

Speaking Internationalism: Class Difference in Writerly Cosmopolitics

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I.

*T*he same logic of the crisis of profitability that led, in the 1970s, to neoliberalism – an intensification and widening of the class contradiction between the bourgeoisie and proletariat globally via such mechanisms as privatization, the dismantling of economic borders, constructions of transnational supply chains, a new global regulatory and financial régime, and an (at least officially) pluralistic and “cosmopolitan” culture of production for a world market – is now producing widening fissures within the post-neoliberal order. As Michael Roberts explains, however, under capitalism the logic of the crisis of profitability, far from being an anomaly, is the norm for the capitalist production system (*The Long Depression* 45-64). Indeed, as Roberts’ examination of global profit rates demonstrates, the post-war long boom that capitalism holds up as its “ideal” was itself caused by the workings *not* of a purportedly “normal” capitalism, but by the massive opportunity for profitable capitalist investment that opened up in the wake of the sustained global destruction of capital during the second world war (which was itself the result of the economic and political crises of the Great Depression). Today, austerity, an authoritarian police state, catastrophic regional wars and threats of global nuclear war, environmental devastation, the rise of the far right, and the peripheralization of large populations, need to be globally understood as

developments arising from the inability of neoliberalism to stave off the intrinsic general dynamics of the capitalist system, the tendency of the rate of profit to fall, combined with the low level of organized class struggles in the neoliberal era. The political lesson is writ large: if the international working class – now materially united by its class conditions of life, and institutionally integrated into a global system of production – is to overcome its conditions of exploitation that leave it increasingly immiserated and in precarious life conditions even as its productive capacity and the wealth it produces grows, what is needed is united class struggle across all differences, guided by knowledge of the social totality as a clear guide to internationalist organization and red solidarity in building a new society in the interests of the majority.

To build such a red internationalism today, however, demands critique-ally confronting the still intellectually dominant neoliberal ideology that has invalidated all binaries (which are cultural inscriptions of the difference of class) and made “difference” a concept which, for the purposes of liberating the signifier and opening up the “free” play of meaning (Derrida), or in the name of the sheer “multiplicity [...] [of] things” (Latour, *Reassembling* 116) substitutes a formal difference for a dialectical materialist concept of “difference-in-relation,” and an historical theory of meaning, language, and theory as socially (and not simply linguistically, autonomously, or autopoietically) constituted. On the terms of such a neoliberal theory of difference – which institutionalizes what Roland Barthes calls the “writerly” (S/Z) – difference is deployed, as I shall argue with reference to Derridean deconstruction and Latoureaan actor-network theory, to invalidate and render incoherent the very idea of unity in class struggle, of labor as the “ground” of social life, and of solidarity as internationalist praxis to transform the social totality. Instead, the writerly takes as axiomatic Margaret Thatcher’s old slogan that Bruno Latour smilingly revives, that “neither society nor the social exists in the first place” (36), in order to displace the very idea of “total” change and instead to advance a localist cosmopolitics as the “radical” horizon of political change.

By contrast, the historical and materialist theory of language, meaning, and difference begins not on the basis of abstract philosophical premises or of raw empirical data, but on the basis of what Marx and Engels elaborate in an early text, as the "real premises from which abstraction can only be made in the imagination. They are the real individuals, their activity and the material conditions under which they live, both those which they find already existing and those produced by their activity" (*German Ideology* 37). Only a theory of difference based on this dialectical interrelation of humans with their environment, mediated by their activity of labor, and subject to determinate, historical forms of social organization based on this interrelation, can, I argue, *meaningfully* contribute to the transformation of capitalism into its non-subsumable systemic "other": socialism. Only what might be termed the "speecherly," as I elaborate later via a close reading of Marx's "First Address to the International Working Men's Association," places this analytics of class difference into active opposition with bourgeois ideology and thus offers to working people a dialectical and historical understanding of their conditions of life, and relates their struggles to the totality of the economic system in which they exist, thus enabling its "total" transformation.

To put this another way, the materialist theory of meaning and difference begins not with the inherited system of metaphysical oppositions (deconstructive textualism) nor, by contrast, as in actor-network theory (purportedly in stark opposition to textualism) with attentiveness to "fully visible and empirically traceable sites" (Latour, *Reassembling* 179), as do writerly theories, but with the social conditions of language. Thus when Marx and Engels write, "Language is as old as consciousness, language is practical, real consciousness that exists for other men as well, and only therefore does it also exist for me; language, like consciousness, only arises from the need, the necessity, of intercourse with other men" (*German Ideology* 44), the emphasis here should be placed on the fact that language exists neither as a transparent window onto the world, nor as a pre-existing system of meanings, but as a *social relation to others* that arises out of the mode of collective life that

materially defines humans as social animals. And, insofar as language arises and functions as a social relation, it has a definite *use value* for humans – both as a means of facilitating their empirical life activity, but equally important, as a means to come to terms with – by way of conceptual abstraction, i.e., theory – their social being so as to actively transform it. As Alexander Spirkin clarifies this question, the fundamental issue at stake is not simply (as it is in idealist philosophy) the “question between thinking [or language, as the form of thought] and being in general, but more specifically, that of the relation between social consciousness and social being [...] the objective relations between people formed on the basis of their production of material goods” (28). Contemporary “writerly” theories, along with all they underwrite, thus need to be understood in terms of this question: what relation to social being, i.e., to objective social relations that can only be abstracted from “in the imagination” (*German Ideology* 37) do they posit, and how is this posited relation itself dialectically explainable on the basis of social being? More specifically, what is significant is the question of whether (as historical materialism argues) language offers us concepts that are capable of bringing social being and social consciousness into relation – that is, of grasping the social totality or organization of social being, which can only be known abstractly, and thus opening the way to its transformation – or whether, as the writerly claims, the concept is by definition “unreliable” because it is caught in an infinite chain of displaced significations and sliding meanings, or exists simply as an imposition on or a mediation in an originary hybrid flux, and thus social being itself is a contingent fiction.

