Desire and Class (cont.)

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VI
Labor Theory of Re-presentation: Knowledge and (Unmet) Need

"Knowledge Will Tear apart the Chains of Slavery"

The argument that knowledge necessary for change comes from within culture is an effect of post-structuralist theories of representation which contend that knowledge is fundamentally shaped by the laws of motion of language in which it is represented. From this emerges the idealist notion undergirding post-ality that the subject is subject to the laws of motion of language. This simply repeats the dominant notion Marx argued against in the *Grundrisse*, that "individuals are now ruled by *abstractions*, whereas earlier they depended on one another. The abstraction, or idea, however, is nothing more than the theoretical expression of those material relations which are their lord and master" (164). As he develops this theorization in *Capital*, it is the commodity-- the congelation of abstracted labor--that appears to rule individuals "because 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" (Marx *Capital* vol. 1 72). The core issue here is the relationship of representation to ideology. As Marx indicates, representation is never representation *qua* representation but rather representation as formulated by a particular mode of inquiry, itself--on the Marxist view--produced by and reproductive of ruling class interest. "Representation,"as Stephen Tumino and Brian Ganter have argued, "is not a transparent vehicle reflecting the 'phenomenal universe' or a transcendental moral truth, but is itself 'political'--in other words, the so-called 'facts' of the 'phenomenal universe' are always 'produced' by the exercise of institutional power as 'the facts' within a particular institutional context and the interpretation of those 'facts' is inseparable from the exercise power" (54). The important questions, then, become: What does the theory of representation Jameson suggests presuppose about the social, What is its relation to class interest, and What are

the effects of deploying that particular theory, that is, *Why* is it being deployed and legitimated now?

Jameson returns to Lacan because he presumes that the alienated subject of modernism has become the fragmented body of postmodernism. Noting that Edward Munch's painting *The Scream* is "a canonical expression of the great modernist thematics of alienation, anomie, solitude, social fragmentation, and isolation, a virtually programmatic emblem of what used to be called the age of anxiety" (11), Jameson goes on to read this work-text also as "a virtual deconstruction of the very aesthetic of expression itself, which seems to have dominated much of what we call high modernism, but to have vanished away. . . in the world of the postmodern" (11). Specifically, Jameson addresses "the waning of affect" (16) that "signals the end of th[e modernist] dilemma" both reflected and breached (precisely through reflection) in Munch's painting, that dilemma being that while "expression requires the category of the individual monad, . . .when you constitute your individual subjectivity as a self-sufficient field and a closed realm, you thereby shut yourself off from everything else and condemn yourself to the mindless solitude of the monad, buried alive and condemned to a prison cell without egress" (15). The postmodern, however, while presumably signaling an end to this dilemma, signals a "new" one, the "end. . . of style," where "the unique and the personal" end with the emergence of mechanical reproduction, such that the "centered subject"--who could still feel "anxiety and alienation" (14)--is displaced by a different subject, one from whom all feeling has been "liberated" since "there is no longer a self present to do the feeling" (15). With no outside for critical distance, "the subject has lost its capacity actively to extend its pro-tensions and re-tensions across the temporal manifold and to organize its past and future into coherent experience." Without the outside--which Jameson here suggests produced not the critical distance of the proletariat and the vanguard, but the stylishness of the avant-garde--all that is left of the subject is a heap of fragments. But this "crisis in historicity" itself "now dictates a return" to "the questions of temporal organization. . . in the postmodern force field": that of "space and spatial logic" (25). Through this return, Jameson restores through what Lacan calls "the lure of spatial identification" (736) not critical distance, but the fetishization of style integral to the ideology that production has been superseded by consumption, as we saw with Pakulski and Waters.

This "lure"--Jameson's "dictate"--is irresistible because, according to Jameson, the loss of critical distance has opened onto a "shift in the dynamics of cultural pathology. . . in which the alienation of the subject is displaced by the latter's fragmentation" (14). "This fragmented body" (Lacan claims the term is his [736]), once "caught up in the lure of spatial identification" precipitated by the inauguration of the mirror stage, finds itself subject to a "succession of phantasies" (736) or images, which Lacan also calls "imagoes" (735), that the mirror stage "manufactures for the subject" (736). As Jane Gallop explains, within this frame the subject is positioned to understand, upon entry into the Symbolic, the imagoes manufactured by the Imaginary to be "structuring positions" (61). Because Jameson's effort proceeds from a space of cultural economism (the space "from within") that is both effect of and support for the exclusion of a determinate outside of capitalism (the space enabling the revolutionary theory "from without"), the effort to

represent our place in the global system is circumscribed by the terms of the Imaginary. These imagoes, determined by what the Imaginary "manufactures," provide the subject with ready-made positions. That the effort is so circumscribed is a point Jameson seems aware of. As Gallop notes in arguing that "the ethical imperative to accede to the symbolic and vigilantly to resist the imaginary is itself mired in the imaginary," "Jameson makes a similar point" (60; 60 n5). By moving to this withinist frame, Jameson enters the very frame of idealism the historical materialist position aims to critique. Certainly it was precisely such "imagoes" Marx and Engels referred to when they wrote that "The phantoms of [human's] brains have got out of their hands" (*The German Ideology* Preface) and proceeded to show, through critique, that "the phantoms formed in the human brain are. . . , necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premises" (47). In short, Jameson shifts the Marxist project into a frame in which it is not labor that positions people in the social, but representation, understood as images produced through the subject's entry into language whose laws of motion are themselves imagined to be autonomous from those of capitalism. Here, he effectively agrees with Paul Bove's post-structuralist understanding that the "'roots' of our representations" are "in inescapable yet hidden linguistic processes" (92). What Jameson displaces here in the effort to open Marxism onto representation of the "existential," the "daily life" of the "biological subject," is that representation from a Marxist perspective involves political contestation over meanings carried out in class struggle and determined by the development of the forces of the base. That is, representation is never merely a matter of "mapping"--what amounts to cataloguing--existing images, a project that sets the limits for change at the rearrangement of signs in the quest for unity through "style", and which presumes that it is indeed representation that determines people's lives. Rather, representation is a site of struggle over the competing meanings of materially produced existing images, competing meanings shaped by the material interests of the two classes of capitalism which the proletariat becomes embryonically aware of through the development of critical distance.

Jameson's move into the Lacanian theory of representation erases class and need, substituting for them the subject in language driven by desire which he presumes cannot be made sense of in terms of the need produced by class contradiction. That is, he accepts the terms of Lacanian theory which install desire in language as that which motivates individual change and thereby displaces need as that which makes systemic transformation both necessary and possible. This has great consequences for the production of knowledge. The imagoes or phantasies manufactured by the mirror stage sublimate that stage into the Symbolic, their existence accomplishing that deflection of the specular into the social I. But what becomes the cause of "human knowledge"as a sublimate in this withinist frame is not "material life-process" whose basis is need, but, as Lacan argues, "desire of the other" (737). Knowledge here is a sublimate of lack, of nothing. That is, the lack at the core of the social is understood not in terms of need socially produced by class contradiction that privileges profit over human lives, a condition that can be intervened in and transformed, in part through theory as critique of the conditions of intelligibility. Rather, the lack is understood in terms of desire in language, a transhistorical and socially insurmountable condition that (re)produces the social and the social subject through the operations of the incessant scissions of

semiotics. This ignores that the relations of production are integral to the movement of history that places proletariat, lumpenproletariat, and above all, people's needs, *outside* the social interest of capitalism. These people's needs, that is, become, on the bourgeois view, "surplus": Marx argues that "if a surplus labouring population is a necessary product of accumulation or of the development of wealth on a capitalist basis, this surplus population becomes, conversely, the lever of capitalist accumulation, nay, a condition of existence of the capitalist mode of production" (*Capital* vol. 1 632); "the production of a relative surplus population--*i.e.*, surplus with regard to the average needs of the self-expansion of capital--is a necessary condition of modern industry" (vol. 1 633). To put it bluntly, capitalism produces "a disposable industrial reserve army, that belongs to capital quite as absolutely as if the latter had bred it at its own cost" (vol. 1 632). Implicit in the concepts of surplus-labor and surplus population is the bourgeois concept of "surplus-need," what I will call "outlawed need." From the point of view of the bourgeoisie, there is an entire class of people whose subsistence and subsequent vital needs (those that would arise in classless society when subsistence needs are met) are anathema. When we theorize lack to be an effect of nothing rather than socially produced and outlawed need, we concede we exist in a condition from which, despite the generation of a proliferation of signifiers, we can never produce knowledge that enables intervention into and systemic transformation of the social, since the social exists only on the basis or center that is in fact no basis or center, but precisely the transhistorical separation of the organism from unity with its self as an integral part of its environs that in the Lacanian formulation is the condition of possibility of human Being. In the Lacanian formulation, the signifier is an abstraction from nothing, and the subject is destined to seek an impossible unity, constrained within a field of being in which the tool of the quest--language--can never bring the subject to know that unity now made phantom by the development of the tool that made us aware of the possibility of unity in the first place. All the signifier and the subject can reach is another signifier. Here, abstraction is displaced in favor of the trope.

