



TOURISM SECURITY-SAFETY AND
POST CONFLICT DESTINATIONS

OF TOURISTS AND VAGABONDS IN THE GLOBAL SOUTH

Marginality and Tourism in Buenos Aires City

MAXIMILIANO E. KORSTANJE



Of Tourists and Vagabonds in the Global South

Of Tourists and Vagabonds in the Global South is a thought-provoking exploration of the intricate relationship between mobility, privilege, and the spaces we occupy. Set in the vibrant yet unequal landscape of Buenos Aires, this work delves into the hidden intersections of desperation and leisure, challenging our understanding of concepts like “non-places” and the stark division between “tourists” and “vagabonds.” With a keen eye, it investigates the unsettling fascination with poverty and how safety-obsessed tourism policies can inadvertently exacerbate the marginalization of those already struggling. Prepare to have your perceptions of mobility, privilege, and the urban experience profoundly reshaped.

– **Babu George, PhD, Professor, Alcorn State University**

TOURISM SECURITY-SAFETY AND POST CONFLICT DESTINATIONS

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BY

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United Kingdom – North America – Japan – India – Malaysia – China

Emerald Publishing Limited
Emerald Publishing, Floor 5, Northspring, 21-23 Wellington Street, Leeds LS1 4DL

First edition 2024

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British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN: 978-1-83608-045-9 (Print)

ISBN: 978-1-83608-044-2 (Online)

ISBN: 978-1-83608-046-6 (Epub)



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Contents

Foreword	<i>ix</i>
An Introduction to Poverty Tourism and Homeless Tours	<i>1</i>
Chapter 1 Poverty as a Commodity, Poverty as an Attraction	<i>17</i>
Chapter 2 Tourism Safety-Security	<i>35</i>
Chapter 3 Of Tourists and Vagabonds	<i>49</i>
Chapter 4 The Essence of Non-places in Super-Modernity	<i>63</i>
Chapter 5 The Game of Have and Have-Nots	<i>79</i>
Chapter 6 Tourists, Vagabonds, Locals, and Strangers as City-Dwellers	<i>99</i>
Conclusion: The Dreamers and Dark Tourists, a New Solution Toward an Integrated Planning or the Perpetuation of Exclusion?	<i>113</i>
Index	<i>117</i>

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Foreword

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The vagabond has been one of the most emblematic figures of urban modernity in European and postcolonial social theory. Zygmunt Bauman's famous essay has certainly amplified the symbolic fields which a vagabond would not be allowed to reside, and yet always entered and/or resided illicitly, like an "intruder" or "pest" that is hard to get rid of. Bauman's work poetically relays what has always been an aspect of the word's semantic ambiguity: from the Latin verb *vagary*, meaning to wander, the Latin-French conflation of *vagabundus* came to be in a border-obsessed modernity synonymous with transgression *qua* criminal intention to dis-order social life. The semantic continuity from transgression to crime bears the mark (and wound) of European modernity's civilizing process *par excellence*: the replacement of anarchic tribalism with the power of the state to nominate fields of life and death. Originating in the officialdoms of the nation-state and its administrative networks, but now also extended to the risk and security projects of independent business, the rejective, if not abjective discourse of vagabondage hides an unsettling constant: not only is the "pest" part of the genetic mechanisms of the "ecosystems" that it allegedly disrupts and threatens (the nation, the ordered city, and an axiologically ridden logic of stratification, with the middle class and the superrich occupying higher honorary positions in it), but it is also, in fact essential for their signifiatory recognition, self-knowledge and systemic survival. Reiterating some familiar posthumanist conclusions regarding the continuity between nature and culture, this symbiosis between filth, displacement, declassification and nonbelonging, and order, cleanliness, and progress, also reveals that the vagabond's genesis may not be modern at all but part and parcel of planetary anthropogenesis long before capitalism and urbanization.

