contemporary theatre and performance have excitedly welcomed what tested a new, and have begun to expose, reflect and respond to these 'digital' and 'mobile' turns in society. Toby Coffey (2017), head of digital development at NT has once said:

Theater has always worked with technology – that's not a new thing – but what we have now is a whole new wave of technologies that bring with them the potential for new genres of theatre and story- telling at large (n. p.).

In parallel to the challenge of digital technologies and the thrust of mobility, new pioneering genres and mediums have become recurring tropes, adding extra dimensions, expanding possibilities within the theatre, and taking the art form in new directions. Developing new paradigms, the practitioners of these trends have centered on highlighting the fallibility of definite truth, and on encouraging the audience to reach their own individual understanding by raising questions rather than attempting to supply answers. In a nutshell, these

practitioners have extended the vocabulary of theatre by becoming 'physically inclusive, spatially adventurous and technically ingenious' (Billington 2001: n.p.).

The goals of the of the reform were: to reject romantic naturalism and psychologism in favour of an aesthetic which was not based on mimesis but on a system of signs and symbols; to break the barriers between actor and spectator, the famous 'Fourth Wall,' through the invention of new relationships between the stage and the audience; and finally to shatter the unities of classical drama by means of montage of actions in symbolic space and time (Savarese 447).

* Among the recent experimental performative practices – affected by this global, capitalist society in which mobility and free choice are central issues – emerges a specific and newly invented concept and artistic experience named as the 'Nomadic Theatre'.

Over the last decade, performances become 'on the move' and are difficult to get a hold of. The reason behind this is that there seems to be a tendency towards mobility in theatre; i.e., an increase of ambulatory performances and performative installations that attempt to (physically) mobilize – and alter our understanding of – the spectators, and rethink the conditions of the stage. A newly – created, analytical and mobile concept, the Nomadic theatre – introduced by Liesbeth Groot Nibbelink – is not a genre, but a vital tool for analyzing how movement and mobility have affected and implicated the theatre, thus making way for lived spaces, for embodied, situated and local operations, and for speculating mobility at large. Constantly shifting geographical and architectural spaces for performances, this concept thus involves the encounter of the nomadic (a particular mode or attitude theorized by Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari) and the theatre (a theatre that manifests itself as a movement and thinks performance through mobility.) As such, the theater materializes differently and the nomadic as well is 'contaminated by the theatre.'

A kind of non-representational theatre and a tradition of radical particularity, the Nomadic theatre creates a nomadic smooth space of continuous variation, transposes everything into a constant becoming, stages

movement, and in turn mobilizes the stage. Rather than the bordered area of stage, events are moved outside the theatre into public areas. Fluid performer / spectator spaces are created either inside or outside traditional theatre buildings. As to the spectators, they are not seated but, individually, move around, traverse the city by bikes, wheel chairs, cars, motor bikes or mini-vans, following designated migrant - performers through the urban landscape, while listening on their headphones to auditory instructions. Alongside the mobility of theatre spaces and spectators, these nomadic performances play with the displacement of performers. Forsaking the usual center – stage position, the performers turn into guides, tour operators, or voices on an audio tape.

Understood as shifts in relative positions or shifts of borders between positions, the fluid stages, ambulatory performances, morphing theatre spaces, ambulant spectators, and occasionally disappearing performers are some key ingredients of the Nomadic theatre. Increasingly diverse and transdisciplinary, the Nomadic theatre crosses borders with other disciplines and feeds dramaturgical analysis with insights derived from media theory, urban philosophy, cartography, architecture, and game studies. Equipment such as mobile phones, mobile audio and video devices, smart phones with GPS applications and other locative media fuse with artistic and cultural practice (Nibbelink 2019: 36-40).

Preferring the experience of temporality and change, this theatre's identity is thus always in a state of transition and transformation. Distrusting the existence of universal and timeless aesthetic truths, this theatre avoids fixed theatrical frameworks and rigid boundaries, establishes new dynamic relationships between performers, spectators and spaces, and involves change - whether the physical shifting of architectural landscape, or the destabilizing of the spectators' experiences, beliefs, tastes, attitudes and habits. The Nomadic theatre thus illustrates how theatre – as a material form of thought – creatively and critically engages with mobile existence both on the stage and in society.

