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Beyond Occidentalism: Toward Nonimperial Geohistorical Categories

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Beyond Occidentalism: Toward Nonimperial Geohistorical Categories

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Are you sure it is my name?
Have you got all my particulars?
Do you already know my navigable blood,
my geography full of dark mountains,
of deep and bitter valleys
that are not on the map?

—Nicolás Guillén, “My Last Name”

A place on the map is also a place in history.

—Adrienne Rich, “Notes toward a Politics of Location”

Frantz Fanon begins the conclusion of *Black Skins, White Masks* with the following epigraph taken from Marx’s *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*:

The social revolution . . . cannot draw its poetry from the past, but only from the future. It cannot begin with itself before it has stripped itself of all its superstitions concerning the past. Earlier revolutions relied on memories out of world history in order to drug themselves against their own content. In order to find their own content, the revolutions of the nineteenth century have to let the dead bury the dead. Before, the expression exceeded the content; now the content exceeds the expression. [1967:223]

Imagining a future that builds on the past but is not imprisoned by its horror, Fanon visualized the making of a magnificent monument: “On the field of battle, its four corners marked by scores of Negroes hanged by their testicles, a monument is slowly built that promises to be majestic. And, at the top of this monument, I can already see a white man and a black man *hand in hand*” (1967:222).¹ Drawing his poetry from the future, Fanon sought to counter the deforming burden of racialist categories and to unsettle the desire to root identity in tradition in order to liberate both colonizer and colonized from the nightmare of their violent history.

In a shared utopian spirit, here I explore representational practices that portray non-Western peoples as the Other of a Western Self. By examining how these practices shape works of cultural criticism produced in metropolitan centers and subtly bind them to the object of their critique, I seek room for a decentered poetics that may help us imagine geohistorical categories for a nonimperial world.²

Imperial Maps

How to represent the contemporary world? Maps have often served as a medium for representing the world as well as for problematizing its representation. From Jorge Luis Borges's many mind-twisting stories involving maps, I remember the image of a map, produced under imperial command, that replicates the empire it represents. The map is of the same scale as the empire and coincides with it point for point. In this exact double of the empire's domain, each mountain, each castle, each person, and each grain of sand finds its precise copy. The map itself is thus included in the representation of the empire, leading to an infinite series of maps within maps. The unwieldy map is eventually abandoned and is worn away by the corrosive force of time even before the decline of the empire itself. Thus, history makes the map no longer accurate, or perhaps turns it into a hyperreal representation that prefigures the empire's dissolution.

Unlike cartographers' maps produced under imperial orders, the representations I wish to examine are discursive, not graphic, and seem to be the product of invisible hands laboring independently according to standards of scholarly practice and common sense. Yet they involve the use of a shared spatial imagery and have the strange effect of producing a remarkably consistent mental picture or map of the world. In everyday speech as much as in scholarly works, terms such as the "West," the "Occident," the "center," the "first world," the "East," the "Orient," the "periphery," and the "third world" are commonly used to classify and identify areas of the world. Although it is not always clear to what these terms refer, they are used as if there existed a distinct external reality to which they corresponded, or at least they have the effect of creating such an illusion.

This effect is achieved in part by the associations they conjure up as a group of terms. Often combined into binary sets, these sets forge links in a paradigmatic chain of conceptions of geography, history, and personhood that reinforces each link and produces an almost tangible and inescapable image of the world. For instance, the West is often identified with Europe, the United States, us, or with that enigmatic entity, the modern Self. In practice, these paradigmatic elements are frequently interchangeable or synonymous, so that such terms as "We" or "Self" are often employed to mean Europe, the United States, or the West—and vice versa. The term "third world," used since its creation during World War II to define the "underdeveloped" areas caught between the first (capitalist) and second (socialist) worlds, has remained the preferred home for the Other.³ Although many of these categories are of only recent origin, they

have gained such widespread acceptance that they seem almost unavoidable. Drawing on the naturalizing imagery of geography, they have become second nature.

Despite the apparent fixity of their geographic referents, these categories have historically possessed remarkable fluidity. With postmodern élan, they have taken on various identities and have come to identify places and peoples far removed from their original territorial homes. Japan, until recently an emblem of the East, has increasingly been accepted as a member of the West in international organizations as well as in popular culture. Raymond Williams, in a discussion tracing the origins of the West-East distinction to the Roman Empire and to the separation between the Christian and Muslim worlds, argues that the West “has so far lost its geographical reference as to allow description of, for example, Japan as Western or Western-type society” (1983:333). Noam Chomsky, in turn, explains, “I’m using the phrase ‘Europe,’ of course, as a metaphor. Europe includes and in fact is led by the former European colonies in the Western Hemisphere and Asia. And of course Europe now includes Japan, which we may regard as honorary European” (1991:13). Historians of Europe are still of many minds about the birth of “Europe” as a meaningful category, and warn against the habit of reading history backward, extending the existence of present-day Europe into the past beyond a time when one could reasonably recognize its presence. The “third world,” for years firmly anchored in the “periphery”—that is, in Asia, Africa, and Latin America—seems now to be moving toward the United States, where the term is being applied not just to areas populated by migrants from the original “third world” but to spaces inhabited by old domestic “minorities” such as “women of color,” and to “underprivileged” ethnic and social groups. Los Angeles is increasingly referred to as “the capital of the third world,” a designation that also serves as the title of a recent book (Rieff 1991).

While one may wish to question the imperial conceit that lies behind this move to elect as the capital of the “third world” a metropolitan city located within the territorial boundaries of the old first world, this ironic twist raises even more basic questions about the stability and meaning of these categories. If, like Chomsky’s “Europe,” these terms are used as metaphors, what are their original referents? Were they ever *not* metaphors? Yet, aren’t these terms unavoidable precisely because they seem to designate tangible entities in the world, because they appear to be as natural as nature itself? In the face of their slippery fluidity, should our task be, as in the case of Borges’s imperial map, to construct a perfect map by finding words that faithfully match reality “out there” point for point? And if we managed to freeze history and replicate geography in a map, wouldn’t this representation be ephemeral? Since space too is located in time and is changing constantly, how could a map represent geography without apprehending its movement? But perhaps this shows that maps do not mirror reality, but depict it from partial perspectives, figuring it in accordance with particular standpoints and specific aims.

Within academia, the growing awareness of the limitations and ideological bias of the three worlds schema as a “primitive system of classification” (Pletsch 1981) has not stopped or significantly altered its almost inescapable use. The common practice among some scholars of indicating discomfort with the categories of this classificatory scheme by means of quotes or explicit caveats only confirms its stability and the lack of an alternative taxonomy. If we were to choose not to employ the term “third world,” would we be better served by such categories as “the underdeveloped world,” “backward areas,” or the euphemism “developing nations”? As soon as new conceptions are constructed, as in the case of the call by the South Commission presided over by Nyerere to promote a “new world order,” they seem to be resituated within the semantic field defined by the old binary structure, as was the case when George Bush appropriated this phrase months after it was formulated to create his own version of a “new world order” during the rhetorical war that preceded the Gulf War (Chomsky 1991:13). The shrinking of the second world has not dissolved the three world scheme, only realigned its terms. Thus, a noted journalist can say straightforwardly that the “Evil Empire turned out to be a collection of third-world countries” (Quindlen 1994).

With the consolidation of U.S. hegemony as a world power after 1945, the “West” shifted its center of gravity from Europe to “America,” and the United States became the dominant referent for the “West.” Because of this recentering of Western powers, “America,” ironically, is at times a metaphor for “Europe.” Perhaps one day Japan, today’s “honorary European,” will become the center of the West. In this string of historical turns, it is another historic irony, as well as a pun, that what began as an accident—the discovery of America as the “Eastern Indies”—gave birth to the Occident. Columbus, sailing from the west to reach the east, ended up founding the West. Perhaps if one day Japan becomes the West, and today’s West recedes to the East, it will turn out that Columbus indeed reached, as he insisted, the East.

Given the intimate association between Europe and Empire, it is significant that in colonial and postcolonial studies Europe is primarily equated with the nations of its northwestern region. This exclusion of southern Europe is accompanied by the analytical neglect of Spain and Portugal as pioneering colonial powers that profoundly transformed practices of rule and established modular forms of empire that influenced the imperial expansion of Holland, England, and France. So ingrained has the association between European colonialism and northern Europe become that some analysts identify colonialism with its northern European expression (Klor de Alva 1992), thus excluding the first centuries of Spanish and Portuguese control in the Americas.

The Politics of Epistemology: From Orientalism to Occidentalism

The problem of evaluating the categories with which the world is represented was compellingly faced by Edward Said in *Orientalism* (1979), a path-breaking work that raised to a higher level the discussion of colonial discourse in the United States. I propose to advance a related argument concerning West-

ern representations of cultural difference that focuses on the politics of geohistorical categories.

In *Orientalism*, Said defines Orientalism as taking three interdependent forms: the study of the Orient; a “style of thought based upon an epistemological and ontological distinction made between the ‘Orient’ and (most of the time) the ‘Occident’ ”; and a corporate institution dealing with the Orient (1979:2–3). While Said’s discussion of each of these forms relates Orientalism to the exercise of power, his major concern is the connection between modern Orientalism and colonialism. Yet at times Said’s discussion ambiguously moves between an abstract conception of the inevitable partiality of any representation and a historically situated critique of the limits of specific representations as the effect of unequal power relations. This unresolved tension may create the impulse to approach the gap between Western representations of the Orient and the “real” Orient by searching for more complete maps without inquiring into the sources of partiality of Orientalist representations.

Said confronted the ambiguity of his formulation in “Orientalism Reconsidered” (1986), written in response to the persistence of Orientalist representations in works produced by critics of imperialism. He called for an inclusion of “Orientalists” as part of the study of Orientalism: “because the social world includes the person or subject doing the studying as well as the object or realm being studied, it is imperative to include them both in any consideration of Orientalism” (1986:211).

