

*Uppsala Rhetorical Studies* **U R S**

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ENGAGING  vulnerability

**CAN A PERSON BE  
ILLEGAL?**

Refugees, Migrants  
and Citizenship in Europe

**Stathis Gourgouris**

Crisis and the Ill Logic of  
Fortress Europe

Alexander Stagnell, Louise Schou  
Therkildsen, Mats Rosengren [eds]

## Stathis Gourgouris — Crisis and the Ill Logic of Fortress Europe —

### Part I — Crisis

I am taking as a point of departure Marcel Gauchet's assertion that "the constant use, in various forms, of the word 'crisis' has eroded its strength."<sup>1</sup> Especially in the last few years crisis has become an umbrella term for a whole set of alibis that impede critical thinking, or from another standpoint, a sort of "screen term" that facilitates slipping under the rug a whole lot of situations that are difficult to interpret. Thus, the use of the term prevents us from pushing up against, not only what "crisis" – as a word with multiple meanings – might signify, but also what has been recently instituted in its name or even in reaction to its existence, whether as expressions and implementations in the first case, or counter-measures and palliatives in the second.

The word "crisis", I remind us, is linked to judgment and decision and is therefore quintessentially political. It pertains as well to the faculty of distinguishing or discerning, and therefore, in some fashion, to dividing, separating. It is also, in this specific sense, linked to law – to regulation, apportionment of value, and in that sense to fundamental aspects of social organization. But all these frameworks of meaning should be considered in light of the idea that "crisis" also pertains to something that is barely stable, precarious – something, as we say, in critical condition – which tempers the elements of finality inherent in judgment, decision, or regulation. Crisis is thus a border concept, or if you will, crisis is always a concept in crisis.

For this reason, there is a sense, even if not always articulated, that crisis is nothing new, but rather endemic to the long term situation of modernity – whether as an intrinsic element of the capitalist economy (whereby it even becomes a coveted object, a target, a

project as such), or as an intrinsic element in democratic politics (whereby again it may be appear to be a necessary condition, an existential reality, and even here too a target, a project as such).

However, these two rubrics of endemic crisis – if it is indeed endemic – are entirely different. At least from my perspective, against what is conventionally assumed, capitalist economics and democratic politics are not only intrinsically unrelated but in utter contradiction with each other at an existential/structural level. Capitalism and democracy are profound enemies of each other; pushed to the ontological limit in each case, their existence means each other's annihilation, war to the death.

According then to this assertion, I cannot say that the notion of crisis operates in similar fashion in each of the two rubrics. The crisis of capitalism is not the same as the crisis of democracy. Or, we can put it differently: capitalism has a different agenda for the use of crisis than does democracy. They each put the notion into use in very different, perhaps even antagonistic, ways.

For this reason, the so-called economic crisis – whether as the crisis in financial capitalism signaled by the banking collapse of 2008, or the crisis in sovereign debt that followed virtually everywhere in Europe – cannot be equated with the crisis in political institutions, national sovereignty, political legitimacy etc., which we are seeing virtually everywhere in so-called Western 'democratic' societies. Nor is it the same with another domain of identified crisis, which is becoming ever more prominently displayed: the crisis in the cultural sphere, as it is manifested through clichés such as “the resurgence of religion” or “the clash of civilizations”.

Of course, I am not suggesting these matters are unrelated. I am just resisting easy determinist causalities: say, that the whole lot is reducible to the advent of globalization and the domination of the

neoliberal order. We can certainly debate the connections and the points of influence and effect – and there are many – but the two situations are not interchangeable.

