



Class Struggle for the 21st Century: Racial Inequality, International Solidarity, and the New Apartheid Politics

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Wilma Dunaway and Donald Clelland’s article, “Moving toward theory for the 21st Century: The centrality of nonwestern hemispheres to world ethnic/ racial inequality,” is structured around a contradiction between the interrogation of global apartheid theory’s political correctness and reverse racism and the scathing, yet hyperbolic, critique of the semiperipheries as the most egregious site for the reproduction of racial inequality in the world today. This contradiction is articulated in the form of a disavowal of race: On the one hand, they criticize global apartheid theory and whiteness studies scholars, and rightly so, for enforcing a Eurocentric conception of race that racially codifies the increasing polarization of wealth in the non-western world into a dichotomy between “white affluence” and “colored poverty/ stagnation.” The claims of global apartheid theory, they suggest, are undercut by the ascent of the transnational capitalist class (Robinson 2014) and the rising power of the semiperiphery as a neo-colonialist and sub-imperial power block which “causes, contributes to, and exacerbates” ethnic/ racial inequality around the world today.¹

¹The authors use extensive data on income levels and DGP per capita to demonstrate the ascent of the semiperipheries, in order to delineate ten different ways by which nonwestern semiperipheries allegedly perpetuate and aggravate



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On the other hand, they themselves reproduce the same reification of race they seek to distance themselves from and transcend in their discussion of the function of race and racial oppression in the intensified integration of the semiperipheries in the global capitalist system. The authors homogenize race as an analytical concept, treating it as an abstract and universal idea in their analysis of the vast geographies and histories that constitute the borders of semiperiphery they identify in their article. Hence, they fail to ground their critique of ethnic/ racial inequality of the semiperiphery in any substantive discussion of racial politics, institutional structures, and ideologies, including the cross-cultural appropriation of Western scientific theories and cultural mythologies in non-western racial economies.² In this sense, the terms of the analysis of racial inequality conflate race with other analytical concepts that inform specific forms of oppression and exploitation in these semiperipheres. In an earlier version of this article (Dunaway and Clelland 2016), moreover, they even refer to this transnational capitalist class as “dark capitalists,” who deserve as much critique as white capitalists in the analysis of the world-system. As such, they end up reinscribing their analysis of inequality in the semiperiphery in the same racial terms they reject in the critique of Western imperialism, racial privilege, and white affluence.

In this paper, I propose to interrogate the implications of Dunaway and Clelland’s disavowal of race in relation to two major themes that emerged in their analysis of racial inequality in the semiperipheries namely, the reification of race and the refugee crisis. Drawing on the work of the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek, I will argue that in their critique of the Manichean racial economy and empty liberal posturing of global apartheid theory, the authors move in the right direction and they should be applauded for it. However, they miss an important opportunity not only to transcend the reification of the idea of race altogether, but also to extend world-system as well as global apartheid theories in new directions.

ethnic/racial inequality around the world in the 21st century. However, the direct correlation the authors make between the increasing wealth of the semiperipheries and their rising hegemonic status in the world-system overlooks the debates about the most reliable measure of state wealth—whether state assets or measures of income and flows of services and goods constitute the real source of state wealth. As John Mearsheimer remarks in a different context, the economic resources a state has at its own disposal to develop its military power, what he refers to as “mobilizable wealth,” “is more important than overall wealth because what matters is not simply how wealthy a state might be, but how much of that wealth is available to spend on defense” (Mearsheimer 2003, 62). Moreover, the categorical claims they make about the rising power of the semiperiphery are still undercut by many of the assertions they make about the unwaning power of the core in the world-system today.

² A cursory look at the available literature on the problem of race in the semiperiphery demonstrates the massive differences in the perception of race and racial politics in these countries. Indeed, the difficult task of accounting for the nuances among such histories of racial inequality in the vast areas of the semiperiphery cannot be underestimated. For a very useful and in-depth discussion of the problematic of race in China and India, please see Jacques (2009) and MacDuie-Ra (2015), respectively.

Juxtaposing Dunaway and Clelland's claims with Žižek's is not an arbitrary choice: Although Žižek is critical of world-system theory, especially the problem he sees in Wallerstein's conceptualization of the proper dialectical tension between the universal and particular (Žižek 2002), he shares with Dunaway and Clelland the same animus against the liberal posturing and the political correctness of contemporary theory and cultural studies. For him, as he has succinctly put it recently, "the cruel irony of anti-eurocentrism is that, on behalf of anti-colonialism, one criticizes the West at the very historical moment when global capitalism no longer needs Western cultural values (egalitarianism, fundamental rights, the welfare state) in order to function smoothly, and is doing quite well with authoritarian 'alternative modernity'" (Žižek 2017). Nonetheless, Žižek's political theory is grounded in a specific understanding of the necessity of the class struggle and the intensification of the antagonism between the included and excluded in the expanding global apartheid regime, around which all the contradictions of the global capitalist system collapse.

In what follows, I will first, discuss Dunaway and Clelland's critique of global apartheid theory in relation to Žižek's uncompromising interrogation of liberal, multicultural strands of contemporary theory especially, postcolonial studies and postmodern feminism, for their "culturalization of politics." For Žižek, the reification of race here, like many other secondary contradictions, only distorts the realities of class exploitation and obfuscates the truth of the fundamental antagonism (class struggle). As he shows in the example of Malcolm X and the case of postcolonial Indian subjects who are fully integrated in the global capitalist system, only the renunciation of identity markers, ontic properties, or roots can open up a space for a true radical universality. In the context of his specific understanding of the new apartheid politics in the world today, he thus insists that the class struggle cuts across and throughout all world societies and the apartheid politics that pervades them. While Dunaway and Clelland hint at these realities in their discussion of the transnational capitalist class and their reference to South Africa, the authors substitute class for the class struggle today, opting instead to show the bankruptcy of the racial divisiveness of global apartheid theory.

Second, I will contrast Dunaway and Clelland's treatment of transnational migration and the global refugee crisis with Žižek's analysis of the humanitarian tragedy of the refugees. Their acknowledgment of the humanitarian campaigns on behalf of refugees in the semiperipheries notwithstanding, Dunaway and Clelland cynically use transnational migration and the refugee crisis to establish their claims about the major role the semiperipheries play in reproducing racial inequality in the world through their brutal mismanagement of the crisis. In contrast, Žižek frames the problem of the refugees in the context of the totality of the crisis in both host countries and countries of origins, relinks the crisis to the political economy of the refugees, and discusses the implications of the refugee crisis for the future of a truly radical solidarity politics. Dunaway and Clelland are surprisingly silent about the issue of international solidarity in their discussion of

ethnic resistance to state power which they ascribe to the widespread appropriation of the culture of universal human rights and multicultural ideology in the semiperiphery.

