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Closing frame: Broken geographies

ABSTRACT

Dead bodies piled on the beaches of Greece and Italy, the dramatic combination of popular revolt in North Africa against local dictators and the transitional regimes of the World Bank and the IMF, the growth of the Islamic State in the Middle East, the augmentation of migration across the Mediterranean, and the perpetual intensity of Israeli colonialism in Palestine, have pushed a once peripheral margin off the coasts of southern Europe into an unforeseen centrality. Concentrated in this relatively restricted geopolitical space are the tensions, conflicts and contradictions that constitute the modern world. Beyond superficial theses on the 'clashes' of civilization and religion lie far deeper structures and tendencies. In this chapter I will argue that it is the latter that transform the present-day 'emergency' in the Mediterranean into an insistent interrogation of Occidental modernity as a political and cultural settlement. What will be offered, through a consideration of the contemporary arts, particularly in their visual and auditory forms, is a journey that permits the registration of other modalities of belonging to both the Mediterranean and modernity. This will mean a consideration of art as a critical disposition. This allows us to consider what is irreducible to the formal language of passports and identity cards, juridical definitions and border controls. The histories that are sustained and suspended in the signs and sounds of contemporary visual arts and music allow us to break the boundaries that seek to contain the sense of the present and the self.

Introduction

Countries in revolt, territories in flames, dead bodies piled on the beaches of Greek and Italian islands; the dramatic combination of popular revolt in North Africa against local dictators and regimes previously aided and supported by Occidental governments, together with the World Bank and the IMF; the emergence of the Islamic State in the Middle East; the augmentation (directly created by European law and legislation) of 'illegal'

migration across the Mediterranean; the perpetual intensity of Israeli settler colonialism in Palestine: the combination of all these elements has pushed a once peripheral margin off the coasts of southern Europe into an unforeseen centrality. Concentrated in this relatively restricted geopolitical space lie the tensions, conflicts and contradictions that constitute the modern world. Beyond superficial theses on ‘clashes’ of civilization and religious antagonisms lie far deeper structures and tendencies. In what follows I will argue that it is the latter that transform the present-day ‘emergency’ in the Mediterranean into an insistent interrogation of Occidental modernity as a political and cultural settlement. This involves considering the grounds of critique that are available in the margins of a modernity that earlier consigned them to the periphery. This is something that we learnt from listening to the archipelago of voices of black male critics from the Caribbean: Aimé Césaire, C. L. R. James, Frantz Fanon, Edouard Glissant, Stuart Hall, Bob Marley. All of which implies unpacking both common sense and much of what, institutionally at least, passes for accredited knowledge.

For what emerges from the details of popular uprisings in North African cities, migration to Europe from Africa and Asia, or the colonial construction and management of the Middle East, are a series of interrogations that profoundly displace existing political, spatial and disciplinary categories. Definitions of geopolitical areas, of justice and democracy, of deploying the assumed ‘neutrality’ of sociological and historical protocols, can no longer be taken for granted and blithely applied to the situation at hand. The premises that previously required the structural subordination and exclusion of others, reduced to objects of political practices and disciplinary protocols, can no longer hold. The complex entwining of political perspectives and critical inquiry is stretched. It threatens to snap as the universalism of its language is increasingly interrupted and contested by unauthorized bodies and narratives. To dislocate and decolonize the prevalent narrative is to translate its languages into another space, to expose them to questions that were earlier unauthorized (Chambers 2017). It is to insist on the shift from the universalist assumptions embodied in perspectives and practices that has implicitly proposed Europe as method to considering the altogether more open and destabilizing idea of the unbridled world as method. This is not merely a shift in perspective. Insisting on the

asymmetrical relations of power that structure the present and its grip on the past, what is put forward here takes us beyond a simple overturning of the previous picture.

