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*Review Essay*  
History and Imperialism:  
A Century of Theory, from Marx to Postcolonialism

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PATRICK WOLFE

IMPERIALISM RESEMBLES DARWINISM, in that many use the term but few can say what it really means. This imprecision is encouraged by a surfeit of synonyms. Two stand out: imperialism is taken to be interchangeable with colonialism and reducible to the word “empire.” Add to these the compounding effects of elaborations such as hegemony, dependency, or globalization and the definitional space of imperialism becomes a vague, consensual gestalt.

In its stricter Marxist-Leninist applications, the word “imperialism” dates from the end of the nineteenth century and minimally connotes the use of state power to secure (or, at least, to attempt to secure) economic monopolies for national companies. On this basis, imperialism is not necessarily an extranational project, which would appear to distinguish it from colonialism. Moreover, the monopoly criterion excludes open-door policies, relegating “U.S. imperialism” and “cultural imperialism” to the realm of rhetoric but seeming to leave “Soviet imperialism” with at least a leg to stand on.<sup>1</sup> Since the term “imperialism” has been so closely associated with Left opposition to U.S. foreign policy, it is apparent that later usage of the term has not been too respectful of Marxist technicalities.

In what follows, I shall not presume to dispense a received definition of imperialism. Rather, the term will be used heuristically to group together a somewhat disparate set of theories of Western hegemony (including Marxism, dependency, postcolonialism, globalization, etc.).<sup>2</sup> Although these theories have most often been discussed in relative isolation from each other, taken together, as they will be here, they make up a multifaceted debate that continued for most of the

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<sup>1</sup> For informed and pointed comments on contemporary uses of the term “imperialism,” see two of the contributions to *Radical History Review*'s (no. 57, 1993) forum, “Imperialism—A Useful Category of Historical Analysis?”: Bruce Cumings, “Global Realm with No Limit, Global Realm with No Name,” 46–59; and Carl P. Parrini, “The Age of Ultraimperialism,” 7–20, esp. 13–14 and n. 16. For a thorough and somewhat skeptical account of the concept of cultural imperialism, see John Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism: A Critical Introduction* (London, 1991). For discourse analysis of a range of examples, see Amy Kaplan and Donald Pease, eds., *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (Durham, N.C., 1993).

<sup>2</sup> For reasons of space, Japanese imperialism will not be discussed. A good account that concludes with World War II is W. G. Beasley, *Japanese Imperialism 1894–1945* (Oxford, 1987). Though published in 1973, Jon Halliday and Gavan McCormack's remarks on 224–31 of their *Japanese Imperialism Today: “Co-Prosperty in Greater East Asia”* (New York) remain suggestive.

twentieth century. I shall attempt to characterize and criticize some of the more influential contributions to this debate. To give a sense of the theoretical contexts to which authors have been responding, the account will generally proceed in chronological order. This should not be taken to suggest a teleology in which theories of imperialism have progressively improved (or, even worse, approximated more closely to reality). As should become clear, these theories have varied so widely in terms of emphases and problematics that they are not necessarily even commensurable. Moreover, they have been enunciated under different historical conditions. This notwithstanding, a reasonable degree of coherence can be achieved by organizing discussion around two oppositions that, though misleading, have demonstrably structured debates about imperialism. The first of these is between the internal and the external, variously manifesting as European versus colonial, core versus periphery, developed versus developing, etc. Although this opposition is false because its two terms co-produce each other, accounts of imperialism are comparable on the basis of the ways in which they have distributed emphasis between the two. The second opposition is between the ideal and the material, whose alternatives include ideological versus practical, cultural versus economic, discursive versus instrumental, etc. Even though this opposition overlooks the obvious fact that consciousness is inseparable from practical activity, the majority of the theories that we will consider stress one at the expense of the other. These two oppositions are meant as implicit guides and should not be imposed too rigidly on the material. I intend to show that, at different times, in different political situations, and with different strategic intentions, they have been differently emphasized and configured. The interplay between theories of imperialism and the varied contexts within which they have been framed will, I hope, be more informative than an attempt to rank them on their merits. To this end, we will start with Marx.

ALTHOUGH KARL MARX PRECEDED THE DEBATE ON IMPERIALISM and did not use the term, the majority of theorists of imperialism have claimed to be furthering his ideas. While Marx saw capitalism's need for endless expansion as producing a Malthusian struggle for survival between an ever-dwindling group of monopolies, it is important to recognize that this vision was thoroughly positive, in the nineteenth-century sense. Rather than simply decrying capitalism, Marx admired its achievements, which were historically prerequisite to the transition to socialism. Moreover, the dialectical process ensured that, before a given mode of production was transcended, the class struggle would have scoured out its full historical potential. Historical development was, in short, as much qualitative as quantitative.

Although the "internal" dialectic of class conflict largely accounted for the historical preeminence of Europe, other societies were a different matter, for the simple reason that, unlike the European case, their historical development was not unprecedented. Rather, Europe was already there, a coexistent future whose impact was bound to be transformative.<sup>3</sup> Hence Marx's famous assertion—which

<sup>3</sup> In the case of the United States, this situation was reversed, since, unlike Europe, it lacked a

was to prove so embarrassing to Marxist liberation movements in the following century—that England had a double mission in India. While colonial intrusion and the reorganization of native society to serve the requirements of European capital had certainly occasioned untold destruction, the corollary was that capitalism itself—with its railroads, industrial infrastructure, and communication systems—had introduced a dynamic historical germ that would rouse Indian society from the timeless stagnation of the Asiatic mode of production and set it on its own course of historical development, a course that would eventually lead through capitalism to an Indian transition to socialism.<sup>4</sup>

In the decade following Marx's death in 1883, capitalist monopolization did indeed gain rapid momentum, only the consequences were not as he had foreseen. For, rather than carving up each other, monopolies began to carve up the market, with cooperative trusts, oil cartels, and, on the other side of the Atlantic, empire-wide closed shops becoming the order of the day.<sup>5</sup> Given the inconsistency between this trend and some of Marx's predictions,<sup>6</sup> it is not surprising that the most developed initial responses to it should have come not from within Marxism but from the world of liberal capitalism itself. Even though the English liberal J. A. Hobson's *Imperialism: A Study*, which appeared in 1902, was to shape subsequent debates about imperialism as a result of the formative influence it had on the thinking of V. I. Lenin, Hobson was not the first in the field. As Norman Etherington has shown, in the United States, with the possibilities of frontier expansion exhausted, the era that saw John D. Rockefeller's formation of the Standard Oil Trust, the recession of the 1890s, and the Spanish-American War produced a range of American proposals for exploiting the opportunities that imperialism held out. Not for the first time, description lagged behind prescription,

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feudal past ("a country where bourgeois society did not develop on the foundation of the feudal system, but developed rather from itself; where this society appears not as the surviving result of a centuries-old movement, but rather as the starting-point of a new movement." Karl Marx, *Grundrisse: Foundations of the Critique of Political Economy*, Martin Nicolaus, trans. [New York, 1973], 884).

<sup>4</sup> Karl Marx, "The Future Results of the British Rule in India" (1853), rpt. in Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The First Indian War of Independence, 1857–1959 [sic]* (Moscow, 1959), 29–35. For concise discussions of Marx's views on Asia (his attitude to colonized Ireland was different), see Anthony Brewer, *Marxist Theories of Imperialism: A Critical Survey*, 2d edn. (New York, 1990), 48–56; Hélène Carrère d'Encausse and Stuart R. Schram, *Marxism and Asia* (London, 1969), 7–10; A. James Gregor and M. H. Chang, "Marxism, Sun Yat-sen and the Concept of Imperialism," *Pacific Affairs* 55 (1982): 58–61.

<sup>5</sup> For U.S. trusts and the new economic thinking associated with them, see Carl Parrini and M. J. Sklar, "New Thinking about the Market, 1896–1904: Some American Economists on Investment and the Theory of Surplus Capital," *Journal of Economic History* 43 (1983): 559–78. For Chamberlain's "social imperialism," a radical departure from Victorian Britain's commitment to laissez faire in favor of a combination of tariffs and colonial trade compacts designed to strengthen the empire while assuaging unrest at home, a formula that rendered the weary imperial Titan ingloriously reliant on the good will of its dominions, see Peter J. Cain and Anthony G. Hopkins, *British Imperialism: Innovation and Expansion 1688–1914* (New York, 1993), 204–13; Bernard Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform: English Social-Imperial Thought, 1895–1914* (London, 1966); John Eddy and D. M. Schreuder, eds., *The Rise of Colonial Nationalism: Australia, New Zealand, Canada and South Africa First Assert Their Nationalities, 1880–1914* (Sydney, 1988), 19–20; compare Richard Jebb, *Studies in Colonial Nationalism* (London, 1905), 240.

<sup>6</sup> Though, in a corpus as tactically heterogeneous as that of Marx, it is often possible to find countervailing possibilities, as H. Gaylord Wilshire did in reaching the conclusion that Marx had anticipated the rise of trusts. See Norman Etherington, *Theories of Imperialism: War, Conquest and Capital* (London, 1984), 27.

or, as Etherington phrased it: "Hobson did not invent the idea that capitalism would benefit from imperialism. Capitalists invented that idea."<sup>7</sup>

For canonical purposes, though, the terms of the post-Marxian debate on imperialism were definitively set by Hobson, whose views were prompted by opposition to the Boer War.<sup>8</sup> Hobson's starting point, which was to become axiomatic to the entire debate on imperialism, was the problem of the economic surplus that capitalism generated. The downsizing and new technologies that an increasingly competitive domestic market generated boosted productivity beyond the market's capacity to consume its output, leaving a glut of both commodities and, since reinvestment was thus rendered pointless, of profits (the "underconsumptionist" thesis). The solution lay in immature markets overseas. Hence imperialism as an outlet for surplus. Since it only benefited a plutocratic few and directed national expenditure toward warfare and away from socially beneficial undertakings, Hobson recommended that imperialism be discontinued in favor of an income redistribution that would produce a more equitable and domestically viable form of capitalism.<sup>9</sup>

The details of Hobson's analysis need not concern us here. The crucial feature—which, apart from presaging World War I, distinguishes the "technical" imperialism that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century from earlier forms of colonial or imperial hegemony—is the element of compulsion that arose at the point where productivity exceeded the consumptive capacity of a metropolitan market conceived as finite and contained.<sup>10</sup> Co-conditioned by this imperative, monopoly trusts—which maintained domestic profits by fixing prices—and imperialism—which displaced the pressure of domestic limits—were two sides of the same coin.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Etherington, *Theories of Imperialism*, 7. For a different view, see James Sturgis, "Britain and the New Imperialism," in C. C. Eldridge, ed., *British Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (London, 1984), 85–105; compare A. M. Eckstein, "Is There a 'Hobson-Lenin Thesis' on Late Nineteenth Century Colonial Expansion?" *Economic History Review* 44 (1991): 297–318.

<sup>8</sup> He was also reacting more generally to Britain's post-1872 economic decline. Hobson's polemic on propaganda and the Boer War, *Psychology of Jingoism* (London, 1901), is a neglected gem that substantially anticipated cultural studies and amply rewards a contemporary reading. See also Hobson, *The War in South Africa: Its Causes and Effects* (London, 1900).