In Žižek's political theory, the refugees stand in for the surplus, disposable, and excluded populations that embody a genuinely radical universality, in a way that can reinscribe the class struggle and engage in a "positive universal project shared by all." This is the only ground from which a meaningful solution can emerge. While Dunaway and Clelland argue that the transformative power of the semiperiphery lies in its "ability to challenge and perhaps alter the entire system," this potential cannot be actualized without offering the refugees and other surplus, excluded populations a place in the class struggle within the global capitalist system.

The culturalization of politics and the new apartheid regime

One of the main goals that Dunaway and Clelland set out to accomplish in their article is decentering dominant Western theoretical paradigms in contemporary sociology and international relations especially, what they refer to as the "Western race paradigm" and theories of global apartheid and white supremacy. After almost a decade and half of debates about post-theory which announced the premature death of theory, the authors seek to revamp theories of racial inequality and reshift the conceptual framework of hegemonic Western theories to reflect the realities of the nonwestern part of the world-system. These theories reify race, framing the problem of racial inequality in global racial Manichean terms that promote a "West vs. the rest" worldview, identify whiteness as the exclusive site of racial privilege and affluence, and ascribe to whiteness the sole agency in the oppression of "the rest" and the perpetration of the majority of cases of inequality in the world today.

Likewise, Žižek condemns hegemonic Western theories for their "culturalization of politics," or the institutionalization of postpolitical multicultural ideology as "the cultural logic of multinational capitalism" (Žižek 1997: 28). This postpolitical multicultural ideology makes possible the proliferation of social movements that inscribe their presumably oppositional subjects primarily within the sphere of cultural production. For Žižek, multicultural postpolitics, embedded as it is in proliferating narratives of victimization and the primacy of identity and ontic properties, reduces the struggle for emancipation and economic justice to a struggle over identity politics and the politics of recognition, be it gender, racial, sexual, national, ecological, and so on (Žižek 1999: 396; Žižek and Daly 2004: 143). He deems it symptomatic of these movements' complicity with capitalism that multiculturalism enumerates these ontic properties or secondary contradictions within the constellation of identity politics, bearing "witness to the unprecedented homogenization of the contemporary world" by the "(dead universal)" global capitalist machine, which colonizes the "heart of each (particular living) ghost" (Žižek 1997: 45-46).

In his specific engagement with feminism and postcolonialism, which for him constitute dominant forms of multicultural identity politics, Žižek thus calls for more reflexivity in interrogating the constructivist content of feminist theories of performativity and the radical postcolonial critique of liberalism and Eurocentric universality. For him, the content of both these theories is “insufficient:” on the one hand, feminism merely describes the dominant attitude concerning the possibility of repositioning and restructuring identity; on the other hand, postcolonial discourse not only repeats the standard Marxist critique of “false universality” but also levels this critique through the very same liberal vocabulary it purports to criticize, thus failing to transcend the constitutive contradictions of the dominant neocolonial liberal ideology (Žižek 2008: 148). Moreover, feminism and postcolonialism, like all other social movements structured around the identitarian logic of multiculturalist postpolitics, are embedded within the mainstream logic of domination. Therefore, these discourses are necessarily susceptible to “inherent commodification,” since “the very space for this proliferation of multiplicity is sustained by the recent stage in the development of capitalism” (Žižek 1999: 395).

For Žižek, these theories define the terrain of struggle around multicultural issues of tolerance, diversity, and identity, distorting the instrumental role multiculturalism plays in the reproduction of global capitalist hegemony. He thus argues that 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” (Žižek 1997: 46). 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. (Žižek, 1997, 46)

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” (Žižek 1997: 44).

Žižek’s main problem with multiculturalism is that the terrain of struggle in multicultural politics is constructed around the cultural-ethical mandate of tolerance. Žižek shows that this multicultural discourse “involves the ‘repression’ of a different discourse to which it continues to refer,” namely, the socioeconomic struggle (Žižek 2010: 137). For Žižek, as he suggests in the

case of feminism and postcolonialism, the extent of the class struggle is repressed or displaced by offering excessive representations of the “horrors of sexism, racism, and so on,” an excess that can be attributed to “the fact that these other ‘-isms’ have to bear the surplus-investment from the class struggle whose extent is not acknowledged” (Žižek 2000: 97). The problem here is that this reification of identity distorts the potential of the particular reality structured around these specific identities to actualize the condition of its abstract universality (universal emancipation).

Žižek makes these claims clear in his discussion of the revolutionary thinking of his hero Malcolm X. Unlike other black nationalists, Malcolm X was not obsessed with searching for precolonial African roots. Rather, as Žižek states, Malcolm X saw the opportunity afforded by the traumatic African-American history of slavery, forcible dislocation and the involuntary erasure of culture and the past, as an opening to the freedom to invent a new universal identity. This is precisely the meaning of his newly iconic last name (X). As he says to Tavis Smiley in an interview,

Because of this Malcolm X [. . .] wasn't playing the Hollywood game, *Roots*. You remember that stupid TV series? The greatest honor for you blacks' desire is to find some tribe in Africa. Oh, I'm from there. No. Of course, Malcolm X meant by the brutality of white men, being enslaved, we were deprived of our roots and so on.

But he wrote about it. But this X paradoxically opens up a new freedom for us, all that white people want to be, not primitive tribal, but universal, creating their own space. We, black people, have a unique chance not to become, not to return to our particular [roots], to be more universal, emancipated than white people themselves. You see, this is the important thing for me. (Žižek and Smiley, 2015)

Malcolm X thus traversed the fantasy of roots and past. Since local traditions work well with global capitalism, as Žižek points out, the precondition for a new path of freedom is precisely the renunciation of all roots in favor of an emancipatory universal identity.

This dialectical tension between the particular and the universal, a tension that is inherent to any identity, cultural content, and/ or life world, is best exemplified in his critique of the postcolonial axiom that the truth of the postcolonial subject living in a globalized world is its cultural lifeworld, tradition or way of life. Žižek refers to the Indian historian Dipesh Chakrabarty's example of the Indian software programmer who represents the truth of Indian lifeworld through his concrete (cultural) content such as rituals, etc (Žižek, 2010, 280-285). For Chakrabarty, this Indian programmer is a paradigmatic cipher of the unproblematic simultaneity or

“normalized coexistence of the universality of modernization and of particular lifeworlds.” Žižek, however, correctly notes that “postmodernity is not the overcoming of modernity but its fulfillment: in the postmodern universe, pre-modern leftovers” are no longer experienced as obstacles to be overcome by progress towards a fully secularized modernization, but as something to be unproblematically incorporated into the multicultural global universe—all traditions survive, but in a mediated “de-naturalized” form, that is, no longer as authentic ways of life, but as freely chosen “life-styles.” In other words, within the totality of global capitalism, “elements of pre-existing lifeworlds and economies (including money) are gradually re-articulated as its own moments, “exapted” with a different function.”