Of course, there is an irreducible gap between the signifier and the referent or, in the case of Lacan following Saussure, the signified ("The Agency" 740). However, this is not an issue that has gone untheorized by historical materialism (as many have implied, e.g., Hall 279). Engels, for example, argues that "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), a point Lacan reiterates when he argues that the form of the Ideal-I (the specular I) "situates the agency of the ego, before its social determination, in a fictional direction, which will always remain irreducible for the individual alone, or rather, which will only rejoin the coming-into-being . . . of the subject *asymptotically*" ("The Mirror Stage" 735 emphasis added). To which Engels would reply, especially with regard to Lacan's location of agency "in a fictional direction," "although a concept has the essential nature of a concept and cannot therefore *prima facie* directly coincide with reality, from which it must first be abstracted, *it is still something more than a fiction*, unless you are going to declare all the results of thought fictions because reality has to go a long way round before it corresponds to them, and

even then only corresponds to them with asymptotic approximation" (letter 563, emphasis added).

A concept in the frame of historical materialism is "something more than a fiction" because the gap produced when, as Marx argues, "Man makes his life-activity itself the object of his will and of his consciousness"--a gap back across which the concept works to reach but which the trope cannot--does not occur, as it does in the Lacanian formulation, in isolation from "life-activity," that is, does not occur in isolation from the emergence of "labor. . . *productive life* itself, [which] appears in the first place merely as a *means* of satisfying a need--the need to maintain physical existence" (Marx *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* 113; original emphasis). While the concept does produce a distance from that labor, this distance from labor is not the *disenabling* distance of (signifying) lack which ineluctably and forever determines humans to shuttle back and forth along a never-ending chain of desire, satisfaction of which desire would, on these terms, amount to an asteroid of judgment that would make dinosaurs of humans. Rather, the distance Marx alludes to, one based on need, *is precisely what allows for agency*: "[life- activity] is not a determination with which [man] directly merges" (113). Here, the gap does not foreclose, as it does in the Lacanian framework, the possibility of an increase in knowledge which, while fundamentally asymptotic and therefore preclusive of *natural* unity, nevertheless allows for *material* unity--that aimed for by the abolition of class society. Nor does it disenable action toward that unity, but rather is precisely what enables such agency. The difference is that Marx understands unity in the historical materialist sense in which unity is *social*--not individual--unity that is also capable of socially effective material unity with nature, where the environment is not poisonously exhausted.

Concepts, then, are "something more than a fiction" because they are never effects of a gap undetermined by need, that is, they never arise independently of "the necessity of associating with . . . individuals" (*The German Ideology* 51) for the purpose of meeting "needs which are already developed" (87). Concepts, in short, are not abstracted from a lack that marks nothing, but from a lack that marks human need, itself produced by a degree of social organization of labor; in turn, those concepts are transformed by the social organization they enable (*The German Ideology* 87), and the resulting "knowledge then reacts back in practice on the total supply and demand. Although on the given standpoint, alienation is not overcome by these means, nevertheless relations and connections are introduced thereby which include the possibility of suspending the old standpoint" (*Grundrisse* 161). That is, the concept is abstraction that allows for historical materialist critique that enables transformation. Since the "forms of intercourse" these concepts enable "correspond at every stage to the simultaneous development of the productive forces, their history is at the same time the history of the evolving productive forces taken over by each new generation, and is, therefore, the history of the development of the forces of the individuals themselves" (*The German Ideology* 87). As this indicates, "individual" "existential" "daily life" of the "biological subject" is not ignored, as Jameson intimates; rather the mode of intelligibility that constitutes the horizon of meaning with regard to each is one that situates the subject in relation to all

other subjects as they work together to reproduce human life; that is, it is one that situates the subject in history.

A concept in the materialist frame, then, is not simply the effect of "deflection" from an imaginary, specular I unattached to need. Rather, it is an *inflection* of the material, class position of those who have the resources to "fix" the concept to a particular meaning. The tripartite understanding of language in the historical materialist frame, then, is as follows: The Concrete Real, which labor produces in its work on nature; The Recognition of new Need, need which is itself produced as an effect of labor on nature; the Materio-symbolic inflection of material subsistence through class position in the social production of that which addresses (but in class society does not satisfy) the new Need. Here, signifiers in language have the signified of need, whose ultimate referent is the labor from which it is made possible and produced. In capitalism, while this need is invisible, it is not made of nothing, but produced by class contradiction as a by-product of exploited labor. In the last instance, then, the symbol is an inflection of need.

To argue that it is not so inflected and ultimately fixed, that it is unstable, an effect of desire, is not, however, an argument that escapes class interest. Rather, to mount the argument that representation is unstable and a deflected effect of desire is precisely to inflect and fix the concept of representation through the class interests of those whose class position in the social necessitates their denial and erasure of the concepts that enable the agency of the proletariat. This not only reveals that the Lacanian formulation of representation Jameson returns to is a capitalist class-interested one. It also reveals that the charge of "reductiveness" leveled at Marxism from which we supposedly escape by appeal to the subject in language applies also to those theories of the subject in language. Theories of the subject in language exclude from the possibility of explanation materially produced and outlawed social need. They quite precisely *reduce* the subject to a subject who cannot unfold through the development of proletariat class agency. This simply points up that there is no such thing as an all inclusive form of representation, whether it be material (where the limits of inclusiveness are the limits of the asymptotic relationship between concept and that to which it refers) or semiotic (where the limits of inclusiveness are set by the impossibility of containing or halting the production of surplus meaning).

In consideration of representation, then, the issue is not one of inclusiveness or exclusiveness outside of material history, but rather what exclusion is necessary in history, and the exclusion necessary at this historical moment is the exclusion of class society which excludes the needs of workers as "surplus." What is critical, then, is not the development of an all inclusive form of representation, which is basically what Jameson's aesthetic of cognitive mapping aims for, given his privileging of the Bowie character's ability, in *The Man who Fell to Earth*, to watch "fifty-seven television screens simultaneously" (31). Here, Jameson ignores Lenin's point that "mankind has not created a 'third' ideology, and, moreover, in a society torn by class antagonisms there can never be a non-class or an above-class ideology" (*What Is to Be Done* 41). Rather what is critical is that the means of representation--language--is theorized and used as a means for explaining class need, the meeting of which requires the overthrow of class society; only through such red representation can social unity, in the material and not idealist

sense, be achieved. Through such red representation, the worker becomes Lenin's worker theorist (41), who joins the vanguard in the critique of what is in the struggle for what can be.

A materially inclusive aesthetic or narrative is not possible within class society because class society requires exclusion of proletariat need. To claim that it is possible is at base to presume that discourse that is the sublimate of labor can act with a power derived from something beyond that labor on which it is predicated. It is to assume that the power of discourse is autonomous from labor-power. In ignoring that as long as there is exploitation, power is an effect of those who steal labor-power, such a discourse is terrorist. It effectively says, to paraphrase Lyotard through Althusser, "Adapt your imagined relations to the real to the way they are represented by those in dominance." What Jameson aims for through an aesthetic of cognitive mapping in which all are represented may very well be the development of Marxism into what it can now only struggle through class contradiction to represent as a possibility: the materially all-inclusive theory that would emerge from the struggle for transformation of class society. As Henri Lefebvre has argued in his return to Marx's concept of "alienation," Marx's writings "contain Marxism, but as a potential, and certainly not all Marxism (a term which in any case has no clearly defined meaning). . . . That Marx should subsequently abandon or transform such philosophical concepts as alienation does not prove them to be meaningless, nor does the advent of political economy mean that the role of philosophy is at an end. We may take them up again and use them--as Marx did--to criticize their social origins and speculative interpretations of them" (80). However, by shifting into the Lacanian framework of the subject in language, Jameson participates in what Lefebvre argued against, those many "attempts to develop Marxism 'freely'," attempts which have "involved deliberate modifications of its most solidly established foundations" (Lefebvre 176). It is necessary now to argue against such "free reading" enabled by the unfreedom from need of many, in order to strengthen the possibility of red critique for freedom from need.