* In connection to (urban) mobile performances and relationships between theory and practice, Gilles Deleuze's and Felix Guattari's scheme of thought serves as a perfect lens through which to study territories – in – motion. Providing a fruitful approach to nomadism, Deleuze and Guattari have developed a mobile mode of thinking – the kind of critical consciousness that resists settling into socially - coded modes of thought and behaviour. Apart

from the stereotypical spatial 'nomad' who quite often conjures up associations with a rootless wandering of rambling vagabonds, or desert nomads, city nomads and urban homeless, the 'nomadic subject' – as maintained by Deleuze and Guattari – is the ultimate 'Other' who does not fit into modernist concepts of territory and nation – state (Engebrigtsen 2017: 42-54). Subtly evading extinction, territorialization, and incorporation in states, the nomadic subject expresses the willingness for an identity mode of continuous transitions, successive shifts, constant movements, coordinated changes, rhythmical displacements and endless becoming.

Founding ideas that are crucial to the development of the post – modern figure of the nomad, Deleuze and Guattari have thus developed their political philosophy of the 'Nomadic'. Their nomadic approach entails a certain mode or attitude that – apart from aligning the nomadic with physical movement or absence of boundaries – is concerned with the disturbance or undoing of territories. Deleuze and Guattari have described these disturbances in terms of de-territorialization and re-territorialization. For the nomad, the ground is a surface for movement, not a territory as it is for the sedentary (Paton 2006: 39). A nomad temporarily occupies a place, takes a place; yet this is a temporary hold, a staying in order to leave. To the sedentary, the ground provides the foundation for building a house; the ground is something to settle on (Deleuze / Guattari 2004: 419-422). Along with the sedentary do borders emerge as well as property, ownership, and so do inclusions and exclusions, inside / outside divisions- in sum: territories. A nomadic relation to the ground thus is the exception rather than the rule, the counter – force to order, regulation, legislation, and to all that have grown into conceptions of normality, standardization or convention. These many references to resistance, disruption, dis-settlement, and deregulation suggest that the 'nomadic' is deeply political as these terms are positioned against the state.

The state – a territorial force that does not only pertain to geographically defined areas but also to economics, finance, political institutions, science, ideologies, education and many other fields – seeks to expand on territory and to maintain its power. Yet, there is always a counter – force which destabilizes the seemingly self-evident nature of the state through de-territorialization. So, the nomad continuously appears as something/someone that comes from the outside, that is suddenly there, in the midst of things, disturbs the existing order of things; 'gets through' but escapes codes, rules, conventions, orders, laws,

contracts, institutions; re-arranges existing conceptions of what can be known, imagined, thought or done; and posits something else in return: experimentation, creativity, potentiality, and resistance (Deleuze 2004b: 253-4).

De-territorialization thus concerns the (temporary) occupation, displacement, or disturbance of territories. It engages acts that capture, change or escape the codes or laws of a system and relates to strategies that render territory into a state of continuous variation (Deleuze 2004b: 253-54). As to re-territorialization, it cannot be separated from de-territorialization; but the former has nothing to do with a return to a previous situation, a going back to 'the same', nor does it involve the establishment of a new territory. Through de-territorialization, elements are given agency or greater autonomy. Through re-territorialization, components acquire new functions within newly-created fields (Ronald Bogue 1997: 475). Ronald Bogue describes the processes of de-territorialization and re-territorialization as respectively "the detachment or unfixing of elements and their organization within new assemblages" (1997:475).

Representing the nomadic resistance to sovereign control, the nomadic subject – as developed by Deleuze and Guattari – is thus the subject who "resides on the territory of the other, always is subject of the law of the other" (De Certeau 1984: 37), but without subsuming to its power. In short, being a nomad means being an agent of change, a destructor of perfect order, a challenger of – or resistant to – the codes, conventions, and classifications that the state power rests on and must preserve, and a post – modern figure for critical thought.

Offering a tool for understanding the fluid performer / spectator relationships as acts of de– and re–territorialization, Deleuze's and Guattari's approach to nomadism can also be seen at work in the Nomadic theatre – where the urban environment partly occupies the theatre space, and performance in turn nests within and captures the codes of everyday life in the city. I.e., the city or the urban environment becomes a stage. Reterritorializing each other, the city and the stage become functions in each other's system (Nibbelink 2019: 11).

* Among the wide range and growing array of theatre practitioners whose nomadic performances have intricately engaged with Deleuze's and Guattari's issues of nomadism, de-territorialization and re-territorialization, the present paper draws on three notable theater makers and visual artists, namely the

Dutch *Dries Verhoeven*, the South African *Brett Bailey*, and the Japanese *Akira Takayama* -who have taken forced displacement, migration, and exile as their subject matters.

