

**A LETTER FROM MUMIA ABU-JAMAL
TO MARK LEWIS TAYLOR**

Upon revising his essay for submission, Mark Taylor also chose to share it with Mumia Abu-Jamal. We publish Abu-Jamal's response here with his and Taylor's permission. Their correspondence is exemplary of the deep intellectual and personal bonds that form the foundation of social justice work. Our decision to include the facsimile alongside Taylor's transcript bears witness to the material trace of a life, Mumia's life, condemned and caged along with too many others by a carceral society profoundly at odds with human freedom and flourishing.

—LÁPIZ Editorial Collective

LLJA! 8/27/21

Dear Mark,

This evening, in the midst of the latest quarantine on this block (becuz 2 guys were COVID+-), I received a thick set of xeroxed pages from you, discussing interpellation according to the theories and thinking of Enrique Dussel.

I've just finished your work: surprisingly moving, thoughtful, interpretive, nuanced and --- freakin' brilliant.

As you probably know, I'd been introduced to the idea of interpellation via Althusser's writing; but this is something else again.

It's hard to describe something like this; but it expresses, in ways I cannot, the distance occasioned by this work—not the usual, that *distancing* that separates further, the imprisoned from the institutions of the State; but, quite the reverse—the distancing occasioned by the scholar who dares—to scale the walls, to touch, to speak, to know—and more importantly, to feel. *to hear*.

Your discussion of interpellation is equally a discussion of cost(s). Not the cost(s) of doing business, as is commonly referenced.

But the cost(s) of *not* doing business as usual.

That read leads to the “rupturing” you noted and explained.

What we learn [is] that the System exacts cost(s) . . . made abundantly clear as I've read in DeToqueville's *Democracy in America*.

In the land that claims 'freedom for all' there are costs for those who actively try to pursue the damned thing--real costs--for real freedom, no?

I am reminded of that old adage 'Rome wasn't built in a day'; but isn't it also true that it didn't fall in a day? But didn't it fall?

As we examine the debacle in Afghanistan this very day, do we not espy the crumbling of empire?

Underneath it all, [it] is the System's attempts to really reckon w/ a re-emergent China; but in order to do so, it must disengage from other corners of the fraying empire.

And disengagement, too, has its cost(s).

The System is real--and because it *is*, it is subject to the forces of entropy. Of rise; fall and even decay.

I wanted to write you to thank you for your deep and exquisite meditations.

Brilliant. Brilliant.

alla best, maj ■

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