



Awakening Figures Masses and Surplus?

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Awakening Lazarus: Forgotten Figures – Masses and Surplus?¹

Abstract

The text aims to think through a figure largely forgotten in radical philosophy or communist theology discussions today: the Biblical figure(s) of Lazarus. The absence of this figure from current discussions might have to do with something that was pointed out by Balibar as the ongoing “fear of the masses,” and with their political awakening that is usually interpreted as violence, failure, riotous noise and absence of political program/organization. I will perform a close reading of two stories of Lazarus from the Gospels in the first part of this article,

¹ This text is an edited lecture that was presented at the conference in St. Petersburg. I would like to thank participants of the conference for their comments, Nathaniel Boyd and especially Dominic Martin for their additional reflections on the political theology of Lazarus, and lastly the peer reviewers for their close reading of lacunae of the earlier version of this text.

tackling the question of the first Lazarus (from the Gospel of John) that can be seen not only as the prefiguration of the resurrection of Jesus, but also as the awakening of political “surplus” that shakes the old order and cannot be easily integrated into the new. The second Lazarus (from the Gospel of Luke) can often be seen as a somewhat stoic figure that remains outside the gates of political life and is only absolved in the afterlife. This oscillation between the figure of poor/excluded was taken up and transformed in the works of three radical thinkers: Foucault, Marx, and Fanon. A short panoramic view of the “legacy” of Lazarus shall be then explored in the second part of the article: from the early discussion of leprosy and the strategic spatial and sovereign separation of exterior and interior in Foucault and Marx’s oscillation between “surplus population” and “Lumpenproletariat,” and finally to Frantz Fanon, who predicted that political subject of Lumpenproletariat is supposed to become a spearhead of future revolutions.

Keywords

political subjectivation, awakening, resurrection, surplus population, Lumpenproletariat, Fanon, Foucault, Marx

“And here we are arisen
All the wretched of the earth
all the upholders of justice
marching to attack your barracks
your banks
like a forest of funeral torches
to be done
once
and
for
all
with this world...”

Jacques Roumain, Sales Negres (1938)

“The Communist Party of Yugoslavia through its long-term struggle raised an intellectual and moral Lazarus, which came forth by the symbolic call ‘Veni foras’ in Jajce on 29.11.1943. The latter received its constitutional form two years later in

1945, when the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia became a socialist federation.”

Miroslav Krleža, Speech on Congress of Writers
(1952)

Lars T. Lih's article "Lenin and The Great Awakening" (2007) opens up a concept for political debate that has not yet been thoroughly discussed: the concept of "awakening." Lih puts forward the interpretation that "awakening" can be seen as a central political and rhetorical mechanism in Lenin's life and work and that Lenin can be seen rather as a "revolutionary preacher" and not as a theorist or a pragmatist/party organizer. He arrives at this conclusion given Lenin's trajectory, which is evidenced by a long fidelity to the Old Testament, the *Communist Manifesto*, and to the carrier of the New Testament, German Social Democracy. Or more recently in a more formulaic way, Lih argues that Marxist theory was based on the narrative of "'historical mission,' 'task,' 'duty,' and 'calling'; it informs the canonical formula 'Social Democracy is the merger of socialism and the worker movement'" (2015: 171). What I would add, however, is that this theoretical narrative might be "true" before the October Revolution but not after, as Lenin's belief and political allegiance to German Social Democracy was thoroughly shaken by their vote in favor of war credits in 1914. If anything, the event of the October Revolution, that is, the historical fact that it first happened and succeeded in a non-Western and economically "backward" environment, broke with the teleological view of the Second International and that Western Social Democracy shall lead the way. It was masses of soldiers and sailors that were on the strike, demanding the end of colonial war and start of social revolution. The Second International had long preached that the communist revolution would first take place in the West and then spread out to the rest of the world (see Althusser 2005). But as with any great political event, its timing and location has a contingent character. In other words, one ought to highlight the unpredictability — in terms of where, when, how and in what form — of a social and cultural awakening by the dominated classes. Furthermore, Lenin's political ability and that of the revolutionary organization needed to have "read" and "dreamt" with the masses. Lenin's *What Is to Be Done?* shook the linearity between the Old and New Testaments, that is the path that the Party (and intellectual) always adopts in its "correct" reading of a sacred text. As all major revolutions of the twentieth century demonstrated, there are certain theoretical and practical problems that can be only solved by political activity. This is how we can understand Lenin's maxim that he announces to all revolutionary organizations, which need to answer the call "from the spontaneously awakening masses — and the leaders' boiling energy is taken up and supported by the energy of the revolutionary class" (1902:

67). The historical task of revolutionary organization does not consist in somehow magically awakening (dead) labor and sleeping masses into a revolutionary class. The avant-garde does not simply instill ideas from without. Instead, for Lenin the historical task of a revolutionary organization is to detect and to participate in the process of awakening. This rousing of expectations of revolution is related to its point of departure in a paradoxical maxim that is condensed in the need to continue revolutionary dreaming, while at the same time awaken from the death/sleep/dream. The crux of this revolutionary dreaming and awakening of the masses is traversed by a contingent encounter that reveals the “communist horizon” and that has ever since held the gates open to a different future.²

The present article will elaborate on Lih’s insistence on the centrality of “awakening” by introducing a more distant biblical reference and providing an interpretation of a figure that has not received thorough consideration in recent radical political theory. This figure is very well known in theological discussions, in many paintings and cultural references. As I will argue, this figure may indeed give us some insight into the revolutionary awakening of the poor/surplus population that redraws the borders between death, life and resurrection: Lazarus. The return in contemporary radical thought to religious traditions and their figures can be seen as an answer to the deeper sign of the period after 1989, when the power of institutionalized religion grew in the former socialist East and diverse religious and spiritual turns take hold across the globe. It is within the eschatological and emancipatory horizon of religion that a series of communist political thinkers and philosophers have intervened and attempted to reappropriate figures from Jewish, Christian, Islamic and other religious traditions. One need only think of the multiple rediscoveries to the “messianic” in Walter Benjamin, Karl Löwith and more recently Michael Löwy’s studies on the theology of liberation. To this one can add Giorgio Agamben and Toni Negri’s different conception of the figure of Francis or practice of Franciscan politics; Alain Badiou and Slavoj Žižek’s defense of *Saint Paul*, Susan Buck-Morss’s analysis of Islamic figures and voodoo practices, and also Roland Boer’s deep meditation on the relationship between politics, religion and Marxism (2015). This is just to name a few of the more famous examples.³ My modest con-

² Jodi Dean offered a powerful conceptualization of the “communist horizon” (2012).