Having said this, the conditions of crisis – the critical conditions of signifying what presently exists – make for strange equivocations. What appears to be one thing is really another – this is the quandary of the neoliberal order. So, the so-called economic crisis in Europe is a political crisis. There is no way we can discount the fact that the agents of financial capital are now wielding real political power. The fact that in 2012 bankers were appointed (not elected) as heads of state in Greece and Italy is an overt and reductive indication of what is otherwise covertly paramount. The recent election of Donald Trump, who is not only epitomizes global capitalism but is moreover a veritable brand in his own person, to the planet's most powerful political office may be the culmination of this phenomenon. Nothing is more bizarre and yet, historically speaking, perfectly logical than the fact that the U.S. Presidency is in the hands of a brand, an impersonal presence of capital in its pure form. In order for neoliberal practices to succeed in across-the-board deregulation of the market, as they purport to do, they have produced the deregulation of the political. Deregulation, mind you, is a perfect pseudonym to hide explicit regulation – laws and rules (often trumping the prerogatives of the law) – that benefit certain competitive interests over others in the name of open competition.<sup>2</sup>

It's interesting to consider the trajectory from the notion of “self-regulation” (of both market and government), which is a classic liberal motif, to “deregulation” (of both market and government), which is a neoliberal motif. Both are pseudonyms, as I said – classic liberalism never allowed self-regulation to exist either, in the sense that it remained reliant on the state apparatus as safeguard for the

market. But a shift can be seen in these pseudonymous practices historically: while classic liberalism is nominally invested in a “minimal state” (regardless of what actually takes place historically), neoliberalism is definitely invested in a “maximal state” – in fact, to such an extent that in effect it mobilizes totalitarian practices.

This maximal state politics conducted literally by economic agents is the present politics of the so-called crisis. In this specific sense, crisis is a manufactured reality that is then taken to be ‘natural’ insofar as its purpose is achieved. In old terms, we could speak of a “crisis-effect” in the sense that crisis produces specific subjects and specific realities that are then taken to be natural. The critical condition thus becomes a crisis-infused norm, with a culture all of its own.

In light of this present critical condition, the need to reconsider the democratic politics necessary to encounter this condition, and particularly as far as the situation in the European Union is concerned, a radical democratic politics that will unmask the ill logic (or para-logic) of its foundation, has become paramount.

## Part II. Conditions of Ill Logic

To speak of this foundational para-logic means to inhabit the present as a condensation of historical time. From this standpoint, the experience of what is current isn’t what flows through us and onward to the future but how this flow actually brushes our experience against the grain.

In this sense, the current so-called “refugee problem” in Europe is neither just current nor really exclusively dependent on the refugee phenomenon. It is rooted deep in the social-historical dimensions of what has come to understand and call itself “Europe” over time

– the name being more of a social-imaginary signification than mere denotation of a cultural-geographical reality.<sup>3</sup> My impetus here is to push beyond the analysis of current events to the consideration of a profoundly ingrained structure of psycho-historical knowledge that fashions what is believed to be a logic of government, of governing self and other, but is instead a project of self-deconstitution that takes a whole lot of others down with it.

Let me register a simple historical and philological point: The word “refugee” first appears in French after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes (1685) to designate those Protestants (Huguenots) forced to flee their rightful place of inhabitation in search of asylum – as is the ancient Greek word for refuge or sanctuary – in other dominions. In this specific way, *les réfugiés sont les refusés* in an uncanny way of matching the presumed right of acceptance and inclusion with the condition of rejection and exclusion. Refugees may nowadays be defined by the condition of seeking or securing a refuge, but in essence the opposite defines them. They exist because they have been refused.

My concern here is to point to an endemic logic in the social imaginary of the European Union that works precisely in this perverse way of reversal – of Orwellian double-speak. This is already inherent in the EU’s constitutive logic of borderless borders that exists way before the so-called refugee crisis. In fact, it is a logic that produces this so-called crisis, even if there are specific social-historical events that play their role. I insist on “so-called” because I am amazed at the ease with which the notion of crisis is bantered about with presumably different qualifiers. A few months ago we had an “economic crisis” now we have a “refugee crisis” – but are they different? Are they a matter of crisis? Or is the language of crisis merely the *modus operandi* of this formation?<sup>4</sup> I will give a sort

of flash account of the elements that affect this situation by asserting what I see as five conditional terrains of “Fortress Europe” both contemporary and historical.

