Precarious Urbanity: 'The Jungle' (Calais) and the Politics of Performing the Urban

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In recent years, the notion of urbanity has drawn heightened interest from postcolonialists. Conference titles such as "Performing the Urban" (EACLALS 2017), "Reinventing the Postcolonial (in the) Metropolis" (GAPS 2013, formerly GNEL/ASNEL), or "Re-evaluating the Postcolonial City: Production, Reconstruction, Representation" (ICPS—PSA 2012) indicate that both "city" and "urbanity" have come under intensified scrutiny in the field, something that is also articulated by an increasing proliferation of publications on this topic (see, for example, Chakraborty and Umme; King; Varma). In such research contexts, postcolonial studies has frequently focused on cities outside Europe, or on former imperial centers such as London. However, a series of recent historical events are now calling for a fresh consideration of the status of various continental European cities. Wars and social unrest in North Africa, the Middle East, and Afghanistan, and highly precarious living conditions in a variety of other regions, have seen millions of people leave their homelands and flee to Europe to seek security, shelter, and a future for themselves and their families. In this context, cities such as Athens, Berlin, Brussels, Calais, Munich, Paris, and Vienna have been challenged in their boundaries, facilities, and institutional structures, frequently failing to provide adequate support to those either wanting to settle or passing through. This process has seen the appearance of shanty-towns, refugee camps, or so-called "tent-cities" (in German "Zelt-Städte"), evoking by-now-familiar images of precarious living conditions to be found in, and on the outskirts of, cities around the world (cf. Davis).

In this article, I will not only shift the focus to continental Europe, specifically Calais, but also inquire into the combined themes of performance, urbanity, and politics; and yet, the themes discussed here are relevant for a range of locales in which people live in unauthorized, semi-permanent, and thus highly precarious forms of settlement. In existing debates, "performing the urban" is typically understood either in terms of "performance culture" (urban dance, urban music, or street theatre) where the city is "figured metaphorically through terms such as 'stage', 'scene', 'set', and 'drama'" (Makeham 151; Mumford; Schechner). It is also often viewed as the product of embodied performance where performances are considered "moments in which the city is enacted, lived, and defined" and where performative urbanism is seen as an "innovative strategy of placemaking" beyond the intentions of city planners (e.g. Hou, Spencer, Way, Yocom;

Wolfrum and Brandis). Both approaches share a sense of "city" as a quasi-positivist marker that signifies geographical or spatial situatedness (performance *in* the city).

My goal in this article is to explore the notion of performative urbanism beyond the idea of theatricality/intentionality and beyond the idea of essential geographical or spatial situatedness, by positing *performing the urban* as a politicized and politicizing practice. Inquiring into the *politics* of performing the urban means recognizing that "urbanity" may well be read in social performance that is not intentionally designed to produce urbanity, and that urbanity may be transplanted, i.e. that performances of the urban may take place outside "city" as a clearly delineated geographical, spatial, or formally acknowledged entity. What is more, inquiring into the politics of performing the urban means exploring the power and privileges, the mechanisms of social inclusion and exclusion with which the markers of "urbanity" and "city" are entangled.[1] As Judith Butler writes, extending her concept of gender performativity, "women, queers, transgender people, the poor, the differently abled, and the stateless, but also religious and racial minorities" have in common that they are marginalized, albeit differently, in and through performative (hetero-) normativities; where they seek to lay claim to the very process of establishing what counts as the norm, this will be troublesome and will require collective action (*Notes* 33). I argue that the signifiers "urbanity" and "city" are similarly indebted to such privileging as well as marginalizing forces, where not everybody's settlement is acknowledged and legitimized as urban, and where laying claim to urbanity is a potentially highly precarious act. Indeed, when viewed in the light of refugees' often unsustainably dangerous living conditions in semi-permanent forms of settlement, "urbanity" and "city" reveal the extent to which they rest, quite existentially, on (exclusivist) claims to humanity, dignity, and citizenship.