VII
Labor Theory of Signification: Consciousness as Materially Produced Need

As I have argued, Fredric Jameson moves the Marxist project of representation to within the space of language, where the social is produced through the operations of linguistic slippage in a "field" with no center, whose motion (compelled by the incessant scissions of semiotics) makes it a field of infinitely divisible cultural practices. In shifting the Marxist project onto such a field, Jameson displaces the social as a totality driven by class contradiction whose center--capital, accumulated capital, profit, and always more of it--is produced through the violent exclusion of need, by the decided forces which constitute the objective outside of the social. This need, which can help push the forces of production to break their current fetters enables and points to the necessity of the praxis of critique. Jameson, however, repeats the double move that opens onto post-ality, that of erasing the priority of production of surplus value through exploitation and simultaneously according infinitely divisible cultural practices (severed from the material practice of exploitation) constitutive priority. Objectively produced need and the

objective forces of capitalism that produce that need as "excess" and in fact outlaw it are erased, replaced by desire and structured projections of the Imaginary. While this "opens" the space of representation, it opens it in a frame hostile to workers and erases the theory of representation necessary for social transformation, which Marxism can provide.

Apparently, as I have indicated, Jameson turns to Lacanian representation because it will "enrich" Marxism, which presupposes that Marxist critique has not addressed, indeed, is incapable of addressing, the "waning of affect" and the "fragmented body." This erases the work and the resources of the work of both Henri Lefebvre and Georg Lukacs. In his 1947 *Critique of Everyday Life* Lefebvre remarks on the waning of affect and death of the subject, which Jameson makes clear is the death of the alienated subject. On affect, Lefebvre writes, "If I have learned to think or to love, it is in and through the words, gestures, expressions and songs of thirty centuries of human alienation. How can I come to grips with my self, or how can we retrieve our selves once more?" (184). On the death of the alienated subject: "Alienated labour has lost its social essence. Though its essence is indeed social, labour assumes the appearance and the reality of an individual task. Moreover, as it is social labour, it takes the form of a buying and selling of labour-power. . . . The individual ceases to feel at one with the social conditions of his activity. . . . For the worker, participation in the creative activity of the social whole takes the form of an external necessity: the necessity of 'earning a living,' and it is thus that, for the individual, social labour takes on the appearance of a penalty, a mysterious punishment. . . .The human being--ceasing to be human-- is turned into a tool to be used by other tools (the means of production), a thing to be used by another thing (money), and an object to be used by a class, a mass of individuals who are themselves 'deprived' of reality and truth (the capitalists)" (165). Throughout the *Critique* he argues it is necessary to return to Marxist thought, especially the concept of alienation, in order to confront this condition and transform it. However, this return must not be "dogmatic" but must attempt "to grasp and extend the evolution of the thought [it] contain[s]," remarking also that "certain Marxists have lost sight of its dynamic, living character." On the other hand, it must not be returned through an attempt "to develop Marxism 'freely' . . . modif[ying] . . . its most solidly established foundations" (176). Rather, in the return to Marxism, Marxism must work dialectically (176), "elaborat[ing] both itself and its content at the same time" (177).

On the basis of this theorization of historical materialism, in which its dialectical aspect is never out of focus, Lefebvre argues that through alienation, "the 'world' is [produced as] man's mirror." But this is not a mirror produced through the alienation of the subject in language from the Real, as it is in Lacan. Rather it is a mirror "because man makes it: it is the task of his practical, everyday life to do so. But it is not his 'mirror' in a passive way. In this his work, man perceives and becomes conscious of his own self. If what he makes comes from him, he in turn comes from what he makes; it is made by him, but it is in these works and by these works that he has made himself" (163). In other words, confronted by Portman's Bonaventure or the Wells Fargo Court, the issue of representation must be returned to through alienation--as well as Lukacs' further theorization of it in terms of reification--as an effect of the binary division of labor, not the divisions of the self in language.

In his substantial introduction to the 1957 edition of *Critique of Everyday Life* Lefebvre grasps alienation more thoroughly as "*an aspect of contradiction and of becoming in man*" (70) (that is, in terms of reification as an effect of contradiction, rather than alienation as the basis of contradiction his analysis of 1947 suggested). In theorizing alienation as such, Lefebvre theorizes everyday life "as having two sides: a little, individual, chance event--and at the same time an infinitely complex social event, richer than the many 'essences' it contains within itself. The social phenomenon may be defined as the unity of these two sides" (57). Here, Lefebvre provides an opening from the class subject to the class subject in language. In his theorization of the two sides of everyday life, we have, *in nuce*, Saussure's theorization of the signifier and the signified as two sides of the sheet of paper, with the difference that those two sides of the paper are theorized as produced simultaneously by the social relations of production, themselves fundamentally rooted in human need produced by labor. In consequence, both the parole/little social event and the langue/grand social event have that socially produced and outlawed need as their referent. Saussure in fact alludes to this last when he points out what both Derrida's and Lacan's followers ignore, although Perry Anderson and indeed Jameson himself have noted it. Brian Palmer reads their suggestions as follows: "Although the sign as a unity of signifier and signified was arbitrary, the concept being eminently detachable from its acoustic or formal image, meaning was acquired only within the differentiations of *langue* as a structure or system. Within language as a system of nonreferential signs, then, lay buried a critical referential axis. Similarly, Saussure's synchronic/diachronic dichotomy actually works precisely because his insistence on freezing analysis of language systems within a particular time rests upon a profound appreciation of the essentially historical character of language. Since the sign is arbitrary, it is nothing less than the product of history. To study its constantly evolving motion, therefore, would be to fail to grasp its systematic logic in the world of the present" (Palmer 9). Indeed, Saussure argues that "the arbitrary nature of the sign enables us to understand more easily why it needs social activity to create a linguistic system. A community is necessary in order to establish values. Values have no other rationale than usage and general agreement. An individual, acting alone, is incapable of establishing value. . . . Furthermore, the notion of value, thus defined, shows us that it is a great mistake to consider a sign as nothing more than the combination of a certain sound and a certain concept. To think of a sign as nothing more would be to isolate it from the system to which it belongs. It would be to suppose that a start could be made with individual signs, and a system constructed by putting them together. On the contrary, the system as a united whole is the starting point, from which it becomes possible, by a process of analysis, to identify the constituent elements" (111-112).

If the sign were not arbitrary, value would lose social motivation and be either natural (in which case "the thing itself is a sign," which is the theoretical wedge Derrida returns to in order to launch his project of grammatology and the pre-eminence of what I call libidinal writing [*Of Grammatology* 49; 49-52]); or "capricious," which as Derrida accurately argues, it is not (*Of* 46). As socially unmotivated in either sense, the sign would have no value, for value is established by the community, which as we have seen, Saussure understands to be "the system as a united whole"--the social totality. However, since the sign has value, it must be systemically socially constructed. Derrida attributes

the systemic social construction of linguistic value to difference (52), itself "immotivated" (which is not socially unmotivated, but always "becoming-unmotivated") (50-51). It is "immotivated" by "*differance*," that "*pure* movement which produces difference" (62; this is the basis of Butler's argument in "Merely Cultural"). Because differance is a "trace," and a "*trace is in fact the absolute origin of sense in general*" that is simultaneously "*no absolute origin*" but rather "*the differance* which opens appearance and signification" (65), the systematicity of the social is ultimately "founded" on a radical and unrepresentable gap. Here, the systemic social construction of linguistic value proceeds as an effect of the "pure movement" set in motion by nothingness, lack. Agency can here be achieved only by accelerating the differantial movement through linguistic performativity, the "profligate behavior" (Pakulski and Waters 157) of trying on and acting out of available (sets of) signifiers.

Derrida can ontologize difference, however, and arrive at this theory of linguistic value in which agency is not principled but rather equivalent to profligate behavior only by restricting his focus to semiotic value systems (speech and writing). Within the parameters of that focus, his theory is rigorous and sound. However, once we ask what it is that unifies semiotic systems as semiotic systems, Derrida's thesis of immotivation as (un)founded on the differantial gap is called into question by the materialist theory of value systems which theorize that gap in terms of human labor, terms which Derrida does not argue against but merely displaces to enable his focus on semiotic systems. On the tenets of Derridean theory itself, the question of what unifies semiotic systems must be asked, for Derrida is explicit that the exterior of any system structures its interior (103). In *Re-reading Saussure: The Dynamics of Signs in Social Life*, Paul J. Thibault asks just this question. In response, he argues that labor, fundamental to the social mode of production and exterior not only to parole but also langue (202), is the "general" value system that structures the values of language (205), itself "the historical product of social work," a point, Thibault reminds us, that Saussure made "on more than one occasion. . . . (e.g., Saussure 1967: 46)" (202). This means that when Saussure argues, as Thibault puts it, that "it is inexact to say that a word signifies something" (205), Saussure does not mean that the word signifies the trace, as Derrida would have it. Rather, it means that signification is invested with a "value relation," and "the value relation which is invested in the sign is abstracted from the material and social relations which produced it" (205-6). "Meaning," in short, is an effect of a system of values which can be abstracted from the social relations of production only in the theoretical imaginary.

