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**Concrete Universality and the  
End of Revolutionary Politics:  
A Žižekian Approach to  
Postcolonial Women's  
Writings**

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In “Dialectical Materialism and the ‘Feminine Sublime,’” Matthew Flisfeder explores the revolutionary potential of the feminine subjective position as the ethical subject of psychoanalysis. Drawing on Slavoj Žižek’s work on the sublime object of ideology, Flisfeder proposes a configuration of the “feminine sublime”—one grounded in both the Lacanian notion of feminine enjoyment (*jouissance*) and the Hegelian idea of radical negativity—that inscribes the feminine subject’s symbolic destitution, or her violence against herself, as the precondition for a genuine revolutionary act. As he asserts, “it is the feminine subjective position that offers for us the dimensions of a ‘proletarian’ position that connects the critique of ideology in dialectical materialism with the psychoanalytic gesture of ‘striking at oneself’—of destroying the very kernel of subjectivity: the sublime object.”<sup>1</sup> Flisfeder grounds this assertion on the premise that the feminine and proletarian subject positions coincide with the Real of antagonism as articulated in psychoanalysis and Marxism: sexual difference and class struggle, respectively. As such, he boldly claims that the feminine subject functions as the primary site for the production of the revolutionary subjective position, that it is the feminine subject that has the greatest potential to occupy or subjectivize the working-class position of the proletarian subject of dialectical materialism.<sup>2</sup>

Flisfeder is, of course, correct in claiming that Žižek posits woman, or the feminine logic of “non-all,” as the “true subject, as [the] subject

1 at its most fundamental,” but Žižek never actually refers to this “true  
 2 subject” as radical or revolutionary.<sup>3</sup> It is only by overreading the con-  
 3 nection that Žižek makes between the Real of sexual difference and the  
 4 ethical position of the subject that Flisfeder can turn around and paren-  
 5 thetically re-present this subject as “radical.”<sup>4</sup> For, however true femi-  
 6 nine subjectivity is for Žižek, he never automatically engenders radical  
 7 subjectivity as feminine within the framework of revolutionary politics,  
 8 nor does he axiomatically elevate such a subjective position to the status  
 9 of a universal revolutionary subject.<sup>5</sup> On the contrary, Žižek does not  
 10 presume that there is a subject that can ever occupy an a priori ontologi-  
 11 cal position as the ultimate locus of revolutionary subjectivity. In fact,  
 12 he never acknowledges that there ever was a “‘predestined’ revolution-  
 13 ary subject,” not even the working class itself.<sup>6</sup> Cognizant of the radical  
 14 transformations that the proletariat has undergone under the neocolo-  
 15 nial global capitalist mode of production, Žižek does not fetishize the  
 16 working class.

17 What’s more, repeating a similar gap in Žižek’s theorization of  
 18 the Act, Flisfeder fails to identify the specific conditions under which  
 19 the feminine subject can assume the proletarian position or, as Žižek  
 20 writes about Lenin’s October Revolution, become capable of looking  
 21 “the abyss of the act” in the eye and rearticulating acts of resistance in  
 22 a different register beyond itself altogether.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, as Žižek himself  
 23 makes clear, Lacan’s configuration of the feminine “non-all” poses seri-  
 24 ous challenges to the possibility of “feminine resistance to symbolic iden-  
 25 tification”: whereas the masculine subject can fully assume his “symbolic  
 26 mandate,” the feminine subject remains “somehow excluded from fully  
 27 participating in the Symbolic order, unable to wholly integrate [herself]  
 28 into it, condemned to leading a parasitical existence[,] . . . condemned  
 29 to hysterical splitting, to wearing masks, to not wanting what she pre-  
 30 tends to want.”<sup>8</sup>

31 It is precisely because of these potentialities and deadlocks that Žižek  
 32 identifies in the feminine subject position, especially in relation to the  
 33 proletarian subject, that his work makes, or promises to make, a signifi-  
 34 cant contribution to contemporary women’s and gender studies in gen-  
 35 eral and minority/postcolonial feminist studies in particular, especially  
 36 at this particular historical juncture, when the normative forms of trans-  
 37 national feminism are increasingly coming under attack for serving as an

alibi for the expanding U.S. neocolonial hegemony in the world.<sup>9</sup> Indeed, contemporary forms of transnational feminism seem to replicate the liberal postideological gesture underpinning second-wave feminism's universalist discourse of "global sisterhood," a discourse that disavows the radical tradition of transnationalism: namely, proletarian internationalism and its correlative socialist feminist tradition. Grounded in neocolonial global capitalist realities and the expanding "actually existing" colonial geographies around the world, multicultural/postcolonial feminisms manage to recuperate alternative modes of subjectivization and forms of transformative emancipatory politics embedded in histories of anticolonial internationalism. As Gayatri Spivak notes, these alternative forms of internationalist praxis and politics are "not only possible but necessary" for postcolonial subjects, women especially, because the increasing hegemony of global capital and World Bank economics makes "social redistribution in [global Southern] states . . . uncertain at best."<sup>10</sup> These new modes of political subjectivity—modes that fall within the larger history of the anticolonial internationalist struggle for liberation and emancipation—include national liberation struggles, decolonization projects, socialist internationalism, hemispheric indigenous solidarity, grassroots activism, and communitarian forms of alliance and resistance, what Edward Said calls narratives of "adversarial internationalism."<sup>11</sup> Such modes of political subjectivization fall outside the language of possibility of the prevailing forms of transnational feminism and thus call for alternative theoretical projects that frame such discourses within a critique of neoliberal global capitalism and neocolonial hegemony.

In this essay, then, I argue that Žižek's dialectical materialist interventions can help illuminate both the radical possibilities of and the contradictions inherent in the new modalities of political subjectivization found throughout multicultural/postcolonial women's writings. On the one hand, Žižek's ideas reveal the ways in which postcolonial feminism engages in revolutionary politics; on the other, Žižek's interventions also make it possible to appreciate the impossibility of articulating the full potential of the revolutionary act in multicultural/postcolonial feminisms. In what follows, I will first examine Žižek's interventions into the fields of feminism and postcoloniality in the context of what he refers to as the "culturalization of politics," or the institutionalization of post-political multicultural ideology as "the cultural logic of multinational

capitalism.”<sup>12</sup> Second, I will outline Žižek’s dialectical materialist theory of the subject, a theory that attributes the originary division, or multitude, to the subject’s inconsistency with itself, to the constitutive gap between the subject’s ontic properties and the “empty place” of the subject. Here, I claim that Žižek’s theory of the acephalous subject, what Lacan refers to as “extimacy” (*extimité*), offers a productive approach for rethinking the alternative forms of political subjectivization that postcolonial feminist writers negotiate and mediate in their texts. Third, I will interrogate the inscription of multicultural/postcolonial feminist struggle within the histories of revolutionary internationalism by way of Žižek’s idea of “concrete universality,” according to which revolutionary politics is reinstated through an exception that discloses and destabilizes the hegemonic universal framework. I here look at the *testimonio* and the subsequent political memoir of Guatemalan indigenous rights activist and Nobel Prize laureate Rigoberta Menchú—*I, Rigoberta Menchú* (1984) and *Crossing Borders* (1998)—both of which trace the particular struggles of a colonized indigenous woman within and against the universal framework of the neoliberal cosmopolitan discourse of international law and the human rights regime by disclosing this regime’s exception: namely, the cartographies of anticolonial internationalist struggle. As I demonstrate, for Menchú, the only way to challenge the hegemony of cosmopolitan law and the human rights regime is to fully assume its repressed point of exclusion, an assumption that allows for the articulation of an egalitarian and emancipatory politics of solidarity with what Jacques Rancière terms “the part of no part” around the world, since their radical gesture of universality stands in opposition to the empty principles of constitutional equality.<sup>13</sup> Fourth, and finally, I will explore the implications of Žižek’s theory of subjective destitution—the violent act of setting off the ontic properties that lie at the heart of subjectivity—for the revolutionary act in multicultural/postcolonial women’s writings. I will show that in her novel *No Telephone to Heaven* (1987), Jamaican writer Michelle Cliff constructs a viable form of revolutionary politics grounded in the Bartlebian politics of subtraction and withdrawal that Žižek views as the basis for a genuine revolutionary act. At the same time, however, Cliff’s novel also functions as a cautionary tale that illuminates the challenges—even failures—of resignifying a radical,

revolutionary subjectivity that shifts from a politics of subtraction to a politics of resistance, foreclosing the potential of the revolutionary event itself. My point here is not that we should exclusively advocate for these forms of anticolonial internationalism and revolutionary acts, but that we should subject the universal framework itself to a “ruthless critique,” to use Marx’s words, in order to begin rethinking the universal framework beyond itself.