³ In relation to the October Revolution, a recent contribution by Tamara Prosic (2015) on how the Bolsheviks were able to appropriate and work through a certain Orthodox legacy, especially the council political form, is one of the most insightful studies that shows the complex relationship between secular and religious within the October Revolution. Also interestingly, Dominic Martin (2017) shows that the same can be true for the post-Soviet period, where the formation of the new Old Believers in Siberian

tribution aims to stake a few claims. For example, how far can Lazarus be thought of as the figure of the poor and present a strategic space for revolutionary awakening? Can we say that Lazarus (from the Gospel of John) is that political “surplus” that shakes the old order but cannot be easily integrated into the new, or is Lazarus (from the Lazarus of Luke) somehow a stoic figure or witness of revolutionary defeat that remains outside the gates of political life? I will perform a close reading of two stories of Lazarus from the Bible in the first part of this article, while the second part shall point out how the figures of Lazarus resurfaced and were transformed in the works of Michel Foucault (leprosy, separation of exterior and interior), Karl Marx (oscillation between “surplus population” and “Lumpenproletariat”) and Frantz Fanon (where the political subject of Lumpenproletariat spearheads future revolutions). The absence of thinking about the figure of Lazarus points to the ongoing “fear of the masses” (Balibar 1989). Another fear resides in the most direct expression of the poor masses themselves, in the political form of riots that are not easily appropriated in any political program or established organization.

Return to Communist Political Theology: On Lazarus

In theological discussions the figure of Lazarus is well known, both Lazarus the beggar as well as the episode of the *Awakening of Lazarus*. The latter is seen especially as one of the greatest miracles that Jesus performed, and has been eventually “over-determined,” or, could one even say forgotten and over-written by the story of the resurrection of Jesus himself. Could one say that this epistemological and politico-theological transition from *awakening* to *resurrection* becomes a symptom of failed revolution? Shouldn’t we see the same transition taking place in the political context from Soviet Russia (after 1917) to the post-revolutionary Soviet Union (after 1922)? Instead of representing a continuation of revolutionary dreaming, it found expression in the immortality of Lenin who remains asleep in his mausoleum under the watchful eye of Stalin so that the revolution cannot reawaken. The transition from awakening to resurrection can also be detected in a predominant post-1989 reading of Marx that Jacques Derrida discussed as a specter haunting our capitalist predicament.⁴ How can one extract a certain emancipatory dimension

regions actually came from the youth communists, and present as the precarious transitory form, as a resistance to capitalist desert and specific translation of communist legacy onto new brotherly ties, religious community.

⁴ Derrida’s return to Marx infused as the figure of spectrality and “survie” could be seen in accordance with resurrection. Jernej Habjan (2014) wrote a solid critical analysis of Derrida’s return to Marx, which cemented many readings of Marx from the 1989s onwards.

from the history of multi-layered religious readings that have ended in a transition from awakening to resurrection? Can this lineage be reversed and somehow infused in a more general history of the oppressed? As Michael Löwy has argued very well, when we return to the role of religion and figures we should recognize that the “opium of the people” is organized by the institutionalized Church and cannot be equated with subversive and heretic strands of religious movements, e.g., the theology of liberation (1996: 15). To abolish the injustices and hierarchies, the nexus of exploitation and domination in history always takes on a different material form and should challenge the central apparatus (the institutionalized Church included), which entails a rejuvenating project of social transformation that will build coalitions across subaltern subjects and the oppressed.

The figure of Lazarus has long been an object of contention and subject to a diversity of appropriations. If for some theologians, the awakening of Lazarus is seen as the most profound miracle and as a strong indication of God’s presence, other thinkers simply take him as a minor step in the story of the resurrection of Jesus himself. Does the awakening resurrect the flesh, or soul, or both? Does the stain of death persist and haunt him further in life? While Lazarus returned to life, and lived on after, we do not see Jesus coming back to life and living after the resurrection. This “return” remains the central promise and something that resonates with the narratives of the last judgement.

As my knowledge of theological discussion is rather negligible, I will present some general points that struck me most in the two versions of Lazarus in the New Testament. What peaks one’s interest is that the figure of Lazarus is split into two rather independent stories in the Bible. In other words, we have two Lazaruses who have been the subject of misunderstanding and conversion. In various popularized accounts one finds a speculation that the two versions of Lazarus are actually the same person, once appearing as a beggar and again appearing as a leper, which later led to the mixing up of feasts and commemorations. However, the Bible itself clearly differentiates between the two: one is the Lazarus located in John’s Gospel that Jesus awakens from death,⁵ the other is to be found in Luke’s Gospel from the parable of the rich man and the beggar. Etymologically, Lazarus means the one whom *God has helped*. My thesis wants to evidence a specific transformation of roles: rather than Lazarus being an expression of Christ’s love and help, John’s Lazarus was the one who helped Christ discipline his disciples. Also, I will claim that John’s Lazarus and his return to life can be seen as carrying the potential for intervention into worldly politics, and thus as the most

⁵ John’s Gospel has a special status in the Bible, as it claims to be the only real eyewitness, “a disciple whom Jesus loved” (John 20:2).

direct and critical answer to Luke's Lazarus, whose patience is oriented toward and rewarded in heavenly life only.⁶

For the sake of clarity let me briefly sum up the story of Lazarus from Luke's Gospel (16: 19–31).⁷ The story begins with a picturesque juxtaposition: on the one side, within the house there is a rich man, who boasts and eats splendid dinners, while on the other side there is a beggar named Lazarus who is not allowed to enter the house and remains at the threshold of the gate. The separation between rich and poor by the gate heightens the readers' compassion by suggesting that the beggar did not even get the crumbs from the table, while his wounds were soar and licked by dogs. The beggar dies and is not buried appropriately, while the rich man eventually dies and get buried. But this is not the real end of the parable, as the rich man and Lazarus almost meet in the abode of the dead, where a classical reversal of roles takes place. Lazarus finds himself in a pleasantly queer place, that is, he is seen in "Abraham's bosom," while the rich man is thrown in the "lake of fire," thirsty and in incredible torment. Bakhtin suggested that this parable is a typical form of *menippea* that tests temptation and is marked by a carnivalesque reversal. Those crowned in life will be de-crowned in the after-life, while the poor shall be rich and taken care of by God. However, and despite the humanist interpretation of the Bakhtinian carnival this interpretation falls short of registering a central aspect of the parable. The rich man in the lake of fire attempts to establish a communicative sphere with Abraham and Lazarus. First, the rich man asks for adrop of water from the tip of Abraham's finger, who solidly rejects this request, while Lazarus remains mute. Second, the rich man asks for Abraham to send the Lazarus to his relatives as a messenger:

Then I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my father's house, for I have five brothers. Let him warn them, so that they will not also come to this place of torment." Abraham replied, "They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to them." "No, father Abraham," he said, "but if someone from the dead goes to them, they will repent." He said to him, "If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead (Luke 16: 27–31).⁸

Lazarus remains mute in the afterlife as well. Even when he is being taken care of, he is not portrayed as a thinking-speaking-political animal.