In this article, then, the urban is understood to be always performative, whether or not located in officially demarcated city space and whether or not engaged in intentionally and/or consciously. My understanding of performativity, similar to Butler's, is a performativity regulated, structured, and policed by authoritative discourses which normalize some bodies and ostracize others, instigate rules and laws, and enforce normativities not least through the official documents of the nation-state. This politicized perspective is further inspired by, and extends, Michel Agier's work on refugee camps. Agier observes that refugee camps are potential originators of a "new urbanism"; that inhabitants "take possession of these places, or more exactly of these originally 'out-place' spaces, so as to make them into places of life, relationships and identification" (*Undesirables* 180).

Agier thus locates "new urbanism" in a transformative practice outside the city, a practice that creates sociality and identity. However, considering the *politics of performing the urban* means taking another step. It means asking: How is the marker of urbanity entangled with power and precarity? How, when, and why are human performances understood in terms of urbanity? Who can access "urbanity" as a

marker of identification, and who polices such access? What happens if such access is denied and what are the consequences of resisting authoritative allocations of "urbanity"? At a time when geographical boundaries and borders of all natures and sizes are again more heavily monitored; at a time when people are frequently detained or under threat of having their rights of mobility severely infringed; indeed at a time when racisms and populisms are surging whilst so many are abandoned to live and/or travel in highly precarious and often inhumane conditions, there is again a heightened necessity of scrutinizing the spatial categories with which versions of human sociality are regulated and policed. After many efforts to critique "the nation" and "nation-state" as both limiting and privileging entities, "the urban" is in dire need of critical attention, as the harrowing events in the region of Calais urgently remind us.

I. "The Jungle" of Calais—Symbolism, Deprivation, and Necropolitics

Owing to its proximity to the British continent, the French town of Calais has been known as a central port for trade, travel, military action and/or invasion ever since it was used by Roman troops to attack Britannia in Antiquity. It continues to be used by thousands of travelers on a daily basis, moving from France to the UK and back, and has long been a central point of so-called "illegal immigration" to the UK. Most recently, Calais has become associated with desperate scenes of refugees—refugees from Sudan, Afghanistan, Syria, and other North African and Middle Eastern countries—trying, and actively being prevented from, travelling across the Channel. Calais has also become known for its failure to offer adequate housing and support, even temporary, to those arriving. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the UK has welcomed astonishingly few refugees in the last couple of years and might even fail to settle as many as 20,000 (Lyons), as a consequence of Theresa May's hardened stance on immigration. Because many of those seeking to escape war, terror, and/or economic precarity have family in the UK, or see a better future there since they speak English, large groups continue to set out from the camps every day to try and hide in lorries or jump on trains or ferries to cross the Channel. This is an exceptionally dangerous and often life-threatening enterprise, with at least 70 deaths since 2010 (Calais Migrant Solidarity).

In the context of these daily migrations, the refugee camp "the Jungle" has garnered particular attention. Before its formal demolition in October 2016, the site was, and continues to be, a central point of assembly for refugees travelling across Europe, forming a counterpoint to refugee camps along Europe's borders such as on the Greek islands or outside Melilla. Heightened attention to the events in and around "the Jungle" is likely due to its central location inside Europe, and also the likely reason why the camp has become rich in symbolism. Indeed, for Agier, "the Jungle" and other camps around Calais (for example in

Grande-Synthe) have become "symbols of the desire of European governments to convey to the world the message that national borders had been closed" (*Borderlands* 11). This message has been used for political campaigning at both ends of the political spectrum, and on both sides of the Channel. Whilst liberal voices have highlighted the refugees' plight to persuade governments to downscale immigration barriers, right-wing forces have pictured refugees as a threat necessitating stricter immigration rules and even a formal separation from the EU. After Britain's pro-Brexit vote, Calais' mayor Natacha Bouchart upped the political pressure on the UK by suggesting the Calais border could be moved back to British soil, ending France's obligation to prevent refugees from entering the UK (Mortimer).

