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From Refugee Camps to Gated Communities: Biopolitics and the End of the City¹

BÜLENT DIKEN

The article addresses the situation of the asylum seeker as an instantiation of the 'homo sacer', the ultimate biopolitical subject whose life is stripped of cultural and political forms. The focus is on the socio-spatial mechanisms that immobilize asylum seekers in 'non-places' such as accommodation centers in which they lead a life in a permanent state of exception and detention centers into which they are forced without trial. To offer a systematic account of this immobilization the article elaborates on the concept of the camp. It then moves on to discuss some significant convergences between refugee spaces and other more desirable contemporary 'camps' (for example, gated communities) that problematize the notions of the city and politics. To conclude, the consequences of the 'camp' as a form of positive power as well as restriction of freedom are discussed, relating this to a discussion of the 'end of the city' and the (im)possibilities of resistance to or 'escape' from camps.

What the European Christian bourgeoisie could not truly forgive regarding Hitler was 'not the crime of genocide, but the crime of having applied to Europe the colonialist actions' (Bauman, 2002, p. 109). The Nazis' real crime was to bring the *homo sacer* to Europe. It is in this respect significant that the first camps built in Europe were spaces to contain and control refugees (Agamben, 2000, p. 22). Being 'human as such', the asylum seeker is an instantiation of the *homo sacer*. In this respect the confrontation with the refugee remains an acid test for politics, recurrently bringing into play the 'scandal of the human as such' (Dillon, 1999, p. 114). Indeed, as Arendt pointed out long ago, the notion of human rights, which presupposes the existence of a 'human being as such', is drawn into a crisis whenever it is confronted with real people without qualities except, that is, that of being human: the refugees (Arendt, 1979, p. 299).

As is well documented in cultural studies, the refugee conveys a gray zone of ambivalence as to his internality/externality *vis-à-vis* the society, and this provokes a fundamental undecidability. Indeed, our society seems unable to decide whether the asylum seeker is the true subject of human rights, which it

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invites everybody to accept as the most sacred of the sacred, or simply a criminal, a thief, who threatens 'us' with abusing 'our' welfare system. Further, like Simmel's stranger, the refugee is 'both inside and outside', close to and remote from the context in which he 'comes today and stays tomorrow' (Simmel, 1971, p. 143). As such the refugee is a constant threat to the image of order, signaling the horrifying impossibility of occupying one pure and distinct position. 'Building and keeping order means making friends and enemies, first and foremost, however, it means purging ambivalence' (Bauman, 1992, p. 120). And in this process of ordering the refugee is excluded from politics: whereas the refugee wants to 'participate without identification' he is nevertheless forced to 'identify without participation', a process that pushes the refugee further and further away from the political to the anthropological domain along the lines of today's dominant essentialist politics of difference (Sennett, 1996, p. 193).

For all the merits of this image of thought, though, a crucial point needs to be clarified: sovereignty does not work merely according to the logic of a one-way exclusion. The refugee is excluded from the domain of the law but remains subject to it. Thus the life of the refugee is strictly regulated and restricted by the law, which applies even to his or her private life (for example, marriage), even in countries that champion democracy and human rights. The refugee is, in other words, radically internal to the processes of ordering; order does not only seek to 'purge' the ambivalence of the refugee but emerges and expands in a relation to this ambivalence. The refugee is included while being excluded and excluded while being included; this zone of indistinction between inclusion and exclusion, in which the life of the refugee borders on the life of the *homo sacer*, is the very place of sovereignty, which is why '[t]he fundamental categorical pair of Western politics is not that of friend/enemy but that of bare life/political existence, *zoē/bios*, exclusion/inclusion' (Agamben, 1998, p. 8).

The Refugee as Exception

The Netherlands, the end of August 2002: a politician from the List of Pim Fortyn, Hilbrand Nawyn, the former head of the Dutch Immigration Office and now the minister for asylum affairs, put forward a proposal that, in spite of all its populist triviality, reveals the kernel of the contemporary migration debate. According to Nawyn, those foreigners who already have acquired Dutch citizenship should, if they commit crimes, be denaturalized and denationalized so that they can be sent back to their 'home' countries as punishment. Putting aside the question of what then will happen to the Dutch citizens who commit crimes, what is significant here is not only that this idea is not new. Certainly, since World War I many European states passed laws allowing denaturalization of their own citizens, and in this respect one should not forget that '[o]ne of the few rules the Nazis constantly obeyed throughout the course of the 'final solution' was that Jews and Gypsies could be sent to extermination camps only having been fully denaturalized' (Agamben, 1998, pp. 18, 22). What is equally notable in Nawyn's gesture is its endeavor to establish a sovereign exception through suspending the law and abandoning the citizen.

Foucault, and later Deleuze and Guattari, observed that the foundation of sovereignty is normalizing or capturing the outside. 'The law of the State is ... that of interior and exterior. The State is sovereignty. But sovereignty only reigns over what is capable of internalizing' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 360). Sovereign power internalizes excess through interdiction and constructs a social space, an interiority, which only 'lines of flight' can 'break through'. That is, in this perspective, the refugee represents the nomadic excess that the State seeks to capture and normalize through panoptic confinement, for example, in refugee camps. However, Agamben gives a significant twist to such an analysis, complementing it with the concept of 'indistinction'. The launching of the 'state of exception' plays a crucial role in this respect. For in the state of exception:

what is outside is included not simply by means of an interdiction or an internment, but rather by means of the suspension of the juridical order's validity—by letting the juridical order, that is, withdraw from the exception and abandon it. The exception does not subtract itself from the rule; rather, the rule, suspending itself, gives rise to the exception and, maintaining itself in relation to the exception, first constitutes itself as a rule. The particular 'force' of law consists in this capacity of law to maintain itself in relation to an exteriority. (Agamben, 1998, p. 18)

The origin of sovereignty is the state of exception, the ban: the *abandonment* of subjects to a condition of bare life, stripping them of their political rights (p. 29). Nawÿn wants to abandon the 'criminal' citizens with foreign origins to: what? It is the answer to this question that is tricky in our context because the ban involves not a simple exclusion but an inclusion by exclusion in the sense that what is excluded or abandoned at the margins of politics, of the *polis*, maintains its relation to the law as its suspension. Nawÿn's secret appeal is thus to a sovereignty that recognizes the refugee as its genuine subject. The refugee is abandoned only to be included in the domain of power.

Thus one must not be deceived here by the fact that Nawÿn wants to send the refugee 'home'. The ban is a kind of relation with no positive content, 'the simple form of relation with the nonrelational' (p. 29). In this sense the refugee is a 'limit concept'; 'the law applies to him in no longer applying, and holds him in its ban in abandoning him outside itself' (pp. 23, 50). According to the diagram of sovereign exception, power emerges not as an expression of the social bond but as an un-bonding; 'the sovereign tie is in truth only an untying' (p. 90). The social bond itself has the form of exception, or un-bonding, in which an exclusionary inclusion politicizes the subject, in our case the refugee. Thus, every time the refugee is 'excluded' we should be looking for the inclusive gesture that follows it, which is part and parcel of the social bond between 'us' and 'them'. Because untying is not merely exclusion and because it at once excludes the bare life of the refugee as its outside and captures it within the realm of the law, the sovereign decision is a kind of localization that does not distinguish between inside and outside 'but instead traces a threshold (the state

of exception) between the two' (p. 19). The refugee inhabits this zone of indistinction.