⁶ The passages I comment on are taken from the Gospels of Luke (16: 19–31) and John (11: 38–44). There is, however, one passage in Luke that also speaks of Jesus's power to raise a "young man" from the dead when carried out of the house (Luke 7: 12–17).

⁷ This story can be accessed online: <http://biblehub.com/bsb/luke/16.htm>.

⁸ *Ibid.*

In the social order of Antiquity, the poor were excluded from the political space and as such were not counted, heard, or visible by the dominant order of police both in their earthly or heavenly lives.⁹ Furthermore, the certain Godly paternalism of the welfare state after Lazarus (the poor) already being dead can be suggested. While for the rich man God of Abraham shows no mercy. It would be wrong to simply read this as Abraham showing revenge to the rich man and his relatives who do not respect Moses and the Prophets. I would argue that the word of the Lord refers to the structural feature of the earthly and even heavenly world, which functions as a sort of retroactive justice. Abraham says that “a great chasm has been fixed, in order that those who would pass from here to you may not be able, and none may cross from there to us” (Luke 16: 26). The reality is split and that means that no reconciliation with the rich man is possible; in other words, class struggle cannot be healed or covered up.¹⁰ The final sentence from Luke’s Lazarus already brings us to the second story, “If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, they will not be convinced even if someone rises from the dead” (Luke 16: 31). Perhaps one could read the proper answer to Abraham and Luke’s Lazarus by witty elaboration of John’s Lazarus and Jesus’ actions.

The Lazarus of John’s Gospel does not only speak about the poor, which will be taken care of in the afterlife, but precisely about the one who rises from his death. The story from John’s Gospel is an elaborate illustration of a short maxim given by Jesus in Matthew’s Gospel: “Cure the sick, raise the dead, cleanse the lepers” (Matt. 10: 8). The story begins when Mary and Martha from Bethany call upon Jesus, who is far away, to return to their sick brother Lazarus, the one *that Jesus loves*. We witness at first glance a bizarre dialogue: while disciples argue that Lazarus is dead, Jesus insists he is only asleep (John 11: 11).¹¹ This short dialogue already announces the precarious border between sleep and death on the one hand, and awakening and life on the other. Despite the disciples’ warning of the danger and the hunt by authorities, Jesus decides to return to Bethany. This return seems to come a little too late and in vain: Lazarus has already been dead for four days. When Jesus realizes how sad Lazarus’s sisters are — and they are also in no way shy in voicing their criticism of his late arrival — *he weeps*. This is symptomatic as this is the only reference to Jesus crying over a specific person in the entire Bible; on other occasions he cries in the garden on the night of his capture, and he cries over the split Jerusalem that will remain war-

⁹ See Jacques Rancière’s discussion on plebs (1999: 23–27).

¹⁰ In 1970, Helmut Gollwitzer wrote a fascinating piece on some of these points. I must thank Ted Stolze for this reference.

¹¹ For the detailed linguistic and abridged comparison of this strategic places, see: <http://biblehub.com/text/john/11-11.htm>.

torn. In the midst of a feeling of disappointment, the deep sorrow of the sisters and the perplexity of the disciples, Jesus then announces somewhat angrily and stubbornly that he will not forsake Lazarus. And how could the lord forsake the *one that he loved*, the *one that God helps*, as his name witnesses? Despite warnings of the terrible smell, Jesus demands that the tomb be opened. At this moment, two things take place: first, Jesus asks God to listen and to give him strength; second, he calls to the dead Lazarus: “Lazarus, come forth!” (John 11: 43), which stands as the imperative in the Greek *δεῦρο* (deuro). Awakening is then not a spontaneous or passive process, but demands agency on both sides: Jesus’s political work and the response of Lazarus who indeed does awake from death.

I would like to highlight that throughout the New Testament, an active verb for “waking him up” is only used *once* and it is in this particular context of Lazarus. In the original Greek, the word is *ἐξυπνίσω* (exupniso), which is directly attributed to the word of the Lord¹² and means to actively bring someone out of (hence the prefix “ex-”) the state of slumber, to rouse him out of that state and bring him into another state. Jesus’s action thus pulls and extricates Lazarus out of the passive state, be it defined as death or sleep. Seen from the standpoint of the theory of ideology, we would say Jesus’s utterance functions as a “speech-act,” a performative act that prescribes a new quality to both the subject(s) and the situation itself. Doesn’t this fundamental ideological constellation already complicate Althusser’s elementary process of “ideological interpellation” (1971) that was based on religious rituals and belief. Althusser locates the core dimension of the interpellative process in the operation of hailing and (mis)recognizing oneself in the social order with all of its rules, rituals, and appropriate behavior. This is an active social process, the structural place where the individual and the collective are encountered together (Močnik 1999).

Rather than this being some awakening of the “individual” into reality, Althusser’s major point is the gesture of mortifying, “transforming” the “individual” into the “ideological subject” (1971: 174). This process requires an apparatus with a set of beliefs and practices into which we are born, cultivated, educated, raised up, and molded. Yet, while Althusser presupposes that this strategic spot is already filled and fueled by the Church apparatus, in the originary ideological and political constellation Lazarus and Jesus have no Christian Church. Indeed, quite the contrary, Jesus and his small community of disciples resist the synagogue

¹² I would like to thank Dominic Martin for this important linguistic differentiation and etymological explanation, and to his valuable discussion on the figure of Lazarus. For etymological and translational details of the Scripture, see: http://biblehub.com/greek/exupniso_1852.htm.

and the temple as well as the Roman colonial powers. Jesus in this regard is clearly a figure who rises up against the dominant institutions and beliefs, while the miraculous hailing of Lazarus results in the “healing” of the dead. This entails a strong leap of faith, in other words, it triggers a process of “counter-interpellation” that is so strong that even the dead will hear it.¹³

However, we should not forget that this elementary constellation between Jesus and Lazarus coincides with the call of Jesus to God himself, that is, to listen to him. Jesus needs the heavenly party to give him strength, thus the voice in his head needs a certain material base, which is then complemented by the uprising of the poor/dead Lazarus and the disciples. In this respect, the awakening of Lazarus is posited against the laws of nature and the then existing Jewish law and as such becomes the subject of a miraculous event. These are then a few additional points that complement Althusser’s theory of interpellation: if we are to think of a political subject that differs and is not fully integrated within the ideological order, we need to include a meditation on the process of counter-interpellation and its consequences for the awakened subject.