### *Condition #1*

Before we even consider the problem of borders and the so-called refugee crisis, I would assert that, as it stands now, the EU is a failed socio-political formation simply because the economic element has taken over the sphere of the political at a primary level. I am not making an old and trivial Marxist point about the primacy of economics over politics. I am pointing to the fact that the EU has succeeded in an unprecedented way to hand over the domain of political decision to financiers – literally: whether in terms of bankers being appointed as prime ministers, or in terms of a reigning body of finance ministers (the Eurogroup) which, although it does not even have legal status by the EU constitution (thereby not subjected to any oversight), is in essence determining the political fate of European peoples.

This condition signifies the same overall mechanism that, in the name of globalization, has ensured the debilitation of national sovereignty despite the nominal persistence of the nation-state form. Contrary to the conventional assumption, the key institution of national sovereignty is not the state per se but the national economy. The moment that the workings of national economy are dismantled, national sovereignty de facto ends, no matter the name or the flag that sustains the apparent symbolic existence of a state.

In retrospect, as far as the EU is concerned, the logic of this condition seems to have been always in effect. The Eurozone is nothing but a symptom of the original and unadulterated logic of the EEC. The original EEC (European Economic Community) could be read

just as well as the ECC: the European Community of Commodities. In the category of “commodities” I would most certainly include the European peoples themselves.

As this logic unfolded from its initial liberal framework to the neoliberal one, it produced the monetary union as a playground for the most powerful financial interests worldwide, a kind of money laundering scheme through the taxation of the poorer strata. Banking debt was nationalized and made a burden to bear by a community of commodified consumers.<sup>5</sup>

Although to say “nationalized” invokes again the parameters of national sovereignty, note that this very nationalization of debt signifies the exact opposite: further erosion of national sovereignty. At the same time, a “community of consumers” means precisely a community beyond national borders, in the sense that they are consumers of the European idea presumably made available to them via a whole array of commodities, one of which is, of course, (national) debt itself.

We’re talking about quite a scheme.

### *Condition #2*

The Eurozone presumably signifies the ultimate deterritorialization and dissolution of borders. But this dissolution of borders is only in place for the benefit of capital, which doesn’t recognize borders anyway. Again, we might see this as the incursion of the economic into the political: Borderless sovereignty is an original figure of capital, and its achievement in the form of the EU is but the actualization of a logic that has been in place and in effect for a long time.<sup>6</sup>

What this formation really put into effect, despite the presumption of the notion of community, was the dissolution of national sovereignty without, however, diluting the elements of racial

nationalism. In fact, the contrary happened. The more national sovereignty was effectively defanged, the more nationalism and racism were consolidated. The even greater failure of the EU project in this respect was that it brought about the very thing it was supposed to have overcome – in a kind of bizarre perverted manifestation of Hegelian *Aufhebung*, where the element of preservation in the act of overcoming becomes the most dominant. For, instead of quelling nationalist violence, the EU produced the intensification of nationalist (and always in that sense, racist) violence in ways that now present themselves as even more complicated, given the entwinement of multiple social-cultural modes across the very borders that were presumed to have been abolished.

We are talking about quite a scam.

Which in fact is becoming plainly evident in the veritable construction of actual borders – barriers, fences, walls – to block the racially excluded others exactly on the marks of previous national borders. The failure of the EU in this respect is gigantic and insulting to its very premise to overcome the catastrophic legacy of previous European history. The utterly perverse replay of history where the Dachau and Buchenwald concentration camps were put to use again to house the masses of racially others who managed to slip through and infiltrate the native terrain is a perfect such symptom.<sup>7</sup> As is Denmark's parliamentary decision to confiscate the material wealth of incoming refugees as advance payment for their being allowed territorial entry.<sup>8</sup>

In this sense it's a no-brainer to name these new borders in the presumably borderless union spaces of exception, and we do not need to rely on Giorgio Agamben's thinking to do so – but, of course, he called it early on. Up until very recently – indeed, the summer of 2015 when the Syrian front collapsed and hundreds of

thousands of people ended up in Greek beaches, many of them dead on arrival – the EU rhetoric cynically manipulated rubrics of humanitarianism in order to steadily implement and enhance a militarization of its borderless borders.