Enter the camp Woomera, the infamous detention center in Australia. A detainee says: 'when we came first to Woomera, we didn't believe we were in Australia ... Because the things that happened—they wouldn't happen in Australia. It must be another country' (quoted in Campbell, 2002, p. 26). 'Woomera is another country', adds Campbell, commenting on his interviewee's utterance. However, the point is rather that Woomera, established and run by Australian authorities alone, is effectively a frustrating zone of indistinction between inside (law) and outside (unlaw), a space in which the link between localization and order breaks down, a space that can materialize only when exception becomes the rule. It is the location of the unlaw within law in the form of an exception that turns Woomera into an unbounded space. Hence the confusion whether it is inside or outside Australia. The paradox here consists of sovereign power being both inside and outside the juridical order at the same time, a situation in which the experience becomes 'the law is outside itself', or, 'nothing is outside the law' (Agamben, 1998, p. 15).

When the frustrating experience of indistinction abounds in open-ended incarceration, the asylum seekers turn desperate in Woomera, which the staff call a 'war zone', and collapse in hopeless acts of protest (for example, hunger strikes, slashing themselves, hanging themselves from the razor wire, swallowing shampoo and sleeping pill cocktails, or digging their own graves ...) Fifty of them broke out the camp in 2002, most have been captured: 'but they are unlikely to be prosecuted or jailed—if they were, they would have visiting rights and a definite length of imprisonment, luxuries denied them as asylum seekers inside Woomera' (Campbell, 2002, p. 27). The detainees are legally abandoned outside the legal system through exceptional practices that hold them under their ban. The detention center is a 'hybrid' in which the distinction between the legality and illegality of what happens in it does not make sense. Its essence is the materialization of the state of exception, constituting a space topologically different from that of mere enclosure, for example, a prison, for it at once belongs to the inside and the outside of the normal order (Agamben, 1998, p. 169). It is the reason why the inmates of Woomera can find the panopticon luxurious compared to their camp. After all, panopticon was 'a model of mutual involvement and confrontation' that required the constant mutual engagement of power holders and those subject to power (Bauman, 2000, p. 10). The power based on abandonment refers, in contrast, to a model of disengagement; it is, to use Bigo's concept, a 'ban-opticon' in the sense that it seeks pro-active control and risk management rather than normalizing (Bigo, 2002, p. 82).

Denmark, Hanstholm Refugee Center, July 2002. In the center, the asylum seekers have some rather simple daily responsibilities, for example, cleaning their own rooms and the immediate environs, cooking, and so on, and they do not, legally, have to participate in other activities. However, the Municipality of Hanstholm illegally stopped paying the support payments, which the refugees are legally entitled to, as a penalty when some refugees refused to participate in Danish language classes. Consequently, the asylum seekers lodged a complaint, and when the media became involved, the Danish Parliament asked Bertel

Haarder, the Minister of Refugees, Immigrants and Integration, for an explanation of the juridical practice in the field. Haarder's answer was not insignificant. He writes that after the illegal practice mentioned above took place the Danish Home Office (Udlændingestyrelsen) 'clarified' for the Municipality of Hanstholm that the responsibilities of the refugees do not include participation in language classes, and thus municipalities cannot legally take action in such cases. Haarder goes on to point out that the Municipality of Hanstholm had, after this clarification, paid the involved refugees their support payments back. That is, not knowing the law turns out to be an excuse for the municipality and 'paying back' becomes resolution! There is more to it, however, for at this point Haarder gives to the folding of the event an interesting twist:

I can add that the government has established a working group with the aim of strengthening the initiatives of activation and education in asylum centers. Among other things the working group aims at evaluating the valid rules in this field ... In my opinion the system of support payment and of its refusal should from now on work smoothly. I have therefore asked the working group to consider more closely whether in future the operators [of the asylum centers] should be able to take decisions on refusing to make support payments to refugees without any involvement of the Home Office. (Haarder, 2002)

Instead of taking action against the illegal practice, the minister finds it more appropriate to change the law. This is a move that pushes the asylum centers into the territory of vigilantism, a paradoxical territory that can be defined neither as a situation of fact nor as a situation of right. Which is 'the ultimate meaning of the paradox that Schmitt formulates when he writes that the sovereign decision "proves itself not to need law to create the law"' (Agamben, 1998, p. 19). Power beyond the law.

The idea of exception permeates every aspect of refugee life. For instance, recently, it was revealed that the French company, Sodexo, running a new detention center near Heathrow airport in the UK, is supported by the British government in paying refugees 34p an hour for cleaning and cooking, less than one tenth of the British minimum wage. This procedure was made possible by the logic of exception: that 'the legal obligation to pay the minimum wage has been waived for UK Detention Services' (Bright, 2001). This suggestion is reminiscent of forced labor camps and their economy of exception, in other words, 'slave labor' schemes and undoubtedly would contribute to the creation of an underclass of denizens. Like the razor wire of the camp, the interval between 'work' and 'slave labor' delimits an extratemporal and extraterritorial threshold in which the refugee is abandoned to an extreme misfortune—that of the *homo sacer*.

The Refugee as *Homo Sacer*

Having left behind his origin and been stripped of his former identities, the refugee is socially a 'zombie' whose spectral past survives in a world in which

his symbolic capital does not count, and whose present takes place in a condition of 'social nakedness' characterized by the lack of social definition, rights and responsibilities (Bauman, 2002, p. 116). Or, a werewolf: neither a beast nor a man, an outlaw that can be exposed to violence without facing legal sanctions (Agamben, 1998, p. 104–5). 'They are dealing with us as animals, not as human beings', says the detainee in Woomera (quoted in Campbell, 2002, p. 26). In the detention center the human and the inhuman enter into a biopolitical zone of indistinction, and the detainees can be subjected to all sorts of physical and symbolic violence without legal consequences. Banned and excluded from the city, the werewolf is forced to survive in the forest. Banned and excluded from society, the detainee is forced to survive in an open-ended period of incarceration, sealed off by barbed wire and surveillance cameras. It is important, however, to bear in mind that this 'ban-opticon' does not exist outside society but is radically internal to it, just as the 'state of nature' does not exist prior to 'civilization' but is established through the ban:

the state of nature is not a real epoch chronologically prior to the foundation of the City but a principle internal to the City, which appears at the moment the City is considered *tanquam dissoluta*, 'as if it were dissolved' (in this sense, therefore, the state of nature is something like a state of exception). Accordingly, when Hobbes founds sovereignty by means of a reference to the state in which 'man is a wolf to men', *homo hominis lupus*, in the word 'wolf' (*lupus*) we ought to hear an echo of the *wargus* and the *caput lupinem* of the laws of Edward the Confessor: at issue is not simply *fera bestia* and natural life but rather a zone of indistinction between the human and the animal, a werewolf, a man who is transformed into a wolf and a wolf who is transformed into a man—in other words, a bandit, a *homo sacer*. Far from being a prejudicial condition that is indifferent to the law of the city, the Hobbesian state of nature is the exception and the threshold that constitutes and dwells within it. (Agamben, 1998, pp. 105–6)