Multiculturalism as the “Form of Appearance of Its Opposite”:  
Žižek, Postcolonialism, Feminism

As minority/postcolonial feminism is articulated through the overlaps and contradictions between feminism and postcoloniality, it is worth looking first at Žižek’s interventions into these fields, since he usually couples them in the same context of his critique of liberal multicultural ideology. For him, multiculturalism is the ideal form of global capitalist ideology, and as such it constitutes “the form of appearance of its opposite, of the massive presence of capitalism as *universal* world system.”<sup>14</sup> As he makes clear in the parallels he draws between multiculturalism and colonialism, multiculturalism replicates the same racist and Eurocentric colonial structures; he asserts that “multiculturalism is a disavowed, inverted, self-referential form of racism, a ‘racism with a distance’—it ‘respects’ the Other’s identity, conceiving the Other as a self-enclosed ‘authentic’ community towards which he, the multiculturalist, maintains a distance rendered possible by his privileged universal position.” Unsurprisingly, Žižek maintains that the multiculturalist inhabits the privileged position of the “*empty point of universality* from which one is able to appreciate (and deprecate) other particular cultures properly—the multiculturalist respect for the Other’s specificity is the very form of asserting one’s own superiority.”<sup>15</sup> Hence, the terrain of struggle in multicultural politics is constructed around the cultural-ethical mandate of tolerance, which, as he states, “involves the ‘repression’ of a different discourse to which it continues to refer,” namely, the socioeconomic struggle.<sup>16</sup> For Žižek, then, insofar as feminism and postcolonialism constitute dominant forms of multicultural identity politics, they repress or displace the extent of the class struggle by offering excessive representations of the

1 “horrors of sexism, racism, and so on,” an excess that can be attributed  
2 to “the fact that these other ‘-isms’ have to bear the surplus-investment  
3 from the class struggle whose extent is not acknowledged.”<sup>17</sup>

4 In his specific engagement with feminism and postcolonialism, Žižek  
5 calls for more reflexivity in interrogating the constructivist content of  
6 feminist theories of performativity and the radical postcolonial critique  
7 of liberalism and Eurocentric universality. For him, the content of both  
8 these theories is “insufficient”: on the one hand, feminism merely de-  
9 scribes the dominant attitude concerning the possibility of reposition-  
10 ing and restructuring identity; on the other hand, postcolonial discourse  
11 not only repeats the standard Marxist critique of “false universality” but  
12 also levels this critique through the very same liberal vocabulary it pur-  
13 ports to criticize, thus failing to transcend the constitutive contradic-  
14 tions of the dominant neocolonial liberal ideology.<sup>18</sup> More importantly,  
15 Žižek’s engagement with feminism and postcolonial politics must be  
16 understood in the context of what he refers to as the “culturalization of  
17 politics,” or the institutionalization of postpolitical multicultural ideol-  
18 ogy as “the cultural logic of multinational capitalism.” This postpolitical  
19 multicultural ideology makes possible the proliferation of social move-  
20 ments that inscribe their presumably oppositional subjects primarily  
21 within the sphere of cultural production.<sup>19</sup> For Žižek, multicultural  
22 postpolitics, embedded as it is in proliferating narratives of victimiza-  
23 tion and the primacy of ontic properties or secondary contradictions,  
24 reduces the struggle for emancipation and economic justice to a struggle  
25 over identity politics and the politics of recognition, be it gender, racial,  
26 sexual, national, ecological, and so on.<sup>20</sup> He deems it symptomatic of  
27 these movements’ complicity with capitalism that multiculturalism enu-  
28 merates these ontic properties or secondary contradictions within the  
29 constellation of identity politics, bearing “witness to the unprecedented  
30 homogenization of the contemporary world” by the “(dead universal)”  
31 global capitalist machine, which colonizes the “heart of each (particular  
32 living) ghost.”<sup>21</sup> For Žižek, feminism and postcolonialism, like all other  
33 social movements structured around the identitarian logic of multicul-  
34 turalist postpolitics, are embedded within the mainstream logic of domi-  
35 nation and are hence susceptible to “inherent commodification,” since  
36 “the very space for this proliferation of multiplicity is sustained by the re-  
37 cent stage in the development of capitalism.”<sup>22</sup> In short, for Žižek, femi-

nism and postcoloniality fail to address and interrogate the real issue that remains seemingly impossible to symbolize, seeking instead to be integrated within the same dominant symbolic order (capitalist ideology) that mystifies the fundamental antagonism: class struggle, the constitutive split that forms society in the capitalist mode of production.

#### Excess and the Fundamental Antagonism: The Extimate Subject of Minority/Postcolonial Feminisms

In their negotiations and mediations of the contradictions between gender, patriarchy, and the nation-state, on the one hand, and between the nation-state and the neocolonial global capitalist system, on the other, minority/postcolonial women writers construct complex political subjectivities—subjectivities that Audre Lorde and Trinh T. Minh-ha, among others, refer to as “sister/outsider” and “outside in inside out,” respectively.<sup>23</sup> These excessive subjectivities are formed through the dialectical relation between the intimate and the external, the inside and the outside, the private and the public. Minh-ha, for example, locates the production of these subjectivities at that moment when the insider “steps out from the inside,” because her position as a pure insider becomes no longer tenable, affording her the unique vantage point of “looking in from the outside while also looking out from the inside.”<sup>24</sup> Much has been written about these subjectivities in postcolonial feminist texts, but, more recently, critics have framed their discussions of these subjectivities within theories of intersectionality, cosmopolitics, and transnationalism, theories that foreground the multiple allegiances and the shifting, intersectional identities that minority/postcolonial women allegedly inhabit in their nomadic existence within a postnational, borderless world.<sup>25</sup> At the ontological level, theories of multiple allegiances and shifting, cross-cutting identities seem to attribute the inconsistency of the subject to some ontological difference or division from the Other. According to such theories, these multiplicities or multitudes are inscribed and reinscribed in order to, in Žižek’s words, “fill in the gap of the missing binary signifier.”<sup>26</sup> Consequently, such theories endlessly add on new dimensions of identity or otherness within the same unity or totality, conducting their analyses only at the level of the subject’s ontic properties, *ad infinitum*.

1 At the political level, moreover, such theories of intersectionality,  
2 cosmopolitics, and transnationalism fail to account for the exponential  
3 proliferation of discourses of multiple belongings and shifting, intersec-  
4 tional identities in minority/postcolonial women's writings, specifically  
5 in the context of the current neocolonial global capitalist mode of pro-  
6 duction. To paraphrase Žižek, neocolonial global capitalism engenders  
7 and favors the drive for the reproduction of these kinds of identities and  
8 allegiances in the first place, so there is nothing inherently oppositional  
9 or revolutionary about them.<sup>27</sup> The truth of the matter is that the global  
10 capitalist economy has incorporated postcolonial women into its fold  
11 and recodified their bodies as cheap labor in export processing zones  
12 and other special economic zones in the global South. Migrant workers  
13 (legal and illegal), refugees (internally or externally displaced persons),  
14 sexually trafficked women, sex workers, nannies, maids—these are just  
15 a few of the women who have been rendered even more invisible and dis-  
16 posable in a world of increasing wealth polarization. Lorde, for instance,  
17 encodes her “sister/outsider” subjective position in the context of her in-  
18 terrogation of the ways in which the global capitalist system produces  
19 its outsiders and exploits them as, in her words, “surplus people” in the  
20 global economy of profit. She states, “In a society where the good is de-  
21 fined in terms of profit rather than in terms of human need, there must  
22 always be some group of people who, through systematized oppression,  
23 can be made to feel surplus, to occupy the space of the dehumanized in-  
24 ferior.”<sup>28</sup> By thus depoliticizing the exploitation of minority/postcolonial  
25 women in the neocolonial global capitalist economy, theories of inter-  
26 sectionality, cosmopolitics, and transnationalism end up not only repro-  
27 ducing the conditions for structural exploitation, but also displacing and  
28 mystifying the intractable Real of the class struggle.

29 Whereas theories of multiple allegiances and intersectional, shifting  
30 identities locate the subject's multitude in her contingent, ontic proper-  
31 ties, Žižek's theory of the subject as a “signifier-turned-object” within  
32 the “self-referential loop” of the Möbius strip attributes this multitude to  
33 the subject's originary inconsistency and indeterminacy.<sup>29</sup> Žižek grounds  
34 his theory of the political “acephalous” subject in both Lacan's idea of  
35 extimacy (*extimité*) and his account of the drive. In *The Ethics of Psycho-*  
36 *analysis*, Lacan coined the neologism *extimacy* to refer to a paradoxical  
37 mode of subjectivity in which binary oppositions such as inside and out-



side, intimate and external or foreign, are spliced and conjoined to engender a radical zone of indistinction that can be referred to as interior-exteriority.<sup>30</sup> For Lacan, the extimate designates that which is neither fully inside nor fully outside the system, but which exists both inside and outside the system concurrently. As Jacques-Alain Miller notes in his extended commentary on the term, *extimacy* reveals that “the intimate is Other—like a foreign body, a parasite” (in other words, *objet a*), adding that in extimate structures “the most interior has a quality of exteriority,” and vice versa. Miller thus points out that “the subject contains as the most intimate (*intime*) of its intimacy the extimacy of the Other.”<sup>31</sup> To represent this radical zone of extimate indistinction, Lacan and Miller use various figures and shapes, such as the Möbius strip, the “internal eight” (*huit intérieur*), and the torus.