For, way beyond discussion of Europe fraying at the edges and breaking up, the situation today requires an engagement with those central assumptions and processes that are being increasingly rendered vulnerable as the outside world physically and symbolically annuls time and distance and folds in on the centre. Once separate shores now acquire dramatic and unsuspected intimacy. Their histories overlap with ours. This, we might say, is a postcolonial problem, and it draws us inescapably into the underbelly of modernity. Such a scenario proposes a critical injunction, not a domestic definition. Reorienting ourselves here produces an emergent critical space, an unsuspected archive that calls for the investigation of the archaeology of deep histories and the registration of lengthy swells. It announces an open, perhaps incurable, wound. It is where, finally, in acknowledging the power of geography to map and apparently explain the Mediterranean we need fully to engage with the geography of power. Even the cartographical factuality of the Mediterranean, seemingly securely defined within its shores as a stable maritime space between three continents, turns out to be fractious. Even the most superficial historical glance informs us that geographical sense depends on the position of the observer: not only from where we look, but also how and whose look has the power to impose itself, subordinating other perspectives to a secondary and marginal role. The contemporary framing of the Mediterranean is not eternal. It is a historical map. It is the product of historical processes and forces; it is itself history.

If this precise perspective, the outcome of European power, can be dated from Napoleon's seizure of Egypt from the Ottoman empire and the subsequent transformation of the Mediterranean into the theatre of European struggle for world hegemony, the colonial carve-up of Africa and the invention of the 'Middle East', there were and are other 'Mediterraneans' that persist and resist that monochromatic view. The colonial creation of the Middle East, despite promises to the local Arab populations, was produced in the secret Sykes-Picot agreement in 1916 and subsequently transformed into the British and French mandates after 1918. On arriving in Damascus

in 1921, the French general Henri Gouraud purportedly kicked the tomb of the Kurdish leader An-Nasir Salah ad-Din Yusuf ibn Ayyub, better known as Saladin, and announced the return of the West and the victory of the Cross over the Crescent. This was a return after an interregnum of eight centuries, following the expulsion of the Crusading 'Franks' from Palestine by Saladin. In the intervening period there had been other Mediterraneans, framed by powers and perspectives that arrived from Damascus, Baghdad, Fustat/Cairo and Istanbul. If the subsequent tracing of European ambitions led to the invention of modern borders and nations – Syria, the Lebanon, Iraq ... Israel – other maps continue to interrogate that settlement. The past does not settle down so easily; in fact, it often refuses to settle or to pass. And then, beneath these shifting cartographies of power there remain the daily tissues of how such maps are lived and traversed, how they are rendered meaningful and translated, how their points of reference are uncoupled from an explanation and reassembled in another.

Crossing boundaries

The present day semantic machinery that produces the definition of the migrant, the refugee, and the supposedly 'illegal' presence of non-citizens, just as it equally produces definitions of the Mediterranean and modernity, is never neutral. It is precisely in these terms that it becomes important to understand that migration and racism are not about emergencies. If they are persistently presented in this manner this only covers up the profound structural questions and interrogations they pose. Any serious considerations draw us deep into the formation of Western democracy itself. Here we are forced to register the structural exclusion – invariably via the bio-politics of race and racism – that has historically shaped that democracy, both its languages and modalities of governance. Faced with drownings at sea, death in the cities of the Middle East, racial surveillance and killings in North American cities, unrepentant settler colonialism in Palestine, we simultaneously also confront the brutal hypocrisies and

moral limits of Occidental humanism. Marking the foreigner – invariably non-European, non-white, and non-Christian, fundamentally ‘queer’ with respect to the normative – as the eternal threat and foe signals the limits of a precise history and its structures of power. It means, beyond the hysteria of the headlines, to be brought into the uncomfortable place where we need to begin to speak of the critical and political responsibilities of the processes and languages that have brought us to where we are today. This transforms understandings of the present movement of migration from the multiple souths of the planet, and its consistent shadowing and shaping by racism, from considerations of a transitory phenomenon into touching and testing the profound contours of a historical condition. Here we are talking of structured, historical processes and apparatuses of power. For what we encounter here in unpacking migration and racism are the very mechanisms of knowledge and power that legitimate the present state of affairs.

To seek simply to adjust the present historical and political alignment of Europe and the West in the light of these questions is clearly impossible. There is no liberal settlement able to accommodate the sedimented violence and injustice involved. Arguments can no longer be brought home to a secure analytical haven and stable political settlement, there to be rendered explicit and transparent to our interests and desires. There lies the paradox: any critical homecoming of this sort requires a cut-off point, a margin, a border, between ‘us’ and ‘them’. To escape this foreclosure we are necessarily forced to stretch the language of our understanding. This will leave holes and doubts in the account. It also means that we are mapping movement with broken geographies that do not merely confirm our position in the world. This suggests the adoption of other lexicons of understanding, even uncoupled from the linear rationality of critical prose. Here considering contemporary art under another light we can propose a journey in sounds, silences and images that permit the registration, not necessarily the knowledge, of other modalities of belonging to both the Mediterranean and modernity. Beyond the disciplinary limits of existing political science, international relations theory and accompanying geopolitics, this leads to considering contemporary art as a further, unsuspected critical disposition; not merely a form of historical testimony or sociological witness. This

manner of reasoning permits us to consider what is irreducible to the formal language of passports and identity cards, juridical definitions and border controls. The histories that are sustained and suspended in the signs and sounds of the contemporary visual arts and music allow us to cross those frontiers and break the boundaries – both legal and disciplinary – that seek to contain the sense of the present.