<sup>9</sup> Hobson's assessment was to receive laborious cliometric validation in Lance E. Davis and Robert A. Huttenback, *Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Political Economy of British Imperialism, 1860–1912* (Cambridge, 1986), which concluded that, from 1880 on, empire did not provide the ordinary investor with better returns than the domestic economy.

<sup>10</sup> For obvious reasons, Hobson himself did not accept that domestic capitalism had no alternative. Within the Marxist tradition, N. I. Bukharin would systematically elaborate the element of compulsion in his influential 1917 work, *Imperialism and the World Economy* (London, 1972).

<sup>11</sup> In view of the constraint of space, I have decided not to discuss Karl Kautsky's "ultra-imperialism" (or Hobson's "inter-imperialism") thesis, important though it is for appreciating the implications of market-apportioning compacts between nation-states. Even though, as is well known, Kautsky had the misfortune to have an article explaining why wars between imperial powers were unlikely to happen published in *Die neue Zeit* on September 11, 1914, as the battle of the Marne was getting into full swing, his prediction that the capitalist states would cooperate rather than engage in internecine destruction has clearly had more purchase on the long term than it had on the immediate term. See Kautsky, "Ultra-imperialism" (original German title "Der Imperialismus"), *New Left Review* 59 (January–February 1970): 39–46, but ignore the introduction. For the same reason, I will not be discussing either Joseph Schumpeter or the Wisconsin school of Cold War revisionism associated with the name (and authority) of William Appleman Williams, which one might see as having much in common with Kautsky, especially insofar as it stressed the role of U.S. diplomacy in preventing political rivalries between the leading industrial democracies from hindering the international advancement of corporate

The classical Marxist debate on imperialism shuffled the foregoing concepts and derived varying strategic implications from them. Given the emancipatory aspirations of the Communist movement, however, it could hardly remain just a view from above. Initially surfacing at the Amsterdam and Stuttgart congresses of the Second International, in 1904 and 1907 respectively, but achieving full expression a decade or so later in the 1920 Comintern theses of M. N. Roy, founder of the Communist Party of India, the view was expressed that, rather than leading the rest of the world, the revolution in Europe was contingent on revolution in the colonies. Briefly, this conclusion followed from the observation that the bourgeoisie could buy off the metropolitan proletariat, and thus postpone the revolution in Europe, by intensifying exploitation in the colonies.<sup>12</sup> This consequence of imperialism was widely accepted, not only by prominent Marxist theoreticians such as Karl Kautsky,<sup>13</sup> Rudolf Hilferding,<sup>14</sup> and Rosa Luxemburg<sup>15</sup> but by arch-imperialists such as Cecil Rhodes<sup>16</sup> and Joseph Chamberlain.<sup>17</sup> Although the strategic implications that these varied figures derived from their common perception differed widely, for our purposes the perception itself is significant for its negation of a barrier between the metropolitan and the colonial, which emerged as integrated aspects of a systemic whole.<sup>18</sup> This theme would be considerably elaborated in later twentieth-century thinking on imperialism.

Of perhaps even greater significance for later—indeed, for some of the most recent—writing on imperialism is Roy's conclusion, which the classical theorists of imperialism rejected, that the colonized could be the subjects and authors of revolution. At the 1920 Comintern, Lenin made concessions to Roy's position, a gesture that was enabled by the accommodation to Asia that was built into his own theory of imperialism, an accommodation that a Russian revolutionary could hardly

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interests (the open-door policy as more cost-effective than formal colonization). See Williams, *The Tragedy of American Diplomacy* (Cleveland, Ohio, 1959); and *Empire as a Way of Life* (New York, 1980). In this connection, I am grateful to my friend and departmental colleague (and one-time Williams student) Chips Sowerwine for showing me his illuminating unpublished paper, "A Revisionist's Historiography of the Cold War."

<sup>12</sup> Roy's perspective had been prefigured by Marx in 1853: "It may seem a very strange, and a very paradoxical assertion that the next uprising of the people of Europe, and their next movement for republican freedom and economy of government, may depend more probably on what is now passing in the Celestial Empire [China],—the very opposite of Europe,—than on any other political cause that now exists . . . But yet it is no paradox . . . [I]t may safely be augured that the Chinese revolution will throw the spark into the overloaded mine of the present industrial system and cause the explosion of the long-prepared general crisis [in England], which, spreading abroad, will be closely followed by political revolutions on the Continent." Karl Marx, *On Colonialism* (Moscow, n.d.), 15, 21.

<sup>13</sup> Karl Kautsky, *Sozialismus und Kolonialpolitik* (Berlin, 1907).

<sup>14</sup> Rudolf Hilferding, *Finance Capital: A Study of the Latest Phase of Capitalist Development*, Tom Bottomore, ed. (1910; London, 1981).

<sup>15</sup> Rosa Luxemburg, *The Accumulation of Capital* (1913; London, 1951).

<sup>16</sup> As Lenin recounted it, Rhodes said to his journalist friend Stead: "My dearest wish is to see the social problem solved: that is to say that in order to save the forty million inhabitants of the United Kingdom from bloody civil war, we colonial politicians must conquer new lands to take our excess population and to provide new outlets for the goods produced in our factories and mines. The Empire, as I have always said, is a question of bread and butter. If you do not want civil war, you must become imperialists." V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* (1916; Moscow, 1970), 76.

<sup>17</sup> Semmel, *Imperialism and Social Reform*. See also E. J. Hobsbawm, *The Age of Empire 1875–1914* (London, 1987), 69.

<sup>18</sup> Marx and Engels had observed that the expansion of capitalism across the globe would result in a unified economic system; *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (1888 edn.; London, 1983), 18–19.

avoid. Even though Lenin's *Imperialism, the Highest* [or should it really be the latest?] *Stage of Capitalism* (1916) enjoys unrivaled status in the annals of theories of imperialism, apart from its Asian dimension, the work's originality was strategic rather than analytical. In arguing that the small but politically conscious Russian proletariat could sustain a revolutionary vanguard that would lead the feudal masses of Russia's Asian empire to skip over the capitalist mode of production and proceed straight to a socialist revolution, Lenin was not only revising the Eurocentric orthodoxy of classical Marxism.<sup>19</sup> Where the dialectic of history was concerned, his theory was also premised on the contention that, in extending the life of capitalism, imperialism enabled it to expand quantitatively but without the qualitative compensation. Lenin was an activist. In the lived exigencies of the practical struggle against imperialism, life had become too short to wait for Europe.

That Asia should figure at all was a fateful sign of things to come. Mao's peasants, agents and bearers of their own revolution, gathered just over the historical horizon, while, further on, Frantz Fanon would declare Europe to be so corrupting that the natives whom it touched could but betray the anticolonial movement. In the crucible of the struggle against imperialism, Eurocentrism would shift from program to problematic. This occurred in a world that had changed utterly since the late nineteenth century, when Marx had been fresh in his grave and the scramble for Africa was proceeding apace. In the post-World War II era of decolonization, neocolonialism, and development, dependency theory would insist that economic backwardness in the Third World resulted from the presence rather than the absence of capitalism, thus turning Marxism on its head. This was despite the fact that the theory's proponents (the *dependencistas*) either styled themselves as Marxists or closely aligned themselves with Marxism in theory and in practice. In turning to dependency theory, then, we turn to a new style of theory for a new style of imperialism, one that increasingly dispensed with the formality of colonial rule.<sup>20</sup>

A DUAL PROVENANCE is conventionally ascribed to *dependencia*, giving the doctrine a combined North and South American pedigree. In the United States, long-time collaborators Paul A. Baran and Paul M. Sweezy first formulated the contention that monopoly capitalism had stultifying rather than dynamic consequences for economic development. Third World markets were not so much profitable in their own right as on account of the massive state expenditure that safeguarding them triggered: "The loans and grants to so-called friendly governments of dependent countries, the outlays on the military establishment . . . all assume prodigious magnitudes."<sup>21</sup> In this early theorizing of the military-industrial complex, the Third World functioned as an alibi for ever-increasing levels of state patronage of domestic corporations. Since indigenous enterprise obstructed this arrangement, it

<sup>19</sup> Though it should perhaps be noted that, in a letter written toward the end of his life, Marx had referred to the Russian peasant commune as "the fulcrum of social regeneration in Russia." This letter was not, however, published until 1924. Karl Marx to Vera Zasulich, March 8, 1881, *Karl Marx, Frederick Engels: Collected Works* (London, 1992), 46: 71-72.

<sup>20</sup> In most of Latin America, neocolonialism had been prefigured, since this formality had not applied since the nineteenth century.

<sup>21</sup> Paul A. Baran, *The Political Economy of Growth* (New York, 1957), 118.

was either incorporated or disabled. Accordingly, the only areas outside the West where indigenous enterprise could be expected to flourish were those that had escaped Western domination. Hence Baran's famous contrast between the modernizing achievements of uncolonized Meiji Japan and India's abject failure to develop.<sup>22</sup> Somewhat later, and from the hemisphere below, Silvio Frondizi, Sergio Bagú, Luis Vitale, André Gunder Frank, Theotonio Dos Santos, and others asserted that underdevelopment in Latin America was not a frustration but an outcome of capitalist development.<sup>23</sup>

Though complementary, the two theories emerged in quite different contexts. Within European Marxism, Leon Trotsky notwithstanding, theories of imperialism had received little development since the death of Lenin. Not only had Stalinism constrained theoretical innovation within the Soviet Union, but, in the rest of Europe, the success of fascism had provided Marxists with a major distraction from external concerns. As U.S. dominance was consolidated in the wake of World War II, the Cold War, and McCarthyism, on the other hand, it was understandable that, in 1957, a beleaguered American Marxist such as Baran should recall the Great Depression and warn that all was not as it seemed, that monopoly capitalism was bound to produce stagnation in both the domestic and foreign economies. In contrast to Baran, the Latin American *dependencistas* of the 1960s and 1970s did not have the problem of explaining away the reality of a domestic boom. Rather, their immediate historical experience was dominated by an appalling mutuality between development programs and popular immiseration. As Arturo Escobar has recounted, the era of Third World development that was inaugurated along with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund at Bretton Woods in 1944 produced and systematized a new regime of deprivation in Latin America, one that differed in quality and extent from the modes of exploitation that had characterized European domination of the subcontinent.<sup>24</sup> Dependency theory formalized its proponents' anger at the gap between the rhetoric of modernization and the reality of exploitation.

A basic premise of *dependencia* was that of historicity: European history was transcended and unrepeatable.<sup>25</sup> Ignoring this, the theory and ideology of modern-

<sup>22</sup> Baran, *Political Economy of Growth*, 149–50.

<sup>23</sup> Published in Buenos Aires in 1947 and 1949 respectively, Silvio Frondizi's *La integración mundial, última etapa del capitalismo (respuesta a una crítica)* and Sergio Bagú's *Economía de la sociedad colonial* appeared well before Paul Baran's *Political Economy of Growth* (1957). All the same, Bagú and Frondizi were unrepresentatively (not to say presciently) early. In any event, Paul Sweezy, *The Theory of Capitalist Development: Principles of Marxian Political Economy* (New York, 1942), can be seen as a bridge between classical Marxism and later work, as Brewer does (*Marxist Theories of Imperialism*, 137). Latin American *dependencia* generally emerged in the mid to late 1960s, in the decade after Baran and generally after Paul A. Baran and Paul M. Sweezy, *Monopoly Capital: An Essay on the American Economic and Social Order* (New York, 1966).