Over the past few years, the performances, projects and installations of the distinguished Dutch theater maker and visual artist Dries Verhoeven have drawn much attention by staging stories of transnational traveling and experiences of migrancy and diaspora, and by thematizing traveling in the 'contact zones' of today's world. Rather than having a theatrical slant, Verhoeven's current theatrical projects have shifted more towards – and inspired by – strategies known from the visual arts. That's why his current projects are perhaps considered more provocative than his earlier works. Traversing the areas of performance art, fine art and their interventions in public spaces, Verhoeven's theatrical projects set a new course that engages the spectators with diverse socio-political issues through intimate encounters or straight forwardly provocative events.

Struck by the striking indifference and gross lack of awareness regarding the potential value of art in society primarily amongst politicians, and considering this as the worst response one can get as an artist, Verhoeven thus creates installations and nomadic performances in the urban cities to redirect the spectators' attention, responses, perspectives, and sensibilities to social affairs, political issues, and human suffering itself. Taking the public space as the primary stage, Verhoeven invites the spectators to spontaneous nomadic encounters to reflect on how they use, think about, and share public spaces; thus rendering these spectators active accomplices; and giving them the chance to steer or to be co-responsible for their experiences.

Previously staged in several European cities, Verhoeven's *No Man's Land* (2014) is set in the centre of Athens. It stages one-to-one encounters, where twenty supposedly local spectators (citizens) are guided by twenty performers (economic migrants, political refugees or asylum seekers residing in the city) through the city of Athens, while listening through head phones to an audio track or a voice over providing a range of different stories, scenarios and experiences of migration, forced displacement and exile.

Starting their walk from Monastiraki square-one of the most telling examples of Athens' multi-lingual and multi-cultural life, each spectator is paired off by a performer - acting as a guide and as a witness for his/her

community - in a unique 'tour' through the surrounding streets (Verhoeven 2014). Ironically, the spectators (the citizens) are shown a side of Athens they may never have seen before by the performers (the migrants or refugees who had been forced to leave their countries and who have made the Greek capital their new home).

Questioning which territories are in play and how processes of de- and re-territorialization are put to work, this paper focuses on two distinctive territories that have been disrupted in this nomadic performance: the stage and the auditorium. Playing with the boundaries of the stage, Verhoeven's *No Man's Land* – instead of strictly separating the stage from the auditorium – renders performers and spectators share the stage and traverse the work together. Instead of fixing the stage on one particular location, Verhoeven distributes the stage (the theater space) over the city by making the performance occupies and takes hold of the indefinite domain of urban space, without claiming ownership. While traversing the streets of Athens, the spectators find the stage – lacking clear - cut boundaries – unfolds and seems to transform into a No Man's Land - a migrants' life, in-between homes, marked by displacement and social disintegration, as the route progresses. On the other hand, the auditorium-as a place of assembly- becomes de-territorialized and re-territorialized, as it has been dispersed and multiplied into twenty concurrent routes, running parallel through town with slightly different rhythms and coordinates.

Not only are the stage and the auditorium mixed, merged and put into a state of continuous variation in Verhoeven's *No Man's Land*, but the stereotypical conceptions of the migrants and the spectators as well are de-territorialized and re-territorialized by this challenging of habitual assumptions. Instead of sitting passively in a darkened auditorium at a safe distance from the stage in which a fictionalized world is presented, the spectators become active participants in a performance in the real public space. Never solely addressed on one level, the spectators become both observers and objects of vision, beholders and listeners, and present in both the theatrical and the real space. This doubleness in addressing the spectators destabilizes the spectators' perceptions. Destabilized, the spectators thus get activated to navigate and traverse the streets of Athens to perceive, think about and experience the paradoxes of a migrants' life and to reflect on their thoughts, assumptions and prejudices about the different aspects of migration.

Given active roles, positioned as co-creators of the performance, and invited to actively engage in their way of perceiving, the spectators are also invited to make blends and to shift between different modes of perception. Addressed by inputs from the theatrical space (the guide and the voice over) and inputs from the real space (the public space of Athens), the spectators are thus meant to make a blend between acting normally, walking through the urban space, and following the guides passively, while listening to the voice over, without responding verbally to what they hear. This difficulty or impossibility to blend thus destabilizes the spectators' way of perceiving and makes them wonder whether they have become spectators in the life of 'Others' or, for a moment, the protagonists of their lives.