The sound continuum of the Mediterranean has been continually sliced up in different cities into the diverse sonic signatures of the *kapadis* of Istanbul, direct cousin of *rebetika* in Athens, or else Neapolitan song, the *ma'luf* in Tunis, flamenco in Seville: communalities in difference. Here sounds situate the voice, the singer, the musician and the participating audience in a very different place from that prescribed by inherited roles, adherences and identities. Consider the famous singer Rosa Eskenazi, a Turkish-speaking Sephardic Jew born in Istanbul and raised in Thessaloniki, Komotini and Athens. Rosa perfected her art in the taverns of Pireaus singing in Greek, Turkish, Arabic, Hebrew, Italian, Ladino and Armenian. She was accompanied by oud and lyre players, and in the 1930s at the height of her fame was recording both in Athens and Istanbul. Her biography is only one of the multiple musical maps transmitted around and across the Mediterranean. Elsewhere Tony Gatlif's beautiful film on Rom culture *Latcho Drom* (1993) takes us on a travel in sound from north-west India to Egypt, and then on to the Balkans, southern France and Spain. Then consider the significance of such female performers in modern *rai* music as Cheika Rimitti, Chaba Fadela and Chaba Zahouania. In each instance we are relayed in sounds that overwhelm the stability sought in official accounts and institutional renderings of what turns out to be multiple variations of an ongoing Mediterranean composition.

Many of these voices – women in *rai*, heavy metal in North Africa and the Muslim world – are frequently reduced to silence by commercial structures and political strictures (LeVine 2008). Nevertheless, the sound leaves a trace, installs an interval, and activates Deleuze and Guattari's idea of the 'deterritorialization of the refrain' (2004). Sound – the immediacy of voice, body and locality – both crosses time and moulds space, promoting the sonic event of becoming other that inaugurates the new. It is precisely

this potentiality that transforms music from the plane of artistic and aesthetic embellishment to that of a critical cut. The sound is not an echo of an existing order, but rather the reverberation of another order, still in the making. Opposed to the rigidity of many an institutional explanation and its static insistence on the securities of local and national belonging, musical passages propose an altogether more frayed and fluctuating map. They allow us to appreciate how the multiple histories of the Mediterranean are suspended and sustained in bodies and sounds that trouble and escape the official register.

To reason with sound and vision, that is, to transform both from objects of disciplinary attention (sociological, historical, anthropological) into affective forces and critical apparatuses in their own right, is to open up a further and more extensive analytical frame. Historically, sounds and images have continually criss-crossed the Mediterranean, stitching it into multiple accounts while simultaneously establishing commonalities. Both music and the visual arts deepen our sense of the archive introducing a sonic and visual reach besides and beyond the prevalent alphabet of the document and the written text. This brings into critical play further languages, able to sound out both the past and the present in an unsuspected and instructive manner. To consider the work of the Palestinian visual artist Mona Hatoum, for example, is to be drawn into a subtle geopoetics that is constantly redrawing the confines between poetics and politics, aesthetics and ethics, encouraging us to break the frame of established understandings (Ianniciello 2014). It leads not simply to displace the Mediterranean as a stable object of aesthetically and ethical enquiry, but also, through insisting on the ultimately ungrounded nature of language and belonging, disturbs and interrogates our continual desire to domesticate it. It frees the past up, unshackling memories from a single established narrative, permitting its shards to contribute to other compositions of the present. The world here emerges as an altogether more disquieting and unstable work, its languages always under way, without the promise of a definitive homecoming. Art operates a cut, an opening, a space of reassembling, a permanent interrogation. Such considerations clearly invest many other contemporary woman artists working in and with the Mediterranean (MatriArchiviodelMediterraneo 2016).