<sup>24</sup> Arturo Escobar, *Encountering Development: The Making and Unmaking of the Third World* (Princeton, N.J., 1993), 70–94.

<sup>25</sup> The following is intended to express some of the central characteristics of dependency theory. Although individual theorists differed in matters of detail, it is contended that most would accept these basic premises. In view of his prominence, I have generally expressed them in the language of André Gunder Frank, though this should not be taken to imply endorsement of his oddly amateurish, nineteenth-century style of presentation, which involves tacking together extended verbatim quotations from a range of sources to an extent that can make it difficult to discern whether Frank himself has anything to add. For a judicially balanced collection on dependency theory as a whole, see Dudley

ization held out capitalist development as a process of catching up, forgetting that, when the West had been undergoing its own momentous development, there had not been another “West” already there. Rather, there had been colonies, whose exploitation had historically produced—and, in changing ways, continued to produce—the paramountcy of the West. In other words, the great global fact that modernization theory obscured in representing Western history as autochthonous and repeatable was that development and underdevelopment were not two distinct states but a *relationship*. Underdevelopment was not, as modernization theory’s dual thesis would have it, external to capitalism, a condition that prevailed in backward regions that had yet to develop.<sup>26</sup> Rather, it was of the essence of capitalism, being both precondition to and corollary of the developed status of the dominant countries. In a fundamental break with Marxist temporality, therefore, underdevelopment did not figure as a residue or survival from a superseded mode of production—usually, from feudalism—but as an integral component of modernity. (In this respect, the theory prefigured a key feature of the thinking of the Subaltern Studies group.) Underdevelopment was, in short, a transitive condition (to put it in Foucauldian terms, a positivity)—something that capitalism produced.<sup>27</sup> If there were any areas of the globe that had yet to be touched by capitalism,<sup>28</sup> their independence of the international division of labor was *undevelopment*, an intransitive historical separateness, rather than *underdevelopment*.<sup>29</sup>

Focusing primarily on unequal exchange, dependency theory provoked controversy in orthodox Marxist circles for seeming to privilege distribution over production.<sup>30</sup> Though employing geopolitical units of analysis (nation, colony,

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Seers, ed., *Dependency Theory: A Critical Reassessment* (London, 1981). For particular viewpoints both critical and appreciative, see, for example, Theotonio Dos Santos, “The Structure of Dependence,” *American Economic Review* 60 (May 1970): 231–36; Adrian Foster-Carter, “From Rostow to Gunder Frank: Conflicting Paradigms in the Analysis of Underdevelopment,” *World Development* 4 (March 1976): 167–80; Colin Leys, “Conflict and Convergence in Development Theory,” in Wolfgang Mommsen and Jürgen Osterhammel, eds., *Imperialism and After: Continuities and Discontinuities* (London, 1986), 315–24; Tony Smith, “Requiem on New Agenda for Third World Studies,” *World Politics* 36 (1985): 532–61; John G. Taylor, *From Modernization to Modes of Production: A Critique of the Sociologies of Development and Underdevelopment* (London, 1979); and Charles K. Wilber’s collection, *The Political Economy of Development and Underdevelopment* (New York, 1973), especially the two essays by Celso Furtado.

<sup>26</sup> The best-known example of modernization theory, and a prime target of *dependencia* critique, was Walt (W. W.) Rostow, *The Stages of Economic Growth: A Non-Communist Manifesto* (Cambridge, 1960). A comparably modernist optimism could still find Marxist expression in 1980, in Bill Warren’s contention that capitalism would eventually develop the areas that it penetrated (eventually, the entire world). See Warren, *Imperialism: Pioneer of Capitalism* (London, 1980).

<sup>27</sup> This is not to say that capitalism simply modeled dependent societies at will, as if on some behaviorist *tabula rasa*. It means that, within a given country, a particular infrastructure of dependency was conditioned—encouraged, maintained, and modified in a delegated or indirect manner through the agency of the coopted national elite. See Baran, *Political Economy of Growth*, 194–98; Susanne Bodenheimer, “Dependency and Imperialism: The Roots of Latin American Underdevelopment,” *Politics and Society* (May 1971): 337–38.

<sup>28</sup> *Dependencistas* had differing views as to the discreteness of the Second World.

<sup>29</sup> Despite the analytical centrality of this distinction, undevelopment received scant attention in *dependencia*, principally because areas that seemed to furnish good examples usually turned out to have been early mercantile growth centers of the colonial economy that had subsequently fallen into decline.

<sup>30</sup> Though attracting considerable attention for its critique of Frank, Ernesto Laclau’s “Feudalism and Capitalism in Latin America,” *New Left Review* 67 (May–June 1971): 19–38, principally confined itself to establishing a charge of heresy in relation to Marxist orthodoxy. Robert Brenner’s aptly

country), the theory simultaneously problematized and, implicitly at least, subverted them (a feature to be elaborated in world-systems theory). A distinctive characteristic of dependency was a hierarchically replicated cyclopean structure whereby a metropolis (also known as “center,” “core,” etc.) dominated a number of (usually surrounding) satellites (the “periphery”).<sup>31</sup> In addition to dominating its satellites, a metropolis was itself satellite to a higher-order metropolis further up the chain of dependency, say a state or regional capital, and so on up to the final metropolis, the colonial center. Apart from the very lowest and the very highest links in the chain, therefore, each level had a dual aspect, functioning both as metropolis and as satellite. A crucial difference was, however, that, as metropolis, it monopolized a number of satellites, whereas, as satellite, it served only one metropolis.

Though static, the model was not balanced. Rather, it was emphatically unidirectional. Power traveled downward: to depend was to subserve. In consequence, the theory was disappointingly undialectical. There was little sense of the metropolis’ own dependence on the compliance of its satellites, little sense of the possibilities of contradiction. Above all, there was little sense of ideology, little evidence of Gramscian perspicacity concerning the crucial calculus of force and consent in the maintenance of hegemony, with the result that collaboration figured as crudely utilitarian. Yet it did not have to be thus. At various points, dependency theory was potently suggestive in regard to such matters, only to hurry back to economism as if questions of culture or consciousness were a frivolous indulgence. It has been suggested that Frank’s theory was more influential than the sterner stuff that Baran dispensed because it fortuitously coincided with the Western radicalism of the 1960s.<sup>32</sup> While there may be some truth in this, we should not overlook the appeal of what lay between the lines, implicit but profound, in *dependencia*. This applies particularly to the client or *comprador* role of local elites, whom Frank deftly disparaged as *lumpenbourgeoisie*. They were the agential linchpin of the whole system, acquiescing in their own exploitation from above in return for the balance left over from what they had expropriated from below—including, of course, the military, political, and economic support that the metropolis committed to maintaining them in power. This deeply ambivalent condition confounds dualistic schemes of domination in a way that is particularly vulnerable to ideological critique. Indeed, Dos Santos seemed to lay some of the ground for Homi Bhabha’s psychology of colonialism, though with greater economic and geopolitical substance, when he observed, “Domination is practicable only when it finds support

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subtitled “The Origins of Capitalist Development: A Critique of Neo-Smithian Marxism,” *New Left Review* 104 (July–August 1977): 25–92, offered a wider challenge. For an analogous critique emerging from a concrete empirical case-study, see N. S. Chinchilla, “Interpreting Social Change in Guatemala: Modernization, Dependency, and Articulation of Modes of Production,” in Ronald H. Chilcote and Dale L. Johnson, eds., *Theories of Development: Mode of Production or Dependency?* (Beverly Hills, Calif., 1983), 139–78.

<sup>31</sup> Surprisingly perhaps, the terms “center” and “periphery” were coined by Raúl Prebisch, the first director of the Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL). See Ronald H. Chilcote, “Introduction: Dependency or Mode of Production? Theoretical Issues,” in Chilcote and Johnson, *Theories of Development*, 12; and Escobar, *Encountering Development*, 90.

<sup>32</sup> Hamza Alavi, review of Wallerstein’s *The Politics of the World-Economy, Race and Class* 27, no. 4 (1986): 87–88.

among those local groups which profit by it. Thus we see the irrelevance of the concept of alienation which claims that our elites are alienated because they look upon themselves with alien eyes."<sup>33</sup>

Shying away from its discursive dimension, however, the theory failed to account for the extent to which *lumpenbourgeois* leaderships could deploy the rhetoric of national independence to mobilize popular support for programs that actually intensified national dependency. Inattention to this paradox of liberalism rendered utopian the remedy (autocentric or independent development) that *dependencistas* advocated, a consequence that was exacerbated by the fact that, for all its radicalism, *dependencia* never questioned the concept or value of development per se.<sup>34</sup> Rather than imagining alternatives to development, it sought to orchestrate a takeover bid. Having so stressed the limits of local agency in the face of the enormous power of international capitalism, however, the theory subverted in advance its own commitment to enabling satellites to break free and keep their surpluses to themselves.<sup>35</sup>

AS NOTED, DEPENDENCY WAS CONCEIVED AS UNIDIRECTIONAL—spreading out from Europe, it reduced the whole periphery (the singular is significant) to undifferentiated subordination.<sup>36</sup> Small wonder that other schools of thought have since stressed heterogeneity and particularity. In the 1970s and 1980s, Marxist anthropologists and economic historians influenced by Louis Althusser employed structuralist methods to map the complexities of social (including colonial) formations. A Western communist reacting against Stalinist iron laws, Althusser amended the teleology that had characterized much Marxist thought to that point, insisting that modes of production were ideal abstractions not to be found empirically. Actual social formations conjoined (articulated) a number of modes of production. (Even in Europe, feudalism persisted locally in subordinate relations to capitalism.) Rather than simply instantiating (however awkwardly) a predetermined stage of unilinear development, a given social formation comprised a particular configuration of modes of production, articulated together in unpredictable ways that had to be reconstructed anew in each particular case. Of these modes of production, one predominated—that is, it subordinated the others to the requirements of its own historical reproduction. In keeping with Marxist fundamentals, economic factors were determinant, but only in the last instance.<sup>37</sup> They were not necessarily

<sup>33</sup> Dos Santos, "Structure of Dependence," 78. Although he did not specify a particular target, Dos Santos must have had in mind Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Constance Farrington, trans. (New York, 1966, first French edn., Paris, 1961).

<sup>34</sup> Such questioning is the principal concern of Escobar's profoundly thought-provoking *Encountering Development*.

<sup>35</sup> Frederick Cooper has argued along comparable lines in relation to dependency theory's application to African contexts. See Cooper, "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History," *AHR* 99 (December 1994): 1524–25.

<sup>36</sup> Samuel P. Huntington, "The Goals of Development" in Myron Weiner and Huntington, eds., *Understanding Political Development* (Boston, 1987), 283–322, noted that the *dependencistas'* failure to acknowledge cultural differences prevented them from accounting for obvious counterexamples such as Korea and Taiwan.

<sup>37</sup> This premise is more clearly associated with Emmanuel Terray than with Althusser himself, whose

dominant as well, as in the case of capitalism, although they did determine which sphere was dominant (for instance, the political in the case of feudalism or kinship in the case of hunter-gatherer societies<sup>38</sup>).

