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Anahita NEGHABAT

FLUID INTERCONNECTIONS: ON THE FILM *INSURGENT FLOWS* BY GRŽINIĆ, KANCLER, PRISTOVŠEK (2023)

The title *Insurgent Flows* immediately indicates that the film deals with fluid interconnections or entanglements. Instruments of power and agents of the politics of death are both historically and currently interwoven through complex, interconnected webs. The subtitle draws our attention to trans*decolonial and Black Marxist futures, indicating that the film is about imagining possibilities for futures and providing utopian answers. To understand the future, we need to make sense of the present and the past. States, carceral institutions, borders, sexual regimes, democratic instruments, and much more shape the politics of death. They operate through "regimes of separation," as noted by Ruth Wilson Gilmore in the film.

How can we untangle these entanglements? The film interviews critical thinkers who examine them from different theoretical and global perspectives. Capitalism, sexual identities, Islamophobia and Orientalism, racism, colonialism, border regimes, and digital technologies – by examining them from a trans*decolonial and Black Marxist perspective, the film undertakes the ambitious task of making their entanglements tangible for the viewer. This in itself is immensely valuable, but the film makes another, perhaps even more central, contribution: in its effort to highlight global flows, it actively reflects on post-socialist Eastern Europe, a space that is all too often analytically excluded when the world is de/constructed and constantly re/imagined as "West" and "Rest." The film does the necessary work to bridge this analytical blind spot. By questioning how Eastern Europe is embedded in these entangled relations, the film sheds light on the role that post-socialist Eastern Europe plays in the contemporary racialized condition of Europe and the world.

Insurgent Flows begins with a black screen and blurred red lights, shakily filmed as if from a moving car, accompanied by captivating and politically charged rap and arabesque music by EsRAP. The strong opening of the film then lists harrowing facts about Fortress Europe and its militarized borders, conveying the violence and inhumanity that make up Europe. Footage of a Black Lives Matter demonstration in Barcelona in June 2020 reinforces these themes.

The camera immerses us in the protest, making us witnesses and participants, while the sequence emphasizes the global entanglements of the struggles against racist violence and the insurgent movements, linking the events in the US to the ongoing struggles in Europe and beyond.

The film is based on interviews conducted in November and December 2021.

It opens with Basha Changuerra, a promoter of the Afrofeminist social organization AfroFem Koop and a member of CNAACAT (Black, African, and Afro-descendant Community of Catalonia). She talks about the decisive moment of Lucrecia Pérez's assassination in 1992, which galvanized collective political commitment against anti-Black racism in Spain. She emphasizes the heterogeneity of worldviews within the Black, African, and Afro-descendant communities and describes the need to move from "cancerous Western individualism" to the articulation of a Black political subject and finally to collective action against White supremacy.

The film cuts to Danijela Almesberger, coordinator of the Lesbian Organization Rijeka – LORI, which was founded in Croatia in 2000. Almesberger talks about the challenges facing the LGBTIQ+ movement in Croatia, the former Yugoslavia, and Europe, and points to the troubling rise in intolerance towards LGBTIQ+. Almesberger explains that right-wing conservative actors exploit social prejudices against LGBTIQ+ for political purposes, diverting attention from failures to tackle social problems, rising inequalities, and attacks on human rights and democracy. Ultimately, she arrives at what the film presents to us as insurgent flows, when she claims that we need to radically rethink social structures and fight together instead of fighting separate battles.

Nat Raha, a Scottish-based poet and activist, and scholar in the queer/trans* field, takes a nuanced perspective to the historical reification of sexual desire. Her argument that capitalist cultures promote certain sexual subjects – primarily white, cisgender, heterosexual individuals – while marginalizing others, underscores the intersection of cultural and economic forces in shaping social norms. For Raha, the potential for transgression lies in everyday practices: "It comes from bodies, it comes from practices, it comes from everyday life."

