

Desire and Class: The Knowledge Industry in the Wake of Poststructuralism*

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**"Knowledge Will Tear apart
the Chains of Slavery"**

A recent U.N. study--The Human Development Report of 1996, compiled by the U.N. Development Program-- finds that, worldwide, "the wealthiest and poorest people--both within and among countries--are living in increasingly separate worlds" (Crossette A1). This finding speaks to the ongoing relevance of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels' argument of 1847 that "Society as a whole is more and more splitting up into two great hostile camps, into two great classes directly facing each other: Bourgeoisie and Proletariat" (*The Communist Manifesto* 80). The finding also points to the ongoing and increasing necessity of enabling proletariat class consciousness through the "ruthless criticism of everything existing." This criticism is the practice of historical materialist critique which abstracts from what is manifest in order both to expose the politics that disable revolutionary praxis; and to produce reliable knowledge of the objective forces of

production, those involving both the revolutionizing of the means of production as well as the capitalist class practices of appropriation of labor power "freely" sold by the proletariat--but under conditions of private ownership of socially produced property that subject any "freedom" to the "force" of capital (Marx *Capital* vol. 1 235). These objective but also socially (re)produced forces constitute the outside of culture and its appearances, which they determine decisively. Because they are forces historically (re)produced through the contradictory social totality in which all people are divided into two classes, they cannot be transformed through the discourses and their attendant individual and group discursive practices currently in dominance as those which provide the means for achieving a more equitable society--articulation, performativity, negotiation, dialogue and conversation. They can only be transformed through proletariat class praxis enabled by the dialectical movement between production, through historical materialist critique,

of reliable knowledge of the objective forces of the social totality, and action on those forces that is both organized and principled with regard to the knowledge produced about those forces. It is only this *revolutionary* praxis that can transform the forces which determine what becomes manifest in and as culture into forces that end class society and inaugurate what the forces themselves not only enable as a possibility but also make historically and materially necessary: communism.

Of course, in the regime of post-ality, which "announc[es] the arrival of a new society which is post-production, post-labor, post-ideology, post-white and post-capitalist" (Zavarzadeh "Post-ality" 1), all of the concepts necessary for both effective, organized (systemic) revolutionary praxis and the historical materialist critique that contributes to it--labor, objective forces of production, dialectics, ideology, class--are displaced by tropes of corporeal and libidinal flows--post-Althusserian overdetermination; dialogics; representation; status; and, above all, desire. Class itself, when used at all, is deployed as a trope descriptive of status. While the displacement of such concepts is widely regarded by those of the post-al left as necessary to ensure that no social movement is regarded as "subordinate" to the proletariat movement (e.g., Aronowitz *The Death* 196; Butler "Merely" 268), the fight against what the post-al left posits as the "hierarchization" (Butler "Merely" 270) of left movements by "leftist orthodoxy" (Butler 268) actually registers a profound and capitalist-class interested resistance on the part of what I will theorize there as middle-class fraction knowledge workers to allowing the class politics of knowledge production to surface within the practices of knowledge production. The displacement of revolutionary concepts is nothing less than the attempt, on the part of a middle-class fraction increasingly disaggregated by "global capitalism," to bloc(k) the development of revolutionary theory--for "without a revolutionary theory there can be no revolutionary movement" (Lenin *What Is to Be Done?* 28), and, as I will argue, what the post-al middle-class fraction is historically determined to reject is revolution. At its core, that is, the displacement of revolutionary concepts is a profound and *opportunist* resistance to enabling proletariat class consciousness to develop. It is a capitalist-class interested resistance, above all, to *organizing* the proletariat for the revolution that will overthrow the class society whose "asymmetries" of "distribution" the middle-class fraction professes can be equitably "reformed"--through ethical instruction, education in skills, radical democracy, . . . international free trade zone treaties, . . . updating the policies of the International Monetary Foundation, . . .--in short, through any means except through abolition of private property, property which many of that fraction struggle to obtain, regarding it as their "right" to do so. Both the displacement of revolutionary concepts with post-al tropes, as well as this historically produced, capitalist class-interested "absence" of revolutionary concepts and theory and what is at stake in its maintenance, are the focus of this critique.

I

The Labor Aristocracy, the Disaggregation of the "Middle Class(es)," and the Promotion of Polyarchy

The stark manifestation of the two-class international division of labor emerges as an effect of the revolutionizing of the forces of production that responds, through capitalist

class practices of global corporate centralization, to the most recent crisis of capitalism, that which spanned the 1970s and early 1980s. Due to a number of national and international manifestations of the contradictory movement of the forces of production--chief among them market saturation of consumer goods in the 24 post-World War II industrialized countries and increasing market competition from the "newly industrializing countries" (NICS)--that crisis drove down profit in the world's most affluent industrialized countries (including the U.S., Canada, Japan, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, and the Western European nations). For example, while in 1965 U.S. corporate profits were at a "postwar high of 10 percent," "by the 1970s corporate profit had shrunk to less than 6 percent" (Rifkin 90). The capitalist class response to this most recent crisis has made the two-class international division of labor manifest through three corporate practices: "lean production," which employs a less specialized workforce in the production of easy-to-assemble products produced "just in time" so as to lower warehousing and financing overhead; "reengineering," which combines "the skills of specialist clerks and middle managers into software packages that are attached to desktop computers," in the process collapsing layers of service workers such that many lose their jobs; and "outsourcing," the practice of "contracting out" all possible production to non-union employees of "smaller, independent producers, whose wage costs will be lower" than that of the large industrial corporation (Head 47-48). All of these are imperialist practices, where imperialism is understood as Lenin theorized it, as "that stage of [capitalist] development in which the dominance of monopolies and finance capital has established itself; in which the export of capital has acquired pronounced importance; in which the division of the world among the international trusts has begun; in which the division of all territories of the globe among the great capitalist powers has been completed" (*Imperialism* 89). The practices of imperialism aim not to produce and distribute commodities in a more efficient and equitable manner but, above all, to produce greater and greater quantities of surplus-value for the capitalist class. As Marx argues, "Production of surplus-value is the absolute law of this mode of production" (*Capital* vol. 1 618). The effects of these practices through which the capitalist class shapes the objective world to its interests in profit accumulation are increasingly manifest in the lives of workers everywhere. Workers are subject to the loss of stability in previously stable employment sectors (engineering, plant management, . . . academia); to the intensification of exploitation; to the poverty, illness, and death that result not only from unemployment but also from employment that does not provide a living wage; and to, as William I. Robinson argues, the penetration of commodification into "the intimate private spheres of community, family, and culture," such that "none of the old pre-commodity spheres provide a protective shield from the alienation of capitalism" (Robinson "Globalization" 15).

However, despite these increasing and increasingly bald manifestations of the binary division of labor along international lines, and the growing class consciousness of the capitalist class reflected by these manifestations, proletariat class consciousness--consciousness that is revolutionary with regard to capitalism--is sporadic and isolate; in a word, it is unorganized as proletariat class consciousness. That proletariat class consciousness and action are not organized for revolution makes both embryonic proletariat consciousness and action easily destroyed or recuperable by the capitalist

class. Instead of class consciousness and an international proletariat, there have arisen a great many cultural forms of struggle or social movements. These movements constitute what is widely regarded to be "the left." It is, however, a "left" that does not organize, in a systemic, principled manner, to struggle against the class conscious and highly organized corporate practices of the capitalist class that disaggregate the working class through extended and intensified imperialist corporate practices and produce it as a constellation of relatively autonomous movements, all readily recuperable.

Why not? Why does the "left" not actively organize as the proletariat movement, "the self-conscious, independent movement of the immense majority, in the interest of the immense majority" (*The Communist Manifesto* 92)? This question is a crucial one to ask, in particular since many movements arise from explicit knowledge of and in explicit opposition to exploitative practices. From the protest of capitalist practices by Malaysian factory women who claim spirit possession in order to stop factory production (Ong) to the protest by Yale students for the right to unionize, social movements around the globe increasingly register an awareness, if embryonic, that inequitable practices involve capitalist practices of exploitation. Yet these movements do not work in organized solidarity with one another against the diverse tactics of capitalism they encounter. Of course, one reason for this ongoing condition of "relative autonomy" of social movements from one another is that ideology has responded to the recent capitalist crisis as it has to all capitalist crises: it works to mask the core contradiction of the forces of production by re-presenting the historically produced *effects* of the contradiction--social differences and the practices that maintain and contest them--not only as natural and inevitable, but also as the motivating force of the social. However, this must not simply be asserted but historicized in relation to both the forty-year retreat by "left" knowledge workers from the classical Marxist binary concept of class and their simultaneous development and production of knowledges and social analyses which all dismiss class and the forces of production as determinant of the social, substituting for them a radical heterogeneity that is understood not to be motivated by labor and human need but rather by the inspiration of desire. For it is this retreat from class and advocacy of difference as autonomous from labor that has in fact accompanied, and in effect if not by design *enabled*, the international division of all people into two classes. It has enabled that division to proceed--despite the fact that the theorists call themselves "left"--precisely by displacing the Marxist theory of class that enables the development of an organized proletariat movement for transformation. Under the sign of the "left," post-al theorists actively augment the work of ideology.

These theorists are the knowledge workers of the Knowledge Industry, whose emergence with modern industry Marx theorizes, though does not name, in the "Afterword to the Second German Edition" of *Capital*, volume 1: "In France and in England the bourgeoisie had conquered political power. Thenceforth, the class-struggle, practically as well as theoretically, took on more and more outspoken and threatening forms. It sounded the knell of scientific bourgeois economy. It was thenceforth no longer a question, whether this theorem or that was true, but whether it was useful to capital or harmful, expedient or inexpedient, politically dangerous or not. In place of disinterested inquirers, there were hired prize-fighters; in place of genuine scientific research, the bad

conscience and the evil intent of apologetic" (15). Today, the knowledge workers of the Knowledge Industry--among them are Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, and Stanley Aronowitz--actively *oppose* the organization of all workers into a proletariat class-conscious movement and in fact *refuse* to organize social movements into a revolutionary left on the basis that to do so is "to impose unity upon. . . [them] from the outside" (Butler "Merely" 270). Left theorists must not "impose" such "unity," for to do so would be a violent attempt to halt that which "makes movements possible," "*the self-difference of movement itself*" (Butler "Merely" 269). Arguing that any such effort "to impose unity. . . from the outside will be rejected. . . as a form of vanguardism dedicated to the production of hierarchy and dissension, producing the very fact that it asserts is coming from outside itself" (Butler "Merely" 270), the knowledge workers who contest what they have called the "resurgence of leftist orthodoxy" (Butler "Merely" 268)--their code word for revolutionary knowledges and praxis--and who work to suppress vanguard knowledges and practices because they would "halt" "movement" through organization, in fact actively organize social movements for use by the capitalist class in the production of profit. Their legitimation of a plethora of movements as fundamentally discrete enables the imperialist practice that Robinson calls the "promotion of polyarchy."

Robinson argues that a core way by which the transfer of wealth from the working to the capitalist class has been achieved throughout the 1990s was through a new aspect of U.S. foreign policy "synchronized with. . . military intervention," the policy of "promoting polyarchy" (100). Polyarchy is "elite minority rule and socioeconomic inequalities alongside formal political freedom and elections involving universal suffrage" (356). The "*modus operandi*" of this new political practice is "democracy promotion" (101). Backed by "the State Department, the NED [National Endowment for Democracy], or some quasi-private agency funded by the U.S. government," promoting polyarchy involves "organizing and advising mass political parties" (101) and labor organizations (102), and "penetration of the target country's media, the nurturing of women's and youth movements, and, in agrarian countries, peasant organizations" (103). Polyarchy is achieved, that is, by promoting democracy in "autonomous" social movements, and this "democracy" is then used not to unify workers to fight against the capitalist class, but to bring workers into capitalist hegemony. The polyarchy promotion "effort," for example, is not to thwart women's mobilization *per se*, but to counter the popular content of national feminist projects and to bring them under the hegemony of women from the elite and of female representatives of transnational pools in intervened countries. In a similar manner, programs targeting labor will give special emphasis to workers in internationalized manufacturing zones, and programs targeting peasants will concentrate on the agro-export sector" (104). Its general "goal is to establish and consolidate the polyarchic model of power in the intervened society, predicated on the view that direct power is deposited in institutions and exercised by those who wield influence in, or control, governmental, political, labor, social, and civic institutions. The aim is to construct in intervened countries an exact replica of the structure of power in the United States. This is done by strengthening existing political parties and other organizations identified as congenial to US interests, or by creating from scratch new organizations where ones do not already exist" (105). The erasure of class by post-al theorists and the production and legitimation of bloc(k)ed social movements through

theories of "radical heterogeneity" provide the polyarchy promotion project with the local organizations it requires for its interventions.

Knowledges and social analyses based on the theory of radical heterogeneity as the condition of possibility of the social--a theory which finds its fullest expression in the work of, for example, Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari, and Lacan--are in dominance across the spectrum of the post-al left. Radical heterogeneity is the basis of the "radical democratic" politics--fundamentally indistinguishable from the promotion of polyarchy--developed by Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe and now advocated by Stanley Aronowitz; the poststructuralist feminism of Donna Haraway and Drucilla Cornell; the queer theory of Judith Butler; the postcolonial theory of W.J.T. Mitchell and Homi Bhabha. *Why* these theories are in dominance now--but also, in light of the internationally manifest binary division of labor, why they are running up against their limits--involves the historically produced, objective class position of the knowledge workers who produce them.

These knowledge workers came to produce knowledge as members of the so-called "middle-class(es)," which burgeoned in the wake of World War II as an effect of a double move executed in the interests of the capitalist class profit motive in the core industrialized countries: an increase in imperialist practices by the industrialized countries, enabled in part by division among the "allies" of territory and resources formerly under control of Germany, Japan, and Italy; together with an increase in access to part of the greater profits (made available as a result of increased imperialism and in the form of higher wages, student loans, the GI Bill. . .) "granted" by the capitalist class to the proletariat and members of the old petty bourgeoisie. This "grant" of access was in no way the emergence of "compassionate" capitalism. Rather, it was an opportunist move that enabled greater numbers of workers from these classes to attend colleges and universities at a time when the capitalist class required the production of the knowledges and technologies that would 1.) most rapidly revolutionize the means of production and increase profit; and 2.) ease--through "crises" presented to workers at the level of the everyday and as an effect of the revolutionizing of the means the production--the production of the new subjectivities required by the revolutionized means. This last involves the production of new subjectivities required by the updated means and the relations they entail. It requires that knowledge workers produce knowledges that update the ruling ideology. These knowledges enable and naturalize a pedagogy that teaches both the reading of events as autonomous, unique crises and the "management" of them as such. Such "literacy," while requisite for workers to "get along" within capitalism because it enables the worker to make sense of her tasks and daily life and "deal" with them, is a literacy of and for the efficient production of surplus-value. It is a literacy which masks, through the teaching of the event as autonomous, its connection to class contradiction; in this way, it works to disappear the determinate cause of crises and the objective interest of the proletariat, which make it necessary for the proletariat to refuse to "manage" their crisis and instead break the fetters of capitalist social relations that produce "individual" "crises."