'A bandit'. Clinging to trains, attempting to cross the channel in boats, hiding among the refrigerated vegetables in long-distance lorries—and all that to become the bandit against whom 'citizens' unite without feeling any political or moral obligation. One of the globally relevant features of the contemporary discourse is, indeed, the criminalization of the asylum seeker. The contemporary discourse of immigration, which creates the asylum seeker as an 'outsider inside', is based on the sovereign myth and its body politic that conceives of the state as a container, as a 'body endangered by migrants' who 'penetrate' its borders (Bigo, 2002, pp. 68–9). It is the very equation of the bandit and the refugee that makes it possible to locate the refugee in a zone of indistinction, in which the refugee is excluded from the domain of ethical responsibility and exposed to violence both from the civil society and the state without legal consequences. The bandit/refugee steals our wealth and enjoys it in excessive ways, all at the expense of our own enjoyment, our own wealth. Thus, the Home Secretary, David Blunkett, could time after time describe asylum seekers as

‘swamping’ British medical services and schools (quoted in White and Travis, 2002). In a similar spirit, Danish Prime Minister Anders F. Rasmussen proposed that the ‘newcomers’ must wait seven years before they could access the Danish welfare system: ‘That will be a way to protect our welfare’ (quoted in Osborn, 2001). That is, the refugee is the ‘other’ who threatens ‘our’ wealth, promising no more than uncertainty, insecurity and danger. A clever ascription, it is through this figure—the ‘theft of enjoyment’—that the other is othered. ‘This would be the most general formula of the modern racism we are witnessing today: a hatred of the particular way the Other enjoys ... the Other as he who essentially steals my own enjoyment’ (Jacques-Alain Miller quoted in Žižek, 1993, p. 2003). As a bandit, the refugee is not simply excluded from the law in an indifferent manner but rather abandoned by it, that is, rendered vulnerable on a threshold in which life and law, outside and inside, become indistinct. It is in this sense difficult to decide whether the refugee is inside or outside; he is at once at the mercy of the juridical context in which he seeks asylum and is exposed to any kind of (cultural, social, religious, political, economic ...) threat and violence.

If the formal structure of sovereignty is untying, or exception, the production of untying is bare life (*zoē*), biological life stripped of (life) forms and political rights and thus located outside the polis. Bare life is the life of the *homo sacer*. However, the meaning of ‘sacred’ here must not be located within the religious domain. The sacred in Bataille’s sense, for instance, involves the distinction between the sacrificeable and unsacrificeable, a principle ‘according to which *what is useful* is destined to sacrifice’ (Bataille, 1997, p. 218). In stark contrast, the *homo sacer* can be treated violently but not in the form of religious sacrifice; he ‘can be killed but not sacrificed’ (Agamben, 1998, p. 18, 111–5). The bare life of the *homo sacer*, in other words, belongs to the domain of (bio)politics, not religion. That is, as *homo sacer*, the asylum seeker is the political figure *par excellence*, for ‘from the point of view of sovereignty only bare life is authentically political’ (p. 106). Breaking the continuity between man and citizen, as *homo sacer*, the refugee brings to light the real condition of sovereignty and the contradictory character of the attempts by committees and organizations dealing with the refugee’s ‘human rights’, which insist that their actions are only humanitarian and not political. Yet this post-political stance that represents itself outside and above politics is attainable only when, and paradoxically, the refugee is considered as *homo sacer*, as a referent of biopolitics. This separation between politics and humanitarianism, or between the rights of the citizen and the rights of man, thus signals ‘a secret solidarity’ between humanitarianism and the powers it should fight (Agamben, 1998, p. 133). Humanitarian organizations need the same bare life which power feeds upon. Thus Žižek is fully justified when he argues that:

today’s *homo sacer* is the privileged object of the humanitarian biopolitics—it is the one who is deprived of his full humanity through the very patronizing way of being taken care of. One should therefore assume the paradox that concentration camps and refugee camps for the delivery of humanitarian aid are the

two faces, 'human' and 'inhuman', of the same socio-logical formal matrix. In both cases, the cruel joke from Lubitch's *To Be Or Not To Be* applies: when asked about the German concentration camps in the occupied Poland, the 'concentration camp Erhardt' snaps back 'We do the concentrating, and the Poles do the camping'. In both cases, the population is reduced to an object of biopolitics. It is thus not enough to enumerate the list of the figures of today's homo sacer: les sans papiers in France, the inhabitants of the favelas in Brazil, the African-American ghettos in the US, and so on. It is absolutely crucial to supplement this list with the humanitarian side. (Žižek, 2002, p. 91)

In as much as political events are double-sided, the moral call of the organizations dealing with refugees—what is at stake is life itself—leads to the transformation of 'politics into a question of generic life, life in all its generality' (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p. 313). Once the fundamental referent becomes bare life, political distinctions (Right/Left, private/public, liberalism/totalitarianism, and so on) disappear in a zone of indistinction (Agamben, 1998, p. 122). The growth of this gray zone is, in fact, the mechanism behind today's 'post-politics' based on a disavowal and foreclosure of real political issues surrounding the phenomenon (Žižek, 1999).

The concept of 'post-politics' is interesting regarding the point of interference and the inherent complementarity between humanitarianism and power. The dominant form of politics in the field of asylum is post-political in the sense that it disavows politics as such, which, however, takes place not by 'repressing' politics but by 'foreclosing' it (see Žižek, 1999, p. 198). What is precluded in the post-politics of asylum is the gesture of politicization proper. The metaphoric universalization of particular demands, which is 'not simply a part of the negotiation of interests but aims at something more': at the restructuring of the social space (pp. 204–8). Thus the aim of the politics of asylum is pre-emptive risk management, to make sure that nothing disturbing really happens, that 'politics' does not take place. In this sense, post-politics is the end of politics proper. Of course there exists a cacophony of discourses in the context of asylum in contemporary societies, and of course this multiplicity of the discourses constitutes a struggle for hegemony. However, it seems that the discourse of securitization seems to have articulated its rivals within its own horizon and become the dominant discourse in the field of asylum (see Bigo, 2002). Indeed, politics of security is today in the aftermath of September 11 fast becoming the dominant form of politics, redefining what it means to be a political subject. However, when security becomes the dominant form of politics, that is, when politics is replaced by a constant state of exception, power can too easily be provoked to act in a terrorist fashion (Agamben, 2001). Hence the tendency today to 'terrorize' the political space by transforming democracy into a hostage while we are witnessing, once more, that forms of security (and fear) are related to forms of life; security is a formative, productive and dynamic aspect of social life (Dillon, 1996). Thus it is small wonder that the politics of asylum is increasingly drawn into the orbit of the global post-politics of security (and fear).

And significantly in this context, even the critical discourses that do not perceive the asylum seeker as an existential threat to national identity too often argue this ‘by accepting the framing of a different domain of security beyond the political—one linked with emergency and exception. In doing so, they agree with the idea of an “exceptionalization,” or a “beyond the law” politics’ (Bigo, 2002, p. 73).

