

The disappearing immigrants: hunger strike as invisible struggle

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This article invites readers to consider an act of civil resistance as a performative one. A large scale hunger strike conducted by 300 immigrants in central Athens in early 2011 became a catalyst for Greek conversations about civil society. In particular, the strike offered supporters the opportunity to engage more widely with debates on immigration and human rights across Europe, alongside reading the virulent effects of the economic crisis in financial capital terms and resulting neo-liberal backlashes. The authors employ a performative frame; initially the context of Athens is explored as the stage primed for a performance. Secondly, the value of the Law School as site for the hunger strike is considered, with specific reference to Lefebvre's spatial resistance. The hunger strike itself is analysed as a 'performance of resistance', and as a spectacle. The audience is considered a witness to the act, reflecting their moral imperative to react to the 'performance'. Finally, the wider social, political and cultural implications of such a hunger strike are considered. Throughout, we are concerned with the invisible bodies of the hunger strikers, particularly regarding how their struggle is represented or appropriated. *[Article copies available for a fee from The Transformative Studies Institute. E-mail address: journal@transformativestudies.org Website: http://www.transformativestudies.org ©2012 by The Transformative Studies Institute. All rights reserved.]*

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