To further clarify this issue for historical materialist theory, language is neither a transparent, unmediated reflection of reality (the conventional humanist view), nor is it an external imposition on a reality that exceeds it, as in the Kantian and post-Kantian views that posit an unbridgeable ontological divide between the subjective and the objective, the phenomenal and the noumenal, to arrive at a false idealization of the conceptual world as transcendently given (Kant, *Critique of Pure*

Reason 135-43). Rather, language is a social product of the material interactions of developing humans as they act on the natural world through the dialectical praxis of labor, and subsequently they form a central aspect of these interactions. From this perspective, what is problematic with both the humanist and Kantian/post-Kantian views is their cutting off of the linguistic/conceptual from the *total* social relations within which they form a determinate part, a collective product of humans, which reflexively grasps, translates, and mediates their social activity. The ultimate horizon of language, in other words, is its social *use value* – both in the (non-linguistic) process of the transformation of the natural world by the social activity of laboring beings (and, in and through this very process, their self-transformation), as well as in the revolutionary transformation of the conditions of this process, which requires a revolutionary theoretical consciousness of social being. The laboring process produces not only the direct transformation of the natural environment, but the entire mediated social series to which this gives rise, including the relations of class conflict fought out at the level of culture (Marx, "Preface" 263). To the extent that language offers us concepts (themselves aspects of the congealed labor of humans) that go beyond the realm of direct productive activity to grasp the social relations that structurally organize this activity, it has a potentially revolutionary use value in enabling the transformation of these objective relations, and with them, the relation of humans to external reality. Whether formally deployed as "speech" or as "writing," in other words, the question for a red politics is the (social) *relation* that any instance of language use establishes between "social consciousness" and "social being," and, in particular, whether it opens up the potentiality of the transformation of the relations of hierarchical difference that have historically constituted social being since the onset of "civilization."

However, it is precisely this relation to its "outside" conditions of existence that is cancelled out in "writerly" theories of language and meaning (dominant since the 1960s and 1970s and loosely grouped under the sign of the "post"), such that not only is the conceptual cut off from the objective external world (as it is in the Kantian frameworks), but

language, which is represented as further and further removed from external social reality, is ideologically translated by the writerly into a free floating independent sign system of signifiers in endless serial exchanges with other signifiers without any point of “outside” reference. Here the radical transformative use value of language is jettisoned as simply a nostalgia for “presence” and the (supposedly constitutive) failure of meaning as reference, which makes it impossible to make any determinate distinctions between dissenting accounts, becomes the “new radical.” On the terms of this writerly linguistico-empirical radicalism, whether advanced in the older rhetorics of textualism or the new “object oriented” Latourian empiricist discourses, social totality becomes little more than a myth of closure and political internationalism – which relies on the connection to the whole – is displaced by localist “cosmopolitics” since, it is claimed, “what we lack is just what our prestigious ancestors possessed: a cosmos” (Latour, “Whose Cosmos” 453).

The *arche* theorist of the “writerly” who has been canonized as offering the *really* radical theory of language, meaning, and difference, is of course Jacques Derrida. What is radical for Derrida, as he makes clear across the entire body of his writing, is not an emphasis on the political relationality of meaning (the social use value of meaning within the horizon of class society and the régimes of difference that organize such societies), but on its “play.” As opposed to speech, traditionally privileged over writing as the authentic moment of meaning as self-presence, Derrida effects a first decentering. For Derrida, writing (and especially its poetic literary instance) is the key to understanding language. As he writes:

It is when that which is written is *deceased* as a sign-signal that it is born as language: for then it says what it is, thereby referring only to itself, a sign without signification, a game or pure functioning since it ceased to be *utilized* as natural, biological, or technical information, or as the transition from one existent to another, from a signifier to a signified. (*Writing and Difference* 12)

In other words, as he makes clear, writing as inscription, in contrast to speech, opens onto the "sign" as "language," a self-referential process, like a game, which ensures its transmissibility beyond any particular context, and thus "emancipates" the sign from both the closure of context, as well as from its "use value" in terms of information, "meaning" (the relation of the signifier to the signified, of the formal mark to the concept), or reference (the relation of the sign to its "outside"). It is, of course, this model of "writing" as bringing out the "infinite transmissibility" of the "sign" beyond any limit that Derrida then radicalizes to posit language as an *arche*-writing – a decentered "structure" of infinitely exchangeable sign-substitutions that cannot be totalized because the field of language is

in effect that of play [...] there is something missing from it:
a center which arrests and grounds the play of substitutions
[...]. Play is the disruption of presence. The presence of an
element is always a signifying and substitutive reference
inscribed in a system of differences and the movement of a
chain. (*Writing and Difference* 289-92)

Why is such a perspective the most "radical" for Derrida, and what theory of meaning and difference does it provide? For Derrida, the necessary starting point is the inherited concepts which undergird "Western metaphysics" by way of relying on a system of oppositions which, he claims, dissolve when subjected to a deconstructive close reading: thus all the oppositions – man/woman, nature/culture, bourgeois/proletarian, thought/reality, use value/exchange value, speech/writing, owning/non-owning... – that structure the dominant régimes of signifying difference, can be shown to be unstable (as concepts), and can be dismantled by inserting them into the infinite exchangeability of endless substitutions, deferring their claim to "presence" and thus undermining their "authority." The "writerly" then functions as the negation not only of the use value of language as a means to grasp external reality, but posits all "differences" as themselves fictions of an ever elusive "presence." All orders of differences are, in other words, to be understood within the terms of "Western metaphysics" as itself a presupposed (non-originary) "origin" of all "meaning."

The deconstructive “writerly,” however, needs to be seen not simply within the self-enclosed terms of a given system of linguistic oppositions, but within the social and historical context of neoliberalism. While an emphasis on difference as the negation of the reach of the conceptual has its philosophical predecessors from Nietzsche (e.g., *Twilight of the Idols*) to Adorno (*Negative Dialectics*), the writerly theory of language, difference, and meaning is not simply a deconstruction of the use value of language insofar as it is “utilized as natural, biological, or technical information” (Derrida, *Writing and Difference* 12) but, more significantly, it aims to dismantle *its use value in bringing social consciousness into relation to social being* and as a means that enables its praxical transformation. In doing so, the writerly does the work of global capitalist market relations. Such relations, which are expansive in their reach beyond the stable “identities” of the previous economic period, have relied on making differences/identities flexible (and thus open to change) while at the same time rendering the system producing these differences as beyond the reach of change. By positing the fundamental instability and exchangeability of all elements within the signifying system, the writerly renders difference as having no determinate basis “outside” the system of signification. By this logic, the writerly invalidates all forms of language use that posit the relation of the concept to social being as one of “reference” and attempts to ideologically dissolve the possibility of systemic revolutionary change of social being.