The Refugee Camp as a Non-place

The place held in common by the ethnologist and those he talks about is simply a place: the one occupied by the indigenous inhabitants who live in it, cultivate it, defend it, mark its strong points and keep its frontiers under surveillance, but who also detect in it the traces of chthonian or celestial powers, ancestors or spirits which populate and animate its private geography; as if the small fragment of humanity making them offerings and sacrifices in this place were also the quintessence of humanity ... (Augé, 1995, p. 42)

On the other hand, most refugee spaces, both more ‘open’ ones (for example, interchangeably called refugee camps, accommodation centers, or, reception centers) and ‘closed’, prison-like structures (for example, detention centers) are instantiations of what Augé called ‘non-places’: they do not integrate other places, meanings, traditions and sacrificial, ritual moments but remain, due to a lack of characterization, non-symbolized and abstract spaces (p. 82). As non-places, most refugee spaces are spaces of indistinction: ‘a person entering the space of non-place is relieved of his usual determinants’ (p. 103).

Refugee camps are often located outside cities, in suburbia or in rural areas, as a rule in demonstratively peripheral sites, the contemporary strategy behind which is the dispersal of the asylum seekers. As a Home Office (2002) press release tells, for instance, the new British asylum accommodation centers are all planned on former military sites in rural areas isolated from the amenities and cultural facilities which are concentrated in cities. Needless to say, because it will be difficult for asylum seekers to afford transport on their small support payments, it is most likely that they will spend most of their time confined to the centers, and, coupled with the size of each center (750 places each), this might become a ‘recipe for frustration and tension within the centers and between asylum seekers and the existing local communities’ (Cambridgeshire Against Refugee Detention, 2002, p. 2). Basic to the strategy of dispersal are economic considerations (for example, cheaper land) and social concerns against the formation of ‘refugee ghettos’ in metropolitan and urban centers. However, the practice of dispersal itself leads to ghetto formations in isolated locations. In such locations they come to look like islands, or, like ‘neutral cities’ (Sennett, 1990, p. 170), characterized by a sterilized, mono-functional enclosure: contact with the outer world is physically minimized behind the fences, which yield no permission to touch the outer world, resulting in the complete isolation of the refugee from public life. In contemporary politics of asylum, the refugee invokes

this fear and the related feeling of uncertainty, and the refugee camps are perfect materializations of a 'fear of touching' made obvious by their very architectural design, their anti-urban ideal and their idealization of the sterile as an image of order. Indeed, the refugee camp can be considered as, to use Sennett's apt metaphor, an 'urban condom' (Sennett, 1994, p. 228).

Not surprisingly, therefore, the strategies of dispersion directly aim at *not* integrating asylum seekers, neither in the local context, labor market, nor in schools, keeping them in limbo in sites of confinement until they acquire the status of refugee, which clarifies whether they are going to be sent 'home' or not. Indeed, from the systemic point of view, refugees embody those people who are excluded from several function systems at once and thus whose lives are reduced to bare life; in Niklas Luhmann's words: 'bodies which have to survive somehow on their own, and not so much as a kind of parts, or kind of persons used for whatever purpose in function systems' (1994, p. 4). Thus, the most basic four characteristics of camp life consists of: living on small amounts of support payments or even food vouchers with no cash allowance, which pushes the asylum seeker out of the normal functioning of the economic system; to be prevented from finding paid work; living according to the governments' choice of residency; and minimum geographical mobility.

In short, the life of the asylum seeker is marked by an extreme isolation; not only physically but also socioeconomically and culturally. His social contacts often depend on the good will of (especially the voluntary) staff in the camps. An important factor in this context is of course the barrier of language, reducing the asylum seeker's capacity to participate in civic activities. Further, there is the economic barrier: transportation to the closest cities, for instance, as all other civic activities, costs more than the asylum seeker can afford, which reduces their mobility to short-distance movements. For those who do not have their own means there is no possibility of work except in the 'black' economy, which, apart from the inequalities related to it and difficulties of finding it in isolated or 'dispersed' sites, can result in the involved asylum seeker being sent from the refugee center to the detention center. The only possibility for the asylum seeker to avoid forced residency in a refugee center, a possibility that emerges only in some countries once the reception period is over, is to apply for permission to reside outside the centers. In Sweden, the UK, France and the Netherlands, for instance, asylum seekers are entitled to keep a minimum amount of their support payments if they can find a residence outside the camps themselves, and they can use 'activation' and educational offers. In countries such as Denmark and Austria they loose their rights to receive support payments, to participate in activation schemes and to use the health system, if they choose not to live in the camps. Germany is even more restrictive: here, refugees have to live in the refugee camps chosen for them by the authorities, and have to ask for written permission when they wish to travel more than a few kilometers away from the centers (ECRE, 2002, p. 33). One step further is Australia, where all asylum seekers are detained.

As mobility today is fast becoming a determining factor of social change and social stratification, and as the distinction between *Gesellschaft* and *Gemeinschaft* consequently tends to be displaced onto a new distinction between the

mobile and the sedentary (see Bauman, 2000), the asylum seeker is held in a condition of immobility. Distances disappear and the globe shrinks for the mobile, but, as Bhabha says, 'for the displaced or the dispossessed, the migrant or the refugee, no distance is more awesome than the few feet across borders' (quoted in Graham and Marvin, 2001, p. 219). Across the borders, immobility persists, not only in the geographical sense but also in terms of sociality and the objects that hold sociality together. The regulation of the support payments and residencies, for instance, fixes refugees geographically in a world of flows, the paradox being that, whereas network mobility is reshaping the relationship between physical and social proximity today, the refugees' lives remain indexed to an image of sociality that demands both physical and social proximity. It is significant in this context that the refugee camps are an integral part, a product and manifestation of processes of contemporary globalization as are Augé's non-places. In terms of global mobility, refugee non-places have in common several significant characteristics. First, they are places in which exception becomes the rule. Thus the German 'Durchgangslager' or 'Aufganglager', for instance, can grant admittance or rejection to refugees without the intervention of the ordinary citizenship rights. Second, and akin to the mobile character of the refugee identity itself, such spaces are in general close to central transportation nodes and borders and thus directly involve mobility in their regulatory matrix (Verstrate, 2001). Thus, the police can immediately send refugees back, transportation companies are obliged to check if people have visas, and so on. It is therefore not a coincidence that refugee camps mirror the contemporary technologies of *speed* (that make it possible to get rid of the refugee as soon as possible), *escape* (from political publicity) and *passivity* (neutralizing the refugee as stranger), all of which are concepts Sennett (1994) uses in characterizing modern urban design. And third, such places are organized around a 'pre-emptive' logic of risk management, with the police seeking to operate *before* potential problems occur, for example, before the refugees enter the country. The aim is, in a sense, to control 'eventualities' before the 'event' takes place (Lyon, 2001, p. 54), turning the 'exclusion' of the refugee into a pre-emptive action.