Robinson explains the unfolding of the class contradiction as follows:

the surpluses syphoned out of the underdeveloped regions and into the centers of the world economy, via direct mechanisms such as colonial plunder and a host of indirect mechanisms such as unequal exchange, would ameliorate in the advanced countries social contradictions germane to capital accumulation. The extraction of surpluses from the peripheral to the center regions of the world system, and the redistribution of these surpluses in the center countries via state policies, led to the emergence of a huge 'middle class' in the developed countries (what Lenin termed a 'labor aristocracy' and what modernization theorists such as S.M. Lipset assert is essential for 'democracy'), averted the civil wars which Marx predicted and Rhodes feared, and provided the social conditions for relatively stable polyarchic political systems. (347)

Through the double move of extended and intensified imperialism and the redistribution of resources in the industrialized countries, knowledge workers became deeply implicated in the production of relative surplus-value. The production of relative surplus-value "turns," as Marx argues, not on "the length of the working-day," as does absolute surplus-value, "the starting-point for the production of relative surplus-value," but "revolutionises out and out the technical processes of labour, and the composition of society" and relies on that revolutionizing of the means of production to stabilize or even shorten the working-day while nevertheless increasing productivity (*Capital* vol. 1 510). The increased implication of knowledge workers in the production of profit through production of both updated technological and ideological knowledges has opened on to the current outright privatization of knowledge production manifest now in the growth of corporate universities such as the University of Phoenix as well as the privatization of knowledge production in universities through business and university partnerships accelerated, in particular, by legislation enacted by Congress in the 1980s "which granted huge tax write-offs, along with the right to purchase patents derived from academic research, to corporations that engage in partnerships with universities" (Zaidi 52). Most crucially, however, the increased implication of knowledge workers in the production of profit inaugurated in industrialized countries what Marx and Engels in *The Communist Manifesto* term a "supplementary" class--the new petty bourgeoisie, drawn from the proletariat (108)--which serves in the main as "comprador" to the capitalist class, what the Revolutionary Marxist Collective (RMC) has called the "comprador left" ("Owning the Net: PANIC LEFT"). It bloc(k)s the very social movements whose "free flow" it so insists upon extending.

In the industrialized countries, then, there developed "supplemental" class relations integral to the production of profit and which constituted, in part, the dominant relations of production. The knowledge workers of this "supplement"--the middle-class fraction, what is commonsensically referred to as the "middle class(es) whose upper strata is (also commonsensically referred to as "elites" (e.g., Lind)--are today's "labor aristocracy." This is the group Lenin theorized, in keeping with Marx and Engels' theorization of them as a "supplement" to the capitalist class, as a "stratum of bourgeoisified workers" who are "*the real agents of the bourgeoisie in the labour movement, the labour lieutenants of the capitalist class, real channels of reformism and chauvinism*" (Preface to the French and

German Editions of *Imperialism*, 14). Since from the Marxist historical materialist theory of the social "the ruling ideas are nothing more than the ideal expression of the dominant material relationships, the dominant material relationships grasped as ideas" (Marx and Engels *The German Ideology* 64), and this class "supplementarity" became integral to those dominant material relationships, the theory of "discursive supplementarity" that emerged in the form, for example, of Derridean deconstruction, and which is the basis of dominant "left" theories that have accompanied the intensification of imperialism, is actually class supplementarity expressed as "the ideal" of "the dominant material relationships." It is this "ideal" expression of dominant relations--in which radical heterogeneity presumably unmotivated by labor and socially produced need is claimed to be the condition of possibility of society and about which I will have more to say below--which underpins at the philosophical level the retreat from the concept of class by the middle-class fraction knowledge workers constituting the labor aristocracy.

In displacing class and theorizing the condition of possibility of the social in terms of radical heterogeneity, the labor aristocracy advances a politics in which transformation is neither possible nor necessary. To take a widely influential formulation of such politics, the "radical democracy" of Laclau and Mouffe entails "forcing the myth of a rational and transparent society [communism] to recede progressively to the horizon of the social," where such a society "becomes a 'non-place,' the symbol of its own impossibility" (191). On Laclau and Mouffe's terms, this forcing back is necessary in order to "affirm" and "defend" the "moment of tension, of openness, which gives the social its essentially incomplete and precarious character" (190). In turn, this enables ongoing contestation among "a polyphony of voices, each of which constructs its own irreducible discursive identity" (191). However, in the absence of any organization for revolution, what the argument for a "polyphony of voices" amounts to is an argument for the maintenance of "what is"; for the argument enables, through a "polyphony of voices," the promotion of polyarchy by strengthening, widely disseminating, and above all, naturalizing the ruling ideology that capitalism is the most effective mode of production for producing social wealth, an ideology that refuses acknowledgment of what is now manifest: that the wealth is produced by all but appropriated for the pleasures of only a tiny minority. The argument for "radical democracy" is nothing more than the opportunist work of the middle-class fraction to preserve itself from the objective movement of the forces of production which now threaten that class. They are threatened because as Robinson argues, there are, following capitalism's most recent crisis, "no 'new frontiers,' no virgin lands for capitalist colonization and incorporation into the world system" (348). That is, there are no new sources from which to extract "surpluses" to redistribute to "the center regions of the world system"--in short, no material basis for capitalist "support" of the "middle class(es)."

By arguing for the heterogeneity of the social, the labor aristocracy bloc(k)s the development of a revolutionary proletariat movement by galvanizing and legitimating what is--the embryonic class consciousness manifested in a ubiquity of social movements--as the horizon of what can be. The post-al left dismissal of the binary concept of class and the substitution of representation for ideology it entails enables a politics through which the middle-class fraction--now disaggregated by the

transnationalization of capital and "constantly hurled down into the proletariat by the action of competition" (Marx and Engels *The Communist Manifesto* 108)-- works to preserve the "middle-class" practice of "choice" of "lifestyle" whose "supplemental" material base is steadily being eroded by the unfolding of the class contradiction that disaggregates the middle-class fraction. Sensing this disaggregation but unable to make sense of it in terms of their objective class interests--those of the proletariat from which they are drawn and into which they are now "hurled"--middle-class fraction knowledge workers' reactionary response is to reject "the language of the left." Stephen M. North does just that in his essay "Rhetoric, Responsibility, and the 'Language of the Left'." Written by a composition specialist and preceding Butler's "Merely Cultural" by seven years, the essay runs through the very same moves as does Butler's, beginning with the question of parody (North 128; Butler 266) and concluding with a refusal--prefiguring Butler's "refusal to become resubordinated to a unity that caricatures, demeans, and domesticates difference" (276-7)--to be "emplotted" by "this language of the left" (North 135). Presumably widely separated in time, subject matter, and methodology, the *sameness* of the argument for *difference* by these two theorists vividly points up the emptiness of the post-al argument to preserve difference through the rejection of class and exposes it as a middle-class fraction interested argument. North argues that while he "appreciate[s] the intent of [the] Gramscian notion concerning the role of intellectuals in . . . a struggle" to raise political consciousness in even the very limited sense argued for by Ira Shor, whose work North accurately assesses as contradictory (132; 130), he "cannot commit . . . to [its] language." This is because the hours of North's week are "spent in or on a life that I would characterize as a system-supporting, system-supported, pro-capitalist, American mainstream life. It is a life that, so far as I can tell, I would fight to defend--or at least one that, in the face of a fair number of genuine options, I keep on living. Were I to shift over, though, commit myself to the language of critical teaching--of liberatory learning, of a socially revolutionary pedagogy [sic] were I to enlist to fight in what Shor has described as the 'vast arena of culture war called education' ('Educating' 26) I would feel compelled to change that life, as well" (132). It is this middle-class fraction "lifestyle"--it is actually privilege--which he refuses to give up. Instead, he and the post-al left "fight to defend" it. By dismissing its "language," they work to suppress revolutionary theory and therefore attempt to save the middle-class fraction. Believing they can thwart the forces of history by displacing the revolutionary knowledges and practices the forces of history have called into being and now compel the proletariat to employ, comprador left knowledge workers are engaged in a desperate effort to preserve their privileges by convincing workers, and those of the "middle-class" in particular, that class contradiction can be "solved" in the cultural imaginary of discourse and through the local, discursive practices it enables. It cannot. What such opportunist, preservationist efforts will do, however, is prolong for generations the class struggle toward a classless society.

In order to reveal the extent to which the middle-class fraction resistance to revolutionary theory has made even forthrightly "Marxist" theory complicit with both "post-Marxist" theory and the post-revolutionary theories spawned by poststructuralism, I will first critique Fredric Jameson's work on postmodernism as promoting a culturalist theory of the social. The consequences of this--as I will argue through a critique of

Resnick and Wolff and Pakulski and Waters--are devastating for the development of a proletariat movement, in that such a theorization posits that the principled, reliable knowledge of the objectively produced world necessary for transformation of the social totality is neither necessary nor possible. In the remainder of the essay, I critique Jameson's abandonment of classical Marxist concepts and reliance on poststructuralist tropes; historicize that abandonment by theorizing it as an effect of the unfolding of the class contradiction; and argue for the politico-theoretical effectivity of classical Marxist concepts for exposing, explaining, confronting and transforming the suffocating social relations of capitalism.

II

The Knowledge Industry: Enculturating Class, Occulting Revolutionary Knowledge(s)

In "The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" Fredric Jameson argues that "we must go on to affirm that the dissolution of an autonomous sphere of culture is . . . to be imagined in terms of an explosion: a prodigious expansion of culture throughout the social realm, to the point at which everything in our social life--from economic value and state power to practices and to the very structure of the psyche itself--can be said to have become 'cultural' in some original and yet untheorized sense" (48; all references, unless otherwise noted, are to this essay). Jameson insists that this "postmodern. . . space is not merely a cultural ideology or fantasy but has genuine historical (and socioeconomic) reality as a third great original expansion of capitalism around the globe" (49). Elsewhere, he works to distance his theorization of the postmodern from those of the avatars of post- and anti-Marxist postmodern--Tafuri and Lyotard in particular--by arguing that their work emerges from discourses that are "implicitly, and more openly at certain strategic moments, rewritable in terms of a post-Marxism which at length become indistinguishable from anti-Marxism proper" ("Ideology" 61). The implication is that Jameson's own work is not so "open" to post- and anti-Marxist "rewritings." However, as Brian Palmer, among others, has argued, "for all of his Marxist, historical materialist intention, Jameson. . . has been unable to break out of the enclosures of the contemporary scene of critical theory" (43; see also Ebert 139-45; Montag; Weber). In fact, Jameson fortifies the "enclosures" precisely by arguing that "everything. . . can be said to have become 'cultural.'" This move rewrites the "dissolution of an autonomous sphere of culture" as "a prodigious expansion." While this rewriting is sufficiently ambiguous enough simultaneously to suggest both the ongoing regnancy of Western culture (as Ahmad has critiqued Jameson) as well as its transformation (that it has "exploded" is a formulation in line with the Baudrillardian announcement that the "orgy"--his rendering of revolution--has already happened [*Transparency* 3-4]), what the move unquestionably does is restate in terms of positivity what Jan Pakulski and Malcolm Waters argue in terms of negativity in *The Death of Class*, namely, the "good news" that class is dead: "class has collapsed and is decomposing, leaving only the merest traces of its effects. If it ever was real and salient, and we are certainly prepared to admit that class was a sturdy historical reality, it is no longer" (7). What has replaced class society, Pakulski and Waters argue, is "a culturalist or *status-conventional* phase" (153). By positing that "everything has become cultural," Jameson's "Marxism" contains critical theory to the

enclosures of a culture to which there is no determinant and knowable exterior. His is a formulation, in other words, which denies (and masks that it denies!) that the most fundamental of classical Marxist concepts--the binary concept of class--is the theoretico-scientific expression of objective forces that are not cultural but rather *determine* culture through material relationships involving privately owned property and the violent abstraction of labor power enabled by it. In short, in the terms of Jameson's "Marxism," class has no prior-ity in the practice of critique. Rather, class becomes, as in Resnick and Wolff's Marxian theory of overdetermination, simply another "influence" within a culture whose internal morphologizing "processes" produce "change": "the class process, like any and every particular social process, has no existence other than as the site of converging influences exerted by all the non-class processes" (Resnick and Wolff 116).

When class is drawn in to culture, becoming one among many influences, producing reliable knowledge of the objectively produced world--knowledge necessary for the development of proletariat class consciousness and for principled, systemic transformation--becomes impossible. Both Resnick and Wolff's and Pakulski and Waters' work makes this clear.

Resnick and Wolff reject that there is a core and irreducible division--the binary of class--that decidedly constitutes the outside of culture and determines knowledge of culture. On the terms of Resnick and Wolff's "Marxian" (an adjective, not a noun [1]) (re)theorization of Marxism, "*class* is an adjective, not a noun" (original emphasis 159). In their theoretical world, one must not prioritize any struggle by grounding the "process of theory" (10) in an objective category such as "class." In another refusal of the "language of the left," Resnick and Wolff substitute an adjectival class for the concept of class. The presupposition that one must not prioritize is symptomatic of their espousal of the poststructuralist understanding of the laws of language as that which underwrites, as Derrida argues, the possibility of conceptuality ("Differance" 140). This view, which is in opposition to the materialist theory of the production of material life as that which gives rise to consciousness (Marx and Engels *The German Ideology* 47), informs their Marxian theory of knowledge and class.