In his elaboration of the acephalous subject, moreover, Žižek connects Lacan’s reference to the *objet petit a* in his theory of extimacy back to the Lacanian account of the drive. According to this theory of the drive, subjectivization results from the subject’s continual circumnavigation of an allegedly missing object, an impossible object in the order of the Real that does not exist in the first place.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the impossible and unsymbolizable *objet petit a* comes to stand for this missing object, “for that which the subject had to lose in order to subjectivize itself.”<sup>33</sup> It is in this sense that Žižek argues that the *objet petit a* constitutes “the subject’s stand-in within the order of objectivity.”<sup>34</sup> By identifying with the *objet petit a*, in other words, this acephalous subject (the subject of the drive) “assumes the position of the object,” opening up a space for its depersonalization and desubjectification, whereby “the subject emerges out of the person as the product of the violent reduction of the person’s body to a partial object.”<sup>35</sup>

In this sense, the extimate subject as Žižek’s political acephalous subject can be considered multitudinous by virtue of the constitutive gap between the subject’s ontic or symbolic properties and the “empty place” of its inscription. Making use of set theory in explaining Žižek’s theory of the subject following subjectification, Molly Anne Rothenberg points out that the subject equals both a set that places in brackets its ontic properties in the symbolic order and an “empty set” representing a little piece of the Real, the *objet petit a*. The excess in the subject is the effect of the coincidence of the external brackets with “the internal element of the

empty set” in this equation.<sup>36</sup> As such, any account of the subject must also take into consideration the “hollow place” in which the subject is inscribed into the symbolic order, thereby “actually becom[ing] a subject.”<sup>37</sup> As Rothenberg explains, for Žižek, the subject is reduced to these formal elements by way of subtracting “the ontic properties from the presentation of the subject.”<sup>38</sup> The subject thus puts in quotation marks or sets off “[its] real life substantive properties, fostering [its] minimal self-difference,” bringing forth its excessive location as both signifier and object, as that which either completes communal social life or blocks it.<sup>39</sup> Despite the seemingly universal formal conditions of subjectivization here, Rothenberg correctly argues that each subject will set off these ontic properties in a singular way that will make “the extimate cause of [one’s] subjectification, [one’s] *Versagung*, . . . look different from everyone else’s.”<sup>40</sup>

At stake in this account of extimate subjectivity is the excess that typifies the social field itself in terms of what Alain Badiou calls the “relation of nonrelation.”<sup>41</sup> As Rothenberg explains, the social dimension of subjectivity is “irremediably *excessive*”; she adds that the production of the social subject’s extimacy “leaves a remainder or indeterminacy, so that every subject bears some unspecifiable excess within the social field.” Paradoxically, this excess is not only that which renders our symbolic efficiency and “meaning as social beings” uncertain to us and incomprehensible to others, but also that which is at the same time “the necessary ingredient of the social field within which we obtain the only meaning that we will ever have, however uncertain.”<sup>42</sup> The constitutive excess that marks the production of these extimate subjectivities thus requires constant negotiation and mediation, as they are constructed without a chance of closure or resolution.

Gloria Hull’s explication of Lorde’s notion of “sister outsider” is instructive here. Hull explains, “When Audre Lorde calls herself ‘sister outsider,’ she is claiming the extremes of a difficult identity. I think we tend to read the two terms with a diacritical slash between them—in an attempt to make some separate, though conjoining, space. But Lorde has placed herself *on that line between the either/or and both/and of ‘sister outsider’*—then erased her chance for rest or mediation.”<sup>43</sup> As they operate through paradoxical zones of indistinction, zones where the logics of *neither/nor* and *both/and* bleed into each other and operate seamlessly,

minority/postcolonial feminists indelibly inscribe their extimate subjectivities in the enviable position of constant interrogation, questioning, reframing, and recodification. For Rothenberg, living with the uncertainty that results from this ineradicable excess “means that the subject can never live in absolute peace and harmony: some form of discord is inevitable.”<sup>44</sup>

### The Question of Solidarity: Concrete Universality, the Exception, and Revolutionary Internationalism

In their production of extimate subjectivities, minority/postcolonial women writers reconfigure their ontic or symbolic properties as subjects, setting them off and nullifying them in order to foreground the distance of the subject from itself. These practices of desubjectification and depersonalization serve as a precondition for reimagining a genuinely egalitarian dimension of solidarity politics in which all subjects encounter each other in their nonsymbolic dimension as objects. Extimate subjects are for Žižek identified with the *objet petit a* as their “little piece of the Real,” affording them access to this “order of objectivity.”<sup>45</sup> Needless to say, Žižek considers this access to the register of the Real an act of withdrawal from ontic or symbolic properties, since the Real in itself “stands for the collapse of the symbolic.”<sup>46</sup> It is in this sense that Žižek states that “the subject who acts is no longer a person but, precisely, an object.”<sup>47</sup> For Žižek, then, the subject’s symbolic divestiture, her nullification of her symbolic properties, installs the subject in “objective-ethical” relations with other subjects-turned-objects.<sup>48</sup> As Rothenberg explains, “The manifold differences or symbolic properties of individuals move to the background, while each subject, as identified with the object of the drive, finds its way to the objective order, the only terrain on which meaningful change can occur. Solidarity, then, emerges not from intersubjective relation but rather from the relations of subjects purified of their symbolic identities, subjects who meet on the ground of objectivity, as objects.”<sup>49</sup>

However, Žižek himself admits the contingent nature of this political project, since the process of objectification keeps open the temporality of solidarity, thus making it impossible to predetermine the precise manner in which these objects will encounter each other and interact. Yet despite

1 the “intentional fallacy” that he locates at the heart of solidarity politics,  
2 Žižek is intent on quilting it around some emancipatory Master Signifier.  
3 For example, he asserts that “*the only real universality is the political one:*  
4 *the universal link binding together all those who experience a fundamen-*  
5 *tal solidarity, all those who [become] aware that their struggles are part*  
6 *of the very struggle which cuts across the entire social edifice.”*<sup>50</sup> But this  
7 “universal link” can be articulated in any number of ways: there are no  
8 immanent guarantees that will ensure a singular script of the politics of  
9 solidarity. Rothenberg is thus correct to note the inconclusive nature of  
10 Žižek’s theory here, arguing that he fails to address the potential of the  
11 “objective-ethical” order to slide into fascism.<sup>51</sup> In other words, desub-  
12 jectification makes it possible to produce a level playing field in which  
13 all subjects are equally re-posed as objects, but it does not necessarily  
14 serve as the grounds for articulating emancipatory forms of solidarity  
15 politics structured around the disclosure of the Real of the fundamental  
16 antagonism.

17 One way to reconfigure this aporia in Žižek’s political theory is to  
18 interpret it through his appropriation of the Hegelian idea of “concrete  
19 universality.” According to Žižek, in Hegel the universal coincides with  
20 the particular contents or concrete situations through which it can be  
21 “hegemonized,” while at the same maintaining its universal frame in and  
22 through these concrete situations. Žižek thus maintains that for Hegel  
23 not only is the particular content a “subspecies of the universality of the  
24 total process, [but] it also hegemonizes this very universality,” trans-  
25 muting universality itself into a “part of (or, rather, drawn into) the par-  
26 ticular content.”<sup>52</sup> As such, the universal does not stand in opposition to  
27 some concrete content or particular feature of the totality; rather, both  
28 universal and particular occupy the same paradoxical zone of extimate  
29 indistinction. In order to sustain itself, therefore, Hegelian universality  
30 requires a point of inherent exclusion, “an exception at which it is sus-  
31 pended.”<sup>53</sup> For Hegel, universality is inherently exclusive, not only in the  
32 simple sense of excluding the “underprivileged Other,” but, more impor-  
33 tantly, in the sense of excluding “its own permanent founding gesture—a  
34 set of unwritten, unacknowledged rules and practices which, while pub-  
35 licly disavowed, are none the less the ultimate support of the existing  
36 power edifice.”<sup>54</sup> To this extent, concrete universality refers to the excep-  
37 tion that is “reconciled in the universal”—that is, concrete universality

is formed through “the unity of the abstract universal with its constitutive exception.”<sup>55</sup> Unsurprisingly, Žižek considers such points of exception to be constitutive of the “very site of political universality.”<sup>56</sup>

In a different context, Žižek links this notion of concrete universality to the modern feminist movement, suggesting that feminism can live up to its radical potential only when it actualizes the language of possibility of this concrete universality. According to this model, feminists would not simply engage in inscribing a particular form of difference (i.e., gender or sexual difference) within the matrix of the dominant symbolic order; rather, they would interrogate and destabilize the universal framework within which a troubling excess is foreclosed: “This is what you must be conscious of, that when you fight for your position, *you at the same time fight for the universal frame of how your position will be perceived within this universal frame*. This is for me, as every good feminist will tell you, the greatness of modern feminism. It’s not just we women want more. *It’s we women want to redefine the very universality of what it means to be human*. This is for me this modern notion of political struggle.”<sup>57</sup> The concern with particular sexual or gender difference in feminist discourses would embody the exception, as long as feminists seek not to single out this particular difference and elevate it to the level of the universal. The point is to instead appropriate the form of feminist particularity in order to interrogate and destabilize the very universal framework (i.e., multiculturalism and identity politics) within which this particular form of difference is posited. The concern here, in Fabio Vighi’s words, is that the struggle for a particular form of difference becomes “nothing but a content that is necessarily distorted by its own attempt to fulfill the demand of its abstract universal” (in Žižek’s example above, sexual difference and human emancipation, respectively).<sup>58</sup> What is crucial to keep in mind here is that the emphasis on the struggle against particular forms of oppression structured around secondary (visible) contradictions mystifies and displaces—even effaces—the fundamental antagonism, or the constitutive split, in the neocolonial global capitalist mode of production insofar as it constitutes the totality of social relations today. To this extent, the assertion of the concrete universality of specific forms of struggle must be made in a double inscription: it is an articulation of particular forms of struggle against exploitation based on the specific experiences of the exploited and oppressed, but it is also a rearticulation