For Said, the inclusion of the Orientalists entails a fundamental critique of the forms of Western knowledge informing their works in the following terms:

What, in other words, has never taken place is an epistemological critique at the most fundamental level of the connection between the development of a historicism which has expanded and developed enough to include antithetical attitudes such as ideologies of western imperialism and critiques of imperialism on the one hand and, on the other, the actual practice of imperialism by which the accumulation of territories and population, the control of economies, and the incorporation and homogenization of histories are maintained. If we keep this in mind we will remark, for example, that in the methodological assumptions and practice of world history—which is ideologically anti-imperialist—little or no attention is given to those cultural practices like Orientalism or ethnography affiliated with imperialism, which in genealogical fact fathered world history itself; hence the emphasis in world history as a discipline has been on economic and political practices, defined by the processes of world historical writing, as in a sense separate and different from, as well as unaffected by, the knowledge of them which world history produces. The curious result is that the theories of accumulation on a world scale, or the capitalist world state, or lineages of absolutism depend (a) on the same displaced percipient and historicist observer who had been an Orientalist or colonial traveller three generations ago; (b) they depend also on a homogenizing and incorporating world historical scheme that assimilated non-synchronous developments, histories, cultures and peoples to it; and (c) they block and keep down latent epistemological critiques of the institutional, cultural and disciplinary instruments linking the incorporative practice of world history with partial knowledges like Orientalism on the one hand and, on the other, with

continued western hegemony of the non-European, peripheral world. [1986:223–224]

This provocative challenge invites multiple responses. Here I propose to move beyond a predominantly epistemological critique of Western knowledge cast in its own terms toward a political understanding of the constitution of the “West” that encompasses an examination of its categorical system. To the extent that “the West” remains assumed in Said’s work, I believe that Said’s challenge, and the ambiguity in his discussion of Orientalism, may be creatively approached by problematizing and linking the two entities that lie at the center of his analysis: the West’s Orientalist representations and the West itself.

I wish to take a step in this direction by relating Western representations of “Otherness” to the implicit constructions of “Selfhood” that underwrite them. This move entails reorienting our attention from the problematic of “Orientalism,” which focuses on the deficiencies of the West’s representations of the Orient, to that of “Occidentalism,” which refers to the conceptions of the West animating these representations. It entails relating the observed to the observers, products to production, knowledge to its sites of formation. I would then welcome Said’s call to include “Orientalists” in our examination, but I will refer to them as “Occidentalists” in order to emphasize that I am primarily interested in the concerns and images of the Occident that underwrite their representations of non-Western societies, whether in the Orient or elsewhere. This perspective does not involve a reversal of focus from Orient to Occident, from Other to Self. Rather, by guiding our understanding toward the relational nature of representations of human collectivities, it brings out into the open their genesis in asymmetrical relations of power, including the power to obscure their genesis in inequality, to sever their historical connections, and thus to present as the internal and separate attributes of bounded entities what are in fact historical outcomes of connected peoples.

Occidentalism, as I define it here, is thus not the reverse of Orientalism but its condition of possibility, its dark side (as in a mirror). A simple reversal would be possible only in the context of symmetrical relations between “Self” and “Other”—but then who would be the “Other”? In the context of equal relations, difference would not be cast as Otherness. The study of how “Others” represent the “Occident” is an interesting enterprise in itself that may help counter the West’s dominance of publicly circulating images of difference. Calling these representations “Occidentalism” serves to restore some balance and has relativizing effects.⁴ Given Western hegemony, however, opposing this notion of “Occidentalism” to “Orientalism” runs the risk of creating the illusion that the terms can be equalized and reversed, as if the complicity of power and knowledge entailed in Orientalism could be countered by an inversion.

What is unique about Occidentalism, as I define it here, is not that it mobilizes stereotypical representations of non-Western societies, for the ethnocentric hierarchization of cultural difference is certainly not a Western privilege, but that this privilege is intimately connected to the deployment of global

power. In a broad-ranging discussion of constructions of cultural difference, John Comaroff defines ethnicity, in contrast to totemism, as a classificatory system founded on asymmetrical relations among unequal groups, and reminds us that “classification, the meaningful construction of the world, is a necessary condition of social existence,” yet the “marking of identities” is always the product of history and expresses particular modes of establishing cultural and economic difference (1987:303–305). As a system of classification that expresses forms of cultural and economic difference in the modern world, Occidentalism is inseparably tied to the constitution of international asymmetries underwritten by global capitalism. Linking Eurocentrism to capitalism, Samir Amin argues that “Eurocentrism is thus not a banal ethnocentrism testifying simply to the limited horizons beyond which no people on this planet has truly been able to go. Eurocentrism is a specifically modern phenomenon” (1989:vii).⁵

While classificatory systems may construct the relations among their terms as unidirectional, in effect they always entail different forms of mutuality. Noting that Said has not analyzed the impact of Orientalist images upon the people who use them, Nancy Armstrong has shown how Occidentalism involves the formation of specific forms of racialized and gendered Western Selves as the effect of Orientalist representations of non-Western Others.⁶ In my view, Occidentalism is inseparable from Western hegemony not only because as a form of knowledge it expresses Western power, but because it establishes a specific bond between knowledge and power in the West. Occidentalism is thus the expression of a constitutive relationship between Western representations of cultural difference and worldwide Western dominance.

Challenging Orientalism, I believe, requires that Occidentalism be unsettled as a style of representation that produces polarized and hierarchical conceptions of the West and its Others and makes them central figures in accounts of global and local histories. In other words, by “Occidentalism” I refer to the ensemble of representational practices that participate in the production of conceptions of the world, which (1) separate the world’s components into bounded units; (2) disaggregate their relational histories; (3) turn difference into hierarchy; (4) naturalize these representations; and thus (5) intervene, however unwittingly, in the reproduction of existing asymmetrical power relations.

Three Occidentalist Representational Modalities

In response to Said’s call to deepen the critique of Orientalism, I discuss three modes of Occidentalist representation and illustrate my argument with examples taken from texts that have played a significant role in the contemporary critique of imperialism. I do not set these examples against ideal non-Occidental texts, for my argument concerns implicit assumptions that influence intellectual agendas and cultural habits everywhere, whether in the center or the periphery. At the risk of simplifying their arguments, I select certain elements of these works in order to discuss three Occidentalist representational modalities:

the dissolution of the Other by the Self; the incorporation of the Other into the Self; and the destabilization of the Self by the Other.⁷

The Dissolution of the Other by the Self

In this modality of representation, Western and non-Western cultures are opposed to each other as radically different entities, and their opposition is resolved by absorbing non-Western peoples into an expanding and victorious West. I discuss this mode by analyzing the transformation of Hegel's dialectic between Master and Slave into Todorov's interaction between Self and Other in *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* (1984[1974]).

Perhaps more than any other body of thought, Hegel's philosophy of history has influenced the entire political gamut of modern Western interpretations of world development. For the purposes of this essay, I sketch the geopolitics of Hegel's thought so as to relate his discussion of the dialectic between Master (Self) and Slave (Other) in *The Phenomenology of Mind* to his ideas concerning the historical place of Europe, America, Africa, and Asia that he put forth in *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*. In these writings, we can see the emergence of a map of the world that continues to define the Western political imaginary.

In *The Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel argues that the "World Spirit" is realized through the dialectic between Self and Other. Consciousness of Self, achieved through recognition by the Other, makes possible the movement of the World Spirit by means of dialectical transformations through which distinct forms of consciousness mutually constitute each other as spiritual forms and as historical objectifications. Europe, or the Old World, as Hegel makes clear in his *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, is "the setting of world history," the stage upon which the embodiment of the universal spirit is objectified as History (1975:171). "The world," he says, "is divided into the Old and the New." America is "new" not only because it has "recently come to be known by Europeans." Rather, "the New World is not just relatively new, but absolutely so, by virtue of its wholly peculiar character in both physical and political respects" (1975:162). America's fauna, he argues following Buffon, was primitive and weak: "Even the animals show the same inferiority as the human beings. The fauna of America includes lions, tigers, and crocodiles, but although they are otherwise similar to their equivalents in the Old World, they are in every respect smaller, weaker, and less powerful" (1975:163). Because of America's immaturity, its civilizations, as in Mexico and Peru, had no lasting significance, for its culture was "purely natural which had to perish as soon as the spirit approached it" (1975:162). According to Hegel, "America has always shown itself physically and spiritually impotent, and it does so to this day. For after the Europeans had landed there, the natives were gradually destroyed by the breath of European activity" (1975:163).

Hegel classifies the three continents of the Old World according to cultural principles drawn from distinctions attributed to three geographical areas: uplands regions, broad river valleys, and coastal lands. Since for him these geographical distinctions characterize the three continents of the Old World, he

feels he can “classify these according to which of the three principles are dominant within them”:

Africa, generally speaking, is the continent in which the upland principle, the principle of cultural backwardness, predominates. Asia, on the other hand, is the continent in which the great antitheses come into conflict, although its distinguishing feature is the second principle, that of the broad river valleys; these support a culture which broods for ever within itself. The totality consists in the union of all three principles, and this is to be found in Europe, the continent in which the spirit is united with itself, and which, while retaining its own solid substance, has embarked upon that infinite process whereby culture is realised in practice. [1975:172]

Hegel recognizes that Asia is older than Europe and presents it as the continent where “the ethical world of political consciousness first arose.” It is, he argues, “the continent of sunrise and of origins in general” where “the light of the spirit, the consciousness of a universal, first emerged, and with it the process of world history” (1975:191). He also acknowledges that the cardinal points are relative: “Admittedly, every country is both east and west in relation to others, so that Asia is the western continent from the point of view of America” (1975:190–191). Yet he asserts the centrality of Europe as the heir and apex of ancient civilization. “But just as Europe is the centre and end of the Old World—i.e. absolutely the west—so also is Asia absolutely the east” (1975:190–191). While geography makes cardinal distinctions relative, history renders them absolute. “World history has an absolute east, although the term east in itself is wholly relative; for although the earth is a sphere, history does not move in a circle around it, but has a definite eastern extremity, i.e. Asia” (1975:197). East and West are thus defined by the convergence of the geographical and the historical, the natural and the moral. While the east is “where the external and physical sun rises” and the west is where “it sets,” it is in the west “that the inner sun of self-consciousness, which emits a higher radiance, makes its further ascent. World history imposes a discipline on the unrestrained natural will, guiding it towards universality and subjective freedom” (1975:197). Through Hegel’s pen, the Spirit draws a map that produces a now familiar image of the world. “World history travels from east to west; for Europe is the absolute end of history, just as Asia is the beginning” (1975:197).