In 2013, after the two major Lampedusa disasters, the so-called Mediterranean Task Force (in effect a consolidation of Frontex and Europol) began the process of military patrol of the seas under the presumption of averting nautical disasters but in effect creating conditions of interdiction with the aspiration of dissuading passage into EU land.<sup>9</sup> Remarkably, such practices of interdiction in the high seas were soon deemed counter-productive because the alleged saving of peoples from drowning (even though it meant internment on land) was seen as a motivating indicator for greater influx. The highlight of these efforts – the extraordinary program instituted by the Italian government under the revitalized Roman name *Mare Nostrum* – seemed to be a moment of national sovereignty reasserting itself in the midst of nation-state depoliticization by the political arms of global capital. Yet, even in this case, a national government and a national budget (unsustainably high – 9 million Euros a month) were being put in the service of EU elite interests, thereby confirming the loss of sovereignty even while acting in its name.

Note incidentally the fantastic list of names given to the operation of protecting Fortress Europe: Xenios Zeus (this was a Greek operation), Hermes, Triton (previously Frontex Plus), Perseus, Mare Nostrum (Italian), Poseidon Land. The Greco-Roman alphabet of control is to me one of the most cynical expressions of EU bureaucratic elites, and it confirms their appropriation of Mediterranean antiquity as a means of dismissing and discounting the modern realities of southern (or eastern) populations, including of course the civilizational categories of what is presumed to be non-European.

But to return to this issue of militarized so-called humanitarianism and pseudonymous national sovereignty: The so-called refugee crisis and the problem of borders that it brings to the forefront shows clearly that there is no way that single nations in the south facing the sea can deal with Europe's migration problems in return for economic incentives. On the contrary, the perverse and nightmarishly Orwellian face of pseudonymous values (as I have been describing it) seems to have no conceivable end to its capacity. I recall Gideon Rachman in *The Financial Times*<sup>10</sup> making what was in effect a perfectly Swiftian Modest Proposal, except it was not meant to be satirical: He offered as a solution the idea that Greece would be substantially forgiven its debt, in exchange for sealing its northern land borders completely and storing the influx of refugees in concentration camps on the islands where they land, until the Syria conflict were to be resolved at which point the refugees would be returned. Far be it that this is a singular expression by a recognizably cynical voice in best neoliberal fashion. The idea of Greece turning into Europe's concentration camp in the outer Schengen zone was certainly bantered about in the corridors of Brussels, and it continues to be palpably real; it only remains to establish exactly what its price will be.

### *Condition #3*

Let's draw back and consider the broader geographical history:

While the presumed dissolution of borders in the EU was put into effect not only in order to facilitate commodity circulation but also movement of labor according to the original logic of the EEC (as labor too, we must not forget, is a commodity), it nonetheless produced strict borders of exclusion in the labor market, in terms different from the ethno-political lines of (the otherwise, in any case, dismantled) national sovereignty.

So, extraordinary *internal* borders were imposed to contain the massive migration of cheap labor sought after from spaces surrounding the EU: first, from collapsed ex-Soviet societies (Balkans, Caucasus, Poland etc.), then new waves of postcolonial migration (Asian/African/Caribbean) chiefly into the UK, France, Holland, and finally the post Iraq and Afghanistan (and now Syria) refugee debacle.

While the formal distinction between refugees and immigrants may need to be maintained, the element of cheap/undocumented labor remains a common factor in both and very much the determining element: if not quite as cause of migration, then certainly as its effect or end point.<sup>11</sup> In this regard, the German Chancellor spoke with unusual sincerity compared to her European counterparts when she hailed the new influx of Syrian refugees as a great infusion of labor force in the German economy. But also, by the same token, the 2016 agreement brokered between EU and Turkey, which would have never happened without German insistence, is a scandalous pretension in all kinds of ways but certainly in presuming to distinguish political refugees from labor migrants.

In this overall framework, there is much merit to Aamir Mufti's position that every country that becomes part of the EU is implicated inexorably in Europe's colonial and post-colonial condition regardless of national history.