1 of this struggle through the language and grammar of the fundamental  
 2 antagonism of the class struggle. This is not to say that Žižek dismisses  
 3 the important struggles that surround and accompany these secondary  
 4 contradictions, but rather that he insists, above all, on the need to fully  
 5 assume the repressed point of exclusion as “the gap between the particu-  
 6 lar . . . and the universal which destabilizes it from within” in order to  
 7 reconfigure the very coordinates and terms of universality.<sup>59</sup>

8 The work of the Guatemalan Quiché Nobel Prize laureate and indige-  
 9 nous rights activist Rigoberta Menchú maps out a politics of solidarity in  
 10 her particular struggles as a colonized indigenous woman in a way that  
 11 destabilizes the universal framework of both the neoliberal cosmopolitan  
 12 discourse of international law and the human rights regime through its  
 13 exception: namely, the history and practices of anticolonial internation-  
 14 alist struggle. In her political memoir, *Rigoberta Menchú: La nieta de los*  
 15 *mayas* (translated into English as *Crossing Borders*), Menchú unravels the  
 16 gaps and contradictions between these cosmopolitan institutions and her  
 17 struggles for ethnic particularity that sustain the universal framework  
 18 itself.<sup>60</sup> Obversely, Menchú’s ethnic particularity hegemonizes this uni-  
 19 versality. That is to say, it is precisely through her commitment to ethnic  
 20 particularity that internationalist universalism becomes possible. In  
 21 specifying the national and international conditions under which her im-  
 22 posed exile and nonvoluntary travels throughout Mexico and Europe be-  
 23 came embedded within institutionalized forms of cosmopolitanism such  
 24 as the United Nations, the human rights regime, the Nobel Prize, and  
 25 the transnational movements of solidarity with other exploited peoples,  
 26 Menchú demonstrates that rethinking universalism requires a thorough  
 27 interrogation of the universal framework itself.

28 In Menchú’s work the postcolonial female subject is constructed  
 29 through her extimacy, as she desubjectifies herself by divesting herself of  
 30 and nullifying her symbolic properties. In her descriptions of her travels  
 31 as a Nobel laureate, Menchú underscores the gap between her extimate  
 32 subjectivity, as she is reduced to an excremental position on her travels,  
 33 and her reception in official cosmopolitan ceremonies and protocols: “I  
 34 always travel like any other citizen of the world, *squat and dark-skinned* as  
 35 I have always been. I will always have *the face of a poor woman, my Mayan*  
 36 *face, my indigenous face*. At official ceremonies, when I am received by  
 37 a king or a head of state, I am the winner of the Nobel Peace prize. Yet

when I cross borders, it's another story. Customs and immigration officials act impatiently. They take my things out one by one, even my underclothes. They are often very offensive and racist.”<sup>61</sup> In contrast to the image of the subject of liberal individualism—the unfettered, unbound, rootless, privileged citizen of the world that sustains the normative-philosophical claims of cosmopolitical discourses—Menchú inscribes her extimate subjectivity within the structural, material conditions that mark the excremental positionality of the racialized body of the female indigenous subject as an object of the proliferating technologies of surveillance, criminalization, and control under the neocolonial capitalist state. This emphasis on extimacy and excremental positionality is important for the distinction Menchú draws between, on the one hand, the official reception she enjoys at international ceremonies and global institutions whose structures of fame and recognition reinscribe her body within its multiple allegiances and intersectional identities, and, on the other hand, the harassment and persecution she is subjected to within structures of state surveillance regimes and border/immigration authorities that reduce her to the objectified position of an excremental subject. Ironically, she realizes that her passport to international fame and world citizenship—that is, her Nobel Peace Prize—does not offer her the protection she expected from the “racism and bullying” of state officials, and this makes her ponder the condition of the thousands of illegal Guatemalan immigrants living in the United States under constant threat of deportation. Thus, following a press conference in which she protested the racist practices of immigration and border officials, she concludes, “I felt proud to be an ordinary citizen. Yet for people who have no help at the borders, things are very tough. It’s as if, at the end of the twentieth century, it’s a crime to be poor, and an international crime at that, for wherever you go in the world you always come up against obstacles and laws.”<sup>62</sup>

Menchú’s interrogation and destabilization of the hegemonized universality of cosmopolitan law and the human rights regime within which the struggle for ethnic particularity is inscribed disclose its exception or troubling excess as a point of inherent exclusion that unravels the violent founding gestures of the universality of the neocolonial capitalist system.<sup>63</sup> In her reaffirmation of “the need for resistance,” Menchú not only links her struggle to the struggles of oppressed indigenous communities

1 both in the western hemisphere and around the globe—those excluded  
 2 communities whose members comprise “the part of no part”—but also  
 3 situates these struggles within histories of anticolonial internationalist  
 4 struggle for emancipation.<sup>64</sup>

5 In his discussion of concrete universality in the context of Hegel’s  
 6 elaboration of the “rabble” as a trope for the part of no part, Žižek notes  
 7 that “it is precisely those who are without their proper place within the  
 8 social Whole (like the rabble) that stand for the universal dimension of  
 9 the society which generates them. This is why the rabble cannot be abol-  
 10 ished without radically transforming the entire social edifice.”<sup>65</sup> The part  
 11 of no part, therefore, introduces a “totally different universal, that of an  
 12 antagonistic struggle which, rather than taking place between particu-  
 13 lar communities, splits each community from within, so that the ‘trans-  
 14 cultural’ link between communities is one of a shared struggle.”<sup>66</sup> As  
 15 such, these excluded communities turn the conflict under global capital-  
 16 ism from one between two particular groups to one between the global  
 17 order and this radical universality, since such communities are more than  
 18 willing to “introduce a division of ‘Us’ versus ‘Them.’”<sup>67</sup> In their lack of  
 19 a determinate place within the private order of the social hierarchy, these  
 20 excluded communities of struggle recenter the egalitarian emancipatory  
 21 dimension needed for living in a just world. The universality of the part  
 22 of no part becomes, then, the universality of “the public use of reason,”  
 23 which can redefine “the very universality of what it means to be human.”  
 24 From this vantage point, it becomes possible to subvert the totality of  
 25 the system, since the domain of politics proper is not simply about “the  
 26 negotiation of interests but aims at something more, and starts to func-  
 27 tion as the metaphoric condensation of the global restructuring of the  
 28 entire space.”<sup>68</sup> Indeed, as Jodi Dean notes, such a political act consti-  
 29 tutes a reinscription “in another register, a register beyond itself,” that  
 30 can “unsettle or challenge the existing order.”<sup>69</sup>

31 For Menchú, the only way to challenge a given sociosymbolic order is  
 32 to fully assume its repressed point of exclusion, the struggle of the part  
 33 of no part, since their radical gesture of universality stands in opposition  
 34 to the empty principles of constitutional equality. As elaborated in her  
 35 testimonio, *Me llamo Rigoberta Menchú y así me nació la conciencia* (trans-  
 36 lated into English as *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guate-  
 37 mala*), Menchú was from an early age involved in a number of radical



movements—among them the Committee for Peasant Unity (in 1979), the 31st of January Popular Front (in 1981), the United Representation of the Guatemalan Opposition (in 1982), and the National Coordinating Committee of the Committee for Peasant Unity—that sought to educate indigenous peasants in resistance to the military dictatorship in Guatemala, a struggle that, following her exile from Mexico, she later expanded into a hemispheric struggle for the land rights and national sovereignty of Native Americans and indigenous peoples throughout the western hemisphere.<sup>70</sup> In fact, Menchú concludes her testimonio with a statement that grounds her revolutionary internationalism within the specific context of her ethnic, indigenous particularity: “My commitment to our struggle knows no boundaries nor limits. This is why I’ve traveled to many places where I’ve had the opportunity to talk about my people.”<sup>71</sup> Hence her work with the American Indian Movement and the International Council of Indian Treaties in 1982, which led to the formation of the first continental Quincentenary Conference in Colombia in 1989, where the “Five Hundred Years of Resistance” campaign began to support landless peasants in Brazil with the participation of indigenous movements from Ecuador, Colombia, and Guatemala. Indeed, by 1991 this movement had turned into a hemispheric campaign that included, in addition to indigenous and Native American organizations, Caribbean and other South American popular movements; it was appropriately called “Five Hundred Years of Indigenous, Black, and Popular Resistance.”<sup>72</sup> These experiences in the western hemisphere only confirmed Menchú’s belief that the struggle of indigenous peoples was only a part of the struggle of the oppressed all around the world, grounding her radical politics in revolutionary internationalism.<sup>73</sup>