There are, however, very few clues as to what happens after the event — what does Lazarus do when he rises from the dead? There is only one more place where we can see Lazarus again in the Gospel (John 12: 2), when Jesus is invited for a dinner six days before the Jewish Passover and we see Lazarus also having dinner, where he seems indifferent and quiet. One possible interpretation of Lazarus’s state was given by a fascinating novel from Leonid Andreyev *Lazarus* written at approximately the same time as Lenin’s *What Is to Be Done?* Andreev argues that the reawakened Lazarus is so silent because he carries the deep stain of death that persists within him in his new, or second life (see Andreyev 2018). Andreev writes about Lazarus’s solitary trip to the desert from which he returns completely transformed with all his passions taken away. Andreyev’s Lazarus might then testify to insistence of death in life or the living dead. Perhaps the key to his interpretation is to read it in light of his actual disappointment with the 1905 revolution in Russia, as a negative testimonial to revolutionary defeat. Shifting back to the Gospel of John’s Lazarus: the poor and sick of Bethany still live on in misery, that is, death is still omnipresent. Even if Lazarus returned to the living world, there is no guarantee that he returned to be vested from a diseased life, sleep and death at the margins of society. Another interpretation for the indifference and silence of Lazarus could be anger, since Lazarus could be angry that Jesus awakened him to life only

¹³ For a detailed psychoanalytical criticism of the one-dimensional ideological subject of Althusser, see Mladen Dolar (1993).

as a testimony of his powers and to instruct his own disciples. Might it also not be the case that Lazarus is now indifferent to Jesus, because he had been liberated from his master by awakening (Zarathustrian)? In the frame of *caritas*, one is supposed to show gratitude to the one who loved him and brought him back to life, however, one could also ask Jesus for his ethical stance: Since Jesus did not ask for permission to experiment with the body and soul of the already deceased Lazarus, does that not actually put him in debt to Lazarus? It was only much later in the discussion of the Christian Fathers that the place of giving alms to the poor and the healing and taking care of the sick (lepers) became so important as a sign of love (of) to God, and so characteristic of *caritas* (Lorey 2008). *Caritas*, already in Aquinas, can be seen both as a virtue and a passion: to love God but also to love your neighbor (Aquino 1895). If Luke's Lazarus receives redistributive justice but only in his afterlife, then the question for John's Lazarus and the maxim to love your neighbor might either extend into a potential transformation of wretched circumstances or at least make them more bearable.

Why can one argue that the figure of Lazarus is so paradigmatic for Jesus himself? Let us remember that Christ's own awakening, in the form of resurrection, takes place just some days later. This is why some theologians conceive the act of the awakening of Lazarus as being directed towards the hesitance of Jesus's disciples and his close circle of followers. Among others, this was a thesis most profoundly asserted by Saint John Chrysostom.¹⁴ The Bethany affair of Lazarus can be seen as a general probe for the crucifixion that is to prepare the disciples and his entourage for the "Passion" of Christ. Evidently, Lazarus returned to the world, while Christ resurrects and leaves earth, however, the sign of God is now laid bare in front of his followers. This minimal difference

¹⁴ In his homily, Chrysostom addresses this strongest of signs for Lazarus: "Resurrection must be such as was that of Christ, for He was the first fruits, the first born of the dead" (1978: 485). From all the activity of Jesus the raising of Lazarus sparked much attention "the multitude which went before and which followed after was sufficient to cast them into an agony; for no sign so much attracted the people as that of Lazarus." (Ibid.: 482) This was one of the reasons the religious authorities planned to kill Lazarus, explains Chrysostom. Furthermore, there is a fascinating passage where Chrysostom argues that Jesus's prediction works on specific revolutionary temporality, where future has to be retroactively affirmed by past "yet still He proclaimed beforehand the resurrection of Lazarus and of the world. And when He had spoken of these two, that of Lazarus which should come to pass almost immediately, and that of the inhabited world which should be long after, He confirmeth the first by the paralytic and by the nearness of the time, saying, 'The hour cometh and now is'; the other by the raising of Lazarus, by what had already come to pass bringing before their sight what had not yet done so. And this we may observe Him do everywhere, putting (forth) two or three predictions, and always confirming the future by the past" (Ibid.: 281).

between the awakening of Lazarus and that of Jesus is central to the doctrine of resurrection, which demands followers to believe in a miraculous event and continue the teaching of Christ on earth afterwards (Badiou 2003).

If Christ's resurrection has been subject to the heavily interpreted Christian eschatology, then the case and counter-interpellation of Lazarus promotes an alternative paradigmatic figure. Lazarus becomes a name that subjectivizes all the excluded: the sick, the poor, and the prostitutes of Bethany. The space of Bethany may refer to "house of suffering," and interestingly, through history has been home to the oppressed (today located in the West Bank). Bethany was found outside Jerusalem and could be considered as a heterotopic space reserved for the poor and sinners, where travelers could stay without being bothered. From a communist perspective we can read in the awakening of Lazarus as a trigger for a larger event that fights against colonial rule and its local collaborators. In the time of Jesus, revolts took place, even if unsuccessful; they called for the general awakening of the poor and the sick (of Bethany) and an uprising of all those in spaces of *immiseration* that might have lost all hope. Undoubtedly the individual awakening in itself does not suffice for a general political strike/uprising.

There is another important symbolic bridge that differentiates further the notion of awakening, namely the notion of conversion. The latter corresponds to two Greek words with different meanings. The first one is *epistrophe* (ἐπιστροφή): it signifies a change of orientation and implies the idea of a return to the origin and to the self. This could be understood under a simple "awakening," where Lazarus would simply return to himself and to the origin — to Jesus and God. The second is *metanoia* (μετάνοια), which signifies deeper change of mind and repentance, which leads us further to the idea of a mutation and a rebirth. This is then connected to the idea of deeper awakening, where Jesus is already reborn through Lazarus, while Lazarus's awakening might trigger a mutation of the multitude of the poor in Bethany. It is then between this weaker awakening and deeper conversion that the contradictory opposition between the idea of a "return to the origin" and the idea of "rebirth" began to echo in an array of different theological treatises, radical thought, and political activism, and finally it also brings us back to the primal scene of the two figures of Lazarus.