Resnick and Wolff argue that one must not prioritize any struggle because to do so would be to accept that there is an "essential cause of any event" (3). They refuse to accept that there is an "essential cause of any event," which is what they understand to be argued by what "has often been labeled 'classical' or 'official' Marxism": "In [the 'classical' or 'official' Marxist] view Marx was and is understood to have discovered the truth, namely, that the economic aspect of social reality determined the noneconomic, specifically the various political and cultural, aspects" (40). "Against determination or determinism" (2), they argue from "a commitment to [the concept of] overdetermination" (118) which "stands opposed to any form of reductionism or essentialism" (2). "Overdetermination" is their "conceptual entry point into the specification of what theory is; it is [their] partisan epistemological position." While acknowledging that it is a "term. . . borrowed from Freud, Lukacs, and Althusser and considerably modified by us," they assert it "is a basic concept in Marxian theory" (2). It is not, however, a concept

fundamentally opposed to determination, rather, they produce it as such by equating "determinism," as the above quotes indicate, with "reductionism or essentialism."

Resnick and Wolff understand essentialism as the outcome of "the presumption that among the influences apparently producing any outcome, some can be shown to be *inessential* to its occurrence while others will be shown to be *essential* causes" (original emphasis 3). On these terms, it follows that if "the economic are the essential cause of historical change[,] [t]he noneconomic processes are relegated to the rank of inessential causes and/or consigned to the status of mere effects of economic processes" (3). Essentialism is to be refused, in short, because it leads to "one-sided analyses" (141).

By reading determinism through the understanding of essentialism as "one-sided," Resnick and Wolff produce a formulation of determinism--which they impute to Marxism--from which the *social* relations of production are abstracted, rendering "the economic" as the sum total of instances of commodity exchange (120-121; see footnote 34). This rendition serves to legitimate their "commitment" to overdetermination, since it is indeed absurd to understand people--who in addition to exchanging commodities also argue, love, have aspirations, make laws. . .--solely as instances of commodity exchange. However, because it empties "the economic" of its core, the *social* relation of exploitation which "force" (Marx *Capital* vol. 1 235) those who do not own the means of production to sell their labor-power as a *commodity*, it effectively erases the ways in which the social relations of production themselves appropriate existing difference to reduce people to "instruments of labour" (*The Communist Manifesto* 88), which is what makes *class-interested analysis*--as opposed to ahistorically partisan "one-sided analysis"--a historical necessity. By reducing the economic, Resnick and Wolff absolve themselves of the historical necessity of examining the way in which their "commitment" is itself conditioned by the binary relations of class, that is, from considering their own theory as a class- interested theory.

By emptying "the economic" of its core--exploitative social relations--Resnick and Wolff effectively read into Marx a theorization Marx repeatedly refutes. One of the critical features of Marx's theory is that it refuses to treat social relations as separate from the production process. That social relations are not separate from production is a point Marx argues throughout his works. For example, in *Capital*, volume 1 he argues specifically that, regarding the capitalist, "The expansion of value, which is the objective basis or main-spring of the circulation M->C->M, *becomes his subjective aim*, and it is only in so far as the appropriation of ever more and more wealth in the abstract becomes the sole motive of his operations, that he functions as a capitalist, that is, as capital personified and endowed with consciousness and a will" (152, emphasis added).

If "the economic" is only commodity exchange, where, in Resnick and Wolff's Marxian theory, are the relations of exploitation that reduce people to bearers of labor-power? They are made external to the social--as they are by bourgeois theories of individual competition, merit, and so forth--and thereby erased from history. Marx was emphatic that this must not be done: "Those who consider wage-earning labour, the sale of labour to capital, in short the status of the wage-earner, as external to capitalist

production" are "mistaken." "In fact, wage-earning labour is a form of mediation that is essential and continually reproduced by the relationship of capitalist production" ("Results" 396). That is, the relations of production are integral to the movement of history that refuses to meet proletariat needs. From the point of view of the bourgeoisie, there is an entire class of people whose existing and vital needs are not integral to the full development of the social totality; indeed, they are actively excluded in order to produce profit. By reducing the economic to commodity exchange, Resnick and Wolff accept that this is so. In effect, they not only ignore that, as Marx and Engels argue, "the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all" (*The Communist Manifesto* 105). They also implicitly accept the primacy of the bourgeois category of the individual and its corollaries: that some are inherently more capable, will therefore become successful, and that their success is right, good, and sufficient for the gradual development of capitalism into an equitable society. This in turn presumes that the social as it exists is the best people can do, despite the millions afflicted by disease from corporate waste, the millions who cannot read, the millions deemed "invalid". . . . Resnick and Wolff would reply that at least in such a social as exists, people are not ultimately reduced to fungible cogs in a machine where the economic is the essential element. However, this charge rests on an understanding of "essential" that Marx never held.

While Marx does use the term "essential" regarding wage-earning labor, he uses it to note that it is not essential in the sense of "essence," or "unitary thingness," which is the way Resnick and Wolff read it, despite their argument (which appears to repudiate an equation between "essential" and "unitary thingness") that essentialism "holds that any apparent complexity--a person, a relationship, a historical occurrence, and so forth--can be analyzed to reveal a simplicity lying at its core" (2-3). That they understand "essentialism" in terms of "unitary thingness" is apparent in their criticism of empiricist and rationalist epistemological position, against which they theorize their own overdeterminist position. As Resnick and Wolff argue, empiricism assumes a "unitary" or "singular reality" (8); likewise, rationalism assumes a "singular reality": "Because it sees a singular reality as the phenomenon of an essence whose presumed nature makes it accessible to theory, we may characterize the rationalist epistemological position as essentialist" (10).

However, for Marx, what is "essential" is not "a unitary reality" but a *relation*--one involving private ownership of socially produced property--that is a "form of mediation." Through this relation, the "division of labour seizes not only the economic, but every other sphere of society, and everywhere lays the foundation of that all engrossing system of specialising and sorting men, that development in a man of one single faculty at the expense of all other faculties" (*Capital* vol. 1 354) (producing the "incapacity" Jameson speaks of). Each moment, that is, is never a simple moment of difference in the social, but an "involved moment" (more on this below) one that is the "most abstract form of crisis" and therefore decidedly determined by contradiction (Marx *Theories of Surplus Value* 140).

By reading determination as essentialist in the sense of unitary thingness, Resnick and Wolff effectively manufacture a reason to urge the rejection of Marxism. They claim it is a knowledge incapable of explaining the totality of social relations; it is a knowledge caught in a "dilemma": "the problem concern[ing] the relation between Marxism and economic determinism" (39). Yet it is their own reading of it that contributes to and upholds the idea that Marxism is caught in a "dilemma." In other words, Marxism is not caught in a "dilemma," rather its effectivity is blocked by class struggle, by bourgeois readings of it--like Resnick and Wolff's--that impute to it an economic reductivism, thereby making it appear to be incapable of explanation. By reading the effects of class struggle as a "dilemma," Resnick and Wolff effectively create a demand for a "new" explanatory knowledge, which they then can move to meet with their Marxian theory built on overdetermination, and move to meet *without having to explain why, in relation to the external limits set upon them by "the economic"--in particular the bourgeois refusal to meet the needs of the proletariat--they are "committed."*

In line with their rejection of determination--fundamentally a rejection of causality (that is, that external practices produce the objective world), as evident in their theorization of overdetermination--Resnick and Wolff theorize overdetermination in terms of "mutual constitutivity [not to be confused with "mutual causality"] among entities" (4): "If all possible entities are overdetermined, none is independent of any of the others. Moreover, each entity will have a different, particular relation to every other entity. Each entity only exists as--or, is caused or constituted by--the totality of these different relations with all other entities. . . . Among the different relations between any one entity and all those others that overdetermine it, none can be ranked as more important' or more determinant' than another" (4). This basis for Marxian theory, which introduces multiple subdivision into a presumably closed social, supposedly allows the theory to "go beyond the rejection of economic determinism to a resolution of the debate" (49) or "dilemma [that] has beset the theoretical tradition of Marxism since its inception," that being "the relation between Marxism and economic determinism" (39), fundamentally the "problem" Laclau and Mouffe (among numerous others) take up in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*: the gap between "the unity of the working class [as] an infrastructural datum" and its political activity, which Marxism and the vanguard then must fill to fuse (Laclau and Mouffe 12). We have seen, however, that Resnick and Wolff in fact produce this gap by reducing the economic to commodity exchange.

Marxian theory's commitment to overdetermination presumably provides a basis for "resolving" this "dilemma." However, since this "dilemma" is in fact an effect of class contradiction, is a *material* reality that people must *struggle* to transform not merely in the realm of theory but in that of material practices (ownership of means of production, exploitation for the production of surplus value), any attempt to "resolve" it in the realm of abstraction alone is idealist, based on the fantasy that "resolve" exercised in thought can in and of itself produce resolution in actuality. The very notion that thought could resolve even its own "dilemmas" belies Resnick and Wolff's reliance on an idealist epistemology over and against their expressed commitment to overdetermination: thought can resolve its dilemmas because it is somehow *not* overdetermined, but quite precisely

determined--and by nothing other than itself! In Resnick and Wolff's Marxian theory, idealist resolution is substituted for materialist revolution.

But in fact, Resnick and Wolff do not even make a rigorous attempt to resolve the issue in theory; their general strategy is to "resolve the traditional debates over economic determinism" not by showing the limits of the presuppositions and concepts of Marxist theory, but "by *setting aside* (emphasis added) the presumptions and terms of the debate along with the various debating positions," and then putting "in their place"--substituting--the "pursu[it]" of "the task of specifying the mutual overdetermination of the class and non-class processes constituting society" (52). They substitute, for example, "thinking resolution" for "class struggle"; "dilemma" and "difference" (5) for "class contradiction"; "process" for "practice" (55-56); "epistemology matters" for "materiality" (38; 51). Through these "new," pluralizing and hydraulicizing terms-- all fundamentally attached to an overdetermination that is in fact idealist, where the social is determined by thought alone-- Resnick and Wolff "resolve" the "dilemma" by reading the excluded needs of the proletariat back into the social totality in terms not of two classes in a hierarchical power relation, but of fundamental and subsumed class, which have no hierarchical relationship (118), and nonclass processes. This move makes the social fluid (and updates the myth of class mobility) and makes excluded need merely a problem of distribution process rather than an effect of exploitative practices. Fundamental class processes involve the production and appropriation of surplus labor or its products; subsumed class processes involve "the distribution of already appropriated surplus labor or its products (118). Nonclass processes involve anything from rainfall and photosynthesis (116) to social processes that "involve money payments and those that do not" (151). This presumably allows for the "dilemma" to be resolved because it offers a grid of the social in which analysis "necessarily involves the specification of all. . . constituent social processes." An analysis can therefore "be complete," whereas "to specify merely the class process within a relationship is then never a complete analysis" (160). As Resnick and Wolff argue, Marxian theory's multiple subdivisions allow one to "begin with any of these subdivisions and elaborate an analysis that progressively incorporates the other subdivisions" (151).

This ignores that they in fact have "set aside" the "economic" and with it, the issue of excluded proletariat need. They are able to do this because they rewrite contradiction as difference (5), and in so doing, produce a theory of the social not as an integrated totality produced by class contradiction, but as a dis-integrative set of more or less autonomous "spheres," one of which is dominant at any particular site. However, since their theory is anti-foundationalist, how and why they know which sphere is dominant can be and is left unexplained.

The move to a separate spheres theory is itself enabled by Resnick and Wolff's class-interested misreading of *The Grundrisse*. Resnick and Wolff argue that "fundamental class, subsumed class, and commodity exchange are three distinct economic processes kept theoretically apart by Marx, notwithstanding his argument that sometimes, under specific historical conditions, they may occur together" (121). Yet in the Introduction to *The Grundrisse* Marx states that "the conclusion we reach is not that production,

distribution, exchange and consumption are identical, but that they all form the members of a totality, distinctions within a unity" (99). That is, "distribution is itself a product of production, not only in its object, in that only the results of production can be distributed, but also in its form, in that the specific kind of participation in production determines the specific forms of distribution, i.e. the pattern of participation in distribution. It is altogether an illusion to posit land in production, ground rent [sic] in distribution, etc." (95). Marx clearly regards the three spheres as aspects of a single unity, but Resnick and Wolff ignore this.

What the subdivisions in a nonhierarchical (non-causal) relationship allows for is the possibility that exploitation will never actually be "incorporated" into any particular analysis. This is evident in one of Resnick and Wolff's own examples: "Two people going fishing are involved in a particular social relationship or practice, that is, a subset of processes. This relationship may include or exclude the class process, depending on the social context--that is, the social overdetermination of the relationship. If one of the two receives surplus labor from the other--one is the employer of the other in a capitalist fishing enterprise--then the relationship is a set of processes, including the class process. If instead it is a case of two friends sharing leisure time, the relationship does not include the class process" (117). Here, the economic sphere drops out entirely, as if one's ability to engage in such a "leisure time" activity was not shaped by relations of exploitation that leave many without "leisure time," let alone funds for "leisure time" activity.

While they claim, then, that "theory is the complex effect produced by the interaction of all . . . other processes" (2) and that this theorization of theory allows for a "complete" analysis because the "process of theory embodies the different influences of its many determinants" (2), because those determinants are thought of as multiple and discrete (having no hierarchical, causal, or necessary relation), it is more than a possibility--as their own example illustrates--that their "Marxian" theory is itself the product of a cause which "influences" it to sever *itself* from being able to conceptualize that which is influencing it to make that severance.

Moreover, they produce a knowledge with which it is impossible to think proletariat excluded need. Causality becomes so indeterminate that the social cannot be mapped. Theirs is not, that is, a theory that works against the incapacity to map the social, which Jameson sees as necessary. In fact, it *produces and privileges* that incapacity.

What Resnick and Wolff's nonessentialist theory makes nonessential to the social totality is the social relations of exploitation. Everything else is essential, that is, all of culture--in particular the subsumed class process of distribution--is essential to the existence of the binary class relations of exploitation: "The subsumed class process of distributing appropriated surplus value [including sales that realize surplus value (124); managerial supervision and politics in general (129); and cultural and ideological processes (130)] aim to secure conditions of existence of the capitalist fundamental class process" (121). Indeed, Resnick and Wolff accord culture, combined with the political and (deracinated) economic spheres, the power to "produce, that is overdetermine, the capitalist fundamental class process" (130): "the class process, like any and every

particular social process, has no existence other than as the site of the converging influences exerted by all the non-class processes" (116). Having done away with exploitation, they can presume that the production of surplus value is dependent on cultural processes. It is this reversal of the relationship between base and superstructure that allows them to argue that class processes cannot exist without all cultural processes, but that a cultural process--such as two friends fishing--can exist without the core class practice of exploitation made possible by the ownership and protection of private property.