The writerly deconstructs social totality (and capitalist totality in particular) by translating all “limits” into indeterminable fictions of a “transcendental signified” that can halt the “play” of meaning (Derrida, *Writing* 278-94). Yet capitalist totality is not a language construct but an objective structure of relations constituted by what Marx theorizes as the “working day.” The “working day,” as Marx argues in *Capital*, is not an “identity” but (like all identities) is a relay of a social division of labor between the class of owners of capital and those who are forced, through lack of ownership of the means of production, to work for this class. The supposed identity of the workday – which formally constitutes a free

exchange of labor-power for wages over a given period of time – is in actuality divided into two parts. During part of the workday, the worker produces the equivalent in value of the wage she/he receives for her/his labor. During the “other” part of the workday, however, the worker produces a “surplus value” that is the source of capitalist profits. Without access to the surplus value produced by workers, capital (the accumulation of the surplus value of workers that confronts them nevertheless as an “alien force” dominating their lives) would disappear, and with it, the capitalist social totality as a whole. The wages system – as the concealed mechanism of transfer of wealth from the working class to the capitalist class – in short, forms the foundation of the wage-labor/capital relation, which is the difference that shapes all other differences. Beyond this relation, capitalism as an historical form of organizing the collective laboring capacity of humans gives way to a post-class social form. The working day gives us the objective limit that establishes the internal necessity of capitalist totality: simply put, without access to the surplus value produced by workers, capital (privately accumulated surplus value with command over the surplus labor of others) cannot exist (Zavarzadeh 98). To theorize the working day as a “transcendental signified” deployed to “halt” the “play” of meaning and to deconstruct it does not, however, get rid of capitalism. At most it simply makes the line of division structuring the workday more flexible and thus “reforms” the system “from within,” which is a strategy of political liberalism to keep the system as a whole intact. The myth of infinite substitutability of all terms, of play without limit, is a conceptual relay of the social system that privileges the primacy of exchange value over use value.

The writerly marginalizes the social use value of language (determinate concepts) and privileges its exchange value (substitutability), but in doing so it also cuts off the dominant régimes of hierarchical difference from their relation to the relations of exploitation of labor that organize social being under capitalism. By contrast, an historical materialist theory of difference-in-relation starts with the “real premises” that govern social being, the process of production of the means of life that are

presupposed not in thought but in material existence, and thinks all differences through on this basis. From this point of view, language and culture are not the presupposed givens from which to “begin” analysis, but the secondary terrain on which the class struggle is fought out. This does not entail relying on an ideology of “reference” that is assured from the side of the (intending) subject, but quite the opposite: “reference” – the degree to which social consciousness (whether through writing, speech, or...) grasps social being – is determined from the “side” of the objective social relations. It is these relations, in other words, that give material significance to differences – make them a space of active conflict, or render them “immaterial.” For instance, the “meaning” of “poverty” is not an “in itself” capable of being understood in isolation, nor does it acquire/lose meaning by way of the interactions within a formal system of signifiers; rather, it is the “name” of an historical “difference-in-relation” in which its “meaning” lies in its relationality to the social structure as a whole.

The writerly theory of language, as I have been marking, deconstructs “identity” and constructs a theory of difference as the negation of any totality. Moreover, it sees this negation as radical and as “saving” “difference” from its totalitarian subsumption into any overarching matrix. On these terms, totality is rendered “impossible” (Laclau, *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time*), as “simulation” (Baudrillard, *Simulacra and Simulation*), or as undone by the deconstruction of “the limit” (Cornell, *The Philosophy of the Limit*), and the transformation of capitalist totality (the social relations of production) as the “origin” of the operative régimes of difference (from class to race to sexuality to nationality to...) is rendered unintelligible and, thus, removed from the political horizon. It is, of course, the case that the attempt to speak in the name of this non-subsumable difference has historically marked the antagonism to totality: from Nietzsche’s “philosophizing with a hammer” (*Twilight of the Idols*), to Sartre’s emphasis on the “concrete” of lived bodily experience as incapable of being absorbed into any “abstract” system (*Being and Nothingness*), to the critical theory of Adorno, who despite his materialist

view that "concepts [...] are moments of the reality that requires their formation" (11), states that in the name of "nonconceptuality, individuality, and particularity" (8) "Totality is to be opposed by convicting it of non-identity with itself" (*Negative Dialectics* 146). Difference, that is to say, exceeds "identity," which he figures as an authoritarian imposition of meaning over the material world. In saying so, however, he leaves aside the fact that the "particular" is already a mediated reality and not a "pure" difference. It is, in other words, an "abstract" bearer of the social relations. The "particular" exists as a mediated (relational and relative) but nevertheless *historically determinate* difference and not as pure otherness.

To clarify, writerly theories of difference stand opposed to any attempt to theorize differences relationally and dialectically (as in historical materialism), such that "otherness" is seen as something to be explained *within* the terms of a totality, "not something indifferent outside it, but its own moment" (Hegel 148). Within the terms of the textualist writerly, such a theorization of difference/otherness-in-relation to social totality is posited as only able to think a "self-consolidating Other" (Spivak 254) with a colonial provenance (as opposed to the idea of difference as non-recuperable within the terms of the Self/Same), or as rendering the "same" uncanny, as in postcolonial notions of "colonial mimicry" (Bhabha 121-31). By contrast, for the historical and materialist theory of difference-in-relation, as I have suggested, there is no absolutely independent "other" in totality because all differences are reducible to, in the sense of being *explainable by*, social being: the dialectics of labor give rise to a determinate social organization and the conflicts emerging from this social organization. From this point of view, to posit any difference as that which evades the totality is not to "liberate" it as "independent," but to *cut it off* from the dialectics of the social whole in which it forms a relational moment and thus to actively prevent its historical explanation as a moment of the social totality that calls for its transformation. And it is, as Lukács argues, "Only in this context, which sees the isolated facts of social life as aspects of the historical process, and integrates them in a *totality* [...that]

knowledge [...can] hope to become knowledge of *reality*" (*History* 8). "Reality," in other words, is not an unmediated facticity, i.e., self-evident empirical fragments that must then be "totalized," but (what is experienced as) the "concrete" is already mediated by labor and, in itself, already a "unity of the diverse" (Marx, *Economic Manuscripts of 1857-58* 38). To grasp "reality" thus requires totality as a necessary analytical and intrinsically relational concept, and this "concept" is itself a relay of the developing objective social relations: "The existence of revolutionary ideas in a particular period presupposes the existence of a revolutionary class" (Marx and Engels, *German* 60). By contrast, the Derridean writerly, which dispenses with "reality" as a metaphysical trope, is the updating of this anti-totality theory of difference for the neoliberal era by way of post-Saussurean linguistics and a post-Heideggerean resistance to the "metaphysics of presence." What is of particular concern, however, is how in an exemplary gesture, Derrida ties this version of difference to the neoliberal transnationalization of the national and to an ethical project of liberal reform that claims to negate the necessity of revolutionary internationalism and solidarity.