Signification is invested with a "value relation" because it is tied to the need produced by labor. Derrida erases this tie, imagining writing to be founded on physical movement that is unattached to need. He writes: "What Saussure saw without seeing, knew without being able to take into account, following in that the entire metaphysical tradition, is that a certain model of writing was necessarily but provisionally imposed (but for the inaccuracy in principle, insufficiency of fact, and the permanent usurpation) as instrument and technique of representation of a system of language. And that this movement, unique in style, was so profound that it permitted the thinking, *within language*, of concepts like those of the sign, technique, representation, language" (*Of* 43.) Here, Derrida assumes physical movement to be behind writing; that this movement is

proto- and arche-writing; and that this movement that remains in the theory of grammatology as the trace is autonomous from labor. It is not. It is only the purposeful activity of labor--socially organized "life-activity"--that makes possible the consciousness which enables purposeful labor specific to any "sphere," understood not as an autonomous "plane" but as an *involved moment* determined by the state of the forces of production. Movement is never "mere" movement autonomous from the (re)production of real life. If, then, in the (re)production of real life a new need ("gap") arises, it can be explained only by asking What is the condition of possibility with regard to the (re)production of real life that allows for the new need? And the only explanation can be: life-activity, the simple and local (re)production of life, achieved a degree of practical organization--that is, in *practice* it achieved effects that could not be attributed to accident. In short, "life-activity" became labor, the complex relations constituting the *social* (re)production of *material* life. This practical organization met prior needs with an effectivity that so increased the practical ability to sustain life that it became a practice which could not be abandoned to spontaneous, conjunctural (re)formation but had to be actively (re)produced. It became a practice, in other words, regarding the maintenance and extension of which *there could be no choice*. For to "choose" against it would mean to "choose" a greater possibility of death. That is, practical organization effectively created a new need--one of consciousness, specifically the "consciousness of the necessity of associat[ion]" (Marx and Engels *The German Ideology* 51). This is the consciousness of "relation to others" that does not exist for the animal; in people, it "takes the place of instinct or that. . . instinct is a conscious one" (*The German Ideology* 51). Its *practical* expression--for since the "'spirit' is afflicted with the curse of being 'burdened' with matter," there can be no "'pure' consciousness" (*The German Ideology* 50)--is language. "Language," Marx and Engels argue, "is as old as consciousness, language is practical consciousness" (51). As the practical expression of consciousness of the necessity of association, language is the "agitat[ion] . . . of air" (50-51) made necessary by the need to maintain and extend the "co-operation" that "is itself a 'productive force'" (50).

To think consciousness as anything other than that which arose to meet a need produced by labor is to posit that *consciousness is not a necessity*. To think it as having arisen as autonomous from the labor necessary to (re)produce material life is made possible only by the development of historical forces that allow the needs of the few to be met at the expense of the needs of the many, such that some can fantasize that movement is not shaped by labor. To think movement as autonomous from labor is a symptom of having taken up the interests of the capitalist class and the resultant desire to maintain class society. Movement is thought as autonomous from labor by those such as Butler and de Certeau, who theorize physical movement as the site of that "entirely different kind of production, called 'consumption'" (de Certeau 31) that is performed within the terms of the given social and in fact leads to the profligate behavior of Pakulski and Waters that works best--for the production of profit--in the *absence* of consciousness.

With this materialist rereading of Saussure and critique of Derrida, what is allowed for by Lefebvre is not a theorization of language that ignores labor but rather puts it at its core. It is not "lack" outside of/autonomous from the (re)production of material life that is

the "master anti- signifier-signifier," as poststructuralist theories of language construct it; rather, the actuality that enables signification is the socio-historically produced human need to which all labor is ultimately tied. Moreover, Lefebvre extends alienation to explain the subject who has lost its self. Here, through a rereading of Marx's "Alienated Labour" in *The Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844*, Lefebvre argues that "Marx does not limit alienation to exploitation, to the fact that a share of the product is taken away from the worker individually or collectively (the working class) by the individual and the class which controls the means of production. He analyses alienation under several headings," including "the alienation of the worker as an *object* (the alien power which turns him into an object)" (61). Alienation stemming from class contradiction is what produces the "little, individual, chance event" of everyday life by creating the conditions of reification of the event as separate from the totality, whose condition of possibility is labor-produced need. Alienation on the basis of labor-produced need created by class contradiction, that is, produces "the individual" who can regard through alienated thought the events it effects or participates in as discrete, uncircumscribed by class relations. Capitalism, that is, conditions conceptual abstraction by creating through labor relations "the individual" who then conceptualizes in terms of the imposed frame of individualism. This is why Lefebvre argues that "Individualism is not simply a theory, but also a fact and a class weapon" (151). It is a weapon because it severs abstraction from the labor relations that produce it and thereby effects the "incapacity" to map that "worries" Jameson.

Turning to Lukacs, we can represent from a materialist frame--and explain its condition of possibility as rooted in labor (socially organized "life-activity") rather than free-floating images--the "fragmented body" and the postmodern displacement of feelings for Lyotard's "intensities," which are "free-floating and impersonal" (Jameson 16; cf Lyotard's *Libidinal Economy* 60), both of which Jameson turns to the Lacanian framework to represent, inasmuch as Lacan provides the image that Jameson seeks: "There is in effect no signifying chain that does not have, as if attached to the punctuation of each of its units, a whole articulation of relevant contexts suspended 'vertically,' as it were, from that point" ("The Agency" 743). Lukacs argues that capitalism effects a "divorce between work and the individual capacities and needs of the worker" (98). That is why, in fact, surplus value can be regarded as "surplus": it is only by severing work from capacity and need that, as Lukacs argues, the worker can "present himself as the 'owner' of his labor-power, as if it were a commodity" (92). He can then be regarded as selling what he himself regards to be "surplus" labor-power, such that the capitalist class can be seen as utterly in the right in buying that labor-power: It must be surplus to the worker! After all, he chose to sell it to us! This is Marx's point in the *Grundrisse*: "within [the process of production and realization] the worker produces himself as labour capacity, as well as the capital confronting him, while at the same time the capitalist produces himself as capital as well as the living labour capacity confronting him. Each reproduces itself, by reproducing its other, its negation" (458).

Lukacs goes on to explain that the split in the worker also enables the worker to sell "his personality": "one faculty (or complex of faculties) is detached from the whole personality and placed in opposition to it, becoming a thing, a commodity" (99).

Following from the severance of work from capacity and need, the worker's "qualities and abilities are no longer an organic part of his personality, they are things which he can 'own' or 'dispose of' like the various objects of the external world" (100). The founding moment of the objective working class, that is, is the "divorce"-- "reification" is the precise materialist abstraction Lukacs provides--of the worker's labor-power from the other elements of his being, resulting in the reification of "individual" human qualities. Reification of human qualities produces "personality," "uniqueness," "individuality," in a word, reification of human qualities produces the "individual" who exists separately from labor and labor practices, and can even be said to "precede" them, inasmuch as the worker sells his labor power. Under monopoly capitalism, this reification resulted in embryonic individualism, which positioned the neo-individual to "develop" --to become "the real thing," a "really unique person," an "individual," "truly" "human"--by aspiring to and adopting bourgeois habits and practices. The neo-individual "forgets" that "the real thing" is not produced by autonomous habits and practices but by habits and practices enabled by the cash that "transforms the *real essential powers of man and nature* into what are merely abstract conceits and therefore *imperfections*--into tormenting chimeras--just as it transforms *real imperfections and chimeras*, essential powers which are really impotent, which exist only in the imagination of the individual--into *real powers* and *faculties*. . . . Money. . . . transforms idiocy into intelligence and intelligence into idiocy" (Marx, *Economic* 168-9).

In what Jameson calls multinational capitalism, where capital's mobility ends the condition of possibility for many to have whatever dull, specialized consistency was afforded by a lifetime "career" and instead requires the worker to be, if not geographically mobile, then representationally so, in order to take up whatever job is available until the next round of downsizing or workforce restructuration required by the latest revolutionizing of the means of production; in this historical moment the worker must live in a constant state of virtual reification of all parts--now functions--of the self, including the managerial function: one must present oneself as well-groomed, polite, civil. The worker must, that is, live with all parts of herself "suspended 'vertically'" from herself, ready to sell any part--which reveals why Lacan says the suspended contexts are "relevant": they are "relevant" to the individual's life, which depends on relations of production. In short, the subject is dead--fragmented in body and with affect on the wane, replaced by so many free-floating intensities--not because "alienation . . . is displaced by. . . fragmentation," but because reification is now so thorough, it has invaded every pore of human culture.