Menchú’s internationalist politics are clearly grounded not only in the moral vision that underwrites normative discourses of cosmopolitanism but, more importantly, in a materialist understanding of poverty and fundamental inequality within the power structures that inform global capitalist and neocolonial hegemony. For instance, she correctly criticizes the proliferation of developmental agencies and many “phony” nongovernmental organizations that, under the aegis of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, bear “direct responsibility for the extreme poverty that plagues the majority of the world’s population.”<sup>74</sup> She also condemns the paternalistic and discriminatory practices of these global

1 financial institutions and cosmopolitan civil society for undermining  
2 “the [indigenous] people’s own organizations and leaders, [and for] im-  
3 posing on them groups or organisms that just serve to channel funds.”  
4 As she points out, these global institutions and organizations trivialize  
5 the pragmatic knowledge of indigenous peoples, thereby precluding the  
6 contribution of local “knowledge, techniques, wisdom, and labor” in  
7 development.<sup>75</sup>

8 What is most interesting to note about the response to Menchú’s  
9 scathing critique of global financial institutions, cosmopolitan civil so-  
10 ciety, and developmentalist discourses is that once it is transvalued into  
11 the language of internationalism, it immediately becomes repackaged  
12 and dismissed as communist.<sup>76</sup> Nonetheless, it seems that only within  
13 such a discourse can the egalitarian dimension of solidarity politics be  
14 coupled with its hidden emancipatory potential to reactualize Žižek’s  
15 “universal link” through her commitment, as she says, to “my humble  
16 home, to my own poor people, women with calloused hands and shy un-  
17 certain smiles.”<sup>77</sup>

18 It is important to note the extent to which anticolonial internation-  
19 alism functions as the exception in the universal neoliberal ideology of  
20 international law and the human rights regime. For example, although  
21 theorists of cosmopolitics maintain that cosmopolitanism and interna-  
22 tionalism are neither identical nor incompatible, they continue to omit,  
23 even excise, narratives of radical internationalism from their accounts  
24 of cosmopolitanism. Indeed, cosmopoliticians question and elide narra-  
25 tives of internationalism and the history and theory of decolonization,  
26 replacing them instead with emergent forms of global civil society that  
27 are not yet available to the subjects of internationalism—subjects who,  
28 as Timothy Brennan states, “have an interest in transnational forms of  
29 solidarity, but whose capacities for doing so have not yet arrived.”<sup>78</sup> This  
30 tendency to erase internationalism, even when references to it are made  
31 or fondness for it is feigned, is common among cosmopoliticians. In the  
32 end, these theorists reject the term *internationalism* for its valorization of  
33 national sovereignty, overshadow the realities of global capitalist exploi-  
34 tation and class struggle with the abstract language of rights and ethics,  
35 and substitute the exclusive concerns of global civil society and trans-  
36 national solidarity movements for internationalism’s comprehensively  
37 transformative program.<sup>79</sup>

The Ends of Revolutionary Politics: The Politics of Subtraction,  
Liberated Zones, and Resignifying the Revolutionary Act

Although Menchú's work frames her struggle in solidarity with the part of no part in the context of the universal exception or the concrete universality of anticolonial internationalism, it fails to articulate the full potential of the revolutionary act. In this case Menchú's work is symptomatic of minority/postcolonial women's writings in general, in which there is an illumination of the cartographies of alternative forms of antiprogrammatic subjectivization and politics, but in which there also remains a glaring gap with regard to the possibility of re-creating and reimagining a fully fledged revolutionary project. Most of these writers invest in relinking these forms of struggle with a vaguely described larger project of "resistance" and emancipation, not with a revolutionary event or act per se. As such, the full elaboration of the actualization of the genuinely revolutionary act remains lacking in these texts. The challenge here cannot be underestimated, of course: the main problem with the dominant neocolonial global capitalist system is the way in which it uses ideological fantasy to appropriate, co-opt, and integrate every aspect of the subject's thoughts and experiences within the system itself, to the extent that even theories of revolution and radical politics begin to replicate the logic, rhetoric, and values of the dominant economic and political order itself.<sup>80</sup> For Žižek, therefore, the revolutionary act must take a form that cannot be described as resistance in the traditional sense.

As we have seen, Žižek argues that desubjectification through the nullification of ontic or symbolic properties opens up a space for the extimate subject to access the register of the Real and identify with the object, thereby making it possible for the subject to assume a genuinely revolutionary positionality. In this act of desubjectification, the subject aestheticizes itself through self-distancing practices that allow it to strike against itself in pure acts of violence (*Versagung*). The subject's violence against itself thus constitutes for Žižek the precondition for a genuine revolutionary act, since in its symbolic divestiture the subject becomes "a signifier reduced to an inert stain that stands for the collapse of the symbolic order."<sup>81</sup> Žižek views such a gesture, one embodied in the subject's violent relationship to itself, as a revolutionary gesture par excellence because "revolution does not come about through a replacement of what

1 is with something else, not even through a focus on the elimination of  
 2 suffering, but rather in the stubborn stance of refusal of the entire social  
 3 universe.”<sup>82</sup> Hence, in its refusal and withdrawal, the subject appears as  
 4 an “obstacle to the Symbolic, [a] little piece of the Real that resists sym-  
 5 bolization” and thus clears a space for reimagining the possibility of a  
 6 different relationship to the symbolic order, perhaps even its collapse.<sup>83</sup>  
 7 As such, Žižek argues that a proper political act refuses to seek legitima-  
 8 tion from the big Other, opting instead to “authorize itself only in itself”  
 9 and thus create “its own (new) rationality.”<sup>84</sup>

10 This is precisely where Žižek locates the meaning of the revolution-  
 11 ary act of Melville’s *Bartleby*, beginning with his affirmation of a “non-  
 12 predicate” by way of his literal insistence that he “would prefer not to.”  
 13 As Žižek explains, *Bartleby*’s act of *Versagung* instructs us “how [to]  
 14 pass from the politics of ‘resistance’ or ‘protestation,’ which parasitizes  
 15 upon what it negates, to a politics which opens up a new space outside  
 16 the hegemonic position and its negation.” This, Žižek asserts, is “the  
 17 gesture of subtraction at its purest, the reduction of all qualitative differ-  
 18 ences to a purely formal minimal difference.”<sup>85</sup> Žižek therefore describes  
 19 *Bartleby*’s act of refusal as not so much “the refusal of a determinate  
 20 content as, rather, the formal gesture of refusal as such.”<sup>86</sup> In this way  
 21 the subject can reveal to others the possibility of resignifying revolution-  
 22 ary acts of symbolic divestiture, thus unraveling the limits of the social  
 23 field and its mechanisms of normalization, and fostering “the conditions  
 24 under which people will have a choice to make at the level of practices—  
 25 individual, familial, institutional.”<sup>87</sup> Although Žižek maintains that the  
 26 subject cannot control the way its acts are resignified and repeated by  
 27 others, he insists that there is no other option but to “accept the risk that  
 28 a blind violent outburst will be followed by its proper politicization.”<sup>88</sup>

29 Michelle Cliff’s novel *No Telephone to Heaven* (1987) bears witness  
 30 to Žižek’s speculations on the revolutionary act, but it also raises im-  
 31 portant questions about the conditions under which the revolutionary  
 32 subject becomes genuinely revolutionary and the politics of subtraction  
 33 can no longer be sustained as the need arises for resignifying the revolu-  
 34 tionary act in a register beyond itself, something for which Žižek offers  
 35 no clear answers. In her novel Cliff constructs a viable form of revolu-  
 36 tionary politics grounded in the *Bartlebian* gesture of subtraction and  
 37 withdrawal—a politics embodied in the emergence of a revolutionary

band living in a commune. However, when the guerrilla members of the commune insist on shifting the locus of their act from subtraction to resistance, the end result is their premature death. Cliff's novel thus avows the symbolic divestiture constitutive of the sudden eruption of violence necessary to any authentic radical revolutionary act, while at the same time warning against the resignification of political acts before the process of self-aestheticization has been completed.