Along with class, they reject the possibility of reliable knowledge of the objective world. As they argue, "there can be no question of reducing th[e] notion of causality. . . to any common standard or measure. Among the different relations between any one entity and all those others that overdetermine it, none can be ranked as 'more important' or 'more determinant' than another. To propose such a ranking is to reduce those differences to a quantitative measure of something presumed common to them all. Such a presumption is precisely what the concept of overdetermination contradicts. To explain the causes of any entity is to construct its differential relations with all the other entities that overdetermine it" (4). The impossibility of producing reliable knowledge of the objectively produced world from a frame of intelligibility in which class has been made a part of culture becomes evident when they claim that "Marxian theory aims to specify the different and ever-changing class positions of workers" (138). This is incoherent on two counts. First, to specify would presumably also be to reduce, which they refuse to do. This refusal to reduce is in fact a refusal of knowledge, since *all* knowledge "reduces" the actual through representation. As Engels has argued, "the concept of a thing and its reality, run side by side like two asymptotes, always approaching each other yet never meeting. This difference between the two is the very difference which prevents the concept from being directly and immediately reality and reality from being immediately its own concept" (Engels letter "To C. Schmidt" 563). Second, while the specification might be legitimated on the grounds that it is one influence on the ever-changing class positions of workers, the fact that the specification would itself change the positions of workers would make that specification an invalid basis for principled action upon commencement. The logical consequence of taking their theory seriously would mean that *one should not produce any knowledge*, for any knowledge produced would be both a violence and utterly useless for principled, collective social change; one should merely *perform* production of new statements to benefit oneself--and perhaps preserve one's middle-class fraction position, be more secure in one's position in the corporate university, and precisely because one has produced a knowledge which eviscerates collective social praxis. In short, Resnick and Wolff--like all post-al theorists--produce a theory that participates in the war on theory by making class a trope--a descriptor of. . . whatever.

While Resnick and Wolff cannot therefore be said to be producing knowledge that might be important to action, what their theory urges by dismissing the relevance of any knowledge is an "activism" that amounts to a performativity of and for individual interests. It is this performativity which, in the work of Pakulski and Waters, altogether displaces revolutionary knowledge and praxis.

Pakulski and Waters argue that, in a "culturalist or status-conventional phase," "identity is. . . not linked either to property or to organizational position. Under conditions of advanced affluence, styles of consumption and commitment become socially salient as markers and delimiters" (156). Indeed, "'taste', 'fashion' and 'lifestyle'" -terms which "capture" the idea that "consumption, or more precisely a capacity to consume, is itself reflexively consumed"--are the key sources of social differentiation, that displace both class and political affiliation" (122). As their use of consumption indicates, Pakulski and Waters treat consumption as abstracted from its participation in exploitation, and indeed privilege its current form-- "capacity to consume," in a word, style-- as the motor of change, thereby displacing history conceptualized as the unfolding of the class contradiction. Consumption as the motor of change is common in current poststructuralist consumption/libidinal economy theory, which legitimates the focus on consumption by way of arguments that "consumption" is "an entirely different kind of production" providing a site of agency for "subver[sion]. . . from within" (de Certeau 31; 32). However, because positing consumption as "an entirely different kind of production" simultaneously alters the way one thinks about production--one thinks it in terms of a trope whose form can be changed on the model of the relation between enunciatory practices and the linguistic system (de Certeau 33) rather than a material practice which can be changed only through praxis--it has the effect of containing transformation to the level of the social imaginary, that is, of actually making people *incapable* of effecting social transformation. While it is implied (for example, by Laclau and Mouffe 192) that such a transformation in thinking will eventually have such an impact on the base that it effects an evolution into socialism, this argument is logically incoherent. Because production is thought in terms of production transformed and already available to further transformation primarily through enunciatory practices, this knowledge dismisses as outdated the knowledges that enable principled, systemic transformation. As a consequence, the very knowledges necessary for actual transformation are discredited; access to them is denied on the basis that they are no longer "relevant." Indeed, they are not "relevant"--but they are irrelevant not to actual practices, but to the dominant knowledges. Yet this is simply to reinscribe the hierarchy of knowledge maintained by the ruling class: transformational knowledge is never regarded by ruling class ideologues as "relevant"--can we imagine the National Endowment for the Humanities funding a Marxist Institute for Revolution?--and in consequence, the move that suggests that people whose needs are marginalized should "metaphorize the dominant order" simply functions to reinscribe the suppression of transformational knowledges as irrelevant. Indeed, "deficiencies" of Marxist knowledges are enumerated and trotted out as "proof" that the knowledges are in fact "outdated," when in actuality they are not outdated but in a perpetual state of newness, their resources relatively untapped as a result of repeated dismissals. That the move to metaphorize reinscribes the dominant hierarchy of knowledges through representation of practices that constitute an "art" and which are "excluded in principle from scientific discourse" (de Certeau 38; 39) simply makes it all the more useful to the ruling class: the move has the added value of appearing to institute a knowledge that is "alternative."

Of course, this knowledge is not a radical alternative to dominant knowledges. It is, rather, a political attack on revolutionary knowledges. Referring to it as representative of

"an entirely different kind of production" is a ruse used to displace transformative knowledges and offer a "different" "alternative" knowledge. This "different" "alternative" knowledge is certainly different from transformational alternative knowledges--it enjoins people to think that proletariat class transformation of the social totality is unnecessary: whatever change needs to be effected can occur at the level of the individual.

Framing their reiteration of the consumption paradigm with the popular refrain that it is "difficult" "to reconcile the formation [of class] with the structure [of class] because the apparent events and experiences of social life and the trajectories of societal development simply do not match up with the theoretical proposal" (9), Pakulski and Waters argue that "a . . . radical theoretical overhaul is necessary. Such an overhaul should begin by disposing of the remnants of class theory and class analysis" (45). This frame of "difficulty" with regard to explaining why working-class subjectivity has not developed into the revolutionary proletariat movement that would consciously and collectively act on and for its objective class interests is itself symptomatic of the reinscription of the dominant hierarchy of knowledges. It is basically an alibi deployed as a "reason" for dismissing knowledges that inquire into determinant and knowable causes, and it allows its user to legitimate and privilege knowledges that explain things in terms of appearances, or surfaces only. Ignoring, as Marx argues, that "all science would be superfluous if the outward appearance and the essence of things directly coincided" (Marx *Capital* vol. 3 817), Pakulski and Waters confront the problem of the gap between formation and structure not by asking why this gap exists and setting that gap in relation to the means of producing real life that also produces an enormous wage gap. Rather, they confront it by doing away with class as a theoretical category, substituting for it "new collective actors that are transfunctional, attracting support from diffuse social categories based on locality, gender, ethnicity and lifestyle" (143). That is, Pakulski and Waters change science to fit with outward appearance only. The move works to do away with the need for science by collapsing structure into formation, making structure identical to formation. This move both suppresses the necessary science of historical materialism, thereby reinscribing the dominant hierarchy of knowledges; and manufactures a "new" model of the social that can then serve as a basis for cyberscience, science that theorizes connections not with regard to a depth model of the social, but rather a net-model. In terms of the three levels necessary to a global, scientific historical materialist analytic--mode of production, social formation, and conjunctural moment--social formation (the prevalent form assumed by the mode of production) is made identical to the mode of production. This collapse unquestionably gets rid of the "difficulty factor" which Pakulski and Waters offer as the reason that necessitates a "theoretical overhaul"--but the "difficulty" is gotten rid of only at the level of the theoretical imaginary and through a capitalist class-interested move whose logic is idealist: it presumes that all one needs to do is change the way one thinks about the world in order to solve what they understand as the problem of "fit" (152) between theory and the actual.

The collapse of formation into structure is an effect of assuming that the problem of "fit" originates with knowledge of the world--where knowledge is understood as (relatively) autonomous from material practices--rather than in the material practices that

condition knowledge, and then proceeding on that idealist assumption to change the theory while leaving in place the material practices that condition it. However, this merely substitutes "theoretical overhaul" for class struggle and ignores that from the point of view of historical materialism, the "difficulty" factor is not a simple "difficulty" or inadequacy of Marxist theory, but rather a symptom of the iron rule of the ruling class, iron rule enabled by private property. Changing that iron rule necessitates struggle for actual transformation--abolition of private property--not simply "theoretical overhaul." Where theory is conceptualized simply as the way we think about things rather than as a praxis for social change, where theory is conceptualized as ideas that are not produced by and reproductive of material life, anything can be made into anything else. That, however, is not the challenge. Anyone can fantasize, but fantasy will not change fact. The challenge is to change the hard facts of the objective world--that people are exploited; that their subsistence and subsequent vital needs go unmet; that they are enjoined to think (by theories like Pakulski and Waters') that effecting social change that will meet all people's needs is no longer necessary; that even if they saw such change as necessary, they understand themselves to be incapable of effecting it; that all of this occurs because profit is privileged over people. Changing that objective world requires development of a science that produces reliable knowledge of the objective world, not manufacture and dissemination of a theory that simply gets people to think differently about their social relations--which is what Pakulski and Waters' theory effectively asks people to do. They claim that "we are witnessing the death of class society as a historical formation," but in the same breath they also assert that this is not "the end of capitalism as a system of generalized commodity production guided by rationalized capital accounting." Rather, what is emerging is "post-class capitalism" (147). However, class is undeniably at the core of capitalism. Capitalism is the mode of production that produces capital, and capital results from the appropriation of surplus value made possible by the practice of exploitation. If there is no class, there is no capitalism. What Pakulski and Waters must mean by their formulation, then, is that what is emerging, and what they are assisting in its emergence with their theory, is in actuality a phase of capitalism in which people no longer *think* there are classes. The current historical moment is not one of "post-class capitalism." It is *post-thinking-about-class capitalism*. This is particularly the case given that they argue so vigorously against continued use of the term class when, according to them, all evidence points to the fact that there is no such thing as class. One would think, given this argument, that they would likewise refuse to use the term capitalism, since on their own argument, its core structure--that of class--is extinct. However, since they retain the term, we must take them seriously--and this leads directly to the fact that their theory simply asks people *to imagine* we are "post-class." Does it really need to be pointed out that this "theory" is the product of ruling class ideologues?

That it is indeed the product of ruling class ideologues is evident when one considers what Pakulski and Waters achieve by collapsing structure into formation. They legitimate their argument to do away with class and equate structure with formation by claiming that "class analysis . . . cannot cope with the diversity of new politics and the variety of new social actors" (147), that is, class analysis cannot explain the "messiness" of everyday life because it effectively equates social formation with mode of production, thereby privileging the objective factors of lived reality over the subjective. While their theory

certainly succeeds in putting the focus on the subjective over the (now non-existent) objective, and thereby presumably imputes agency to "new social actors," in fact, by moving away from "an unacceptable economic-productiveness reductionism" (129), it limits the agency it works to augment, unless we understand agency to be the simple acting out--the performance--of "churning and unrepressed emotions" (155-156). Here we have an "agency" that is based not on reliable knowledge of the objective world, but "on an inward gaze on the self. Material success is the consequence of individual performativity" (124). While the focus is now most certainly on what in other theories would be called subjectivity, that focus is achieved at the expense of knowledge of the social totality which is displaced by a move to privilege activity posited as the pure, "natural," and "spontaneous" expression of drives and flows. In other words, what used to be called subjectivity is reduced by their theory to mere activity. The person is enjoined not to theorize itself but to perform itself, and with no guarantees: "In the contemporary phase, markets have become casinos. Each individual is now their own market player, We are moving into a situation in which what you get depends on how you perform, although there is very little evidence that this means that the market necessarily will judge performance on a just calculus" (89). Instead of class-in-itself attempting to become class-for-itself, we have the individual-in-itself who through profligate behavior becomes individual-(per)for(ming)-itself. Their theory transforms agency into performance by erasing class structure, and most specifically exploitation as the practice external to knowledge that shapes knowledge, which in turn acts upon that practice, either to maintain it or abolish it.

Substituted for exploitation is what I am calling excitation, that process Pakulski and Waters understand as "a process of restless subjective choice that seeks to gratify churning and unrepressed emotions that include anxiety and aggression as well as desire" (155-156). This excitation, as I have noted, is the "source of novelty" (155), that is, excitation and not exploitation is the final determinant of social position. As opposed to exploitation as that which (re)produces class structure, Pakulski and Waters argue that it is excitation, which allows for "profligacy" of behavior (156-157) that determines one's social position. Profligacy of behavior--driven by the compulsion to satisfy affect from aggression to desire--manifests itself in "the pursuit of symbolic attachments that tend to advance the interests, identities, values and commitments to which they subscribe and aspire" (157). In Pakulski and Waters' formulation, the reach of this pursuit--which they mark by the locution "capacity to consume"-- is what produces social position. For example, capacity to consume produces "the so-called 'underclass.' . . . this is not a class in the production-centered sense but rather is identified by the incapacity of its members to engage in status as opposed to subsistence consumption. Its membership is not prescribed by a common relationship to the production process because it includes aged pensioners, state-supported single parents, the 'working poor', ethnic and racial minorities, people challenged by reduced physical abilities, women excluded from masculinized occupations, working youth, recent migrants and 'guest' workers, the unemployed, and the homeless. The bases for the exclusion of such people from high-reward labour markets is to do not with class but with both ascriptive and conventional statuses" (84-85).

While exclusion or "closure processes remain effective in status-conventional society" (157), Pakulski and Waters argue that by increasing one's profligate behavior, and thereby one's capacity to consume, one can nevertheless effect change: "the very act of [becoming profligate in behavior] will, by the proposition of resignification, tend to redefine and reorder the symbolic dimensions that reference the system" (157). In other words, since "the income-poor so-called 'underclass' is not class defined but is rather status defined by the symbolizations attached to postcolonial migration, race, ethnicity, gender, age and pattern of family support" (157), all one needs to do to free oneself from "the stigmatization that attaches to the 'underclass' [as] a function not of its members' exploitation but of their incapacity to consume" (157-158) is become highly profligate in behavior. The greater the profligacy, the greater the capacity to consume, the greater style--and the greater becomes one's ability to effect social destigmatization and become acceptable. All one needs to succeed in life is style, flair, excess, *jouissance*. . . desire.

