

"Reason and its Postcolonial Doubling"

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Colonialism became the mode of universalizing the rule of reason during the nineteenth century. Staging territorial conquest as a "civilizing mission" to enlighten the dark corners of the globe, to establish rationality as a principle independent of social status and power, Europe was forced to rely upon racist and colonialist hierarchies to establish the universality of reason. "The conquest of the earth," Joseph Conrad wrote, though "not a pretty thing when you look into it too much," was redeemed by an idea: "An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea-- something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to" ¹

To place the the selfish "conquest of the earth" as the double of the "unselfish belief in the idea" is to situate reason historically; it is to position displacement as the mode of reason's historical functioning. One does not negate the other, but operates in the process of its uncanny doubling. From this point of view, postcoloniality as a form of critique also emerges in this "other," colonial staging of reason, in the historical process of "the idea" alienating itself in "the conquest of the earth." Such a reading of postcoloniality resists both its celebration as freedom from imperialism and its denunciation as the ideological ruse of the late-capitalist imperial ideology.

Instead, my reading locates postcoloniality as a historically contingent critique that takes shape in the folds of history and functions through reinscriptions and revisions.

To identify the historical location of the criticism of Reason, it is instructive to return to Hannah Arendt. In a neat reformulation of Lenin's famous dictum, Arendt wrote: "Imperialism must be considered the first stage in political rule of the bourgeoisie rather than the last stage of capitalism."² Arendt's subtle but profound reinscription dislodges not just the Leninist definition but also the more common understanding of imperialism as an outgrowth of the West's prior self-generated and self-sustained capitalist revolution. For if, as Arendt suggests, the capitalist triumph in the metropole was achieved via territorial conquest elsewhere, then empire was not something that happened "out there": Imperialist exploitation "outside" formed part of the same process that constituted the metropolitan "inside." This is not to abolish the difference between metropolitan and colonial locations, nor is it to subsume imperialism in the narrative of capitalist development. On the contrary, it is to suggest that a contradictory relationship was at work in conjoining the core to the periphery, in using colonies to fulfill the bourgeoisie's "empty desire to have money beget money." To universalize free labor through enslavement, to extend the rule of the "invisible hand" of the market through, as Arendt put it, a "complete disregard for all laws--economic as well as ethical--"³ was to open a deep division in the

universalization of capital. For Arendt, this signified "an inner contradiction between the nation's body politic and conquest as a political device" that was to have profound and lasting effects on Europe.⁴ If imperial conquest and domination ensured the triumph of the metropolitan bourgeoisie at home, it also necessitated the alienation of the principles of liberty and popular representation. Compelled to rely on naked racism in Africa and a thoroughly authoritarian bureaucracy in India for its execution, the "civilizing mission" was to return home, Arendt suggests, to haunt Europe and plunge it into fascism. While bearing some resemblance to Adorno and Horkheimer's attribution of the Enlightenment's descent into totalitarianism to the functioning of its structure as a dialectical unity of liberation and domination,⁵ Arendt locates the rise of fascism in the "inner contradiction" produced by the inextricably linked histories of capitalism and imperialism; for her, the transformation of reason's mastery over nature into totalitarian domination was the effect of a split opened by the process of capital's universalization.

One cannot help but marvel at the acuity of Arendt's insights. Her identification of an "inner contradiction" produced in the process of Europe's territorial expansion anticipates the emphasis on disjunction and dislocation observable in current writings in the field of colonial and postcolonial studies. Without following her explicitly, recent analyses also foreground the intertwining of colonial and

metropolitan histories, and identify a deep division in the history of colonialism. But whereas Arendt used the notion of an "inner contradiction" to trace the origins of European totalitarianism, the concepts of displacement, doubling, and ambivalence seek to undo the totalizing narrative of European colonialism; their purpose is to show that colonial power and subjects were constituted and contested in the space of insurmountable contradictions and conflicts produced by colonization. The perversion of Europe's body politic that Arendt identified in imperialism, then, comes to signify a more general process of dislocation and reconstitution of colonial reason. In this sense, the disjunctive functioning of colonialism produces the possibility of postcoloniality.

To place the current notion of disjunctive histories in relation to Arendt's concept of an "inner contradiction" is to cast postcoloniality in a different light. Postcoloniality acquires significance not as a term that periodizes history too glibly, that privileges the colonial time, that celebrates the contemporary period as a continuistic evolution of colonial slavery into postcolonial freedom.⁶ Instead, it appears as a profoundly differentiated structure produced by the divided functioning of colonialism. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak defines postcoloniality as a case of the deconstructive philosophical position, as a catachresis, as an effect produced by the displacement of European concept-metaphors from their proper context.⁷ The term postcolonial, in this sense, refers to a