* Like Verhoeven, the theater maker and visual artist Brett Bailey investigates current conditions of statelessness and precarious livelihoods through the nomadic form of performative installation. South Africa's leading figure in the post – apartheid theater since 1996, Bailey has always been a controversial theatre maker for interrogating the many layers, complexities and dynamics of colonial and post-colonial Africa, and for critically probing the 'fractured inner spiritual world of black African culture' for years (Bailey 2003: 6). Bailey's transition, artistic involvement and direct engagement with the darkest sides of Europe and with the issues of refugees, immigrants, racism, xenophobia and the ongoing repression of the subalterns go back more than ten years. His most iconic performances - from operas to site - specific theatrical installations - have been presented all over Europe, Australia, Africa and Latin America, and have always been raising questions about the complex relationships between Africa and Europe, the dismal realities and states of oblivion and non – existence experienced by many refugees and migrants on a daily basis, and the dementia of the EU citizens who fear them. Bailey claims:

I wanted to explore the rise of xenophobia in Europe, the securitization, the militarization, the borders that go up as sanctuaries are ruptured. But also Europeans living in fear that their own sanctuaries will be ruptured (Krueger 2013: 4).

Exploring the traumatic experience of forced displacement and the loss of both the notion of 'home' and the sense of 'belonging,' Bailey's *Sanctuary* (2017) is an installation performance that considers different notions of home:

homes lost, homes threatened, and homes yearned for (Arfara: n. p.). Straddling the territory between visual/ installation art and performance, *Sanctuary* attempts to create a notional 'shared space' on the borderline between fiction and reality while concurrently testing the limits and the potentials of art's social function. In making *Sanctuary*, Bailey aims at creating an immersive, virtual and nomadic journey across the surreal territory of a European union in crisis, in which racism and xenophobic stance are increasing, the surveillance and control of this territory's borders are growing, and the states of uncertainty experienced by people seeking refuge in Europe today are expanding. Accordingly, Bailey focuses on composing portraits of human beings on their paths to find a new place to call home. However, they end up trapped in states of limbo, fear and uncertainty, struggling to become subjects or-more precisely speaking-human beings with equal rights of a global citizenship, and are currently confronted with an 'unnatural death'.

'I wanted to make a piece about people stuck in states of limbo, and their quest for sanctuary in Europe,' Bailey says. 'People get stuck along the way, and there is a dehumanization that comes along with that' (Kruger 2013: 4).

The performers in Bailey's *Sanctuary* are eight multi-linguals and multi-cultural performers, ranging in age from twenty to seventy - years-old. They include refugees, immigrants, activists, interpreters, and engaged citizens from the Middle East, Africa, and Europe. Developing fictional characters that confront the literal or metaphorical rupturing of their own sanctuaries, Bailey's performers-most of them not formally trained actors – depart from Bailey's visual 'environments' and are engaged in the process of creating scenes around fictitious characters fleeing or fearing horrors of varied kinds and telling individual stories in tense, condensed scenes full of grim ambiguity.

A prison in the form of a labyrinth where the spectators can make their way through, *Sanctuary's* setting is an ideal form of Bailey's work. The very structure of the prison-like labyrinth – its metal fences and few dark tissues – imposes a controlled and concrete trajectory and a specific behaviour on the audience, obliging them to follow carefully designed paths. This space thus reflects the living conditions of the refugee camps in Greece and all over Europe and, consequently, the territorial thinking of colonial occupation which entails, first and foremost, a division of space into compartments. Besides, the

borders of this labyrinth mirror Europe's current schemes: the setting of boundaries, limits, margins, check points, walls, fences, and barriers; the usage of pure force; the separation of the 'insiders' from the 'outsiders'; the withdrawal of resources; the division of population into groups and subgroups; the alteration of landscapes; the immobility of refugees; and the manufacture of a large reservoir of cultural imaginaries.

'I was frustrated because I couldn't find a form to hold it, and I was afraid of the subject matter', Bailey says. 'It's so current and so big and so complex. Who is complicit in the crises that the people ran from in the first place (Kruger, 5)?'

At the end, Bailey has arrived at the idea of a labyrinth.

Upon entering this prison - like labyrinth, the spectators progress through eight tableaux of vivid scenes. Charged with symbolism, these scenes convey both the no man's land areas where refugees and immigrants are immobilized and the states of fear, uncertainty and insecurity of the European citizens who consider them a threat to their own sanctuary. These eight heterotopic spaces of disturbing proximity are introduced as often strange, invisible, marginalized and ambivalent spaces- camps, squares, rail ways, private rooms, and graveyards. Though virtual, these spaces mirror real places existing in real European societies as paradigmatic experiences of otherness. As Stavros Stavrides argues, these spaces are heterotopic spaces with open boundaries where differences meet and "may be understood as sites of osmosis and encounter, as areas in which different identities may meet and become mutually aware of each other (2)." Mirroring and yet upsetting what is outside, these spaces are worlds within worlds and are somehow considered as 'others' – isolated, concentrated, intense, disturbing, incompatible, contradictory or transforming. Having more layers of meanings or relationships to other places than immediately meet the eye, Bailey's heterotopic spaces – as illusory spaces exposing every real space and, simultaneously, real spaces creating a space that is the other – are spaces affirming difference, escaping from authoritarianism and repression, and addressing the possibility of co-existence.