Cliff's diasporic protagonist, Clare Savage, attempts to set off and nullify her ontic properties—especially the symbolic properties inscribed within the history of the colonial imaginary in the Caribbean—but she ultimately fails in her self-aestheticization project owing to her insistence on overidentifying with her (African) self and reclaiming her grandmother's land. Clare grows up as a privileged creole child, enjoying the prerogatives of light skin and straight hair in a postcolonial society that still values and operates by the residues of an old colonial culture. Throughout her formative years, Clare identifies with the desire for whiteness of her father, Boy Savage—what her mother, Kitty Savage, refers to as “favor[ing] backra.”<sup>89</sup> In fact, Kitty, in an attempt to expose and ridicule her husband's colonial mimicry, calls him “busha” and “massa.” Cliff writes, “With each fiction his new self became more complete.”<sup>90</sup> To accomplish his racial fantasy, Boy begins to practice camouflage and invisibility, or assimilation, losing all connections to his home culture. In Paris, Clare explains to her expatriate African American boyfriend, Bobby, the psychological effects of such fantasies on her self-image: “I was raised by my father to be that way. To be the soft-spoken little sambo, creole, invisible neger, what have you, blending into the majority with ease.”<sup>91</sup> Given the structures of colonial mimicry that shape her thought, it is not surprising to see Clare drawn to metropolitan space and its colonial culture. Foregrounding the irony in Clare's choice to travel to London, for instance, Cliff writes, “Choosing London with the logic of a creole. This was the mother-country. *The country by whose grace her people existed in the first place.* Her place could be here.”<sup>92</sup> Although she momentarily manages to disidentify with Jane Eyre, she is still incapable of nullifying her symbolic identity, as she continues to misrecognize herself as Bertha, whom she sees as “Captive. Ragut. Mixture. Confused. Jamaican. Caliban. Carib. Cannibal. Cimarron. All Bertha. All Clare.”<sup>93</sup> Such misrecognition on the part of Clare emphasizes Žižek's

point that suffering and victimization are still premised on the elevation of one ontic property over others.<sup>94</sup>

This valorization of one ontic property over others is also obvious in Clare's overidentification with blackness, her misrecognition of herself as a coherent and unified black subject. Clare realizes that in order to shake off colonial authority, or the (colonial) Name-of-the-Father, she needs to make a choice between whiteness and blackness. As she explains to Bobby, people like her, "who look one way and think another, feel another[,] . . . can be very dangerous, to ourselves, to others," a view that leads her to conclude that she has to "be one and not both."<sup>95</sup> Clare's renunciation of the subject's inconsistency with itself in favor of a unified subjectivity makes her susceptible to the gaze of Harry/Harriet, the novel's hermaphroditic and ardent nationalist, who leads her to reclaim her commitment to the nation and to overidentify with blackness over other identity narratives. In fact, as a victim of rape by a colonial white officer as a boy, Harry/Harriet wholeheartedly believes in reclaiming national consciousness and resistance politics, because "Jamaica's children have to work to make her change." Harry/Harriet thus urges Clare to return home and "help bring us into the present."<sup>96</sup> Ironically, at one point in the novel Clare seems ready to think her subjectivity through her extimate position as "neither the one thing, nor the other," but Harry/Harriet suggests that such a gesture is a sign of luxury and privilege and that they, as well as all Jamaicans, regardless of ethnicity and sexual orientation, will "have to make [a] choice."<sup>97</sup>

No longer able to live "in borrowed countries, on borrowed time," Clare returns to Jamaica, reclaims her grandmother's land, contributes it to the cause, and withdraws into a commune with a local guerrilla band in an effort to fight oppression and transform the deplorable conditions of Jamaica by modeling their struggle after the local history of slave fugitism and resistance, or marronage.<sup>98</sup> In its Bartlebian gesture, Clare's withdrawal into the commune is a step in the right direction, for this is precisely the type of space that Žižek claims exists outside the hegemonic position and its negation. Despite her renunciation of the prospects of revolutionary politics and violence, Cliff's representation of the experiences of the guerrilla band in the commune points to the radical potential of such sites of agency. Indeed, for Žižek, such communal spaces, like the favelas and slums of the Third World, constitute alter-

native forms of community, or “supernumerary” collectives, that exist “outside the structured social field” in extrajudicial spaces beyond state control, spaces where the system itself is suspended.<sup>99</sup> In fact, according to Žižek, the state has withdrawn its power to control the slums and their dwellers, leaving them to “vegetate in the twilight zone,” even though they are still subject to integration within the global capitalist economy as its “systematically generated ‘living dead.’”<sup>100</sup> Grounded in the possibility of “self-transparent organization,” these marginalized and dispossessed dwelling spaces have led to the construction of an emergent form of agency and social awareness.<sup>101</sup> Hence, Žižek dubs these spaces “liberated territories” where the “horizon[ ] of the politics to come” is being actualized.<sup>102</sup>

Like the members of the guerrilla commune depicted by Cliff, the postcolonial subject in the favelas and slums subjectivizes the position of Marx’s proletariat. Although the slum dwellers, in contrast to the working class, are defined in sociopolitical rather than economic terms, Žižek argues that they embody—even exceed—the definition of the “free” proletarian revolutionary subject. He writes that they are “‘freed’ from all substantial ties; dwelling in a free space, beyond the police regulations of the state . . . ; they are a large collective, forcibly thrown together, ‘thrown’ into a situation where they have to invent some mode of being-together, and simultaneously deprived of any support in traditional ways of life, in inherited religious or ethnic life-forms.”<sup>103</sup> Furthermore, for Žižek, such utopian spaces are embedded in what, appropriating Walter Benjamin’s phrase, he calls “divine violence,” those negative and inhuman forms of vitality and energy that are necessary for shaking up the system. Like the biblical locusts, the slum dwellers, Žižek surmises, strike “blindly” out of nowhere, “demanding *and* enacting immediate justice/vengeance,” an act or a decision not “covered by the big Other,” and, as such, one without any external guarantees, invoking the passion of risking a contingent decision—a decision requiring what Žižek calls “the political suspension of the ethical.”<sup>104</sup> As such, there is, as Žižek might put it, “more in the favelas than the favelas themselves,” indicating the capacity of these Other utopian spaces to affect a subversion of the whole edifice of the system. Indeed, for Žižek, it is precisely through the “improvised modes of social life” that proliferate in the slums—criminal gangs, the black economy, diverse forms of socialist solidarity and social

1 programs, and so on—that such utopian sites become capable of facili-  
 2 tating the “political mobilization of new forms of politics.”<sup>105</sup>

3 Insofar as it remains implicated in the politics of subtraction, Cliff’s  
 4 guerrilla commune, like the favelas and slums, is a truly authentic “event-  
 5 tal site.” Though they overidentify with blackness and elevate it over other  
 6 symbolic properties, Clare and her guerrilla band attempt to resignify the  
 7 revolutionary act by turning to the politics of resistance as an answer to  
 8 Jamaica’s problems: “NO TELEPHONE TO HEAVEN. No miracles. None  
 9 of them knew miracles. They must turn the damn thing upside down.  
 10 Fight fire with fire. Burn. Yes, burn it down. Bu’n it dung, bredda. Catch  
 11 a fire. Catch afire. Send flame through the hills like you light the cane.  
 12 Watch de snake run ’way. *No hab no choice in de matter. . .*”<sup>106</sup> The band  
 13 thus attacks a Hollywood movie production site. However, in a clear  
 14 setup, they end up dead following a shootout with the local police. Con-  
 15 curring with Žižek, then, Cliff’s novel offers Clare’s narrative as a cau-  
 16 tionary tale, re-positing this failed military attack as suicidal.

17 The example of Clare and her guerrilla band clearly demonstrates  
 18 Žižek’s contention that the shift from a politics of subtraction to a poli-  
 19 tics of resistance cannot succeed until the subject has completely nulli-  
 20 fied her symbolic properties and managed to actualize the project of  
 21 self-aestheticization. Moreover, Žižek is careful to posit the Bartlebian  
 22 politics of subtraction as “merely the first, preparatory, stage for the sec-  
 23 ond, more ‘constructive,’ work of forming a new alternative order.” That is  
 24 to say, the politics of subtraction is not the new alternative order itself but,  
 25 rather, “the very source and background of this order, its permanent founda-  
 26 tion.”<sup>107</sup> However, Cliff’s novel still raises important questions about  
 27 the extent to which the politics of subtraction can be sustained under the  
 28 socioeconomic and political conditions that typify postcolonial spaces in  
 29 the global South. Žižek fails to specify the conditions under which a revo-  
 30 lution might occur as the need for resignifying the revolutionary act in a  
 31 register beyond itself becomes inevitable. However, there might not be  
 32 easy answers to these questions at present. Nonetheless, reading Žižek’s  
 33 operative semantics and theories of the subject, solidarity, and revolu-  
 34 tionary politics with and against minority/postcolonial women’s writ-  
 35 ings promises to clear a space for interrogating the current global crisis in  
 36 general and the postcolonial impasse in particular from the perspective of  
 37 some ideas that fall outside the hegemonic neoliberal ideology.