Žižek thus concludes that the truth of the postcolonial subject is its abstraction (incorporation into the global capitalist system) not in its concrete (cultural) content. Indeed, according to Marx’s critique of commodity fetishism, in the global capitalist system, the subject relates to itself and its reality as “contingent embodiments of abstract universal notions”: the particular life world or cultural content is merely experienced as contingent, since the “abstract universal capacity to think and/ or to work” constitutes the ultimate ground for self-definition (Žižek, 2012, 356-357). His point here is that “in the specific conditions of commodity exchange within a global market economy, ‘abstraction’ becomes a direct feature of actual social life,” for it “has an impact on the way individuals behave and relate to their fate and to their social surroundings” (Žižek, 2012, 356-357). Žižek thus maintains that under the hegemony of the global capitalist system, subjects are actually more universal than they think and that particular identities themselves are “always already traversed by universalities, and caught up in them” (Žižek, 2014, 260). Indeed, he maintains, these particular identities are nothing but a “fragile ideological fantasy” that overlooks “how universality manifests itself in the gaps, failures, and antagonisms at the very heart of these very identities” (Žižek, 2014, 260).

What partisans of identity politics tend to forget is that “every particular position is haunted by its implicit universality, which undermines it” (Žižek, 2012, 360). Every cultural content or life world seeks to repress the universal dimension which lies at its core, since this actual universality mediates, destroys, and splits all particular cultural content or identities from within. It is sufficient to mention that any critique of or protests against the excesses of a particular cultural content are “formulated from the standpoint of universality” (Žižek, 2012, 357). Therefore, he insists, above all, on the need to fully assume the repressed point of exclusion as “the gap between the particular . . . and the universal which destabilizes it from within” in order to reconfigure the very coordinates and terms of universality (Žižek, 2012, 361).

It is important to note that Žižek posits “the empty place” of universality for human beings as a problem, in the sense that it is “simultaneously necessary and impossible” (Žižek, 2012, 356). In

contrast to Ernesto Laclau's idea of hegemony, in which a particular content can predominate in the struggle for hegemony by assuming the empty place of universality, Žižek maintains that universality "can never be filled with any proper content." The problem for the human subject lies in the contradiction between its "singular subjective viewpoint," through which it perceives and colors reality, and its status as another object in that reality (Žižek, 2012, 356-357). Consequently, any particular content will never succeed in filling in this universality or in bringing the particular content into harmonious relations with the universal. As such, universality is unavoidable and empty at the same time.

In a different context, Žižek uses feminism to draw the radical political implications of this problematic status of 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. (Pound 2010: 113)

The concern with particular sexual or gender difference in feminist discourses should not be to single out this particular difference and elevate it to the level of the universal. Such a move can only represent radical antagonism in a distorted way, "through particular differences internal to the system" (Žižek, 2012, 357). In Fabio Vighi's words, 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 (Vighi, 2006, 108). 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. In other words, as he states, "the true particularity is, primarily, the particular subjective position from which the universal Notion is acceptable to me" (Žižek, 2012, 360). In the case of particular cultural content or life world, to paraphrase his example about the state, the idea is not simply to recognize that the subject lives in a particular life world and that there are other types of life worlds, but that the recognition of being a subject of a particular life world, framed within

its specific ideological structures, informs, shapes, and “colors the universal notion” of a life world.

This is not to say that Žižek dismisses the important struggles against particular forms of oppression structured around secondary (visible) contradictions. His crucial point here is that the emphasis on these secondary contradictions mystifies and displaces—even effaces—the fact that the struggle for universal emancipation (the class struggle) must be made “through or at the site of a *thwarted particularity*” (emphasis in the original; Žižek, 2012, 362). Hence, he argues that universality in itself is nothing but the failure to realize a particular identity—when a particular identity falls short of becoming itself, it rises up to the status of the universal (Žižek, 2012, 362). He thus states, “it is not only that universality inscribes itself into my particular identity as its rupture, its out-of-jointedness; universality ‘in itself’ is in its actuality nothing but this cut which blocks from within all and every particular identity” (Žižek, 2012, 362). Hence, Žižek points out, the precondition for a new path of freedom is precisely the renunciation of all cultural content and/ or roots in favor of an emancipatory universal identity. Elsewhere, Žižek calls this process “subjective destitution,” which makes it possible for the revolutionary subject to invest in a new radical universal subjectivity. For him, as he maintains, a genuine anti-colonialism cannot be grounded in the glorification or defense of specific cultural content, traditional lifeworlds, or identity narrative, but can only be based on their evacuation.

The differences between Dunaway and Clelland’s and Žižek’s approaches to race and the struggle for justice and equality under the hegemony of the global capitalist system can be attributed to the way Žižek frames his critique of the integration of the semiperipheries in the new logic of global capitalist economy within a specific understanding of the growing global apartheid regime around the world (Žižek 2010). For him, new forms of capital and profit have privatized the three major commons of humanity, including the ecology, genetics, and intellectual property, at the expense of the surplus and disposable part of humanity, the majority of the world’s population, in ways that culminate in new forms of apartheid that register the gap between the included and the surplus, disposable, and excluded humanity in the global capitalist system. Unlike the bifurcated model of global apartheid theorists that Dunaway and Clelland criticize, Žižek appropriates the conservative German philosopher Peter Sloterdijk’s idea of the cupola (Sloterdijk 2013) to argue that the included, or privileged elite (the transnational capitalist classes), everywhere live under a protective, self-enclosed cupola that groups and segregates them from the rest of surplus, excluded humanity.

These new forms of apartheid remain central to the transformation of the global capitalist system. In *Against the Double Blackmail*, he thus writes:

In the series of four antagonisms outlined above, the one between the Included and the Excluded is the crucial one: without it, all others lose their subversive edge. Ecology turns into a problem of sustainable development; intellectual property into a complex legal challenge; biogenetics into an ethical issue. One can sincerely fight for ecology, defend a broader notion of intellectual property, oppose the copyrighting of genes, without confronting the antagonism between the Included and the Excluded. (Žižek 2016: 105)

As he forcefully concludes, such politics cannot lead to true universality, because only the antagonism between the included and excluded can testify to the threat that global capitalism poses to “the commons of humanity itself” through all its apartheid technologies. In short, as he states, while the first three antagonisms “effectively concern questions of humanity’s economic, anthropological, even physical survival,” the fourth contradiction between the included and excluded is “ultimately a question of justice” (Žižek 2016: 105).