* The contemporary crisis of migration, forced displacement, and involuntary nomadism is also at the core of the Japanese, Akira Takayama's oeuvre. Undoubtedly affected by the images of refugees stranded in the port of

'Piraeus' in limbo, Takayama has attempted to unravel the tragic, but nonetheless, multicultural experience, forgotten history, hidden facts, and the unheard voices of the refugees and asylum seekers that have shaped the demography of Athens. This has been undertaken by creating nomadic performances that take the theatre out of its usual context - beyond its theatrical space, and that serve as new social platforms having a new social function. Driven by the desire to update the 'architecture of theatre', expand its conventions, construct new relationships, and open up new possibilities, the acclaimed Takayama has broadened the scope of his practice by collaborating with a wide range of fields, including visual arts, architecture, tourism, and urban researches, not bringing things into stage production.

In 2002, Takayama formed the theater company "Port B" in Tokyo; and since then, he has been producing projects, installations, and peripatetic performances that utilize urban spaces as a way of engaging with cities and societies, and as a method of articulating his critique of the heterogeneous residential models found in down-town capitals. Takayama's aim is to exhort his spectators to engage with the inhabitants of these capitals in a manner free of spatial idealizations or dangerous distinctions between 'locals' and 'immigrants', show the urban environment from different human perspectives, and offer evacuation points for its spectators from the city they know (Kobayashi 2017: n. p.).

Thinking that the performers might not be necessary at all, Takayama thus begins to think about what the spectators could do with their own bodies, sensibilities, and physicality. And thinking that the stage may not be necessary as well, he begins to think that the spectators' act of going out into the city and feeling things with their bodies, seeing things and hearing things could itself be theatre. Besides, no longer considering both theatre buildings or theater performances relevant and endeavoring to embrace a unique nomadic approach, Takayama has left the theater and has gone out on the streets to show his spectators that the structures and relationships of the things seen in theater are also occurring – in complicated intertwined forms – in the urban environment. Moreover, for the sake of influencing the spectators, Takayama has thus made them realize that what they feel or are provoked to think about at the moment of seeing a play is rather more important than the play itself.

A large- scale theatrical project enacted on the streets of Athens, Takayama's '*Piraeus/Heterotopia*' consists basically of an unusual guided

walking tour to seven ‘locations of difference.’ This tour starts from Omonia square (one of the most recognizable landmarks of modern Athens and emblematic of its multiculturalism and turbulent history) and ends at Piraeus (Greece’s biggest port and gate to Europe, which has witnessed the thrust of unprecedented number of immigration waves in the country, peaking in 2015). In this iconic site of mobility and transition which serves as an ideal, if unsettling, ‘theatrical scene’ where the drama of up-rooting and displacement can be re-enacted, the spectators discover this port area with other several stops - all of which are highly public in nature - by means of smart phones, specifically designed apps and maps. Reaching physically every stop, the spectators listen to a speculative oral history as they unlock the sound audio in the app (which was written by seven commissioned writers from different countries.) Based on detailed research of the history and possible connotations associated with the specific spot, the stories being told indicate that they are not the stories of one single migrant, but that of many, and that they might have happened in this spot.

Although its spatial set-up is quite different from Verhoeven’s *No Man’s Land* and Bailey’s *Sanctuary*, Takayama’s *Piraeus/Heterotopia* highlights Takayama’s stance-that has always been-to create a site-specific and nomadic performance that adheres as closely as possible to each site, and that is more expansive, experiential and unrestrained. Aiming to yield something new by using an expansive and diffusive style and believing that this sort of experimentation does not work on stage, Takayama thus decides it is time to leave the stage, to be out-of-doors, to stage his performance in urban space, and follow the physical requirement of having to walk around.

As such, Takayama has incorporated a range of nomadic strategies in a way somewhat different from what one can expect. Rather than creating a completely different exotic space, Takayama has tried to find a space that is just on the horizon of consciousness, that is relatable- but new- to people, and that serves as an effective method of slightly testing people’s thinking process. He has managed to bring something ‘other’ to the urban environment, something which escapes, changes, and yet reverberates with the codes of the city. He has thus created a strange space, a placeless place of multiple layers, and cut off from everyday life. Unlike the utopia of fantasy, Takayama’s proposed space-informed by Foucault’s proposed Heterotopia- does exist in reality and is constructed for the purpose of description, comparison, and prediction. It is a

perfect frame for delivering Athena's mixture of harsh realities with the cultural assumptions and imaginaries of what could be perceived to be a significant site. As such, Takayama has immersed the spectators not only in the heterogeneous elements or 'locations of difference' of the city, but also in another mode of encounter where they traverse and engender the work by themselves, and are thus re-territorialized in their expectations.