Such public attention from politicians, local authorities, and also journalists has come in stark contrast to the legally unrecognized status of "the Jungle," its lack of governmental support (Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi 4; Davies and Isakjee), and also the explicit hindrance of volunteers who are trying to help where the authorities will not.[2] In effect, French authorities have translated the symbolism of border-closing into a double process of segregation. By obstructing volunteer work, they have undermined projects in which both French and British charities and/or individuals would join forces. Where they have treated refugees as unworthy of support, and Calais' citizens as in need of protection, the authorities have further enforced an inequality of entitlement and epistemological barrier between both groups (see also Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi 6; Rigby and Schlembach). The implication is that refugees and Calais' citizens do not, and should not, share the same conceptual space of humanity.

In this configuration, the choice of "the Jungle" as a name for the Calais camp makes some sense. First embraced by refugees as an ironic comment on their disastrous living conditions (Harker), the term can well be read as a form of writing back, that is, as an appropriation of the refugees' positioning by politicians and authorities as unworthy of proper housing and a safe passage to the UK. Indeed, as Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi report: "When asked about the term, participants appropriated it, often to demonstrate that they were being 'treated like animals'" (3). Unfortunately, this ironic stance has also back-fired, encouraging right-wing politicians and press to continue hurling insults at refugees based on a colonial discourse of cultural (and, implicitly, racial) superiority. While Harker therefore makes the case to stop calling the camp "the Jungle," I use the term like others (Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi) in inverted commas in recognition of its emergence, particularly because many alternative terms—including "the camp" or "refugees"—are also problematic, since they have also been used in derogatory ways.

"The Jungle" itself is best understood as a "self-organized refuge" (Agier *Undesirables* 39; Lewis *Becoming* 21), a term that denotes "hiding-places or provisional shelters in the forest or in town (squats), sites of rest or waiting between two border posts, where people stop for a while, always ready to leave" (Agier *Undesirables* 39). Importantly, "self-organized refuges" are "extremely precarious as

well as informal, invisible or even illegal" (ibid). As has frequently been noted in the press, academic articles, and charities such as Care4Calais, living conditions in "the Jungle" were in many ways precarious, undignified, and dangerous for a variety of reasons. Situated on the outskirts of Calais, away from general view, the site of "the Jungle" is located next to two chemical plants. Here, migrants were forcibly moved by the authorities from a variety of smaller camps (or "Jungles") in 2015. The grounds are heavily polluted with asbestos, so that any kind of digging would have been inadvisable. The stark precarity of this condition is revealed when considering that asbestos has been banned in France from either being imported or sold; yet refugees were made to subsist there to realize their goal of getting across the Channel, as neither the French nor UK authorities would tolerate their passing (Channel 4 News). The hygienic conditions in "the Jungle" were rudimentary at best; one activist reports how she would step over "small rivers of human faeces from overflowing toilets" (Lewis *Becoming* 21). The soil was difficult to keep out of tents, clothes, and even food. In cold weather conditions, fumes of burning plastic would fill the air, as people burned anything they could get their hands on to keep warm (ibid). Next to these alarming health conditions, life was dangerous particularly for women and children who were under heightened threat of sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and abduction into permanent states of forced prostitution. Unfortunately, heavy police presence did little to alleviate these dangers. In fact, police reportedly did not care about incidents such as sexual abuse when they occurred (Quine).[3]

There was further a harrowing contrast between the cultural and ethnic diversity in the camp and the boundaries that were implemented by the police. When intending to accompany a pregnant woman to a hospital by car, volunteer Lewis's car was stopped at one of "the Jungle's" entrances and they had to argue with the police to be let out (Lewis, personal communication, 3 Dec. 2016). While state forces did next to nothing to improve the living conditions inside "the Jungle," the site was effectively turned into what has often been called a "caged Jungle," with fences, a wall paid for by the British government (Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi 13), and a substantial police presence that would oftentimes hinder movement and subject refugees to unmotivated acts of both physical and verbal violence. Suitably, therefore, Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi have suggested Achille Mbembe's term "necropolitics" for the authorities' behavior, illuminating how "the Jungle's" residents were "kept alive but in a state of injury" (Mbembe 21; qtd. in Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi 6).