However, although the refugee is seen as a sign of displacement, and although his routes are densely controlled by infrastructures of mobility, his own life in the camp can only be described as immobility. The camp is officially a transitory, so to say, an 'exceptional' space, in which the refugee is supposed to spend only a limited amount of time. Yet, everywhere the refugee camp has today become a 'permanent' location and the transient condition of the refugee extends indefinitely, becoming an irrevocable and permanent situation, freezing into non-negotiable, rigid structures:

Refugee camps boast a new quality: a 'frozen transience', an on-going, lasting state of temporariness, a duration patched together of moments none of which is lived through as an element of, and a contribution to, perpetuity. For the inmates of a refugee camp, the prospect of long-term sequels and consequences is not part of the experience. The inmates of refugee camps live, literally, from day to day—and the contents of life are unaffected

by the knowledge that days combine into months and years. As in the prisons and 'hyper-ghettos' scrutinized by Loïc Wacquant [2001], camped refugees 'learn to live, or rather survive [(sur)vivre] from day to day in the immediacy of the moment, bathing in ... the despair brewing inside the walls'. (Bauman, 2002, pp. 114–5)

This 'transient permanency' of the camp is related to the very logic of the camp, which emerges when the exception becomes the rule. However, the extreme form of such immobility that can materialize for the asylum seeker is the detention center. Asylum seekers are sent to detention centers in three different situations. First, for clarification of their identities and travel routes but especially when asylum applications are refused. In French international airports, for example, this is the case 'during the four days foreigners may be kept in the zone d'attente before the intervention of French judicial authorities' (Agamben, 2000, p. 42). Second, Australia, for instance, has a policy of mandatory detention and, assuming that asylum seekers are all 'bogus' until proven genuine, that is, until they 'deserve' the status refugee, detains every asylum seeker, a system also called the 'pacific solution': dumping about 400 people in dying desert settlements such as Woomera, in which about 20 inmates a week attempt suicide (see Campbell, 2002), and, doing everything to even deter them from attempting to claim asylum. And third, the refugees who have committed crimes (for example, by working in the 'black' economy, or by being violent or threatening the camp staff) can be 'imprisoned' until their applications are processed. It is significant that in most Western countries theft of around £50 by an asylum seeker can result in detention. And the interpretation of what counts as 'threatening' behavior often depends on the personal and arbitrary tolerance threshold of the staff. Many refugee centers operate with 'zero-tolerance' policies so that asylum seekers can be sent to detention centers even for relatively small crimes. As a whole, the atmosphere of the detention center is characterized by latent threats of violence, which at times are actualized in concrete violence and even cause deaths, while the constant presence of the police strengthens the image of it as a prison. As a consequence, the violations of human rights abound. In one of the many cases, for example, 'the detainee was handcuffed, shackled, placed in a windowless room for six days, denied medical treatment and held in detention for more than twelve months in 1996 and 1997' (Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission, 2002). Indefinite imprisonment, not being told of one's rights, delays in responses to requests for legal assistance, being held in isolation from other parts of the detention center, the use of force, and poor general conditions regarding food, medical services, privacy, sleeping arrangements, the level of personal security, and education and recreation facilities: these are the most common characteristics of life in most detention centers all over the world.

What is most significant in this respect is the increased use of forced detention in relation to people who are held in the detention centers without trial, sometimes for very long periods in which normality is suspended. When Blair's government came to power in 1997, around 700 people were imprisoned in

detention centers at any one time in the UK; the figure is today around 1800; and the government promises to increase the numbers to 4000 with the new detention centers called 'removals centers':

The government claims that they are for 'failed' asylum seekers who will be held for a few days prior to deportation. On past experience this seems unlikely—according to recent government statistics only 4% of detainees were awaiting imminent removal action, with some 60% not even having received an initial decision on their asylum applications, and most of the rest awaiting the results of appeals—and many detainees have been held for months or even years. (Cambridgeshire Against Refugee Detention, 2002, p. 5)

Denmark: Sandholmslejren, or, the camp Sandholm. In number 17 two women reside: N. Jamshidi and H. Elmess, respectively, from Iran and Lebanon. They are there not because they have committed crimes but because their asylum applications are rejected and they are waiting to be sent home. Jamshidi says she is 'going crazy from sitting here'—she is afraid of going back and eventually risking her life in a country from which she has escaped. And the same frustration again:

I feel nothing any more. No hope. No hunger. I just want some peace. Formerly I cried all the time, I missed my freedom, I missed my children, now I am just unconcerned ... Eating time, shout the personnel at 12. Eating time, they shout again at 17. At 22 we go to bed. It is the same every single day. I can just as well go back to Lebanon and get killed. Inside I am already dead ... I am nothing.

Is it, one wonders, so difficult for the authorities to recognize the voice of the *homo sacer* here? The European Council Torture Committee visited the camp Sandholm in 2002 and expressed its concern regarding people held in the camp without trial, which is in conflict with the UN's principles of human rights. The Danish authorities explained the situation by emphasizing that the problem is one of capacity, adding that they 'predict' that 'tightening the immigration rules will in future deter many foreigners from coming to Denmark' so that this problem will be solved by itself (quotations are from Sørensen, 2002, my translation).

Generalization of the Camp

A world where people are born in the clinic and die in hospital, where transit points and temporary abodes are proliferating under luxurious and inhuman conditions (hotel chains and squats, holiday clubs and refugee camps, shantytowns threatened with demolition and doomed to festering longevity); where a dense network of means of transport which are also inhabited spaces is developing; where the habitué of supermarkets, slot machines and credit

card communicates wordlessly, through gestures, with an abstract, unmediated commerce; a world thus surrendered to solitary individuality, to the fleeting, the temporary and ephemeral, offers the anthropologist (and others) a new object ... (Augé, 1995, p. 78)

This new global object Augé announces is the 'non-place', or, as I would rather call it, the camp. What camps and non-places have in common are exterritoriality (they are 'in' but not 'of' the contexts in which they are located exceptionally), disposability of meanings, fluidity of identities and the permanency of transience, that is, the constitutive tendencies of 'liquid modernity' (see Bauman, 2002, p. 113). What is the mechanism, then, behind the formation of such spaces?

Carl Schmitt has shown that it is the link between localization and order that constitutes the 'nomos of the earth'. Through this link, the biological (*zōē*) and the social/political (*bios*) are separated, and bare life is excluded from the polis. There is an ambiguity, though: in the state of exception this link breaks down. When the unlocalizable, the exception, achieves a permanent localization, the camp emerges as a zone of indistinction, in which law and chaos, inside and outside become indistinguishable: 'To an order without localization (the state of exception, in which the law is suspended) there now corresponds a localization without order (the camp as a permanent state of exception)' (Agamben, 1998, p. 175). The camp, materializing the state of exception, constitutes a zone of indiscernibility, which is structurally different from panoptic entrenchment. In fact, even though Foucault had examined the prison as the paradigmatic political space of modernity, curiously leaving the camp out of consideration, it is the camp that is the *nomos* of the modern (p. 20). In this respect it is paradoxical that social theory can conceive of the camp only as an anomaly: an exceptional site situated on the margins of the polis in order to neutralize its 'failed citizens' and 'enemies'. In this, the camp merely articulates an image of the disappearance of the social into the state of nature. However, in the logic of exception, exception is not merely an anomaly but also what explains the rule. The law is always posited in a negative way: the rule is known through its transgression, a state through its exception, the normal through the pathological. To understand the social bond one thus needs to understand what it excludes. Or, in Schmitt's allusion to Kierkegaard, the camp is the exception that 'explains the general and itself' (quoted in Agamben, 1998, pp. 16, 166).