VIII
". . . That Dangerous Supplement. . .": Class Supplementarity, the Middle-Class Fraction, and the Vanguard

Jameson apparently has concluded that this invasion precludes any possibility for revolutionary critique. This, however, ignores that the need (at the core of reification) produced by the capitalist contradiction at the base of alienation is not "culture." Rather, it is a socially produced condition actively excluded by capitalist practices that disappear it from the dominant cultural imaginary with the active assistance of the labor aristocrats

and their followers in the Knowledge Industry. In ignoring this, informed as his formulation is by the assumption that spaces for revolutionary critique are either available or not, and that struggle plays no part in producing the space for transformative knowledges, Jameson performs nothing less than a retreat from proletariat class struggle and the development of Marxism as the proletariat class-conscious science of history and social transformation. This enables the invasions of a transnational capitalism that seeks to commodify the not yet commodified, its own version of the quest for an all-inclusive representation--on its terms, commodification--of the unrepresented. Jameson's conclusion enables this invasion because in abandoning labor and critical distance--which exists as a possibility so long as there is exploitation that produces need--it robs workers of the means of struggle against exploitation by asserting that there is no possibility for developing class consciousness, either at the level of the everyday or critical abstraction. Critical distance is gone, argues Jameson, as if it is a done deal that precludes struggle. What he does not rigorously engage, however, mentioning it briefly only to dismiss it on the basis that it goes against what he claims "we all. . . dimly feel," namely that all resistance and intervention is "co-opted," "disarmed and reabsorbed by a system of which they themselves might well be considered a part, since they can achieve no distance from it" (49); what he does not rigorously engage is that the very idea that critical distance is gone--indeed the very idea that all is cultural--does not arise from beyond class struggle but is in fact the effect of class struggle determined by the contradictory unfolding of the forces of production. The capitalist class in this struggle surely does fight through co-optation, disarmament, or reabsorption; but these are simply tropes for the material means of struggle of the capital class: commodification. Commodification very precisely makes the labor, exploitation, and above all, the need at the core of the class contradiction *invisible*.

The core of the commodity's power for the capitalist class is precisely its ability to conceal the relations of production such that those relations "appear. . . to [people] as an objective character stamped upon the product of that labour" (Marx *Capital* vol. 1 72). Commodity fetishism is one effect of the commodity's concealment of the relations of production, that is, the power of the commodity appears to emanate from within the commodity itself, when in fact its power is an effect of its materiality, the congealed labor that constitutes it.

Given this, coupled with transnational capitalism's invasion of all spheres, what is this Marxism that Jameson produces if not commodified Marxism, a "Marxism" which makes labor invisible, and thereby manufactures the ideology that we live in a post-capitalist world? What are these theories of the subject in language if not theories that commodify language, theories that, as Lefebvre argues in a critique of "poetic mystery," deny life: "life must be 'made nothingness' so that the secret of existence may be revealed, namely nothingness, the nothingness within every man, his 'infinite' ability to free himself from any instant, any moment, any state, any determined situation, in and through nothingness. The underside of life reveals itself to be its nothingness; and the confusion of nothingness and being is to be found at the heart of the confusion between the abstract and the concrete, the symbolic and the real" (125).

These theories that commodify social processes indicate that what is "unrepresentable" is never unrepresentable in an historical vacuum but very much determined by history. What is "unrepresentable" under capitalism is the possibility of a class-conscious proletariat, one that sees its stolen labor erected as monuments to those who deny production for social need, *and reveals it as such*. Under these historical circumstances, what is privileged is a "Marxism" such as the one articulated in Doug Henwood's *Wall Street*, which gained the author--a self-proclaimed Marxist and editor of *The Left Business Observer*--a spot on FOX News and celebration in the pages of the "left" journal, *The Monthly Review* (see Dowd). But as *The Worker's Vanguard* reveals, Henwood does not recognize the "central importance of the class struggle in determining the movement of financial markets"; "the working class enters Henwood's picture of the current American economy only as helpless victims of capitalist greed personified by Wall Street financiers" (1). His book, the *Vanguard* argues, "is an expression of a new-populism which blames the worst ills and excesses of American capitalism on bankers and other financial operators." In short, *Wall Street*--much like its namesake--"disappear[s] the struggle between labor and capital" (*Vanguard* 6) by erasing labor--for which Henwood is rewarded by the bourgeoisie with a spot on TV.

The possibility of critical distance has not been abolished; rather the institutional sites for the development and practice of transformative knowledges that might develop class consciousness from critical distance have been diminished, and they have been diminished by influential post-al left theorists who while they may believe, as does Jameson, that they are "enriching" Marxism, actually enrich only themselves and the capitalist class when the theories they produce erase labor.

Jameson's moves have serious consequences for social praxis, for the logic of the space onto which Jameson shifts the Marxist project is a *ludic* one which disenables the transformative politics without which Marxism becomes merely one among many other theories that amount to so many "petty-bourgeois socialisms"--which, however, "when stubborn historical facts . . . dispers[e] all intoxicating effects of self-deception, . . . end. . . in a miserable fit of the blues" (Marx and Engels *The Communist Manifesto* 108-109).

The logic of the space of the Symbolic is ludic because it follows the logic of the Derridean understanding of signification. Derrida deploys Saussure's theorization that "in language there are only differences *without positive terms*" (original emphasis "Differance" 140; Saussure 118) to theorize language as a system in which "the signified concept is never present in itself, in an adequate presence that would refer only to itself. Every concept is necessarily and essentially inscribed in a chain or a system, within which it refers to another and to other concepts, by the systematic play of differences" ("Differance" 140). Here, the sign is not a site of class struggle motivated by socially produced need, as Marx and Engels argue in *The German Ideology*: "language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men" (51). Rather, it is the site of "immotivation" as an effect of infinite play which has "no ground of nonsignification. . . to give it foundation" (*Of Grammatology* 48). That is, "there is no presence"--people, things, knowledge, classes, exploitation, private property. . .-- "before the semiological difference or outside it" ("Differance" 141). This means that

knowledge itself is not an expression of human material practice (*The German Ideology* 47), but an effect of linguistic play: " play. . . differance. . . [constitutes] the possibility of conceptuality, of the conceptual system and process in general ("Differance" 141). This logic is ludic because, as Teresa L. Ebert argues, it "address[es] reality as a theatre for the free-floating play (hence the term 'ludic') of images, disembodied signifiers and difference" ("The 'Difference'" 887). That is, "this movement of play. . . is the movement of *supplementarity*" which occurs not in a "totality" whose "center. . arrests and grounds the play of substitutions" but a "field" which "lack[s]. . . a center or origin" ("Structure, Sign and Play" 91). This theorization ignores that the lack of center is from the capitalist view not enough profit, and from the proletariat standpoint, the fact that subsistence and vital subsequent needs are not met. In short, the very appearance of a social in which there is no center is an effect of class struggle. It is the perception of this *effect* that is here reified in a theory of the social as a formation lacking a center. That the *effect* is reified as the core of the theory of "the way things are" is symptomatic of that theory as one produced by those whose class position allows them to disregard need. As I have argued, following Thibault's re-reading of Saussure, this theory is possible only by ignoring and excluding the materialist theory of value systems. What makes this exclusion possible is precisely the exclusion of need by and from class society, an exclusion determined by class contradiction that provides the condition of possibility for some people to meet their needs such that they can read the fetters of class relations as "traces" of semiotic movement that one does not need to burst asunder but can rather "flow with." It is not, however, the only possible reading or option but the only desirable one for those historically positioned to find class society capable not only of meeting needs but titillating desires, those induced wants, displacing vital subsequent need, produced by capitalist society upon fulfillment of subsistence needs. The desirable reading, dependent on exclusion, also reproduces it.