II. Reading Urbanism

Under these somewhat difficult conditions, volunteers and refugees built an impressive infrastructure, in particular in the last year or so of the "the Jungle's" existence. Supported by both monetary and material donations, hundreds of makeshift homes (wooden frames on a pallet

base) were erected. Gradually, a variety of institutions were set up, ranging from educational and religious centers, to a theatre, shops, cafés, restaurants, and night clubs. Paths in the camp morphed into main roads lined by shops and cafés; squares formed, received place-names, and the population grew significantly from an estimated 1,300 in 2014 to an estimated 10,000 after the Brexit vote on 23 June 2016 (Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi 1). Building and improving the infrastructure garnered attention from artists and other creators who either came into the camp to help out and/or take life in the camp as an inspiration for artistic projects. Dutch artist and photographer Henk Wildshut designed an entire exhibition called "Calais—From Jungle to City," which he collated between the years of 2005 and 2016 and in which he notes his amazement with "the Jungle's" transformation: "In January 2016, I counted 40 restaurants, 43 shops, 6 hamams, 8 bakers, 4 hairdressers and 7 bars/ discos." Gráinne Hassett, an Irish architect who built a women and children's center in "the Jungle" (August 2015), writes:

> There was a kind of life there that UNHCR camps simply don't have […] The cafes and restaurants, churches and mosques, even a bookshop and a radio station—the stages for strong social and cultural structures had somehow been forged out of nothing. (Qtd. in Wainwright)

For former dean of the Cass School of Art and architect Robert Mull, "it's a hell of a place and utterly distressing in so many ways, but it was fascinating to see how different groups were establishing a kind of *urbanism* which felt very authentic, very deeply rooted in their cultures" (ibid.; my emphasis). And French intellectuals and press who similarly credit "the Jungle" for its singular infrastructure speak of a "jungle urbaine" or a "village of the world": "La Jungle de Calais est une ville-monde, une forme urbaine à venir" (Thiéry). According to Cyrille Hanappe,

> "Multicultural, solidarity, ecological, dynamic, sympathetic but also dirty, chaotic and ill-equipped, the jungle of Calais was not born from a utopian ideal, but from this mixture of chance and necessity that gave rise to all the great Cities of history. The jungle is the *village of the world*, the district of humanity, the forum of the societies." (translation my own)[4]

What emerges from these statements is that those who seek to present "the Jungle" in a positive light stress its varied infrastructure, improved housing, and feel of community life, and thus, even sometimes explicitly, its *urbanity*; this is clear from formulations such as "from Jungle to city," "urbanism," and "village du monde." By contrast, critical voices, whether this is the right-wing press, the mayor of Calais, or politicians—and I will not reproduce their statements here—stress a *lack* of infrastructure, preferably referring to it as "the camp" or simply "migrants," thereby implying a disorganized, criminalizing, and parasitic as well as temporary existence. Clearly, this is not only a geographical but also an epistemological fixing whereby people are systematically alienated from each other and confined to different positionalities in a civilizatory hierarchy.[5]