The camp is therefore, and significantly, the becoming-rule of exception. The camp emerged in the Nazi period as an exceptional space in which the life of the inmate was violently transformed into bare life (see Sofsky, 1997; Agamben, 1999). However, the production of bare life is today extended beyond the walls of the concentration camp, which is why the camp ceases to remain a historical anomaly. What the story of modernity left out was the Holocaust, the camp as exception that sustains the rule (see Bauman, 1991). What the post-modern (or 'post-political') narrations push away is the camp that has become the rule. And just as one cannot narrate modernity without the concentration camp, one cannot tell the story of post-modernity without the camp in the second sense. Which is not to say that all contemporary spaces can be characterized by the cruelty of the

Nazi camps (although camp-like structures such as detention centers are spreading quickly). But the logic of the camp is generalized throughout the entire society (Agamben, 1998, pp. 20, 174–5). We increasingly live in a time in which populations' 'ontological status as legal subjects is suspended' (Butler, 2000, p. 81). In this, sovereign power is not only exercised as actuality (in actually delimited spaces) but also as potentiality, not only by creating zones of indistinction between the inside and outside (of the nation, town, or the home) but also by penetrating the whole political/social field, transforming the entire social space into a dislocated biopolitical space in which the modern political categories (for example, right/left, private/public, absolutism/democracy) are entering into a post-political zone of indistinction and dissolving (Agamben, 1998, p. 4). It is in this context that the status of the refugee *vis-à-vis* the citizen is more than telling:

Are we then witnessing a rebirth of the old distinction between *human rights* and *rights of a citizen*? Are there rights of all members of human kind (to be respected also in the case of homo sacer), and the more narrow rights of the citizens (those whose status is legally regulated)? What if, however, a more radical conclusion is to be drawn? What if the true problem is not the fragile status of those excluded, but, rather, the fact that, at the most elementary level, we are all 'excluded' in the sense that our most elementary, 'zero', position is that of an object of biopolitics and that eventual political and citizenship rights are given to us as a secondary status? (Žižek, 2002, p. 95)

It is here essential to recall the fundamental duality of power: that power is positive and 'liberating' as well as negative and restrictive. The ultimate mystery of power is founded on the paradoxical relationship between its absence and presence. To quote from *The Usual Suspects*: 'The greatest trick the devil has ever pulled is to convince the world he did not exist'. In certain cases it is thus easy enough to recognize the camp (for example, refugee camps, rape camps, favelas, and so on). But nevertheless there are also more 'benevolent' camps (for example, gated communities, sex tourism, theme parking, and so on) that repeat the logic of the exception for the 'winners'. Thus, taken in the first sense, as exception, the camp can refer to both extreme deprivation and extreme privilege, both to extreme exclusion and extreme inclusion. At both extremes, the distinction between the biological and the political tends to disappear and it becomes increasingly difficult to refer to the polis and politics in the classical sense.

To illustrate the nature of the camp as 'positive' power, let me now briefly consider 'gated' urban structures of New Urbanism. Marketing not only property but also access to a securitized lifestyle, most gated communities have literally no public spaces; indeed, they are spaces in which some basic citizenship rights such as freedom of movement are denied outright (see Rifkin, 2000, pp. 114–33). Threatening the idea of the common good and violating the rights based on citizenship, such communities often 'act *in opposition* to the interests of the wider community' (Bell quoted in Amin and Thrift, 2002, p. 139). With their technologies of pre-emptive social filtering, inward-looking architectural design,

biased premium infrastructure links (for example, special transportation and virtual networks excluding others) and privatized governance regimes, gated communities constitute a new type of localization miles away from what is traditionally understood by 'city'; they demonstrate, rather, how the 'city' is 'splintered' today (see Graham and Marvin, 2001). What characterizes 'splintering urbanism' is, first, the increasing 'unbundling' or fragmentation of the standardized infrastructures of the Fordist era through the processes of privatization and, second, the selective 're-bundling' of the fragments through advanced premium networked infrastructures. The reordered fragments establish, however, not a 'city'; what we get instead are fragments: governmental districts, shopping malls, cultural centers, office parks, gated communities, ghettos, and hybrids such as themed shopping malls, the airport retail area, and so on. And significantly, these fragments producing a splintering, incoherent overall structure 'can exist only when they are connected to the networked infrastructures that allow them to sustain their necessary or desired socioeconomic connections with spaces and people in more or less distanced elsewhere ... Thus networked infrastructure becomes directly embroiled in the secessionary process, supporting the material construction of partitioned urban environments' (Graham and Marvin, 2001, p. 228).

One should add that the background against which this development can take place is the logic of exception. The solipsistic enclaves of the under-theorized unbundled city are, in other words, camps. It is in this respect no coincidence that, with increasing 'splintering', the obsession with security becomes 'a zeitgeist of urban restructuring' and city life is increasingly 'militarized' (Davis, 1990, pp. 223, 232). Indeed, today, the image of the 'urban' (civilization) more and more turns into that of a state of nature: the city 'as if it were dissolved'. Regarding this becoming-rule of the exception, Rose's description of the way the old Victorian asylums have been transformed from panoptic sites to contemporary gated communities is a case in point. 'In a reversal that would be laughable if it were not so sad, these are no longer promoted as measures to secure the community outside from the inmate ... High walls, closed circuit video cameras, security guards and the like can now be reframed and represented as measures that keep threat out rather than keep it in. ... Outside the walls, danger lurks, epitomized by the image of the madman' (Rose, 1999, pp. 248–9). When the city is dissolved, everybody turns into a 'madman', or rather, a 'werewolf', and the archetypal link between civilization and barbarism is reversed. And herein we have the underlying fantasy of the contemporary urban life: the city is an unpredictable and dangerous site of survival, a 'jungle'. Seen from the gated communities, the 'urban jungle' is a zone of indistinction where terror reigns and the *homo sacer* engages in a struggle for survival. What is repressed in this story, however, is a crucial link between desired and undesired camps:

Refugee camps and the *nowherevilles* share the intended, in-built, pre-programmed transience. Both installations are conceived and planned as a hole in time as much as in space, a temporary suspension of territorial ascription and the time sequence. But the faces they show to their respective users/inmates sharply differ.

The two kinds of extraterritoriality are sedimented, so to speak, on the opposite poles of globalization. The first offers transience as a facility chosen at will, the second makes it permanent and irrevocable, an ineluctable fate: a difference not unlike the one that separates the two outfits of secure permanence—the gated communities of the discriminating rich and the ghettos of the discriminated poor. And the causes of difference are also similar: closely guarded and watched entries and wide open exits on one side of the opposition, and largely indiscriminate entry but tightly sealed exits on the other. It is the locking of the exits in particular that perpetuates the state of transience without replacing it with permanence. In refugee camps time is suspended; it is time, but no history. (Bauman, 2002, p. 114)

Aiming no longer toward disciplinary confinement but also exclusion, our society seems to be producing two kinds of camps; the camps seem to come in twins: those voluntary camps where the entry is blocked but the exit is free, and those where the entry is free but the exit is blocked. Some camps are designed to keep people (outcasts) ‘out’, some to keep people (inmates) ‘in’. In both cases the principle is founded on the distribution of (the possibilities of) entry and exit. In this respect there is a fundamental difference between the concentration camp and today’s camps: unlike the concentration camp, the contemporary camps refer to a situation of choice. In the consumer society camps function, so to say, as the horizons that attract or repel the consumer-citizens/denizens who do not know if they will go ‘up’ (gated community) or ‘down’ (detention center). And there is nothing that automatically leads most subjects of liquid modernity from one extreme to the other. Rather, most people are suspended or plotted somewhere in the continuum between the extremes, which also materializes the *unsicherheit*, or fragility, characteristic of ‘liquid modernity’ (Bauman, 2002). This suspension, and the insecurities and uncertainties that follow, is part and parcel of the functioning of the camp in that it compels people to recognize power as potentiality (of abandonment).