The Lazarus in Luke was excluded both from the political life and the *oikonomia* (οἰκονομία) of the rich man, and lived a poor life. In the end, he was rehabilitated in the afterlife as a sort of "return to origins" and as a deeper moral truth that stands for all those forsaken, but still not intervening in worldly life. Contrary to this, the Lazarus of John might also live a modest life in Bethany, however he was awakened back to life, as a paradigmatic figure for Christ's own death and resurrection on the one hand,

and for the (failed) uprising of the poor, on the other. This is where the figure of Lazarus, especially the Lazarus of John, can become an important source for the communist imagination and the concept of political awakening. For Susan Buck-Morss, political awakening “requires the rescue of the collective desires to which the socialist dream gave expression, before they sink into the unconscious as forgotten” (2000: 209). The same can be said of the dispossessed masses before the October Revolution. The latter offered a theoretical-political space and political representation for those who are without a voice and were all too often relegated to the sphere of political discipline, riot, and counterrevolution.

The Subterranean Trajectory and Metamorphosis of Lazarus in Foucault, Marx, and Fanon

Lazarus as the figure of the abnormal

Outside theological and art historical circles, the figure of Lazarus might nowadays be largely forgotten, but that was not the case in the Middle Ages. In medieval Europe Lazarus became an extremely vibrant symbol, most of all connected to the figure of the leper, sacred and sinful, sick and miraculously treated. Perhaps the name was most popularized through Saint Lazarus, the patron saint of lepers. Yet a powerful order of knights also existed, which emerged in the period of the Crusades and initiated a large hospital infrastructure for lepers that spread throughout Europe (e.g., *lazarets*). This infrastructure was also a source of revenue and ideological power that enabled the knightly order to remain a strong military force after the Crusades across Europe. The phenomenon of Lazarus and lepers was not a marginal issue, and Isabel Lorey argues that it was inherently connected with the doctrine of giving alms and the exculpation of sins:

handling of the actual lepers [...] was to muddle all the way through into the 11th c., when these sick persons, through alms-giving, became one of the central figures of Christian charity. The Church Fathers had already further developed the teachings of the New Testament with their doctrine of alms-giving, but not until the High Middle Ages did the concept of *caritas* come into full flower. Alms-giving came to function as a sacramental exculpation of sins, at the same time as it was a factor in the structuring of social life (Lorey 2008).

Foucault’s academic career in certain way begins with lepers. Aside from the plague and smallpox, according to Foucault leprosy becomes the most important disease and demonstrates a characteristic re-

sponse of the new sovereign principle in the Middle Ages. This sovereign trait operated through the binary split and clear drawing of boundaries between exterior and interior. Lepers were those that were excluded from society. Lorey links this Foucauldian rationale to the “fear of infection” which has an “effect that lepers are stigmatized, cast out to the social periphery and radically ostracized.” In the very first pages of his groundbreaking study, *Madness and Civilisation*, Foucault leads the reader onto the *Ship of Fools*. The latter remained a strong visual metaphor for that historical period and Foucault’s definition of sovereign power and its control over life and death, the dividing line between normal and abnormal that attests to the fears of the social order and how it deals with these. Foucault documents how lepers, the mad, and the really sick were segregated in colonies outside the cities and describes a set of rituals of excommunication. The latter proclaimed lepers to be symbolically dead, and therefore placed outside of the field of vision and Christian community. After their symbolic death, they could “live” on, or should we say “sleep” their living death in the colonies, camps, ghettos, and hospitals left to themselves and a few caretakers. The gesture of excommunicating lepers is marked by a twist of irony within Christianity, since it opposed *caritas* and the central teaching of Jesus. The New Testament brings forwards many instances where Jesus himself touched and healed the sick — the care of the sick and poor was seen as a highly virtuous activity and also a sign of God. Instead of an awakened Lazarus, Foucault’s story presents a mass of sick sleeping outside the walls of the city. This is why one should trace Foucault’s “Lazarus” rather to the Gospel of Luke, that is Lazarus the beggar who stayed outside of the gates, a precarious life in the hands of caprice and good will of the rich and powerful.

Moreover, Lorey quite correctly relativizes Foucault’s “exclusion thesis,” since immediately after the eleventh century excommunication due to the “infectious counter-principle” was minimized, and lepers became objects of “Christian mercy and *caritas*” (2008). One could add that the leper is a sort of “avant-garde” figure of Foucault’s later notion of biopolitics, where rather than the decision over death (old sovereign principle) the control and management of life became primary. And this is true for the figure of the leper — even if excommunicated, even if becoming the central object of charity, the leper is increasingly subjected to a very tightly managed order.

If one continues to speculate about a more general historical hypothesis around the start of and during the age of the Crusades, then this can become a strong visual and textual metaphor for the birth of “Europe” (Mastnak 2001). Advancing the coming of the heavenly Kingdom through an ideology of peace and conquest of the Holy Land, the millenarist ideology brought a very clear demarcation between interior and exterior. Ex-

communication of the sick and lepers was a small part of a racialized campaign that identified the internal enemy (Jew) and external enemy (Muslim)¹⁵ and which has accompanied many disastrous cleansings, wars, and genocides up until the present day. Once the first historical pogroms in Europe began, they were often directed against both Jews and lepers, while at the time Christian ideology justified this as part of the campaign against Muslims in Spain (a conspiracy theory). After the conspiratorial agitation spread to the indigenous populations of Europe, it triggered a series of *racial* riots both from below and above. One should add to this violence also violence against women.¹⁶ In regard and in response to the spreading of racialized riots against the sick, lepers, and Jews, the institution of leper colonies and ghettos was a sort of “pacification” of violence and part of a long-term European spatial “dealing” with the *Other*. If the outward appearance of the skin or leper accumulated fear from infection in ordinary people, then the relegation of the abnormal to the margins of society covered up the originary violence of the ordinary people and local powers. The fear of infection and epidemic resonated well with other social “diseases,” the fear of (religious) heresies of any sort, or of uprisings of the poor in their struggle for the commons in a highly hierarchical society. Might one say that what could be awakened in all of those sick, poor, beggars, heretics, witches, Jews, and Muslims had to be annihilated and/or segregated? And was this not a precautionary measure to avoid revolt in the heartlands of Western Christendom, to preserve the core of an internally homogenous and religiously uniform Europe? The creation of the “Other” was primarily defined through competing eschatologies. As Brett Whalen (2009) showed well, Christian eschatology predicted that Jews (and other people) would convert to the Christian faith and then Jesus would come (back) again. Once this was generalized to other people, it became a source of imperial-colonial form of Christianity. I would nevertheless add that a Foucauldian reading brings to light the inscription of racism at the heart of the biopolitical project at the origins of Europe. The creation of “Other” is not only belonging to the religious sphere, but as we saw carries “biological” (leper), “gender” (witch), and other racial demarcations in the colonial conquests. This reading from Foucault is made from the standpoint of (sovereign) power and thus leaves little ground to more positive notion of resistance of *lazzaroni*.¹⁷ This constellation is rendered into an even more com-

¹⁵ For an excellent political and historical analysis on the creation of Europe, see Mastnak (2001).