position of reinscription, and its conditions of possibility imply the displacement of colonial discourses in the process of their dissemination. To appreciate the reinscriptive and critical effects of the term postcolonial, however, displacement must not be thought of as only disarticulation or dispersal of colonial discourses. The concept of displacement acquires added vitality and specificity if it is taken to refer to not just the derailment of colonial categories, but their necessarily disjunctive, agonistic functioning. Such a concept of displacement begins with the proposition that a fundamental instability and division characterized the exercise of colonial power because it was required to produce the authority of the "civilized" in the figure of the "uncivilized"; that the very functioning of colonial discourse entailed its estrangement because it was compelled to address incommensurable positions of the colonizer and the colonized. Thus, colonial power was required to relocate its categories contingently and contentiously as it sought to negotiate and regulate unequal knowledges and subjects. Seizing on the instability produced by this contingent and contentious regulation, fastening on the loss of colonialism's identity and authority necessitated by its historical operation, postcoloniality signifies a critical realignment of colonial power and knowledge. It is to evoke the immanent nature of its reinscriptive position that elsewhere I have referred to postcoloniality as an aftermath, as an after--as a location formed in the fragile functioning of colonialism.⁸

Postcoloniality in this sense does not represent either the transcendence or the reversal of colonialism, and it sidesteps the language of beginnings and ends. Containing a link to the experience of colonialism, but is not contained by it, postcoloniality can be thought of as a form of realignment that emerges in media res, undoing and redrawing colonialism's contingent boundaries critically.

Such a conception of postcoloniality breaks down the binarism around which oppositional stances to colonialism were traditionally organized, and it casts doubt on notions of subjects and identity that underpin certain traditions of thinking about resistance to imperialism and domination. While critics consider this as the evidence of the inability of the concept of postcoloniality to produce a critique of contemporary global capitalism and imperialism, I wish to suggest otherwise. The concept of postcoloniality has acquired currency, it is true, after the defeat of socialism and third-world radicalism. But this does not warrant the conclusion that it is a ruse of late capitalism, designed to demobilize opposition. To begin with, the hybrid and uncertain conditions of power and criticism signified by postcoloniality have a long history; an "inner contradiction" punctuated the exercise of colonial domination and characterizes current processes of capitalist globalization, producing different and changing forms of power. Moreover, oppositions to colonialism and capitalism have also always operated in a shifting, mobile, and disseminatory mode even when

they have taken on the appearance of being grounded in pure, stable, and solid identities. The issue, therefore, is not whether disjunction and displacement demobilize the opposition to power, but how and in what historically contingent ways the disjunctive and differentiating functioning of colonial and capitalist dominance provides sources for an immanent criticism, for conducting a sort of guerilla warfare that operates through historically specific strategies of recombination and realignment. It is precisely such a mode of functioning of power and criticism that emerges from the history colonial conquest and capitalist expansion, and it is this that I wish to highlight in this essay.

Colonialism and the Metropolitan Liberal Discourse

No sooner had the East India Company acquired territorial power in India than its conduct was subjected to a blistering attack. I refer here, of course, to Edmund Burke's impassioned denunciation of Warren Hastings, the Governor-General of the Company in the late eighteenth century. Hastings believed firmly that the Company ought to respect India's oriental laws and customs, but this belief did not prevent him from imprisoning and displacing Indian chieftains, and annexing their territories. Burke's fury at Hastings's role in acquiring territory derived its force from the recognition that colonial oppression in India would return to corrupt the English body politic.

Do we not know that there are many men who wait, and

who indeed hardly wait, the event of this prosecution, to let loose all the corrupt wealth of India, acquired by the oppression of that country, for the corruption of all the liberties of this, and to fill the Parliament with men who are now the object of its indignation?--To-day the Commons of Great Britain prosecute the delinquents of India.--To-morrow the delinquents of India may be the Commons of Great Britain.⁹

Despite Burke's eloquent rage, Hastings was to be acquitted by the House of Lords, overturning his impeachment by the Commons. This decision closed the small window that Burke's blistering attack had opened to bring into view the incompatibility between the Company's declared aim to preserve traditions and colonial expansion. This is neither surprising, nor only a reflection of the support that Hastings enjoyed in the House of Lords. Both Burke and Hastings, the accuser and the accused, shared the guilt of colonial rule. The English authority over the indigenous population was not in question, and both even agreed that indigenous customs and laws should guide Company rule in India. Colonization itself was not on trial but the stage for a discursive contest between the Company and the Parliament, between the merchant and the state, to fashion an appropriate language of colonial appropriation. With the contest framed to bring under control the "arbitrary power" of the merchant, the arbitrariness of colonization itself was placed beyond scrutiny,

and all the blame was personified in Hastings. Burke seized on Hastings because, as Sara Suleri points out, "he was unable to admit that his vision of colonial rapacity could never resolve itself into a myth of imperial venerability."¹⁰ By singling out Hastings as the "repository of ill-doing," however, Burke protected "the colonial project from being indicted for the larger ill of which Hastings was simply a herald."¹¹ With the arbitrariness of colonization itself expunged from the proceedings, the trial became a spectacle about powerful individuals. Though Burke was defeated, but the accountability he wanted was successfully instituted. The Parliament gradually enlarged its control over the affairs of the Company, and colonialism entered the fiber of British life, just as Burke had feared.