Although Hegel’s dialectic engages Master and Slave in intimate reciprocity, one of the consequences of Hegel’s Eurocentric view of history is that the unfolding of the dialectic is confined to the West; the non-West remains fundamentally external to it. This regional focus is reproduced, although in attenuated form, in the most influential elaboration of Hegel’s model, Marx’s vision of the universal movement of capitalism. Thus, in Marx’s view of history, the emancipatory dialectical relationship between capitalist and worker also unfolds within the advanced capitalist nations of Europe. But whereas for Marx non-European societies underwrite the development of European nations through colonialism, primitive accumulation, and world trade, for Hegel these peripheral societies have limited significance for the movement of history. Fanon per-

ceptively noted how the Hegelian dialectic loses its generative power as it leaves Europe and embraces peoples of darker complexion. According to Fanon, Hegel's dialectical understanding of the Master-Slave relation does not apply to race relations as defined in center-periphery interactions, for in colonial slavery "the master differs basically from the master described by Hegel. For Hegel there is reciprocity: here the master laughs at the consciousness of the slave. What he wants from the slave is not recognition, but work" (1967:220).

Ever since Hegel cast his Eurocentric conception of the evolution of universal history in terms of a struggle between Master and Slave, there have been numerous attempts to sociologize his philosophical categories and historicize his ontology of history. Most works that transpose the Master-Slave scheme to historical situations preserve Hegel's Eurocentric bias while vulgarizing his dialectic and essentializing his philosophical categories. In this vulgarized sense of the dialectic, Todorov's *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* is implicitly a Hegelian work. It recounts how European Selves (presented as universal Selves) learn to deal with Otherness through the experience of the conquest, destruction, and domination of Mesoamericans.

Seen as a normative injunction, this learning has a seemingly laudable end: confronting Otherness should mean that Others are treated as different but equal. However, this norm takes for granted the imperial categories of Selfhood and Otherness which are the preconditions of this learning. In Hegel, this learning takes place through the long movement of history, and its lessons are internal to the "West." In Todorov's account of the relationship between Self and Other, there is no dialectic in the Hegelian sense, only an interaction between discrete actors. He presents Mesoamericans as a homogeneous mass, incapable of reacting to novelty and trapped in an oral culture. Their monological existence is defined by immutable codes that condemn them to the mere reproduction of their world until rescued into history by Western intervention. He presents Europeans, in contrast, as history's agents. Capable of historical action, innovation and self-transformation, their dialogical self-identities are constantly transformed on expanding historical terrains. Through the experience of dominating others and learning about their cultures, Europeans learn about themselves and become capable of relativizing their perspective. Through this interaction between knowledge and conquest, they become capable of turning violence into love and domination into communication. In Todorov's account, Selfhood is an attribute that identifies history's victors; the West is the space they occupy.

Todorov, like Hegel, celebrates the Self-Other polarity because it is through the clash of its poles that historical progress takes place. But while for Hegel the struggle between Self and Other entails their mutual transformation, for Todorov the confrontation between Europeans and Mesoamericans must lead to the destruction or Westernization of native Americans. The "hybridization" of Mesoamericans means in reality their Europeanization, the abandonment and destruction of their original cultures. The "hybridization" of Europeans, in contrast, means the evolution of Western culture through its encompassment of other cultures. The West is a name for history's victors.

“There is an odd double standard here which in effect makes it impossible for the West to lose or the Other to win which is built into the logic of the West” (Hayden 1991:21). Europeans need Mesoamericans in order to discover who they are. Thus the discovery and conquest of America is fundamentally the discovery and making of “Europe” and of the Western “Self.” Historical progress takes place not with, but at the expense of, others.

Although Todorov’s intent is to analyze European reactions to Mesoamericans, his work is subtitled *The Question of the Other*. The question of the Other is presented as a problem *for* the Self, not *of* the Self or *for* the Other. In this modality of Occidentalism the Self is assumed. Analysis centers on the problems the Self confronts but does not include the constitution of the Self as a problem. The other question is not asked: the question of the Self.

In this representational modality, America becomes but the territorial stage for the expansion of the West, and its diverse cultures the object to be absorbed. Since the Self is identified with history’s victors, it is understandable that the increasingly powerful United States was identified with America and became a metaphor for Europe. In contrast, in Latin America the term “America” refers first to the entire continent and “Americans” to its inhabitants, although those continuing to be identified as members of native societies are often dismissed as “indios” and excluded from this geocultural category. In the United States, this exclusion of native populations takes no less insidious forms. President Ronald Reagan’s historical reflection on Native Americans places the benevolent modern Self on the side of history, willing to incorporate those who are not: “Maybe we made a mistake. Maybe we should not have humored them in that—wanting to stay in that kind of primitive life style. Maybe we should have said, ‘no, come join us. Be citizens along with the rest of us.’ ” (Reagan, quoted in *New York Times* 1988).

The Incorporation of the Other into the Self

In this second modality of Occidentalism, a critical focus on Western development unwittingly obscures the role of non-Western peoples in the making of the modern world, subtly reiterating the distinction between Other and Self that underwrites Europe’s imperial expansion. I develop this argument through a discussion of Eric Wolf’s *Europe and the People without History* (1982), which presents Western capitalism as a transformative process that originates in the center and engulfs non-Western peoples, and Sidney Mintz’s *Sweetness and Power* (1985), which analyzes sugar’s place in the modern world in terms of the interplay between commodity production in the colonies and consumption in the imperial center.

While Todorov excludes Mesoamericans from history, Wolf brings non-Western peoples into the Self’s history. His important book ambitiously traces the evolution of mercantile and capitalist development from the 15th to the 20th century, focusing on the production of a number of key primary products throughout the world. Against the atomistic view of the world as an aggregate of independent, thinglike entities, reinforced by the reified categories of con-

ventional social science, Wolf proposes a historical perspective that seeks to represent the unitary character of world history. The central metaphor informing his critique of prevailing conceptions of global history is the image of the world as a pool table in which isolated units bounce against each other without being affected internally by their collision.

By turning names into things we create false models of reality. By endowing nations, societies, or cultures with the qualities of internally homogeneous and externally distinctive and bounded objects, we create a model of the world as a global pool hall in which the entities spin off each other like so many hard and round billiard balls. Thus it becomes easy to sort the world into differently colored balls, to declare that "East is East, and West is West, and never the twain shall meet." In this way a quintessential West is counterposed to an equally quintessential East, where life was cheap and slavish multitudes groveled under a variety of despotisms. [Wolf 1982:6-7]

Wolf's alternative interpretation seeks to make visible the interaction between worldwide structural transformations and local changes. Since his book presents capitalism as a global system engendered by the metropolitan centers, the interaction between macro and micro levels is presented as equivalent to that between cause and effect. In Wolf's words, he "hopes to delineate the general processes at work in mercantile and capitalist development, while at the same time following their effects on the micro-populations studied by the ethnohistorians and anthropologists" (1982:23).

Following this provocative introduction, Wolf's analysis proceeds as an account of the inexorable movement of capitalism from center to periphery. Capitalism, understood as a process of production of commodities in which labor itself becomes a commodity, originates in Europe and moves to other territories, transforming them into colonies or outposts for the production of a few primary goods. As capitalism expands, various precapitalist societies are transformed and rearranged in order to fulfill the requirements of capitalist production. One by one, the production of specific commodities—wheat, sugar, coffee, gold, diamonds, meat, and so on—comes to reorder and determine the fate of precapitalist societies. Their incorporation into the capitalist market means their entrance into history.

In this analysis, the interaction between Europe and its Others is largely restricted to the transformation of precapitalist societies under the impact of capitalist production. While Wolf starkly depicts its fundamental asymmetry, his account of this interaction gives the impression that agency is located predominantly at one end. "If the world is a 'global pool hall,' the European billiard ball is composed of solid steel while those of non-Europeans are of the flimsiest papier mache; in the aftermath of collision, Europe continues on course unscathed, while the other party is utterly transformed (or brutalized)" (Herron 1991:2). There is little mutuality in this conception of interaction; the capitalist steel ball stamps its mark upon the places it traverses without being significantly affected by them. As the capitalist steel ball moves toward new territories, commodity production takes place in predictable patterns.

Perhaps because of his zeal to critique the power of capitalism, Wolf focuses his discussion on the global impact of commodity production. Yet the peoples and societies producing these commodities or affected by their production are largely absent, save as another commodity, labor-power. In contrast to works in which Wolf has compellingly analyzed the cultural transformations of colonized societies, in this book the narrative focuses on the inexorable movement of capitalism as a system of production of things, obscuring how capitalism itself is the product of human activity. Thus, the history of the peoples without history appears as the story of a history without people. Not even Europe seems populated, for in this account “Europe” is a metaphor for capitalism. The story of capitalism as a self-expanding system becomes history.

Like Wolf, Mintz, in *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*, examines capitalism as a system of production of commodities for the market. Mintz focuses on one product, sugar, and two processes, production and consumption. The book neatly moves from sugar production in the West Indies to its consumption in England. In certain respects, this narrowing of focus gives this work a particularly deep scope, for Mintz is able to show how England itself was affected by developments in its colonies. By carefully examining changing patterns of colonial sugar production and imperial sugar consumption, he provides a textured image of how the increasing availability of sugar in Europe as a result of the development of plantation economies in the colonies affected changing patterns of metropolitan consumption, including the cultural understandings attached to sugar as it ceased to be an elite product and became a staple for the laboring classes. He also points out that plantation sugar production set a model for the organization of factory production in England. This suggests that the development of industrial capitalism in England could be reconceptualized not only as the result of domestic transformation of production and of the division of labor (the classic story of the internal breakdown of feudalism, the evolution of the putting out system first into manufacture, then into machinofacture, and so on) but also as the expression of the spatially separate but historically related process of colonial domination.