Žižek’s political theory underscores the centrality of the surplus, excluded humanity in any understanding of the global apartheid regime that cuts across all world societies. As such, Žižek concludes, “Capitalism’s global reach is grounded in the way it introduces a radical class division across the entire globe, separating those protected by the sphere from those outside its cover” (Žižek 2017). The refugees and other surplus, disposable, and excluded communities, exist without a proper place in the global capitalist system, and, therefore, introduce a “totally different universal, that of an antagonistic struggle.” Žižek explains that “rather than taking place between particular communities,” this antagonistic struggle “splits each community from within, so that the ‘trans-cultural’ link between communities is one of a shared struggle” (Žižek 2010: 53). As such, these surplus, excluded communities turn the conflict under global capitalism from one between two particular groups to one between the global order and this radical universality, since such communities are more than willing to “introduce a division of ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’” (Žižek 1999 201).

For this reason, Žižek rejects modern theories’ overinvestment in new forms of domination that erase capitalist exploitation in their theoretical paradigm, serving as an alibi for the market. On the one hand, just like Dunaway and Clelland, Žižek insists that western theories of domination ignore the extent to which particular lifeworlds and cultural traditions are invested in “domination and oppression and conceal hidden (or not) antagonisms” (Žižek, 2014, 261). On the other, he maintains that any analysis of the way in which domination and control interlock with neoliberal ideology must above all address capitalist exploitation. Quoting Frederic Jameson, for example, Žižek writes in relation to the theories of Foucault and Agamben: “All their detailed elaborations

of the regulatory power mechanisms of domination, all the wealth of notions such as the excluded, bare life, homo sacer, etc., must be grounded in (or mediated by) the centrality of exploitation; without this reference to the economic, the fight against domination remains “an essentially moral and ethical one, which leads to punctual revolts and acts of resistance rather than to the transformation of the mode of production as such” – the positive program of such “ideologies of power” is generally one of some type of “direct” democracy. The outcome of the emphasis on domination is a democratic program, while the outcome of the emphasis on exploitation is a communist program” (Žižek, 2012, 1003). The problem with this emphasis on domination is that it “fails to register . . . that only in capitalism is exploitation naturalized, inscribed into the functioning of the economy” (Žižek, 2012, 1004). This logic of domination, as Fabio Vighi notes, is incompatible with the Marxist critique of exploitation which is “characterized by the incessant production and re-appropriation of that excess called surplus value” (Vighi, 2014, 17). Ultimately, for Žižek, in its inability to reinscribe the fundamental antagonism qua class struggle, contemporary theory will miserably fail in politicizing “the growing masses of excluded subjects as the locus of universality” (Vighi, 2014, 18).

Žižek thus insists on relinking the ongoing integration of the semiperipheries into the global capitalist system back to the fundamental antagonism or class struggle. What needs to be remembered is that the class struggle for him is not about the division of the world’s population between two clearly defined, antagonistic and opposed classes, which would turn the class struggle into a pure struggle that could be peacefully resolved. Rather, he argues, there is a class struggle, because a supplementary excess, a third class that Hegel refers to as the “rabble” and Jacques Rancière as “the part of no part,” exists in a way that “blurs or displaces the purity of the class struggle” and forever forecloses its reconciliation (Žižek 2010: 136-137). The differences between Dunaway and Clelland’s and Žižek theoretical approaches to the global apartheid regime and the antagonism between the included and excluded inform the way they reframe the humanitarian refugee crisis.

The refugee crisis and the future of the class struggle

Under the section, “Global Migration crisis,” Dunaway and Clelland discuss one of the ten ways by which the semiperipheries allegedly “cause, contribute to, and exacerbate” racial inequality, paying special attention to transnational migration and the refugee crisis and its management in core and semiperipheral countries. The authors engage in several debates and respond to various contradictory claims in academic and popular discourses on these issues, calling into question mainstream media reports about and academic theories of “unidirectional South to western core flow,” the utopian representations of diasporic and migrant experiences in the West, the critique of western anti-immigration policies, the chauvinistic and racist white backlash against “racial

minorities and immigrants of color,” and the problems of appropriating western concepts such as xenophobia and racism in discussions of migration in non-western countries. Unfortunately, some of their hyperbolic claims about the management of the refugee crisis in the semiperiphery are undercut by their own claims about the role of the core countries in causing and exacerbating this crisis.

Interestingly enough, the authors begin this section by indicting the core countries not only for their mismanagement of the refugee crisis, but also for causing this crisis through their imperial politics and consequently, for fueling racial inequality in the new century. They thus make it clear that core countries exploit the semiperiphery and periphery and drain “them of resources to resolve a refugee crisis exacerbated by its military imperialism.” They also correctly note the disproportionate levels in the accommodation and integration of the refugees between core countries and semiperipheral countries—despite their volatile economies, high levels of unemployment and poverty, and unstable structures, the semiperipheries seem to be engaged in a heroic effort to accommodate higher numbers of transnational migrants and refugees, by straining their GDP per capita and bearing the cost of the core countries’ imperial politics. They thus state that “a majority of the world’s refugees are being welcomed by countries with unemployment rates that are three to eight times worse than in the western core countries and in which a majority of the population lives on less than \$2 per day.”

Ironically, however, the ultimate goal of this section turns out to be establishing the extent to which “semiperipheral states are just as involved in regulating migration flows and restricting citizenship rights as western core countries,” and how “ill-equipped” they are to accommodate the refugees. In their response to western scholars who ignore the mismanagement of transnational immigrants and the refugee crisis in the semiperiphery, the authors insist that “semiperipheries are as enmeshed in as much conflict over transnational migrants as western states” through reactionary chauvinistic politics, infringement upon the human rights of “foreign aliens,” intolerance of foreign migrants, the use of quotas in administering migrants and refugees, deportation programs, the creation of enclaves for foreign workers, institutionalized xenophobia and racism, and even the administration of state camps for immigrants and refugees.