For Pakulski and Waters, style is not an effect of actual consumption alone; rather it is behavior that expresses both a desire to consume and the extent--the capacity--to consume. Here, style is the mark of the good capitalist consumer, committed to a system which requires her to desire (to buy) goods which she cannot and to buy and accept as emancipatory that commodity--consumption knowledge--which simply works to exclude the transformative knowledges which lead to true emancipation: freedom from need. As Marx argues, "the realm of freedom actually begins only where labour which is determined by necessary and mundane considerations ceases" (Marx *Capital* vol. 3 820). Acceptance of consumer-based knowledge commits the individual to the restless behavior and pursuit of commodities--including other knowledges--that she thinks will make her complete but which actually never can. What she searches for, but is prevented from knowing that she searches for because of the suppression of transformative knowledges, is freedom from need, which requires transformation of the social totality through the abolition of private property, and the knowledge that will enable the working class to propel the unfolding of the class contradiction toward transformation.

Rather than enabling the working class to transform the social totality and free itself from need, consumption-based knowledge enjoins the individual to seek pleasure through the purchase of objects of desire. In essence, consumption-based knowledge represents capitalism as a system of production whose purpose is to produce means of enjoyment for all. It is a knowledge that produces an *incapacity* to transform the mode of production by displacing transformative knowledges, thereby effecting the "forgetfulness" Marx argues against: ""It must never be forgotten that the production of. . . surplus-value. . . is the immediate purpose and compelling motive of capitalist production. It will never do, therefore, to represent capitalist production as something which it is not, namely as production whose immediate purpose is enjoyment or the manufacture of the means of enjoyment for the capitalist. This would be overlooking its specific character, which is revealed in all its inner essence" (Marx *Capital* vol. 3 243-4). Consumption-based knowledges do just that: they represent capitalist production as something which it is not.

Critique of these recent theorizations of class as enfolded by culture--theorizations which make class not a noun, but an adjective; not a concept, but a trope; and finally, not

extant but quite "dead," ineluctably dispersed into elements of style--shows that when class is made cultural, the knowledge necessary for principled, systemic change is violently displaced in favor of performance and status. In this "new," stylish world, the Knowledge Industry develops and thrives, superseding the culture industry, its "prodigious expansion" made possible (at the philosophical level) by the dismissal of historical materialism, the subsequent reification of the incapacity to "map" the social produced by that dismissal, and the creation of new knowledges to supplement the reified gap but never address the need produced and maintained by capitalist class contradiction, the fundamental cause of material inequity which continues to be displaced by "new" "supplemental" knowledges which cannot enable transformation. In other words, the presumption that all is now cultural entails a rejection of the possibility of modernist or Enlightenment science; since there is no objective "real," rather only subjectively conditioned "realities," science loses its object and is delegitimated as a form of knowledge that can produce any reliable knowledge on which to base principled action. Rather, science is rewritten--for example, by Lyotard--as a "pragmatic" performance whose "differential or imaginative or paralogical activity. . . is to point out. . . metaprescriptives (science's 'presuppositions') and to petition the players to accept different ones" (65). Postmodern science (science as performative pragmatics) exists only to "generate ideas, in other words, new statements" (Lyotard 65), and not reliable knowledge of the objective world necessary for centralized development whose priority is the full development of all rather than the accumulation of profit. With the loss of its object occasioned by knowledge workers' sustained focus on the effects of the gaze on the object of the gaze--a prolonged gaze on the gaze--science opens onto aesthetics. Its purpose becomes no different from that of producing readings of texts which, as Roland Barthes has argued, is not "for some intellectual advantage (to understand better, to analyze on good grounds): it is actually and invariably for a ludic advantage: to multiply the signifiers, not to reach some ultimate signified" (165).

III

The Displacement of Critical Distance "from without" with Cultural Economism "from within"

It is in fact the post-al notion of the impossibility of producing reliable knowledge of the objectively produced world which Jameson implies when he argues--and as Montag accurately points out, "shows us his hand" (94)--that the "critical distance" necessary to "assault" "the massive Being of capital" from "outside" has very precisely been abolished in the new space of postmodernism" (48). By proclaiming that "critical distance" has been abolished, Jameson obliterates, at the philosophical level, the oppositional space "from without" necessary for historical materialist critique and shifts the possibilities for intelligibility to a space "from within." This space "from without"--which Jameson refers to as the "outside," the space of the "abolished" "critical distance"--is the space Lenin argues, following Kautsky (Lenin *What Is to Be Done?* 40), that is necessary for the proletariat acquisition of "class political consciousness": "The workers can acquire class political consciousness *only from without*, that is, only outside of the economic struggle, outside of the sphere of relations between workers and employers" (76). "From without" is the space outside of dominant relations and the ideology--"the ideal expression of the

dominant material relationships" (Marx and Engels *The German Ideology* 64) which Lenin refers to as "economism"--to which those relations give rise. This "critical distance" from the dominant relations is made possible, as I will argue shortly, by the class contradiction of capitalism. It is developed into scientific knowledge of the social totality by the praxis of historical materialist critique, which apprehends the social totality in terms of class contradiction in order to produce both knowledge of possible futures given what is manifest in the present, and the most effective knowledges and practices for the transformation of capitalism into the historically and materially necessary future: communism.

Critical distance is what Lenin refers to as proletariat "consciousness in an *embryonic form*," a "spontaneous" knowledge produced from class contradiction that is inaugurated when "workers [abandon] their age-long faith in the permanence of the system which oppressed them." At the inaugural moment of proletariat class consciousness, workers begin "not. . . to understand, but to sense the necessity for collective resistance, and emphatically abandon their slavish submission to their superiors" (32). Both the knowledge produced from historical materialist critique as well as the praxis of undertaking historical materialist critique develop embryonic consciousness into "genuine class consciousness," Lenin's term for knowledge of all forms of "political oppression" (57) manifesting themselves in the social as an effect of class contradiction: "the consciousness of the masses of the workers cannot be genuine class consciousness, unless the workers learn to observe from concrete, and above all from topical, political facts and events, *every* other social class and *all* manifestations of the intellectual, ethical and political life of these classes, unless they learn to apply practically the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of *all* aspects of the life and activity of *all* classes, strata and groups of the population" (68). If embryonic consciousness is not developed into genuine class consciousness through this "ruthless criticism of everything existing"--fundamentally, the collective pedagogy of the proletariat that supersedes identity criticism by inquiring into the material conditions of possibility of identity--the capitalist class can produce in workers a false consciousness by making concessions to them which work to lock various groups of the population into identity on the basis of conjunctural circumstances. This is why Lenin argued against economism. It is a false consciousness of the "problem" as one that can be "solved" through the winning of an economic concession--which works "to win the confidence of the masses of workers" (62) by inspiring them to believe that "a kopek added to a rouble [is] worth more than Socialism and politics" (38), in short that the existing system is "kind," "amenable"--rather than as one that can only be effectively addressed to eradicate socially produced need through the transformation of the mode of production into a socialist, classless mode of production. What is necessary for the development of class consciousness that transformation requires is critique--al apprehension of every tyranny, every daily event, as a feature of the social totality whose fundamental determination is that of class contradiction. As V. A. Lektorsky has argued,

A fundamental feature of the Marxist approach to the analysis of cognition is recognition of the need to consider all forms of cognitive activity in the context of the real activity of social man, in the context of the practical

transformation of natural and social reality. It is not in cognition but in practice, i.e., in actually doing something with objective reality, that Marxism sees the starting point of man's relationship with the world. Practice, as social man's changing of the natural and social environment, as the creation of new forms of life activity and hence changing the subject himself, is a specific feature of man and sharply distinguishes him from the animal. Man is not passive in the face of external nature, he treats it as the object of his activity, as something that should be changed in accordance with some aim of his own. *In actual practice cognition of the object as it is 'in itself,' and goal-setting, the setting of the task of changing the object, are directly united.* (100-101 emphasis added)

What this means is that workers cannot develop into class consciousness their "embryonic consciousness"--which, emerging from material need, points to the necessity of transforming capitalism--unless they learn to conceptualize their actual, concrete circumstances in terms of the necessity of transformation, that is, learn to see the necessity of transformation as a social and historical necessity embedded in every "sense" of unrest they experience in their working day lives. Learning this--to see the working day "event" immediately and undeniably as "a totality comprising many determinations and relations" (Marx, *Contribution* 206), learning to see it as a *manifesto* for transformation the refusal of which inevitably leads to an increase in "naked, shameless, direct, brutal exploitation" (Marx and Engels *The Communist Manifesto* 82)--is the development of class-consciousness through a pedagogy of red literacy. The development of this class-consciousness is enabled by the vanguard, intellectuals who stand not outside history, but outside capitalist social relations to the extent that they have been enabled by capitalist relations to "comprehend the movement of history as a whole" (Marx and Engels *The Communist Manifesto* 91) and theorize socialist relations, relations that form the bridge to communist relations and which are "outside" in the sense that they are opposed to the dominant ideology.

Jameson not only works to remove the recognition of embryonic consciousness from the theoretical imaginary by declaring critical distance to be abolished, a move which enables Pakulski and Waters to substitute "activity" and "profligate behavior" for class consciousness. He also displaces vanguard critique with avant-garde aesthetics. Arguing that the abolition of critical distance is in fact the "'moment of truth' of postmodernism" (49), which "the [historical materialist] dialectic requires us to hold to" in an effort to glean from postmodernism "a positive or 'progressive' evaluation of its emergence" (50), but also arguing that "we cannot. . . return to aesthetic practices elaborated on the basis of historical situations and dilemmas which are no longer ours" (50), Jameson argues for "an aesthetic of *cognitive mapping*" (51). In his displacement of class, critical distance, and critique, the theorist who once said that "to teach Marxism and tirelessly to demonstrate the nature of capitalism and its consequences is a political act which needs no apologies" (Jameson "Notes" 37), joins the post-al movement,

the ensemble of all practices that, as a totality, obscure the production practices of capitalism--which is based on the extraction of surplus labor

(the source of accumulation of capital). . . . Post-ality. . . is a regime of class struggle against the workers that posits a structural change, a rupture, in capitalism: one that severs the past of capitalism from what it regards to be its radically different and "new" present (which unlike its past is now free from exploitation). In doing so, post-ality attempts to solve--in the theoretical imaginary--the historical and material contradictions of capitalism caused by the social division of labor. (Zavarzadeh "Post-Ality" 1)

As Zavarzadeh's theorization indicates, in the wake of poststructuralist and postmodern critiques of theory as a metanarrative (Lyotard *Postmodern*), theory as "the critique of intelligibility" (Zavarzadeh "Theory" 30)--which produces the transformative knowledge "of the possible" (Shumway 99) necessary for revolution--has been displaced by practice as "styles of action" (de Certeau 30) which do not produce knowledge (as Lyotard notes, postmodern science "produc[es] not the known, but the unknown" [*Postmodern* 60]), but rather enable "a certain art of placing one's blow, a pleasure in getting around the rules of a constraining space" (de Certeau 18). Here, where "one does not expect a revolution to transform the laws of history" (de Certeau 25), "the critical task," as Judith Butler explains with regard to performativity, her own highly influential rendition of Michel de Certeau's "styles of action," "is. . . to locate strategies of subversive repetition enabled by [discursive] constructions, to affirm the *local* possibilities of intervention through participating in precisely those practices of representation that constitute identity and, therefore, present the immanent possibility of contesting them" (Butler *Gender* 147, emphasis added).

By calling for "an aesthetic of cognitive mapping" (54), Jameson participates in and enables a recuperation of the aesthetic in the modality of "a new kind of formalism" argued for, for example, by George Levine (23). This is an aesthetic which "has no particular political commitments" (Levine 20). The return to the aesthetic which provides a "very small breathing space of free play and disinterest left to those who risk finding value even in the literature that seems to despise them" (Levine 21), one which privileges an "almost mindless physicality of . . . engagement" (4), is a return that recalls the formalism Jameson critiqued in *The Prison-House of Language*. In "Five Theses on Actually Existing Marxism," Jameson himself privileges an "almost mindless physicality of . . . engagement"--a libidinal economy--as the motor of revolution, a privileging that exposes his turn to the aesthetic as a return to and reliance on the bio-determinist spontaneity currently resuscitated in arguments for experiential knowledge and which are fundamentally opposed both to proletariat organization and the necessity of a vanguard for the purposes of developing class-consciousness to enable such organization. As Jameson sees it, revolution will occur spontaneously:

We must imagine revolution--as something which is both a process and the undoing of a synchronic system--as a set of demands which can be triggered by a punctual or political event such as Left victory in an electoral struggle or the dismantling of colonial authority, but which then take the form of wider and wider popular diffusion and radicalization.

These waves of new popular demands, which emerge from ever deeper layers of the hitherto silenced and deprived population, then radicalize even an ostensibly left government and force ever more decisive transformations on the state. The nation (but in our time the world, as well) is then polarized in the class dichotomous fashion in which everyone, however reluctantly, must take sides" (179).

This is a populist form of Marxism that ignores the extent to which three decades of a steady retreat from class by knowledge workers has eroded the common basis of "demands" in worker need and has redirected even the emergence of "spontaneous" demands toward goals whose local limits not only allow for their immediate appeasement but also preclude a priori their connections through worker need with other demands. In imagining revolution "as a set of demands which can be triggered by a punctual or political event," Jameson in fact repeats the exact spontaneist argument of Rosa Luxemburg, which Laclau and Mouffe used--with devastating effects for the proletariat--to thoroughly discredit Marxism and launch their "post-Marxist" project of "radical democracy" (see *Hegemony* 8-14). Luxemburg argues that proletariat "tactical policy. . . . is the product of a series of great creative acts of the often spontaneous class struggle seeking its way forward" (121). The "creative force" giving rise to these acts is itself an extension of "unobstructed, effervescing life" (390). It stems from "the natural pulsation of a living organism" which is weakened through any use of "formal means" to strengthen it (129). Luxemburg's spontaneity places the conditions of possibility for transformation outside of history and within the space of a natural "sense" which, left "unobstructed, can produce necessary knowledge from the "natural pulsation" of life. This is an argument for experiential knowledge--Luxemburg writes that "only experience is capable of correcting and opening new ways" (390)--which is at base an argument for the "sensationalism" of Mach and the empiricism of Avenarius which Lenin critiques as repudiating the fundamental assumption of materialism, that "outside us, and independently of us, there exist objects, things, and bodies and that our perceptions are images of the external world" (*Materialism* 89). Moreover, in arguing that "only unobstructed, effervescing life falls into a thousand new forms and improvisations" capable of furthering the interests of the working class, she contradicts herself with regard to her critique of opportunism. For her, "opportunism knows only one principle: the absence of principle" (126). However, since the "improvisation" she privileges implies the same principle, she effectively makes an argument that legitimates opportunism. Jameson's return to a formalist aesthetic underpinned by an uncritical notion of spontaneity indicates that Jameson's formulations are decidedly the "retreat" Montag argues they are (97), enabling not a "new and original way of thinking and perceiving," a "new. . . cultural form" (Jameson 31; 51) but rather renewing the dominant ideology by reiterating it--multiplying its signifiers--under the sign of Marxism.