While Mintz’s discussion of sugar production and consumption offers a compelling view of the interaction between colonies and metropolitan centers, he does not justify the basic theoretical and organizational scheme that informs his account: production in the colonies, consumption in the center. This division is taken for granted, as if the colonies’ relation to sugar could be reduced to their role as producers for the imperial center, or as if the consumption of sugar would take place only in England. What happened to sugar in the colonies? How was it consumed, both by the elites and the laboring classes? What meanings were attached to the commodity upon which the life of the colony depended? Why do we see pictures in the book of a variety of candied treats in Europe—for instance, such imperial “sweets” as a bust of George V, a replica of the royal state coach, the cathedral of Notre Dame, even a life-size chocolate female nude lying on a bed of six hundred sugar roses—but only one picture of sweets in the colonies, the photograph of fantastic candy skulls, tombs, and wreaths prepared in

Mexico for *el día de los muertos* (All Saints' Day, or "the day of the dead"). In a brief explanation of that photograph, Mintz tells us that "the artistic and ritual association between sugar and death is not a Mexican monopoly; in much of Europe, candied funeral treats are popular" (1985:185). Throughout the book, Mintz only occasionally notes the place of sugar in the colonies as an item of consumption. For instance, he comments that sugar consumption in old sugar colonies like Jamaica was substantial, for "slaves were given sugar, molasses and even rum as part of their rations" (1985:72). Yet these brief references only create a desire for a more extended discussion of the local consumption of sugar. Given this lack, it is difficult to understand the multiple meanings of sugar in Caribbean societies, to sense its evocatory power, such as when Celia Cruz, the great Cuban singer who popularized Caribbean music throughout the world, punctuates her songs with her inimitable exclamation "¡azúcar!" (sugar!). But since sugar was fundamentally produced for export, it is particularly important to ask, Was sugar consumed in the colonies only as sugar?

Sugar was also consumed as money. Given the double character of commodities as use values and exchange values, it may thus be helpful, particularly in colonial and neocolonial contexts, not to restrict the analysis of commodities to their use value, that is, to their consumption as sensuous things endowed with particular attributes and utility. What would happen if sugar and other commodities were analyzed also as exchange values, as material vehicles for capturing "hard" metropolitan currencies, that is, as export commodities whose dominant function is to serve as means of exchange? The examination of their "consumption" would entail an analysis of how they are transformed into money, and specifically into international currency. If we analyze the process by which the value of these colonial commodities is realized through their transformation into money, we could then take another step and see how these commodities circulate as money in both metropolitan and colonial societies. Since the value of money is realized through its transformation into other commodities, we could extend this analysis further and include as well the uses to which sugar money is put.

In this expanded sense of the consumption of commodities, sugar, as sugar money, was "consumed" in multiple forms: it purchased the accoutrements of social status for an emerging class; it supported, through taxation and other means, the imperial state and its outposts in the colonies; and, as capital (that is, transformed into means of production), it contributed to the expansion of capitalism at home and abroad. Its consumption as capital is most significant, because as self-expanding value it had a multiplier effect. Sugar money fueled the slave trade, turning millions of people into commodities, carving the path for their forced migration, creating conditions for the formation of plantation societies built around the massive production of a single product, and making the fortunes of these people depend upon the shifting demand and volatile price sugar commanded in changing world markets.

Given this emphasis on sugar's exchange value, it becomes necessary to discern how the price of sugar is determined. A common view, of course, is that

the price of commodities results from the play of supply and demand. Yet there are additional social and political dimensions that intervene in the formation of price, for “price” is a complex category that reflects struggle and competition among the many social actors involved in the production and exchange of commodities. The effort to see the mechanisms of price formation as unfolding not just in the market, regarded as a separate domain, but within society as a whole distinguishes a Marxist perspective. Taking this perspective, we may see how “sugar money,” as the expression of the metamorphosis of sugar into value, is an index of multiple social relationships.

As is well known, Marx, in response to certain ambiguities in Adam Smith’s theory of value, argued that total surplus value, as the exclusive product of labor power, is divided among profits for capitalists, rents for landowners, and wages for workers (in the case of slaves, the cost of their reproduction). According to his analysis, profits and rents do not reflect the proportional contribution of capital and land to the price of commodities, as Smith suggested, but the social power of capitalists and landowners. Marx argued that the competition among different forms of capital and the struggle among opposing social classes affect not only the distribution of surplus value but also the level of market prices. Landowners, by demanding a rent, influence the level of prices. By directing our attention to land-ground rent, we may link readily observable and quantifiable measures, such as the level of supply and demand, to the more opaque but no less significant worldwide power relations affecting the determination of commodity prices.

I believe that our understanding of colonial histories would be enhanced by taking fuller advantage of the category of “land-ground rent.” Marx felt that this category together with “capital-profit” and “labor-wages” formed the “trinity” that “holds in itself all the mysteries of the social production process” (1981:953), a strong claim even for Marx, yet one that he supported with laborious scholarship.⁸ Given the intellectual and political climate of our postmodern times, few may wish to accompany me in regarding these tools as useful. Yet I believe that what is at stake is not a trivial technical matter but the possibility of analyzing capitalist production as a totalizing social process that involves the increasing commodification of social life and the simultaneous production of things and of social relations. Of course, the danger in using tools that claim to have such general applicability is that they may homogenize and flatten what are distinct historical terrains. However if these tools are used flexibly—as a broom rather than a hammer—they may clear the ground and reveal how each society is affected by particular forms of commodification.

The recognition of the centrality of ground rent for capitalism should lead to a different view of colonial and imperial histories and of capitalism itself. It entails the inclusion of “land” (by which Marx meant all the powers of nature) as well as of the social agents identified with it, in particular the state as the sovereign representative of a national territory. As Lefebvre has argued, a focus on the commodification of land together with that of labor and capital—Marx’s “trinity” formula—should displace the capital-labor relation from the ossified

centrality it has been made to occupy by Marxist theory (Lefebvre 1974). This shift from a binary to a triadic dialectic expands the geographical and social referents of capitalism and decenters Eurocentric conceptions that reduce its development to a dialectic of capital and labor originating in advanced “centers” and engulfing a passive “periphery.” Rather than homogenizing capitalism, this global perspective should bring out its contradictions and complexity, showing how its totalizing impulse is only partially fulfilled and making visible the social spaces that lie outside its control.⁹

Few anthropologists have contributed as much as Wolf and Mintz to the understanding of the links between colonial and imperial histories. With respect to the books discussed here, whereas Wolf’s broad vision reveals patterns in the global movement of capitalist expansion, Mintz’s concentrated focus makes visible the dynamic interaction between colonial production and metropolitan consumption. As much by what they accomplish as by what they leave uncharted, their works show that if we examine commodities in their double life as objects of utility and sources of exchange, we can see how their multiple transfigurations are part of a wider social metamorphosis that necessarily involves the production of social relations. Since the agents involved in commodity production do not appear ready-made on history’s stage but are constituted by their activity, a comprehensive study of colonial commodities must address as well the production of the social agents that participate in their production.

In this respect, we may find instructive *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* (1995[1940]), written by Cuban anthropologist Fernando Ortiz, a pioneering work that sees sugar and tobacco as windows into Cuban history. Ortiz develops the concept of “transculturation” in order to grasp the reciprocally transformative character of cultural encounters under colonialism, as opposed to the unidirectional concepts of “acculturation” and “cultural contact” prevailing in British and U.S. anthropology in the 1930s.¹⁰ Weaving together various theoretical perspectives and narrative modalities, Ortiz shows how sugar and tobacco are elements in an ongoing interaction across cultural boundaries which involves the mutual production of commodities and society. His treatment of commodities offers an unusual understanding of the intimate links between colonial commodity production and the making of colonial societies.

Treating commodities as complex hieroglyphs, Marx focused on the mystery of exchange value and dealt but tangentially with the complexities of use value. For some years now, there has been a move away from Marx’s concern with the relationship between exchange value and value. Some steps in this reorientation have been taken by Jean Baudrillard, who has insisted on the need to problematize use value as part of a more sweeping critique of Marxist epistemology, and by the cultural studies approach, which has brought the study of consumption to the foreground. Perhaps the strongest departure, however, has come from the field of economics. Treating the labor theory of value as either wrong or irrelevant, neoclassical as well as some Marxist economists have reduced exchange value to price and have treated price as a measure that can be readily derived from quantitative data concerning supply, demand, and technol-

ogy.¹¹ It is worth remembering, however, that just as “use” is not a natural but a cultural category, “price” is not merely an “economic” but a political measure, and neither term can be understood independently of the other or outside their common involvement in the history of capitalism’s global expansion.

The expansive, boundary-crossing impulse of capitalist production struck thinkers who witnessed the early period of British colonial domination. John Stuart Mill recognized, from an imperial perspective, the intimate connection between England and its colonies.

These are hardly to be looked upon as countries, carrying on an exchange of commodities with other countries, but more properly, as outlying agricultural or manufacturing estates belonging to a larger community. Our West Indian colonies, for example, cannot be regarded as countries with a productive capital of their own [but are, rather,] the place where England finds it convenient to carry on the production of sugar, coffee and a few other tropical commodities. All the capital employed is English capital; almost all the industry is carried on for English uses; there is little production of anything except for staple commodities, and these are sent to England, not to be exchanged for things exported to the colony and consumed by its inhabitants, but to be sold in England for the benefit of proprietors there. The trade with the West Indies is hardly to be considered an external trade, but more resembles the traffic between town and country. [cited in Mintz 1985:42]

John S. Mill illuminates certain aspects of the relations between empire and colony (“the traffic between town and country”), yet obscures not only the violent nature of these connections but also many of their specific manifestations.