In contrast to Dunaway and Clelland’s cynical use of the humanitarian refugee crisis to shift the scene of the struggle for refugee rights from the core to the periphery and the semiperiphery, Žižek is concerned with showing that the humanitarian tragedy of the refugees must be understood in the context of the totality of the refugee crisis, the political economy of the refugee crisis especially, the privatization of asylum accommodation in the European system in which market considerations supersede any other calculations, and with the question of radical solidarity as a way to break out of the global capitalist deadlock and its multiculturalist logic (Žižek 2016). Žižek makes it very clear that the refugee crisis is a symptom of the global capitalist system especially,

its recent mutation into authoritarian capitalism, or capitalism with Asian values (Lingle 1996). As a result of these changes, global capitalism intensifies world-wide crises, in order to relocate disposable and uncountable populations in zones of unemployability in the global North. Consequently, these refugee communities can be managed and controlled more easily on welfare and other schemes.

For Žižek, first of all, the refugee crisis has to be understood in its totality—that is, the totality of the invisible, yet constitutive scene of violence that generates the refugee crisis in both host countries and countries of origin within the contradictions of the global capitalist system. In an interview with RT, Žižek discusses the “cinematic effects” of the image of the boatload of refugees, stating that when the camera pans back, the whole of “social totality” can be uncovered. Developing this insight, I propose to examine this totality in relation to the actually-existing exclusionary asylum accommodation process in core countries and the causes of the refugee crises in their countries of origin. Dunaway and Clelland overlook the extent to which the new asylum paradigm in the core already applies harsh exclusionary measures to restrict integration of the refugees and their access to refugee status in Europe. This paradigm places heavy restrictions on the mobility of the refugees through a complex legal pending asylum process, lack of physical and social mobility, warehousing, and an assemblage of ideological, political, social, and discursive mechanisms that subject the refugees and other forced migrants to an intricate system of monitoring, tracking, regulation, examination, surveillance, and policing that arrests, fixes, and freezes many refugees and other forced migrants in place (Witteborn 2011: 61).

Benjamin Mullen, for one, notes how in the post-September 11 global world order, states have intensified their use of technologies of control and surveillance and “heightened border controls, increased passport restrictions, and embarked on an overall clampdown of movement” (Muller 2004, 50). He examines a UK White Paper entitled *Secure Borders, Safe Haven* as a manifestation of this paradox and the increasing trend towards the biopoliticisation of the refugees. *Secure Borders, Safe Haven*, which came out in February 2002, led to the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Bill 2002, intended to make necessary adjustments to the existing act from 1999 and reflecting the contemporary realities in the politics of asylum. Under the subheading “The Challenge of Globalization,” the White Paper mentions the increased interconnectedness and interdependence in the world, and the need to further liberalize movement, which was under negotiation in the WTO. In a section entitled “Biometric Registration,” the Paper introduces a series of measures and mechanisms intended to both “detect and deter clandestine entrants,” as well as increase the speed and management of legitimate migrants. These measures are carried out by employing “biometrics technology” and other technologies of control that were allegedly put in place to “discipline” movement and expose human trafficking.

In this new asylum paradigm, various technologies of administration and control are used to regulate movement and limit access to refugee status. Saskia Witteborn (2011) discusses two major technologies that regulate and control the body of the refugee in the pending asylum process. First, Witteborn examines the use of bureaucratic labelling (where the asylum applicant is a refugee, asylum seeker, a person entitled to asylum, a convention refugee, or a quota refugee) that construct refugees and their bodies in terms of deviant Otherness, security threat and terrorism, through the institutionalization and legalization of exclusionary practices and restrictive accommodation policies that place the refugees under heavy surveillance, examination, control, administration, detention, even criminalisation technologies. The bureaucratic labelling produces a particular status that can determine the type of “subsidiary and complementary forms of protection,” eligibility for family reunification, employment, restrictions on physical mobility, or access to particular resources that can be granted the refugees (Tax 2014: 27). Nonetheless, as B. S. Chimni notes, the labelling of the refugees and their definition is rooted in policy-making practices and was always designed to serve state policy (Chimni 2009: 13-14). He correctly points out that the emphasis on the legal status of the refugees reflects a “certain legal fetishism” that seems to imply that “legal categories provide protection to refugees,” while in fact these “legal categories are not merely devices for inclusion but also for exclusion” (Chimni 2009: 11).

As some commentators have referred to the “Palestinianisation” of the Syrian refugee crisis, especially their fears that the crisis might be intractable and permanent, it might be useful to consider the implications of these labelling practices on the Palestinian refugees. As Ilana Feldman (2012) shows, labelling, identification and categorization of the Palestinian refugees is not merely a bureaucratic decision. Rather, these practices constitute a far-reaching process that creates not only “discursive and material framework for action and opportunity”, but is also a “source of constraint” (Feldman 2012: 388). Labelling has subjected Palestinian refugees to regulatory techniques that served as an important mechanism for “managing access to relief under the UNRWA rolls” (Feldman 2012: 394); it determined eligibility and regulated membership in the available refugee categories through highly punitive and intrusive measure that were assisted by security systems in the host countries. The label obstructs rights (citizenship, homeland) and provides access to others (relief, recognition); it confers recognition of loss and reduces refugees to the vulnerable status of victims and dependents (Feldman 2012: 389). Hence, even the labels and categories were subjected to policing and investigation. These practices have had three major effects on Palestinian refugees: first, they exposed the refugees to new modes of governance and policing, for UNRWA’s definition of the refugee was created “for the purpose of the administration of its relief and other programs” (Feldman 2012: 401). Second, they introduced the already traumatized Palestinian refugees to new experiences of loss, especially of rations and

assistance. And third, they made possible the elaboration of political claims and the demand for recognition.

Witteborn also discusses the ways in which the new asylum paradigm also assigns refugees to heterotopic spaces, separate housing and warehousing that freeze them in social, semiotic and discursive locations that eventually aim to normalize and contain the refugees socially, culturally, and legally (Witteborn 2011: 1154). These spaces are usually excluded from the typical biopolitical sites of exception. In these shared refugee and asylum-seeker accommodations (*Gemeinschaftsunterkunft* or *Asylunterkunft*), they are required by law to stay for a period of time that ranges between three and seven months for purposes of bureaucratic registration, after which they are transferred to more permanent (collective) accommodations. These heterotopic spaces are comprised of different types of accommodation, including the stand-alone, multi-storey concrete apartment buildings, which provide shared apartments and kitchen/bathroom facilities. There are also the barrack-like structures, which are the most difficult to live in due to the basic scheme of the accommodations, the lack of privacy, thin walls, and sometimes problematic hygienic conditions. Different rules pertaining to food package pick-up time, the use of amenities on the premises, or appointments with the social services department make social relations among the refugees even more difficult. Unsurprisingly, as Witteborn mentions, refugees refer to these accommodations as *asylum camps* (*Asyllager* in German), *reception camps* (*Aufnahmelager* in German), or *deportation camps* (*Abschiebelager* in German), to foreground the institutionalized nature of these accommodation services and shift the responsibility back to the state that tends to blame and scapegoat individual refugees for failing to integrate in these accommodation centres.