Despite the obvious energies and attachments invested by the inhabitants of "the Jungle" and by volunteers into building the infrastructures described above, which can be understood as powerful ways of home-making and worlding, it is important to note that positive representations of "the Jungle's" urbanity are, of course, part of the symbolic over-determination previously mentioned (and it is also evident that this article is similarly caught up in these politics of representation). These attributions of urbanity do not come from the inhabitants themselves; indeed it is difficult to obtain wholesomely positive accounts from this group—or "group*s*," as "the Jungle" was highly diverse in its population. The lack of wholesomely positive accounts is most likely due to the fact that living conditions in "the Jungle" were ambivalent, oscillating between temporary home and daily violence, neglect, and harassment. For good reasons, Calais Migrant Solidarity stress the deadliness of the Calais and Dunkirk border life, rather than its thriving urbanity. There thus emerges an unevenness, not only regarding assessments of "the Jungle's" (lack of) urbanity, but also regarding the positionalities of those engaging in the assessments. In the light of these imbalances, this article cannot possibly determine whether or not "city" or "urban" are adequate markers to describe "the Jungle." Instead, my intention is to unpack the politics of reading or not reading activities in and around the camp in terms of urbanity, and to see how these readings highlight, hide, and/or reinforce conditions of precarity. If refugee camps produce forms of "new urbanism" (Agier *Undesirables*), or are *seen* to produce forms of "new urbanism," these notions will easily trigger hostility and aggression if they are seen to counter the logics engaged by the authorities. Forms of new urbanism will emerge in a web of discourses suffused with generalizations, marginalization, racism, and violence. In such a context, being read as performing urbanity—and reading performance in terms of urbanity—is potentially highly political.

III. Necropolitics vs. Claiming the Sphere of Appearance

To further illustrate the political dimension of locating "urbanity" in human sociality, it is worth exploring Achille Mbembe's notion of necropolitics. Necropolitics denotes a type of violence that is administered through constriction: "being deprived of the opportunity or freedom to improve one's hazardous or miserable condition" (Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi 7). Mbembe defines necro*power* as a "subjugation of life to the power of death," a condition in which "vast populations are subjected to conditions of life conferring upon them the status of *living dead*" (Mbembe 39-40; my emphasis). If we accept, as Davies, Isakjee, and Dhesi argue, that the French authorities in effect subjected the residents of "the Jungle" to such a regime of power— through both action and inaction (i.e. depravation), as well as through restriction of movement and enforced relocation ("new Jungle"[6])—then it becomes clear to what extent the images of a self-organized, even vibrant urbanism in "the Jungle" must have been read

as a form of resistance. In clarifying this point, it is insightful to engage with Mbembe's discussion of Frantz Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth*. For Mbembe, Fanon's text provides an example for "the very way in which necropower operates" (26):

> The town belonging to the colonized people […] is a place of ill fame, peopled by men of evil repute. They are born there, it matters little where or how; they die there, it matters not where, nor how. It is a world without spaciousness; men live there on top of each other. The native town is a hungry town, starved of bread, of meat, of shoes, of coal, of light. The native town is a crouching village, *a town on its knees*. (Qtd. in Mbembe 26-27; my emphasis)

In the passage quoted by Mbembe, Fanon describes a scenario of colonial occupation, something that Mbembe extends in the second half of his essay to talk about contemporary wars and also, briefly, refugee camps. In his discussion, Mbembe does not pick up Fanon's theme of urbanism ("the native town" above); yet I suggest that Fanon's concept of "a town on its knees" is significant for the context of refugee camps, precisely in the context of (attesting) "new urbanisms." Fanon's "town on its knees" is a town that has bent to colonial occupation, a town that has been crushed in its very capacity to provide safety, identity, and sustenance. Those who dwell here are posited as essentially "evil"; their lives have no value, their bodies are unworthy of the spaciousness commonly deemed appropriate for humans, and unworthy of any means that would fulfill basic needs, whether food or sources of light/warmth. Such conditions are not only the *effect* of the colonial necropolitical regime, they are themselves the very *foundations* on which the regime's durability is built. As Foucault has suggested, a subjugated body reflects the power of authority (*Discipline*; chpt. "The Body of the Condemned"). Indeed, the subjugated body is the embodiment of power, with power inscribed in its surface to manifest the authority's capacity of absolute control. I suggest that in Fanon's theorization, the native town—"a town on its knees"—acquires the status of the subjected body, a *communal* body that is made to reflect the absolute power of the colonial necropolitical regime.