In *Monolingualism of the Other*, constructed as a series of brief dialogues with and rejoinders to anonymous interlocutors who mockingly question his assertion that he has only one language but it nevertheless is not one that belongs to him, Derrida questions, characteristically, the concept of cultural identity, "this concept of which the transparent identity to itself is always dogmatically presupposed by so many debates on monoculturalism or multiculturalism, nationality, citizenship, and, in general, belonging" (14). Drawing autobiographically on his own "identity" as a "Franco-Maghrebian" Jew, part of the community of French Jews in Algeria who (after being granted French citizenship in the 1870s), were first deprived of citizenship and then gained it back during World War II, Derrida stresses his lack of condoned access in colonial French Algeria to any of the non-French Algerian languages. In addition, he stresses his ambiguous relation to French as an Algerian Jew, who is both assimilated to the official French culture and inside it, yet, at the same

time not of it. Thus his "predicament" of inhabiting a language (French, his only language) that was nevertheless not his "mother tongue": "My culture was right away a political culture. 'My mother tongue' is *what they say, what they speak*; as for me, I cite and question them" (34).

Of course the significance of Derrida's sketching of his own deconstructive relation to the French language and culture is not just to provide an "anti-colonial" radical provenance to deconstruction (as "authentically" of the "margins"), but rather to foreground "the colonial structure of any culture" (39) insofar as it "institutes itself through the unilateral imposition of some 'politics of language'" (39). Culture, and even more so, national culture, for Derrida, is always the scene of an asserted mastery/sovereignty, of a monolingualism "imposed by the other [... and] tend[ing], repressively and irrepressibly [...] to the hegemony of the homogenous" (40). On this view, the colonial situation is exemplary insofar as it "allows one to read in a more dazzling, intense, or even traumatic manner the truth of a universal necessity [...] of any reference as *différance*" (26). Thus for Derrida, the radicality of the writerly in the (post)colonial context is that it fundamentally undoes any claim to the self-identical and homogeneous culture of the master, and thus to the discourse of mastery. Thereby, "the 'non-mastery' [...] of an appropriated language of which [Edouard] Glissant speaks [...] carries well beyond [...] determinate conditions [of "'colonial alienation or historical servitude'"] . It holds for what would be called the language of the master [...]" (23). The mastery of the hegemonic national culture, in other words, is refuted by the "logic" of *différance* which denies access to the idea of any "pure" origin and dismantles the cultural certitudes of nationalism and nationalist discourses.

And yet the entire salience of this deconstructive view relies in turn on an initial privileging of the hegemonic self-understanding of the colonial as a project of cultural domination ("civilization") and not "exploitation" (the early private appropriation of the surplus-labor of the South by capital of the North as the condition of the North's industrialization). How a question is answered is closely linked to the

starting point of any theory – e.g., does it begin from the organization of social being, or from some aspect of the cultural (or natural, or “divine”) world? – and, dialectically, the starting point also gives us the “limit” of the field of change posited by a theory. In the Derridean writerly, the “colonial” becomes a structure of cultural domination and mastery with its underlying conditions in language and, as such, is also best “undone” in language by showing that

contrary to what one is often most tempted to believe, the master is nothing. And he does not have exclusive possession of anything. Because the master does not possess, exclusively and naturally, what he calls his language, because whatever he wants or does, he cannot maintain any relations of property or identity that are natural, national, congenital, or ontological, with it [...] because language is not his natural possession [...]. (23)

The master, in other words, inhabits the same condition of linguistic alienation – inhabits, that is, “a structure of alienation without alienation [...] inalienable alienation” (25) which is language for Derrida – as the slave, and thus his claims to an “authentic” and superior national culture, to a natural hierarchy, as a legitimization of expropriation, are rendered untenable.

This perspective, in deconstructing the opposition between the colonizer/colonized, the dominant and subordinate culture (both colonizer and colonized, master and slave, are, in relation to language, and the national language in particular, in an identical situation of non-belonging) not only ideologically places them in a space of cultural “equivalence,” thus obscuring a structure of class antagonism existing at the level of social being (and not only cultural being). But, in positing alienation as a constitutive effect of language, it naturalizes its historicity as an effect of the material development of the globalizing relations of production of capitalism, which can be transformed. The writerly thus marginalizes the antagonistic material relations, which are the effect of the theft (alienation) of the surplus labor of one class by another class by displacing it with a “structure of alienation

without alienation" (25), which is the fate of language. While this gesture is made in order to purportedly avoid "the reconstitution of what these phantasms managed to motivate: 'nationalist' aggressions [...] or monoculturalist homo-hegemony" (64), it does so by obscuring the relations of the social totality which in fact give the "phantasms" (as well as their later deconstruction!) their material force.

Indeed, as I have already marked, in dismantling the concept of capitalist totality as a fiction of systemic closure of a network of decentered signs, and proposing, instead of systemic and revolutionary change, a cosmopolitan decentering of the cultural legacy of the colonial hierarchies of national difference, the ideological work of the Derridean writerly and its adjuncts takes its place as part of the project of the neoliberal order of global markets that require a more "inclusive" and differentiated cultural world view for its managers. The "limit" of change, on this view, is to inhabit the "mother tongue" differently as a subversion of the "identity" of the nation(al) as grounded in the national language. Within this frame, "internationalism" figures only as a form of cultural resistance via the invention of new idioms that challenge and rewrite the national culture "from within": "Compatriots of every country, translator-poets, rebel against patriotism! [...] Each time I write a word, a word that I love and love to write; in the time of this word, at the instant of a single syllable, the song of this new International awakens in me" (57). This, however, is to substitute a continual poetic subversion of a given national culture – while simultaneously accepting its necessity – for any positive basis for international solidarity across national and other boundaries.

Indeed, the absence of such a positive basis is what is fundamentally at stake in the new cosmopolitanism, which Ida Nursoo names an "aporetic cosmopolitanism." In her discussion of Derrida's *On Cosmopolitanism* (an address to the International Parliament of Writers in 1996), as well as his late text *Of Hospitality*, Nursoo begins by arguing that "The deconstructive approach to cosmopolitanism neither claims a cosmopolitan ethics nor sets out to design a cosmopolitics, but concerns itself with the identification and negotiation of [a] non-passage in the discourse of cosmopolitanism,"