## Notes

- 1 Matthew Flisfeder, "Dialectical Materialism and the 'Feminine Sublime,'" *Subjectivity* 5 (2012): 385.
- 2 Flisfeder, "Dialectical Materialism and the 'Feminine Sublime,'" 391. Flisfeder doesn't simply suggest that there is a homology or "chain of equivalence" between the feminine and the proletarian subject positions, that the referent "Woman" merely constitutes "the psychoanalytic name for the Marxian subject of History: the proletarian," or, in his paraphrase of Jacques Lacan, that "'Woman' is one of the names of the proletarian" (378). Rather, he actually attributes to the feminine subjective position an inherently revolutionary potentiality.
- 3 Slavoj Žižek, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 91.
- 4 Flisfeder, "Dialectical Materialism and the 'Feminine Sublime,'" 390. In an interview in which he intervenes in the debate over feminism at some depth, Žižek speaks of the "truly horrifying dimension of subjectivity," namely, the "radical negativity" of the feminine subject position. Alluding to both the eponymous Medea from Euripides's play and Sethe from Toni Morrison's *Beloved* and contrasting these instances of feminine radical negativity with the masculine logic of sacrifice, Žižek describes the former as the position of "letting the object go precisely when you could have gotten it," of "abandon[ing] everything for *nothing*." For Žižek, such a radical feminine subjectivity can be established only through positively violent acts. To this extent, he goes on to claim, "subjectivity as such . . . is feminine." Nonetheless, he never generalizes this feminine subject position as the "true subject" into the revolutionary subject as such. Žižek, "Slavoj Žižek: Philosopher, Cultural Critic, and Cyber-Communist," interview by Gary Olson and Lyn Worsham, *JAC: A Journal of Rhetoric, Culture, and Politics* 21, no. 2 (2001): 263, 262.
- 5 Todd McGowan assigns an "inherently political" structure to the feminine subject position, but he does not call it revolutionary or radical either. For McGowan, this politicization of female subjectivity can be attributed to its lack of a "signifier of exception [the phallus], which means that the set of women is a set without a limit, an infinite set that must remain incomplete," as opposed to the masculine logic of exception, which "must create the illusion of a whole—a whole society and whole identities—in order to provide a sense of social stability." McGowan, *Out of Time: Desire in Atemporal Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011), 119. Molly Anne Rothenberg also examines particular cases of radical feminine subjectivity, including the Jewish ballerina, as exemplary of Žižek's theory of the act, but, again, she does not suggest that these cases operate as a universal theory of the revolutionary subject. See Rothenberg, *The Excessive Subject: A New Theory of Social Change* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2010), 172.
- 6 Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes* (New York: Verso, 2008), 289.
- 7 Žižek, "Introduction: Between the Two Revolutions," in *Revolution at the Gates: Selected Writings of Lenin from 1917*, ed. Slavoj Žižek (New York: Verso, 2002), 8. For more on Žižek's exhortation to repeat Lenin today, see my essay "Žižek's Infi-

- delity: Lenin, the National Question, and the Postcolonial Legacy of Revolutionary Internationalism,” in *Žižek Now: Current Perspectives in Žižek Studies*, ed. Jamil Khader and Molly Anne Rothenberg (Malden, MA: Polity, 2013), 159–74, as well as the contributions in Sebastian Budgen, Stathis Kouvelakis, and Slavoj Žižek, eds., *Lenin Reloaded: Towards a Politics of Truth* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007). For critiques of Žižek’s theory of the Act, see Adrian Johnston, *Badiou, Žižek, and Political Transformations: The Cadence of Change* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2009); Rothenberg, *The Excessive Subject*; and Matthew Sharpe and Geoff Boucher, *Žižek and Politics: A Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010).
- 8 Žižek, *Tarrying with the Negative: Kant, Hegel, and the Critique of Ideology* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1993), 57. Fabio Vighi suggests that Žižek’s defense of Lacan’s feminine logic of the not-all against feminist critiques insists on linking the true subjectivity of the feminine position to the “inconsistency of feminine sexuality” as the assertion of “women’s ontological primacy over man.” For Vighi, however, this “ontological primacy” does not seem to automatically translate into a revolutionary or politically radical subjectivity. Vighi, *Sexual Difference in European Cinema: The Curse of Enjoyment* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 151–52.
- 9 Some critics, like Sarah Kay, consider Žižek to be “an ally of feminism,” while others, like Ian Parker, argue that Žižek’s position constitutes merely a repetition of the French existentialist themes common in the 1950s but “stripped of [their] feminist rhetoric.” Kay, *Žižek: A Critical Introduction* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2003), 14; and Parker, *Slavoj Žižek: A Critical Introduction* (London: Pluto, 2004), 68. Parker suspects that Žižek may find himself in trouble with feminists because he does not hesitate to offer plausible explanations, or specifications, as he calls them, about “what women want and what they will not be willing to give up because of it” in response to Lacan’s insistence on the Real of sexual difference. Part of the problem, Parker maintains, is that Žižek’s theory of sexual difference appeals “not so much to an analysis of and distance from the historical constitution of man, and of woman as other, and with some mysterious access to the Other, but to a tragic repetition of the failure of both men and women to measure up to the figure of man in their own distinctive ways” (67). For a concise defense of Žižek’s views on feminism, one that draws parallels between his views and those of other feminist philosophers such as Luce Irigaray, see Marcus Pound, *Žižek: A (Very) Critical Introduction* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 2008), 112–26.
- 10 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*, ed. Donna Landry and Gerald MacLean (New York: Routledge, 1995), 260. For an examination of the links between transnational feminism and the legacies of colonialism, neocolonialism, and global human rights institutions and discourses, see Inderpal Grewal and Karen Kaplan, eds., *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Practices* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994); Chandra Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003); and Sally Engle Merry, *Human*

*Rights and Gender Violence: Translating International Law into Local Justice* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006). See also Andrea Smith, "Native American Feminism, Sovereignty, and Social Change," *Feminist Studies* 31, no. 1 (2005): 116–32, for an indigenous feminist critique of transnational feminism.

- 11 Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Knopf, 1993), 244.
- 12 See Žižek, "Multiculturalism; or, The Cultural Logic of Multinational Capitalism," *New Left Review* 225 (September–October 1997): 28–51.
- 13 See Jacques Rancière, *On the Shores of Politics*, trans. Liz Heron (New York: Verso, 1995).
- 14 Žižek, "Multiculturalism," 46.
- 15 Žižek, "Multiculturalism," 44.
- 16 Žižek, *Living in the End Times* (New York: Verso, 2010), 137.
- 17 Žižek, "Class Struggle or Postmodernism? Yes, Please!," in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*, by Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek (New York: Verso, 2000), 97.
- 18 Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* (New York: Picador, 2008), 148. Žižek's critique of feminist contingent identities, constructivism, and performativity follows the lead of Joan Copjec's seminal work on the exclusion of the Real of sexual difference from theories of gender performativity. See Copjec, "Sex and the Euthanasia of Reason," in *Read My Desire: Lacan against the Historicists* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1994), 201–36. Žižek tirelessly admonishes Judith Butler for merely describing and mystifying the state of things under the hegemony of the global capitalist mode of production, arguing that "there is nothing inherently anticapitalist" in her program of subversive/parodic performativity. See, for instance, his interview with Diana Dilworth, "Slavoj Žižek: Cultural Critic," *Believer Magazine* 2, no. 7 (2004), in which he explains that Butler's theory of performativity operates "totally within the framework of today's capitalism, where again, capitalism, in order to reproduce itself, to function in today's condition of consumption society, the crazy dynamics of the market, no longer needs or can function with the traditional fixed patriarchal subject. It needs a subject constantly reinventing himself."
- 19 Žižek has at times been accused of racism in his discussion of postcolonial spaces and cultures. See, for instance, Ananda Abeysekara, *The Politics of Postsecular Religion: Mourning Secular Futures* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008). Žižek's representation of the postcolonial subject is certainly ambivalent, as he oscillates between representing this subject as either a fetish or a symptom of global capitalism, an ideological supplement or an excremental remainder. On the one hand, his work features a culturalist representation of the postcolonial (mostly Tibetan Buddhism) as a fetish, a fantasmatic object upon which the Western melancholic subject projects his or her own anxieties, embodying the lie that allows this subject to endure the unbearable truth. See, for instance, Žižek, *On Belief* (New York: Routledge, 2001), 12–15. On the other hand, his work features a political representation that considers the postcolonial (mostly the favelas in Latin America and the slums in Southeast Asia) as a symptom of the logic of global capitalism, modernization, and

developmentalism that functions as the point of the return of the repressed truth of class antagonism within the “field of global capitalist lies.” See, for instance, Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes*, 420–27. In both cases Žižek fails to reimagine the subject of postcolonial difference as a genuine locus of the revolutionary act, as a subject-for-itself. However, this is no reason to frivolously call him a racist. For more on this topic, see my “Žižek’s Infidelity,” 162–65.