In front of this backdrop, it becomes clear that "new urbanisms" (Agier *Undesirables*) always need careful differentiation. The urbanism that emerged in Calais' "Jungle" is not easily termed an urbanism "on its knees." At least the multiplicity of "the Jungle's" institutions (schools, mosques, churches, cafés, theatres, etc.), and their images that continue to circulate online and in other media, do not imply a failing or subjected urbanism, but point to an urbanism that is self-generated and creative, providing people with basic sustenance and opportunities for cultural and social exchange. Whilst accounts of depravation and violence in the camp are, of course, also abundant, it is precisely the narratives and images of a thriving urbanism and community life that position its inhabitants as eminently worthy of a livable humanity. It is for this reason that the *politics* of performing the urban are so central when looking at Calais and similar contexts.

Where transitoriness, depravation, violence, and/or a lack of systematic organisation and communal structures are flagged by the authorities to manifest the illegitimacy and criminal potential of an assemblage of people, their unworthiness of safe living conditions, safe passage, or mobility, then evidence of a *thriving* urbanity—an urbanity that makes life more livable—is likely to be read as a form of resistance. The existence of a self-generated and liveable urbanism in "the Jungle" meant that its residents could be read as rejecting the embodiment of an urbanism "on its knees," and as such as rejecting a reflection of authority's power.

In *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015), Judith Butler asks a range of questions that further illuminate this relationship between urbanity and resistance: "Which humans count as human? Which humans are eligible for recognition within the sphere of appearance, and which are not?" (36) She further asserts: "If only a grievable life can be valued, and valued through time, then only a grievable life will be eligible for social and economic support, housing, health care, employment, rights of political expression, forms of social recognition, and conditions for political agency" (198). Taking up ideas from her previous works *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence* (2004) and *Frames of War. When is Life Grievable?* (2009), Butler presents the crucial view that "the human is differentially produced" (41), rendering some ways of life more worthy and, as such, more "human" than others.

These notions are, of course, also at the core of Mbembe's concept of necropolitics. Mbembe writes: "sovereignty means the capacity to define who matters and who does not, who is *disposable* and who is not" (27; my emphasis). As Butler suggests, "disposability" has a lot to do with normative intelligibility. "Failing" to conform to normative intelligibility (and this affects "women, queers, transgender people, the poor, the differently abled, and the stateless, but also religious and racial minorities"; *Notes* 33), means becoming invisible, losing access to the concept of "the human," and to entitlements (such as sustenance and governmental support) that come with it. It is in this context that Butler defines *collective* performativity as a way for disenfranchised groups to lay claim to public visibility —to what she calls the "sphere of appearance"— through public assembly (58).

In these terms, the urbanism that emerged in "the Jungle" can very well be read not only as a revolt against a necropolitical regime, but also as a way of laying claim to the sphere of appearance. A disenfranchised group—migrants, *sans papiers,* those who are not meant to be visible—became readable as performing versions of urbanity, thus counteracting projections of depravation and powerlessness ("a town on its knees"). Such a reading interfered with authoritative self-legitimization strategies that rested on the perception of a civilizatory gap between "city" (self) and "camp"/"Jungle" (other). It reduced the contrast between the refugees' allegedly less worthy state of being on the one hand and that of privileged, white Europeans on the other (members of the security forces and Calais

citizens). The effect was an uncanny one, exposing the authorities' necropolitics as illegitimate and unethical, which instigated police to "bec[o]me more aggressive the more infrastructure there was" (Lewis, personal communication, 3 Dec. 2016). That the refugees were seen as laying claim to the sphere of appearance was, I would suggest, a central reason why Calais' "Jungle" was destroyed so systematically by the authorities—why its urbanism was razed to the ground—in October 2016.