In this book, which advances a perspectival analysis of critical undertones, Maximiliano Korstanje explores some key axiomatic facets of "vagabondage," by ethnographically situating the modern vagabond in the urban landscapes of Buenos Aires. Perspectival discourse is a classificatory tool, so in this book, Bauman's reflections are reinterpreted into a more specific critical program to explore the realities of "contested urbanism," in which zoning, segregation, and policing take precedence over compassion, conviviality, and affirmative action against inequality. The book's thesis aligns with Korstanje's previous research on security and risk as mechanisms of governance and control in the hypermobile

spaces of tourism and consumption. The idea is to geolocate an abstract idea: to rehumanize what we tend to plunge into the dark corners of any phantasmagoria, any City of Lights. Through snapshots of *activities* associated with the “social malaise” of homelessness and poverty, and of *profiles* of marginality embedded in these phantasmatic ecologies of the city, Korstanje attempts to recraft the spatial, temporal, and phenomenological coordinates of what Bauman originally introduced in social theory as an ideal-typical variation of (im)mobility. The latter word game (*im*-mobility) is in fact a language game of analytical depth, which is already implicit in Korstanje’s work: socially fixed and marginalized, but also often politically persecuted, institutionally displaced, and stripped of their citizenship rights, the urban vagabond has become a *sine qua non* “variable” in the formation of a binary analytical model in social analysis. The vagabond’s juxtaposition with tourist and business subjects, privileged urban residents in gated communities, but also even the consumers of cinematic spectacles themed by poverty, sketches a neo-Weberian analogue of what means to be fully and unquestionably recognized as a human subject.

The project proceeds in bold strokes to tell a visually enhanced critical story about our contemporary urban condition – of alienation, mobility, ecological rationalization, and affective (dis)engagement with those human populations law interpellates as “others.” I trust that the readers of this book will enjoy delving into its different chapters and sections, which are dedicated to relevant critical literature reviews, social-theoretical deliberations and ethnographic contextualization of the phenomenon that their author develops in equal stead.

An Introduction to Poverty Tourism and Homeless Tours

Abstract

Since the publication of Bauman's seminal book *Tourists and Vagabonds: Heroes and Victims of Postmodernity*, sociologists and particularly social scientists have further interrogated the influence of globalization, and mobility culture in tourism consumption. Bauman offers a fertile ground to discuss the production of material asymmetries among classes. The present book continues this discussion with a special focus on Buenos Aires City, Argentina. Chapters integrating this book give a snapshot revolving around the convergence of social marginality, and the tourist experience. In this introductory section, I introduce readers to the complexity of the colonial period as well as the role played by slavery as a cheap manpower. Here I posed not only the main questions that guided the present book but also the intersection between slavery and poverty in global capitalism. At the same time, I place the question of homeless tours into the critical lens of scrutiny.

Keywords: Colonial period; colonial voyage; slavery; poverty; homeless tours

Introduction

Zygmunt Bauman's metaphor *Tourists and Vagabonds* has widely resonated in the sociological constellations of English-speaking countries. In his text, he argues convincingly that global postmodernity has resulted in the separation of two classes, the tourists who are eternal strangers in the visited sites, and vagabonds who as wanderers move by nostalgia. Vagabonds move always based on the sentiment of returning to a lost home (Bauman, 1996). This book borrows Bauman's metaphor to describe a situation common in Buenos Aires City. The conflictive intersection of tourists and homeless persons, most of them dwelling at airports, transport hubs, bus stations, or even nearby luxury hotels – so to speak in spaces that Marc Augé dubbed as *non-places*. This particularly generated a big problem for local authorities and

Of *Tourists and Vagabonds in the Global South*, 1–16

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doi:[10.1108/978-1-83608-044-220241001](https://doi.org/10.1108/978-1-83608-044-220241001)

2 *Of Tourists and Vagabonds in the Global South*

policy makers. Some studies have alerted that homeless communities – unless organized – should harm not only the destination organic image but also compromise the tourists' security (Bae, 2023; Seo et al., 2021; Thomas et al., 2021). Having said this, it is vital to build a conceptual dialog between Zygmunt Bauman (and his notion of economic exclusion) and Marc Augé (and the eradication of space-time in non-places). This begs a set of interesting questions this book intends to unravel:

Is homelessness a continuation of colonial slavery? Is tourism perpetuating the colonial center-periphery dependency? What are the epistemological borders of places and non-places? Are Bauman's categories (tourists-vagabonds) enough to be empirically applied in a fieldwork? How do policy makers and the tourist professionals understand homeless tours and its realities? May we speak about a homeless invasion or it is an ethnocentric narrative? What are the weaknesses and limitations of safety-security paradigm today? Why is nowadays poverty or pauperism a criterion of attraction for tourists in the Global North?, are non-places being transformed in places by the advance of homeless people?