But the colony entered not just in the form of the much-caricatured "nabobs" who returned from India with their ill-gotten wealth to set themselves up as gentlemen, acquire large estates and lordships, and buy parliamentary seats. It surfaced in British liberalism itself, including in Utilitarian high priests, Jeremy Bentham, and two famous employees of the Company, James Mill and John Stuart Mill. While India came to offer an ideal location for realizing Bentham's vision of the Panopticon and prison discipline, James Mill's contempt for India's culture and civilization opened a vast territory where liberalism could be cast in the authoritarian mold at will and with leisure.¹²

The most revealing but little-recognized effect that

colonialism produced in liberal ideology can be found, however, in John Stuart Mill. Consider, for example, his attempt to reconcile the confident assertion that Britain was committed to the principle of non-intervention in the affairs of other nations with the British annexation of Awadh in 1856. Mill begins his essay with an unambiguous declaration of Britain's adherence to the principle of non-intervention: "There is a country in Europe, equal to the greatest in extent of dominion, far exceeding any other in wealth, and in the power that wealth bestows, the declared principle of whose foreign policy is, to let other nations alone."¹³ But he must reconcile this declaration with the British annexation of Awadh, violating an existing treaty between the East India Company and the ruler of the province. Mill seeks to accomplish this by repeating the excuse that the Company had used, namely, that the ruler had violated the terms of the treaty by allowing his reign to become a "mixture of tyranny and anarchy."¹⁴ The intervention, therefore, was justified because it ended an oppression for which England was morally accountable. Elaborated here is the idea of the "civilizing mission," the pursuit of which requires violation of the declared principle of Britain's foreign policy. Observable here is an irresolvable paradox in the enunciation of the liberal discourse in the colonies: The extension of the principles of liberty to other territories required their estrangement in despotism. Thus, Mill had to claim that the universal principle of non-interference did not apply to the

British in India or the French in Algeria. He argued that "it was a grave error" to assume that "the same rules of international morality" that obtained between civilized nations could apply to relations between the "civilized nation and barbarians."¹⁵ The "barbarians" could not follow the principle of reciprocity expected of "civilized nations" because they could not be "depended on for observing any rules." What is noticeable here is the fact that the appeal to colonial difference authorizes the idea of "civilized nations;" the claims of civilization come to rest on the deficiency of barbarism. "Independence and nationality" emerge as essential for "the growth and development of a people" precisely when they are shown to be "either a certain evil, or at best a questionable good" for the uncivilized.¹⁶ In this institution of authority, the barbarian emerges as the displaced representation of the civilized: Europe is split and authorized by its barbaric double. To constitute the authority of the civilized at its limits, however, was to render it liminal; to summon the colonial "supplement" to authorize the colonizers was to open the discourse to its displacement by those "barbarians" who neither knew the rules of reciprocity nor valued independence and nationality.¹⁷ The effect of the supplement was to alienate the discourse, forcing Mill to disavow the very principle of non-interference he wished to defend and embrace authoritarianism. "The Romans were not the most cleanhanded of conquerors, yet would it have been better for Gaul and Spain, Numidia and Dacia,

never to have formed part of the Roman Empire?"¹⁸

Utilitarianism, elaborated and tested in colonial governance cast British liberalism in a decidedly authoritarian mold, persuading it that not only could good government substitute for representative government in the colonies, but also that despotic rule alone could institute the rule of law and order overseas.¹⁹ Having thus elaborated the rule of law and the principle of good government in the colonies, Utilitarianism practiced the conceit that the verities of liberal ideology were universal, and that its history lay securely within the boundaries of the English nation--a conceit that survives in numerous studies of British liberalism that determinedly overlook its colonial genealogy. This pretense enabled the metropolitan discourse to stretch itself to cover the colonies but cover over the effects of its extension. Britain's glory came to be embodied in its vast empire stretching from the Caribbean islands to India, and displayed in artifacts from these territories at grand international exhibitions, and yet it was believed to be somehow insulated from the effects of the sordid business of conquests and profiteering. Colonial possessions became jewels in the British crown, but they were thought to be merely decorative.

Thus, Disraeli could mastermind the coronation of Queen Victoria as the Empress of India in 1877 as a domestic political maneuver because the empire was already domesticated as something "out there," outside Britain and to be shared by all Britons. Formed in the alliance between capitalism, colonialism, and

liberal ideology, the metropolitan discourse was blind to the incompatibility between the "nation's body politic and conquest as a political device." Is it any wonder, then, that when Britain entered the "scramble for Africa" in the 1880s, Gladstone felt drawn into it unwillingly, by force of circumstance? So integral had the colonial calculus become in the political arithmetic of the British imperial nation-state that, beginning with the conquest of Egypt in 1882, it was driven to participate in the partition of Africa without overwhelming economic interests, as imperial historians remind us persistently.²⁰