The Mediterranean as archive

Perhaps here we can begin to appreciate the possibility of turning the Mediterranean itself into an archive, altogether more fluid than those land-locked institutions seeking to establish the record in museum objects, artistic exhibits, catalogues and text books. The sea itself, site of the sedimentation of stratified histories, cultures, bodies and lives, is no longer a dumb object, confined and explained by terrestrial concerns, but poses a vital historical and political challenge. The sea itself produces social, historical and cultural formations (Chambers 2008). Historical mobilities and cultural exchange have continually skewed an apparent maritime barrier into a passage, a bridge and zone of passage. Reasoning in its vicinity, and at sea, serves to extract the existing lexicon of modernity from the assumed stability that guarantees its authority. Our assured conceptual vocabulary suddenly becomes vulnerable. The very terms of identity – democracy, citizenship, freedom of movement, the nation-state – turn out to be procedural practices, open to contestation and modification, rather fixed anchors in our daily life. History returns, not only in the present swell of migration from the ex-colonial world, but also in the turbulence and change investing the conceptual and historical understanding of our very lives. The Mediterranean, in both accounts, becomes re-centred as a laboratory of modernity.

This brief journey takes us into a far deeper space than that proposed by a glance at the map or a hurried look at the headlines. It is also a space that is altogether more extensive and unstable than the existing explanations offered in the classroom and textbook. To consider the Mediterranean as an open, unfinished archive, where the past consistently comes to meet us from the future, is to delink it from the deadly inevitabilities of a unique chronology. Even more decisively, it is to insist on the critical distinction between the idea of the archive – contested and always under construction, fundamentally tuned to the future – and the understanding of history that takes custody of the past, seeking to affirm, institutionalize and monumentalize its presumed truth. This provocative distinction is evoked precisely in order to wrench archives away from their subordination to the

historiographical operation. It is to argue that the materials that constitute an archive inevitably exceed the linear narrative and the drive for coherence that history seeks to impose. The discrete, the singular and the exceptional, as both combinatory and discontinuous, all prick and punctuate that telling of time. And the instruments of the telling itself, its language, prose and poetics is always a limited exercise. More bluntly, history as the complex constellation of the past that continues to impact on the constitution of the present is politically and culturally too important to be left solely in the hands of historians. This altogether more agonistic understanding of the past as an on-going critical construction, called upon to answer different interrogations from diverse locations, necessarily undoes the disciplinary protocols and premises of an institutional narrative called 'History'. This is what Wolfgang Ernst refers to as the necessity of 'decolonising archival memory from the supremacy of historical discourse.' (2016: 9) It is, of course, to reframe our very understanding of the past (and present) when the property rights that guarantee the liberal authority to narrate and explain 'our' world are contested, interrogated and interrupted by other modalities for recognizing the pertinence of the past in the proposals of the present. This is not simply to register unrecognized modalities for conserving and transmitting the past: from cuisine to music making and the contemporary visual arts. It is to insist on the necessity of an epistemological rupture. After all, even reasoning in the most banal and pragmatic terms of knowledge formations, who in identifying and explaining the making of the modern Mediterranean reads Arabic and can access and receive the cultural and historical textures of its African and Asian shores? To bring such limits into view is to register an ignorance that cuts across and disturbs the bird's eye view we are accustomed to adopt. It is already to move closer to the ground and into another rougher and discontinuous conceptual landscape whose political and cultural implications are immediately apparent.

As a minimum, we need to register the hypocrisy of (European) liberal humanism and its racial apparatus of power and recognition that continue to discipline the hierarchization of planetary forces and relations. The subsequent and necessary struggle to humanize the objects of colonial rule means to affront the inequalities that allocate individuals to diverse orders of importance and rights. It means to name and confront the violence required

to contest the dehumanization of the colonized and his or her subsequent afterlife in the contemporary world. This means to slash the pretensions of liberal dialogue, as though those involved – the colonizer and the colonized, the European and the Arab, the white person and the black, the Israeli and the Palestinian, the citizen and the migrant – are equal figures. The structures of power and history do not offer a playing field of equally distributed powers and resources. The relationship is inherently an unjust relationship disciplined by violence. The fundamental universalism here lies not in the purported ethics of equal exchange between abstract actors, but in the concrete violence that produces and structures the encounter. This is the ‘violence’ of which Frantz Fanon speaks in *The Wretched of the Earth*. It is a structural, historical, cultural and epistemological violence, justified by race and racism, sustained in a continuing colonial disposition of powers.