Dunaway and Clelland also fail to address the cause of the refugee crisis and ramifications of the crisis in their countries of origin, opting to highlight some of the chauvinistic responses to the crisis without paying enough attention to the nuances, reversals, and paradoxes of the crisis. For example, debates in the Arab world raged about the legal, social, economic, and cultural effects of the accommodation of the Syrian refugees, whose image was constructed at the intersection of human rights discourses and different dominant epistemes such as national security, border control and the war on terror. Indeed, the Arab press was replete with stories about the “cultural divide” between the Syrian refugees and the neighbouring Arab countries and the debates around the integration of the refugees in the Gulf and elsewhere. Saleh Al-Kilani (2014), for example, notes that the movement of Syrian refugees into Jordan threatens Jordan’s national identity and suggests that the Jordanian government supports resettlement, which they do not discuss in public media to discourage other refugees from “coming to Jordan as a gateway to third countries” (Al-Kilani 2014: 30-31). Omar Dahi (2014) even claims that the Jordanian government fears that “substantial investment in refugees will provide incentives for further inflows—or integration of existing

refugees.” He quotes a Jordanian minister who “admitted in 2013 that conditions are calibrated to provide minimal aid so that refugees will have no incentive to remain, and this appears to be an unspoken policy in other host countries as well” (Dahi 2014: 11-13).

Part of the problem is that neighbouring countries such as Jordan and Lebanon are non-signatories to the 1951 Refugee Convention, and therefore do not see themselves under any international legal obligation to offer the displaced Syrians the asylum and protection accorded refugees in the cosmopolitan human rights regime (Peteet 2009). Moreover, as Al-Kilani notes, Jordanian law on refugees does not allow for integrating the refugees locally as a solution, and restricts the option of applying for political asylum to most refugees (Al-Kilani 2014). In Lebanon, Syrian refugees are accorded limited legal status. As Dalia Aranki and Olivia Kalis (2014) demonstrate, Syrian refugees “without the required entry or stay documentation to be in Lebanon” are considered to be “illegal,” giving them only limited legal status in the country. Consequently, many of these refugees “feel that they have been forced into the situation of being illegally present in Lebanon and feel compelled to limit their movements for fear of being arrested, detained or even deported back to Syria” (Aranki & Kalis, 2014, 17-18). This limited legal status makes it almost impossible for many Syrian refugees “to access basic services, work and UNHCR registration sites, and to register births and marriages is severely limited.” It also placed severe restrictions on their “freedom of movement” and many feared crossing checkpoints, especially in areas that have been heavily monitored and policed. As a result of the history of the tensions between Palestinian refugees and their Lebanese hosts, furthermore, Palestinian refugees from Syria find “the restrictions on entering Lebanon and on renewing their legal stay . . . much more severe” (Aranki and Kalis 2014). Indeed, Lebanon’s experience with Palestinian refugees since 1948 affects its practices and policies toward the displaced Syrians. The Lebanese authorities have refused establishing camps, fearing history will repeat itself.

The accommodation of the Syrian refugees has escalated tensions between the Syrian refugees and their host communities in Lebanon and Jordan, who view the resettlement of the refugees outside the camps as a severe social and economic burden on the local and host communities, and as the primary source of depressed wages and limited employment opportunities. Omar Dahi (2014), for instance, notes that in Jordan and Lebanon, these challenges have been “felt on a day-to-day basis by all Lebanese and Jordanian citizens, whether through higher rents and declining public service availability, or through health and education infrastructure that is stretched beyond its limits” (Dahi, 2014, 11-12). Consequently, he adds, “the tensions between host communities and refugees within Lebanese society are obvious, and in both countries a lot of government and societal discourse about refugees has become palpably resentful” (Dahi, 2014, 11-12). In many cases, tensions erupt because humanitarian agencies assist refugees,

but not the local population. Consequently, the Syrian refugees have been labelled and used as scapegoats in matters of economic as well as political insecurity. As the refugees compete with host communities for even lower wages, resentment against the refugees increases, since they are seen as recipients of humanitarian aid.

Interestingly enough, cultural differences have been the site of clashes between Syrian refugees and Jordanian host communities and NGOs in the Zaatari camp. As Sarah Tobin and Madeline Campbell (2016) remark, cultural clashes erupted over the curriculum in the camp, since many refugees thought it was incompatible with their experiences and outlooks. One particular cultural difference between the two was the question of domestic violence and the physical/corporeal punishment of children. Tobin and Campbell write that “the refugees felt that domestic violence, particularly directed at children, was the only means by which the children would heed their parents’ admonitions,” while the Jordanian hosts “expressed shock and frustration that the debates, for the Syrians, centered on acceptable “degrees of violence” rather than the acceptability of violence itself” (Tobin and Campbell 2016).

Moreover, these cultural differences were a source of contention in issues related to child labour and child marriages. In the case of early consanguine arranged marriages in particular, refugee communities clashed also with Jordanian NGOs that work in the camp. As Tobin and Campbell note, these marriages are “deemed ‘illegal’, as the age of consent for marriage in Jordan is 16 for females, and marriages must be registered locally in accordance with Jordanian law.” Moreover, early marriages expose these young girls to domestic violence and abuse (Tobin and Campbell 2016) Ironically, refugees have complained that host communities are imprinting “local sensibilities and laws on the refugee population, at times challenging young women to choose between family and tradition, and what they hope or anticipate might be their futures.”

Ultimately, these problems have led to the central debate in Arab countries regarding the refugees: the debate about nationalizing (*Towteen*) the refugees as citizens and compatriots in their host Arab countries. Sari Hanafi (2008) explains in the case of the Palestinian refugees, towteen is the bogymen that can “release a public phobia against the basic rights of the Palestinians.” Any debate about the civil and economic rights of the refugees is structured around making towteen impossible “to the point that rights become substituted by fast humanitarian or security solutions.” Indeed, as Hanafi points out, various Lebanese political parties operate with the unwritten rule that *towteen* is a major taboo and is tantamount to national treason. By foregrounding sites of exception in Europe only, biopolitical theories gloss over equivalent spaces of exception in other parts of the world that are important for mapping common strategies of disposability within the neoliberal global capitalist economy.

