

They the people

Problems of alter-globalization

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You have asked for current thinking about different concepts and forms of political collectivity.* If I were speaking as an academic, I would, I suppose, look once again at the implications of ‘multitudes’, as conceived by our colleagues and allies Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt. Speaking as an activist, however, I am obliged to say that the bold and indeed brave and intriguing notion of the multitude does not quite match up yet to the practical fact of the transformation of Antonio Gramsci’s Modern Prince into what is too easily called international civil society. I will speak about the world’s ‘people’ as constructed by this haphazardly put together episteme, ‘international’ by default.

The developmental logic of the expression ‘international civil society’ might be taken to run as follows: first step, ‘social’ as opposed to ‘political’ – in other words, movement as opposed to party; second step, non-governmental, effective social engagement as opposed to party politics; third step, a management-style decision not to use the negative (‘non’-governmental), but to invent a positive, not-state-therefore-civil-society. The crucial political-theoretical fact that the emergence of ‘civil society’ presupposed a certain type of social contract, which linked it to the production of an urbanity in a controlling relationship with a specific state, is completely ignored here. The importance of the *bürgerliche Gesellschaft* to the bourgeois state is therefore precisely forgotten, as the possibility of the welfare state as accountable is closed off more and more in the interest of a globalization that alter-globalization must accept in order to come into existence. This potted possible history is always in my mind as I use the expression ‘international civil society’.¹

It is well known that Gramsci thought of the Party as the Modern Prince.² As Laclau and Mouffe, and before them Christine Buci-Glucksmann, have pointed out, the

ideas in Gramsci’s *Prison Notebooks*, which he circled around in many different ways, are most often what Derrida has called *pharmakon*.³ Ideas like hegemony, the Party and indeed the state have the ambivalence of something that can be both poison and medicine. Gramsci’s work is a blueprint for practical and epistemological activism. Parties still have a degree of archaic importance in local and national politics, with their local and national traditions, spiced by human intrigue. After the failure of state and revolution, in this era of world governance, the importance that Gramsci perceived in the intellectual formation called the Party, belonging to a democratic international socialism, has displaced itself. The mood of the Left is altogether in favour of what, twenty years ago, Immanuel Wallerstein, Giovanni Arrighi and Terence Hopkins called ‘anti-systemic movements’ – the then newish social movements – extra-state collective action to attend to problems neglected by state and party alike.⁴ Wallerstein’s fear then was that they would seek state power. Now, these movements have gained so much strength that they bypass the state almost completely and provoke us into asking if they should take the helm of world governance. My title today is directed to their clientele.

What is called terrorism can also be defined as extra-state collective action. George W. Bush attempted to take up arms against this from the point of view of the state. I will not here be able to consider how the ‘war on terror’ haphazardly took the shape of international governance, in spite of the petulant and self-centralizing role of the USA. I would, however, like to draw a parallel between the war on terror and the control of migration. For just as the violent management of international extra-state violence was undertaken *nationally* by the United States of America and became internationalized, so migration is provoked

* This is the text of a talk to the *Radical Philosophy* conference, *Power to the People?*, London, 9 May 2009. I should like to dedicate these few words to Professor Nanjundaswamy, valiant fighter against Cargill and Monsanto, who died in 2004, and who was imprisoned for destroying a Kentucky Fried Chicken in Bangalore, India in 1997. It was my great good fortune to spend some time with him that year. I could not join forces with him because, although we ourselves could converse in English, his field of operation was in the idiom of Kannada, the language of his native state, mine in Bengali. However, as I will argue here, linguistic diversity is not an obstacle to an effectively international socialism, but rather its constitutive double bind.

by globalization in a heterogeneous way, as can be seen in Amit Bhaduri's critical focus on what the Right calls 'the managerial state', brought into being by the pressures of globalization.⁵ We live in an uneven world, determined by global *and* state-based imperatives, with geopolitical difference determined by history and geography, not yet inhabited by a multitude. Into this world steps the international civil society, 'we the saviours', with its clientele of 'they, the people', and a jubilant cry: 'Another world is possible.'