Takayama's '*Piraeus/Heterotopia*' produces a range of de-territorializations other than staging the performance in urban space. De-territorializing the stage and rendering his performers absent, Takayama has presented the spectators on the stage. This by definition creates an unstable situation, where the spectators are both participants and reflexive observers at the same time. Becoming geographers, these spectators undertake a new spatial, historical, political, social, and cultural mapping of Piraeus as they navigate the route linking the seven landmarks. So, instead of reflecting on the subject matter from the distanced position of the observers, the spectators are invited to traverse and physically experience contemporary suspensions of disbelief themselves. By bringing the spectators' auditorium along, Takayama has thus turned the stage into a space in which multiple perspectives and new processes of thinking about and relating to the self and the 'other' are active at the same time. Hence, it is not only the stage, the performer and the spectator that are put in a state of continuous variation, the stereotypical conception of the 'migrant' as well is de-territorialized.

* To sum up, the global digital revolution-reaching to the farthest corners of the earth-has represented a new paradigm shift within which people come to define and understand themselves in completely new ways, has consciously and subconsciously transformed commonly accepted habits, notions and patterns of thought in its wake, and has generated new mobile experiences influencing the human understanding of the self, the other and the built environment. Equally important, mobility- apart from its physical dimension and its reference to rootless existence, perpetual displacement and the literal act of traveling – has emerged as a new paradigmatic turn, a new way of thinking conducting our lives, a new way of living referring to the intellectual space of creativity, and a new more adequate scheme of representing ourselves. Apart from being a liberating way of being and one of the aspects of freedom- being free to move around, to go where one wants to, mobility has become a counter part of the

freedom of the mind; thus, opening up new fields of inquiry and new perspectives on today's social world.

In tandem with this mobility-centered perspective, the figure of the nomad has emerged as a hero of post modernity, a liberating figure and an agent of change condensing the feelings and thinking of the era, and fitting very closely with the new political ideology of globalization. Along with this image of the nomad, the concept of nomadism has come to the fore. Referring to the kind of critical consciousness that subverts conventions and resists settling into socially - coded modes of thought and behaviour, Deleuze's and Guattari's nomadism has emerged as a tool of perpetual variation and a process of continuous differentiation that points to things in a state of change, and to the option of the always otherwise. Disturbing the notion of territory and being intrinsically connected to processes of de- and re-territorialization , nomadism thus has become a line of thought that forces us to think , and a form of political resistance to hegemonic and exclusionary views of subjectivity. That is why, the present paper postulates that Deleuze's and Guattari's nomadic attitude comes to be recognized and seen at work in a wide and growing array of theatrical performances that are intricately engaged with issues of mobility as a means of capturing, changing or escaping the codes of the systems of power that strikingly influence our thoughts and actions.

Invoking as well one of the central, political, social, humanitarian and cultural issues of our time, the notion of migration has made a diverse range of emergent theatre performances become sites for representing issues of exile, displacement, and otherness. Among the theatre makers and visual artists who have advocated an understanding of theatre as a practice that is (literally) deeply embedded within society, have rendered territories into a state of continuous variation, and have made an art out of processes of de- and re-territorialization, the researcher has cited Verhoeven, Bailey and Takayama.

Increasingly influenced by the societal developments in their form and content, Verhoeven, Bailey and Takayama have taken multicultural environments, forced displacement, migration, and exile as their subject matters. And, instead of focusing strongly on creating one intense experience that takes place in closed space, these theatre practitioners have preferred to make the experience varied, rambling, and nomadic. Underpinned by the drive to update the 'architecture of theatre', they have created theatrical experiences that take the theatre out of its usual context by managing desperately to connect

theatre to other realms, opening up new possibilities in a variety of fields, and constructing new relationships, so that the nomadic change becomes more relevant. Producing a range of de-and re-territorializations other than staging performance in urban space, the trio involve movement in their performances, generate new aesthetic experiences, impel both confrontation and interaction, and engage the spectators actively by way of observing, meaning- making and memorizing.