The lack integral to both classes in capitalism is what gives rise to the capitalist class requirement of the labor aristocracy, the support of which is made possible, as I argued at the beginning of this essay, by imperialist practices. The middle-class fraction knowledge workers who constitute the labor aristocracy are employed to produce and deploy knowledges to increase, of course, the rate of profit, but also to develop those knowledges--ideologies--which work to explain the lack produced by a refusal to meet subsistence needs as a "gap" produced by "elites" (Lind); a retreat from (bourgeois) ethics (Bennett, Bates, Bloom, Bellows); an effect of a break or rupture yielding a new world order (Bell, Fukuyama); an effect of discourse . . . and a thousand and one other tales whose goal is not transformation into what is possible, but survival within "what is" through the practice of what I have called cultural economism. The class struggle, in other words, engenders a class supplementarity--at the core of the myth of social mobility--that results in "a new class of petty bourgeois. . . fluctuating between proletariat and bourgeoisie and ever renewing itself as a *supplementary* part of bourgeois society" (Marx and Engels *The Communist Manifesto* 108 emphasis added). The members of this class fraction often act opportunistically as ruling class ideologues--to create and maintain a position of comfort for themselves in capitalism--by theorizing what is actually socio-historically produced need as a "gap" to fill with yet another "new" knowledge. Each of these "new" knowledges simply masks the class contradiction that

produces the need forming the basis of what becomes manufactured as a "gap" attributable to anything and everything but class contradiction. This "supplement" to the ruling class (*The Communist Manifesto* 108) is the "dangerous supplement" Derridean theory itself masks as a linguistic supplement.

The "middle-class fraction" is the "dangerous supplement" to all classes--working, "middle," and capitalist. Knowledge workers are members of "the lower middle class. . . [who] fight against the bourgeoisie, to save from extinction their existence as fractions of the middle class" (Marx and Engels *The Communist Manifesto* 91). That is, knowledge workers do not constitute a "new" class, such as the PMC theorized by the Ehrenreichs; they are a *supplement* to the capitalist class which produces knowledges in denial of themselves as knowledges materially produced by the contradictory forces of production, asserting instead that they are produced from within a cultural manifold without a decided exterior. However, the knowledges produced by this fraction do not arise from within culture as an effect of semiotic laws of motion internal to culture; rather the fraction *reifies* the logic of language as the only possible social logic, and this reification is a tool in the middle-class fraction's struggle to maintain the conditions of possibility for its existence. In that their fight is a fight to maintain their middle-class positions, whose "conditions of existence" the bourgeoisie in their accumulative quest continually "threaten" (Marx and Engels *The Communist Manifesto* 91), the "fight against the bourgeoisie" by the "fraction of the middle class" comprising knowledge workers consists--apparently paradoxically--in producing knowledges which mask or discredit the transformative knowledges of classical Marxism. It is, however, not a "paradox" but a manifestation of class contradiction. Middle-class fraction knowledge workers by and large are determined by class supplementarity to fight for the preservation of the class contradiction which enables and requires the supplementarity through which these workers compete to secure promotions, higher salaries. . . material comforts. To fight for classical Marxist knowledges and revolution of the mode of production would be to fight against the condition of possibility for class supplementarity. The middle-class fraction therefore works to mask the class contradiction and deny other workers access to revolutionary knowledges. However, since the tendency of the unfolding of the class contradiction is toward the division of all into only two classes, bourgeoisie and proletariat, the middle-class fraction fight against the capitalist class through maintenance of the class contradiction is actually a fight on the side of the capitalist class that results in the disaggregation of the "middle class." What the middle-class fraction refuses to see (because it rejects ideology critique) is that the increase in "upwardly mobile" class supplementarity that produced the huge post-WW II "middle class" was a historically determined requirement of capitalism which capitalism is now historically determined to reverse ("downsizing" is the code word) in an effort to raise the rate of profit. While middle-class fraction knowledge workers, then, fight "against the bourgeoisie" to maintain the class contradiction, seeing that maintenance as the way to ensure the re-production of the "middle-class," it is precisely the maintenance of that contradiction that now has the opposite effect: the erasure of the middle-class fraction. These are the "stubborn historical facts"--intolerable for the middle-class fraction--which disperse "self-deception" and end such "petty-bougeois socialisms" "in a miserable fit of the blues."

Reification of semiotic laws of motion is the primary weapon now used by the fraction to fight the bourgeoisie, for it allows precisely for the displacement of classical Marxism. At the same time, this is also a fight against the proletariat, for it works to maintain the social as it is, that is, class divided. It is because the middle-class fraction fights to maintain the social as it is that it is dangerous to itself. Because "the individual members of this class. . . are being constantly hurled down into the proletariat by the action of competition" (*The Communist Manifesto* 108), their objective class interests are those of the proletariat-- precisely the class their knowledges disenable. However, they are not only a dangerous supplement to the proletariat, but also to the bourgeoisie for, "in the times when the class struggle nears the decisive hour," "a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole" "cuts itself adrift, and joins the revolutionary class" (*The Communist Manifesto* 91). The fact that capitalism produces both a "new" petty bourgeoisie--at the core of which is the labor aristocracy--and a vanguard through the material process of class supplementarity that produces the middle-class fraction explains why the "new" petty bourgeoisie's labor aristocracy denies so vehemently the critiques of it by those positioned to develop vanguard practices (the emergent vanguard), critiques that expose its practices as complicit with those of the capitalist class. As the labor aristocrats see it, they most certainly do engage in fighting the capitalist class. In fact, they do. But they do so for a very different reason than does the emergent vanguard.

The "middle-class" supplement sees danger all around, but instead of confronting through a proletariat class-interested theory the violence of capitalist practices that produces and conditions these dangers, part of that supplement works to protect from those dangers its own immediate, cultural economist interests--those engendered by its employment as a supplement by the capitalist class--by producing and privileging theories that attempt to bloc[k] change by making meaning ultimately undecidable. Such a space of undecidability is provided by the Symbolic as formulated by Lacan and Derrida.

Within the infinite chain of signification Derrida theorizes, meaning is ultimately undecidable and knowing can only ever be knowing in the negative, that is, as Lyotard argues, knowledge production is a process that "produc[es] not the known, but the unknown" (60). Knowledge production here is not a proletariat conscious, class-interested *practice* grounded in the production of material life that is external to and causal of culture, but a process of internal slippage. In order for there to be truth, there must be determinate meaning, that is, the supplementarity or slippage of signifiers must be halted, and for Derrida, such a halting is always an illusion or fiction resulting from the privileging of one signifier (narrative) as a master signifier. The truth, however, is rather something else: the middle-class fraction by and large does not want to argue against the determinacy of exploitation, for to do so would be to fight against the supplementary movement of middle-class fraction individuals that affords those individuals comforts and pleasures they do not want to give up. Blind to the fact that transnational capital now more than ever requires *downwards* supplementary movement in the middle-class fraction--as well as in the working class--in order to raise profit for itself, they produce and privilege theories, like deconstruction, which so disenable

theoretical apprehension of the social totality that principled, transformative politics is impossible. Nevertheless, that fraction persists in the production of such knowledges because the practices allow the fraction that produces them to continue to fight the capitalist class and save itself, prolonging profound immiseration for many others by (re)producing the class binary.

IX
Cyberknowledge

Knowledges produced from the post-al mode of intelligibility, which are the principle product of the Knowledge Industry, are what I call cyberknowledge. Dependent on the erasure of the classical Marxist theorization of class, cyberknowledge is produced not through critique of practices that constitute the very basis of the (re)production of real life in global capitalism, but from information bits regarded as recombinatory fragments "interfaced in nearly infinite, polymorphous ways" (Haraway 187). It is a knowledge driven not by consciousness of the historical necessity of meeting all people's needs, but by the pursuit of pleasure (Haraway 174) across a de-totalizing (in Derridean terms, "immotivating") plane of information that is beyond "organic, industrial society" (Haraway 185). By assuming a break that puts the social beyond determination by class, cyberknowledge can represent itself as a "partial," but not class-interested, knowledge--as does the knowledge produced by Resnick and Wolff. Yet it is in fact the embourgeoisement of working-class consciousness, the production from embryonic materialist consciousness of false consciousness, that is enabled by actual, historical possibilities being pre-empted by class-interested action and practice--specifically capitalist-class interested knowledge production--in order to bloc[k] transformation and reinvigorate capitalism. It is manufactured by knowledge workers who, as an effect of class struggle, read their interests as being best served by the extension of capitalism, and thus saturate the social imaginary with cyberknowledge in what looks to be an effort to secure "radical democracy," but which actually preserves the core contradiction of capitalism. It is the partiality Donna Haraway advocates yet occludes the class character of when she argues that "the cyborg is resolutely committed to partiality, irony, intimacy, and perversity" (175); "a cyborg world might be about lived social and bodily realities in which people are not afraid of their joint kinship with animals and machines, not afraid of permanently partial identities and contradictory standpoints" (179). Such a formulation is a *capitalist manifesto* producing workers who do not attempt to meet their objective needs but rather take pleasure in the unending quest to satisfy induced want (desire). This manifesto is most fully developed by Slavoj Zizek, who argues "we must assume a kind of 'active forgetfulness' by accepting the symbolic fiction even though we know that 'in reality, things are not like that'" (168). This is the core of his argument that workers must "identify with the sinthome" (137) which, as Teresa L. Ebert argues, urges that you "enjoy your symptom" ("Review" 142). The capitalist manifesto urges the erasure of actual individuality (Marx and Engels *Manifesto* 98) of all those whose labor forms the basis for the individuality it works to (re)privilege, the bourgeois "individuality" bestowed by capital and available only to the few. Produced by capitalist labor practices and reproductive of them, cyborg being amounts not only to an "incapacity" to grasp

one's position in global networks, but an acceptance of that "incapacity" as "the way things are," where one can only celebrate need as pleasure.