The concept of social formation provided a powerful tool for analyzing the structural dynamics of complex societies in a manner that both preserved their historicity (inscribed in the power balance between the component modes of production) and identified points of tension around which historical transformations could occur. In the course of a long-running and celebrated French debate involving ethnographic and archival data from West Africa, for instance, Emmanuel Terray took issue with Claude Meillassoux's use of technological criteria to define the "lineage" mode of production, arguing that, since the same technologies occurred in different social systems, it was necessary to employ social criteria.<sup>39</sup> Terray instanced the Abron kingdom of Gyaman, in which the peasants (lineage mode of production agriculturalists) were dominated by slave-holding Abron aristocrats. Even though the peasants were only liable for the most token of agricultural tributes, they were obliged to be available constantly for the warfare that maintained the supply of slaves.<sup>40</sup> Thus the low level of tribute was explained on social criteria, the dominance of the slave mode of production, whose reproduction was the primary determinant of the social formation. On the basis of their account of Portuguese slave-trading on the west coast of Africa, Georges Dupré and Pierre Philippe Rey contended that Terray's model was too static. To account for historical change, it was necessary to bring out the tensions and contradictions between the articulated modes. According to Rey and Dupré, the slave trade had hooked into a chain of indigenous exchanges (slaves for prestige goods) that had obtained in the political sphere of indigenous society and predated the Portuguese. Since the political sphere had been the dominant sphere, and since the Portuguese trade had intensified rather than conflicted with it, indigenous society had remained intact. Upon the abolition of the European slave trade, however, the capitalist

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commitment to structural causality rendered such formulations problematic. As elsewhere in this review, I am presenting an overview of the salient characteristics of the general approach.

<sup>38</sup> I use the term "societies" rather than "modes of production" to avoid controversy as to whether "hunter-gatherer," "lineage," "hoe," etc., constitute valid criteria for categorizing modes of production, a controversy that I cannot enter into here.

<sup>39</sup> See (in order of debate) Claude Meillassoux, "'The Economy' in Agricultural Self-Sustaining Societies: A Preliminary Analysis," and "The Social Organization of the Peasantry: The Economic Basis of Kinship," in David Seddons, ed., *Relations of Production: Marxist Approaches to Economic Anthropology* (Totowa, N.J., 1978), 127–69; Emmanuel Terray, "Classes and Class Consciousness in the Abron Kingdom of Gyaman," in Maurice Bloch, ed., *Marxist Analyses and Social Anthropology* (London, 1975), 85–135; Pierre Philippe Rey, *Colonialisme, néo-colonialisme et transition au capitalisme: Exemple de la Comilog du Congo-Brazzaville* (Paris, 1971); Georges Dupré and Pierre Philippe Rey, "Reflections on the Pertinence of a Theory of the History of Exchange," in Harold Wolpe, ed., *The Articulation of Modes of Production* (London, 1980), 128–60; Claude Meillassoux, *Maidens, Meal, and Money: Capitalism and the Domestic Community* (Cambridge, 1981). See also the other articles in Seddons' and Wolpe's collections. For secondary accounts, see Adrian Foster-Carter, "The Modes of Production Controversy," *New Left Review* 107 (January–February 1978): 47–78; Bridget O'Laughlin, "Marxist Approaches in Anthropology," in *Annual Review of Anthropology* 4 (1975): 341–70; Janet Siskind, "Kinship and Mode of Production," *American Anthropologist* 80 (1978): 860–72.

<sup>40</sup> Slaves were emancipated into the peasantry in the second generation to prevent them from developing a potentially disruptive class solidarity on the basis of the shared language and culture that their parents, captured from a variety of different groups, had lacked.

mode of production had sought new sources of profit, penetrating the subsistence realm of indigenous society (that is, articulating to the economic rather than to the political sphere), which it rapidly dominated and subverted, engendering socio-economic chaos and encouraging colonial occupation.<sup>41</sup>

For all its dated mechanicism, the social-formation model brought a welcome leaven of specificity to historical-materialist accounts of complex social structures. In contrast to dependency theory, it paid due heed to local determinations. It also conclusively invalidated the illusory but pervasive anthropological (functionalist/relativist) image of the contained and homogeneous culture, replacing it with a fissured, unstable composite that did justice to the fact that few if any human societies have developed in isolation. And yet, in suggesting that contingent features of a social formation could be inferred automatically once the dominant mode of production had been identified, the model failed to break with the predictive scientism that has so dogged the career of Marxism. By the same token, it failed to pay due attention to ideological and discursive factors, which were bypassed in the mechanical play of final determinations.<sup>42</sup> These deficiencies were not, however, essential to the model, whose deep structural strengths remain recuperable in an era preoccupied with rhetorical form. In particular, the concept of articulation enables us to distinguish between different modes of colonialism (settler, franchise, internal) and, accordingly, to gain insight into the different types of discursive regime that they respectively subtend.<sup>43</sup>

IF THE SOCIAL-FORMATION MODEL paid due heed to local determinations, Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher's distinctively British theory of "excentric" development, framed in the context of decolonization and the Nasserite revolution in Egypt, tended to make local determinations a law unto themselves. Although Robinson and Gallagher acknowledged that European imperialism had been partly motivated by economic and political factors internal to Europe, in their writings these factors were overwhelmed by the efficacy of local pressures that emanated from outside Europe and threatened imperial interests.<sup>44</sup> In this, their rejection of

<sup>41</sup> This aspect of Rey and Dupré's analysis shares ground with Peter J. Cain and Anthony G. Hopkins, "The Political Economy of British Expansion Overseas, 1750–1914," *Economic History Review* 33 (1980): 483–85. A number of other historians, usually reacting to Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher's theory (see below), have pointed to the consequences for West African society of the abolition of the slave trade, which led to the development of more "legitimate" commerce between Africans and Europeans—in particular, the vegetable oil trade—which favored groups of a lower status than the aristocratic ruling class that had benefited from trading slaves to Europeans. The rapid decline in vegetable oil prices after the 1860s is argued to have contributed to the circumstances that encouraged the scramble for Africa. See Perry Anderson, "The Figures of Descent," *New Left Review* 161 (January–February 1987): 42–44; Robin Law, "The Historiography of the Commercial Transaction in Nineteenth Century West Africa," in Toyin Falola, ed., *African Historiography: Essays in Honour of Jacob Ade Ajayi* (London, 1993), 91–115; but compare R. A. Austen, "The Abolition of the Overseas Slave Trade: A Distorted Theme in West African History," *Journal of the Historical Society of Nigeria* 5, no. 2 (1970): 16–28.

<sup>42</sup> In Althusser's original formulation, the ideological realm ("instance") had been co-determinate with the political and the economic. See Louis Althusser, *For Marx*, Ben Brewster, trans. (New York, 1970); and Althusser and Etienne Balibar, *Reading "Capital,"* Brewster, trans. (London, 1970).

<sup>43</sup> This point will be developed below.

<sup>44</sup> "Historically European imperialism might be defined as a political reflex action between one

the Marxist tradition was explicit, as was their privileging of political and diplomatic considerations over economic ones.<sup>45</sup> Their case was built on a rereading<sup>46</sup> of the scramble for (or partition of) Africa, a historical phenomenon that, in keeping with Marxist premises, had been represented as a contest between the major European powers for formal control of markets that capitalism had already, at least initially, opened up. Robinson and Gallagher reversed this schedule, placing colonial annexations before the development of markets: "It was not the businessmen or missionaries or empire-builders who launched the partition of Africa, but rather a set of diplomats who thought of that continent merely as a function of their concerns elsewhere . . . Only at the end of the process did the businessmen arrive . . . Imperialism was not the cause of the partition. It was the result."<sup>47</sup>

According to Robinson and Gallagher, throughout the nineteenth century, British imperial policy was consistently minimalist ("informal control if possible, formal rule if necessary"<sup>48</sup>), a strategy that relied crucially on the offices of native or (better still) white-settler collaborators.<sup>49</sup> The sudden rush of formal annexations in Africa during the 1880s and 1890s did not result from a change to this general policy but from a fear that nationalist successes in Egypt and South Africa might jeopardize wider imperial interests, specifically trade routes to India (the Suez Canal) and to Australasia (the Cape). Fears for the security of the Suez Canal led to the British occupation of Egypt, which, in turn, prompted France to annex large portions of West Africa so as to prevent the British from achieving cross-continental domination. Franco-British rivalry spiraled across the African interior, a situation that Bismarck was not slow to exploit. In this fracas, the strategic priorities that the contending parties displayed were not consistent with economic motivations. For instance, in order to keep the French out of Egypt, Lord Salisbury sacrificed West Africa, whose commercial potential was considerable, in favor of securing the Nile Valley, whose light soil was largely unproductive. Robinson and Gallagher concluded that the European powers had scrambled *in* rather than *for* Africa, their primary concern being to deny each other rather than aggrandize

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non-European, and two European components. From Europe stemmed the economic drive to integrate newly colonised regions and ancient agrarian empires into the industrial economy, as markets and investments. From Europe also sprang the strategic imperative to secure them against rivals in world power politics. As the stock-in-trade of the old masters, these may be taken for granted, although of course they were indispensable to the process. Their role however has been exaggerated. They did not in themselves necessitate empire . . . There was nothing intrinsically imperialistic about foreign investment or great power rivalry." Ronald Robinson, "Non-European Foundations of European Imperialism: Sketch for a Theory of Collaboration" (1972), rpt. in Wm. Roger Louis, ed., *Imperialism—The Robinson and Gallagher Controversy* (New York, 1976), 128–51, quote p. 130.

<sup>45</sup> D. K. Fieldhouse significantly qualified Robinson and Gallagher's understatement of economic factors. See *The Theory of Capitalist Imperialism* (New York, 1967); and *Economics and Empire, 1830–1914* (London, 1973).

<sup>46</sup> The archives had only recently become available under the fifty-year rule.

<sup>47</sup> Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, "The Partition of Africa" (1962), rpt. in Louis, *Imperialism*, quote p. 117.

<sup>48</sup> Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, "The Imperialism of Free Trade," *Economic History Review* 6 (1953): 13. This much-cited article launched their theory.