After Bernard Cassen's 2003 interview in *New Left Review*,⁶ we all know that the ATTAC (Association pour la Taxation des Transactions pour l'Aide de Citoyens) – the French organization at the helm of alter-globalization or the international integration of globalization – spawned the World Social Forum. But it is also possible to say that the World Social Forum is a necessary outcome of that slow failure of state and revolution, by internal and external forces, which is one of the major narratives of the past century. This *décalage*, between the efficient and the necessary cause of the World Social Forum, has created a radical philosophy that can allow for only a sentimental version of auto-critique, if at all; far indeed from the systemic goals of Marxism. The difference between 'Another Europe is Possible' and 'Another World is Possible' is a crucial part of this.

The South and the North

It was between the inception of the social movements in the 1980s and the founding of the ATTAC in 1998 that the slow appropriation of these movements by the forces of international capital and the recognition of so-called international civil society by our imperfect but venerable organization of world governance (I refer, of course, to the United Nations) took place, in 1994: the opening of the NGO forum at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) in Cairo. It is significant that the theme of the ICPD dealt with reproductive heteronormativity in the context of 'development', which was blatantly an alibi for transnational capitalism, then even without any serious commitment to the figure of 'sustainability', hovering over the nakedness of its double bind. Never had the real difference between North and South come clearer, and also, of course, the usefulness of acknowledging gender in this re-coding of 'the people'.⁷ This is a supremely important point. None of the words in the subtitle of this conference – the people, proletariat, workers, masses, nations, communities, multitudes, commons – pays the slightest attention to gendering. But capitalism, as it freed labour, also produced what

we recognize as feminism in the enlightened European eighteenth century. At last, in Cairo, the two came together as that crucial connection between town and state, included within Marx's own narrative, loosened. This is something that requires an *Eighteenth Brumaire* type of analysis of its own.

I travelled with UBINIG that year, a Bangladeshi non-governmental organization that was not registered as an NGO, precisely because of the narrative I have laid out in the international context, and also because in the context of the poorer nation-states, the connections between the managerial state and the NGOs were in fact strong. In other words, UBINIG wanted to retain an older sense of 'we the people', recoding ideological feudality in the tradition of a Rosa Luxemburg or a W.E.B. Du Bois theorizing the general strike, where the agent is the 'worker'; not in terms of a strike, which would relate to the Gramscian concept of the Modern Prince, but as slowly creating another world – not as decreed by the whirlwind activism of the World Social Forum.

We were working against pharmaceutical dumping on women's bodies; our sense of reproductive rights was against enforced sterilization. We could only be perceived as 'consensus breakers' against the overwhelming Northern perception that the right to a legal abortion – which we strictly supported, of course – was the only right that could be mentioned in the draft resolution. As a member of the Asian Women's Human Rights Council, I wrote an open letter that year to Gro Harlem Brundtland, then chair of the World Commission on Environment and Development. I cite it here to give you a sense of what it is to think from the perspective of Bangladesh, to create a simulacrum of membership in a 'we', rather than a distant obligation to a 'they'. I am not Bangladeshi, I am Indian. The perspective is here a linguistic link that pre-dates artificial frontiers. The national language of India is not my mother tongue, but the national language of Bangladesh is. In order to come close to achieving a simulacrum of idiomatic continuity with oppressed groups so that the activism in a social movement can represent them as portrait – 'we' – as well as proxy – *for* 'us' – activists have to learn to inhabit the 'lingual memory' of the oppressed. (The idea that the 'oppressed themselves' agitate in the social movements is questionable.) Since the question of representation in the social movements is not subject to the abstract structures of state-run democratic procedure (for better or for worse), this is particularly important in this sphere and gives the lie to universalism in a practical way. Unless universalism is mediated by linguistic

diversity, and not by the ruse of metropolitan 'translation' alone, ATTAC (which has my admiration and support in principle) will not have to face the problem of the named-language register, but the World Social Forum does. Without exaggeration, this is a baseline issue that should not be reduced to the metropolitan debate on universalism, singularity and particularism. Any attempt at socialism run through inter-state agreements, by hierarchically arranged vanguards connected by hegemonic languages, defines the people as 'they the people', and crumbles easily under the seduction of capitalism. In contemporary London, for example, the politically correct acknowledgement that the language of a majority of Bangladeshi British is the language of Sylhet (a specific district of Bangladesh, a language not generally understandable across the rich dialectal map of Bengali) transforms Bengali into a private language, in the sense described by Ngugi wa Thiong'o.⁸ Here we need to attend to Gramsci's notion of historical linguistics as a play of power, in his extraordinary last notebook, no. 29, revising his earlier position on national language and dialect, as his native Sardinian was grammaticized.⁹ We need also to remind ourselves that migrant activism, the most urgent field of action today, is the primary theatre of they-(allocthon or autocthon, depending on your situation)-the-people-ism.