Although this editorial project is mainly oriented to be read by professional sociologists or philosophers, I avoided any type of jargon to be accessible to other readerships as well as pre- and post-graduate students coming from different sub-disciplines. This seems to be one of the most challenging aspects this book wants to cover, how to pass a complex theory to explain a reality in the mega city in the Global South – without falling out in simplifications. Our argumentation, far from starting with an ethnocentric discourse or class-centric classification, traverses on the different fields that very well include cultural studies, neo-colonial discourse, marginality, inter-class conflict, as well as tourism consumption and cultural resentment.

As the previous backdrop, this introductory chapter interrogates the question of enslavement, European expansion, and the rise of poverty in global urban areas. The question of poverty, as well as the ghettoization process suffered by some infra-class, can be explained in sync with the touristification of the world (Freire-Medeiros, 2014; Rolfes, 2010; Tzanelli, 2018). The question of marginality and tourist attraction appears to be inextricably intertwined, at least in the core of literature. As Matilde Azcarate puts it, the tourism industry has been successfully expanded by the combination of two factors, real-estate speculation and the segregation of the local population from strategic areas. Per her viewpoint, tourism recreates the conditions for a *bubble model* where interactions with local others are neglected (Azcarate, 2020). The opposite is equally true, marginality, poverty, and suffering can be marketed and sold as unique experiences to first-world tourists – who are culturally disgusted by their societies. Needless to say, the quest for outstanding experience may put foreign tourists in jeopardy (Lisle, 2007; Tzanelli & Korstanje, 2016).

Let's return to the organization of (dark) tours in zones of extreme poverty and marginalization. Tourism poverty or slumming represents a novel phenomenon that began to be discussed in the literature. One of its contradictions rests on the

fact poverty is commoditized as a product – instead of being ultimately eradicated (Dyson, 2012; Freire-Medeiros, 2014; Frenzel et al., 2012; Nisbett, 2017). Malte Steinbrink (2016) offers an interesting description of modern slum (poverty) tourism in global capitalism. The controversy is simply given by the fact slum tourism is depicted as a social malady of the Global South, even if it originated in the UK and global North – in the mid of mid-19th century or Victorian London. Tourism keeps a capacity for transformation while standardizing long-standing adscriptions to reproduce new meanings. If the slum is a place of poverty, slumming replicates its conditions to an expanded area, as the author adheres. In view of this, a short review of slumming history traces us back to the UK. Victorian London was situated as the epicenter of slum tourism, in which case the Anglican discourse dealt with poverty. As Steinbrink goes on to write:

London's rapid growth resulted in the fact that its inhabitants no longer knew every part of their city from personal experience. An 'imaginative geography' of the city thus emerged in parallel with the clear spatial separation between the rich and the poor. From the viewpoint of the top of the vertical hierarchy of London's social structure, the slums of the East End represented the dark 'abyss'. One needs only take a glance at Peter Keating's collection of social reports. (Steinbrink, 2016, p. 219)

At the time, these slums attracted a rising number of tourists and visitors coming from middle-class England. Their main motivation was to be in contact with the "unknown Other" (p. 221), a cultural mainstream value coined by colonialism in former centuries. For a moment, Steinbrink speaks to us of a new global order where the global Slum is culturally constructed and imposed as an allegory to commoditize poverty (Steinbrink, 2016). In a nutshell, per the author, the ethnic categorization of the stranger, the slum-dweller, or simply the stranger, leads to an unspeakable legitimization of the socio-economic background that created the interclass disparities. The culturalization of poverty bodes well with the replication of poverty tourism (Steinbrink, 2016; Steinbrink & Voshage, 2021).

Even if I agree with this conception, no less true seems to be that despite the over-abundance of studies focusing on slum tourism, less attention was given to an outcast class known as homeless persons, or beggars and their interaction with first-world tourists in cities of the global South. To fill the gap, the present book concentrates efforts (in the successive chapters) on discussing in-depth Zygmunt Bauman and Marc Augé's contributions. In addition, I offer a historical reading revolving around the origins of enslavement, colonial expansion, as well as the consolidation of inter-class conflict in modern capitalist society. Of course, even if this review is not exhaustive, it gives a snapshot to readers of how the next chapters are articulated. Each chapter can be read separately but they are integrated into a common-shared thread argument. The capitalist expansion has created untrammelled changes in daily life and what anthropologists and ethnographers subbed as the *problem of the alterity*. If the COVID-19 pandemic

4 *Of Tourists and Vagabonds in the Global South*

showed something important, it evinces the crisis of sense or the crisis of Hospitality in the West. The problems of dealing with strangers – at the borderlands – are not pretty different from the regulation of homeless people in the core of urban (tourist) cities. This argument coincides with my previous works in the fields of cultural studies, the thanatopic tradition, terrorism, mobilities, and the COVID-19 pandemic (Korstanje, 2016, 2018a, 2018b, 2019; Korstanje & George, 2021).