The second difference between Dunaway and Clelland's and Žižek's approaches to migration and the refugees is that Žižek insists on addressing the "netherworld" political economy of the refugee transportation and its profit in a global capitalist economy, in which "commodities—but not people—are permitted to circulate freely." This black market in the refugees is important to address as it is intertwined with the exploitation of the refugees within human trafficking and sex trafficking networks around the globe. However, the obverse side of this black market in the refugees namely, is the privatization of asylum accommodation in the European system must also be interrogated in a critique of the political economy of the refugees, since it demonstrates the extent to which the market logic dominates all decision and considerations in contemporary refugee politics.

Jonathan Darling (2016), for example, argues that the asylum seeking and accommodation/refugee processing in the UK has been embedded in a neoliberal governmentality that shifted the management and administration of these humanitarian services from local authorities to private delivery companies. He explains that in March 2012, the UK government signed six contracts, known as COMPASS (Commercial and Operating Managers Procuring Asylum Support), with three private delivery companies to manage the accommodation and reception of asylum seekers and their families. Although prior to COMPASS, he points out, asylum accommodation and reception were framed within a business model, including the employment of private security companies to manage the UK's deportation system and exorbitant legal services to asylum seekers and refugees, this new development marked an intensification of neoliberal governmentality in this humanitarian field. As such, the institutionalization of this accelerated for-profit market rationality in the asylum accommodation and reception services has been translated into pure economic calculations, market competition, consumer choice, and economic efficiency (Darling 2016, 232). "In effect," he states, "local authorities, private providers and third sector organisations are all positioned as constituting the neoliberal governmentality of asylum accommodation through assenting to a model of provision that is based on market logics of efficiency, flexibility and cost" (Darling 2015, 25).

Darling thus suggests that now not only humanitarian considerations underpinning the asylum accommodation and reception process but also the overlapping of private, public, and state interests have been completely superseded by market norms. Moreover, it facilitated the production of "new spaces of dispersal," new relations and positions of authority, and "increasingly fractured assemblages of governance," expanding the state's jurisdiction under new modalities of governance (Darling 2016, 232). Finally, this neoliberalization of the asylum market made it possible to reconstruct the image of the refugees and other forced migrants rhetorically and discursively as a burden through "narratives of 'worthiness,' 'welfare,' and 'prioritization'" that repackage the "economic account of asylum as a question of resource allocation, cost, and

productivity” (Darling 2016, 39). This was, as he says, a “part of a revanchist trend to socially marginalize those seeking asylum as an economic and fiscal drain during a time of austerity, at the expense of a citizenry constructed as ‘our’ people” (Darling 2016, 235).

Ultimately, the intensification of neoliberal governmentality led to the depoliticization of the asylum seeking process, even though Darling’s conceptualization of the terms is limited to democratic debate and decision making. First, the form and content of the debates, what is considered legitimate and acceptable viewpoints, over asylum accommodation and refugee processing are “defined in advance” so that “other potential political viewpoints on how asylum might be framed in public policy” are foreclosed. Second, depoliticization normalizes the neoliberal rationality underpinning the asylum market, turning the whole process into an issue of contract negotiations with private delivery companies (Darling 2016, 238). Darling, however, obfuscates the most important aspect of depoliticization namely, the structural violence of the global capitalist economy in the production and circulation of asylum seekers, refugees, and other forced migrants.

Moreover, he does not examine how this privatization of humanitarian services is interlinked with the national securitization episteme in the global capitalist economy. It is no coincidence that two of the private corporations contracted by the British government include G4S and Serco, a multinational security services company and an international services company, respectively, have previously managed “immigration removal centers and aspects of the UK’s deportation regime” (Darling 2016, 232). In other words, the reproduction of neoliberal governmentality is embedded within a securitization and surveillance episteme that regulates and polices the undesirable, foreign, and disposable body of the asylum seeker and refugee.

This privatization of the refugee management process is also evident in the Arab world. Tobin and Campbell (2016) show that the Jordanian government has “outsourced the provision of humanitarian aid and services in refugee camps” to hundreds of non-governmental organizations, limiting its role to “regulating camp access and deploying police.” Consequently, they maintain, these neoliberal policies in the governance of the Syrian refugees have led to “the privatization of the refugee experience” and the spread of campaigns whose goal is to cultivate the refugees into “new moral subjects” or even figures of the “ideal refugee.” Consequently, NGOs working with Syrian refugees in camps in Jordan have tried to “inculcate certain ‘proper’ or ‘ideal’ understandings of women and work, youth, and early marriage, or the marriage of teenage girls. In each of these cases, the NGO guidelines for the “appropriate” understanding clashed with the refugees’ own understanding of these issues. They conclude that the suffering and uncertainty of these refugees increased as a result of these neoliberal policies, “by rendering Syrian refugees responsible for their own management and aid provision.”

The last, and most important difference between Dunaway and Clelland's approach and Žižek's analysis of the refugee crisis is Žižek's insistence on the need to build "global solidarity of the exploited and oppressed," a politics of solidarity structured around a common struggle for a "positive universal project shared by all" (Žižek 2016, 100). For him, this is the only ground from which a meaningful solution can emerge. As Žižek made clear over and over again, this new position cannot be carved out by celebrating diversity and multiculturalism. The reason is that multiculturalism, as he states in no equivocal terms, serves as an alibi to the global capitalist system, operating as the main ideological vehicle for suppressing and displacing the class struggle. In turn, the false universalism of global capitalism, especially in its recent shift into Asian values, sustains this multicultural ideology, allowing people universal access to economic exchange, while keeping cultural identity particular (Lingle 1996).

Žižek grounds his understanding of the radical solidarity with the refugees in the Hegelian notion of "concrete universality." According to Žižek, Hegelian universality requires a point of inherent exclusion, "an exception at which it is suspended" (Žižek 1992, 98) and the refugees, like Hegel's rabble and Rancier's "part of no part," represent such a point. For Hegel, universality is inherently exclusive, not only in the simple sense of excluding the "underprivileged Other," but, more importantly, in the sense of excluding "its own permanent founding gesture—a set of unwritten, unacknowledged rules and practices which, while publicly disavowed, are none the less the ultimate support of the existing power edifice" (Žižek 2000, 217). Concrete universality thus refers to the exception that is "reconciled in the universal"—that is, concrete universality is formed through "the unity of the abstract universal with its constitutive exception" (Žižek 1992, 97). Unsurprisingly, Žižek considers such points of exception to be constitutive of the "very site of political universality" (Žižek 2000, 213).