From Raha's exploration of cultural production, the film turns to Bogdan Popa, who questions technology. Popa, a post-doctoral researcher at the Department of Literature and Cultural Studies Transylvania University of Braşov, criticizes that although some view technology through the lens of techno-feudalism or post-Marxist cognitive exploitation, these perspectives overlook the historical context of class struggles and geopolitical regimes. Using Jordan Peele's 2017 film *Get Out* as a metaphor, Popa claims that there is a pervasive sense that one's body is not one's own, comparable to the "sunken place" in the movie. He contrasts this to his experience of growing up in communist Romania and feeling part of a collective – a feeling that has disappeared. Popa believes that the current feeling of immobility, which is exploited by the right through conspiracy theories, can be transformed.

Aigul Hakimova, an activist from Slovenia, brings the conversation back to the reality of migration and asylum. She talks about her involvement in the movement for the rights of the "Erased" in Slovenia, a group of more than 25.000 people who were deprived of their legal status in 1992 after the country declared its independence. Hakimova gives insights into her work with the self-organized migrant initiative Infokolpa and talks about violence at the borders and the failure of the Dublin Agreement. The vulnerability of the refugee movement makes it "maybe the bravest, strongest, best movement for struggle," Hakimova explains, after emphasizing the importance of collective struggle "from the margins," perhaps describing a direction from which the traces of insurgency should flow into the film.

Hakimova is followed by prominent scholar Ruth Wilson Gilmore, who discusses the

institutions of carceral geographies, emphasizing borders, normative sexual regimes, and racial hierarchies, all of which reinforce inequality under capitalism. Gilmore describes how the carceral system in the US creates harmful regimes of separation between "innocent" and "non-innocent," and perpetuates organized violence against the latter. Abolitionists, she explains, seek to dismantle these structures by addressing how organized violence leads to disorganized violence and harm. The central question that arises is how to dismantle the regimes of separation to create an abolitionist geography.

From the US, the film turns our attention back to Eastern Europe and turns to Piro Rexhepi, whose research focuses on decoloniality, sexuality and Islam in the post-socialist, post- Yugoslavian context. Rexhepi emphasizes how anti-Muslim racism intersects with homonationalism, particularly in Muslim-majority contexts such as Bosnia, Kosovo and Macedonia, but ultimately in all post-socialist spaces. He describes how homonationalist discourses function in Eastern Europe, where homophobia is widespread across the region, but is selectively framed as primarily an issue of religious fundamentalism in Muslim majority contexts. This discourse forces citizens of Muslim-majority countries to identify as secular and reinforces a racialized divide between "White, secular, European Muslims" and racialized, othered, supposedly "radical" Muslim refugees. This process, he argues, reinforces the mentality of a carceral state and perpetuates inequalities.

Decolonial thinker Ramón Grosfoguel points to the epistemic extractivism and racism of Western thinkers who appropriate ideas from Black Marxist traditions without recognition. He emphasizes the need for epistemic justice to recognize the contributions of Black Marxists and notes how concepts such as "intersectionality" have been misappropriated, whitewashed, and stripped of their original radical meaning. When asked by filmmaker Marina Gržinić where he sees the potential for insurrectionary movements, Grosfoguel answers without hesitation: "It is happening as we speak!" he says, identifying insurgent politics in anti- imperialist and Indigenous movements in Latin America, Africa, but also in Western contexts.

Nat Raha intervenes once again calling for a political vision that focuses on the material interests and realities of the most marginalized, such as migrants, precarious trans people, and sex workers. Ruth Wilson Gilmore closes the film by emphasizing the need to think with complexity and act through consciousness. She argues for an unbounded vision of service that transcends limited political identities and group-differentiated vulnerabilities, a vision she recognizes in numerous decolonial movements.

In sum, this film masterfully navigates the intricate web of historical and contemporary entanglements that shape our world, exposing the pervasive and entangled state of capitalism, sexual regimes, extractivism, coloniality, Islamophobia, racism, and more. The critical insights of the aforementioned thinkers emphasize the need to fight together for a utopian future based on trans*decolonial and Black Marxist approaches. Finally, the film examines how theoretical concepts travel.

Insurgent Flows argues for a radical, political vision that transcends individual and group identities, and challenges us to act with consciousness and complexity if there is to be a future at all.