This treatment of colonies as the empire’s “hinterland,” according to Raymond Williams, is an ideological transposition to the international level of the mystifying country and city model. In his pathbreaking *The Country and the City* (1973), Williams argues that the representation of the divisions between country and city should be seen as the result of a unified process by which social practices and forms of consciousness are at once mutually constituted and become separated and opposed. The cultural construction of urban and rural sectors tends to abstract their features and to give them a metaphysical status, presenting domains that are social and interrelated as if they were natural and autonomous. Williams’s work suggests that we examine the historical encodings of country and city so that we may trace the hidden connections that reside within these concepts. His observation that “one of the last models of the ‘city and the country’ is the system we now know as imperialism” (1973:279) directs our attention to the links between colonial centers and colonized peripheries. “At the global level we may observe the same ideological concealment that operates domestically: a tendency to obscure the mutually constitutive relationship between center (‘city’) and periphery (‘country’) and to represent them as separate entities whose characteristics appear as the consequence of intrinsic attributes” (Skurski and Coronil 1992:233). Just as viewing England’s colonies as its “countryside” was for John Stuart Mill a natural fact of empire building, treating Latin America as the United States’ “backyard” is a ruling assumption

of official ideology and political practice, as when President Clinton, in describing U.S. vital interests in Haiti, stated, "First of all, it's in our backyard."¹²

So pervasive was the impact of colonial production on the international division of labor and on the constitution of colonial societies that even after independence these nations have continued to depend on primary export production. As independent republics, most of these ex-colonies have instituted projects of national development designed to promote economic diversification. But since these modernizing projects are typically financed by foreign exchange obtained through the export of primary products, they often have the paradoxical effect of intensifying the production of traditional export commodities, thereby recasting the old colonial role of these societies in the international division of labor as primary producers. Neocolonialism thus follows postcolonialism. In this respect, the "post" of postcolonialism is not a sign of the overcoming but of the reproduction of colonialism.

It is thus understandable that the present worldwide turn toward free market economics, with its command to erect the market as the source of the natural and the rational, has led to the reprimarization of many economies whose partial diversification had been achieved through state protectionism, which is now seen as the locus of the artificial and irrational. It is being rediscovered, with a convenient mixture of historical amnesia and imperial nostalgia, that the comparative advantage of the ex-colonies lies in their colonial role as sources of cheap labor and raw materials. These neoliberal policies assume a view of nations as independent units, whose transformation and historical progress depend on internal "adjustments."

Focusing on the dynamic exchange between metropolitan and (neo)colonial societies would lead to a less dichotomous view of their identities and to a unifying conception of capitalism. Rather than the West molding its Others, the emerging image would reveal hidden connections obscured within these imperial dichotomies.

The Destabilization of Self by Other

While in the previous two modalities of Occidentalism, non-Western peoples are either dissolved or incorporated by the West, in this third form they are presented as a privileged source of knowledge for the West. This knowledge becomes available, as in the first modality, by opposing Western and non-Western peoples as contrasting entities, but in this case the depiction of radical Otherness is used to unsettle Western culture. By examining Michael Taussig's *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America* (1980) and Timothy Mitchell's *Colonizing Egypt* (1988), I wish to show how the use of polarized contrasts between cultures that are historically interrelated has the effect of exalting their difference, erasing their historical links, and homogenizing their internal features, unwittingly reinscribing an imperial Self-Other duality even as it seeks to unsettle colonial representations.¹³

In *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America*, Taussig examines fantastic devil beliefs in South America as critical responses to encroaching

capitalism by peoples unaccustomed to its objectifying logic, and argues that capitalism's naturalized assumptions are also fantastic constructs that only our long familiarity has made appear commonsensical. In his book, ethnography is inseparable from cultural critique. Taussig has objected to accounts that reproduce capitalism's phantom objectivity by reinscribing its forms of knowledge, arguing that "critique sustained in conventional terms sustains conventions" (1980:13). Evidently, he seeks to find critical counterconventions in the beliefs of peoples not yet subjected to capitalism's all-encompassing logic.

The bearers of precapitalist culture in Taussig's *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism* are Colombian peasants and Bolivian miners. In my view, the heart of this book is its analysis of a set of beliefs concerning two rituals for obtaining money, the baptism of the bill and the devil contract, which Taussig interprets as expressing peasant reactions to capitalist commodification in Colombia's Cauca valley. Taussig offers a brief description of these beliefs and an extensive interpretation of their meaning. The ethnographic account seems to be intentionally thin; we are told little about the place of devil beliefs within a larger ensemble of beliefs and practices, believers and practitioners. Questions such as who accepts them and how belief relates to practice seem to be out of place. In fact, Taussig argues that it does not matter whether these rituals are practiced; what matters is that people believe that they are sustained, because he is concerned "with a collective belief" (1980:95).

Taussig believes, however, that devil contracts really do take place, and he supports this claim by stating that he knows two folk healers who arrange such contracts and by giving one example. His example, a story he was told by a close friend, departs considerably from his original formulaic description of devil contracts (1980:95). The story tells of a man born on the Pacific coast who came to the Cauca valley as a young boy. He worked intermittently on the plantation, and frequently visited his father on the Pacific coast, where he acquired knowledge of magic. Increasingly resentful of plantation work, he decided to make a pact with the devil. To this end he bought several books of magic that are sold in the plantation town marketplace. Drawing on their instructions, he performed the following ritual:

One day he went to the sugarcane field and eviscerated the palpitating heart of a black cat over which he cast his spell (oración, or prayer). No sooner had he done so than a tremendous wind came roaring through the sugarcane. Terrified, he ran away. "He did it in order to sell his soul to the devil, so that he could get money without working," said my informant. [Taussig 1980:96]

This individual example of a "collective belief" raises many questions concerning a variety of issues: the role of individual creativity and agency (of the informant, if this was but a tale; of the ritual performer, if the event took place); the existence of a flexible repertoire of devil contracts (if this particular ritual is part of a larger set of beliefs or practices); the rigidity of the devil contract (if the moral of this story is that modifications of formulaic rituals will lead to disastrous results); and the role of books of magic in the development of peasants' re-

sponses to capitalism. More fundamentally, this example suggests the importance of relating ritual belief to ritual performance and relating talk about rituals to beliefs in rituals. But since Taussig uses this illustration as an example of the devil contract, its place in the text raises an even more basic question: What is this example an example of?

In the narrative, Taussig depicts Colombian peasants as the subjects of a natural economy ruled by use value and of a precapitalist culture organized by the logic of analogical reason. In my view, this story of the devil contract is an example of the precapitalist Other. That is, this illustration works as an example of an example in a paradigmatic chain of examples of Otherness. It is an example of the devil contract in the same sense that the devil contract is an example of peasant consciousness, and peasant consciousness is an example of natural economy, and natural economy is an example of noncapitalist society, and noncapitalist society is an example of analogical versus causal rationality, and each, in turn, exemplifies the Other. In each case, ethnographic contextualization is relinquished for the sake of a higher purpose: to construct an image of Otherness that, by standing in opposition to "our" capitalist culture, can help us demystify its underlying assumptions. If the peasants are models of Otherness, any one of their beliefs may stand for them. Given this paradigmatic structure, what seems important in this narrative is to conjure up an image of an alternative culture and to avoid producing a conventional ethnographic account that reproduces the West's objectifying gaze. At stake is a conception of ethnography as a particular kind of cultural critique. Instead of risking objectifying others along conventional lines, Taussig provides a suggestive portrait of peasant cultures, but one drawn less as a means to understand "other" societies in their unique complexity than as a way to gain a critical vantage point to critique "our" own.

Taussig's exceptional contribution to the ethnography of Latin America lies precisely in his having opened up an imaginative space for understanding fundamental cultural differences. Yet his own analysis permits one to interrogate his manner of constructing difference and to ask, Who are "they" and who are "we"? Ironically, Taussig constructs these peasants into Others by leaving to one side his examination of "their" history, and in so doing mystifies as well what appears as "our" history. In two informative historical chapters that precede his analysis of these rituals, he shows how the peasants in the Cauca valley are the offspring of a long process of slavery, colonial domination, and market involvement. That some of these peasants managed to create relatively isolated communities during the 19th century only heightens the significance of their centuries-long engagement with market forces and forms of capitalist commodification. Yet, so that they might defamiliarize our understanding of capitalism, he constructs them as pure emblems of precapitalism and places them on an island of Otherness, untouched by commodity fetishism. By his own account, however, these peasants are in fact coauthors of the history of Western capitalism and should be seen as part of the Western world. Just as their slave ancestors contributed to the making of the Occident, these peasants are engaged today in reproducing Western capitalism. The books of magic that some of them read in-

clude codified responses to market forces whose roots may be traced back to the European Middle Ages and beyond. As if by a hidden historical affinity, their devil beliefs involve a transformation and adaptation of these European beliefs to their own conditions and traditions.

In an increasingly interrelated world, it is to be expected that books and beliefs participate in complex global circuits of exchange across time and space. In effect, while Taussig claims that only from the precapitalist margins can one demystify the all-encompassing phantom objectivity of capitalist culture, he sees the peasants' responses to capitalism in South America through the prism of his previous understanding of capitalist culture derived from the defamiliarizing writings of Marx, Benjamin, Lukács, and Adorno. Their books, like the books of magic available to the Colombian peasants, codify various responses to commodity culture. The very existence of these books and of the critical traditions they represent shows that commodity culture is not of one piece or all-encompassing, that its phantom objectivity has been resisted by popular and intellectual traditions both in Colombia and in Europe, and that its conventions include counterconventions. One could perhaps imagine the occurrence of a hidden transcultural exchange between devil beliefs and European critical theory. It is by resituating and rearticulating these interconnected beliefs and traditions that Colombian peasants, as well as Taussig, make sense of their world.