This has to be understood in the context of the dialectical tension between the universal and particular in Hegel's work. The universal, as Žižek explains, coincides with the particular contents or concrete situations through which it can be "hegemonized," while at the same maintaining its universal frame in and through these concrete situations. Žižek thus maintains that for Hegel not only is the particular content a "subspecies of the universality of the total process, [but] it also hegemonizes this very universality," transmuting universality itself into a "part of (or, rather, drawn into) the particular content" (Žižek 2001, 23). As such, the universal does not stand in opposition to some concrete content or particular feature of the totality; rather, both universal and particular occupy the same paradoxical zone of extimate indistinction.

In this sense, universality, for Žižek, is not about abstract neutrality, because the abstract universal fails to include its particular content, thereby becoming itself something particular over and against the particulars it cannot include. That is, abstract universality is neither concrete nor transcendent; it is immanent to concrete reality and coincides with its own produced destabilizing

excess. It exists in the form of a gap/ impossibility in concrete reality. In this sense, universality is a “process or a sequence of particular attempts that do not simply exemplify the neutral universal notion but struggle with it, give a specific twist to it – the universal is thus fully engaged in the process of its particular exemplification; that is to say, these particular cases, in a way, decide the fate of the universal notion itself” (Žižek 1999, 102).

As such, universality is reconsidered in terms of its constitutive exception—the particular cases of the excluded determine what the universal is. Following Hegel and Marx, he points out that “universality becomes ‘for itself’ in so far as individuals no longer fully identify the kernel of their being with their particular social situation: they experience themselves as forever ‘out of joint’ with regard to this situation” (Žižek, 2012, 261). Hence, universality is hegemonized by including the exception under it, and hence “it is only through the exception that it becomes the rule, that is, a universalized function.” In this sense, the excluded, in this case the refugees, stand out as a singular or concrete form of universality in the sense that they stand “alone among the other particulars, not as a particular kind over and against them (which would make it only particular) but as an exception to the very idea that it is a “kind” at all.”

Žižek thus maintains that the “part of no part” embodies the failure of universality and stands for the lie of the existing universal system and “what is wrong with society.” He thus writes that their “abject position stands for the lie of the existing universality and it doesn't necessarily have a direct positive dimension. In this sense the universality here is not fake, because it only embodies what is false in the existing universality. It gives body to the failure of universality and does not have any positive content” (Žižek and Daly 2004: 160). Žižek explains: “. . . when you have in a certain social totality those who are 'below us' -- the negated or outcast -- then precisely insofar as they are the abject, they stand for universality (Žižek & Daly, 2004, 160).

Needless to say, these excluded populations in the increasingly expanding modalities of apartheid are not the classical Marxist subject of the proletariat. As Žižek notes, one is lucky to be an exploited worker today; the real issue is that more and more people are not simply unemployed, but unemployable and discardable refugees, slum dwellers, surplus populations, bedoons, and homo sacers (to use Giorgio Agamben's phrase). In a nutshell, they are the “part of no part,” to use Jacques Ranciere's term, “the object of disciplinary measures and/ or even humanitarian help, but not full citizens,” who lack any “determinate place” in the system and who are kept at a proper distance through technologies of surveillance, torture, and death (Žižek & Daly, 2004, 160).

Only by identifying with this uncounted and discardable then that the moment of the truth of the global capitalist system can be reached. Because these rabble populations “stand for the universal dimension of the society which generates them,” Žižek maintains, they cannot be “abolished without radically transforming the entire social edifice” (Žižek, 2012, 432). The universality of these surplus, excluded populations becomes, then, the universality of “the public

use of reason,” which can redefine “the very universality of what it means to be human.” From this vantage point, it becomes possible to subvert the totality of the system, since the domain of politics proper is not simply about “the negotiation of interests but aims at something more, and starts to function as the metaphoric condensation of the global restructuring of the entire space (Žižek, 1999, 208). Any sense of radical universality that can oppose global capitalism must, therefore, be theorized from the perspective of the larger segments of the world population who are kept at a distance from the ideological construction of itself as an excess that is relegated to a position of abjection. What is needed then is to rethink the inequality and injustice of the global capitalist system from the perspective of this “part of no part,” who are kept at a distance from the system by virtue of these technologies of apartheid and enclosure such as prisons, separation walls, gated communities, etc., that embody the proliferating forms of capitalist privatization. Indeed, as Jodi Dean (2006) notes, such a political act constitutes a reinscription “in another register, a register beyond itself,” that can “unsettle or challenge the existing order” (Dean, 2006, 123).

This, for him, justifies the validity of the struggle for Communism as the grounds for a new configuration of solidarity based on the politics of the commons. The “progressing ‘enclosure’ of the commons” by the global capitalist system and its privatization technologies is the correlative of the “proletarianization of those who are excluded from their own substance,” making it possible for them to inaugurate an alternative radical revolutionary project that can mobilize people outside the market and state control. This politics of the commons links diverse global struggles in anti-globalization and anti-capitalist practices that aim to reverse the oppressive technologies of apartheid and bring an end to the horrible policies of enclosure.

Hence, the political universality of the commons is a real and genuine form of universality, because it is “the universal link binding together all those who experience a fundamental solidarity, all those who [become] aware that their struggles are part of the very struggle which cuts across the entire social edifice” (Žižek, 2002, 177). That is to say, the subjects of this emancipatory universality posit the antagonistic struggle not between particular communities, but within each community, “so that the ‘trans-cultural’ link between communities is one of a shared struggle” (Žižek, 2010, 53). Their universality cannot be obtained by moving from particular lifeworlds or identity narratives upwards to some forms of shared or common humanity or histories, but “downwards, from the totality of a particular life form to the elements which signal its instabilities and inconsistency” (Žižek, 2014, 260). The excluded, that is, constitute the “lateral link” in each life world and identity narrative whose gaps, inconsistencies, and antagonisms serve as the ground for the emergence of emancipatory universality.

In so far as they lack any determinate place in the hegemony of the neoliberal global capitalist regime, the refugees can be said to represent the system’s constitutive exception, its symptomatic

truth qua the structural injustice and inequality of the system. In the case of another “symptomatic point” namely, the proletariat, Žižek writes that “an event proper occurs only when this symptomatic point is fully assumed in its truth—say, when the proletariat grasps that its lack of a proper place within the social body signals that it stands for universality (universal truth) of the society in which there are proletarians” (Žižek 2014, 78). The main challenge of emancipatory politics today is to assume this truth, by identifying with this symptomatic point, the refugees, by “propos[ing] and fight[ing] for a positive universal project shared by all participants” and “offer[ing] them a common struggle, since our problems today are common” (Žižek 2016, 100). This is the only way to affect real change, if Dunaway and Clelland seek to actualize the transformative powers of the semiperiphery.

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