Cyberknowledge, the generic form of the products of the Knowledge Industry, is capable of repeated reinvigoration of capitalist social relations. At a time when people around the globe are turning to "class" to explain and confront the vast and rapidly growing gap between the "rich" and the "poor," cyberknowledge is already there, reworking the concept. It does so by privileging and celebrating "permanently partial identities"--now including those at the site of class itself--as enabling of "*pleasure* in the confusion of boundaries" (Haraway 174). Those whose existence is made partial by their entry--"independent of their will" (Marx *Critique* 11)--into capitalist relations of production (including workers, those who cannot find employment, and those who are "invalids" with respect to "ability [or "capacity"] to work [on this last, see Nibert]) are by this privileging and celebration presented with a partial--which is also to say, not historical--"choice": work (or not) and be miserable; or work (or not) and find pleasure in it. The possibility of social transformation of socially produced relations--and satisfaction in such work!--is, on these terms, not a possibility. That is, not only do workers now enter capitalist relations "independent of their will"; they are enjoined to think they must continue in those relations "independent of their will," their only "choice" being whether they will read such engagement as pleasurable or not.

While cyberknowledge is material in the historical materialist sense because its production is dependent on and reproductive of the exploitation of workers, it represents itself as delinked from exploitation, as emerging from what Amrohini J. Sahay has theorized as "cyber-materialism." "'Cyber-materialism,'" argues Sahay,

> is less a concerted theoretical effort than a paradigm of intelligibility for understanding recent changes in the mode of production. It . . . is exclusively a form of *cultural* materialism. That is, it is part of that regime of understanding which posits 'culture' as an indeterminate, non-closural, and, above all, non- referential process which is resolutely opposed to the understanding of 'culture' as *historically determinate* (as in historical materialism. . . . the limit-text of the material in cyber-materialist understandings (as in all the post-al materialisms) is the (cultural) 'everyday' where the speculary effects of ideological change are foregrounded. It is, in other words, a non-transformative materialism which is deployed primarily as a device to avert attention away from the 'daily'--the sphere where 'the dull compulsion of economic relations completes the subjection of the labourer to the capitalist' (*Capital* 737 [vol. 1 of the edition I have been citing])-- and onto the 'everyday,' which is then theorized as a space of limitless self- invention. (56)

Cyberknowledge, then, as is clear from its assumption of the cyber-materialist paradigm of intelligibility evident in Lyotard's claim that the little narrative "destabilizes the capacity for explanation" (61; we are reminded here of Jameson's "incapacity"), is not an explanatory knowledge. Rather, it is a performative knowledge, one which purports to

constitute the social from an indeterminate movement of differance by "articulating" "surplus meanings" into "alliances," a practice theorized and advanced by Laclau and Mouffe.

The shift from theorizing the social as a totality whose fundamental class bipolarity produces a cultural manifold, to theorizing culture as an effect of the cultural articulation of differance, is one that relies on the shifting of the reading of a "surplus" of need--outlawed need, as I have theorized it--to one of a surplus of meaning. Laclau and Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* is a widely influential text that does this work. Laclau and Mouffe conclude, in terms "coincident" with Derrida's (112), that "'surplus' [of meaning] is the necessary terrain for the constitution of every social practice" (111). "'Society,'" that is, "is not a valid object of discourse" (111) but rather constituted by discourse. In this "*field of discursivity*," moreover, the social is never "fully fixed" since it is always "overdetermined" by any "surplus of meaning" (111). Articulation is here the ongoing (re)creation of the social through language acts that, as it is commonsensically understood, "captures the mood of a nation," surplus of meaning in Laclau and Mouffe being an "element" (105) which I read as sense manifested at the level of affect. However, to posit this need as an inchoate "element" or "surplus meaning" that is discursive and can be given intelligible form by discursive performance that inserts it into a "nodal point" (112) in a system of differences organized by discourse alone is to erase the objective fact and organizing effects of the property ownership that is exterior to discourse and which cannot therefore be transformed through discourse. The organization of capital, that is, cannot be discursively negotiated away. As Les Johnston has argued against the managerialist position of Dahrendorf, "No amount of decision-making by managers grants them powers of possession of the means of production, nor any powers of appropriation associated with it" (42).

For Laclau and Mouffe, because the production of any nodal point from surplus meaning simply produces more surplus meaning, the social is only ever "partial" not as an effect of class interest--which on Laclau and Mouffe's terms does not exist prior to discursive construction--but as an effect of "contingency." This partiality, which is only ever momentary, and readily "subverted" by an "surplus of meaning," is nevertheless a given--non-transformable--once the social is understood in terms of discourse. That is, because oppression is here understood as something that manifests itself differently across the social, but as an effect of discourse rather than labor practices, it cannot be transformed, only momentarily reversed at specific sites. This sort of partiality--discursive, non-transformable, fundamentally a feature of "the way things are"--is the partiality championed by Haraway. The radical and nontransformable existence of surplus meaning means that cyberknowledge is actually a form of knowledge whose core is mystical, a form of "cybergnosis." Advocacy of such knowledge not only amounts to advocacy of obscurantism. The knowledge itself is eminently open to capitalist appropriation; it allows for some--those who have the power of capital behind them--to claim and act on "insight" inaccessible to others; "knowledge" based on "experience" (which is denied to be an effect of class position); even "knowledge" based on spiritual communion with a higher Being.

At the same time, cyberknowledge, with its privileging of knowledge as the "arrang[ement] of data in new ways" (Lyotard 51), opens a space for flexibility in self-representation which, should middle-class fraction workers be laid off or begin to desire higher pay, allow these workers to "invent" and market themselves in new ways, or even regard a demotion or layoff as an *opportunity* to "invent" oneself anew. While cyberknowledge allows some middle-class fraction knowledge workers to reinvent themselves, however, they reinvent themselves into positions where the knowledges they must produce are integral to raising the rate of profit. In this way, they participate in creating ever greater quantities of "surplus" need, which ensures increased "flexibility" (class supplementarity) among all strata of the working class, as well as an overall reduction in the cost of wages. Here, the material basis of cyberknowledge is glaringly apparent. For as cyberknowledge benefits that part of the working class raised to the strata of the middle-class fraction, it simultaneously pits that fraction against the rest of the working class. That is, the conditions for success of the middle-class fraction are dependent on and reproduce on an ever-increasing scale the need of the rest of the working class.

The erasure of the objective fact of property ownership--capitalist accumulation, class contradiction--leads to a denial that culminates in cyberknowledge which, while its intent in Laclau and Mouffe's formulation, for example, is to ensure the *openness* of the social, actually works to suture the social, that is, pre-empt transformation from capitalism to socialism.

X
"Surplus Meaning" and Outlawed Need

Erasing the objective fact of property ownership denies that knowledge is "material" in the sense that its conditions of possibility--including its limits--are shaped by the laws of motion of capital. To put it another way, the erasure denies that people can have any knowledge that has not been imparted to them by "hegemonic subjects," or, as Laclau and Mouffe also refer to them, "hegemonic forces" (135). All the "hegemonic forces" exist "on the same plane--the general field of discursivity" (135). Whatever knowledge people have, then, is an effect of discourses in circulation, not property ownership. This opens a space for ambiguity with regard to what is "wrong" with capitalism. For example, while Gayatri Spivak criticizes "discussions of radical democracy" in that they "mention economic restructuring, post-Fordism, and so on--[but]. . . do not think them through" (2-3), she nevertheless accepts capitalism as a given, identifying the "problem" of capitalism as one of distribution, not exploitation. On the basis of a claim that Marx is "not talking [in the three volumes of *Capital*] about the nongeneration of capital but the nonutilization of capital for capitalism" (7), Spivak argues "You can agree to the production of capital, but restrict it (by common consent) so that it can't be appropriated by one group of people but becomes a dynamic for social redistribution" (7). Here, while "surplus" of need is not denied (that redistribution is thought necessary is an indication Spivak embryonically recognizes it as outlawed need), Spivak nevertheless assumes that it is not exploitation that is the issue, but rather distribution, which can be changed by collecting surplus meaning into "common consent." However, not only is this formulation unable to explain