<sup>49</sup> In Robinson's memorable phrase, the white settler was the "ideal prefabricated collaborator" ("Non-European Foundations," 134).

themselves. Once they had acquired their African possessions, however, they were obliged to make them pay their way. Hence trade followed the flag.<sup>50</sup>

Robinson and Gallagher's scheme, which they presented in some detail, attracted criticism on empirical and even documentary grounds.<sup>51</sup> For contemporary purposes, however, it is more revealing to consider its implications for subsequent scholarly alignments than to rehearse what are now ageing controversies. For instance, its emphasis on the significance of local collaborators was consistent not only with Baran's, Frank's, and Fanon's analyses of the role of *comprador* elites but also with Benedict Anderson's and Partha Chatterjee's more recent critiques of the derivativeness of colonial-nationalist discourse.<sup>52</sup> In this light, it is notable that Robinson and Gallagher's reversal of Eurocentrism, congenial as it now seems to postcolonialist sensibilities, should have been welcomed in conservative circles as providing a refutation of Marxism. Whether or not the theory did offer a challenge to Marxism is, however, another question. As Eric Stokes pointed out nearly quarter of a century ago, Lenin's definition of imperialism as dating from the point at which the capitalist powers had finally divided the world up between them is hardly affected by Robinson and Gallagher's thesis.<sup>53</sup> Indeed, when it is recalled that they were not denying either intra-European or economic factors but (ostensibly at least) were merely arguing about relative emphases, it is surprising how little they were actually saying. After all, no self-respecting Marxist dialectician would deny the relative determinacy of a wide range of factors.<sup>54</sup>

<sup>50</sup> See, in particular, Ronald Robinson and John Gallagher, *Africa and the Victorians: The Official Mind of Imperialism* (with A. Denny) (London, 1961); and "Partition of Africa." Numerous accounts of their theory have been published. The following are clear and reliable: A. E. Atmore, "The Extra-European Foundations of British Imperialism: Towards a Reassessment," in Eldridge, *British Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century*, 106–25; D. K. Fieldhouse, "Imperialism: An Historiographical Revision," *Economic History Review* 14 (1961): 187–209; Eric Stokes, "Imperialism and the Scramble for Africa: The New View" (1963), rpt. in Louis, *Imperialism*, 173–95. See also the articles in Andrew N. Porter and R. F. Holland, eds., *Theory and Practice in the History of European Expansion Overseas: Essays in Honour of Ronald Robinson* (London, 1988).

<sup>51</sup> For instance, C. W. Newbury and A. S. Kanya-Forstner contended that French policy in Africa had already shifted before British activities in Egypt could have occasioned the crisis that Robinson and Gallagher attributed to them. See "French Policy and the Origins of the Scramble for West Africa," *Journal of African History* 10 (1969): 253–76. See also A. Adu Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism* (Baltimore, Md., 1987), esp. 28–57. Cain and Hopkins stressed how the post-1870 disparity between Britain's relative industrial weakness and the continuing financial strength of the City of London prompted a drive for new colonial markets. See Peter J. Cain and Anthony G. Hopkins, "Gentlemanly Capitalism and British Expansion Overseas, II: New Imperialism, 1850–1945," *Economic History Review* 40 (1987): 1–26; and *British Imperialism*, 181–99. Newbury, "Victorians, Republicans, and the Partition of West Africa," *Journal of African History* 3 (1962): 493–501, also asserted that French ministerial papers for the period made no connection between West Africa and Egypt. For a general survey, see John M. MacKenzie, *The Partition of Africa 1880–1900 and European Imperialism in the Nineteenth Century* (New York, 1983).

<sup>52</sup> Though their analyses are subtler, in that, by stressing the European provenance of the models of nationhood made available to colonial nationalists, they avoided problematizing the bona fides of committed nationalists. Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origins and Spread of Nationalism* (London, 1983); Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (London, 1986); and *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton, N.J., 1993).

<sup>53</sup> Stokes, "Imperialism and the Scramble for Africa," 189.

<sup>54</sup> Various scholars have criticized Robinson and Gallagher on the grounds that their distinction between the political and the economic does not withstand scrutiny. See, for instance, Geoffrey Barraclough, *An Introduction to Contemporary History* (1964; Middlesex, 1967), 58; Ronald Hyam, *Britain's Imperial Century 1815–1914* (London, 1976), 373; Robin Law, "Imperialism and Partition,"

In view of its bearing on contemporary debates over postcolonialism, Robinson and Gallagher's emphasis on extra-European factors invites consideration. It should be noted that the enthusiasm with which some proclaimed their theory to be "Afrocentric" was misplaced.<sup>55</sup> The imperial interests that motivated British takeovers in Egypt and southern Africa were not internal to Africa, which merely functioned as an arena for the European powers to fight out wider imperial concerns. Moreover, Robinson and Gallagher's "collaborator" category grouped white settlers together with tribal federations, Muslim *mujahideen*, and other indigenous entities, a conflation achieved by treating those who resided in a sphere of colonial influence as undifferentiatedly belonging there.<sup>56</sup> In many cases, white settlers were not so much collaborators as delegates. In other words, Robinson and Gallagher's departure from Europe was merely geographical. In social, economic, and political terms, their purview remained resolutely Eurocentric, a quality reflected in their fondness for colonial boys'-club rhetoric.<sup>57</sup>

IN POSITING FOUNDATIONS that, though external to Europe, were not internal to anywhere in particular but were, rather, empire-wide and systemic, Robinson and Gallagher's theory begged the basic question of globalization: how are we to conceive of a system that lacks exteriority? This question grows ever more insistent in a decentered era that we might term virtual imperialism, when radically de-territorialized forms of capital flash around the globe at fiber-optic speed, seeking out low wages, tax and tariff advantages, currency disparities, and innumerable other opportunities that presuppose the very nation-state boundaries that their exploitation transcends. Although it would be unrealistic to deny the profound impact of cyberspace and satellite communications, we should resist the techno-

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*Journal of African History* 24 (1983): 101-04; John Lonsdale, "The European Scramble and Conquest in African History," in Roland Oliver and G. N. Sanderson, eds., *The Cambridge History of Africa 1860-1905*, vol. 6 (Cambridge, 1985), 694. A number of historians both Western and African have argued that the scramble for Africa resulted from an interplay between African and European factors. See Cain and Hopkins, "Gentlemanly Capitalism"; Ian Phimister, "Africa Partitioned," *Review* (Fernand Braudel Center) 18 (1995): 355-81; G. N. Uzoigwe, "European Partition and the Conquest of Africa," in A. Adu Boahen, ed., *Africa under Colonial Domination 1880-1935*, UNESCO General History of Africa, vol. 7 (London, 1985), 19-44.

<sup>55</sup> For example, A. S. Kanya-Forstner judged their article "The Partition of Africa" to be "the most Afrocentric interpretation ever advanced." See "A Final Comment on the Value of Robinson and Gallagher," in Louis, *Imperialism*, 231. In Phimister's less generous assessment, Gallagher and Robinson "succeeded in combining anti-Marxist prejudice with the appearance of Africanist [*sic*] agency"; Phimister, "Africa Partitioned," 356. For a review of some subaltern theories of imperialism up to 1972 (but not Roy's), see Thomas Hodgkin, "Some African and Third World Theories of Imperialism," in Roger Owen and Bob Sutcliffe, eds., *Studies in the Theory of Imperialism* (London, 1972), 93-116.

<sup>56</sup> In contrast to "indigenes oscillating between collaboration and conflict," John Benyon has emphasized the significance of the proconsular "man on the spot." Benyon, "Overlords of Empire? British 'Proconsular Imperialism' in Comparative Perspective," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 19 (1991): 164-202.

<sup>57</sup> Consider one example from scores: "the starveling colony of the Congo, the theocracies around Tchad, the petty Muslim oligarchies of Ubanghi-Shari, the wanderers in the marshes of the Bahr al-Ghazal, the Coptic state of Ethiopia, the stone-age men living around the sand-bank at Fashoda"; Robinson and Gallagher, "Partition of Africa," 107. A reading of their individual publications would suggest that this regrettable tendency was principally encouraged by Robinson.

logical determinism that credits them with effecting a wholesale historical rupture. Throughout the twentieth century, imperialism has been theorized as a global category cross-cut by the discontinuously intersecting dimensions of class, nation, race, and, more recently, gender. Moreover, Lenin's dating of imperialism from the end of the nineteenth century has by no means stood unchallenged, with writers such as Eric Wolf stressing the global significance of the late eighteenth century (the Industrial Revolution), ones such as Immanuel Wallerstein and Samir Amin stressing the late fifteenth century (Columbus) and the renovated Frank plumping (at the last count) for 2,500 B.C.<sup>58</sup> The choice of late fifteenth, late eighteenth, or late nineteenth century correlates, of course, with the emergence of mercantile, industrial, and monopoly/finance forms of capital respectively. Whichever one prefers, the point is that globality is not merely a postmodern condition.

A world system dating from the end of the fifteenth century had been prefigured in dependency theory, in which capitalism had rapidly and contagiously converted undevelopment into underdevelopment—for instance, in the Latin American case, had converted Amerindian economies into dependencies whose exploitation was subsequently to prove indispensable to the development of, first, Iberian (mercantile), then British (industrial), and, most recently, U.S. (monopoly/finance) capitalism. This scheme involved spatial and historical considerations that conflicted with the abstract concept of mode of production as theorized in the Marxist tradition. In particular, they were inconsistent with the definition of capitalism as being constituted on the basis of wage (that is, commodified) labor. The issue is similar to that noted in relation to Althusser: actual social formations do not manifest as pure theoretical types. In the case of world-systems theory, though, heterogeneity was (is) not conceived as obtaining *between* different modes of production as they were articulated together. Rather, it is conceived as obtaining *within* a single capitalist world-system. To cite two instances favored by Wallerstein, capitalism in urban northwestern Europe required as a concomitant condition of its development non-wage systems in eastern European wheat production (the so-called “second serfdom”) and in American plantations.<sup>59</sup> Empirically, such considerations had been familiar to Marx.<sup>60</sup> As an inherent (as opposed to incidental) feature of capitalist expansion, however, non-wage labor lacked the flexible capacity for surplus production that “free” alienated labor alone enabled.<sup>61</sup> On the basis of this

<sup>58</sup> Samir Amin, *Accumulation on a World Scale: A Critique of the Theory of Underdevelopment*, Brian Pearce, trans. (New York, 1974); and *Imperialism and Unequal Development* (New York, 1977); Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System* (New York, 1974–89). For André Gunder Frank, see “A Theoretical Introduction to 5,000 Years of World System History,” *Review* (Fernand Braudel Center) 13 (1990): 155–248. On page 185, Frank states that “in his self-designated Marxist book, *Europe and the People Without History*, Eric Wolf (1982) takes a giant theoretical step backward by dating the beginning of the world capitalist system in 1800.” For an account that breaks the barrier of the fifteenth century without going as far back as Frank would have us go, see Janet L. Abu-Lughod, *Before European Hegemony: The World System A.D. 1250–1350* (New York, 1989).

<sup>59</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World-System*, Vol. 1: *Capitalist Agriculture and the Origins of the European World-Economy in the Sixteenth Century* (New York, 1974), 301–05; Vol. 2: *Mercantilism and the Consolidation of the European World-Economy, 1600–1750* (New York, 1980), 137–38, 174–75.

<sup>60</sup> “The veiled slavery of the wage-workers in Europe needed, for its pedestal, slavery pure and simple in the new world,” Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1 (Moscow, 1954), 711.