a non-passage based on the irreducible imbrication of ethics and politics (6-7). As she elaborates, the focus of Derrida's contribution is to deconstruct Kantian cosmopolitan ethics by way of an interrogation of the ethical ideal of hospitality. As Derrida frames it, "pure hospitality consists in welcoming whoever arrives before imposing any conditions on him, before knowing and asking anything at all, be it a name or an identity 'paper'" (qtd Nursoo 10). And yet, as Nursoo marks, such an unconditional ethical ideal is always already undone by the political: insofar as "hospitality is conditional upon its very recognition and naming of a stranger [...] it is always [...] a compromised position. The point is that 'hospitality' commits a kind of violence in its very subjectivation of the stranger to whom it professes its welcome" (Nursoo 10). This contamination of the ethical by the political is then what Nursoo marks as the fundamental "lesson" of Derridean aporetic cosmopolitics. Thus, responding to Nancy Fraser's critique of deconstruction on political grounds, Nursoo says, "perhaps it is the conceptualization of the political, as an antagonistic struggle between two sides with a winner declared at the end, that demands such polarized certainty from deconstruction" (2), whereas, by contrast, fundamental to the Derridean approach she advances is the "discomfort of uncertainty and unknowing" (2). In place of a clear conceptual grasp of the structure of relations producing the contradiction between the professed ideals of Western democratic states and their reality as a form of class rule over workers diversely located in the international division of labor, Nursoo puts forward "aporetic analysis" as a mode of at "least allow[ing] for the awareness of structures of violence, of being confronted by the structure of 'inside-outside' or 'subject-object'" while "acknowledg[ing] that our task is not to dissolve its awkwardness, nor to gain mastery over that which threatens" (Nursoo 14). My point here is not to focus on how ultimately, for Nursoo, drawing on Jacques Rancière, Derrida himself is not attentive enough to the aporia of the ethical/political such that his "injunction [of a] 'democracy to come' functions according to a logic that frames politics in terms of an ethics that would exceed it" (Nursoo 16), which is itself part of the continual "new"ing of the writerly

to ward off the spectre of its speecherly "other." Rather, what is significant is how the aporetic cosmopolitics functions, in all its various renditions, as a structure to close off politics as precisely an "antagonistic struggle between two sides."

The war on totality (as a structure of determinate relations) in order to untether difference from social determination is of course not limited to deconstructive textualism. The institutionalization of the writerly extends equally to the analytics of Latourian "actor-network" theory that rejects textualism in favor of a "second empiricism" (*Reassembling* 115) that goes "back to the object" (146) (by way of a reliance on Deleuzian "immanence") in a "livelier, more talkative, active, pluralistic, and more mediated" way (115). Although differently from the Derridean mode – for instance, Latour stresses that in his approach "Hermeneutics is not a privilege of humans, but, so to speak, a property of the world itself" (245) – the Latourean analytics as well cancels the inside-outside binary, which (like all binaries) is not discursive but the cultural expression of a two-tier economy, in the process reducing the analysis of the relation of capital to labor to a Deleuzian immanent intensity. The immanent – like the aporetic – displaces the two-sided international class struggle with cosmopolitanism as a post-class interpretive ethics for cognitive capitalism. Latour's ideas, best represented in his jokey statement that "Economists have hitherto only changed the world in various ways, the point now is to interpret it" ("Affects of Capitalism" 10), obscure economic analytics with interpretation, rendering internationalism obsolete if not simply a "bad affect."

At the core of the Latourean analysis is the proposition of a new "flat ontology" in which all entities (human and non-human) function equivalently as "actants" in rhizomatic networks thus displacing any relative causal significance of different phenomena and above all dispersing hierarchical social "relations-between" (difference-in-relation) into circulating flows and contingent assemblages without any origin or end. The result is a metaphysics of description that abandons theory as social explanation for a neo-empiricist tracing of series of associations between entities: "Things, quasi-objects, and attachments are the real

center of the social world, not the agent, person, member, or participant – nor is it society or its avatars [...] social is not a place, a thing, a domain, or a kind of stuff but a provisional movement of new associations” (*Reassembling* 238). In this movement of differences, circulation and the traces of what empirically circulates (from microbes to concepts to...) are rendered primary as against any substantial relations: “The task is to deploy actors as networks of mediations” (*Reassembling* 136) and “a good account will perform the social in the precise sense that some of the participants in the action – through the controversial agency of the author – will be assembled in such a way that they can be collected together” (138). “Thus,” Latour concludes, “through many textual inventions, the social may become again a circulating entity that is no longer composed of the stale assemblage of what passed earlier as being part of society” (128).

What Latour represents here, as is clear, is a new empiricism of meaning: meaning is enacted in practice, inherent in assemblages and the networks that produce them. Latour’s new empiricism of meaning still relies on an idealist theory of discourse: “writing,” he argues in “Life Among Conceptual Characters,” is “a thought producing activity” and *Of Grammatology* was “a key influence on the later notion of scientific inscription” (3), which is to say, as Graham Harman puts it, for both Derrida and Latour, “No name can refer more directly than another to some non-existent underworld where a veritable sun-essence or tree-essence would be housed” (*Prince of Networks* 25). At the same time, Latour also claims to “deepen” the “materiality” of writing: “Everything that is said of the signifier is right, but it must also be said of every other kind of [actant]. There is nothing special about language that allows it to be distinguished from the rest for any length of time” (*Pasteurization of France*, 184-85). For Latour, the study of meaning is not restricted to language and semiotics, it becomes the study of existence itself: “I never took (Greimassian) semiotics as being limited to texts, but as a formidable toolbox for providing a handle on ontology” (“Life” 5). The role of this ontologizing of meaning is to wall off the empirical consciousness

(ideology) from any critique of its social-historical causes and thus prevent any deeper understanding of the class basis of solidarity.

For Latour, the very idea of the social as an already existing structure of relations with determinate boundaries prevents the conceptualization and hence emergence of new collectives/assemblages, and difference is the condition neither of language as such or of class relations but of the ontological multiplicity of objects which remain always partially obscured and thus render 'reality' as always provisional and opaque to social analysis or critique. In arguing for such a provisional "sociology of associations" (*Reassembling* 108), Latour is of course relying on Deleuzean-Spinozan immanence as an ontological model. Deleuze develops his thought in opposition to what he sees as Representational thinking which purportedly relies on a transcendent ground to mediate between existing things and their possible conceptualization, and thus presupposes a common conceptual form of identity imposed upon difference rather than differences being positively affirmed as attributes of one Substance: "Ontologically one, formally diverse" (*Expressionism in Philosophy* 66). As opposed to historical materialism, which thinks difference as a material relation under definite conditions of labor and of life, Deleuze wants to think difference "in itself, neither represented nor mediated" (*Difference and Repetition* 66) and above all as freed from conditions of opposition and antagonistic contradiction (which he assimilates to a philosophy of identity): "There is a false profundity in conflict, but underneath conflict, the space of the play of differences" (51). Anything else, for Latoureaans as for Deleuzeans, amounts to social theorists as élitists imposing meaning on the plenitude of the given forces, rather than letting the actors "speak for themselves."