how "common consent" might be achieved, not to mention what its objective basis might be. It also reiterates the argument regarding the "so-called labour fund" Marx critiques in *Capital* (vol. 1 609-11) that resurfaces in the theories of social evolutionists such as Eduard Bernstein regarding the realization of socialism through social reforms. Rosa Luxemburg critiques this argument by pointing out that at the core of the theorization of realization of socialism through social reforms is the presumption that, since "expropriation of the means of production cannot possibly be effected as a single historic act," it is necessary and possible to effect "expropriation by stages" (51). This in itself, she argues, presupposes "a certain objective development of capitalist property and of the state" involving the separation of ownership and control (51). On this basis, Luxemburg argues, theorists such as Bernstein and Konrad Schmidt argue that an effect of the variegation of capitalist production is that while capitalists may "own" the mode of production, managers, who are not capitalists, "control" distribution, and can therefore gradually expropriate what the capitalist class has appropriated. This line of argument, however, misses the point, Luxemburg argues, that distribution, delinked from the "personal management on the part of the capitalist," is simply the "purest form" of the capitalist "right to appropriate somebody else's labor," now with absolutely none of the personal relations that existed "between the feudal lord and his serfs or tenants" (52). Here, "far from being. . . a reduction of capitalist ownership,. . . 'social control,' is, on the contrary, a protection of such ownership. . . . the regulation of. . . exploitation" (53).

Most fundamentally, shifting the reading of outlawed need ("surplus" of need) to a surplus of meaning mediates against the transformation of capital by making its cause unknowable. If a cause is unknowable, the circumstances are unchangeable, and capitalism is tacitly accepted, as in Lyotard's formulation where the *petit recit* is "tolerated" by the system (66). Here, property relations are protected. But it is important to note that the shift also naturalizes unknowability, or "incapacity," by locating unknowability in language use understood as the fundamental ground and immutable condition of human being. This serves the interests of the capitalist class in imperialism because, as I have noted, the workforce must be highly mobile, if not always geographically, then certainly in the sense of movement in and out of local work sites. Unknowability, that is, naturalizes and removes from the possibility of transformation both the movement of binary class supplementarity and the contradictory forces of production that are its cause.

With regard to working class outlawed need, however, unknowability would not be a site of "*pleasure* at the confusion of boundaries," but a site of *terror*, inasmuch as it would be sensed at the level of affect by the working class, despite its naturalization, as radically unable to provide reliable knowledge of the objective world necessary to theorize and enable effective action towards securing the resources necessary to live fully rather than partially. That is, naturalizing unknowability would not necessarily produce a quiescent workforce. Indeed, myth as a possible site of oppositional knowledge would re-emerge. What becomes necessary, then, is a myth that anticipates and subverts working class terror, and that myth, of course, is the myth of the cyborg.

The narcotic for working class terror, what makes unknowability "pleasurable," is the use of Derridean-based formulations that understand class supplementarity as discursive supplementarity that is an effect of language "play." Recall that Derrida extends Saussure's argument that "in language there are only differences *without positive terms*" (Saussure 120) to produce the formulation of *differance* in which "every necessary concept is necessarily and essentially inscribed in a chain or system, within which it refers to another and to other concepts, by the systematic play of differences" ("Differance" 140). *Differance*, "the possibility of conceptuality, of the conceptual system and process in general" (140), involves the ongoing deferral or play of meaning along an endless chain of signifiers since "the signified concept is never present in itself" (140). On these terms--which as Thibault has argued indicate not that the word means nothing but that it is invested with material relations--unknowability is reunderstood as the indeterminacy that is the effect of *differance*, language "play," and not the violence of capitalist production that produces outlawed need. These terms, that is, allow unknowability to be shifted from the site of exploitation and terror to the site of "play" and pleasure.

It is to this logic and these political consequences Jameson and post-al theorists subject not only Marxism, but all the workers of the world when they place the Marxist project within culture, which amounts, as it should by now be clear, to throwing gasoline on a book already burning by legitimating the discourses of desire the capitalist class uses to accelerate the expansion of global capitalism required for profit accumulation.

The Marxist project set within the terms of the cultural which Jameson advances--and which contradict Jameson's claim that "the 'codeword' for cultural situations is the marxian category of the mode of production" (cited in Wise 187 n8)--is no different than the "post-Marxism" of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy* (4) whose "analysis meets up with a number of contemporary currents of thought which. . . have insisted on the impossibility of fixing ultimate meanings," specifically that current of thought of Derrida (111). Laclau and Mouffe "renounc[e] the conception of 'society' as founding totality of its partial processes" (95). Sweeping away the base-superstructure model of society, they replace it with a "single plane" model of "hegemonic articulation" whose logic is that of Derridean language: "once the essentialist assumption [of objective class structure] is abandoned, the category of articulation acquires a different theoretical status: articulation is now a discursive practice which does not have a plane of constitution prior to, or outside, the dispersion of the articulated elements" (109). In this model, a social formation is articulated through a discursive practice which occurs on a single plane to which there is no center and exteriority--as the base which is considered exterior to the superstructure--but for another discourse (146 n20). For subjects fundamentally unified by objective class structure, the formulation substitutes a plurality of "elements" ever only partially sutured into a particular discourse. Once Jameson places the Marxist project in the space of the Symbolic, Laclau and Mouffe's "radical democracy"--from which objective class structure has been jettisoned--becomes the social that Jameson's formulation prepares workers to accept and realize. Here we witness the extent to which "Marxist" theorists have abandoned the necessity of creating a world in which production is organized to meet need rather than produce

profit: in arguing that "'society' is not a valid object of discourse" (111), Laclau and Mouffe are in agreement with Margaret Thatcher, who has also argued that "there is no such thing as society" (cited in Lash and Urry 6). That Jameson's logic is that of Laclau and Mouffe's makes Jamesonian Marxism a "Marxism" which is not one that is resolutely opposed to the Thatcherism Jameson would surely find repellent.

* * *

In an effort to eradicate those knowledges which challenge the priority of profit over human lives, the current economic and cultural pressures on public education--for example, funding cuts, educational privatization, and attacks on revolutionary knowledges as reductive--work to force knowledges produced with public funds to contribute to advancing the interests of imperialism, a mode of production which produces wealth not for the public use and full development of all, but for the private use and pleasure of the few. Because those who control production for profit also control knowledge production, and in doing so circulate knowledges that assert that transformation is both impossible and unnecessary, it appears that such is indeed the case. It is not. Revolution is not only possible, but necessary. Necessary because the forces of production have reached the apex of contradiction: 1.3 billion of the world's people live in dire poverty, at the same time as some CEOs make more than the total GNP of some countries. Possible, because while certainly everything is connected to everything else, the social is nevertheless fundamentally divided by objective, historical forces which produce antagonistic interests, those of the bourgeoisie--whose interest is profit, and always more of it--and those of the proletariat--whose interest is in abolishing class society.

This means that capitalism has dug its own grave, producing not only towering need but also insurgent knowledges, and therefore people who will refuse to accept that we cannot feed those who starve, refuse to accept that we cannot make a world which validates the lives of those called "invalids," refuse to accept that we cannot make a world in which children are not sold into slavery for the sake of profit.

Refusing death sentences such as these means developing vanguard practices that expose the opportunist practices of the labor aristocracy as opportunist. Developing vanguard practices means working to make all sites of public pedagogy open sites of contestation and debate over the assumptions informing practices in each and every involved moment. It means exposing the power relays in each and every instance of tyranny, including the tyranny of the labor aristocracy. It means bringing the class politics of knowledge production to surface within the practices of knowledge production and explaining the power connections among the practices, the politics, and the state of development of the contradictory forces of production. It means. . . the ruthless criticism of everything existing--but not only for the purpose of exposure. Critique also produces the knowledge necessary for proletariat revolutionary praxis.

By exposing people's participation in maintaining class society, critique is both proletariat pedagogy and vanguard praxis that produces knowledge of the contradictory

forces of production that are necessary for the development of revolutionary political strategy. These forces work in such a way as to conceal themselves. This concealment constitutes a fetter, along with ownership of private property, that prevents transformation. Because this is so, the very act of exposing the forces, making them visible in people's working day, begins to break one of the fetters of class society. Developing political strategy from this knowledge goes beyond exposure and enables further revolutionary praxis that can rupture those fetters. The vanguard praxis of critique, in short, produces knowledge of the social as one which is manifestly polarized; explains why it is polarized; shows that *it does not have to be this way*; and above all, produces knowledge for ***revolutionary politics***.

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