I want to attend to the deep separation between 'us' the gendered people and 'they' the gendered people, reflected in 'us' the classed people and 'they' the classed gendered people, which relates unevenly to racialization. That is where current conceptions of those synonyms must go – 'multitude' as well – in order to be in the least effective in our world.

Here is my letter.

A Response to Gro Harlem Brundtland

Ms Brundtland has started a good and spirited discussion. Her criticism of religious obscurantism, her emphasis on the education of women, and her call for decriminalizing abortion, combating sexually transmitted diseases, and expanding adolescent sex education cannot be questioned, no more than can be her perception of the connection between 'the peoples of the industrialized North and the privileged in the developing South', and her general emphasis on accountability. There remain, however, some assumptions that do need questioning.

1. An apparently innocent descriptive remark, '95 per cent of population increase takes place in developing countries ... the ecologically fragile areas where current numbers ... reflect an appalling disequilibrium between people and Earth's resources', resonates with an unspoken assumption that troubles those with some experience of the running debate: the poorest are guiltiest for the current global disaster,

the very guiltiest being the poorest women of the South. The move from this to specious comparisons between the harm done by the resource-poor peasant of the South and the monstrous expenditure of resources in the North is only too familiar to some of us.

2. When overpopulation as the root cause of global disaster is so unquestioned, the approach to education becomes mechanical. 'The girl who receives her diploma will have fewer babies than her sister who does not' has a nice ring, and no doubt has statistical support. But internationally aided education schemes have peculiar priorities. As Amaryllis Tiglaos Torres states, women's education in the Philippines is 'tailor fit for the dominant forces in the global economy' (Jill Conway, ed., *The Politics of Women's Education*; the book makes this point for the entire South). The control, either of the bodies of women through coercive population policy, or of their minds through an 'education' that propagates the 'values' underlying the financialization of the globe, is too often celebrated as free choice and 'women in development'.

3. Sex education for the adolescent is another excellent idea. But it only fits the established infrastructure in the North. Sex education schemes for the adolescents of the rural or urban poor in the South, without prior incentives to sustained social redistribution, is of no practical use. The popular videographic image of a woman oppressed by tradition and ignorance waiting to be 'rescued' by Northern body control has little reference to the existing situation: people suffering from centuries of neglect, now bewildered and helpless before an obsessive focus on the reproductive systems of women even as general health declines, and all resistance is foiled by governments mortgaged to the forces of so-called development.

For 'family planning as a universal right for all', 'reproductive rights' must be redefined in a global perspective. Brundtland's emphasis on abortion was perhaps provoked by Cairo. We are against the criminalization of abortion but perceive access to safe and legal abortion as an important and *society-specific* issue. In a situation where extreme poverty makes children mean social security, the right to abortion may be immaterial. In a situation where coercive contraception lays waste a woman's reproductive and general health, a right to abortion may be irrelevant. In a situation where the absence of resources makes it impossible to think of male and female children becoming equally competitive in future, the right to abortion may facilitate the removal of female fetuses, where internalized gendering is misrepresented as woman's choice.

We applaud the Prime Minister's obvious goodwill. But when she speaks of 'allocating at least 4 per cent of Official Development Assistance to population programs', she should take cognizance of the obvious blackmailing potential in the connection between aid packages and population control

(although the letter of the law may sometimes reassure us to the contrary): ‘control the reproductive bodies of your poorest women [and men] or else.’ To ‘empower’ women would mean to start a process that would reverse this trend, so that infrastructural supports may be secured through which these women, by no means passive victims, can resist the crimes committed in the name of population control.

Brundtland speaks of ‘accountability’ in a general way. It may not be possible in a keynote address to be more specific. But the long-established consensus among activist NGOs in the South has been to ask for monitored accountability for multinational pharmaceuticals which ravage the bodies of the women and, through chemical fertilizers and pesticides, the land. Therefore, while commending Gro Harlem Brundtland’s words, we regret that the best of the North still remains set in the usual and recognizable mould.