However, with the becoming-rule of exception, there does not emerge a new, an other ‘model’ of the city on the basis of the idea of the camp in the sense that the ‘existing’ or real situations could be taken as divergences from or ‘exceptions’ to the model. Indeed, if there could ever be such a ‘model’ it would be like Calvino’s ‘model city’ in *Invisible Cities*:

It is a city made only of exceptions, exclusions, incongruities, contradictions. If such a city is the most improbable, by reducing the number of abnormal elements, we increase the probability that the city really exists. So I have only to subtract exceptions from my model, and in whatever direction I proceed, I will arrive at one of the cities which, always as an exception, exist. (Calvino, 1997, p. 69)

The becoming-rule of exception basically refers to a kind of spatiality suspended in between ‘exclusion’ and ‘inclusion’. As Bauman reminds us in this context,

occupying such indistinct zones historically has been the privilege of pariah groups such as *les malheureux* of the eighteenth century, *les misérables* of the nineteenth century and now *the refugees* (2003, pp. 129–30). Indeed the exclusionary aspects of the camp can be likened to the expulsion of the poor in early modern Europe where the poor were liable to expulsion outside their home parishes because relief was normally restricted to the local poor. The ‘ghetto’ of the poor, likewise, historically has condensed what the city is not, a negativity that emerges through the relational logic of dichotomic differences between order and disorder, normality and perversion, the law and unlaw (despotism), and so on. What the logic of exception can add to this is the awareness that the dichotomic difference should not be treated merely as a difference between elements within the same symbolic economy. Rather, the ‘other’, for example, the ghetto, signifies what is prior to difference (see Grossrichard, 1998; Diken and Laustsen, 2001). The difference that matters here is that of between difference and the lack of difference. As such the ‘ghetto’ is beyond the symbolic order: constituting a ‘fantasy space’ in the Lacanian sense, it resembles a kind of ‘state of nature’. Not an empirical space but a space constructed through the logic of exception. Yet, its stuff is material, for example, signifiers and buildings, and as such the fantasy space belongs to the symbolic register (compare to Lacan, 1977, pp. 146–78). In other words, fantasy has a spectral structure in which reality and fantasy become indistinct categories through a discursive representation of a space beyond the symbolic.

What can be said about the ‘end of the city’ in this context? Historically the city has been imagined as an enclosed space surrounded by ‘walls’ demarcating the limits of inclusion and exclusion (Virilio, 1997). Enclosure establishes a distinction between the polis and (the state of) nature. Yet the transition from nature (the real) to the polis (the symbolic) is not clean-cut and it is here we must look for the ideological fantasies that sustain urban reality: in fact ‘the circle of reality can be closed only by means of an uncanny spectral supplement’ (Žižek, 1994, p. 21). Then, urban reality presents itself via its failed symbolization and it can never be a Whole. It is precisely this lack that is foreclosed through urban fantasies based on the reduction of exception to an anomaly, and it is precisely through these fantasies that the Real returns in the form of an abject or object of desire (camp as the detention center or the gated community), constructing a scheme in which the lack in the urban ‘reality’ (the symbolic order) can be filled and the city can be experienced as an imaginary whole with fixed coordinates.

The End of the City

In what sense, then, does the camp signal the ‘end’ of the city? The first answer to this question is that the city has never existed as a whole; it has always been held together by the exception. The idea of an ‘ordered’ city is thus fundamentally nostalgic, the very symptom of which is the camp. The fantasy created thus is: if the hole (the camp) did not exist, the city would have been a whole. The camp is the ‘contingent’ space that hinders the urban order that would have been if, that is, the camp did not exist. What this fantasy hides is of course that the

camp is a 'necessary' effect of existing power relations. And precisely as such the camp participates actively in the construction of the contemporary urban reality. Paradoxically, thus, the camp is what holds the city together: thanks to it, one can fantasize a non-antagonistic city! Thus a radical position against the idea of the camp as an anomaly is indeed to say that the camp does not exist: the city is always already antagonistic; it is an antagonism.

This is not the whole story, though. There is a sense in which the camp definitely signals the 'end' of the city, and this brings us back to the question of post-politics, to the difficulty of politicization today in the classical Greek sense, that is, as the metaphorical universalization of particular demands with the aim of restructuring the social space (Žižek, 1999, p. 35). In as much as politics is the ability to debate and the capability to change the frame of the political debate and struggle on the basis of conflict, the camp means that power can escape the agora, that there is an essential link between increasing mobility and the 'splintering' city. The world of the contemporary camp(ing) is a world, in which power goes nomadic. Post-panoptic power is able to 'travel light', finds engagement neither necessary nor desirable, and speed is fast becoming the paramount factor of stratification and domination (Bauman, 2000, pp. 150–1). If 'hit and run' is the logic that makes people obey today, to be in the right camp means to be in a position to run at short notice. Political conflict requires time and engagement, that is, dialogue; yet nomadic power can bypass the agora. Disengagement is no longer the outer limit of power relations, and uncertainty does not lead to conflict; they have both become effective strategies of power. Conflict requires relation; yet, one side of the mutual (panoptic) relation opted out (p. 188). Power moves to the 'space of flows'; politics, the agora, remains incessantly local (Castells, 1996). In short, speed is 'beyond politics' (Lotringer and Virilio, 1997, p. 86).

Consequently, the mobile elite seems to be elevated above the existing modes of dispute and conflict which Boltanski and Thévenot (1991) call 'regimes of justification' or 'cities' (*cités*). The inhabitants of the voluntary camps often need not and do not justify their actions with reference to a principle of equivalence and an assumption of common humanity. Rather, their behavioral principle seems to be non-equivalence and non-commitment to the 'common good', be it 'society', 'justice', or a locality. On the opposite end, though, the camp means an increasing distance between knowledge and action; thus knowing more and more (about suffering in the camp Woomera, for instance) is in no way a guarantee for an ethical and political action (see Boltanski, 1999, p. 15). Against this background, the camp confronts us with an unsatisfactory choice between a post-politics that can escape the agora and an 'ultra-politics' that sublimates order indexing all politics to the politics of security in an 'attempt to depoliticize the conflict by bringing it to its extreme, via direct militarization of politics' (Žižek, 1999, p. 29).