If economics did not determine politics in the outbreak of the "new imperialism," this should not cause any surprise. After all, political conquests had prepared for capitalism's world-wide expansion from the very beginning. The late nineteenth-century imperialist scramble for Africa completed a process started in the early 1500s, and was distinguished by the fact that the global spread of capitalism had come to depend on imperial nation-states, not on conquistadores and trading monopolies, but on the giddy onrush of jingoism among the metropolitan masses and the practice of realpolitik by imperial politicians. This world of imperial nation-states advanced the spread of "free labor" by unleashing racist oppression and extra-economic coercion. The structural split between the ideals of liberty and their alienation in the colonies was there to see, but metropolitan intellectuals looked away. Thus, Joseph Conrad's Heart of Darkness brilliantly demonstrated that the artless truth of

Europe was uttered in its artful lie in the colonies. But even as Conrad showed that the savagery Europe committed in the heart of Africa had returned to haunt its soul, he chose to see Africans as mute victims and silent onlookers of the European descent into the depths of barbarism. Kurtz, on the other hand, was celebrated as a modernist hero for "staring into an abyss of nihilism so total that the issues of imperialism and racism pale[d] into insignificance."²¹ Conrad stared into Europe's heart of darkness, but could not locate other sources of knowledge and agency that drove Europeans into colonial savagery. Or take George Orwell, who confessed that his mind was split working as a colonial officer in Burma: "All I knew was that I was stuck between my hatred for the empire I served and my rage against the evil-spirited little beasts who tried to make my job impossible."²² With one part of his mind, he knew "the British raj to be an unbreakable tyranny," with another he thought the "greatest joy in the world would be to drive a bayonet into a Buddhist priest's guts." This split thought, Orwell, continues, was the normal by-product of imperialism experienced by colonial officials, but one that they would confess to only when caught "off duty."

But the colonial official's work was never done, and the luxury of "off duty" contemplation was postponed. This is not surprising, for though split minds and double visions pointed to a fundamental division and instability in colonialism, they also constituted the space of its enunciation: British rule operated

by splitting between the empire's "unbreakable tyranny" and "evil-spirited little beasts" of Burma. In shuttling between between the two, the colonizer could experience a loss of agency and feel helpless, as Orwell did, but this experience was yet to serve as an argument for dismantling the colonial divide. Europe had to endure the slaughter of millions in two world wars, undergo the terrible experience of colonial oppression coming home to the European soil with the ferocious rage of the return of the repressed, and confront the upsurge of anti-colonial movements before it could reflect on the implications of the incompatibility of empire and nation, or what Hannah Arendt called "the inner contradiction between the nation's body politic and conquest as a political device."

From Colonies to the Third World

In the colonies, on the other hand, where Europe's body politic was experienced as the political device of conquest, the incompatibility was all too clear, and was brought to light by slave rebellions, peasant revolts, and popular uprisings. While the insurgency of subaltern groups marked the limits of the liberal discourse, even colonized intellectuals with access to the culture of the colonizers came around to recognizing its deep fissure when they found that the "civilizing mission" came encased in steel armor. No one was perhaps more eloquent in this respect than Frantz Fanon whose "striptease of our humanism," as Jean-Paul Sartre put it,²³ laid bare the contradiction entailed

in the application of the Rights of Man to the colonies. "That same Europe where they were never done talking of Man, and where they never stopped proclaiming that they were only anxious for the welfare of Man: today we know with what sufferings humanity has paid for every one of their triumphs."²⁴

But there was more to the alienation of liberal ideals in the colonies than its visibility. If subaltern resistance and critiques by the colonized exposed the limits of the liberal discourse, they also forced it into liminality. The fact that the liberal discourse was instituted through illiberal instruments meant that it was forced to lose its identity and authority in the very process of its operation. This loss, this leakage of liberalism into despotism, turning limits of the discourse into conditions of liminality, rendered colonial power both unstable and productive. Unstable because, forced to negotiate the gap between liberal ideals and their alienation, colonial power could not but dislodge its subjects; the "native" could not be identified simply or located unproblematically when colonial power itself was compelled to dislocate, when there was no fixed position from which the colonized could be constituted. The "nation's body politic," let us remember, was forced to support "conquest as a political device;" the "rules between civilized nations," we know, were underpinned by the barbaric "supplement." Because of these necessary dislocations, an endemic instability and movement characterized the functioning of colonial power. For the same reason, however, it was also

effective in producing a wide range of positions that the "native" was obliged to occupy. Now race and then gender, now biology and then culture, now class and then ethnicity, or any combination of these was invoked, depending on the context. The extraordinary variety in colonialism, which remained at the same time and everywhere an exercise of alien power, testifies to the productivity of displacement. Once we appreciate this nature of colonial power, the alienation of ideals in the colonies acquires a highly charged shape; it becomes more than a simple demonstration of the European double-speak, and emerges as the mode of dissemination of colonial discourse.

What was disseminated most widely in the colonies was the nation-state. Paralleling the emergence of the imperial nation-state form in metropolitan locations, projects to create anti-colonial nation-states flourished in the colonies. And though each anti-colonial and imperial nationalism claimed uniqueness and primordality, the division between empire and nation left a profound imprint on the nationalist structuring of the world. This meant that even if capitalism underwrote the global integration of territories, the conflictual economy of empire and nation overwrote its functioning. Thus, every internationalist project was forced to negotiate the interstitial space between capital and race, every expression of universal sisterhood or working-class solidarity had to confront the heterogeneity of the metropolitan and colonial subalterns. More frequently than not, such universalist expressions were unable to radically

reconfigure the relationship between empire and nation, and proceeded no further than imperial feminism, produced no greater vision than the nationalist opportunism of the Second International, and formulated no larger project of revolutionary transformation than "socialism in one country."