¹⁶ The role of witch hunts in the “primitive accumulation of capital” has been explored by Federici (2004).

¹⁷ For an inspiring example of what religious practice can be drawn as a resistant subject, see Sanna Tirkkonen’s article (2015) that addresses the Dionysus cult, in which ways rites were anti-systemic while also coopted by governmentality.

plex relation once one speaks of capitalism and its changing articulation between the mode of exploitation and forms of domination.

Marx on “lazarus layers”: Between surplus population and Lumpenproletariat

There are not many direct references to Lazarus in Marx’s oeuvre,¹⁸ but, as I will argue, when they do appear they are at two very symptomatic moments. I claim that this symptomatic space reflects a deeper quandary, perhaps even a split within Marx that Žižek (2000) once clearly diagnosed in the main difference between Marxian thought (critique of political economy without thinking politics) and post-Marxist thought (thinking politics without critique of political economy). Perhaps the marginal figure of Lazarus as he appears in Marx’s work will be a small contribution to depicting this theoretico-political quandary of the Marxian legacy. Marx speaks of “lazarus layers” / “lazzaroni” at two strategic places in his work. First, in *Capital*, Volume I (MECW vol. 35: 638) they appear as a stagnant part of “surplus population.” Second, in his earlier works, but especially in his famous political texts of *The Class Struggles in France* (MECW vol. 10: 62) and *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (MECW, vol. 11: 149) he speaks of them as a part of the “Lumpenproletariat.” As I will argue, Marx’s ambiguity and skepticism towards the notion of lazarus layers / *lazzaroni* is described by this strategic oscillation and shift of perspective, on the one hand between “surplus population,” and on the other, “Lumpenproletariat.”

Surplus population is not a class formation in itself; it is interpreted as redundant, superfluous, a space/subject of refuse, while also remaining at the immediate disposal of capital. Marx shares a political skepticism towards the category of Lumpenproletariat; it appears on the counter-revolutionary side, and is as such infused by what Balibar described as “fear of the masses” (1989). If the former is mostly described from the standpoint of capital, then the latter is assumed from the negative position of proletariat. These two notions seem to perform a negative demarcation, a derivation firstly from the working class, and then from the proletariat — perhaps even precluding the proletarian awakening and communist revolution?

Let us first turn to the question of “lazarus layers,” which appear to-

¹⁸ He mentions the biblical parable of Lazarus and rich man a few times, then perhaps more symptomatic is the letter to Engels in which he writes “Lepsius proved that the exodus of the Jews from Egypt was nothing other than the story Manetho relates of the expulsion from Egypt of ‘the leper folk,’ with an Egyptian priest named Moses at their head. Lazarus the leper is thus the archetype of the Jew” (MECW 41: 286).

wards the end of volume I of *Capital*.¹⁹ For many Marxist theorists, Marx's greatest discovery comprises a detailed analysis of value, valorization, the capitalist production process and finally a deeper understanding of the creation of "surplus value" that is at the core of capitalist exploitation. Contrary to Robinsonian myth, Marx argues that "surplus value" cannot be attributed to technological invention or capitalist innovation, but is only produced by those who possess labor power — the workers. Marx conceptualizes a complex scheme of capitalist production that entails a series of irreconcilable contradictions and asymmetrical relations between capital and labor, between productive forces and the relations of production that express the underlying logic of exploitation and uneven development. Many commentators nevertheless forgot to add one essential component in the production of relative surplus value. It is noteworthy that towards the end of volume I of *Capital*, when Marx discusses the intricacies of capitalist "crisis," he speaks of the working of the "law of capitalist accumulation." As the name "law" suggests, crisis and accumulation are not seen as something exceptional, but as an essential part of capitalist production, whose most direct results are "pauperism" and "immiseration." The material evidence of this process is embodied by what Marx termed "the industrial reserve army," the "lazarus layers" of the working class, or more generally "surplus population."

Marx goes on to specify a few central modalities of "surplus population" that is redundant formation, whose most stagnant parts are "the lazarus layers of the working class, and the industrial reserve army" (MECW 35: 638). "The lazarus layers" are literarily and structurally the layers that are "dead" (labor) for capital; they return to life only insofar as capital resurrects them at any given time for any given labor — to increase the rate of profit. Marx's metaphor of "lazarus layers" is directly indebted to John's Gospel, while the figure of Jesus is here substituted by capital, and the sick (leper) Lazarus is substituted by those sick layers of the working class. More concretely, Marx approaches "surplus population" from the standpoint of capital. Surplus population is the mere "faux frais" of production: "Accumulation of wealth at one pole is, therefore, at the same time accumulation of misery, agony of toil, slavery, ignorance, brutality, mental degradation, at the opposite pole" (MECW 35: 640). This is why when speaking of capitalist production one should immediately think of capitalist reproduction (feminist critique) and endeavor to think beyond the mere composition of the active working labor force that produces "surplus value." The lazarus layers of the working class denote an internal split — structural fracture within the working class — while the term "surplus population" subsequently clearly shows their "ex-

¹⁹ See also Gavin Walker's excellent study of surplus population in the frame of imperialism and theory of crisis (2018).

cessive” character. In structural terms, capitalist domination over the lazarus layers of the working class disciplines the “active” working class and decreases wage levels, and in that way, the *lazzaroni* indirectly enter the creation of “relative surplus value.” Gavin Walker specifies this in a following way:

The significance of the formation of a relative surplus population is that while capitalist production must circulate and consume labor-power as a commodity despite being unable to produce it directly, its own methods of production lead to the emergence of an available mass of workers who have nothing except their labor-power to sell as a commodity. This is precisely where capital attempts to *indirectly* “produce” labor-power, through the formation and maintenance of this “available mass” (Walker 2018).