So, for example, Greece – which was never a colonial power and in many ways has a history of being colonized (not in terms of land occupation but more in terms of occupation of its imaginary, as I argued long ago in *Dream Nation*: “the colonization of the ideal”) – comes to inherit all the problems of post-coloniality insofar as it participates in massive immigration because of its EU status. People who come to Greece (about which they know nothing) seeing it as

Europe bring to it all their assumptions about Europe (or the West), and when they might subsequently encounter a similar xenophobic reception of the culturally Other, in a country where what is Self and Other in the context of the West and the East is inordinately complicated to say the least, they cannot be expected to clarify the difference. This condition of cultural/political befuddlement pertains both to the immigrants and to the Greeks.

So, in this sense, the rise of neo-Nazi or neo-fascist elements in Greece (but I would argue this to be the case for other such countries – say, Hungary or Poland) is not merely a rehashing of old indigenous nationalism, but a kind of intra-European (and in that sense, colonial) racism, which would otherwise be absent in those countries.

Indeed, we are talking about a scam in which those scammed involve virtually everyone but the highest elites.

When the EU moved against Italy in spring 2014 and dissolved Mare Nostrum, “Europe kept the negative side, the militarization of immigration control, and rejected the positive, the saving of immigrants and refugees from drowning at sea and their transportation to European land. In this fashion, it remained consistent with two basic principles that pertain to EU immigration policy for almost a decade: the closing off of legal pathways to Europe, which is the main reason why immigration became criminalized, and the continuation of militarized border control. In this sense, Europe selected in essence to persist in a dead end that it itself had created” (Fotiadis, *Merchants of Borders*, 74).

The ultimate project in this quandary is the creation of a high-tech panopticon system of surveillance on the outer borders of the EU, which would achieve same time virtualization of all that takes place in the vicinity. This was officially inaugurated as Eurosur

(European System of Border Surveillance) in October 2013, and has yet to achieve full implementation but provides the perfect image of Fortress Europe in critical condition. “Frontex is everywhere present and nowhere exposed” (Fotiadis, 103).

#### *Condition #4*

In the last decade, before things just unraveled, the internal dimensions of ethnic, racial, and cultural exclusion grew immensely under the project of the presumed EU consolidation. While divisions of this kind existed since the outset of decolonization, they were severely augmented by the EU formation, partly because the influx of peoples from the periphery increased under the cultivated aspiration of greater flow and absorption into the Euro socio-economic sphere.

But most significant was another factor. In the era of national sovereignty, the problem of assimilation of postcolonial populations was conducted within the limits of each colonial state itself, with its own specific racist exclusions. But with the EU forming in response to and as consequence of globalization, the vision and promise of the European dream elevated the (post)colonial problem to an overarching *civilizational battlefield*. Suddenly, the antagonism ceased being simply between colonial metropolis and colonized periphery within one metropolitan language as reference framework for an array of peripheral vernaculars. Instead, enormously abstract and loosely defined social-imaginary constructions were conceived to be in an existential battle: the West against the East, Christianity against Islam, secularity against religion, modernity against tradition, Europe against the non-European.

But there is a grave irony here that remains largely unacknowledged. The presumption of those constituencies that advocate a



civilizational battlefield is that they are thus enacting a war against the persistently ensconced colonial structures that spell the failure of the decolonization project. Yet, it was colonialism that invented the terrain in which civilization became the goal in the battlefield. What is unique in colonial political practice is that all institutional parameters – economic organization and infrastructure, legislative and executive political practices, legal measures, decisions about religious or cultural practices at large, and in essence all governmental dimensions – were coded as imprints of “civilization”. Even brutal punitive violence was conceived to advance civilization in the colonies. So, from this standpoint, the newly emergent civilizational battlefield – whatever may be the expressions of anti-Western radicalism it animates – is nothing more than an extension of the colonialist administration paradigm.