Mitchell's splendid works *Colonising Egypt* (1988) and "The World as an Exhibition" (1989) illustrate an interesting variation of this modality of Occidentalism. His provocative analysis of colonialism is also based on a sharp distinction between Self (Occident) and Other (Orient). Instead of focusing on the Other in order to destabilize the Self, however, Mitchell focuses on the Self's expansion into the Other—the European colonization of Egypt—as a process that illuminates the Self. For him, the colonization of Egypt involved "the spread of a political order that inscribes in the social world a new conception of space, new forms of personhood, and a new means for manufacturing the experience of the real" (1988:ix). Since colonialism implied the attempt to impose a Western metaphysics on an Oriental one, the analysis of colonialism entails the examination of the ontological and epistemological assumptions underwriting Western metaphysics. Drawing on Heidegger's view of modernity, Mitchell views the metaphysics of modernity as entailing the splitting up of the world into "representation" and "reality." Following the logic of the world's seeming division into two, Mitchell argues that this distinction corresponds to another division of the world, into the West and the non-West (1988:32). Thus, the colonization of Egypt is simultaneously the construction of the West by means of this foundational metaphysical principle: the separation between reality and representation. Mitchell's discussion of Western metaphysics is further illuminated by his fascinating account of the complementary perspective offered by Oriental visitors to the Occident.

While Mitchell's book focuses on Western metaphysics, his argument requires that it be opposed to an alternative conception of order—an Oriental metaphysics. In order to highlight the contrast between Western and Eastern

modes of manufacturing a sense of the real he offers Bourdieu's description of the Kabyle house. This house, like Taussig's Colombian peasants, stands in his narrative as an example of a radically different order of things, an instance of "Otherness." Interestingly, Mitchell recognizes this similarity in a comment that shows his awareness of the risks entailed in the use of polarized totalities that come to be inhabited by collective prejudices and anxieties.

Because the purpose of such examples is to make visible our own assumptions about the nature of order by contrasting them with a kind of order whose assumptions are different, I run the risk of setting up this other as the very opposite of ourselves. Such an opposite, moreover, would appear inevitably as a self-contained totality, and its encounter with the modern West would appear, again inevitably, as its rupturing and disintegration. These sorts of self-contained, precapitalist totalities acquire the awful handicap, as Taussig has remarked, of having to satisfy our yearning for a lost age of innocence. Such consequences, though perhaps inevitable, are undesired and unintended. [1988:49]

Despite Mitchell's recognition of the undesirable consequences of polarized typologies, he constructs Egypt as a self-contained, precapitalist totality in order to make visible the assumptions underpinning capitalist culture. Building on Bourdieu's account of the Kabyle house in Algeria, Mitchell provides a detailed exegesis of it as an expression of a radically different conception of the world. The logic governing its spatial organization reveals the relational character of its various components, viewed as forces, not objects. His conclusion is that the house defines "a way of dwelling that did not reduce order to a question of the relationship between things and their plan, between the world and a map" (1988:49). The house is an emblem of an order in which there is no split between reality and representation. It is not the case that in this order the relationship between objects and people, meanings and practice, is differently articulated, that objectification and representation have come to assume different forms. Rather, here there are no representations and no symbols, only contextual relations and associations.

Such relations are not the relations between an object and its meaning, as we would say, or between a symbol and the idea for which it stands. There is nothing symbolic in this world. . . . These associations, in consequence, should not be explained in terms of any symbolic or cultural "code," the separate realm to which we imagine such signs to belong. They arise entirely from their particular context, in the difference and similarity that produces context, and are as many and as varied as such contexts might be. [1988:60–61]

It is against this Eastern world of immanent meanings that the West appears as a world split by the separation between reality and representation. Mitchell's book is structured in terms of the binary opposition between two historical actors who stand for, or are constituted by, these different metaphysics. Each actor appears as a bounded homogeneous totality, without fractures or contradictions, without long-term historical connections, without people—classes or categories of people—taking different positions or responding in distinct ways to their re-

spective worlds or to the often violent collision among them. Mitchell's didactics of polarized contrasts reveals much about Western colonialism. Yet perhaps one of the undesired and unintended consequences of the contrasting opposition that structures this study of colonialism is that its innovative examination of the underlying metaphysics of the modern West ends up producing West and East, and colonialism itself, as metaphysical entities.

In my view, the call to question the epistemological assumptions underpinning Orientalist representations entails interrogating modes of constructing cultural diversity that mystify the connections between Western and non-Western peoples, either inflate or erase their distinctive differences, and thus risk stabilizing a hegemonic categorical order. Just as Orientalist accounts are partial not because of their inherent incompleteness, representations of non-Western cultures have colonizing effects not because they depict diversity. What makes a difference is not the inscription of difference but the kind of difference it makes.

In other words, there is no such thing as an immaculate representation. Since all representations are saturated with history, the issue is to recognize the implications of their involvement in history. At stake is the accountability of our accounts, a matter of politics rather than of metaphysics, of alterable historical consequences rather than of unavoidable transhistorical effects, or more precisely, of the politics of epistemology and of the epistemology of politics. In my view, challenging an imperial order requires overturning the Self-Other polarity that has served as one of its foundational premises. This requires that cultures be seen, as Ortiz and Said propose, in contrapuntal relation to each other rather than taken to be autonomous units, that their difference be historicized rather than essentialized, and that their boundaries and homogeneity be determined, not assumed.¹⁴ This contrapuntal perspective may encourage the development of a decentered "transcultural anthropology" (Coronil 1995:xliv) that avoids confirming a Self-centered standpoint from which difference is turned into Otherness either through Self-confirming objectification or Self-questioning exoticization.

Labyrinths of the Imagination: The Truth of Power

In his discussion of the 1889 Parisian Oriental exhibition, Mitchell remarks on the continuity between the exhibition and a world outside which looked like an "extended exhibition." "This extended exhibition continued to present itself as a series of mere representations, representing a reality beyond" (1988:10). Borrowing an image from Jacques Derrida, he suggests that we may think of it less as an exhibition than as a kind of labyrinth that "includes in itself its own exits." Like Derrida, who once said that all of his subsequent writings "are only a commentary on the sentence about a labyrinth," Mitchell tells us that his own essay also "should be read as a short additional comment on that sentence" (1989:224).

There is an affinity between the idea of a labyrinth that includes not only the maze but the exits leading beyond it, and the idea of a map that represents not only geography but history. Or, to offer an alternative reading, there is an affin-

ity between a labyrinth without real exits to the world, which dissolves the distinction between the inside and the outside, and a map without real difference from the world, which erases the distinction between representation and reality. Indeed, Derrida acknowledges his intellectual debt to Borges, who plays with epistemological paradoxes in his writings. Let us now return to Borges's story of the imperial map.

It is in the nature of paradoxes to elicit multiple readings. Jean Baudrillard begins *Simulations* (1983) with a reading of the Borges map story as a parable about simulation. He uses the story to argue that our age involves an epochal break in the relationship between reality and representation. If previously maps were taken as representations of reality, now they are a means to generate reality. Thus, Borges's image of the tattered map may be read as a prefiguration of the empire's decay. As Baudrillard puts it, "Simulation is no longer that of a territory, a referential being or a substance. It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreal. The territory no longer precedes the map, nor survives it. Henceforth it is the map that precedes the territory" (1983:2). Baudrillard portrays Marx as a thinker still caught up in a world divided by a distinction between reality and representation. Following his lead, Mitchell argues that Marx held the illusion that by lifting the veil of mystification produced by commodity fetishism one would find naked reality ready to be represented. "Marx opposed to the imaginary productive processes represented by these misunderstood hieroglyphics the 'transparent and rational form' in which the practical relations of everyday life should present themselves" (1988:180). This means, for Mitchell, that "to the mechanisms of misrepresentation by which power operates, Marx opposed a representation of the ways things intrinsically are, in their transparent and rational reality" (1988:18). Thus Marx's theory of commodity fetishism was flawed, because in "revealing power to work through misrepresentations, it left representation itself unquestioned" (1988:18). The crucial problem is that it expressed what for Mitchell is a central tenet of Western metaphysics: "It accepted absolutely the distinction between a realm of representation and the 'external reality' which such representations promise, rather than examining the novelty of continually creating the effect of an 'external reality' as itself a mechanism of power" (1988:18–19).

For Mitchell, power seems to be epochal rather than historical; it is the expression of an age, not of a particular society. Insofar as it has a specific social referent, it works in Foucauldian fashion through capillary effects dispersed throughout society rather than being enacted as well by competing forms of organized human agency. In his concern "to question representation," Mitchell draws on Heidegger's examination of objectification in the modern world, cast in terms of epochal and existential categories, and cites him in his book's opening epigraph: "The fundamental event of the modern age is the conquest of the world as picture" (1988:v). It is as "picture" that Baudrillard reads Borges's map.¹⁵

Borges's story, however, could also be read as an allegory of power. From this perspective it is about imperial power—the power to constitute the Empire

through the exercise of power and the ability to determine the terms in which reality should be defined. It is not only about the truth of representation but about the representation of truth. It is about the representation of power and the power to represent, about the truth of power. In other words, it is about the connection between knowledge and power and, more specifically, about the relationship between imperial power and imperial knowledge.

This reading permits us to approach the unresolved ambiguity in Said's critique of Orientalism, that is, the tension between the limits of Orientalist constructs as necessarily incomplete representations or as misrepresentations that reflect unequal power relations under colonialism and imperialism. If one abandons the pursuit of the complete map—a map that coincides with reality point for point—the fundamental issue becomes not the existence of an unavoidable gap between reality and representation but the consequences of specific representations, or, in other words, the relationship between the representation and constitution of social relations in specific societies. Marx's statement that "all science would be superfluous if the form of appearance of things directly coincided with their essence" (1981:956) calls attention not to a reality outside representation that analysis can apprehend directly, but to the need to evaluate the effects of existing representations and to contribute to developing more enabling ones.

By deconstructing the categories through which European (primarily British) capitalist society imagined itself, Marx intended to understand them but did not hold the illusion that in so doing he could dispel their power. Their hold over people's consciousness could not be changed by reinterpreting the world, only by transforming it. These categories, he argued, are necessary mystifications because they are both true, in that they enter into the constitution of social relations in capitalist society, and false, in that they obscure their character. For example, the idea that money "begets" money, that money "grows" or "produces" interest in banks, is a fetishistic mystification in that money does not in fact expand by itself. Yet it is an accurate depiction of what happens in capitalist society when money is placed as capital in banks, where it is used as a means to capture value produced elsewhere. Thus money does appear to grow in banks. This appearance, as well as the obscuring of the actual source of money's "growth," is necessary for the constitution and legitimation of capitalist society.