In such brief compass, I can only hint at the immense effort required to operate a transition from this earned bitterness about Northern radicalism to the possibility of working together, to overlook, however briefly, the rift between us and them.

State and party

Let us consider the transition achieved as I express my conviction that ATTAC is most astute in focusing on the Tobin tax on foreign-exchange transactions. In doing so, it targets finance capital, the not-so-silent silent killer in capitalist globalization. We must also appreciate the idea of a global tax revenue fund. The thought of an equitable global tax revenue fund can be entertained only on an ad hoc basis today. We are obliged to recall that the work of taxes is to *sustain* a polity, not to solve problems on an ad hoc basis, nor to shore up private-sector voluntarism. For the effective functioning of an equitable global tax revenue, in a divided world, the structurally imaginable instrument is still the state structure, although it is a broken instrument. It can be imagined that the oppressed (I am using this word because it is not on the list making up the subtitle to this event, although it is of course susceptible to the crosshatching that I proposed when I mentioned the words on your list) will engage the public sphere of the state, and thus step into the ‘we’ of the citizen. It cannot be imagined that s/he will engage the structure of world governance without the prosthesis of international civil society, as part of the perennial ‘they’. The emergence of a global functioning structure is, in its turn, predicated upon the establishment of a parity that would make the World Social Forum powerfully *advisory*. This question cannot be begged. Only a romantic part-time

academic activist would deny this. In spite of the many ecstatic remarks of the genre ‘the slum dwellers in Mumbai know how to build a just world’, we have to take into account the difference between our justified moral outrage and their equally justified self-interest. Freedom *from* oppression does not automatically lead to the use of that freedom *to* redistribute. As for the UN’s ‘millennium goals’, you may read Samir Amin’s criticism, in *Monthly Review*.¹⁰

Yet a democratic state entails parties. And the party today, the intellectual formation envisaged as the party by Gramsci, has displaced itself. Yet it is still the only real candidate for a Modern Prince. Our list of aporetic tasks must include rethinking the definition of democracy as competition between parties. The aporetic is a situation where we cannot cross over fully to the other side, yet must continue to perform carefully mustered imperfect crossings, manoeuvring wars entailing impermanent wars of position. Such a description releases the aporetic potential of that Gramscian distinction.¹¹ I might mention that the aporia is often Socrates’ gift to his students, especially in the dialogues surrounding his death.¹² This structure is also classically raced, classed and gendered as women’s work, agricultural and domestic work. The Socratic maieutic metaphorizes this, and the horticultural crosses the divides, literally and metaphorically. Shall we call the task of tending the texture of the party in the structure of the state ‘gardening’ or ‘housekeeping’, if ‘aporetic’ sends the wrong message? Confidence in the urban network model altogether ignores the nature of this necessary labour.

In effect, all parties today are more or less capitalist in their economic policy. The difference lies in the degree of privatization. The platform-orientation of parties, in an economically restructured globe, invariably deal with questions of identity, shading into the mobilization of the differences between discourses of the transcendental, gender-in-religion. After all, the transnational agencies that run welfare these days, in international civil society, do not work through party competition. We are suggesting that parliamentary representation is a social contract. We are proposing an aporetic and persistent cleansing of the state of nationalism. The task of theory is to rethink the party structure as welfare-issue-based collectivities that urge the state into redistribution. This too calls for (subaltern) epistemological transformation on a massive scale – uncoercive rearrangement of desires on a humanities-based Du Bois–Gramscian model, rather than the claim for a transformed episteme based on the presence of electronic telecommunication.

Capitalist globalization cannot continue to be the only source of authority and legitimation in our world. The empirical-in-the-aporetic is more challenging than a self-legitimizing 'theory' that makes no difference to the forces that run the world.