Though choosing to go forward as artists not as activists, the selected trio believe that if theatre is to have political influence, it should be performed in places out of the reach of political power, and should open up other bypasses or channels to get around politics. Pushing the dramaturgical activity beyond the well – frequented theatre limits, the trio have thus exposed cultural domains, have instigated a new way of political debate, and have essayed an alternative mode of uncovering, exposing and resisting the overriding power structures and ideologies in the nation - state. Creating new experiences for the audience where the city is an active participant, the nomadic performances in question have thus opened up novel forms of face- to- face performance encounters in public spaces, have shuffled the performer -spectator - space constellation, have mixed and merged the auditorium and the stage, and have distributed the theatre space over the urban space. Taking their performances to the streets and poorer parts of the city to meet the problem if not to exactly confront it, the peripatetic performances under consideration have entered society by putting different neighborhoods right in the middle of conflict, dramatizing their diverse cultural micro-narratives, inviting spectators on the stage, allowing them to experience a different way of viewing the cityscape where they wander, and de-familiarizing their perception. As such, they have managed to render their nomadic performances not only objects for theoretical reflection, but thinking practices as well.

A political intervention in the form of a peripatetic performance, Verhoeven's *No Man's Land* - the first nomadic performance in question- seeks to explore what is a multicultural environment today and what it means to live your life as a migrant. This has been accomplished by inviting the spectators to spontaneous nomadic encounters, engaging them with diverse social political issues, redirecting their attention to human suffering itself, rendering them share the stage and traverse the work together with the performers, make blends and shifts between different modes of perception, and making them observers and

objects of vision, beholders and listeners, active accomplices and co-creators of the performance. In addition to rendering the spectators co-responsible for their experiences, Verhoeven has mixed, merged, played with, distributed and put the boundaries of the stage in a state of continuous variation, while dispersing and multiplying the auditorium into twenty concurrent routes, running parallel through town.

As such, *No Man's Land* – this paper maintains – is not an ordinary play where the spectators come to understand its meaning afterwards. Instead, it gradually shapes or adjusts the spectators' opinion on migration. Positioning the spectators in such a way that they can physically experience what migrants might also experience when fleeing from their home country, *No Man's Land* deprives these spectators from the possibility to respond or verbally communicate with their guides and positions them, as well, as people who are being looked at – as 'Others' constantly in a vulnerable state of not knowing what they are supposed to do or what will happen. Furthermore, at the end of the walk and against the rhythms of such hectic area, the spectators come back together with their guides (the performers) in one group, surprisingly establishing and gradually developing personal relationships with each other, and wondering if they have become spectators in the lives of 'Others' or, for a moment, the protagonists of their lives.

A peripatetic project and an exemplary artistic reflection on this ongoing humanitarian crisis, Bailey's *Sanctuary* is another reflective work rather than a work of activism. Challenging the very notion of representation, *Sanctuary* works on the capacity of each spectator to respond and reflect on the historical roots of today's schemes of exclusion and marginalization. Opening up the installation to borderless associations and mental landscapes, Bailey thus confronts the spectators with an extended horizon of perception, and engages them profoundly with their environment in the territory between the real human beings and their representation.

Creating a hypothetical 'shared space' on the border line between fiction and reality, Bailey thus accentuates the uneasiness and uncanny nature of his *Sanctuary*. This has been attained by the limited dramatic action, the absence of linear development, the haunted setting, the spectators restricted movement and impossibility to choose their path, the affinities and disunities, the encounters and disruptions implicated by the dramaturgy, the few spoken texts in various languages, the explicit fakeness and distorted perspective which make

impossible any direct association with reality. Most of all, the heterotopic spaces created by Bailey in Sanctuary mark crucial transformations of social identities and emancipating potentialities of sharing. Besides, they are temporary reflective spaces, i.e., parallel spaces, heterotopic zones of intimacy where proximity is not a threat but a dynamic space of social potentiality, as it contains the possibility to diffuse a virus of change, and to make utopia possible somewhere else.

The contemporary crisis of migration, forced displacement, and involuntary nomadism is also at the core of Takayama's *Piraeus / Heterotopia*. Conceiving it as a crucial problem - having these refugees and asylum seekers whose voices are not heard and who are in danger of being alienated and estranged in Europe, Takayama has thus managed to focus on heterotopias and on people (migrants and refugees) who are actually part of the greater 'we', but are not included due to laws that make them 'others' or 'aliens'. Bringing something 'other' to the urban environment, Takayama has shown this environment from a different human perspective. Apart from triggering dramatized stories of personal narratives of migration and forced displacement, Takayama has defied the expectations of the spectators by creating encounters that do not follow principles of quite transformation, but encounters that evoke change, create new assemblages, and invite the spectators into states of intimacy, familiarity and otherness. Apart from alerting the spectators' perception and understanding and re-arranging their existing conceptions of what can be known, imagined, thought, or done, the created heterotopia has facilitated practices of resistance, transition and transgression. Meanwhile, the spectators' walking tours and spatial experiences have produced and reproduced 'mobile aesthetics' that create new subjectivities, new ways of perceiving the everyday spaces of the city, and new processes of thinking about -and relating to- the self and the 'Other'.