Jameson's argument that critical distance has been abolished is an argument against historical materialist knowledge and the practice of critique from without; it is an argument for knowing *from within* the dominant frames of intelligibility, what I call, following Lenin's critique of "economism," "cultural economism." Cultural economism is the limit to existing social movement knowledges, which is not to argue that these

knowledges--post-colonialism, cultural feminism, academic unionism. . .--are blanketly invalid. Indeed, they are necessary in that they expose, within all spheres of existence, the effects of capitalist practices on the proletariat. However, it is to argue that since these knowledges have developed in the historically produced politico-theoretical repudiation of Marxism, they have developed precisely within various spheres, with the consequence that the knowledges are haunted by that which they exclude--witness Butler's return to the question of materiality and the constitutive outside, which she theorizes back into the discursive, in *Bodies that Matter* (Ebert Ludic 209-220), as well as Derrida's in *Specters of Marx*, also theorized back into discourse (Eagleton), to name but two instances. The limits of these "withinist" or cultural economist knowledges are those of the Economism Lenin argued against.

Lenin argued--against "Economism"--that spontaneist (that is to say, anti-conceptualist, anti-abstractionist) trade-unionism "dealt with the relations between the workers *in a given trade*, with their immediate employers, and all that it achieved was that the vendors of labour power learned to sell their 'commodity' on better terms, and to fight the purchasers of labour power over a purely commercial deal" (56), but not to "remove the subjection of labour to capital" (43). Though the field is now reversed, the limits of the currently reigning culturalism are precisely those of the economism that Lenin argued against: both attempt, in Lenin's words regarding the limits of economism, "to develop the class political consciousness of the workers *from within*, that is to say, exclusively, or at least mainly, by means of the economic struggle." While the goal of culturalism is certainly not to develop the class political consciousness of the workers but to enable, in Judith Butler's words, "a new configuration of politics" (*Gender* 149) through the "practices of repetitive signifying"--linguistic performativity--that open "the possibility of a variation on that repetition" and therefore the possibility of "agency" (*Gender* 145), culturalism's limits are those of economism because both operate on the logic of contingency or "withinism," namely that agency and change can spontaneously emerge from *within* the practices of a single sphere of the social. As Butler argues, "it is only *within* the practices of repetitive signifying that a subversion of identity becomes possible" (*Gender* 145). However, as Lenin argues, "Such a [withinist] view is radically wrong" because it depends on and reproduces the idea that "a kopeck added to a rouble was worth more than Socialism and politics, and that [the workers] must 'fight, knowing that they are not fighting for some future generations, but for themselves and their children'" (38). It is *radically* wrong because it allows for local change only--Butler's performativity seeks only "to affirm the local possibilities of intervention" (*Gender* 147)--and thereby disenables effective response "to all cases of tyranny, oppression, violence and abuse, no matter *what class* is affected"; it disenables "the materialist analysis and the materialist estimate of *all* aspects of the life and activity of all classes, strata and groups of the population" (68). In short, it is *radically* wrong because it is exclusive in its presupposition that *all* identities are regulated by the laws of motion of one sphere of the social and thereby formulates and disseminates a single "method and subject for political agitation" as the "most widely applicable" method and subject (Lenin 58-59). In doing so, it "restrict[s] the scope of political agitation" (Lenin 58). This urges workers to fight for and accept cultural concessions--access to the "means of representation" (Jay 18), quota-based hiring and admissions practices--that promise but cannot deliver for all "better

jobs," "quality of life," and so forth. What a restricted scope of political agitation produces is the subject whose apprehension of the social is limited to the conjunctural. Through this, identity groups are produced which compete among themselves for this or that "privilege," form alliances for greater leverage in gaining the "privilege," but never develop class consciousness to transform the mode of production because they have been trained to fight only for what they can get within the frame of what is--capitalism.

The politics that result from identitarian based restriction of political agitation to a local sphere is an appreciative, not revolutionary, politics. Lisa Lowe and David Lloyd's introduction to *The Politics of Culture in the Shadow of Capital* is a case in point. In introducing "a collection of essays that, in their combination, advance a critical approach to the 'international,' the 'global,' or the 'transnational' as theoretical frameworks within which intersecting sets of social practices can be grasped," Lowe and Lloyd eschew "adopting the understanding of culture as one sphere in a set of differentiated spheres and practices" and instead "discuss 'culture' as a terrain in which politics, culture, and the economic form an inseparable domain" (1). Culture, that is, is here understood as enveloping production. Within this culture, Lowe and Lloyd argue, there have arisen "forms of agency" (15) which engage in "cultural struggle" (6) at "sites of contradiction" (2) which, while "generated precisely by the differentiating process of advanced globalizing capitalism" (2), "cannot be subsumed by the logic of commodification itself" (1). By this Lowe and Lloyd mean that these forms and struggles cannot be understood as part of a social totality--nor, consequently, addressed by the Marxist politico-theoretical critique of that social totality as what Lowe and Lloyd claim they are not: "founding moment[s] in an oppositional narrative of emancipation" (4). They are not such "founding moments"--the emergence of embryonic consciousness--because while the struggles and contradictions within capitalism may be "generated" by "the logic of commodification," the forms of agency themselves arise from "*differential* [social] formations" emerging from a "multiplicity of significant contradictions rooted in the longer histories of antagonism and adaptation" (15).

Lowe and Lloyd's argument works to struggle against "the tendency" of dominant "understandings of transnationalism"--such as those of Fredric Jameson--"to assume a homogenization of global culture that radically reduces possibilities for the creation of alternatives" (1). That is, they are working to go beyond the limits of cultural economism that results from the enveloping of production by culture. However, they cannot escape those limits through the terms of those limits, which they retain through their insistence on "the subordinated culture's difference and incommensurability with the economic and political operations of . . . colonial power" (6)--their insistence, that is, on rejecting the priority of class on the assumption that "alternative histories and . . . different temporalities . . . cannot be contained by the progressive narrative of Western developmentalism" (5). In their attempt to escape the limits of cultural economism, they simply create a "constitutive" outside which, as Amrohini Sahay argues, substitutes for the "'objective' (decided) outside" of class contradiction "merely an ideological extension of the economies of the inside" ("*Transforming Race*," para. 17). Hence their struggle, while laced with the language of Marxist critique--"fetish," "commodification," "labor exploitation". . .--is not revolutionary class struggle, but, like the "struggle" of all post-al

theorists, "redescriptive" cultural struggle, explicitly committed to "put[ting] into relief the relatively autonomous meaning of the singular instance without needing to reinscribe it as a founding moment in an oppositional narrative of emancipation" (Lowe and Lloyd 4). This is simply a commitment to "discursive relief" that does not "relieve" the proletariat from material need but the middle-class fraction from its anxiety that marks that fraction's guilty sense of its complicity in exploitative practices. As Marx argues, "The bourgeois economists who regard capital as an eternal and *natural* (not historical) form of production then attempt at the same time to legitimize it again by formulating the conditions of its becoming as the conditions of its contemporary realization. . . . These attempts at apologetics demonstrate a guilty conscience, as well as the inability to bring the mode of appropriation of capital as capital into harmony with the *general laws of property* proclaimed by capitalist society itself" (*Grundrisse* 460). "Putting into relief the relatively autonomous meaning of the singular instance," resolves to "appreciating" the "other's" struggle--as North "appreciates" the "language of the left"--and sets such appreciation as the limit of change, for on the terms of cultural economism, to work to bring these movements into solidarity is regarded as a violence (of reduction) that attempts to halt the "self-difference of movement itself" that enables social movement (Butler "Merely" 269).

It is against such "withinist" logic that Lenin argues that "the workers can acquire class political consciousness *only from without*, that is, only outside of the economic struggle, outside of the sphere of relations between workers and employers" (76). It is important to note that Lenin's call is not tantamount to a call for socialist consciousness to be introduced from within the sphere of relations between discursively constructed subjects or from within the sphere of cultural relations, as either might be construed as existing "outside the economic struggle." Rather, the locution "from without," as I have already argued, must be understood as "outside of the sphere of relations between workers and employers," outside of the dominant knowledges of *class relations of production*, the "division of labour" that, as Marx indicates, "seizes upon, not only the economic, but every other sphere of society and everywhere lays the foundation of that all engrossing system of specialising and sorting men" (*Capital* vol. 1 354). The historical materialist theorization of socialist consciousness, as this makes clear, not only does not "reduce" subjects to fungible components of "the economic," an understanding all those who argue against it find it necessary to impute to it in order to mount their own "new" theorizations in their "fight" against the capitalist class. Neither does it restrict the scope of political agitation to a single method and subject, as does Butler's and the Economists'. It cannot, because as Marx indicates, the relations of production are themselves fundamentally divided and further splintered through their radiation into the spheres of society, where they assume multiple forms. This is why Lenin argues against a single method and subject and for the necessity of "*all-sided* political exposure" (*What Is to Be Done?* 67).

This means that while both discursive performativity and trade-unionist activism are useful to the realization of socialist consciousness--because they provide site-specific knowledge of the tyrannies they encounter--they are not in and of themselves sufficient for use by everyone at every time. As Palmer notes, "attention to language is clearly vital

to any historical practice" (5). However, Palmer's point does not mean that an eclectic approach will suffice, for an eclectic approach--like the single method and subject approach--similarly relies, as Butler says of performativity, on "only a taking up of the tools where they lie, where the very 'taking up' is enabled by the tool lying there" (*Gender* 145), a formulation that accepts as given the conditions of possibility that both place a particular tool where it can be taken up and enable its taking up, rather than inquiring into and contesting those conditions of possibility. That is, an eclectic approach is essentially a pragmatic one in which, as Richard Rorty argues, "one does not view knowledge as a matter of getting reality right, but rather as a matter of acquiring habits of action for coping with reality" (*Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* 2). Rather, the condition of sufficiency that enables the contesting and transformation of conditions of possibility is fulfilled by the critical dialectical movement between site-specific knowledge and that of capitalism's "grave-diggers" (*The Communist Manifesto* 94), "a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole" and who, "in times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour, the process of dissolution going on within the ruling class, in fact within the whole range of old society, assumes such a violent, glaring character, . . . cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands" (*The Communist Manifesto* 91). In short, knowledge sufficient for socialist consciousness and eventually communist society is possible only through the production and critique-in-solidarity of knowledges both of all "local" need--often provided only in reified form by cultural economist logics, what Palmer calls the "logic of disintegration" (xvii)--and knowledge of the needs of the social totality and the possibility of fulfilling them through transformation of what is, itself made possible by theorization of what can be through critique of what is. However, this critique-in-solidarity does not occur spontaneously, as an effect of the unfolding of class contradiction. Rather, it is the knowledge of the needs of the social totality and the possibility of fulfilling them through critique and transformation of what is--vanguard knowledge--that "pushes" (Nowlan 368) for the critique-al dialectic of local knowledges of need with that of itself such that together they will constitute the revolutionary force towards communist society. The move to socialism and then to communism is not possible without knowledge "from without" based on the needs of the social totality and the possibility of transforming that totality. It is precisely this knowledge that Jameson's formulation occludes by arguing that everything is cultural. It is precisely this knowledge which must be reclaimed through rigorous critique of his work, critique that looks closely at what his work displaces, and for what reasons. For the question is not only one of *whether or to what extent* Jameson (among many other left theorists, such as Aronowitz and Barrett) has departed from the core concepts of historical materialism, but why this departure occurs *at this historical moment*. In other words, it is not enough merely to note the departure; rather it is necessary--as Jameson would surely agree (see the opening moves of *The Political Unconscious*)--to *historicize* that departure through critique that inquires into the conditions of possibility of that departure and, in so doing, does not produce an increasingly disintegrated Marxism (discrediting or celebrating this or that theorist only produces more and more various shades of Marxism), but instead produces knowledge of *what is yet possible for organization toward transformation*. In the following critique of Jameson's work, then, I will expose the inadequacy of the tropes he

substitutes for revolutionary concepts and argue for the historical necessity of returning to those concepts.

IV The Post-al Unknowable Real and the Marxist Concrete

The "aesthetic of cognitive mapping" Jameson calls for returns to "the Lacanian underpinnings of Althusser's theory" (53). The return to Lacan is at the core of Jameson's abandonment of historical materialism.

Lacan posits three regions or modalities of Being: the Real, the Imaginary, and the Symbolic. The Real is beyond knowing; it is what the newborn organism--and later the subject--exists in but can never know directly since knowing presupposes a split which abruptly and permanently forecloses unmediated sense of that within which existence is embedded. It is at the mirror stage that the organism achieves this split, that is, detaches from the Real and misrecognizes itself as the unified entity it no longer is. The mirror stage, in other words, inaugurates the Imaginary, in which the organism-cum-subject divides and imagines itself as an organized image. The inauguration of the Imaginary is the condition of possibility for the inauguration of the Symbolic, which the Imaginary both initially and henceforth underwrites, in the sense of providing the opposing pole to the Real that instantiates the gap or lack that is the condition of possibility for the Symbolic. The Symbolic itself is the region of infinite division or splitting, the region of the language the subject subsequently deploys in an attempt to fill the lack engendered by the division. The lack, of course, can never be filled by the groping and surrogate terms of the Symbolic, since it is lack itself which "constitutes" the precondition of subjective-Symbolic existence. This lack is itself felt--and now performed--precisely as desire, that loose apostrophe of unmet need that quests for the fullness or unity of Being. This unity can never be "fixed" by language; nevertheless, desire for unity constitutes the very motor of language through which subjects do not "know" the Real, but rather "link the I [of the Imaginary] to socially elaborated situations" (Lacan "The Mirror Stage" 737). That is, at the moment of language, the specular I of the Imaginary is "deflected" into the social I of the Symbolic (737) where the subject can never exist in social unity, but only in various stages of coupling and decoupling.