<sup>61</sup> To simplify a complex set of considerations, the proportion of the working day that labor takes up in ensuring its own reproduction is reducible by improvements to the efficiency of the means of production, which improvements require the reinvestment of accumulated surplus, one of the

and related questions, world-systems theory was driven by the force of its own logic to depart from orthodox Marxism to the extent of arguing that world capitalism had been shaped by the development of systems of distribution and accumulation as much as by the system of production.<sup>62</sup>

Defining capitalism as “the full development and economic predominance of market trade” and a world economy as “a single division of labor but multiple polities and cultures,” Wallerstein held that the two were “obverse sides of the same coin,” different ways of representing the same indivisible phenomenon, the capitalist world-economy.<sup>63</sup> On this basis, the unit of analysis ultimately becomes the world itself,<sup>64</sup> a level at which there is no separating internal from external factors, as in Robinson and Gallagher, since all factors are internal to the system. For Wallerstein, nation-states, which are crucial to the unequal exchanges whereby center (“core”), periphery, and “semi-periphery” relations are constituted, are cut across by the axial division of labor. Although the regional distribution of wealth and power shifts over time, the *dependencia*-style linkage between development at the core and underdevelopment in the periphery (uneven development) remains integral to the system and persists through alternating periods of growth and contraction.<sup>65</sup> The problem with taking the world as the unit of analysis is, of course, the dispersal of agency that almost inevitably follows. Lacking a stable location, “the core” is hard to track down and threatens to degenerate into a reified abstraction. This tendency is exaggerated in globalization theory, where the global system becomes so decentered that it can figure as a kind of disenchanting Gaia that looks for all the world like a hidden hand.<sup>66</sup>

Defined as a single division of labor with multiple polities, a world system need not, however, cover the whole globe. Nor need it be capitalist. Developing this aspect of the theory, Samir Amin has contended that the notion of a universal

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hallmarks of capitalist development. See Marx’s discussion of relative surplus value and the intensification of labor, *Capital*, 1: 380–92.

<sup>62</sup> Frank goes further: “I vote for replacing the focus on mode of production with a focus on the modes of accumulation in the world system”; “Theoretical Introduction to 5,000 Years,” 177.

<sup>63</sup> Immanuel Wallerstein, “The Rise and Future Demise of the World Capitalist System: Concepts for Comparative Analysis” (1974), rpt. in Wallerstein, *The Capitalist World-Economy* (New York, 1979), 6.

<sup>64</sup> In this regard, histories of the world (e.g., Arnold Toynbee, Charles Tilly) should be distinguished from world-histories (e.g., Fernand Braudel, Christopher Chase-Dunn). To exemplify the latter, it seems fittingly ecumenical to cite the sentence with which the anthropologist Eric Wolf introduced his magisterial *Europe and the People without History* (Berkeley, Calif., 1982), 3: “The central assertion of this book is that the world of humankind constitutes a manifold, a totality of interconnected processes, and inquiries that disassemble this totality into bits and then fail to reassemble it falsify reality.”

<sup>65</sup> Extending Wallerstein, Christopher Chase-Dunn has argued that military/political competition between states is as fundamental to the capitalist world-system as economic competition over markets. See Chase-Dunn, *Global Formation: Structures of the World-Economy* (Oxford, 1989). I cannot do justice here to the many modifications and elaborations that Wallerstein and others have added to the basic theory. For a good recent account of the current state of play in world-systems theory (one that evinces a promising sensitivity to the approach’s shortcomings insofar as cultural issues are concerned), see W. G. Martin, “The World-Systems Perspective in Perspective: Assessing the Attempt to Move Beyond Nineteenth-Century Eurocentric-Conceptions,” *Review* (Fernand Braudel Center) 17 (1994): 145–85. See also Peter Worsley, “Models of the Modern World System,” *Theory, Culture and Society* 7 (1990): 83–96.

<sup>66</sup> For Gaia, see Brett Fairbairn, “History from the Ecological Perspective,” *AHR* 99 (October 1994): 1205.

history originating in European capitalism's unprecedented unification of the globe is misleading and Eurocentric.<sup>67</sup> Prior to the sixteenth century, groups of societies were linked by trade into regional and perhaps world systems. Of a number of proto-capitalist regional systems (Indian, Arab-Islamic or Mediterranean, Chinese, barbarian-Christian), all operating on a tributary basis (power was the source of wealth), barbarian Christendom was distinguished by its relative lack of administrative centralization.<sup>68</sup> In combination with the colonization of the Americas, this produced wage-labor based European capitalism (wealth became the source of power), which, though a qualitatively novel phenomenon, established itself on proto-capitalist foundations that were not unique to Europe. Once European capitalism had emerged, however, it stifled further development on the part of the other proto-capitalist systems.

Amin's analysis combines Marxist rigor in relation to wage labor with the postcolonial sensibility of an Egyptian scholar based in Paris. Compared to the dependency/world-systems tradition as a whole, his theory is refreshingly attuned to cultural and ideological questions, situating the discursive politics of the Western academy (as in the critique of Eurocentrism) in the context of the historical development of world systems. Observing that the philosophico-religious movements that culminated Antiquity and inaugurated universal history (Hellenism, Oriental Christianity, Islam, Zoroastrianism, Confucianism, Buddhism) emerged in concert with the consolidation of the great tributary societies, Amin locates the break between Antiquity and the Middle Ages, not, as the Eurocentric scheme of things would have it, at the end of the Roman Empire in the West but from the time of Alexander's unification of the Hellenic East. ("The choice of the conventional division at the end of the Roman Empire betrays a deeply rooted preconception that the Christian era marks a qualitative decisive break in world history, when in fact it does not."<sup>69</sup>)

AT FIRST SIGHT, AMIN'S MARXIST BLENDING of cultural and material factors might seem to distinguish his approach from critiques of Eurocentrism that have been couched in the idiom of discourse analysis. Before dismissing poststructuralism as an idealist perspective that overlooks the material consequences of the international division of labor, however, we should recall that Marx himself was unfailingly attentive to questions of ideology and consciousness. Analogously, the fact that Michel Foucault appropriated the term "discourse" from linguistics should not lead us to forget that, in his hands, the concept encompassed institutional configurations

<sup>67</sup> A comparable polemic by a geographer recently attracted a withering *AHR* review. See J. M. Blant, *The Colonizer's Model of the World: Geographical Diffusionism and Eurocentric History* (New York, 1993), compare Dane Kennedy in *AHR* 101 (February 1996): 148–49.

<sup>68</sup> Samir Amin, *Class and Nation, Historically and in the Current Crisis*, Susan Kaplow, trans. (New York, 1980).

<sup>69</sup> Samir Amin, *Eurocentrism*, Russell Moore, trans. (New York, 1989), 58. It is instructive to compare Amin with Marshall Hodgson: "In sum, the whole Afro-Eurasian Oikumene was the stage on which was played all civilized history, including that of Islamicate civilization, and this stage was set largely by the contrasts and interrelations among the great regional cultural complexes"; Hodgson, *The Venture of Islam: Conscience and History in a World Civilization*, Vol. 1: *The Classical Age of Islam* (Chicago, 1977), 114.

as solid as the prison or the asylum. (As practices go, few can be more material than architecture.) Despite this, postcolonial writing has too often excluded historical, economic, and material factors. In terms of the second of our guiding oppositions, it is fair to state that, with the advent of poststructuralist methods, the dominant focus in scholarly discussions of imperialism shifted dramatically from material to representational phenomena. While it is easy enough to lament this development, as many have,<sup>70</sup> it should be noted that the introduction of a Saussurian concern with the operation of difference within fields of signification has produced an illuminating discussion of race, an issue that, bizarre as it may seem, had largely been left uninterrogated in traditional accounts of imperialism.<sup>71</sup> Thus it is worth considering the historical conditions under which issues of race and representation should have come to acquire a hold on scholarly debates.

One of the major determinants of contemporary global discourse is the significant (albeit limited) extent to which imperialism has been de-territorialized. This is, of course, an extremely complex and still emergent phenomenon. All the same, it is increasingly apparent that the escalating volume, speed, and intensity with which capital, information, commodities, technologies, and people move about the globe constitutes a situation that confounds stable categories of class and location, necessitating more labile, situational, and opportunistic modes of analysis than the repertoire of oppositional modernism makes available.<sup>72</sup> As imperialism came

<sup>70</sup> The charge that postcolonial criticism understates the materiality of imperialism and rarefies or aestheticizes oppression is a fairly common one. It is carefully put in Benita Parry, "Problems in Current Theories of Colonial Discourse," *Oxford Literary Review* 9 (1987): 27–58. See also Anne McClintock, "The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term 'Post-Colonialism,'" *Social Text* 31–32 (1992): 84–98, revised as the conclusion to her *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Contest* (New York, 1995); Elazar Barkan, "Post-Anti-Colonial Histories: Representing the Other in Imperial Britain," *Journal of British Studies* 33 (1994): 180–202; Ella Shohat, "Notes on the 'Post-Colonial,'" *Social Text* 31–32 (1992): 99–113; Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (London, 1992); and "The Politics of Literary Postcoloniality," *Race and Class* 36 (1994): 1–20. Anyone who has ever wished that he or she was Aijaz Ahmad might be glad not to be after reading Parry's measured and deadly response to Ahmad's *In Theory*, a sting that is all the crueler for Parry's own well-known reservations concerning Ahmad's targets. See Benita Parry's review in *History Workshop Journal* 36 (1993): 232–42.

<sup>71</sup> Phillip Darby and Christopher Fyfe have both made this point. See Darby, *Three Faces of Imperialism: British and American Approaches to Africa and Asia* (New Haven, Conn., 1987), 84–87; and Fyfe, "Race, Empire and the Historians," *Race and Class* 33, no. 4 (1992): 15–30.

<sup>72</sup> Such modes of analysis should accommodate—and, perhaps, be informed by—identitarian and social-movement politics, as distinct from, but not necessarily opposed to, traditional "organized" politics. I agree with Prasenjit Duara, though, that social movements need to move beyond the "politics of the wronged" to develop understandings of the historical conditions of their own emergence. See Duara, "The Displacement of Tension to the Tension of Displacement," *Radical History Review* 57 (1993): 60–64. A collection that offers a promising start in this direction is Arturo Escobar and Sonia E. Alvarez, eds., *The Making of Social Movements in Latin America: Identity, Strategy, and Democracy* (Boulder, Colo., 1992). See also Escobar, "Imagining a Post-Development Era? Critical Thought, Development and Social Movements," *Social Text* 31–32 (1992): 20–56; and "Reflections on 'Development': Grassroots Approaches and Alternative Politics in the Third World," *Futures* 24, no. 5 (1992): 411–36; compare Samir Amin, Giovanni Arrighi, André Gunder Frank, and Immanuel Wallerstein, eds., *Transforming the Revolution: Social Movements and the World-System* (New York, 1990). A comprehensive and accessible introduction to globalization theory is Frederick Buell's *National Culture and the New Global System* (Baltimore, Md., 1994). This endorsement should not be taken to extend to Buell's comments (252–54) on my "On Being Woken Up: The Dreamtime in Anthropology and in Australian Settler Culture," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 33 (1991): 197–224, though this is not the place to argue the point, but see Patrick Wolfe, "Should the Subaltern Dream? 'Australian Aborigines' and the Problem of Ethnographic Ventriloquism," in S. Humphreys, ed., *Cultures of Scholarship* (Ann Arbor, Mich., forthcoming 1997), p. 90, n. 50. An entertaining overview that

home to roost in the form of labor, refugee, and other migrations, the metropolis followed in the demographic footsteps of the periphery, with major Western cities taking on the creolized, multi-ethnic look of a nineteenth-century colonial center.<sup>73</sup> Whereas, in traditional theories of imperialism, race had been redundant as an index of domination when that domination was most obviously constituted by spatial separation, in the post-imperial city the reverse has come to apply. Downtown, home addresses are not the main issue—people change neighborhoods more easily than they change races.