- 20 See, for instance, Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* (New York: Verso, 1999), 396–97; and Slavoj Žižek and Glyn Daly, *Conversations with Žižek* (Malden, MA: Polity, 2004), 143–44. Žižek correctly notes that authority and voice in neoliberal multiculturalist politics can be legitimized only through appeals to victimization, which he of course rejects, the reason being, as Rothenberg explains, that although “the suffering victim may appear to be subjectively destitute, . . . the designation as suffering victim, as one reduced to bare life, simply elevates one ontic property above all others.” Rothenberg, *The Excessive Subject*, 183–84. What’s more, the position of victimization aligns the subject squarely with desire rather than with drive.
- 21 Žižek, “Multiculturalism,” 45–46.
- 22 Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 395. In the case of contemporary feminism and its uncritical relationship to the capitalist mode of production, for example, Žižek argues that feminism is “strictly correlative to the fact that, in recent decades, family and sexual life itself has become ‘colonized’ by market logic, and is thus experienced as something that belongs to the sphere of free choices” (395–96).
- 23 See Audre Lorde, *Sister/Outsider* (Berkeley, CA: Crossing Press, 1984); and Trinh T. Minh-ha, *When the Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender and Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 1991).
- 24 Minh-ha, *When the Moon Waxed Red*, 190.
- 25 These theories are premised on the assumption of the feminine subject’s multiple identity narratives and her shifting locations between systems of oppression and privilege. Cosmopolitics and transnationalism project these issues onto wider global horizons, but, all the same, these theories tend to pluralize the subject’s politics of location only to obfuscate the fundamental antagonism in late capitalism. On intersectionality, see Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* 43 (1993): 1241–99; on cosmopolitics, see Bruce Robins and Pheng Cheah, eds., *Cosmopolitics: Beyond the Nation* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998). For both a review and a critique of these theories, see my *Cartographies of Transnationalism in Postcolonial Feminisms: Geography, Culture Identity, Politics* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2013), 1–4, 15–18.
- 26 Žižek, “An Answer to Two Questions,” in Johnston, Badiou, Žižek, and *Political Transformations*, 195.
- 27 See Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 225.
- 28 Lorde, *Sister/Outsider*, 114.
- 29 See Žižek, *The Parallax View*, 385; and Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 195. Rothenberg

(*The Excessive Subject*) offers the most lucid and elaborate analysis of Žižek's theory of subjectivity. My discussion is deeply indebted to hers.

- 30 See Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Dennis Porter (New York: Norton, 1992), 71.
- 31 Jacques-Alain Miller, “Extimité,” in *Lacanian Theory of Discourse: Subject, Structure, and Society*, ed. Marc Bracher, Marshall W. Alcorn, Jr., Ronald J. Corthell, and Françoise Massardier-Kenney (New York: New York University Press, 1994), 75.
- 32 See Rothenberg, *The Excessive Subject*, 174–75; and Todd McGowan, *Enjoying What We Don't Have: The Political Project of Psychoanalysis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2013). One way to explain Žižek's account of the acephalous subject as multitudinous is through Hegel's idea of the absolute. On this point, see Todd McGowan, “Hegel as Marxist: Žižek's Revision of German Idealism,” in Khader and Rothenberg, *Žižek Now*, 31–53. As McGowan explains, Hegel defines the absolute as the inescapability and irreducibility of the structural antagonism, the divided structure of being, the scission and self-division that creates a barrier to self-identity. Rather than representing an obstacle to be overcome, that is, antagonism emerges as the form of one's being, its condition of possibility (31–37). Consequently, the recognition of the inevitability of structural antagonism in Hegel eliminates the need for escape, reconciliation, or transcendence in some form of pure outside or undivided Other (33).
- 33 Žižek, *Organs without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 174.
- 34 Žižek, *Organs without Bodies*, 175.
- 35 Žižek, *Organs without Bodies*, 174, 175. As Rothenberg explains, according to Žižek, “the identification with the object de-personalizes the subject, instituting a gap between its subjectivated individuation (all the little preferences and properties that make up our social identities) and its subject-ness, the pure subject that emerges as a function of the drive.” Rothenberg, *The Excessive Subject*, 176.
- 36 Rothenberg, *The Excessive Subject*, 176.
- 37 Rothenberg, *The Excessive Subject*, 185.
- 38 Rothenberg, *The Excessive Subject*, 176.
- 39 Rothenberg, *The Excessive Subject*, 184, 187.
- 40 Rothenberg, *The Excessive Subject*, 188.
- 41 See Alain Badiou, “The Scene of Two,” trans. Barbara Fulks, *Lacanian Ink* 21 (2003): 42–55.
- 42 Rothenberg, *The Excessive Subject*, 10.
- 43 Gloria Hull, “Living on the Line: Audre Lorde and *Our Dead Behind Us*,” in *Changing Our Own Words: Essays on Criticism, Theory, and Writing by Black Women*, ed. Cheryl A. Wall (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989), 153; emphasis added.
- 44 Rothenberg, *The Excessive Subject*, 45.
- 45 Žižek, *Organs without Bodies*, 175.

- 46 Žižek, *Organs without Bodies*, 385.
- 47 Žižek, *Organs without Bodies*, 176.
- 48 Žižek, *Organs without Bodies*, 182.
- 49 Rothenberg, *The Excessive Subject*, 177.
- 50 Žižek, “Afterword: Lenin’s Choice,” in Žižek, *Revolution at the Gates*, 177.
- 51 Rothenberg, *The Excessive Subject*, 177.
- 52 Žižek, *The Fright of Real Tears: Krzysztof Kieślowski between Theory and Post-theory* (London: British Film Institute, 2001), 23.
- 53 Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom! Jacques Lacan in Hollywood and Out* (New York: Routledge, 1992), 98.
- 54 Žižek, “*Da Capo senza Fine*,” in Butler, Laclau, and Žižek, *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality*, 217.
- 55 Žižek, *Enjoy Your Symptom!*, 97.
- 56 Žižek, “*Da Capo senza Fine*,” 213.
- 57 Žižek, quoted in Pound, *Žižek*, 113; emphasis added.
- 58 Vighi, *Traumatic Encounters in Italian Films: Locating the Cinematic Unconscious* (Portland, OR: Intellect Books, 2006), 108.
- 59 Žižek, *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* (New York: Verso, 2012), 361.
- 60 The title of the English translation, *Crossing Borders*, represents a clear commodification of Menchú’s memoir within the rhetoric of cosmopolitanism and postnationalism.
- 61 Rigoberta Menchú, *Crossing Borders*, ed. and trans. Ann Wright (New York: Verso, 1998), 21.
- 62 Menchú, *Crossing Borders*, 195.
- 63 On this point, see Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 201.
- 64 Menchú, *Crossing Borders*, 117. Menchú’s narrative debunks the common liberal feminist belief that most women, when confronted with the choice between liberal human rights and the right of sovereign nations to exist, “prefer the cosmopolitan view of citizenship which perceives human beings (men and women alike) as citizens of the global community, over and against the internationalist view according to which individuals primarily belong to, and demand rights and benefits from, a particular political community or nation-state.” Baukje Prins, “Mothers and Muslims, Sisters and Sojourners: The Contested Boundaries of Feminist Citizenship,” in *Handbook of Gender and Women’s Studies*, ed. Kathy Davis, Mary Evans, and Judith Lorber (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 2006), 247.
- 65 Žižek, *Less Than Nothing*, 432.
- 66 Žižek, *Living in the End Times*, 53.
- 67 Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 201.
- 68 Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject*, 208.
- 69 Jodi Dean, *Žižek’s Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 123.
- 70 The English subtitle of Menchú’s testimonio, *An Indian Woman in Guatemala*, clearly

- substitutes the political act of conscientization and subjectivization for an ethnoculturalist representation of Guatemalan womanhood.
- 71 Menchú, *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*, ed. and trans. Ann Wright (New York: Verso, 1984), 247.
- 72 Menchú, *Crossing Borders*, 168.
- 73 In 1993, moreover, Menchú traveled on speaking tours to twenty-eight countries, from Thailand to Ecuador, making her struggle for social justice and equal distribution of wealth even more international.
- 74 Menchú, *Crossing Borders*, 175.
- 75 Menchú, *Crossing Borders*, 177.
- 76 Menchú, *Crossing Borders*, 179.
- 77 Menchú, *Crossing Borders*, 1.
- 78 Timothy Brennan, “Cosmopolitanism and Internationalism,” in *Debating Cosmopolitics*, ed. Daniele Archibugi (New York: Verso, 2003), 42.
- 79 For more on this critique of the cosmopolitical erasure of internationalism, see my essay “Cosmopolitanism and the Infidelity to Internationalism: Repeating Postcoloniality and the World Revolution,” in *Critique of Cosmopolitan Reason: Timing and Spacing the Concept of World Citizenship*, ed. Rebecka Lettevall and Kristian Petrov (New York: Peter Lang, 2014), 267–91.
- 80 On this point, see Žižek, *The Sublime Object of Ideology* (New York: Verso, 1989).
- 81 Žižek, *The Parallax View*, 385.
- 82 Rothenberg, *The Excessive Subject*, 187.
- 83 Rothenberg, *The Excessive Subject*, 185.
- 84 Žižek, “Lenin’s Choice,” 243.
- 85 Žižek, *The Parallax View*, 381–82.
- 86 Žižek, *The Parallax View*, 384.
- 87 Rothenberg, *The Excessive Subject*, 208.
- 88 Žižek, “Lenin’s Choice,” 225.
- 89 Michelle Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven* (New York: Plume, 1987), 105.
- 90 Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven*, 62.
- 91 Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven*, 151.
- 92 Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven*, 109; emphasis added.
- 93 Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven*, 116.
- 94 On this point, see Rothenberg, *The Excessive Subject*, 183–84.
- 95 Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven*, 152–53.
- 96 Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven*, 127.
- 97 Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven*, 131.
- 98 Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven*, 193.
- 99 Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes*, 417, 162.
- 100 Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes*, 425.
- 101 Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes*, 376.
- 102 Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes*, 426.

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- 103 Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes*, 425.  
104 Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes*, 162. On “the political suspension of the ethical,” see the conclusion to *Less Than Nothing*.  
105 Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes*, 427.  
106 Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven*, 50; emphasis added.  
107 Žižek, *The Parallax View*, 382.