ATTAC has some theoretical sense of the importance of the Gramsci who thought a 'philosophy of praxis' in an Italy divided by more than class, and took Lenin a step further into an idea of hegemony that saw the state as *pharmakon*, medicine as well as poison, working with a civil society that is both imbricated with it and remains its monitor. Bernard Cassen says this in his interview:

we can envisage other ways of living and organizing society than those we have at present. So our task is to persuade the largest number of people possible of the viability of such alternatives, and prepare the ground for a Gramscian hegemony that would allow different policies to be realized.¹³

This statement is made by an enlightened journalist writing for *Le Monde diplomatique*, interested in helping the world without systemic change. 'The largest number of people' is a journalistic way of saying 'multitude', and carries the same problems. This is where the deep double bind facing the uniformization needed by a democratic international socialism (not easily accessible from any benevolent capitalist/corporatist globalization, as alter-globalization seems to imagine) must be confronted by activists or remain doomed to repeat a Little Britain Marxism as a panacea against statements as wild as mine. In the context of the global South, the failure of the first Bandung on the altar of nationalism is no more than a lesson. The second Bandung, called by South Africa, is not necessarily the solution. The Cancún group – Brazil, China, India, South Africa – is also marked by the state. The usefulness of the deeply ambiguous state structure – so easily claimed by party competition, nationalist patriarchy and the forces of fascism – is not over in the postcolonial world. One unintended consequence of alter-globalization may be to accept the loss of accountability of the state restructured by neoliberalism, and thus to lose the only access to a contracted 'we the people' that we have. Revolution leading to a change in state-formation looking forward to an altered globe may not have a chance any more. But the dangerous structure of the state, persistently cleared of nationalism, party competition as such, and a merely economic regionalism, as a locus of redress, may still be useful in a fractured globe, if only as a transition. It is this persistence, forever looking forward to a transition, which is the aporetic.

Education

This is a tough entry into a concept of the people. It is reminiscent of Marx's third thesis on Feuerbach, in which he insisted that the built-in power structure between teacher and taught must constantly be overturned in order to institute change.¹⁴ (Unfortunately, a mistranslation in the English versions, invariably translating overturning (*Umwälzung*) as revolution, makes the thesis useless in English.)

In the European and Latin American theatre, ATTAC calls upon the resources of the state. This is the state in its international face, seeking to win back the right to redistribution. When expanded internationally through the World Social Forum and other institutions of the social movement, this is the force of thinking a left future. Yet, if unsupplemented by the ethico-political education of each generation of the subaltern as potential agents of redistribution, this future may come to as ignoble an end as the Bolshevik or the Maoist experiment. Like class, subaltern is a position without identity. We are not, therefore, speaking necessarily of hetero-normatively reproduced generations, but rather of the irreducible and determining *production of subalternization* in all systems using capital, including socialism. Another aporetic task.

When Gramsci had time in jail, he elaborated his plans on education. ATTAC sees itself as an 'action-oriented movement of popular education'. What does this mean today? 'Essentially, that militants must be well-informed, intellectually equipped for action. We don't want people turning out on demonstrations without really knowing why.'¹⁵ In the context of language-learning, the World Social Forum faces certain kinds of problems that the ATTAC does not. Educating into alter-globalization, the models of teach-ins, workers' education and the pedagogy of the oppressed, or indeed the nineteenth-century Ligue de l'Enseignement mentioned by Cassen, will not travel to the largest sectors of the electorate of the global South. Gramsci, had already gone far beyond the notion of education as adequate information. Today, in the context not only of an allochthonic Europe but also of a world, I am insisting that access to subaltern idiom is extremely important. NGOs building schools or Human Rights Watch shaming states into good behaviour are not a systematic plan for the future. If we want to 'change the world', alter-globalism must think of the education of the disenfranchised into disinterest, in a double bind with the interest of class struggle: 'democracy ... cannot mean merely that an unskilled worker can become skilled', writes Gramsci. 'It must mean that every "citizen" can "govern" and

that society places him, even if only abstractly, in a general condition to achieve this.’¹⁶ From ‘they’ to ‘we’, however aporetic, imperfect...

In conclusion, then, let me say that we need the state structure to fight the power of the big snarling beast-states that prowl still in a Hobbesian world. In the geopolitical sphere, which manages capitalist globalization as crisis, the alter-globalization lobby, as well as Euro-specific Marxism feudally benevolent towards coloured immigrants, is inefficiently and insufficiently oppositional. We need ‘citizens’ still, to work the state structures of rising nations impatient with the arrogance of European leadership, slouching towards Africa without a civilizing mission. For that, Gramsci’s project – coming to terms with ideology practically, as *pharmakon*, instrumentalizing the organic intellectual – is still on target. The impatience of the World Social Forum, its idealist love affair with the digital, is tempered here by the fact that ‘Intellectuals develop slowly, far more slowly than any other social group. ... to think it possible that such intellectuals’ – self-selected moral entrepreneurs – ‘can, *en masse* break with the entire past and situate themselves totally upon the terrain of a new ideology, is absurd.’¹⁷ Alter-globalization is at best based on a hastily cobbled relationship between the intellectual and the subaltern in the broadest possible sense.¹⁸