There is a relevant question in this context regarding whether it is possible to redefine the 'common good' today in a way fit for liquid modernity. One interesting attempt at such a redefinition is Boltanski and Chiapello's 'project regime', a new regime of justification and critique adjusted to network mobility whose grandeur is connectionism. In this reticular world, in which a pre-estab-

lished habitus is not desirable, the ‘grand person is mobile’ (Boltanski and Chiapello, 1999, p. 183). Within the ethical scheme of evaluation that marks this new ‘city’, one should be acting in search of the ‘common good’ by engaging with others, inspiring confidence, being tolerant, respecting differences and passing information to others. One may travel light in this connectionist world but one can do it for one’s own sake or for the common good of the connected in a temporary network, and in this sense there seems to be a regime of justification that matches the networks of liquid capitalism.

A more radical attempt at a redefinition of the common good is Hardt and Negri’s in *Empire*, which seeks to formulate an immanent critique of liquid capitalism. Within *Empire*, there emerge significant new questions regarding the common good. The public–private divide is crucial in this context in that capitalism historically relies on expropriation and privatization of what is common. In fact, in *Empire*, ‘the public is dissolved, privatized, even as a concept’ (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p. 301). Yet, it is not necessary to weep over the destruction of this immanent relation between the public and the common by the transcendent power of private property; rather, one should focus on how the common operates today: ‘today we participate in a more radical and profound commonality ... in a productive world made up of communication and social networks, interactive services, and common languages. Our economic and social reality is defined less by the material objects that are made and consumed than by co-produced services and relationships. Producing increasingly means constructing cooperations and communicative commonalities’ (p. 302). Today the common good is a network phenomenon: markets are assuming the form of networks, ownership is progressively replaced by access, and the exchange of property is giving way to connections between servers and clients in networks (Rifkin, 2000, pp. 4–5). In the imperialist era, social wealth was transferred from ‘outside’ while sovereignty emerged ‘inside’; in *Empire*, this divide is no longer operational, and the nature of both labor and accumulated wealth is changing. Thus ‘common good’ comes to involve social networks, communication, information and affective networks, while, at the same time, social labor is progressively becoming more immaterial, producing and reproducing all aspects of the social (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p. 258).

This brings us to the question of resistance. If there is ‘no return from the camps’ to politics in the classical sense (Agamben, 1998, p. 188), how is resistance to and emancipation from the camp possible? In this context the concept of multitude is significant for if the naked body of the *homo sacer* is the negative limit of humanity and its passivity, its positive, and productive, limit is the multitude (see Hardt and Negri, 2000, p. 366). Having no spatial or temporal boundaries, *Empire* adopts biopolitics as its exclusive context and recognizes society as a realm of biopower (pp. 23–4), while the fixed and biological notion of ‘peoples’ is dissolving into ‘a fluid and amorphous multitude’ (p. 195). From the perspective of immanence, the multitude is the only absolute sovereign whose sociality is not a matter of social contract but of social contact; it consists of a horizontal network of connections and relations in movement, a domain of trans-individual relations, an open, productive and reproductive, creative field of force and connections, a social physics (Negri, 1997; Ljungström, 2001). Which

relates to Empire as a global, immanent political-economic network. As against the idea that global capital increasingly escapes political regulation and disengages itself from politics, an idea that runs throughout the globalization debate, the Spino-Marxists Hardt and Negri argue that global capital can be global only because a global political-institutional apparatus supports it. 'Empire' is the link between this apparatus and global capital, signifying at once the formal juridical sovereignty and the sovereignty of capital, its content.

Empire is 'a machine for universal integration' (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p. 198) which seeks not to 'divide and conquer', by creating pure and ordered identities in an imperialist fashion, but to integrate differences in a global smooth space without friction or conflict (pp. 198–201). It is in this horizontal world that the multitude stands in opposition to Empire without transcendent mediating institutions (p. 393). The multitude is at the same time the fundamental creative force that keeps Empire and capital afloat. It is the living material and immaterial labor that sets capital in motion, not the other way around; the 'final word on power is that *resistance comes first*' (Deleuze, 1988, p. 89). In short, then, the concept of the multitude enables an approach that can incorporate indistinction and the naked body in a productive way. Let us, at this point, return to the protests that emerged at Woomera in April 2002. The detention center was one of the central focuses of the 'Woomera2002' protests and the protests draw on the logic of indistinction and 'whatever', trying to build 'a body without organs', a multitude:

At brief moments at Woomera2002, our bodies came together with a consistent intensity to form bodies without organs and machines of struggle. At those points, dead ideology ceased to matter. Concepts always matter, but the illusion that we were going to convince people of ideas first, which would then lead to homogeneous action, was broken. The distinction between these things became untenable, and predictable rhetoric about 'us' 'locking up Ruddock' and 'freeing the refugees' evaporated as we enacted concepts together. Concepts like freedom. Concepts that were uncoded by liberal, or social democratic, or socialist, or whatever ideology. (Desert Storm, 2002)

However, 'resistance comes first' means that there is no simple dichotomy between power and resistance, or between one form of camp (for example, detention center) and another (for example, the 'sanctuary' as 'a strategic reinscription of the sacred space of the church as a defence against the sovereign power of the state'—Walters, 2002, p. 287). The problem of resistance against the camp is not a problem of building another camp but 'how to determine the enemy against which to rebel' (Hardt and Negri, 2000, p. 211). Taken as a 'machine' the camp means that the contemporary urbanism has transformed the processes of 'control' (in contrast to 'discipline') into a form of sociality through a discontinuous space of interacting and heterogeneous differences which, for Derrida, do not constitute a *Whole*, for Baudrillard, are not *Real*, and for Virilio, are not simply found to be *There* (see Koolhaas *et al.*, 1995, p. 967). We are therefore witnessing a differential process of creating spaces of indistinction with

the aim of discipline, control, and terror (see Diken and Laustsen, forthcoming). In this, panoptic discipline establishes sovereignty through confinement; control changes this, by creating a smooth space, in which a form of codified mobility becomes a necessity; and terror seems to emerge as an unregulated flow, as a line of escape from 'control', investing in insecurity, uncertainty and unsafety. In the ultra-politics of the 'war against terror', the state extends exception as a permanent state along a totalitarian line of flight from terror, promising security, certainty and safety, which prompts the re-establishment of disciplinary confinement as protection against terror in the reversed form of 'gated community' (as an island of order amidst disorder in contrast to panopticon as an island of disorder amidst order). Hence differentiated spaces of discipline, control and terror co-exist, containing within themselves elements of one another. Their topologies often overlap and clash, which is why it is difficult to 'distinguish' one form of power from another and why the space of power is that of a zone of indistinction (see Diken and Laustsen, forthcoming).

What makes inclusion/exclusion an indistinct concept in this context is that every camp (as machine) consists of flows selected and transformed in the 'intermezzo' into an inside and outside. The camp and the related subject positions are thus coded, decoded and recoded by a differential system (for example, class, sex, crime record, age, consumption patterns and so on) that can be further decomposed into further systems. In this the camp potentially becomes a space of negotiation and the proliferation of heterogeneous inside and outsides, of friendships and coming communities. Only in this sense camps can constitute a 'city': 'a phenomenon of transconsistency, a network ... a threshold of deterritorialization' (Deleuze and Guattari, 1987, p. 432). Otherwise, 'it is not the city but the camp that is the fundamental biopolitical paradigm of the West' (Agamben, 1998, p. 181).

Note

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