Space is not the only material casualty. Marxism's notorious color blindness is symptomatic of economic thinking as a whole, which simply lacks the categories to specify racial, ethnic, or cultural differences. When it comes to difference, the sovereign paradigm is phonology, which is exclusively given over to the refinement of discriminations. In poststructuralist hands, then, domination became a kind of language, with race figuring as an aestheticized construct that belied the physicality of its conventional signs. As we shall see, though, this did not need to be the case and has not always been the case. In turning to the controversial topic of postcolonialism, therefore, my argument is very simple. As noted at the outset, the distinction between the discursive and the instrumental is a false one; representations dialectically inform the (mis)understandings that permeate practical activity. Postcolonial theory offers suggestive ways for historians to open up some of the discursive and ideological dimensions of the complex field of imperialism, but this should not be allowed to suppress other dimensions.<sup>74</sup> Our goal should be a unified historical field.

The linkage of Marx and Foucault in this context is not accidental. Though appealing to kindred political instincts, their epistemologies are axiomatically incompatible. A consequence has been an uneasy division of radical loyalties in the Western academy. Within Europe, the circumstances of the late 1960s (in particular, the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia and the events of May 1968) undid the revolutionary credentials of a dour master-narrative of labor and class. In the Third World, on the other hand, Marxism's role in decolonization—and, above all, the

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succinctly communicates a good feel for the discourse as a whole is Simon During, "Post-Colonialism," in K. K. Ruthven, ed., *Beyond the Disciplines* (Canberra, 1992), 88–100. Seminal articles in globalization theory include Roland Robertson, "Mapping the Global Condition: Globalization as the Central Concept," *Theory, Culture and Society* 7 (1990): 15–30; and Arjun Appadurai, "Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy," *Public Culture* 2 (1990): 1–24. A lively critique of traditional Marxism's incapacity to escape its own entrapment within the structuring logic of global capitalism is Arif Dirlik, *After the Revolution: Waking to Global Capitalism* (Hanover, N.H., 1994).

<sup>73</sup> "[T]he culture, society and space of early twentieth century Calcutta or Singapore pre-figured the future in a much more accurate way than did that of London or New York. 'Modernity' was not born in Paris but rather in Rio"; Anthony D. King, "Introduction," King, ed., *Culture, Globalization and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity* (Binghamton, N.Y., 1991), 8.

<sup>74</sup> Thus I concur with the attitude recommended by Dane Kennedy, "Imperial History and Post-Colonial Theory," *Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 24 (1996): 345–63. I also agree with Kennedy that postcolonialism's promise need not warrant impenetrable terminology: "Let us agree that the non-Western world remains in thrall to the discursive system of the West, to the system that Said identifies as Orientalism. How do the post-colonial theorists propose to liberate these hostages? By writing in a manner that is utterly inaccessible to most of them? By writing as the acolytes of Western theorists? By writing to mainly Western audiences from mainly Western academies about mainly Western literature? By writing? [!]" (p. 350).

triumph of the Viet Cong—gave it continuing vitality in oppositional discourse. Unlike many of their Western counterparts, therefore, Third World intellectuals who embraced poststructuralism were unlikely to see this as requiring them to renounce Marxism. This was the case even though most of those involved were based in the West.<sup>75</sup> Rather than viewing the incompatibility between Marxism and poststructuralism as necessitating a choice between them, diasporan postcolonialism has derived much of its disruptive energy from a strategically provisional juggling of the two.<sup>76</sup> Edward W. Said's *Orientalism* (which, along with Fanon, enjoys ironically foundational status in postcolonialism<sup>77</sup>) is a case in point. A prefatory quotation from *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* dramatizes Marx's own complicity in Orientalism: "They cannot represent themselves; they must be represented." Yet no sooner has the introduction gotten under way than Foucault's concept of discourse is yoked to Antonio Gramsci's thoroughly Marxist concept of hegemony, as if the problem of the humanist subject did not present an

<sup>75</sup> The diasporan status of many (but by no means all—let us be fairer to Partha Chatterjee, Shahid Amin, Gyan Pandey, *et al.*) of these intellectuals has made them a soft target for critics such as Aijaz Ahmad (ex-Rutgers) and Arif Dirlik (Duke). Dirlik is wickedly effective: "'When exactly . . . does the 'post-colonial' begin?' [he quotes Shohat, and answers] . . . When Third World intellectuals have arrived in First World academe"; Dirlik, "The Postcolonial Aura: Third World Criticism in the Age of Global Capitalism," *Critical Inquiry* 20 (1994): 328–29.

<sup>76</sup> Trained in Paris, Marxist to the core, Ranajit Guha prefigured this conjuncture, to which Bhabha is a notable exception, by some two decades. The conjuncture itself has been variously criticized on epistemological grounds. See, for example, Dennis Porter, "Orientalism and Its Problems," in Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen, eds., *The Politics of Theory* (Colchester, 1983), 179–92 (in reference to Said); and Rosalind O'Hanlon and David Washbrook, "After Orientalism: Culture, Criticism, and Politics in the Third World," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34 (1992): 141–67 (in reference to Gyan Prakash). Various Western scholars have effected the same conjuncture. See, for example, Peter Hulme, *Colonial Encounters: Europe and the Native Caribbean, 1492–1797* (London, 1986), 7–8. See also Florencia E. Mallon, "The Promise and Dilemma of Subaltern Studies: Perspectives from Latin American History," *AHR* 99 (December 1994): 1515.

<sup>77</sup> From the point of view of the history of ideas, an epidemiology of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (New York, 1978) could cast light on the conditions of academic receptivity. Despite its extraordinary impact, Said's thesis was by no means unprecedented. In significant ways, it had been anticipated by, among others, Maxime Rodinson, "The Western Image and Western Studies of Islam," in Joseph Schacht, with C. E. Bosworth, ed., *The Legacy of Islam*, 2d edn. (Oxford, 1974), 9–62; Mohammed Arkoun, "L'Islam vu par le professeur G. E. V. Grunebaum," *Arabica* 11 (1964): 113–26; and Hichem Djait, *L'Europe et l'Islam* (Paris, 1974). More is involved here than the fact that Said's book was in English or that it employed French theory. Consider, for instance, the following representative passage from a critique of the "neo-orientalism of western Europe" which appeared fifteen years before *Orientalism* in a journal (*Diogenes*) that is hardly obscure or lacking international credibility (excuse the length, but it is surely striking): "According to the traditional orientalists, an essence should exist—sometimes even clearly described in metaphysical terms—which constitutes the inalienable and common basis of all the beings considered; this essence is both 'historical,' since it goes back to the dawn of history, and fundamentally a-historical, since it transfixes the being, the 'object' of study, within its inalienable and non-evolutionary specificity, instead of defining it as all other beings, states, nations, peoples and cultures—as a product, a resultant of the vection of the forces operating in the field of historical evolution. Thus one ends with a typology—based on a real specificity, but detached from history, and, consequently, conceived as being intangible, essential—which makes of the studied 'object' another being, with regard to whom the studying subject is transcendent: we will have a *homo Sinicus*, a *homo Arabicus* (and, why not, a *homo Aegypticus*, etc.), a *homo Africanus*, the man—the 'normal man' it is understood—being the European man of the historical period, that is, since Greek antiquity. One sees how much, from the eighteenth to the twentieth century, the hegemonism of possessing minorities, unveiled by Marx and Engels, and the anthropocentrism dismantled by Freud are accompanied by europeocentrism in the area of human and social sciences, and more particularly in those in direct relationship with non-European peoples"; Anouar Abdel-Malek, "Orientalism in Crisis," *Diogenes* 44 (1963): 108. Malek goes on to implicate one of Said's prime targets, Louis Massignon, who had died the previous year.

obstacle. In terms of scholarly outcomes, however, it seems safe to say that it has not presented an obstacle. Moreover, using Foucault without (say) Gramsci would have entailed an erasure of subjecthood that would have taken the colonizer out of colonialism. In this as in other respects, Said knew what he was doing.

In contrast to Marxist thought—which, with varying degrees of subtlety, posits a gap between reality and (mis)representation—Foucault's notion of discourse is constitutive (or, as he put it, "positive"). As opposed to a distortion put about by the powerful, discourse produces realities—regulating, ordering, and conditioning the possibilities of practical existence. Thus discourse is not simply ideational. Rather, it operates (though not homogeneously) through all the institutions and routines of social life. This basic distinction has crucial implications for postcolonialism.<sup>78</sup> In particular, it means that, when Said termed Orientalism a discourse, he meant much more than that the Western academy had disseminated misleading ideas about the Islamic Middle East: "Orientalism [is] a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the Orient . . . [an] enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage—and even produce—the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period."<sup>79</sup> In underwriting Orientalism, the Western academy was, in a very wide sense, *making* the Middle East, a scenario that credited certain academics with extraordinary power. This consequence flowed from Said's harnessing Foucauldian positivity to a Marxist sense of hegemonic ideology. As a result, rather than a collaborative or dialogic process, discourse became unidirectional, something that the colonizers wielded. It would be hard to imagine a more fertile flaw.

In Said's account, Orientalism has a distinctly Cartesian quality. In producing its other as an object of thought and acting upon it, colonial discourse reproduces the familiar priority of mind over matter. The final object of colonial thought, a category that emerged in concert with Europe's encompassment of the rest of the globe, was the world itself (a historical achievement that Mary Louise Pratt termed "planetary consciousness"<sup>80</sup>). This dioramic purview was exemplified in cartography, a "projection" that reduced *terra incognita* to order, banishing the monsters and converting space into place.<sup>81</sup> As Paul Carter has observed, Captain Cook did not give New Island its name because it had only recently emerged from the Pacific

<sup>78</sup> In view of the constraints of space, I shall use the term postcolonialism loosely to refer to a generic body of work that brings poststructuralism to bear on colonial questions.

<sup>79</sup> Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

<sup>80</sup> Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (New York, 1992), 134.

<sup>81</sup> For Said's "imaginative geography," see *Orientalism*, 49–73. For suggestive discussions of the colonial functions of cartography, see, for example, Terry Cook, "A Reconstruction of the World: George R. Parkin's British Empire Map of 1893," *Cartographica* 21 (1984): 53–65; J. B. Harley, "Maps, Knowledge and Power," in Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels, eds., *The Iconography of Landscape: Essays on the Symbolic Representation, Design, and Use of Past Environments* (Cambridge, 1988), 277–312; Graham Huggan, "Decolonizing the Map: Post-Colonialism, Post-Structuralism, and the Cartographic Connection," in Ian Adam and Helen Tiffin, eds., *Past the Last Post: Theorizing Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism* (New York, 1991), 125–38; Chandra Mukerji, "Visual Language in Science and the Exercise of Power: The Case of Cartography in Early Modern Europe," *Studies in Visual Communication* 10 (1984): 30–45. See also Michel Foucault, "Questions on Geography," in Colin Gordon, ed., *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings of Michel Foucault, 1922–1977* (Brighton, 1980), 63–77.

Ocean but because, as Cook noted in his journal, "it is not laid down in any chart."<sup>82</sup> In the discourse of discovery, to chart was to call into existence.