It is the "network" which we find ourselves "caught in" in following "deflection" into the Symbolic that Jameson wishes to make "representable" through an aesthetic of cognitive mapping, since with the postmodern abolition of critical distance, he perceives that we as a species are confronting "something like a mutation in built space itself," and we "do not yet possess the perceptual equipment to match this new hyperspace" (38). In other words, he is arguing we have just separated from a "new" (historically produced) Real and have been deflected into a "new" social I of the Symbolic thanks to the elaborations of postmodernism, the equivalents of the Lacanian mirror we have produced for ourselves in the "glass skin" of Portman's Westin Bonaventure Hotel (42) or the "great sheet of windows" constituting the Wells Fargo Court in downtown Los Angeles (12-13).

However, his argument that we "do not yet possess the perceptual equipment to match this new hyperspace" is incoherent--contradictory--with regard to his claim that the world is already knowable--and therefore transformable--through "Marxian 'science'" (53). Indeed, Jameson calls for an aesthetic of cognitive mapping through a return to Lacanian representation not to increase our knowledge of the world, but rather to "afford some useful and suggestive methodological enrichments" (53). The question is, if the world is already knowable and transformation therefore possible, to what are we to append these "enrichments," for whom are they "suggestive," and, above all, what is it they suggest?

Apparently, these would be "enrichments" to the "abstract or 'scientific'" knowledge of Marxism, "enrichments" which would provide representation of "the existential--the positioning of the individual subject, the experience of daily life, the monadic 'point of view' on the world to which we are necessarily, as biological subjects, restricted" (53). These "enrichments" would address the "sharp dilemma" of the late capitalist subject, "the incapacity of our minds, at least at present, to map the great global multinational and decentered communicational network in which we now find ourselves caught as individual subjects" (44). For example, they would enable the individual to perceive and address the problem which Fred Krupp, executive director of the Environmental Defense Fund, raises: "As a species, we have grown so powerful that we. . . are changing the atmospheric chemistry enough to warm the Earth. And yet, as individuals, we aren't equipped to detect that--especially if it comes at us in the form of hundred-page reports published by a committee of 2500 scientists" (Chandler).

Standing behind the argument for "enrichments" to "abstract" Marxism that would enable the individual to map the "network" is the epistemological assumption that critique cannot so enable the individual, that is, that critique produces "abstract" knowledge in the bourgeois senses of "obtuse," "general," "vague," "disconnected," "elite," and "reductive." It is the assumption standing behind Stanley Aronowitz's argument that "Political economy ends when theory seeks to specify the conditions of transformation": theory cannot specify because "the counterlogic of the erotic, play, and the constituting subject may not be reduced either to the mode of production of material life or the mode of social reproduction" (*Crisis* 196). It is the assumption standing behind the charge that Marxism is "totalitarian," a charge which Jameson himself has called the "silliest of all puns, the confusion of 'totality' with 'totalitarianism'" (*History* 60). Yet this is the assumption standing behind his own argument for enrichments.

What Jameson asserts by the assumption is that the Marxist "method of political economy"--critique--cannot provide knowledge of "the existential." But what is the "existential"? For Jameson, it is that which presents itself to the "monadic 'point of view'" of the "biological subject." Since he follows Lacan and in so doing disappears the exterior and decided forces of production by subsuming them in the framework of a culture whose Real is fundamentally unknowable, this "existential" is an Unknowable existential, that is, it has no meaning determined by the productive forces. Its meaning is, rather, ambiguous, open to being "assigned" from the "monadic 'point of view'." In positing the existential as such, Jameson erases the historical materialist theory of the Real as the Concrete Real: "The concrete," Marx argues in the *Grundrisse* and reveals

throughout *Capital*, particularly in his chapter on "Commodities," "is concrete because it is the concentration of many determinations, hence unity of the diverse" (101). Displacing the objective forces of production as that which produce the objective ("existential") world allows the *unambiguous, decided* "meaning" of any entity as a congelation of social labor to be ignored. Instead, the entity has an "ambiguous" meaning that can only be made temporarily less ambiguous by the subject's apprehension of it in relation to another entity. Presenting the "existential" this way augments the work of ideology. Marx argues, "the relation of the producers to the sum total of their own labour *is presented* to them as a social relation, existing not between themselves, but between the products of their labour" (*Capital* vol. 1 72, emphasis added). It is as an ideological effect of class society that labor "is presented" to workers as a relation between things and not people. Those who displace critique by erasing from the theoretical imaginary the decided exterior of culture work to *represent* to workers their labor as a relation between things. In this way, the labor aristocracy confines the subject's capacity to apprehend to the parameters of bourgeois thought: "Man's reflections on the forms of social life, and consequently, also, his scientific analysis of those forms, take a course directly opposite to that of their actual historical development. He begins, post festum, with the results of the process of development ready to hand before him. The characters that stamp products as commodities, and whose establishment is a necessary preliminary to the circulation of commodities, have already acquired the stability of natural, self-understood forms of social life, before man seeks to decipher, not their historical character, for in his eyes they are immutable, but their meaning" (Marx *Capital* vol. 1 75). Denied the tools necessary to produce reliable knowledge of the Concrete Real, subjects are launched on an unending quest for "meaning" which denies that a thing's "meaning" can only be, fundamentally, that by which it is made--a quantity of labor-time determined by social relations of capitalism. This unending quest can then be addressed by the labor aristocracy as "an incapacity to map" which calls for yet another "new" "radical" knowledge. In this way, the disaggregating middle-class fraction creates opportunities for itself that also work to maintain the power of the capitalist class, the only power that can maintain the existence of this fraction. (This is *not* to argue that there is no antagonism between this fraction and the capitalist class--there is, a point I return to below in IX).

Jameson's assumption displaces critique and very precisely keeps people in a condition of "incapacity," keeps them from grasping the way they are "caught as individual subjects," and does so by severing their apprehension of the "net" they are trapped in from labor and class.

The ontological assumption behind the epistemological one is that the abstraction fundamental to modernist art and Enlightenment theoretical projects and enabled by the superstructure/base construction of the social of modernity is now no longer possible since the depth superstructure/base conceptualization of the social has been superseded, through the practices of the ruthless commodification of everything existing, by a planist social structure, that is, one of intersecting surfaces. Here, where there are only surfaces, abstraction and the materialist critique it enables are regarded as antiquities, relics of an age when things were produced by inaccessible chthonic forces that were, however, knowable through abstraction. In the post-al moment of planarity, there is no depth that

makes abstraction both possible and necessary. As Pakulski and Waters' work makes clear, production is regarded not as a practice involving the totality of social relations whose movement is conditioned by a base, apprehension of which requires the practice of abstraction. Rather, production is regarded as a symbolic consumptive performance, involving regional or zonal relations but not those of class. The activity of this performance constitutes the creation of an articulation which, since no chthonic forces are involved, does not require abstraction for apprehension. Since production is understood here as the performative linking of semiotic elements to create nodes, apprehension of that performance involves the (descriptive) reiteration of those connections across the semiotic planes of discourses (none of which has constitutive priority). Apprehension, that is, involves the semiotic reproduction of semiotic (re)production, the troping of what is already a trope, the (dis)simulation of simulacra.

This is regarded as "postmodern praxis" (see, for example, Kaufman) the unity of thought and action that constitutes an emancipatory project. It is actually a capitalist-class interested and manufactured practice whose effectivity for enabling capitalist class freedom--to indulge desires and to ignore that indulging them is made possible by inversely proportionate production of need in the vast majority--is also its violence against the working class from which the middle-class fraction knowledge workers seek "relief" through "appreciation." It is a practice which attempts to defer the proletariat's possibilities for transforming the forces that exploit them. It works to defer them by eroding the praxis of apprehension through critique-al abstraction, erosion the capitalist class must engage in order to increase, by blocking apprehension of the abstraction central to capital, the abstraction of labor-power for the production of profit.

The forces of production that constitute the determinate, objective and knowable outside of the superstructure are just that: forces. They are neither palpable nor manifest, though their *effects* are both. As forces, they require for analysis a tool that goes beyond the visible and does not stop at the simple correspondence: social movements are made possible by "the self-difference of movement itself" (Butler "Merely" 269). What they require is "the force of abstraction" (Marx "Preface to the First German Edition" of *Capital* 8). Abstraction is crucial to the science of historical materialism in that it enables conceptualizing as systemic and systemically produced effects that appear to be discrete, "unique." Abstraction enables and is integral to red critique, which asks "Why?" regarding the causes of these apparently discrete effects, their conditions of possibility. Asking "Why?"--and doing so in strict adherence to the first principle of materialism, the plain fact that no practice or knowledge can be fundamentally conditioned by anything other than the material (re)production of existence of and by real humans--is the praxis that opens on to the science of historical materialism and its praxis of critique, itself that which enables the consciousness necessary for revolutionary praxis.

In its presumption that all has become cultural, Jameson's "Marxism" violently displaces the science of historical materialism and the praxis of critique, and works to defer the revolution that is historically necessary. The question remains, however, Why is aesthetics substituted for critique through the abolition of critical distance? What is gained, that is, by the substitution, for whom, and what is lost? In order to address these

issues, it is first necessary to theorize the critical distance Jameson has declared is abolished.

V

Embryonic Class Consciousness and Critical Distance "from without," Desire, Unmet Need

Critical distance is fundamentally an effect of the alienation produced by class contradiction. It is an effect of the forced separation of workers from that which they collectively produce. This forced separation results in unmet need, which is the materially produced basis for materialist critical distance and the development of class consciousness.

Critical distance is the historically produced awareness of the distance, itself historically produced by the privileging of profit over need, of working class subjects from the development of their full human capacities, development which capitalism excludes from its interests, indeed must exclude if surplus-value is to be produced. This awareness is "critical" in two senses. First, it is critical in the sense that it begins to see and question what is as that which is irrefutably what must be, what is naturally so. Critical distance, that is, comes into being as that "consciousness in *embryonic form*," what Lenin theorized, as I have noted, as the workers' "abandonment" of "their age-long faith in the permanence of the system which oppressed them. They began. . . to sense the necessity for collective resistance, and emphatically abandoned their slavish submission to their superiors" (*What Is to Be Done?*32). This is a consciousness that emerges both "spontaneously" and, yes, *within* culture; but it is not a "natural" spontaneity--Lenin remarks that "there is a difference between spontaneity and spontaneity" (32)--nor *caused* by the culture in which it emerges. That it emerges within culture has given rise to the presumption that it is an effect of culture, which provides the impetus for the sustained focus on the individual's experience of daily life that now dominates post-al left knowledges and cultural studies, the site at which cultural economism has been instituted. Lawrence Grossberg, for example, argues that since "theory is always a response to a particular context" where "there are no guaranteed relations in history" (5), it is necessary "to discover what the questions can be in the everyday lives of our students" by listening for "the 'stutterings,' the unexpected dialects and misspeakings, the unpredicted articulations, within the hegemonic culture, which are capable of producing a minor and popular remapping. . . , which may enable the mobilization of people's memories, fantasies, and desires, and redirect their investments in politics and the other" (20). Similarly, Ira Shor writes that "An intuition came to me. . . that I should count on the unpredictable and the unknown, even on the unruly habits of some students, because human possibilities are not fully occupied by the dominant forces or trends of any age. . . . Thus, I advised myself to search for the untested and unpredictable openings at the margins and in the cracks of the group I was approaching, where I might find territory less captured by the status quo, where some critical thought, civic ideals, and democratic relations were possible even in conservative times" (3). That Shor's "intuition"--his own theoretical "stuttering" to which he attends--is no different from Grossberg's prescription underlines the structural (materialist) rather than conjunctural (cultural) cause of their

own theorizations, which contradictorily attributes the cause of both the students' stutterings and their own theoretical statement-stutterings not to structure but to the culture in which they appear. Despite their materialist rhetoric, this position is profoundly anti-materialist. It assumes that because something appears within culture, it is produced by culture. This amounts to looking for flukes breaking the surface of the ocean, and upon seeing them, declaring that the water produced them.

That "spontaneous" consciousness is neither natural nor a cause of culture attaches to the second and fundamental sense of "critical," that of "crisis." The possibility for "spontaneous" critical consciousness is structurally produced by what Marx theorizes as "the *most abstract form of crisis* (and therefore the formal possibility of crisis)" under capitalism, "the *metamorphosis of the commodity* itself" during which "sale and purchase may fall apart" (Marx *Theories of Surplus Value, Collected Works* v. 32 140) and in which case the commodity cannot be turned "into its opposite, money" (Marx *Theories* 139). This is the historically specific abstract form of crisis derived from the more general, dialectical sense of crisis Marx sets forth in *Theories of Surplus Value*: "the crisis manifests the unity of the two phases that have become independent of each other" (Marx *Theories* 131). This does not mean that a "break" occurs whereby contradiction is superseded by autonomous spheres; rather, Marx is arguing that the crisis pushes the two phases into a higher level of conflict--which is why he can argue in the Preface to his *Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* that people "become conscious," through ideology, of the "conflict" between "material productive forces of society" and "existing relations of production," and "fight it out" (21). That is, "if we say that the simple form of metamorphosis comprises the possibility of crisis, we only say that in this form itself lies the possibility of rupture and separation of essentially complementary phases" (Marx *Theories* 139). However, in *Theories of Surplus Value* Marx refers to this "most abstract form of crisis" as "an involved moment," by which he means that

the factors which turn this possibility of crisis into [an actual] crisis are not contained in this form itself; it only implies that *the framework* for a crisis exists. And in consideration of the bourgeois economy, that is the important thing. The world trade crises must be regarded as the real concentration and forcible adjustment of all the contradictions of bourgeois economy. The individual factors, which are condensed in these crises, must therefore emerge and must be described in each sphere of the bourgeois economy, and the further we advance in our examination of the latter, the more aspects of this conflict must be traced on the one hand, and on the other hand it must be shown that its more abstract forms are recurring and are contained in the more concrete forms. (140)

To put it concisely, crises are the interruption of the moment of qualitative change from commodity to money; they consist of factors that impede the realization of surplus value. The "forcible adjustment" of those factors to achieve the metamorphosis of commodity to money, the forced "condensation" of "complementary phases" which fuses the phases into the dialectically unified process necessary for the production of surplus-value, displaces the factors constituting the crisis elsewhere, into "each sphere of

bourgeois economy." That is, capitalism is always trying to grease the process by which profit is realized by removing any barrier that constitutes a disruptive factor. This is an enormous and ongoing task, however, for greasing the process eventually leads to a crisis in overproduction, where the very lust for profit causes a fall in the rate of profit by saturating the market with goods which people already have, do not want, or, as in the case of workers whose salaries have been kept at a minimum in order to afford the capitalist class more profit, cannot buy. Here, the lust for profit limits the realization of profit. While capitalists certainly make profitable use of such crises, which bring a fall in the prices of means of production that enables capitalists to revolutionize those means to enable the greater production of profit, it remains the case, as Marx argues, that "the *real barrier* of capitalist production is capital itself" (Marx *Capital* vol. 3 250). That is, the core factor constituting the impediment to the realization of surplus value and standing behind the most abstract form of crisis in capitalism is the class contradiction, the division of human beings into two "complementary" classes through which *all* people participate in social production, the yield of which, however, must not--if capitalism is to continue to produce "surplus"-value, that is, "be" capitalism--accrue to all people, but only to a tiny minority. Because capitalist relations of production must obtain in order for capitalism to survive, *what must not occur* is the unity of the two classes, which is precisely what transformation aims to produce through the abolition of class society: a classless society made materially manifest in production organized for the purpose of meeting all people's needs, rather than producing surplus-value for a minority. In short, the "complementary phases" of the unity, the two classes, must never be allowed to "metamorphosize" into that unity; they must always "fall apart."