Thus, the law of capitalist accumulation demonstrates the asymmetrical nature between capital and labor, which Marx uses initially as a clinical metaphor: “Pauperism is the hospital of the active labour-army and the dead weight of the industrial reserve army” (MECW 35: 639). When Marx speaks of “the lazarus layers” and “surplus population” he refers to the “hospital” and the “reserve army,” the bodies that can be brought back to life by capital when necessary. The capitalist rationale for resurrecting and healing the reserve army by capitalist *caritas* (“we gave you a job, and now you complain or unionize”) is linked to the expansion of the market and the need of capital to augment production. It may also represent the opportunity to break strikes and bring in the “reserve” army, or to draft the lazarus layers into national armies to die on the front or abroad in imperial wars or colonialist expansion. One can only confirm Michael Denning’s thesis (2010) that if something is harsher than capitalist exploitation it is non-exploitation, when a “wageless life” is forced into a survival strategy, a constant search for jobs, or an eternal stagnation that merely waits to finally be exploited by capital. Surplus population thus enters the interstices of exploitation and non-exploitation, redundancy and capitalist arbitrariness, completely stripped of any political power and social visibility.

Surplus population is thus economically subjugated and politically excluded. Depending on the general level of welfare, it has very little institutional organization or representation and is left to its own initiative. The psychological effects of such a state are an increasing level of depression, higher suicide rates, addiction, anxiety, and the fear of failure to mention just a few. Taking into account that “lazarus layers” are also social outcasts that bring additional racial, gender, and ethnic exclusions closer together, the difficulties involved in organizing and nurturing solidarity among such dominated classes presents itself as an almost impos-

sible challenge. Then again, it is not surprising that once Marx shifted his focus from capital to labor and the proletariat, he failed to observe any revolutionary potential in surplus population. The political metamorphosis of surplus population finds its new body in the Lumpenproletariat.

Needless to say, the substantive “Lump/en” is a blatantly violent use of language, which carries a very negative social/aesthetical representation of the Lumpenproletariat²⁰. In different places Marx used terms such as “social scum” and the passive “decaying matter of the lowest layer,” a “refuse” that is formed from “a recruiting ground for thieves and criminals of all kinds, living on the refuse of society, people without a fixed line of work” (*The Class Struggles in France* in MECW vol.10). Michael Denning has duly noted that in the moral universe of Marx, “unproductive” time or unemployment is associated with waste. Additionally, Denning emphasizes an interesting connection between a life without wages and refuse: “for those without wages have long worked as scavengers” (2010: 96).²¹ Moving closer to the political (un)consciousness and goals of the Lumpenproletariat, Marx and Engels spoke of it as a “dangerous class” (*Communist Manifesto* in MECW vol. 6), and commented on the counter-revolutionary and promonarchist positions of underclass of *lazzaroni* in Naples during the spread of the French revolution. The most precise political elaboration of the concept can be found in Marx’s *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (MECW vol.11) which among other things draws heavily from Hegel’s *Philosophy of Right* (1991).²²

As the substantive indicates, Marx defines the Lumpenproletariat as a component of the proletariat in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* unlike in some of his earlier works. Nevertheless, Marx here also clearly indicates that the Lumpenproletariat is corrupt and without class consciousness. One of the most extensive sections includes the now collective figure, “lazzaroni”:

the *Lumpenproletariat* of Paris had been organised into secret sections, each section being led by Bonapartist agents, with a Bonapartist general at the head of the whole. Alongside decayed roués with dubious means of subsistence and of dubious origin, alongside ruined and adventurous offshoots of the bourgeoisie, were vagabonds, discharged soldiers, discharged jailbirds, escaped galley slaves, rogues, mountebanks, *lazzaroni*,

²⁰ For details, see Bussard (1987).

²¹ The notion of refuse and the excluded bears some resemblance with Foucault’s conceptualization: that is, between those impure lepers at the margins and these wageless scavengers, the detritus of society.

²² Frank Ruda has written an important study on the Hegel’s concept of the “rabble” (2011), which can be viewed in a great proximity to the structural place of surplus population and Lumpenproletariat. This study has been to some degree inspired by the discussion on the rabble.

pickpockets, tricksters, gamblers, maquereaux, brothel keepers, porters, literati, organ grinders, rag-pickers, knife grinders, tinkers, beggars — in short, the whole indefinite, disintegrated mass, thrown hither and thither, which the French term *la bohème* (MECW 11: 148–49).

One can easily see from such a passage that Marx saw no hope in the Lumpenproletariat. On the contrary, it could all too easily be used in the counterrevolutionary struggle.²³ In most of the passages where Marx deals with the Lumpenproletariat he treats it as an easily moldable mass by any dictator and future populist ideology. Nevertheless, these lower strata of society, the underclass, social bandits at best, have also entered the revolutionary side of history. Those that were most excluded and not seen by society, those that were adrift in a sleeping state, have been the first to rise from death. From the French Revolution and Haiti to the October Revolution and the anticolonial and peasant revolutions of the twentieth century, the Lumpenproletariat was one of the first ranks to enter the fray. If those failed, they were merely called “riots.”²⁴ Obviously, the Lumpenproletariat was not the key element organizing the revolutionary movement. Additionally, it did not supply eternal “ideas” and direct the revolutionary movement. That said, without segments such as those of the Lumpenproletariat there would be no storming of the enemy’s “castle.” For this to receive a proper political explication a mere century was needed: Marx’s pessimistic view of the Lumpenproletariat was turned upside down by Frantz Fanon.

Fanon: Lumpenproletariat as a new revolutionary subject

Fanon is one of the key thinkers on the anticolonial struggle and deserves credit for being able to think beyond nationalist perspectives and outside of conventional party lines. For him to understand the crux of exploitation and domination in the colonial context, the standpoint had to be shifted to the oppressed. To my knowledge Fanon never explicitly used the term Lazarus, but he did indeed resurrect Marx’s notion of the Lumpenproletariat: elevating the concept to the revolutionary and anticolonial cause. For Fanon, this mass of uprooted, urban poor (transitioning from the rural countryside) will become a major political subject that will gain political consciousness during the struggle against

²³ Perhaps due to this prejudice against insurrection and violent mass, Marx failed to address the insurrections and revolutionary character during the civil war during Taiping (Little 2009) when the underclasses entered a politically conscious process of egalitarian policies, such as land reforms and redistribution of wealth.

²⁴ For a detailed view, see Clover (2016).

the colonial world. Let us remember that this colonial world Fanon describes is the world “cut in two, where the dividing lines are shown by barracks and police stations” (1991: 38). The constant violence from the police baton to institutionalized racism thus permeates everything that happens on one side of the fence. And for Fanon this means that the only way out is to revolt with armed struggle. This does not mean to blindly follow certain violence and to only switch structural places, but to focus on the productive moments of armed struggle to create and imagine a new society. When Fanon speaks about the new revolutionary subject he dreams of, the Lumpenproletariat, he is concise and clear: these are “muscular dreams, dreams of action, dreams of aggressive vitality,” against the colonizers, against the

world compartmentalized, Manichaeic and petrified, a world of statues: the statue of the general who led the conquest, the statue of the engineer who built the bridge. A world cocksure of itself, crushing with its stoniness the backbones of those scarred by the whip. That is the colonial world (Fanon 2004: 15).