The most recent political collapse of the Middle East and the Maghreb, as a result of the Iraq war and the Arab Spring and the consequent lawlessness that ensued all around the region, found very receptive ground in this civilizational battlefield, eviscerating political expressions by turning them into cultural ones. Consequently, what was made especially dramatic was the possibility that the Arab world, at least in its Mediterranean terrain, may in fact be seen as *internal to Europe*, recasting in a modern mirror aspects of the Medieval world and doing so in ways that presume the survival of a sort of non-nationalist (or prenational) cultural imaginary that has remained persistent through colonization.

The postcolonial populations born and raised in Europe’s colonial states (in addition to new immigrant flows that came to rest upon the same structures and spaces as part of this internal condition) were consolidated in this respect across borders within Europe that were no longer reducible to colonial/postcolonial national-cultural

boundaries. Instead, borderless Europe came to establish recognizable internal borders on the markings of what was considered to be culturally non-European in its very midst. As a result, dismissed and disaffected, large masses of people (many of whom were actually citizens or legal residents) turned to practices and beliefs that were demonstrably anti-European and harkened back to formations of a “cultural nature” that are imagined to precede colonization and are foregrounded as antidotes to postcoloniality. This is how we should account for what has been called “the resurgence of religion” and the subsequent civilizational war in the name of apocalyptic faith presumed to override politics.

#### *Condition #5*

This civilizational war is conventionally assumed to be the result of the failure of secularism/laïcité in Europe. But this failure is due not to the intrinsic exclusion that secular mentalities allegedly impose by definition, because if they are to be true to their name, secular practices are tantamount to democratic practices. Rather, it is due to the institutionalized ethno-culturalist exclusions that buttress *secularist* institutions in European countries.

Secularism, as institutional ideology that veils and whitewashes racism and ethno-cultural division (which is always linked, of course to class division, but also cannot be reduced to it), provoked the greatest damage against the democratic demands of a bona fide secular sociality. It is important to understand that secularism is not necessarily a secular condition. Not because, as the hopelessly simplistic argument goes, secularism hides a prevailing Christian imaginary still intact, as if people who discovered that God is their own poetic creation only exist in the “West”. Rather, as I have been arguing for some time (in *Lessons in Secular Criticism* and elsewhere),

because, in betraying their democratic underpinnings, the institutional structures of secularism/laïcité have also lost their secular capacities, often masking a kind of *nationalist transcendentalism*. In this sense, secularist dogma effaces democratic doxa and thus becomes fertile ground for all sorts of other equally transcendentalist contrarian forces.

In this situation, if “religion” has become a convenient weapon against these institutional markers of exclusion, exploitation, and oppression, it does not signify a return to tradition or what have you, no matter how often this is underlined by adherents and opponents alike. All this is but ideological dressing – necessary to drive the point home, but no more, and in fact, in this respect, perfectly deceptive.

At the same time, the situation also signifies the failure of late-capitalist consumerism, one of the EU’s most revered aspirations in that it was presumed to produce the flattening of differences (cultural, ethnic, racial) on the way toward a community of commodified peoples. Instead, massive numbers of post-colonial youths abandon the techno-economic palliatives offered to them devalued of any other political currency and turn to presumed-to-be-spiritual modes of liberation. To what extent these modes too are undoubtedly exploitive and oppressive should concern us, but it cannot cover the legitimate causes that force these youths to move from one mode of collective illusion to another.

In this respect, the need to develop forms of left governmentality becomes even graver, since the situation is in part also a failure of the Left to handle it. And as long as the Left continues to be implicated in what are liberal fancies of multiculturalism and identity politics, it will remain disarmed versus the upsurge of “anti-European” (or “anti-Western”) sentiment, even though such sentiment is thoroughly justified historically.

Here, I would argue that there is much to learn from Michel Houellebecq’s recent novel *Submission* (2014). I say this fully aware of the author’s deplorable politics, his misanthropy and his racism, but also perfectly willing to acknowledge his bona fide literary significance, very much in the tradition of Ferdinand Céline and a whole range of such writers in the European canon. Literature is often the most accurate way to unlock the mysterious ways of history, not only of the past but also the visionary horizon of the future. It works in ways that philosophy and science cannot – because it bypasses the dead-ends of analysis and enables the (trans)formative path of *poietic* thinking.