How to Read the Present Project?

Over the years, development theory has enthralled the idea that developed (rich) economies should accompany the irreversible growth of developing (poor) economies. This conceptual paradigm aligned with the thesis-rich economies did the correct thing in embracing successfully global trade and liberal capitalism in comparison with other tagging economies (Rapley, 2013; Ros, 2001). Just after the 70s, tourism was valorized as a key driver to boost local (developing) economies worldwide. At that moment, experts dubbed this tradition as the economic-centered paradigm. The theory of development as well as the economic-centered paradigm had some problems in explaining why some poor nations failed to become developed. Indebted and financially dependent on the center, some peripheral economies deteriorated their fragile economic situation (Schéou & Southon, 2013; Southgate & Sharpley, 2002). This raises some more than pungent question: why have some nations failed in their struggle to become a developed economy? Is the international assistance compatible with the local background?

An alternative answer lays his fingers on the cultural background. This means that some countries mainly affected by corruption, civil conflict, or warfare are unable to embrace democratic institutions. The failure to be a competitive destination was mainly associated to much deep cultural incompatibility with the Western tradition (Cater, 1987; De Kadt, 1979; Tisdell, 1987). The dilemma of how poverty is commoditized and marketed as a tourist attraction occupies a central position in the first chapter. In this context, some critical voices questioned the nature of development theory as well as to what extent tourism is enough to alleviate poverty in developing cultures (Honey, 2009; Scheyvens, 2001). Henceforth, an emerging field – within tourism studies – has ignited a hot debate on the underlying conditions that poverty can be commoditized. In that instance, the development theory and economic-based paradigm have radically shifted. The literature suggests the rise of a *morbid taste* that engages with the “Other’s pain.” This curiosity for the “Other” is based on a reflective attempt to understand its society. This also explains why first-world tourists are psychologically moved to consume slumming, poverty tourism, or homeless tours. This chapter interrogates further the philosophical quandaries revolving around the potential of tourism to eradicate or potentiate poverty.

In the second chapter, I take a plunge into the waters of tourism safety-security. Most certainly, this represents the controversial chapter of the book simply because it is enmeshed in the ethnocentric discourse derived from the notion of tourism security. Here I use the term ethnocentric or Eurocentric because it has been coined in the core

of Western (colonial) tradition. Of course, I enthusiastically embrace the idea that any foreign tourist should be protected from any local threat, but tourism safety and security seem to be conceptually centered on the paradigm that the tourist is the key player in the system. The state, as well as local private stakeholders, should coordinate efforts and investments to protect tourists from the attacks of locals. Invariably this leads to a process of victimization or demonization directed against locals. This chapter acknowledges and exerts a criticism of what specialists named the bubble model which punctuates that first-world tourists should be isolated from any interaction with local people or city-dwellers for their security. The bubble model, from its inception, forbids host–guest interaction. The paradigm reminds us that high-purchasing tourists are fixed targets for local crime, above all in underdeveloped economies. As Lash & Urry put it, the world has been classified into two grids, safe and wild zones. It is also not simplistic to say that the net of experts draws a location map that indicates what zones should be visited or simply avoided (Lash & Urry, 1993). At the end of the 20th century, the figure of local crime made significant ways to a new global risk looming in urban areas: international terrorism. Today foreign embassies issue reports alerting their citizens to avoid certain destinations – considered as high risk for terrorist attacks. Beyond the discrepancies these reports have generated – some of them considered boycott ideologized instruments of control (Seyfi & Hall, 2019; Seyfi et al., 2023), less attention was given to homeless people or marginalized beggars often in interaction with transport hubs and international tourism. The present chapter fills the gap by discussing the complex interaction between tourist security and marginalization.