I will return to this latter point below. First, it is necessary to underscore the main elements of actor-network theory in its negation of totality and elaboration of a post-class cosmopolitanism for cognitive capitalism, and to situate these historically. In his programmatic account of the theory (which has gone through several names and renamings) in *Reassembling the Social*, Latour specifies that an 'actor' "is not the source

of an action but the moving target of a vast array of entities swarming toward it" (46) and "a network [...] is the trace left behind by some moving agent" (132): "an actor-network is what is made to act by a large star-shaped web of mediators flowing in and out of it. It is made to exist by its many ties: attachments are first, actors are second" (217). It is significant that on this view not only are the local and global de-hierarchized and positioned on the same flat plane of the network, but Latour explicitly situates the project of actor-network theory as aligned with a departure from "the superiority of the West" and open to new hybrid and posthuman assemblages and collectives (262). The condition, in turn, of these cosmopolitan, borderless assemblages and collectives is the freedom of entities to circulate, which is a thin allegory of the global market.

Latour's cosmopolitics makes the aporetic pragmatic. He insists there is no more "cosmos" that can even be appealed to and to do so is to fall into what he calls "mononaturalism," which assumes that an (objective) world exists beneath what we think about it ("Whose Cosmos, Which Cosmopolitics?" 453). What we think, which is embodied in our practices and interactions, *is* the world; and the differences betrayed by our notions of "world" testify not to our false thinking but our true realities – the separate worlds we constitute. Actor-network aporetic cosmopolitics names this culturalism turned ecologically sensitive ontology. Representation ("speech") is put forward as a closed cosmos. When Latour says that the basis on "which a common world could be assembled has got to be constructed from scratch," this is an entirely cynical gesture, since he has dismantled the very basis for such a project (462).

Within the assemblage, Latour's actor-network disperses labor as agency among all actors/actants. This erases both the historical activity of labor (which is turned into "action" and "reaction" of all actants and thus makes "value" a product of all kinds of activity) as well as their common class position in the division of labor that unites workers across the global division of labor. Rewriting capitalist social relations in terms of assemblages not only localizes the labor/capital relation and empties it of any antagonism, making it just another trace in the seriality of traces, it

also invites workers to identify their interests with specific organizations or assemblages and the actors in them (which includes the means of production and the owners of the means of production) and not with other workers in the global division of labor. In a more sophisticated way it also teaches the bourgeois lesson that "value" is not created by labor; all, capital and labor, contribute to its production even though only the owner ends up with profit!

Yet what are we to make of such a model for social theory in which only what empirically enters (actually or potentially) the space of circulation has any material significance; in which relations that require to be thought abstractly – *not* as immediate traceable connections, but in terms of the "unity of the diverse" (Marx, *Economic Manuscripts of 1857-58* 38) – are rejected as élitism; and in which fluidity (of circulation) is privileged as an ultimate value? In fact, as Philip Mirowski and Edward Nik-Khah establish, the historical conditions of the emergence of the theory lie not only in philosophy:

many of the philosophical moves of ANT [actor-network theory] were in fact pioneered within a novel discipline forged in the battles of World War II, which later became the source and inspiration of many of the academic postwar social sciences, from decision theory to artificial intelligence, from management science to computational theory, from logical positivism to American neoclassical economics. The ur-discipline was dubbed "Operations Research" or OR. (195)

Both network theory, and the pioneering of "the practice of agnosticism about 'defining the actors of the world in advance'" emerge, in short, not just in the context of the Parisian *avant garde* but in the context of "the proliferation of science/society hybrids incubated in the military in our recent past" (196). On this view, ANT appears not as "amodern," as Latour would claim (*We Have Never Been Modern*), but as an entirely modern operationalization of capitalist management culture – from the military to neoclassical economics.

Equally significantly, as Javier Lezaun's account makes clear, the positing of the "elemental form of activity" in terms of "the building of networks, the circulation of quasi-objects, the execution of trials of strength" (8) conforms to a market model of the social (which is constitutive of neoliberalism). As he further elaborates, discussing the work of Michel Callon, one of the co-founders of ANT, what this approach underwrites is to make

political and moral reflection internal to the constitution of markets, one of the ingredients of their articulation, and by implication calling into question the very possibility of an external position from which the market itself – as a peculiar form of exchange and social organization – could be observed or challenged [...] the market itself becomes the key engine for the production of new political realities [...]. It should now be obvious that ANT will always resist adopting an extraneous or 'critical' position from which to adjudicate matters of concern. (15)

This makes clear how the project of dismantling the inside/outside binary is merely a means to translate capitalism into a series of "event-al" assemblages (erasing its historical and material foundation) without any objective position from which it could be grasped or known. Daniel Robichaud and Francois Cooren, in their Introduction to (Latour inspired) *Organization and Organizing: Materiality, Agency and Discourse*, draw out the implications even more explicitly: "From an ontological standpoint, an organization is thus brought into being as it is performed, acted out, as it becomes literally an event" (xiv). In this way, the actor-network theory that declares "capitalism" not to exist, actually makes corporations and the people who work for them more attuned to the market.

Moreover, despite Latour's ostensible refusal to prioritize any one mode of knowing/being over another, the effect is to confine those who speak for the class interests of the proletariat to an ontological border zone. Those who do not endorse the assemblage and rhizomatics as a way of

life, those who critique the way in which the assemblage interpellates working people to identify with the relations in which they are embedded and in effect to see the corporate drive to privately accumulate surplus value as "mutually" constituting, are not granted access to the zone of "immanence" – they are always imposing from the "outside," they are externality itself. This marginalizes social theory as critique and reduces it to an affirmative enterprise under the guise of a pluralistic gesture aimed at letting every difference or thing "speak for itself." In doing so, Latour articulates a philosophical version of the populism that also underwrites the Trump régime's world view that any explanatory critique that intervenes in the ideological consciousness from its "outside" should be equated with the discourse of "experts" against "the common people" who are "spontaneously" right ("fake news"!). At the same time, Latour advances a not-so-subtle means of granting religion the same "rights" as scientific thought: "Social explanations have of late become too cheap, too automatic; they have outlived their expiration dates – and critical explanations even more so [...]. Why not say that in religion what counts are the beings that make people act, just as every believer has always insisted?" (*Reassembling* 221, 235). The immanence on which Latoureaan "cosmopolitics" is based makes the vulgar (racist) discourse of insiders/outsidiers into a philosophically sophisticated ontology. It is attentive to difference and the way in which the "West" has assumed that its own framework of the world is, or should be, everyone else's (which has become popularized in the liberal discourse of "implicit bias"), but it naturalizes socially produced differences, only challenging the notion (ostensibly) that some differences are better than others, while leaving the *social ontology of difference* "in peace."

II.