Gramsci thought of the dictatorship of the proletariat as a transition to a democratic world-state. In a transformed conjuncture, I am asking you to consider the possibility of the state *structure* as an aporetic transition to the globe. That structure can be useful in actively constructing a ‘we the people’ that must be persistently fractured along the lines I have indicated. Most transformations academically proposed require divine intervention. This one is fairly susceptible to a collective movement that takes advantage of the digital. This will mean relaxing the implicit and only sometimes self-critical control of the movement by the North and the more feudal North-in-the-South. In the old days, when obliged to deal with NGOs, we would inquire into their funding and evaluation structures. In globalized capitalism, can a tendentially aporetic state structure serve as damage control for a persistent rewriting of ‘they’ as ‘we’? I ask the international Left to make it their double-binding question, making internationality itself aporetic in the linguistic diversity of the world.¹⁹ I am back where I began.

Notes

1. This fable is widely accepted among activists. For a more academic suggestion, see Gil Eyal, ‘Anti-politics and the Spirit of Capitalism: Dissidents, Monetarists,

and the Czech Transition to Capitalism’, *Theory and Society* 29, 2000, p. 52. What follows may seem ‘too empirical’ to a particular habit of writing systematic theory in a self-enclosed and self-legitimizing space. However, I write in the conviction that theory and the empirical are irreducibly imbricated. Indeed, theory is in the empirical, and the empirical cannot be thought as such without the intervention of the theoretical.

2. Antonio Gramsci, *The Modern Prince*, trans. Louis Marks, International Publishers, New York, 1957.
3. ‘[O]ne and the same suspicion envelops, in the same gesture, the book [‘theory’] and the drug [*pharmakon*], writing and the occult and ambiguous efficacy, given over to empiricism and chance, operating by the ways of magic and not the laws of necessity.’ Jacques Derrida, ‘Plato’s Pharmacy’, in *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1981, pp. 61–171; p. 73, translation modified.
4. Giovanni Arrighi, Terence Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Antisystemic Movements*, Verso, London, 1989.
5. Amit Bhaduri, *Development with Dignity: A Case for Full Employment*, National Book Trust, New Delhi, 2005.
6. Bernard Cassen, ‘On the Attack’, *New Left Review* 19, January–February 2003, pp. 41–60.
7. For the United Nations’ contradictory role in this, see Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ‘“Woman” as Theatre: United Nations Conference on Women, Beijing 1995’, *Radical Philosophy* 75, Jan/Feb 1996, pp. 2–4.
8. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*, Curry, London, 1986.
9. Antonio Gramsci, *The Gramsci Reader*, ed. David Forgacs, NYU Press, New York, 2000, pp. 353–60.
10. Samir Amin, ‘The Millennium Development Goals: A Critique from the South’, *Monthly Review*, vol. 57, no. 10, March 2006; available at www.monthlyreview.org/0306amin.htm.
11. Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, trans. J.A. Buttigieg, Columbia University Press, New York, 2007, Vol. 3, pp. 168–9.
12. Plato, *Phaedo* 91b is among the most poignant articulations of this.
13. Cassen, ‘On the Attack’, p. 56.
14. Karl Marx, ‘Theses on Feuerbach’, in *Early Writings*, trans. Rodney Livingstone and Gregor Benton, Vintage Books, New York, 1975, pp. 421–3.
15. Cassen, ‘On the Attack’, pp. 44–5.
16. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, trans. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith, International Publishers, New York, 1971, p. 40.
17. Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Political Writings (1921–1926)*, International Publishers, New York, 1978, p. 462.
18. I have long warned against the credulous vanity of believing that unmediated cyberliteracy is an unquestioned good, that the electronic broadening of access does not mean an automatic epistemic transformation. See, for example, my ‘Megacity’, *Grey Room* 1, 2000, pp. 8–25. Now an excellent new book provides research and argument to support this: David Golumbia, *The Cultural Logic of Computation*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge MA and London, 2009.
19. I discuss linguistic diversity in ‘Rethinking Comparativism’, *New Literary History*, forthcoming.