A similar process also occurred in the colonies where nationalist movements were able to rearticulate the divided enunciation of the colonial discourse to project the nation-state as the arena for the resolution of class, caste, gender, and ethnic questions. Enjoying access to the culture of Europe but deeply aware of its limits in the colonies, the nationalist intelligentsia was able to resituate it, cross-hatching it with notions of tradition, history, culture, and justice. It incorporated modern science and polity in the anti-colonial agenda but represented them as the return of the indigenous and the archaic; it endorsed women's education and the reform of patriarchy but located them in the project to recover the nation; it declared solidarity with subaltern struggles against agrarian and industrial transformations but turned them into mobilizations for the achievement of a nation-state.

In this respect, Partha Chatterjee's characterization of Indian nationalism as a "passive revolution" is appropriate and instructive.²⁵ Chatterjee suggests that while Indian nationalists were able to fabricate a finely-textured cultural vision of the uncolonized nation, their conception remained an elite affair, and too closely determined by Enlightenment ideals

and capitalist goals to appeal broadly. Gandhi's arrival marked an important watershed, for he offered a non-modernist agenda that could both accommodate and appropriate the anti-capitalist and anti-Enlightenment politics of the peasantry. For Indian nationalists, the beauty of the Gandhian intervention lay in the fact that it could deliver the popular forces without ceding them the initiative. Thus, Nehru conceded that Gandhi had the uncanny ability to read the pulse of the "irrational" peasants, but, brushing aside Gandhi's reservations on modern industry and politics, he went ahead with the program of building a modern nation-state. Even Nehru could not ignore the necessity of imagining the characteristically Indian basis for his modernizing program. His Discovery of India (1946) contains a moving "quest" to locate the irreducible difference of the Indian nation, which he found in the idea of cultural synthesis. Placing himself as an interpreter who could identify a rational idea of India hidden in the mystical slogans of "Mother India" raised by the masses, Nehru found the nation woven into the psychic and cultural lives of the people.²⁶ In Nehru's vision, the modern Indian state was to represent the myth-ridden people whose welfare and transformation, he acknowledged, could not be left to the unrestrained play of capitalism but had to be carefully nurtured by a state-regulated "mixed economy." Though a far cry from Gandhi's nonmodern utopia, Nehru's "mixed economy" was an eloquent rearticulation of the liberal discourse; it fastened on the dislocation of the liberal discourse to forge a vision at

once different from both colonial modernity and Gandhi's nonmodern utopia.

Indian nationalists were not alone in their longing for a deep tradition, history, and uncolonized culture, and in their search for a more just, egalitarian, and prosperous future. Throughout the colonial world, nationalist movements sought to find another basis for the modern nation. Nkrumah's African socialism, Kenyatta's "Mount Kenya," and Sukarno's combined appeal to nationalism and social revolution were some of the many ways in which the nationalists reinscribed imperial texts. Seizing on the ambivalent articulation of the metropolitan discourse, they re-imagined or hybridized the "modular" imagined community. Drawing on popular struggles, but appropriating their anti-capitalist energies and subaltern languages, nationalist movements succeeded as "passive revolutions." To be sure, each passive revolution was different and represented a distinct political and ideological configuration. Common to all of them, however, was the fact that they functioned in the gap opened in the liberal discourse's colonial functioning.

As the wave of decolonization spread across Asia and Africa during the 1950s and the 1960s, the nationalists projected modern nation-states as agents for healing the hidden injuries of social oppression and cultural uprooting. However limited their hegemony, however coercively secured their dominance, the newly-independent regimes could rearticulate the liberal discourse to invoke emancipatory meanings. This was difficult and short-

lived, but rendered possible by the uncertain status and functioning of the liberal discourse, by the fact that its enunciation in third-world locations required it to shift registers, be mobile and flexible, in order to produce authoritative meanings. Shifting this uncertain discourse radically, anti-colonial nationalists reconfigured the post-war tripartite division of the world to assemble a third-worldist conception from memories of colonial exploitation and desires for cultural regeneration. Richard Wright captured something of the irresistible power of the urge for social justice and cultural renewal that ex-colonial African and Asian nation-states marshalled at the Bandung conference in 1955:

It was the kind of meeting that no anthropologist, no sociologist, no political scientist would ever have dreamed of staging; it was too simple, too elementary, cutting through outer layers of disparate social and political and cultural facts down to the bare brute residues of human existence: races and religions and continents. Only brown, black, and yellow men who had long been made agonizingly self-conscious, under the rigors of colonial rule, of their race and their religion could have felt the need for such a meeting. There was something extra-political, extra-social, almost extra-human about it.²⁷