For Marx, social life could be apprehended as a "transparent and rational form" not through an epistemic act but through social revolution: the overcoming of relations of domination. Transparency works in Marx's narrative as a utopian standard by which one can evaluate existing forms of mystification on the basis of their role in obscuring relations of power.

The religious reflections of the real world can, in any case, vanish only when the practical relations of everyday life between man and man, and man and nature, generally present themselves to him in a transparent and rational form. The veil is not removed from the countenance of the social life-process, i.e. the process of material production, until it becomes production by freely associated men, and stands under their conscious and planned control. [1981:173]

Assuming that the social world has largely been defined from the perspective of the powerful, Marx aspires to illuminate it from a less partial—or more universal—standpoint. The humility of this epistemological aspiration is the other side of its radical political ambition to create grounds of social equality as the condition for the endless unfolding of universality. In my view, the aim is not to create a transparent social world but to overcome conditions that lead to the systemic obscuring of inequality and mystification of privilege in specific social domains and that thus constrain the free development of all. Perry Anderson comments that “a whole utopian tradition . . . assumes that a free and equal society would be transparent. . . . If you actually had a socialist society in which production, power, and culture were genuinely democratic, you would have an enormous multiplication of different ways of living” (1988:336). By being able to choose to live in ways that are suppressed under capitalism, Anderson suggests, people would live in a complex, but accessible and intelligible, social world.

There is no exit from the lived world, only views from different positions within it. It is as if the world were a labyrinth whose exits were entrances into an expanding labyrinth and our maps not only modeled these labyrinths but also created them. Thus, maps embody the imagination of the future, not only that of the past. The destiny of our journey also defines its trajectory.

History and the Fetishization of Geography

Borges’s cartographers produced maps for the emperor. Here I have discussed the often implicit maps of empire produced by invisible hands and reproduced, with varying degrees of critical distance, by critics of colonialism for the metropolitan academic community and the public at large. I have focused on how certain representational practices assume a privileged center—the Occident, the first world, the West, the Self—from which difference continues to be defined as Otherness. Whether Otherness is dissolved in the service of the Self, subsumed within the Self, or celebrated in opposition to the Self, as in the three modalities discussed here, is in this respect less significant than its ongoing definition as a counterimage to a Self in need of confirmation, critique, or destabilization.

If in this discussion I have called attention to the way these maps reinscribe certain imperial boundaries, it is because, as Nicolás Guillén’s poem suggests, they do not sufficiently educate us to see forms of humanity “that are not on the map.” If Occidentalism is an imperial malady, one of its major symptoms is the ongoing reproduction of a colonial Self-Other polarity that mystifies the present as much as the past and obscures its potential for transformation.

In his last book, *State, Power, Socialism* (1978), Nicos Poulantzas argued that states establish a “peculiar relationship between history and territory, between the spatial and the temporal matrix” (1978:114). Taking the nation as his fundamental unit, he characterized the unity of modernity in terms of the intersection of temporal and spatial dimensions: “national unity or modern unity becomes a historicity of a territory and territorialization of a history” (1978:114).

Before his death, Poulantzas was building on Lefebvre's pathbreaking work *La production de l'espace* (1974), which attempts to integrate the study of geography with that of history and has inspired an important body of work by contemporary thinkers who have also reacted against the historicist conception of space as the static stage where time dynamically unfolds.¹⁶ I wish now to bring this literature to bear on Occidentalism through a brief commentary on Poulantzas's insight.

Poulantzas's notion that modernity entails the territorialization of a history and the historicization of a territory does not indicate how this interaction works, but his wording gives the impression of a symmetrical exchange. Yet, the prevailing understanding of history as fluid, intangible, and dynamic and of geography as fixed, tangible, and static suggests that modernity is constituted by an asymmetrical integration of space and time. A telling example is Laclau's argument, in *New Reflections on the Revolution of Our Time* (1990), that space is fundamentally static while time is dynamic.¹⁷ Paradoxically, therefore, the historicization of territories takes place through the obscuring of their history; territories are largely assumed as the fixed, natural ground of local histories. The territorialization of histories, in turn, occurs through their fixation in nonhistorical, naturalized territories. As a consequence, the histories of interrelated peoples become territorialized into bounded spaces. Since these spaces appear as being produced naturally, not historically, they serve to root the histories of connected peoples in separate territories and to sever the links between them. Thus, the illusion is created that their identities are the result of independent histories rather than the outcome of historical relations. There is a dual obscuring. The histories of various spaces are hidden,¹⁸ and the historical relations among social actors or units are severed.¹⁹

In other words, history and geography are fetishized. As with commodities, the results of social-historical relations among peoples appear as intrinsic attributes of naturalized, spatialized, bounded units. Although Poulantzas focused on nations, we could consider these units to be groups of nations or supranational entities: the West, the Occident, the third world, the East, the South, as well as localized intranational subunits, such as peasants, ethnic "minorities," "slum dwellers," the "homeless," forms of "communalism," and so forth. With the generalization of commodity relations, modes of reification involved in commodity fetishism radiate from the realm of the production of things to the production of social identities. Typical markers of collective identities, such as "territory," "culture," "history," or "religion," appear as autonomous entities. Identified by these markers, interconnected peoples come to lead separate lives whose defining properties appear to emerge from the intrinsic attributes of their "histories," "cultures," or "motherlands." As commodity fetishism becomes deeply rooted in society, it works as a cultural schema that permeates other sociocultural domains. As with commodities, the material, thinglike, tangible form of geographical entities becomes a privileged medium to represent the less tangible historical relations among peoples. Through geographic fetishism, space is naturalized and history is territorialized. Thus, the West is constituted

as an imperial fetish, the imagined home of history's victors, the embodiment of their power.

Every society represents other societies as part of the process of constructing its own collective identity, but each does so in ways that reflect its unique historical trajectory and cultural traditions. What distinguishes Occidentalism as an ethnocentric style of representation is that it is linked to the West's effective global dominance. While this linkage raises a number of questions concerning the relationship between Western knowledge about the world and power over it, it must be noted that this dominance is always partial and that it takes place through processes of transculturation which also transform the West. Westernization entails not the homogenization of the world's societies under the force of capitalism but their reciprocal transformation under diverse historical conditions. In this light, capitalism appears not as a self-identical system that emanates from the West and expands to the periphery but as a changing ensemble of worldwide relations that assumes different forms in specific regional and national contexts.

Modernity and Occidentalism

The 19th-century thinkers who insightfully examined the making of the modern world before its categories became second nature initiated a polemical discussion of the relationship between modernity and capitalism. Yet it is striking that even divergent ideological positions often coincide in their assumption that the West is the source and locus of modernity. If we expand our focus so as to bring the West and the non-West within a unified field of vision that encompasses the historical terrain of their mutual formation (for example, Cooper and Stoler 1989), the modern world appears larger and more complex, formed by universalizing and innovating impulses that continuously redefine geographical and cultural boundaries and set new against old, Self against Other. If the West is involved in the creation of its obverse and the modern is unimaginable without the traditional, the West's preoccupation with alterity can be seen as being constitutive of modernity itself rather than as an incidental by-product of Western expansionism. The examination of Western representations of Otherness, from the perspective of a critique of Occidentalism, could then be encompassed within an interrogation of why Otherness has become such a peculiarly modern concern.

Bourgeois modernity is torn by contradictory tendencies. Its universalizing force is inseparably linked to expansive and yet exclusionary movements of capital that polarize nations across the globe as well as people within societies. Spurred by the pursuit of profit, capital's continuous transformation of economic relations dissolves established customs and makes obsolete the new, yet its innovative force is constrained by the structures of privilege within which novelty itself is produced. Commodities come to occupy a central place in the formation of individual and collective life projects, generating forms of power that rely on the possession and consumption of things. Through the medium of things, modernity promises abundance and endless progress. This promise is

fulfilled within conditions of inequality that redefine its meaning and is constrained by powerful interests that confine and condition its fulfillment. "Progress" is thus constituted through a contradictory movement that erodes and establishes boundaries, that releases and contains energies. The future, as a modern construct, is rent by these tensions. The expansion of capital across space and time entails the dissolution of barriers to "development" but also the construction of walls against "disorder." While capital's expansion is the condition of its stability, stability is the condition of its expansion. In the modern world, as Marx and Engels observed, "all that is solid melts into air," but air itself is rendered solid, turned into another object.

Premised on a teleology of progress, capitalist development is embodied in reified institutions and categories. Cultural constructs such as the West and the third world come to acquire, like a commercial brand, an independent objective existence as well as the semblance of a subjective life. As part of their social intercourse, these forms feed the collective imagination and participate in the making of desires and needs, circulating as objects of libidinal attraction (Bhabha 1986) and as subjects of political action that define the terms of political intercourse. As fetishes of modernity, these cultural formations stand for social powers by alienating them; parts replace wholes. The West comes to be identified with leading capitalist nations, the economy with the market, democracy with universal elections, difference with Otherness. Embodying the contradictions of capitalist society, these formations help shape the landscape within which, with mesmerizing allure despite its disruptive social consequences, capitalist arrested development parades as modern progress.

This map of modernity is being redrawn by global changes in culture, aesthetics, and exchange that are commonly associated with the emergence of post-modernity. These transformations have multiple determinants and expressions, of which I can register only a few: the simultaneous integration and fragmentation of social space through new forms of communication; the globalization of market relations and financial networks; the shift from Fordism to flexible accumulation; the increasing tension between the national basis of states and the global connections of national economies; and the growing polarization of social classes both domestically and internationally.²⁰ As a result of these changes, familiar spatial categories are uprooted from their original sites and attached to new locations. As space becomes fluid, history can no longer be easily anchored in fixed territories. While deterritorialization entails reterritorialization, this process only makes more visible the social constructedness of space, for this "melting" of space is met partly with the "freezing" of history. With the generalization of the commodity form, as Lukács noted, "time sheds its qualitative, variable, flowing nature; it freezes into an exactly delimited, quantifiable continuum filled with quantifiable 'things' . . . in short, it becomes space" (1971:90). This spatialization of time serves as the location of new social movements, as well as of new targets of imperial control; it expands the realm of imperial subjection but also of political contestation.