Literary thinking characteristically invites us to think against the grain – even against the grain of literature itself. Houellebecq’s text too invites us to read it against itself. Whatever may be the author’s intentions, the text begs the question: Is Islam really a foreign element? Even Islam’s constitutive element of submission can be said to be deeply imbedded in the European Christian traditions and simply been repressed – Etienne de La Boétie spoke of voluntary servitude already in 1549. The sort of political Islam that Houellebecq is configuring piece by piece in this hardly far-fetched fantasy is not Europe’s Other but Europe’s Self.

This to me is the profound lesson of the book, whatever may be Houellebecq’s political intentions. The plot does not simply represent how Europe is punished for its left/liberal/humanist decadence and conquered by Islam. On the contrary, it shows how Islam comes to renew Europe and extend its imperial power, to rejuvenate its medieval Christian structures, and consolidate its dependence on capitalist institutions which are imploded by capitalism’s own effects of depoliticization, deculturation, and despiritualization.

In this regard, Houellebecq is suggesting that the European Com-

munity of Consumers/ Commodities might entail actually the slow demise – the suicide – of ‘Western culture’ though not necessarily the end of capitalism per se. Instead, the book’s fantasy unfolds an image of how Islam, as a *European force*, actually reinstates Europe’s cultural and political dominance and reinvigorates its otherwise stagnant capitalism.

It’s a truly perverted argument, but nonetheless hardly implausible – at least, not too far from the EU’s constitutive ill logic. The idea that Islamist radicals are essentially one and the same as Le Pen’s fascist “nativists” is all over the book. If we read carefully, it becomes apparent that Houellebecq – despite himself – is crying for the one thing whose gigantic failure figures as a glaring hole in its absence: the need for real left governmentality, which will have shed its attachment to all the liberal principles of multiculturalism and identity politics – that actually favor both the nativists and the Islamists – and would apply itself to a bona fide anti-capitalist democratic mobilization that would dare the alteration of EU institutions in order to salvage whatever still exists in the European tradition that is worthy of the history of free-living, free-thinking, self-governing peoples, regardless of the markings of social (cultural, ethnic, racial) difference.

## Endnotes

1 Marcel Gauchet, “Democracy: From One Crisis to Another” *Social Imaginaries* 1.1 (2015) pp. 163–187.

2 I elaborate on this in “Responding to the Deregulation of the Political” in *Lessons in Secular Criticism* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), pp. 145–180.

3 In the official declaration of the European Commission “New Narrative for Europe” (2014), the unabashed leitmotif is literally “Europe is

a state of mind” See: [http://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/new-narrative/documents/declaration\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/culture/policy/new-narrative/documents/declaration_en.pdf)

4 Singular in making an argument precisely in these terms has been Etienne Balibar’s recent work, collected in *Europe: Crise et fin?* (Paris: Editions Le Bord de l’eau, 2016).

5 Much of this thinking unfolds in exemplary fashion in the post-Autonomia work of Franco Berardi and Maurizio Lazzarato.

6 For all its faults, Fredric Jameson’s *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Verso, 1991) was totally prescient in this regard.

7 Rick Noack, “Germany is housing refugees within Holocaust-era concentration camps” in *The Washington Post*, January 30, 2015.

8 David Crouch and Patrick Kingsley, “Danish parliament approves plan to seize assets from refugees” in *The Guardian*, January 26, 2016.

9 I draw here extensively from the excellent research of Apostolis Fotiadis in his *Merchants of Borders: The New European Architecture of Surveillance* (Athens: Potamos, 2015). Henceforth quoted in the text in my translation.

10 Gideon Rachman, “Greek Debt is the Key to the Refugee Crisis” *The Financial Times*, January 26, 2016.

11 For a brilliant text on what vexes the distinction between refugee and migrant, in addition to an incisive perspective on the overall problem discussed here, see Chloe Howe-Haralambous, “The ‘(anti-) virus’ in Europe: conjuring ‘refugees’ and ‘migrants’” in *Politics/Letters* 6 (November 25, 2016). <http://politicsslashletters.org/2016/11/the-antivirus-in-europe/>