Indeed, there was something utopian, something "extra-political, extra-social, almost extra-human," about this effort

to make the experience of colonial domination the basis for a postcolonial transformation. Fanon's notion of a revolutionary national culture shared something of Wright's sense of the "extra-human," for he, too, envisioned that only the exertion of sheer will would produce a radical national culture of decolonization. He, too, thought of the revolution of the colonized as one that "no anthropologist, no sociologist, no political scientist would ever have dreamed of staging." Marxism needed to be stretched, as Fanon put it, to understand colonial realities and imagine postcolonial futures.²⁸ Enthralled as Wright and Fanon were with the possibility of a third way, they were also deeply conscious of how difficult it was to realize. Wright warned that it was "not difficult to imagine Moslems, Hindus, Buddhists, and Shintoists launching vast crusades, armed with modern weapons to make the world safe for their mystical notions."²⁹ Fanon worried that the national bourgeoisie would crush the will of a revolutionary national culture.

In the end, the hope for a revolutionary "third way" was crushed. As the euphoria of the immediate postindependence period wore off, third-world states became consumed by the project to "catch up" with the West; most of Africa fell to dictatorships and military regimes; radical regimes were subjected to enormous pressures by the US; and neocolonialism subordinated the economies of the new nations to the global capitalist system. The inescapable conclusion was that the indigenization of the nation-state form had failed to impede

imperialism; that the nationalist or "third-worldist" reformulation of the liberal discourse had fallen prey to the advancing global capitalist integration of the world.

Global Integration and Postcolonial Critiques

The dependency theory captured some of the key features in the subordination of non-European territories, pointing out that developmentalism and modernization programs imposed on, or willingly adopted by, former colonies were responsible for the "development of underdevelopment." Exploding the pretensions of nationalist regimes, the dependency theory brought to the surface the corrosive impact of global capitalism on the social and economic fiber of ex-colonial territories. Is it any wonder, then, that the dependency theory was followed quickly by Immanuel Wallerstein's world-system theory? Directed to show that a single capitalist world-system has been in the making since the sixteenth century, the world-system theory marked the end of the three-world conception. Additional studies have poured in to provide further substantiation of the single-world thesis. These studies demonstrate that global integration under capitalism has achieved an unprecedented level in the contemporary period. Multinational corporations have become enormously powerful and truly global, and the collapse of communism in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe has opened fresh territories for the spread of capital. Massive movements of capital and migrants have turned some areas into "emerging markets" while marginalizing others

into "basket cases." The structure of flexible sourcing and markets has scrambled older divisions, producing "third-world" enclaves in Los Angeles and New York, generating "first-world" capitalist "miracles" in East Asia. As the internationalization of capital after the collapse of the Soviet Union produces a new, post-nation-state organization of class structures, advancing the process of dismantling the Fordist combination of big capital-big labor-big government in favor of flexible accumulation,³⁰ it also seeks to turn international organizations and nation-states into capital-servicing units.

The unprecedented advance in the internationalization of capital, however, should be examined carefully for its political implications. By now we should be accustomed to apocalyptic visions announcing the end of the world as we have known it. Critics have frequently proclaimed the arrival of the "last stage" in the development of capitalism, its final "general crisis," its spread to every corner of the globe. This is not to contest the thesis of an unprecedented global integration, but to raise a note of caution about the finalist scenarios it provokes. Skepticism is all the more important because announcements of the ultimate capitalist homogenization of the globe either defuses criticism or postpones it to the time of the future catastrophe. It is with this note of caution, then, that we should approach critics such as Arif Dirlik and Aijaz Ahmad who direct plenty of polemical fire and self-righteous rhetoric at postcolonial criticism but, in their zeal to represent themselves as the last

anti-capitalist intellectuals, affirm that capital can breathe a "pure" life. In their writings, the universalization of capital is assumed to be such an accomplished fact that anything other than a labor-capital conflict becomes a diversion, an epiphenomenon of capitalism itself. It is thus that postcolonial criticism comes in for a sharp rebuke for refusing to make labor-capital conflicts its founding principle. But such transparent posturing for the position of critical intellectuals ignores capital's hybridized life.

Hybridity is not offered here as resistance to capitalism, and not as jouissance that resists the homogeneity of capital, but as capital's aporetic and ambivalent articulation with alien structures that is at once regulative in its effects and unstable in its operation. Perhaps it is necessary to remember that Marx himself had argued that the universalization of capital requires difference; it spreads only by reconstituting otherness. The history of capital's expansion through racist slavery, colonial exploitation, peasant production, and ethnic and gendered mobilization of labor, should remind us that its universalization entailed its alienation into other structures: Capital achieved its dominance by operating in alien structures. This meant that even as capital appropriated other structures, this appropriation was expressed in the transformation and functioning of these alien forms.