As mentioned, the third chapter places Bauman’s works in the foreground. At least for Bauman, the liquid modernity should be understood through the lens of a binomial model, grounded on two main figures: vagabonds and tourists. Let’s clarify to readers that Bauman acknowledges that there is a point of convergence between consumption and marginality. Per Bauman, the postmodern society is structured on an extreme social inequality expressed in the bipolar division between two classes: tourists and vagabonds. Each one is determined by a different degree of freedom of choice, which seems to be the cornerstone of postmodern life. The more freedom of choice each class showed, the higher its rank in the postmodern social hierarchy (Bauman, 1996). As Bauman eloquently observes, the social hierarchy is structured according to its ability to wait or not for instant gratification. Since geographical distances are measured by time, no less true is that there is a delayed gratification which signs “an identity-building zeal.” The symbolic archetype of the tourist appears to be conditioned by the feat of not belonging to the visited place. Tourists not only keep a certain distance from others but they dwell in two worlds they can be in and out of place at the same time. They are always protected no matter where they opt to stay. The tourist system should be seen as a bubble where tourists feel safe and of course, this bubble is constructed in a climate of happiness where some ethnic groups are silently debarred; Tourist life is a constant travel or to be “on the move,” so to speak in quest of something that is never reached. Travels resulted from individual decision-making processes that gave consumers the false idea they were in control, but once started, tourist lost their autonomy to stop the cycle. Following

6 *Of Tourists and Vagabonds in the Global South*

this, tourists become eternal wanderers. Contrariwise, even though vagabonds do have no control over their lives they live in constant (unchanged) present-time. As Bauman explains, vagabonds know very well they will not stay though they desire to stay for long in that place. The tourist basically moves because the world is attractive, but the vagabond moves because the world is unbearably inhospitable. Vagabonds go beyond their temporal home because they have no option. Marked and discriminated against as undesired “Others,” vagabonds roam in a world where their rights are neglected while their voice is systematically silenced.

The fourth chapter is complementarily reserved for the well-known French ethnographer Marc Augé, with a focus on the theory of non-places. The term was originally coined to denote all spaces of anonymity where history and tradition disappear. In consonance with Augé, a Non-place not only results from hyper-modernity but also can be conceived in opposition to an anthropological place. The non-place is also a place of no heritage, no history, and disengagement where anonymity and depersonalization prevail. As a concept, a non-place includes bus stations, airports, hotels, transport hubs, and shopping malls. As Augé eloquently notes, non-places alter radically the essence of belonging blurring the territorial borders or distinction between here and there or us and them (Augé, 1996, 2020). Globalization, which is considered a success of the capitalist system expansion, changed forever not only the epistemology of ethnography but also the host–guest encounters. This chapter centers efforts on deciphering Augé’s thesis to understand why many homeless persons are dwelling in non-places in Buenos Aires city. Although widely criticized because of his understanding of non-places, his theory has been put in dialog with Zygmunt Bauman and his metaphor of vagabonds and tourists.

The three last chapters (fifth, sixth, and seventh) give a snapshot of the outcomes obtained during my auto-ethnography conducted since 2015 to date, where I gathered abundant information (based on a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods) that describes the life of homeless people and his trajectories in Buenos Aires City. Lastly, the eighth chapter offers a fertile ground for policymakers and professional researchers interested in these types of topics.

As stated in previous chapters, social sciences have discussed the host–guest relation from many theoretical lenses and perspectives. Violence as well as local crime has been studied as one of the major risks concerning tourism security. Anyway, less attention was given to homeless people and their interaction with foreign or local tourists. Globalization has winners and losers, in which case, as noted, thousands of persons are excluded from the formal labor marketplace or the economic system year by year. There is an urban underclass formed by those who have been excluded from the economic system. What is more important, such an underclass situates nearby luxury hotels and tourist destinations creating serious contradictions or zones of disputes. These contradictions have been approached by different sociologists since the turn of the 20th century. The question of sustainability, as well as the idea of liveable cities, and the efficient organization of the city, have occupied a central position in the academic debate, above all after the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the metaphor of vagabonds and tourists, we give a snapshot of the problem of homelessness in Buenos Aires

City and its effects on the tourism industry. Unlike other English-speaking countries where the cities are actively organized by the state, Buenos Aires city lacks a planned program to regulate and relocate homeless people. They dwell in non-places nearby tourists sleeping in the streets near luxury hotels (but for sure escaping any planning or governmental control). Some police reports, as well as foreign embassies, have alerted their citizens to avoid certain zones of the city or not leaving the hotel by the night. Tourists are victims of attacks or robberies in certain contexts. Unlike in English-speaking nations (like the US) where vagabonds are strictly monitored – if not reallocated – in Buenos Aires city Police do not endorse any type of relocations without their consent. The current legal background protects homeless people from being located in other houses or places without their consent. Additionally, the lack of a clear homelessness policy or a planning urban space program is making things more difficult for the city. In the years to come, the complexity between homelessness and tourism should continue to enrich the current policymakers' design toward more sustainable cities. Having said this, it is important not to lose sight of the fact I cannot reach a clear consensus on poverty tourism without delving into a short review of colonialism and enslavement. The point will be treated in the next section.