On the one side we have a world of colonial monuments, on the other the vitality of the colonized, the Lumpenproletariat, whose only way out is to turn to violence and organize. The major role in this revolutionary process will be played by men and women, the *Lumpen*, who want to be allowed inside these cities, this “mass of humanity” that “will spearhead the new rebellions” (Ibid.: 81). For Fanon, the new revolutionary subjectivity is

uprooted from their tribe and from their clan, they constitute one of the most spontaneous and the most radically revolutionary forces of a colonized people ... its forces endanger the 'security' of the town, [while] workless less-than-men are rehabilitated in their own eyes and in the eyes of history [...] once more go forward, and march proudly in the great procession of the awakened nation (Ibid.: 72).²⁵

This is a sort of theology of liberation, a liberation of the poor and colonized *lazzaroni* that will in the process of struggle (march forward) to acquire political consciousness and realize the goal of “the awakened nation.” At first glance Fanon’s Lumpenproletariat can be seen as wholly immediate, that spontaneity of the mass that is necessarily on the right side of history. Fanon himself admits in the course of his work of the possible shortcoming of the Lumpenproletariat, if the struggle does

²⁵ Compare the slight differences with the 1991 translation of Fanon from the same publisher.

not acquire proper organizational forms and make coalitions with left-wing intellectuals. At the same time he already launches a stark criticism on conventional communist parties, which were at that time highly Eurocentric and indeed partially implicated in the colonial project. In a specific way, he was already addressing the intersectionality of the struggle between class and race, which would end in the true “humanity.”

In the Guise of a Political Conclusion: Lazzaroni/ Slum-Dwellers of the World, will Awaken/Unite

This article began by offering a close reading of the figure of Lazarus from the Bible, a figure split in two: Lazarus the beggar (Luke’s Gospel) and Lazarus the awakened leper/sick man (John’s Gospel). Lazarus as he appears in Luke was excluded both from the political life and the *oikonomia* (*οικονομία*) of the rich man and lived a poor life. It was only through death that he was rehabilitated. This rehabilitation in the afterlife can be seen as a sort of “return to origin” and deeper moral truth that stands for all those forsaken, while it also clearly entails a punishment for the rich (lake of fire), acknowledging the irreconcilable class rift. However, it returns to the worldly life only by means of a moral supplement in the afterlife, while the poor remains silent and passive. The Lazarus of John may have also lived a modest life in Bethany, however he fell sick (as a leper?), and was awakened back to life. It was argued that this can be seen both as a paradigmatic figure for Christ’s own death and resurrection on the one hand, while also a trigger for the (failed) uprising of the poor in Bethany, on the other. This clearly pointed to an intervention in this worldly life irrespective of how indifferent and silent Lazarus seems after his awakening from the death. Each of these figures of Lazarus give us a very different “subjectivation” of the poor. It ought to be stated that the Lazarus of John may indeed contribute something to the communist imagination and the concept of the “political awakening” of the most excluded and exploited masses. Reading through the Bible, both Lazaruses were deemed outcasts, while in subsequent developments of Christian doctrine and ritualistic practice, the sick and poor also became the subjects of *caritas*, God’s traces and love. This idea of receiving *caritas* speaks clearly to the figure of the poor (Lazarus the beggar), while my argument runs that the Lazarus raised from the dead may become a figure of subjectivation to inspire solidarity among the dominated classes.

In the second part of the article I showed — in a panoramic fashion — in what way the figures of Lazarus were transformed and appropriated in a few key passages of three important critical thinkers: Foucault, Marx, and Fanon. First, for Foucault, his first groundbreaking book departs from

the analysis of the figure of the leper and leprosy that is seen as a strategic site for the investment of the Church and sovereign power that produce a clear separation of exterior and interior (us and them). I added the more general historical contextualization of the Crusades that saw the further identification of enemies (Jew, internally; Muslim, externally). The Foucauldian analysis remains within the horizon of Lazarus the beggar and his exclusion from politics and *oikonomia* (*οικονομία*). Second, the originary split of the two figures of Lazarus appears in some surprising derivations in Marx's work. I argued that the term "lazarus layers" appears at a few rather symptomatic moments in his work, which present us with a certain theoretico-political quandary — and one that Marx encountered no less. In a matter of fact, Lazarus divides firstly into the category of "surplus population" at the level of the critique of political economy. From the standpoint of capital, "surplus population" fluctuates between being and non-being; it is a part of the working class (resurrection of dead labor for capital). Second, the *lazzaroni* are seen as Lumpenproletariat, as a specific political subjectivation of the mass without class consciousness that turn in a counterrevolutionary direction and can be resurrected only by the voice of a dictator (e.g., Napoleon III). Despite his pessimistic tone, Marx provides a solid objective analysis that shows the structural fractures within the working class that may indeed provide some lessons for future political organization. And third, Marx's theorization is turned upside down by Fanon and his theory of anticolonial armed struggle that saw its peak in the Lumpenproletariat (wretched) and the arrival of the mass of urban poor that will spearhead the revolution.

The point is not so much to dwell on the exclusive alternative of either Marx's pessimistic or Fanon's optimistic perspective on the Lumpenproletariat. Any concrete analysis and dialectical take after all should be able to think through both perspectives. What one can discern is the political fact that most obvious political form of Lumpenproletariat is *riot*, which is the language of the unheard.²⁶ This conclusion brings us close to what Žižek has already referred to when claiming that the left today needs to "politicize — organize and discipline — the 'destructured masses' of slum-dwellers" (2008: 427). One can then acknowledge that the left today should not only prescribe the political recipes, but also take political practice seriously, which often starts not from the heights of theory and the politburo of Jesus the communist, but of those whose political awakenings seems condemned in advance. Could we not say that Lazarus holds a symptomatic space where we can weave back together both the critique of political economy and the dreamwork of the revolution of

²⁶ See the work of Joshua Clover (2016) for a detailed analysis of emergence of riots and their connection to strikes in the cycles of capitalist crisis.

awakening into new beginnings? Are the figures that are the most excluded and usually relegated to humanitarian caritas not rather venues for rethinking solidarities among the oppressed? One thing is clear, Lazarus as the figure of (the fear of) masses, the fear of riot, of Nature and its awakening, will continue to play a vital part in our future alternative of ecosocialism or barbarism.

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