To recognize that hybridization does not mean resistance to capital's expansion but constitutes its ambivalent and uncertain

mode of expansion is to acknowledge that globalization is a differentiated and differentiating structure. It operates in unevenness, and it proceeds by domesticating difference. Even as three worlds collapse into one, this process does not mean erosion of difference but its rearticulation. Thus, as capitalism expands, it expresses itself in ever-changing forms, inhabiting pre- and non-capitalist forms, domesticating and subordinating them, performing "capitalist miracles" in non-European territories and attributing them to "different" cultural values. To be sure, these values--order, discipline, and thrift--look very much like values of the modern West. But this act of misrepresentation demonstrates the pivotal role of difference in advancing capitalist values. Clearly, the internationalization of capital proceeds through these instances of differentiation, and produces new global forms of unevenness, inequality, difference, and discrimination. The very same process, however, also renders capitalism open to subaltern pressures, to the pressure exerted by forms and forces it subordinates.

So, even as we recognize that three worlds have collapsed into a single differentiated structure, the demand for immanent criticism remains relevant. For, arising in the folds of history, in its disjunctive moments and displaced locations, immanent criticism functions to refigure it. Edward Said's Orientalism (1978) can be read as an example of such a criticism. Recognizing that Orientalism's authority was global, that it enlisted powerful institutions in the "Orient" itself in

exercising power, Said distanced himself from third-world nationalism while situating his critique from the vantage-point of the other. It is true that his identification of the liberal-humanist intellectual as the critic of Orientalist knowledge partially undermined the scope of his criticism, but there is little doubt that his book's persistent violation of boundaries has had an insurgent effect. It is not necessary here to offer a survey of writings classed under the postcolonial label, except to state that they also, to put it in Spivak's terms, "inhabit a structure that they critique." This, in itself, is not extraordinary. As I have argued, anti-colonial nationalism and third-world revolutionary programs also took shape in the folds of the liberal discourse as it was forced to alienate itself. But whereas previous efforts were certain of binarism in their construction of a militant oppositionality, postcolonial criticism locates oppositionality in ways that do not cohere around familiar and stable lines of demarcation.

It is all too easy to read split sources of agency and hybrid locations of social identification only in terms of poststructuralism's influence, as a hermeneutic commitment to anti-essentialist epistemology, as a reflection of postmodern decentering and pastiche. It is more useful, however, to view the stress on doubling, deconstruction, disjunction, dialogism, etc., as an attempt to respond to a situation in which historical developments have deeply compromised some of the old truths or rendered them irrelevant. We are witness to a profound corrosion

in the authority of established forms of politics and knowledge. This is reflected in the urge to find more "grounded" forms of politics. The emergence of identity politics, and the eruption of conflicts and crises provoked by efforts to ethnicize nation-states and citizenship are some of the expressions of the search for more located sources of politics. The urge to find stable and pure locations for political intervention is widespread, and it includes calls to resurrect labor/capital and First World/Third World oppositions. But, as the Enlightenment project of building a rational, ordered society offers the choice, as it does in India now, between the secularism of state-regulated identities, on the one hand, and the majoritarianism of the religious Right, on the other, we clearly need to think through and beyond established forms of politics and knowledge. When categories such as the nation-state and the third world have been squeezed dry of nearly all their emancipatory potential, then the urge to fashion a strategic response to the prevailing configuration of knowledge and power requires that we think along differentiated, interpellated, mobile, and unsettling lines. The call, instead, to organize all critiques along stable lines of the labor-capital conflict fails to address the strategic necessities of a situation wherein the alienating functioning of capitalism and the liberal discourse have produced new subaltern positions, displacing previous oppositions ever more radically. Even as we recognize that the conceptual/political specification of postcolonial criticism has yet to achieve adequate complexity

and clarity, it is necessary to acknowledge that critical work can hardly be accomplished by reinstating binarisms, or by making psychologically comforting appeals to bring back capitalism and class into our analysis without seriously rethinking and reformulating what these concepts might mean when viewed in their disseminatory, disjunctive functioning. The same can be said of attempts to resurrect the concept of the third world, to situate intellectuals "who live and work" outside the metropole as more located critics of contemporary power. For these evoke Wright's sense of the "extra-human" at a time when its revolutionary impulse has been thoroughly corroded and compromised, and can serve as nativist responses of elite intellectuals whose power to represent their nations is threatened by globalization. The issue of the location of criticism, to be sure, is of utmost importance, for the current financialization of the globe reterritorializes the world unevenly, producing new forms of dominance and subalternity. All the more reason that the issue of the location of criticism has to be conceived more flexibly. This conception cannot afford to blindly reiterate older oppositional grounds in the name of grounding itself historically, but must remain alive to possibilities of critique in the disjunctive, differential functioning of power.

The post of postcolonial criticism, then, is not a problem of "posties," not a result of an epistemological commitment to anti-essentialism, but a response to a strategic situation of contemporary globalization and differentiation. Obviously

related to contemporary intellectual trends and theories of poststructuralism and postmodernism, it is not reducible to them. It signifies an attempt to rethink, transform, relocate, or reclaim, as Spivak remarks, "concept metaphors for which no historically adequate referent may be advanced from the postcolonial space." Based on the belief that we do not have the option of saying no to the determinate conditions of history--capitalist modernity, discourses of liberty, citizenship, individual rights, nation-state--postcolonial criticism attempts to identify, in the displaced historical functioning of these discourses, the basis for other articulations. Pointing to the force of uncertainty produced by the historical conjoining of empire and nation, of capital and race, of globalization and difference, it directs attention to those relocations of dominant discourses that emerge from elsewhere--not from the space of the nation-state, not from the third-world space, but from contingent, contentious, and heterogenous subaltern positions.

