

Book Review

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Frictions in Cosmopolitan Mobilities: The Ethics and Social Practices of Movement Across Culture

by: Tzanelli Rodanthi

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The expansion of capitalism was successfully organised according to the separation of ethics and aesthetics. To rephrase, whether all free citizens enjoy the same rights as responsibilities. This begs the question to what extent this is true. From this moot point, Rodanthi Tzanelli departs in her new editorial adventure that I have the good fortune to review. The economic prosperity of the few (in conjunction with high mobility) entails the failure of the rest (mainly characterised by low mobility). Of course, the Joker (cast by Award-winning Joachim Phoenix-Arthur Fleck) helps in offering a more than interesting and pungent diagnosis about the material inequalities of globalised capitalism. As the start of critical tourism studies, Tzanelli eloquently invites readers to move through different *world civilisations* to explore the differences and commonalities of travel, art-making and tourism. In her introductory chapter, she holds that the act of travelling opens the doors to unexpected intercultural frictions which are a broader part of creativity. Based on Ranciere and Guattari's conceptions on environmentalism, she toys with the belief that an emerging epistemological eco-system deals with the human subjectivity interconnected to the environment and social relations. But having said that, this interconnection, which is far from being static, is in constant change and interaction. The researcher contemplates the object of study (the surrounding world) but in so doing, he or she is interrogated by that object and others; in what ethnographers dubbed as 'reflexibility'. Here two assumptions should be made. Where Guattari sees a point of resistance, Tzanelli contemplates a new opportunity and of course, the film the Joker fits like a hand in a glove. She coins the term 'cosmopolitan pluriversals' to denote the politics of the possible (in Escobar's terms) which establishes an epistemic platform mainly shaped by many world-making stories. Her first chapter is more than an introduction and is the prelude to a brilliant questioning of Western ethnocentrism and the paternalist viewpoint historically constructed around the 'Otherness'. She lays the foundations for a new epistemology of travel and movement that escapes the traditional definition of pilgrimage, which today abounds in the literature. The second chapter dissects the ideological core of the modernist character (through the lens of the Joker, Todd Phillips' movie). She does not perform an analysis of the plot nor a director's

biography, rather she delves into Phillip's cosmology (above all his tendency to describe criminality and social deviation). It reflects what Tzanelli flagged as *modernist character*, which means the Joker is a dark drama motivated by great pain (and fragmentation) which leads towards a radicalised transgression. The 'Other' here is finely embodied by the inequalities that biographically preceded him –in Guattari's terms–; so to speak a product of a reified environment. Also one may question: what is the relation between the Joker and modern tourism?

In the third chapter, Tzanelli argues convincingly that the quest of stability (if not pleasure) – like Arthur struggles to be a clown or a celebrity- invariably ushers us to a type of sacrifice (disruption) where we all become victims of the system. To put this simply, like cosmopolitan (colonial) travels in nineteenth centuries which departed from a fictional story (probably a novel or any literary genre), Arthur really moves through an imaginary world. At a closer look, the abusive past of the colonial period equates to Arthur's disgrace which is sublimated in a simulacrum of the Spectacle (echoing Jean Baudrillard).

The third chapter discusses critically the politics of resurgence as rectification of factual heroism. Like the working-class, as Tzanelli clarifies, the joker seems to be a vulnerable person, abandoned and relegated to a peripheral position. The protest plays a leading role so that the citizen expresses injustice as a form of solidarity. The protester, here, becomes the anti-hero the justice tries to domesticate. She compares the figure of the trickster (present in many mythological structures) with the charismatic hero. While the former is defined as the creator of culture the latter refers to the restorer of order and law (see a further comparison between the Joker and Batman).

It is important to note that the joker embodies a type of negative solidarity which she develops in Chapter 4 as negative hospitality. It is normally subject to a set of fantasies organised in three dimensions. Travel starts from the exemplary centre to the periphery – at least in quest of something- but connecting with practices finely ingrained in the digital consumption of the tourist experience. Lastly, the tourist epitomises a reified and externally-fabricated reality adopted unilaterally as heritage. In a nutshell, media reproduces what consumers ultimately legitimate in personal timetables. The fifth chapter brings reflection on the nature of selfie tourism behaviour. For Tzanelli, selfies are not tourist voyages (looking) in the strict sense of the word, but they very well replicate specific cosmologies in the tourist's inner world (citing Hollingshead's term world-making). Far from being naïve activities, selfie tourism exhibits a radical affirmation of the agency to apprehend the latent nature of contingency. People often over-valorise some beliefs simply because they move as explorers 'of a vast whole' who never meet with reality, as least as it stands. She coins the term *youlfie tourism* as the emerging corrosion of self-integrity in contexts of socialisation which opens the doors towards respectful communication with hosts. Youlfie tourism helps not only locals but it connotes reciprocal learning that leads -both hosts and guests- to a closed cosmopolitan spirit, where the 'Other' is framed through the logic of the liberal market. She goes on to write: "*I propose an alternative sociological definition of selfie tourism as a form of heautosopic pilgrimage that may collapse into narcissism: a mocking youlfism that accepts the Other's perspective only as a version of the self*" (p.80)

At the time tourists enter social platforms (like Facebook or Instagram) they engage with a market of impressions that appropriate their images. It is noteworthy that the self becomes itself producer and final message created by the digitalised world to confront reality. The sixth and seventh chapters speak to us of the damaged hospitality. Continuing

with Derrida's efforts, Tzanelli argues convincingly that tourist-phobia not only attests to the death of proximity and empathic connectivity but also the imposition of new damaged hospitality, where the 'Other' is eradicated or transformed to nothing. The main paradox of this lack of hospitality lies in the following axiom: there is a clear logic of partition that divides hosts from guests; the deregulation of the tourist markets amass further profits bestowing negative effects on the hosts who react against their guests with hostility. Tourists cross a line that is restored with violence.

The above-cited excerpt leads me to think that in Derrida's terms, probably it is the connection between hostility and hospitality. Without any doubt, this book reflects why Tzanelli is situated as a global and critical voice in mobilities theory studies. Taking a closer look, one must confess that *Frictions in Cosmopolitan Mobilities* remains a must-read work which inspires serious debates and insights revolving around mobilities theory; a more than recommended (essential) book for post-graduate students, sociologists, anthropologists and tourism-related researchers.