Commenting on Marx's early critique of Hegel in which he argues that "theory also becomes a material force as soon as it has gripped the masses" (Marx, Introduction 182), Lukács argues for "the need to discover those features and definitions both of the theory and the ways of gripping

the masses which convert the theory, the dialectical method, into a vehicle of revolution” (2). Marx’s “Inaugural Address of the International Working Men’s Association” (1864) given at the founding of the First International, I argue, shows us one of the necessary historical means by which the theory is converted into a “vehicle of revolution” and a mode of practical revolutionary activity. Addressed in a popular register to a working class audience, Marx demonstrates the transformative register of political speech as a means of bringing materialist dialectical thought to the masses, while establishing – for his time, as much as for our own – the historical necessity for a red internationalism guided by revolutionary theory. This transformative register, which understands “truth” not as the representation of “neutral actuality” but as the product of the historical conflicts of its time and actively participates in them by producing knowledge of the social totality (i.e., the means to grasp it conceptually as integrated by its dialectical relations), is what can be termed, in opposition to the writerly, the “speecherly.” We can see the transformative speecherly developed along two primary axes: first, as a theory of totality that engages facts not as they “immediately exist” “in-themselves” but always as an index of a deeper contradictory and antagonistic “difference-in-relation.” Secondly, the deployment of totality as a means to explode any isolated (non-dialectical) understanding of labor struggles, especially as they are situated in the global horizon of class struggle. Thus, beginning not from language but the social relations of production, Marx, in his speeches gives us both a dialectical and praxical theory of “speech” as a political weapon, and deploys the “speecherly” to foreground an entirely different grounding for a red internationalism of class solidarity across all borders: the positive unity of wage labor relations, which indeed constitute a structure, not as a “schematization and spatialization” (Derrida, *Writing* 5) but as the central antagonistic and moving contradiction that is the basis of the “whole.”

We can see the speecherly at work in Marx’s “Inaugural Address of the International Working Men’s Association,” where he begins by foregrounding the material conditions of life of the masses, the “great fact that the misery of the working masses has not diminished from 1848 to

1864" (5), and then reads this "fact" against the official pronouncements of the bourgeois functionaries of the time, to indicate its dialectical "other," the simultaneous fact that the same period "is unrivaled for the development of its industry and the growth of its commerce" (5). Thus against the prediction, in 1850, of "a moderate organ of the British middle class" that "if the exports and imports of England were to rise 50 per cent, English pauperism would sink to zero" (5), Marx juxtaposes the statistics of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, William Gladstone, in 1864, exclaiming in "wild ecstasy" (7) of an "intoxicating augmentation of wealth and power [...] entirely confined to the classes of property" (qtd Marx 7), and places both against the backdrop of the "official facts and figures" commissioned by the bourgeois state managers of labor themselves in order to flesh out the contradiction between the mass of wealth for capitalists and the mass of poverty for workers, which results from the exploitation of workers by capital in production. For example, in the "Inaugural Address," Marx reproduces his famous use of the British "Blue Books" documenting the working conditions of the time in *Capital* vol. 1, and shows how the bourgeoisie's own government-commissioned reports, as he puts it, "bring out [...] such] strange and unexpected fact[s]"; for instance, they indicate that "of the division of the United Kingdom [...] the agricultural population of England [...] the richest division] is considerably the worst fed" (qtd Marx 7). In the course of his analysis, Marx demonstrates that, contrary to the "trickle down" theory of wealth and capitalist growth advanced in bourgeois reports, even the agricultural laborers of Berkshire, Oxfordshire, and Somersetshire fare better than great numbers of skilled industrial workers of the East of London (7). In other words, not only is the theory of "trickle down" refuted in general, but even in the particular it is turned on its head: the worst fed and most poor are not workers in the poor divisions or in the agricultural districts but industrial workers in the very heartland of the booming metropolis!

And yet, Marx does not simply juxtapose the "strange" facts of the material conditions of life of the British working classes to the ideology of the ruling class. And neither does he make "the difference that counts" into

a matter of meditation on the mediations which establish the distinction between “good and bad facts” (Latour, “Whose Cosmos” 459), which is to make all facts contingent on their immediate (discursive-machinic) mediation, and suspend their *material factuality* as the concentration of the totality of material relations. While he spends considerable time quoting from the British Blue Books to underscore the harsh realities of the working lives and conditions of different British populations – from the agricultural laborers (including in colonial Ireland) to the English tailors, printers, dressmakers, cotton operatives and potters (both men and women), a result, as one Public Health Report states, not of “the deserved poverty of idleness” but of “work [...] for the most part excessively prolonged” (qtd Marx 7) – these facts only acquire their historical significance, their reality, in a global frame: “Indeed, with local colors changed, and on a scale somewhat contracted, the English facts reproduce themselves in all the industrious and progressive countries of the continent” (9). The “true” fact is thus not the isolated fact of bourgeois empiricism (and progressive bourgeois journalism), whether old or new, but that of the necessary working out of the relations of capitalist production, the fact that

Everywhere the great mass of the working classes were sinking to a lower depth, at the same rate at least that those above them were rising in the social scale. In all countries of Europe it has now become a truth demonstrable to every unprejudiced mind, and only decried by those whose interest it is to hedge other people in a fool’s paradise, that no improvement of machinery, no appliance of science to production, no contrivances of communication, no new colonies, no emigration, no opening of markets, no free trade, not all these things put together, will do away with the miseries of the industrious masses; but that on the present false base, every fresh development of the productive powers of labor must tend to deepen social contrasts and point social antagonisms. (9)

Thus, contrary to a bourgeois empiricism for which such "facts" appear as "strange and unexpected," Marx indicates rather their historical *necessity*: they appear universally because they are the product of a deeper reality, a reality in which every "advance" of productive forces is, under capitalist relations of production, turned into an instrument of the deeper exploitation of the laborer rather than an instrument of freedom of all from necessity. The result of this is a growing concentration of wealth and a sharpening of the social antagonisms. In contrast to the expectations of a writerly reading of these issues, the speakerly does not turn away from "facts" or "statistics" as phantasms of a "metaphysics of presence" that deconstruct themselves (which is to fetishize their ideality and seeming self-evidence, and thus equally idealistically to dismantle them on these terms), nor does it make "facts" a by-product of agonistic discursive assemblages, which in fact relativizes and dehistoricizes them. Instead, it reinserts the facts back into the framework of social totality (from which they were abstracted out), and thus shows that they are symptoms of underlying structural relations that need to be conceptually grasped and brought to the surface of consciousness, in order for workers to collectively transform these relations in practice. Thus, in the first instance, the speakerly as a political form functions, as we can see here, simultaneously on two different levels: that of bringing into view the facts of everyday experience, which are immediately recognizable to all, and that of the structure producing these economic facts; in other words, in both form and content, it pivots on this relationality as class conscious knowing.