As a result of these transformations, contemporary empires must now confront subaltern subjects within reconfigured spaces at home and abroad, as the Other, once maintained on distant continents or confined to bounded locations at home, simultaneously multiplies and dissolves. Collective identities are being defined in fragmented places that cannot be mapped with antiquated categories. The emergence of a new relationship between history and geography may permit us to develop a critical cartography and to abandon worn imperial maps shaded in black and white. Perhaps one day “their tattered fragments will be found in the western Deserts, sheltering an occasional Beast or beggar” (Borges 1970:90) or, in a world without beggars, an archaeologist of modernity.

Toward Nonimperial Geohistorical Categories

Daughter: Mom, Why did all those people lose their jobs? Will we be poor too?

Mother: Because the factories where they worked were moved to places where it's cheaper to make cars, as often happens when capitalists compete to make more money. If we worked for GM we would have a hard time now.

Daughter: Why can't we just say no to capitalism? Do you think in a few years human beings are going to be extinct? Is the world going to be so polluted that if there is a God, God will say, "I'm tired of all this"? But if that happens, there won't be any Santa Claus. I just can't imagine there never being any more people in the world, never ever.

—Dialogue between Andrea Coronil, 10, and Julie Skurski, following the televised announcement that 74,000 GM employees will lose their jobs. Ann Arbor, December 18, 1991.

How can we articulate the future historically? In seeking to prefigure an emancipatory future, we may track down its marks in the tensions of the present. As Terry Eagleton argues, “a utopian thought that does not risk simply making us ill is one able to trace within the present that secret lack of identity with itself which is the spot where a feasible future might germinate—the place where the future overshadows and hollows out the present's spurious repleteness” (1990:25). Walter Benjamin, who sought to understand the past in order to find within the present the seeds of a desirable future, asserted that

to articulate the past historically does not mean to recognize it “the way it really was” (Ranke). It means to seize hold of a memory as it flashes up at a moment of danger. . . . Only that historian will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the past who is firmly convinced that even the dead will not be safe from the enemy if he wins. And this enemy has not ceased to be victorious. [1969:255]

It may be that only that historian who is convinced that the living cannot be safe as long as the dead remain unburied will have the gift of fanning the spark of hope in the future. “If you can write this,” said a relative of peasants massacred in the town of Amparo, Venezuela, on the pretext that they were Colombian guerrillas, “tell them that despite all the lies they [the powerful] will tell, they won't be able to hide the truth. Sooner or later, the truth will be known. . . . Even

though those people may not believe it, the dead also speak” (personal communication, July 17, 1989). The dead speak in many ways. In February 1989 another massacre took place in Venezuela in which several hundred people were killed following rioting against an IMF austerity program. The effort to exhume the secret mass graves of the army’s victims became the focus of popular struggle around the massacre, as the government sought to prevent the bodies of the victims from speaking of how they had met death. When the stakes of history are high, the safety of the living rests on the voices of the dead who speak through the actions of the living. Establishing this link across time, the Maya rebels of the contemporary Zapatista movement in Mexico define their opposition through a collective history, proclaiming, “Zapata lives, the struggle continues!” while their spokesperson Subcommander Marcos underlines that the people who now speak “are the dead people of always, those who have to die in order to live” (quoted in Poniatowska 1994).

The interaction between geography and history thus involves an exchange not only between past and present but between present and future. Fanon, like Marx, drew on the poetry of the future to imagine a world in which the dead may bury the dead so that the living may be freed from the nightmare of the past. Reflecting on his position as an African American, Henry Louis Gates expresses the tension energizing an aspiration to identity informed by history and yet unconstrained by the past: “So I’m divided. I want to be black, to know black, to luxuriate in whatever I might be calling blackness at any particular time—but to do so in order to come out the other side, to experience a humanity that is neither colorless, nor reducible to color” (1994:xv). It is also in the spirit of freeing the living into the future that Carolyn Steedman concludes her powerful analysis of working-class longing, in which after illuminating everyday formations of desire within working-class culture she calls “for a structure of political thought that will take all of this, all these secret and impossible stories, recognize what has been made out on the margins; and then, recognizing it, refuse to celebrate it; a politics that will, watching this past, say ‘So What?’ and consign it to the dark” (1987:144).

As the future flashes up to a child in the form of a disenchanting, inhospitable, and depopulated world, the safety of those who follow us comes to depend as well on the poetry of the present.

Notes

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1. The gender bias of this utopian image shows that utopian visions, however universal in their intent, are necessarily saturated by the history they seek to overcome and limited by the local position from which they are enunciated.

2. Like Mignolo's "pluritopical" and Shohat's and Stam's "polycentric," I use here "decentered" as a sign of relationality and differentiation among human communities (Mignolo 1995; Shohat and Stam 1994).

3. Pletsch insightfully discusses the genesis of the three worlds taxonomy and its ideological character as a primitive system of classification (1981).

4. After I presented this paper at the Power Conference, Michigan (January 1992), I read an article by Carrier where he makes various useful distinctions: "ethno-Orientalism," by which he means "essentialist renderings of alien societies by members of those societies themselves"; "ethno-Occidentalism," which refers to "essentialist renderings of the West by members of alien societies"; and "Occidentalism," by which he means "the essentialistic rendering of the West by Westerners" (1992:198-199). Carrier's classification helps us recognize various approaches to this general topic, such as Chen 1992; Keesing 1982; and Nader 1989. Carrier's attempt to analyze the process of producing of Orientalist representations, and to relate dialectically representations of Otherness to representations of the West, parallels my own aims in this article.

5. Amin defines Eurocentrism as "an essential dimension of the ideology of capitalism" (1989:ix) and explains his choice of this term over others, including "occidentalcentrism" (1989:xii-xiii).

6. Armstrong (1990) uses the term "Occidentalism" to refer to the "effects" of Orientalism on Western selves. I see these effects as one dimension of Occidentalism, as I define it here.

7. For discussions that highlight the contributions of some of the works I examine in this section, see the reviews of Wolf's work by Asad (1987) and Roseberry (1989). The reader may find instructive the caustic exchange between Taussig (1989) and Mintz and Wolf (1989), as well as that between Taussig (1987a) and his critics in *Social Analysis* (1986). For my discussion of Todorov's book, see Coronil 1989.

8. The excellent reviews by Asad (1987) and Roseberry (1989), although in dialogue with a Marxist tradition, do not note this absence.

9. This perspective informs my work on state formation in Venezuela, an oil exporting nation (Coronil and Skurski 1982, 1991). I discuss elsewhere the significance of the shift from a binary to a triadic dialectic that I have outlined here (Coronil in press).

10. Ortiz integrated poetic and historical narratives in *Cuban Counterpoint: Tobacco and Sugar* in order to evoke the presence of Cuba's major export products throughout Cuban history (1995). For a discussion of his treatment of commodities and of the relevance of his book for postcolonial critique, see Coronil 1995.

11. Given neoclassic economics' selective construction of its ancestry, it may be useful to remember that an approach to price formation grounded in the production of value occupied a central place in A. Smith 1976 (chaps. 4-6) and Ricardo 1983 (chaps. 1-5).

12. Quoted in Rother 1994. It should be noted that in consulting the United Nations prior to invading Haiti, Clinton was the first U.S. president to seek international approval in advance for intervening in the nation's strategically defined periphery. He thus implicitly recognized that the U.S. does not have exclusive rights over the Western Hemisphere, as long defined by the Monroe doctrine. Gaddis Smith, author of *The Last*

Years of the Monroe Doctrine, sees in this remark a sharp reversal of policy. "The United States has recognized that threats to peace and security in the Western Hemisphere are as much for consideration by the Security Council as threats to peace and security in Korea or the Balkans" (quoted in Sciolino 1994). This change shows how an imperial map of the modern world, in which metropolitan centers had their well-defined "backyards," is being redrawn by newer imperial forces which are compressing global space and reconfiguring the spatial referents of "postmodern" empires.

13. Taussig is critical of the works by Mintz and Wolf I discuss here, for in his opinion they reproduce, rather than counter by conjuring up an alternative reality, capitalism's "phantom objectivity" (1989:11). His *Colonialism, Shamanism, and the Wild Man* (1987b) unsettles the dichotomy that informs his analysis in *The Devil and Commodity Fetishism in South America* (1980) by showing how "civilizing" conquerors and "wild" conquered have woven a web of mutually defining relations and representations. For a fuller discussion, see Coronil 1988.

14. Said argues for a "contrapuntal perspectivism" in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993). For an earlier expression of this perspective that pays particular attention to the play of power in economic and cultural relations, see Ortiz 1995.

15. Interestingly, Baudrillard also suggests that this story could be interpreted as "an allegory of the Empire" (1983:2). But he does little with this insight, except to relate it to the "imperialism" of present day simulators who try to make the real coincide with their simulation models. Essentially, the map remains a trope with which to discuss epistemological rather than political questions, although this distinction, of course, is one of degree.

16. For example, works produced by political geographers (Entrikin 1991; Harvey 1989; Smith 1990; and Soja 1989), literary critics (Jameson 1984), and social philosophers (de Certeau 1988; Foucault 1980).

17. Massey offers a persuasive critique of Laclau's conservative understanding of space and develops an important argument concerning the relationship between time and space (1992).

18. For this discussion, I find useful de Certeau's conception of "space" as a "practiced place" (1988:117).

19. This point is supported by the pioneering work of African and African American scholars who have discussed the erasure of links between Greece and Africa in dominant historiography (for example, Diop 1974) as well as by Martin Bernal's forceful argument in *Black Athena* (1987).

20. For a lucid discussion of central issues in the study of globalization and transnationalism, see Rouse 1995.

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