The brutal materiality of such relationships, directly inscribed in bodies as living archives, marked by colour and provenance from the ex-colonial world, is where the *roots* and *routes* of both contemporary migration and modern Europe become one. It is where the European responsibility for colonialism and racism returns. It forces us to untie the historical knots in which we have been taught to conceptualize the world. Ultimately, to acknowledge the ‘right to have rights’ (Hannah Arendt) is to register and refute a geography of powers that consistently negate them. It is to trouble modern national state building, driving a wedge between abstract principles of democracy, citizenship, rights and the endorsement of an emergent radical humanism daily attuned to planetary co-ordinates. The existing maps of modernity and the Mediterranean, those employed to identify and track today’s migration and co-ordinate its geopolitics, are themselves based on the inscription of asymmetrical relations of power. The historical elaboration of ‘we’ and ‘them’ through national institutions and discourse (from the family and the school to the mass media and the museum), consistently requires the structural requirement of alterity. To every inside and its domesticating procedures there is a corresponding outside. The geography deployed, seemingly neutral in its measurements, betrays the historical and cultural distance between its particular point of view and those it is mapping, locating and identifying. From the two-dimensional projections of orthodox cartography to the technologically

sustained imaging procedures and digital mapping devices available today the powers inscribed in the framing device, the map, remains unchanged.

The argument here, of course, is about how to turn this situation around and deviate its trajectory. To recognize Europe as a historical, cultural and political construction is both to provincialize its pretensions on the world and to expose the powers that permit those perspectives to pass as universal. This is not simply to undo the cartographical rationality we have inherited – Europe at the centre of time and space – but it is to understand, above all, how that presumed centrality is the product of the colonialism that transformed the world into Occidental property. The map is always an instance of arbitrary violence, establishing confines, rendering territory transparent to appropriation, excluding other renditions and claims, cancelling those that exist beyond and below the cartographical operation. In its unilateral drive, the map operates with a colonial imperative; which is to say that we still live in a colonial present. The question then is how to smudge it, shift its co-ordinates, rewrite, disturb and cut up its ‘-graphy’ with the historical interrogations of what it has silenced and failed to measure. One exit, hinted at earlier, is to return to the idea of deploying other languages, ones rarely considered to have critical import – music, literature and the visual arts – and add their poetical import to the injunctive of historicizing the historical narrative, sociologizing the sociological explanation, mapping the geographical gaze. This would be to promote a politics whose cultural charge far outstrips the rational limitations of disciplinary locations.

Such alternative mappings are intrinsically associated with the promotion of *discontinuity* and shifting the premises of present pathologies. If, as Nietzsche and Foucault insisted, understanding the history of the present is not a question of origins, but of breaking apart the continuity that the present seeks to impose on the past, then the categories employed, secured in the affirmation of our subjectivity and its grasp of the world, are transformed into a choppy, open sea, a problematic (Nietzsche 2008, Foucault 1984). To insist on shifts, ruptures and contingency is, against the stasis of conceptual order and its naturalization in common (and critical) sense, to historicize, in the profoundest sense of the term, cultural analyses and political prospects. To cut into the existing conceptual order in this fashion is to insist that history, its bodies, powers and arrangements,

bleeds without a designated origin or finality. The world is up to us. This terrifying responsibility cannot be consigned to final causes. As Walter Benjamin so powerfully put it:

The term origin is not intended to describe the process by which the existent came into being, but rather to describe that what emerges from the process of becoming and disappearance. Origin is an eddy in the stream of becoming, and in its current it swallows the material involved in the process of genesis. (1977: 45)