IV. Conclusion

As my analysis suggests, "urbanity" is part of a system which produces "the human" differentially. It is a powerful signifier which, if successfully claimed or if seen as claimed, potentially enforces one's status as part of a human and perhaps even civilizatory elite. In the context of Calais, evidence of a thriving urbanism amidst harrowing conditions became a threat to authority, its necropolitics, and for several reasons. Seen as performing versions of urbanity, the inhabitants of "the Jungle" were considered to lay claim to the "sphere of appearance," and thus to public recognition that would render them intelligible as humans. Their lives became more grievable. In turn, their increased grievability and humanity continually questioned the legitimacy of careless police violence, the government's refusal to provide adequate support, and ultimately the legitimacy of the destruction of "the Jungle." It also shed light on the fact that the authorities' construction of an epistemological gap between a legitimate, humane, and civilized "self" and an illegitimate, less than human, and criminalized "other" was fundamentally ideological in nature, citing a racist colonial discourse that promotes white, European, and/or urbanized supremacy. It was not least to conceal this threat to authority that the camp was ultimately, utterly, destroyed.

Put more generally, performances of urbanity and/or reading urbanity in formations of human dwelling (particularly when situated outside or at the margins of formally delineated city space) can unfold an uncanny power through which narratives of supremacy, social inclusion and exclusion, are legitimized by socio-political elites. Such uncanny power does not require theatricality or intentionality; instead, *performing the urban* transcends the individual, or individual group, as urbanity lies not least in the eye of the beholder. (Uncanny) reminiscence of urbanity, whether or not actively or consciously evoked by those performing "new urbanisms," might be enough for an authoritative and exclusivist group to feel challenged in its supposedly natural superiority. It is here that "the urban" and "city" reveal the extent to which they can signify and sustain socio-political and cultural privilege, a privilege that is illuminated where "city" and "citizenship" coalesce, as it does in many contexts of (forced) migration and informal as well as unauthorized dwelling. Indeed, it is here that Henry Lefebvre's canonical concept of a "right to the city" gains new meaning, where right to the city is not understood in terms of spatial

"access" or as a right of dwelling in the city, but as a right to lay claim to the very concept of urbanity and thus to concepts with which urbanity is associated: humanity, entitlement, dignity, and legitimacy.

V. Coda

When "the Jungle" was destroyed in October 2016, thousands of people were scattered across the north of France. Reports indicate that adults and children continued to sleep rough during the winter, some in ditches or holes in the ground (Moseley); and they continued to do so through 2017's comparatively cold late summer months. As predicted by Care4Calais' founder Clare Moseley,

> [t]he demolition of the jungle did nothing to improve the lives of so many desperate refugees, who now find themselves living destitute on the streets of France and are arriving back in Calais every day. These refugees, many unaccompanied minors, are now living in far worse conditions.

The mayor of Calais has also banned the distribution of food to migrants, which means that food distribution volunteers have been forced to operate in secret because of a heightened police presence (Gentleman "Calais mayor"). As Renke Meuwese, who works with Refugee Community Kitchen and Help Refugees, commented, "[t]hey are trying to make the refugees invisible, so they make it harder to distribute in town than the countryside. We can't distribute at day so we have to do it at night." (qtd. in ibid.) Enforcement of municipal power thus continues to operate by excluding refugees from (public) visibility, which is also indicated by the authorities' obstructions of local charities that seek to open showers for teenage migrants in town. Further, in increasing reports of police violence and harassment, police regularly "confiscate sleeping bags, bedding and possessions," even baby food and milk (Gentleman "Teargas"). Refugees further state that teargas is used during early morning raids, sprayed on those sleeping (ibid.). These incidents suggest that a central ruling of the Court of Lille is not being respected:

> … the mayor of Calais made a serious and manifestly illegal attack on the freedom of movement and *the right to assembly*. By preventing migrants from satisfying vital basic needs, the mayor of Calais made an illegal breach to the right not to be subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment as enshrined in Article 3 of the European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms. (Care4Calais; my emphasis)

The Court of Lille clearly criminalizes the authorities' repeated violations of human rights, and indeed their refusal to treat the refugees as human beings. This ruling was recently reinforced by France's Conseil d'État (supreme court), demanding that the Calais region must provide drinking water, showers and toilets to hundreds of refugees (O'Carroll). However, in a scenario of state failure, this is having little impact on the local authorities in both Calais and Dunkirk, who continue to infringe on the refugees' visibility, their entitlement to

a livable life, and their entitlement to assemble in groups for even basic sustenance.

Taking the events in Calais as an example, there is a recognizable need for a more critical engagement with the politics of performing the urban, in a variety of contexts that can by no means be limited to Europe. There is a general need to inquire into the hidden standards and rules about what constitutes performances of urbanity, and what prompts readings of social configurations and behaviours as urban. Indeed, inquiring into the politics of performing the urban means investigating the privileging and marginalizing effects of such differentiations, and the effects of resistance against these. These enquiries will illuminate the substantial power inherent in the signifiers "urbanity" and "city," and the crucial role they play in allocating social, cultural, and political status (Remember the "city" in "citizenship.")

Notes

1. My approach is influenced by Judith Butler's concept of embodied performativity according to which people's continuous repetitions of "performative acts" uphold entire social systems of normative (gender) conventions. As outlined in several works, including *Bodies that Matter* (2011) and Butler's latest *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* (2015), it is only when people are seen to reproduce normative systems that they will be acknowledged as valid lives or bodies – indeed as human-beings –, and it is only then that they will become visible in the public "sphere of appearance" which awards legitimacy and safety (*Notes* 41). The inverse also applies: those that do not reproduce normative forms of intelligibility are rendered precarious and vulnerable, subject to criminalization, harassment, even death. For a discussion of Butler's move from gender performativity to a more general perspective on matters of social inclusion and exclusion, see my review of *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly* published in *Symbolism* (2017).

2. *Care4Calais* publish regular updates on this on their webpage.

3. Similar risks existed inside Dunkirk's refugee camp (Townsend), but have been reported from refugee camps around the world. Mostly, it is children and women who are forced to offer up their bodies to traffickers in return for blankets, food, or the offer of passage.

4. Multiculturelle, solidaire, écologique, dynamique, sympathique mais aussi sale, chaotique et mal équipée, la «jungle» de Calais n'est pas née d'un idéal utopique, mais de ce mélange de hasard et de nécessité qui fit naître toutes *les grandes villes de l'Histoire*. La jungle est le *village du monde*, le quartier de l'humanité, le forum des sociétés. (my emphasis)

5. As Agier argues with Foucault's concept "heterotopia," particularly with the concept of a heterotopia of "crisis" and "deviation," "by fixing them [the refugees] and gathering them collectively, these other spaces [heterotopias] turn their occupants into permanent deviants, abnormals who are kept at a distance" (*Undesirables* 182). Lewis (*Becoming*) also observes this parallel (21).

6. For Mbembe's necropolitics, restriction of movement is central and applies to "the Jungle" without a doubt. A qualification needs to be made regarding the Foucauldian compartmentalization and intricate organisation of space which also features strongly in Mbembe's theory, and which becomes a prime source of exercising control over people. Indeed, "the Jungle" was relocated ("new Jungle") in 2015, forcing migrants from several smaller camps to cohabit in one space to increase control. French authorities then also set up an area with 1,000 shipping containers; however, this attempt was largely unsuccessful as migrants resisted leaving their tents. Living in the containers would have meant more intense policing, collecting of finger prints, and a curfew between the hours of 7 pm and 7 am (BBC, 15 Jan. 2016).

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