Discussing Enslavement

The history of enslavement seems not to be easy to detach in a couple of lines or a chapter. Anyway, the effort has been worthwhile. From immemorial times, Empires have been built with the slaves' blood. Anthropologically speaking, enslavement or slavery should be defined as an economic system of ownership of a person, especially dedicated to labor for their masters. Slavery is at best not only a form of exploitation legally accepted but also the enslaved person becomes a property. In history, enslavement happened after a military defeat, becoming indebted, or after committing a crime, without mentioning the European expansion that looked for a cheaper workforce (Walvin, 2007). Among all forms of enslavement, I will delve into European enslavement, a process that expatriated millions of African workers to the Americas. While Europe was pioneering and prospering in the Age of Reason and Enlightenment, European merchants took off to enslave the African continent (Logan, 2022; Mosterman, 2021). Geopolitically speaking, two nations scrambled to control the seas and the future of the Americas, the Kingdoms of Portugal and Spain. Since the 15th century, Spain and Portugal recurred to the Atlantic Slave trade to transform the agricultural plantations of the Americas. In successive centuries, this practice was continued by other European powers such as France, England, Belgium, and the Netherlands. Patrick Manning, a well-renowned expert in the field, alerts that the Atlantic Slave trade situated Africans as an overwhelming majority of slaves for the 19th century. European slaveholders – helped by local tribes who practiced slavery in their traditions over centuries – saw in slaves a lucrative trade supported by the increase of labor demand in the Americas. Ultimately, slave abolition took place in different moments for the European countries (Manning, 1983, 1990).

Although in the UK slavery was forbidden until 1833 (Slavery Abolition Act 1833) in the US it was a common practice in the South until *The Civil War*. In her seminal book entitled *The American Kaleidoscope: Race, Ethnicity and Civic Culture*, Lawrence Fuchs calls attention to the role of African slaves in the configuration of American civility and civic culture. At a closer look, the European mass migration that occurred during 19 and 20th centuries, radically shifted American society. The already existent British tradition (blood) was shaken up by migrants coming from different European countries. To re-organize all these new ethnicities into one coherent voice, the US demonized African Americans as an underclass. Without any doubt, the acceptance of European migrants was coincident with the systematic exclusion and discrimination of hapless African Americans. After further discussion, Fuchs' thesis illustrates to readers the following axiom: society is frequently structured on an invisible hierarchy where cohesion is in sync with marginalization. At the time, the US accepted the European newcomers African Americans had been marginalized to achieve social cohesion (scapegoat process).

With the benefits of hindsight, the capitalist system, which emerged in the middle of industrialism, has certainly liberated the means of production as well as the workforce while prohibiting enslavement. As a precondition, the capitalist system expanded through a combination of factors which include technological breakthroughs, as well as the European mass migration that populated the US, Australia, and South America over the 19th and 20th centuries (Harman & Brenner, 2006; Prak, 2005; Wood, 2002). As Walter Benn Michaels (1987) notes, one of the dilemmas of capitalism rested on the fact that it liberated the enslaved workforce, putting in the question of freedom or free choice the future of society. In the freedom of contract, workers can be bought and sold and exchanged as a mere commodity. Following this, the term poverty denotes all those who fail to be successfully exchanged.

Consumption and Poverty in Global Capitalism

Much has been written on the complex connection between poverty, marginality, and global capitalism. Anyway, one of the film plots that better illustrates this connection is *Avatar*. This film is cast in a futurist dystopian world (dated 2154). Mankind has depleted all natural resources of earth on the brink of what experts dubbed as ecocide. The RDA (the Resources Development Administration) located a moon in the Alpha Centauri star system. The moon offers an inhospitable atmosphere but humans may very well dwell in this planet using *Avatars*, or blue-skinned sapient humanoids that live in harmony with the natural environment. Once his identical twin is killed during a robbery attempt, paraplegic Marine Jake Sully is delivered to Pandora. This plot reflects not only the internal material asymmetries culturally inherited into global capitalism but also how commercial expansion rests on the philosophical contradiction between haves and have-nots. *Avatar* offers a good example discussed by several philosophers in the past. However, the contradiction cannot be understood or grasped without