NOTES

1. Heart of Darkness Robert Kimbrough ed. (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988), 10.
2. The Origins of Totalitarianism (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1951), 138.
3. Arendt, 137.
4. Arendt, 128.
5. M. Horkheimer and T. Adorno, Dialectic of Enlightenment trans. J. Cumming (New York: Herder & Herder, 1972), Chs. 1& 2.
6. For some recent criticisms along these lines, see Arif Dirlik, "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism," Critical Inquiry, 20 (Winter 1994), 328-356; Aijaz Ahmad, "The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality," Race and Class, 36:3 (1995), 1-20. From a somewhat different point of view and with less polemical heat, this criticism is also made by Anne McClintock, Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Context (London: Routledge, 1995). For a thoughtful critique of these these authors and their arguments, see Stuart Hall, "When was the 'post-colonial'? Thinking at the limit," in The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizins Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti ed. (London and New York, Routledge, 1996), 242-60.

7. Outside in the Teaching Machine (London: Routledge, 1993), 281.
8. "Introduction: After Colonialism," in After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements ed. Gyan Prakash (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 4.
9. The Works of Edmund Burke (Boston: Charles C. Little and James Brown, 1839), Vol. 7, 519.
10. Sara Suleri, The Rhetoric of English India (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), 45.
11. Suleri, 45.
12. Eric T. Stokes cites Bentham noting with satisfaction that James Mill was "a sincere trumpeteer of Panopticon." Stokes also writes that "the prisons constructed at Poona and Ratnagiri, together with the introduction of an improved system of prison discipline, were symbolic of the new current of ideas which the Utilitarians were directing upon Indian administration." See his The English Utilitarians and India (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959; rpt. Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989), 149-50. James Mill's monumental The History of British India (1817) was an elaborate exercise in authorizing the authoritarianism of liberal imperialism.
13. John Stuart Mill, "A Few Words on Non-Intervention," Dissertations and Discussions (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, and Dyer, 1867), 153.
14. Mill, 170.

15. Mill, 167.
16. Mill, 167-68.
17. On the effect of the colonial supplement on John Stuart Mill's discourse, see Homi Bhabha, The Location of Culture (London: Routledge, 1994), 93-101.
18. Mill, 168.
19. Writing of John Stuart Mill's essay On Liberty, Eric T. Stokes states: "He was faithful to his father [James Mill] in holding to the belief that India could still be governed only despotically." Stokes, 298. In general, although Stokes does not provide quite the same interpretation as I have offered, he comes quite close to it. Consider the following. The "authoritarian element in utilitarianism," writes Stokes, "which had found in India so much more congenial a field for its development and which was given a working expression in the machine of the Indian bureaucracy, was carried back into the English thought and helped to produce the crisis within English liberalism which occurred in 1886." 289.
20. Ronald Robinson & John Gallagher, with Alice Denny, Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism (New York: Doubleday, 1961)
21. Patrick Brantlinger, Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830-1914 (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1988), 270.
22. George Orwell, "Shooting an Elephant," in A Collection of

Essays (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1970), 149. I have learned much from Ranajit Guha's brilliant reading of this text. See his "Not at Home in Empire," Critical Inquiry (forthcoming).

23. Jean Paul Sartre, "Preface," in Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth (New York: Grove Weidenfield, 1991), 24.
24. Fanon, 312.
25. Partha Chatterjee, Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse? (London: Zed Press, 1986).
26. Nehru wrote: "Sometimes as I reached a gathering, a great roar of welcome would greet me: Bharat Mata ki Jai--Victory to Mother India! I would ask them unexpectedly what they meant by that cry, who was this Bharat Mata, the Mother India, whose victory they wanted? My question would amuse them and surprise them, and then, not knowing exactly what to answer, they would look at each other and at me...At last a vigorous Jat, wedded to the soil from immemorial generations, would say that it was the dharti, the good earth of India, that they meant. What earth? Their particular village patch, or all the patches in the district or province, or in the whole of India?" Nehru then goes on to offer his own interpretation of what India meant and what the slogans meant. He would explain that "India was all this that they had thought, but it was much more." Mountains, forests, fields. "Bharat Mata, Mother India was essentially these millions of people, and victory meant victory to these

people. You are parts of this Bharat Mata, I told them, you are in a manner yourselves Bharat Mata." The Discovery of India (New York, Doubleday, 1946), 29.

27. Richard Wright, The Color Curtain (Cleveland and New York: The World Publishing Company, 1956), 13-14.
28. Fanon, 40.
29. Wright, 214.
30. See David Harvey, The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change (Oxford and Cambridge, MA: Basil Blackwell, 1989) on this transition of capitalism.