It is because crisis is the material effect of contradiction that, as Rosa Luxemburg argued, "crises . . . appear to be the instruments of rekindling the fire of capitalist development. Their cessation--not temporary cessation, but their total disappearance in the world market--would not lead to the further development of capitalist economy. It would destroy capitalism" (62). Crisis, as the moment when the two phases fall apart, is the moment providing the possibility for the reassertion through various means--from direct, "repressive" force to ideological suasion to the revolutionizing of the means of production--by the capitalist class of the existence of two classes. Class contradiction, the condition that capitalism cannot live with or without, is what is always subject to the "forcible adjustment" that cannot eradicate that contradiction but only displace it elsewhere, into individual everyday life, where the contradiction assumes not the "abstract form" of $[M \rightarrow]C \rightarrow M1$, but the "concrete form" of an instance in which what a member of the working class needs is unattainable, a circumstance giving rise to the ideological apprehension of unmet need as desire that is autonomous from the production of surplus-value. As a displaced form of unmet need, desire is symptomatic of need that capitalism refuses to meet. Desire is not therefore "autonomous" from capitalism in the sense that it is produced from a site outside of or unreachable by capitalism. It is precisely the effect of capitalist practices. Rather, it is "autonomous" in the sense that it is the cultural symptom of the need the meeting of which capitalism forcibly excludes from its practices in order to produce profit. Desire, then, is the concrete form of need produced from class contradiction and displaced by capitalist-class interest onto the individual or group. Materially attached to need and class contradiction, desire can

become, through critique that exposes its attachment to need and class, crucial embryonic sense that can be developed toward class consciousness. That is, it can be addressed as a form of embryonic consciousness because it is fundamentally attached to need--but it can also be contained and deployed for reformative purposes. This is because, while there can be no commodities produced under capitalism to satisfy unmet need--unmet need is precisely that for which capitalism refuses to produce use-values, in order to extract the greater portion of labor-power for the production of exchange values and, ultimately, profit--there *can* be commodities produced for the cultural symptom of unmet need, desire. Thus it appears that capitalism "works" to produce goods to meet people's needs. What it actually produces, by refusing to meet some need, is--of course--the desiring subject who is predisposed to purchase the commodities with which capitalist practices saturate the market. But in producing the desiring subject, capitalism is also producing the subject who does not apprehend--or abstract, if at all--its "sense" of need in relation to the social totality (which is not to say that capitalism produces a non-revolutionary subject).

Because capitalism produces commodities to address desire rather than meet need, it produces a subject whose sense is finely calibrated to desire, a subject, that is, who is prepared to apprehend all things in life in terms of its symptom, desire, and not its actuality, need. This is a subject prepared by capitalist practices to develop its own consciousness in terms of capitalist consciousness: the "individual" who has "unique desires and seeks to fulfill them in order to "realize" her individuality and "uniqueness"--become "her own" unique "self." Through capitalist practices, that is, the subject is prepared to develop notions about herself that are ideological, notions that express in ideal form the dominant relations of production: that the subject "belongs" to herself and "freely" sells her labor-power to the capitalist. What is concealed is "the reproduction [by capitalism] of a mass of labor-power, which must incessantly re-incorporate itself with capital for that capital's self-expansion; which cannot get free from capital, and whose enslavement to capital is only concealed by the variety of individual capitalists to whom it sells itself" (Marx *Capital* vol. 1 613-14). What is concealed is that "the capitalist . . . constantly produces labour-power, but in the form of a subjective source of wealth, separated from the objects in and by which it can alone be realised; in short he produces the labourer, but as a wage-labourer" (Marx *Capital* vol. 1 571). Capital *owns* the laborer through the force of private property relations; but through capitalist practices, this fact is occluded and the desiring subject naturalized as the "free" subject. However, the contradiction and the need it produces from which emerges critical distance, are not abolished; they are, rather, resituated. While this resituation works to mediate contradiction and need away from the possibility of class consciousness, and into the realms of crisis and desire, the core contradiction is not transformed; need is (re)produced, and therefore the possibility of embryonic class consciousness is nevertheless recurrent. That is, "faith in the permanence of the system" is eroded both through the constant change within the system and the growing unmet need, produced by the system, for a different system.

Critical distance, then, as awareness of the distance between what is and what can be, while it appears within culture, is not produced by culture but made possible by the

structure of capitalism; while capitalism works to erase it through structural mediation, it cannot make the possibility of it disappear and, so long as capitalism produces profit from class contradiction, indeed continually reproduces the possibility of critical distance, and with increasingly greater breadth. If the capitalist class does not in some way actively confront this structural possibility which it continually and ever more widely produces, the capitalist contradiction will unfold through the structures of daily life, that is, will continually expose "the secret" the capitalist class wishes to keep hidden: that absolute surplus-value is that which the worker produces that is kept "apart" from her by capitalist relations of production. If this possibility is not actively concealed, in other words, embryonic critical distance will unfold at the level of the individual member of the proletariat. Because, as Lukacs has argued, "in every aspect of daily life in which the individual worker imagines himself to be the subject of his own life he finds this to be an illusion that is destroyed by the immediacy of his existence" (165), the proletariat at the level of the individual becomes embryonically aware of the division at the level of the individual worker that capitalism produces through its efforts to transform the commodity into money: the division between herself and that which she has produced, the use-value of the commodity, and, at the most basic level, which Lukacs also draws attention to, the division of herself, by "herself" under capitalist relations of force, into "a specialised process" of labor-power sold as a commodity, and those now partial aspects of herself which she can only keep alive (for herself) by continuing to sell her labor-power (166).

Under capitalist relations, then, the possibility of the development of critical distance cannot be eradicated; its concrete forms can only be managed, that is, the recognition that change is possible can only be redirected, organized to serve individual interests--which is to say, capitalist interests, since the frame through which capitalism makes capitalist sense and profit is through that of individual competition for "scarce" resources. As capitalist crises become more frequent and intensified, and therefore produce more and more crises manifesting themselves at the level of the individual and all institutions across the cultural manifold, the possibility of the critical distance of embryonic class consciousness occurring also increases. To address this possibility, the Knowledge Industry arises. Its task is twofold. It must work simultaneously to discredit classical Marxism and thereby suppress the inauguration of the critical distance that can develop into class consciousness, and it must produce "new" "knowledges" that explain the local crisis (fill the "demand" for explanation of awareness of unmet need) in terms other than need--most preferably, in terms of desire. In short, through the Knowledge Industry, ideology is something actively carried out by ideologists. Its practices weaken the ability of the proletariat as a class to abolish the contradiction that makes competition among workers necessary.

Producing and circulating knowledges which posit that critical distance is abolished also manages the possibility of the development of critical distance in those who develop it most fully, into a science of materialist critique: the vanguard. The vanguard, produced through the movement of class (historical materialist) supplementarity which I will theorize more fully below, consists of those "who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole." It is "a small section of the ruling class [that] cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class" (Marx and

Engels *The Communist Manifesto* 91), that is, moves to a position "from without" as an effect of "comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole." As the Knowledge Industry develops, it both thins the ranks of this collective and works to foreclose the possibility it will develop at all. The Knowledge Industry thins the ranks of the vanguard by both suppressing materialist knowledges and setting up a demand for the "new" knowledges across pedagogical sites, including, of course, universities. Those who develop and teach these "new" knowledges are hired, retained, given the most resources for research. Those who do not are not hired, let go, or refused resources for research, on the grounds the knowledge they produce does not "sell." (For a sustained critique of such an involved moment, see Ebert, "Quango-ing.") Universities, that is, are increasingly at the mercy of corporate structures, especially since the 1980s, when "Congress enacted legislation which granted huge tax write-offs, along with the right to purchase patents derived from academic research, to corporations that engage in partnerships with universities" (Zaidi 52). At the University of Rochester, Ali Shehzad Zaidi has argued, this has meant cutting programs and departments "out of favor with corporate interests" (52); redirecting university resources to what corporate "trustees want it to cover" (53); and, ultimately, using "public resources and student tuition" to "fund research that allows corporations to sell products at a monopoly price" (53). Those departments and programs which see the necessity of opposing these moves are explicitly threatened, terrorized in the sense Lyotard articulates when he argues that the system "says: 'Adapt your aspirations to our ends--or else'" (64): "we wish to make clear," a letter from University of Rochester's President Jackson to faculty reads, "that, in the new College environment, resources will flow more generously to those departments which succeed best in supporting the overall goals of the Renaissance Plan" (52). Jackson predicts that, "Within the next five years, all American universities will have to go through something like it" (Zaidi 56). That the vanguard will develop at all is a possibility the Knowledge Industry works to foreclose by providing the conditions for dominance through terrorism--through the processes that also thin the vanguard--of those who develop and disseminate the "new" knowledges, through which the potential vanguard is provided with knowledges not of classical Marxism, but of cultural marxism which produces an avant-garde trained to performance rather than educated to critical theory and the necessity of revolution. The university at the millennium, that is, produces that "trained incapacity" to understand social actuality that Thorstein Veblen noted years ago.

It is important to note that the management of the possibility of the development of critical distance is not a function arising autonomously from the production of surplus-value, that is, it is not symptomatic of a "glitch" in the class contradiction that points to a gap or space from which might arise a class or class fraction--such as Barbara and John Ehrenreich's "professional managerial class" (PMC) (12)--which might also "hold the future in its hands," as does the proletariat (Marx and Engels *Manifesto* 91). This is, in fact, E.O. Wright's conclusion following from his "neo-Marxist" class analysis: "One of the upshots of this reconceptualization of the middle class is that it is no longer axiomatic that the proletariat is the unique, or perhaps even the central, rival to the capitalist class for class power in capitalist society. . . . there are other class forces within capitalism that potentially pose an alternative capitalism" (27). The management of the possibility of the development of critical distance is, rather, a materially produced function, as Marx

argues: "The work of directing, superintending, and adjusting, becomes one of the functions of capital, from the moment that the labour under the control of capital, becomes co-operative. Once a function of capital, it acquires special characteristics. . . . The control exercised by the capitalist is not only a special function, due to the nature of the social labour-process, and peculiar to that process, but it is, at the same time, a function of the exploitation of a social labour-process, and is consequently rooted in the unavoidable antagonism between the exploiter and the living and labouring raw material he exploits" (*Capital* vol. 1 331). This means that the class or class fraction that manages critical distance cannot be theorized as a class because of this function, a function at the core of the Ehrenreichs' theorization of the PMC as a separate class that Al Szymanski critiqued as one which "adds criteria beyond relations of production to class" (50). In turn, this means that the knowledges required for management cannot be thought of as autonomous from the class struggle determined by contradiction. I will return below to a theorization of this class as a class fraction emerging from class struggle determined by contradiction. The main point here is that Jameson's theorization relies on the functionalist argument put forth by the Ehrenreichs because it moves to "enrich" Marxism by focussing on the possibilities for change within culture (once critical distance is abolished). That such possibilities for change could even present themselves from within culture signals a buried assumption on Jameson's part that some knowledges exist, and can be "added on" to Marxism, because they are separate from the expansion of capitalism rather than produced as such by that expansion. Rather than "enriching" Marxism, then, Jameson eviscerates Marxism and manufactures a form of populism where "knowledge" necessary for social transformation is developed from within a culture of multiple spheres without a decided exterior. In other words, Jameson engages in the double move of the Knowledge Industry of suppressing critical distance and producing knowledges based on desire.

By denying the objective, decided exterior to capitalism ("everything has become cultural"), and by then denying that critical distance is objectively produced, it is clear that Jameson abolishes critical distance from the theoretical imaginary and in so doing deprives workers of access to the knowledges that would enable them to go beyond their "incapacity" to map the "global network." He deprives them, that is, of the knowledges necessary to grasp their unmet need and its symptom--desire--in terms of the social totality as a division into two classes and thereby reproduces the very "incapacity" he claims to work against. I will now turn to his substitution of desire for need and class.

End of Sections 1-5; Go to Sections 6-10 in this issue.

* This essay is one in a new series entitled: TEXTS FOR TRANSFORMATION: Introductions to Critique-al Cultural Studies, sponsored by the **RED COLLECTIVE**. The purpose of this series is to bring back into contemporary social and cultural theory fundamental concepts in historical materialist ideology critique. Moreover, this series will argue for the necessity of "the conceptual" at a historical moment when the mainstream liberal-left, in both its academic and activist modalities, has abandoned "theory" in a reactionary stance against "the rational." We argue against the irrational in all its forms-- from the "body-ism" of the libidinal-left to the "spontaneity-ism" of the popul(ar)ist-left-- which put forward (at best) a historically bankrupt act-ionism geared towards a pragmatic politics of local re-form and thus displace the need for theory as an on-going critique of ideology and hence an integral part of an international praxis of revolutionary social transformation. Our purpose is to intervene in this ruling class anti-rational ideology, which, far from opposing late global capitalism, is one of the most "new and improved" means for mystifying the structural determinants (opaque to experience) which are increasingly and systematically privatizing and commodifying the production of knowledge, culture, and basic human needs.

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