To conclude, in a city that has come to be identified as the epicenter of the European crisis and that has functioned both as a physical and psychological symbol of separation, the nomadic performances in question stage everlasting utopias of reconciliation through a very contemporary political lens, make visible those who are normally invisible in society, and provide a voice to those who normally don't have one. As such, these performances manifest the mechanism of power behind social discourses on migration, and acquaint us

with unseen aspects of Athens and diverse cultural micro – narratives hidden underneath unexplored and less frequented parts of the city. Delivering its borders to theatrical activity, this ailing yet resistant city thus becomes not only a witness and an accomplice to the diverse forms of cultural, social and political upheaval, a privileged forum for political expression, a space of detached transition, but also a venue of inspiration and great release, a powerful setting of visionary insight, and a perfect site of creativity. Undoubtedly, the city -with its endless interpretative possibilities- turns into such an attractive stage and powerful setting as it comes to be viewed as a space 'where everything means more than one thing'. It can be thus “an objective thought and a subjective experience, a changed and symbolic thing, as well as real, material, lived reality” (Gallagher & NeeLands 2014: 152).

Questioning pre-supposed ideas of 'them' and 'us', of difference and labeling, the nomadic performances under consideration thus do serve as effective methods of slightly testing people's thinking process, rendering them consider the prevailing status quo from an unexpectedly different perspective, encouraging them to question their own place and identity in the nation state, awakening them to their transformed cultural habitat, forcing them to consider their own ethical responsibilities to those who are excluded, and sowing the seeds of doubt about the systems that inconspicuously influence our thoughts and actions. These performances, thereby, put the responsibility for this cultural encounter at the spectator, and provide an actively thinking viewer instead of an unsuspecting one.

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العروض المسرحية الجواله كبديل جمالي لأعمال المقاومة الشعبية: قراءه في
ثلاث مسرحيات - " أرض محرمة" لدريس فيرهوفن، " الملاذ الامن" لبريت
بايلي، و" بيربوس / إنتباز" لأكيرا تاكاياما.

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المستخلص

تختص الورقة البحثية الحاليه بدراسة مدي إمكانية تفعيل العروض المسرحية وتداولها خارج جدران المسرح التقليدي، كما تناقش المفهوم المتنامي للأداء الجوال وأدواته الفنية الجديده وأفكاره المختلفه، من خلال مجموعة حديثه مختاره من العروض المسرحية الجواله " أرض محرمة" (٢٠١٤) لدريس فيرهوفن، " الملاذ الامن" (٢٠١٧) لبريت بايلي، و" بيربوس / إنتباز" (٢٠١٧) لأكيرا تاكاياما. لهذا الغرض، تستند الدراره الحاليه علي "النظريه المكانية الجواله" لكلاً من جيليز ديروز وفيليكس جواتاري كأداة منهجية يمكن من خلالها تقصي الآليه الأدائيه لكل عرض، و تحري مدي فاعليه مثل هذه العروض كأساليب جديدة للفكر من خلال الممارسه، و طريقه جديده بديله للمناقشه السياسيّة و المقاومة المجتمعيه لكل الإتجاهات التحيزيه والممارسات الإقصائيه للكثير من الدول نحو المهاجرين و اللاجئين السياسيين . و في النهايه ، تستنتج الورقة البحثيه الحاليه أن العروض الجواله قيد الدراره تعمل علي تفكيك مفهوم " المكان " بإعتباره الإطار المتعارف عليه لعرض التجارب المسرحيه، كما إنها تؤكد الترابط بين الصعيد الفكري و الصعيد التطبيقي، فضلا عن كونها تعد بمثابة إستقصاءات دراماتورجيه و ممارسات تأمليه و تقييمات دائمه و تعبيرات صادقه عن علاقه الفرد بالمكان، وتعتبر نقله نوعيه لوعي المشاهد تتناغم مع الروح الجواله للعصر.

الكلمات المفتاحيه:

نظريه الترحال - العروض الجواله - العروض ذات التوجه المكاني - دريس فيرهوفن - بريت بايلي -
أكيرا تاكاياما