Clearly this is to open up a disquieting and turbulent archive, one that refuses to settle down or conclude, or respect the authority of present arrangements. The repressed returns. The negated insist on their right to narrate. The past refuses to pass. Think of Islam and the constitution of modern Europe: the external cultural and historical force against which Europe has apparently defined itself, particularly in the Mediterranean, for over a 1,000 years. Islam's rapid spread across north Africa and Asia, and its apotheosis in the most powerful nation in Europe in the sixteenth century – the Ottoman empire – is undeniable. Yet, if we look further into the recesses of the past a more complex tale begins to emerge. Beyond the simple dualism of Christianity and Islam constituting one another in mutual opposition, we can also insist that Islam has been consistently *internal* to the making of Europe since the eighth century. The Order of the Teutonic Knights, although initially founded around 1190 to protect pilgrims in the Holy Land soon transferred to Transylvania, following the defeat of the Crusaders by Saladin. The Order was subsequently expelled by King Andrew II of Hungary in 1225. Five years later it launched the Prussian Crusade with the declared intent to Christianize the Baltic (and extend its territorial powers). Further north, at Uppsala in present day Sweden, human sacrifices to appease the Norse gods were practiced every nine years until the eleventh century. In 712 Berber troops under Arab command had crossed the Straits of Gibraltar. Twenty years later they had crossed the Pyrenees. If at the end of the fifteenth century Islamic culture had been ethnically expelled from the Iberian peninsula it had simultaneously been firmly established in eastern Europe, almost reaching the walls of Vienna, by Ottoman conquest. So, Islam has been continually present within large areas of Europe for a far longer period than Christianity in other areas.

This, too, is an archive, rarely considered when referring to the complex composition of modern Europe and the hysterical responses to modern day Muslims and pinnacled mosques punctuating the European skyline.

In the modern narration of the nation (and its subsequent distillation into disciplinary protocols) this altogether more messy and undisciplined formation is both simplified and censured. The retreat of Charlemagne's troops across the Pyrenees in 778 led to the slaughter of his rearguard under Count Roland at Roncesvalles in northern Spain. They were attacked and annihilated by prevalently pagan Basque mountaineers, and not Arab forces. Commencing with the anonymous eleventh-century *Chanson de Roland*, the battle was subsequently romanticized into a chivalric struggle between Christians and Muslims. The same theme is again repeated almost five centuries later in Ludovico Ariosto's epic poem *Orlando Furioso*. So, what is this about? Simply seeking to set the record straight? No, the purpose here is diverse and divisive. Reintroducing the traces of other geographies and histories, allows us to unlock the authority of a unique accounting of the past that supports and perpetuates an existing hegemony in the present. Troubling and disturbing inherited explanations we can uncouple an emergent knowledge from a predetermined frame. This allows us not merely to modify understandings of the past-present, but also to interrogate the frame, discipline and consensus that desires the past to be safely packaged in a manner that will placidly illuminate, and certainly not trouble, the present distribution of powers.

To borrow from contemporary vernacular musical practices, pioneered in the black diaspora of the Caribbean, in particular Jamaica, this is to insist on the practice of dubbing the already inscribed to release a series of pasts that come to us from the future. This is to mix the musical and cultural practices of King Tubby and Lee 'Scratch' Perry in their Kingston studios with the philosophical considerations of the German historian Reinhart Koselleck on the semantics of historical time sustained in the space of experience and horizons of expectation (2004). Remaining with dub is to argue for working with the leftovers and cast-offs of the official account. This inevitably draws us into the unofficial and subaltern telling of time, of the histories from below of the vanquished rather than the victors, once again to evoke Walter Benjamin (1969). To cut up and re-assemble the

past in this manner permits a radical recomposition of the present, forcing open the gaps, lining memory with the forgotten, cracking the institutional archive to permit its contents to enter other tellings, sounding out its contents and setting them to diverse, even adverse, rhythms. Brushing history against the grain, diversely accentuating its beats, allows us not simply to register the dramatic re-centring of the Mediterranean in a more innovative fashion than that of superficial historical cycles. It also allows us to track the decomposition of the present in the brutal materiality of death at sea, xenophobic legislation and the increasing suspension of the democratic state in the name of emergency and security precisely at the point where modernity's trumpeted mobilities are increasingly snarled in legalized homicide, frontier detention and camps. At this point, the history of today's migrant becomes the history of modernity itself. Only by confronting this hard truth will it become possible to unwind the present from its colonial premises and enter another future.

This listening, looking and learning from the underside of the narrative, from the geographical and historical periphery, leads to a very different cultural mix; one that politically and intellectually challenges existing distinctions and barriers, allowing us to subtract a contemporary telling from the normative narrative. Just as the above comments are largely inspired by the 'failure' of Occidental history, sociology and philosophy, to account for what they purport to explain – modernity, migration and the hybrid formation of modern life – in a similar fashion, we are encouraged to draw on an altogether more extensive lexicon. This would ultimately be more worldly in its resonance, more sustainable and attentive to detail in its reach, disciplining a sense of the political by a justice yet to come.

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