It is in its second moment, which moves beyond how the bourgeois ideologists engage the class realities of capitalism to how the working classes themselves engage them, that we see the speakerly develop what Lukács argues is the "ultimate goal": "that relation to the totality (to the whole of society seen as a process), through which every aspect of the struggle acquires revolutionary significance" (22), and which, I argue, is the prerequisite of red internationalism. Here we first see Marx re-examine the impact of the failure of the 1848 Revolution on the political activity of

the working classes. He demonstrates that not only was the political activity of the working class “on the Continent, crushed by the iron hand of force” but soon, alongside the absence of any “solidarity of action between the British and the continental working classes” the failure spread “its contagious effects to this side of the Channel” (“Inaugural Address” 10). Thus the failure of the struggles of 1848 were not limited to the Continent, but “the rout of their continental brethren unmanned the English working classes, and broke their faith in their own cause” while restoring “to the landlord and the money lord their somewhat shaken confidence” (10). There was, in other words, as a counterpoint to the lack of “solidarity of action,” what Marx calls “a solidarity of defeat” (10).

This dialectical point – how “the local” has global practical and political ramifications only because it is situated in a totality – is further developed by Marx in his discussion of “two great facts” (10) in the positive development of working class struggles in the period after 1848. On the one hand, the 30-year struggle for the “Ten Hours Bill” waged by the English working classes to curtail the workday functioned as a vanguard for the conditions of life of non-English workers on the Continent as the English Factory Act was adopted in Europe in “more or less modified forms” and as the “immense physical, moral, and intellectual benefits accruing to the factory operatives” (10) became an established fact. On the other hand, as Marx writes, equally important was its significance as “the victory of a principle; it was the first time that in broad daylight the political economy of the middle class succumbed to the political economy of the working class” (11). Here Marx emphasizes not simply the importance of the “concrete” struggle to limit the length of the workday in its immediate impact on the lives of working people, but shows how at the same time the concrete is the site for a more abstract and removed (from daily experience) but ultimately essential struggle over the production of surplus value, whose underpinning is the capitalist working day. As Marx points out, while the bourgeois economists and their cheerleaders had insisted that reducing the hours of labor would be the “death knell of British industry, which vampire like, could but live by

sucking blood, and children's blood too" (11) – and that in a manner more barbaric than in "the mysterious rite of the religion of Moloch" (11) because practiced on an industrial scale and devolving exclusively upon the children of the poor – the legal limitations on the working day in actuality demonstrated a victory in "the great contest between the blind rule of the supply and demand laws which form the political economy of the middle class, and social production controlled by social foresight, which forms the political economy of the working class" (11). Thus the necessary lesson of the fight over the working day and working conditions, as Marx shows, while often couched in moral or legal terms, is in actuality also a fight between two opposing systems of production: capitalism and its drive for profitability, and socialism and its organization of production relations founded on public and collective ownership of the means of production that allows the forces of production to free all from necessity. It is through this work of the speakerly that workers are thus enabled to grasp in a new frame the historical significance of their struggles on the plane of the dialectics of labor, which both points backward to pre-capitalist barbarism and forward to communist control of production by the producers themselves.

It is also within this historical frame that Marx can advance both the meaning and limits of the "great social experiments" (11) of the co-operative movement. As he indicates, their value is to have shown that production on a large scale, and in accord with the behests of modern science, may be carried on without the existence of a class of masters employing a class of hands; that to bear fruit, the means of labor need not be monopolized as a means of dominion over, and of extortion against, the laboring man himself; and that, like slave labor, like serf labor, hired labor is but a transitory and inferior form, destined to disappear before associated labor plying its toil with a willing hand, a ready mind, and a joyous heart. (11)

Yet, while such independent attempts to organize labor on a democratic basis signify the potentiality of socialist production, as Marx also underscores – and in doing so he emphasizes the material necessity of

internationalism – “if kept within the narrow circle of the casual efforts of private workmen, [they] will never be able to arrest the growth in geometrical progression of monopoly, to free the masses, nor even to perceptibly lighten the burden of their miseries” (12). This is because, as he points out, “the lords of the land and the lords of capital will always use their political privileges for the defense and perpetuation of their economic monopolies” (12). To emancipate labor from the chains of profitability for the few, what is needed – and as had begun to take place at the time in England, Germany, Italy, and France – are independent working class parties organized not simply around workplace struggles, but organized to “conquer political power” (12). And to achieve this emancipatory goal what is essential in turn, as Marx argues to his audience, is the “fraternal concurrence” (12) – the class solidarity – of all workers in pursuit of their collective material interests for freedom from exploitation and necessity. The sheer fact of being a majority in all nations is, in short, a powerful weapon of successful struggle, but “numbers weigh only in the balance if united by combination and led by knowledge” (12). Further, as the history of class struggles have shown, the means to such unity is practical struggle against “a foreign policy in pursuit of criminal designs, playing upon national prejudices, and squandering in piratical wars the people’s blood and treasure” (12-13). The fight against war, colonization, imperialism, and slavery, is thus not an “adjunct” to the goal of the self-emancipation of working people globally, but one of its essential pre-requisites requiring them “to master themselves the mysteries of international politics; to watch the diplomatic acts of their respective governments; to counteract them, if necessary, by all means in their power; when unable to prevent, to combine in simultaneous denunciations” (12-13).

The class lesson of the speecherly is that only by bringing the perspective of the social totality to bear on organized struggle, and maintaining the outlook not of particular groups of workers, but of the class as a whole, is revolutionary emancipation from a system based on the exploitation of the majority by a minority possible. In his writings of the 1850s for *The Tribune*, Marx already had set emancipation from

colonialism as a necessary objective of European socialism and supported national liberation movements from Ireland to India. While this explicit condemnation of colonialism has often been read (Anderson 11-20) as Eurocentric – the end of colonialism is necessary for *European* socialism to succeed – in actuality it is an outcome of Marx's fundamental theoretical commitment to the concept of totality. Only within the framework of an interconnected systemic whole in which both differential material conditions of life and of struggle globally are interrelated – difference-in-relation – is there a material basis of and a political necessity for internationalist class solidarity across all borders. To achieve this end, one thus must leave the poetic subversions of the writerly "International" to the "philanthropic middle-class spouters" (12) and stand on the ground of materialist dialectics for which the speakerly is one means of strategic deployment by workers to forge the red internationalism needed in our struggle for self-emancipation from capitalist barbarism:

"Proletarians of all countries, unite!" (13).

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