If mapping fixed the world for European statesmen, museology brought it home to the European masses. It also went beyond visuality, rendering the spectacle of empire a performative experience that democratically and pansensorily involved the whole body. One of the key features of museums (in common with imperial exhibitions, world fairs, and theme parks) is the fact that people walk through them; they are shaped and shaping experiences. Their immediacy makes them key sites of subject-construction, as evidenced in their openness to all classes and their incorporation into school pedagogies.<sup>83</sup> As various analyses have shown, the two most important discourses in which nineteenth-century museums involved their publics were those of citizenship and empire.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, the two were inseparable. Given evolutionary anthropology's all-encompassing phylogenetic hierarchy, any ethnological display was necessarily a statement about rank. For instance, commercial fairs that provided competing industrial nations with opportunities to demonstrate the superior efficiency of their products typically included anthropological displays that illustrated the world-historical development of the advanced technologies in question.<sup>85</sup> These displays conflated what we would today distinguish as archaeology and ethnography on the evolutionist premise that "their" present was "our" past—that non-European peoples differentially occupied the series of developmental niches through which European society had progressively raised itself. Thus space and time were collapsed; to travel beyond the bounds of European civilization was to travel back in time.<sup>86</sup> This global narrative was reenacted by the museum- or fair-going public when they moved between stands, pavilions, or model villages—a sensation that, at the larger fairs, was cemented by the provision of railways and other atmospheric devices designed to popularize imperial subjecthood.

In positioning the European spectator at the apex of universal history, "ethnological showbusiness" potently articulated nationalism and imperialism.<sup>87</sup> The

<sup>82</sup> Paul Carter, *The Road to Botany Bay* (London, 1987), 8.

<sup>83</sup> Tony Bennett, *The Birth of the Museum: History, Theory, Politics* (New York, 1995), 73–74; Annie E. Coombes, *Reinventing Africa: Museums, Material Culture, and Popular Imagination in Late Victorian and Edwardian England* (New Haven, Conn., 1994), 111.

<sup>84</sup> See Robert W. Rydell, *All the World's a Fair: Visions of Empire at American International Expositions 1876–1916* (Chicago, 1984). As Curtis M. Hinsley observed of the mesas and cliff-dweller sites of the American Southwest, a kind of archaeological outdoor museum, "Constructions of both the moundbuilders and the cliffdwellers suggest that the prehistory of America was inarticulately but intimately associated with the extension of national manhood: contact with the ancients' earthly ruins would serve as a medium of lineage from American fathers to sons." Hinsley, "The Promise of the Southwest," in Hinsley and David R. Wilcox, eds., *The Southwest in the American Imagination: The Writings of Sylvester Baxter, 1881–1889* (Tucson, Ariz., 1996), 185. See also Hinsley, "The World as Marketplace: Commodification of the Exotic at the World's Columbian Exposition, Chicago, 1893," in Ivan Karp and Steven D. Lavine, eds., *Exhibiting Cultures: The Poetics and Politics of Museum Display* (Washington, D.C., 1991), 344–65.

<sup>85</sup> The pattern was set by the Crystal Palace exhibition of 1851, evoked in the pen picture with which George W. Stocking, Jr., opens his definitive *Victorian Anthropology* (New York, 1987), 1–6.

<sup>86</sup> On temporality in colonial discourse, see particularly Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York, 1983).

<sup>87</sup> The phrase comes from Bernth Lindfors, "Ethnological Show Business: Footlighting the Dark Continent," in Rosemarie G. Thomson, ed., *Freakery: Cultural Spectacles of the Extraordinary Body* (New York, 1996), 207–18. Lindfors deals with the limit of ethnological showbusiness attained in the

performative dimension, which is crucial here, eludes traditional approaches in which ideology figures as a species of misinformation that leaves reality continuing in parallel. Thus many recent analyses have turned to Foucault for ways to express the fuller discursive production of imperial subjects.<sup>88</sup> This is not to say that what Tony Bennett has called the “exhibitionary complex” was semantically monolithic. Display practice is inherently polyvocal and, accordingly, contested. To cite an obvious example, a skull in a museum might speak to an ethnologist of evolutionary taxonomy and to an Aboriginal person of grave robbery.<sup>89</sup> Even within ostensibly unitary paradigms, as Annie Coombes has noted of British images of Africa, heterogeneity and discontinuity prevail.<sup>90</sup> Coombes might have mentioned Timothy Mitchell’s *Colonising Egypt*, which counterposed the European metaphysic of representation informing the “world-as-exhibition” to the differently framed cultural responses of Egyptian visitors to the Egyptian exhibit. Not only did the Egyptians confront simulacra of themselves within the exhibition; once back outside in the “real” world of nineteenth-century Paris, they found themselves immersed in

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display of native peoples for the entertainment of European audiences. His subject is the infamous treatment of Saartjie Baartman, the San woman who was exhibited in London in 1810–1811 as the “Hottentot Venus,” a topic he discusses without replicating the prurience of the gaze at which the display was directed (compare Sander Gilman, “Black Bodies, White Bodies,” in *Critical Inquiry* 12 [1985]: 204–42). Barbara Kirshenblatt-Gimblett notes how, in the “tomb with a view,” human exhibits, whether alive or dead, are subsumed into the economy of display objects: “The semiotic complexity of exhibits of people, particularly those of an ethnographic character, may be seen in reciprocities between exhibiting the dead as if they are alive and the living as if they are dead, reciprocities that hold as well for the art of the undertaker as they do for the art of the museum preparator”; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, “Objects of Ethnography,” in Karp and Lavine, *Exhibiting Cultures*, 398. On the display of human ethnological “specimens” generally, see Rydell, *All the World’s a Fair*; Phillips Verner Bradford and Harvey Blume, *Ota: The Pygmy in the Zoo* (New York, 1992); Christian F. Feest, ed., *Indians and Europe: An Interdisciplinary Collection of Essays* (Aachen, 1987); C. A. Vaughan, “Ogling Igorots: The Politics and Commerce of Exhibiting Cultural Otherness, 1898–1913,” in Thomson, *Freakery*, 219–33.

<sup>88</sup> A brilliant example is Tony Bennett’s argument that nineteenth-century museums performed a function complementary to Foucault’s carceral prisons and asylums, which only operated in cases where the museum’s (and related civic institutions’) production of a docile and self-regulating citizenry failed. In the museum, the crowd is not so much subject to a controlling view from above, à la Foucauldian panopticon, as exchanging looks between themselves, a “self-monitoring system of looks” that forms “a technology of vision which served not to atomize and disperse the crowd but to regulate it, and to do so by rendering it visible to itself, by making the crowd itself the ultimate spectacle”; Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 68. The possibilities of this approach for analyzing the construction of racial subjectivities in contexts like that of the museum, where anthropological displays incite glances across, between, and within “races,” seem to me to be considerable.

<sup>89</sup> Bennett, *Birth of the Museum*, 59. A great deal has been written on the vexed topic of cultural property. A recent comparative discussion is Moira G. Simpson, *Making Representations: Museums in the Post-Colonial Era* (New York, 1996), which, despite the title’s postmodernist resonance, is a conventional (albeit effective) work of reformist advocacy. For opposing views on the issue of the repatriation of Aboriginal skeletal remains in Australia, see Ros Langford, “Our Heritage, Your Playground,” *Australian Archaeology* 16 (1983): 1–6; and D. J. Mulvaney, “Past Regained, Future Lost: The Kow Swamp Pleistocene Burials,” *Antiquity* 65 (1991): 12–21. The issue is addressed internationally by “concerned” archaeologists in Robert Layton, ed., *Conflict in the Archaeology of Living Traditions* (London, 1989). For an evocative account of the world view of nineteenth-century amateur collectors, museums’ principal source of supply, see Tom Griffiths, *Hunters and Collectors: The Antiquarian Imagination in Australia* (Cambridge, 1996), esp. 28–54. Lynette Russell has recently made an interesting attempt to counterpose European representations of Aborigines and Aboriginal self-representations within the museum context. See her “Focusing on the Past: Visual and Textual Images of Aboriginal Australia in Museums,” in Brian L. Molyneux, *The Cultural Life of Images: Visual Representation in Archaeology* (New York, 1997), 230–48.

<sup>90</sup> Coombes, *Reinventing Africa*, 2–3.

a sea of signification (“exotic” commodity displays<sup>91</sup> in shopping arcades, etc.) that was continuous with the self-consciously staged space of the exhibition. Reciprocally, when Europeans who had been to the exhibition visited the “real” Egypt, they found a disorderly confusion that challenged them to establish a commanding vantage point for themselves, to impose European form on the unruly oriental content.<sup>92</sup>

Mitchell’s inclusion of the Egyptian visitors’ reactions emphasizes the Eurocentrism of analyses that present the colonial encounter monologically, as a narcissistic projection of the Western will to power. As noted above, domination is a relationship. Europe became what it was through its unequal exchanges with the rest of the world; the Englishman’s sweet tooth required the slave triangle.<sup>93</sup> Within the field of visibility itself, modernism’s debt to colonial museology is well known.<sup>94</sup> Fifteen years after *Orientalism*, Said moved to remedy the book’s one-sidedness by demonstrating that the development of European culture—right down to the genteel provincial reaches of Jane Austen’s *Mansfield Park*—had presupposed imperialism as a condition of its possibility.<sup>95</sup> Whether or not an effective antidote

<sup>91</sup> The question of exotification in theme parks, shopping malls, department stores, etc., is, clearly, continuous with that of museology. Walter Benjamin’s arcades project remains influential. See Susan Buck-Morss, *The Dialectics of Seeing: Walter Benjamin and the Arcades Project* (Cambridge, Mass., 1990). See also Marianna Torgovnik, *Gone Primitive: Savage Intellectuals, Modern Lives* (Chicago, 1990).

<sup>92</sup> Timothy Mitchell, *Colonising Egypt* (1988; rpt. edn., Berkeley, Calif., 1991), 1–33.

<sup>93</sup> As Benjamin put it, “There is no document of civilization that is not at the same time a document of barbarism”; Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, Harry Zohn, trans. (New York, 1968), 256.

<sup>94</sup> Primitivism and surrealism are obvious cases in point. See, in particular, James Clifford, “On Ethnographic Surrealism,” in Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988), 117–51. Raymond Rousset’s *Impressions d’Afrique* (Paris, 1910), English trans. by Lindy Foord and Rayner Heppenstall (1966; London, 1983), is a classic source in this regard. See also Hal Foster, “The ‘Primitive’ Unconscious of Modern Art, or White Skin Black Masks,” in Foster, *Recordings: Art, Spectacle, Cultural Politics* (Port Townsend, Wash., 1985), 181–207.

<sup>95</sup> Edward W. Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1994). A growing number of studies have brought out metropolitan culture’s indebtedness to colonialism. For instance, Vron Ware and Moira Ferguson have both argued that British feminist thought from Mary Wollstonecraft to John Stuart Mill borrowed language and imagery from the campaign to abolish slavery. See Ware, *Beyond the Pale: White Women, Racism, and History* (New York, 1992); Ferguson, *Colonialism and Gender Relations from Mary Wollstonecraft to Jamaica Kincaid: East Caribbean Connections* (New York, 1993). More subversively, Antoinette Burton argues that British feminism in the late nineteenth century was deeply complicit in the ideological work of empire, particularly in orientaling Indian womanhood. See Burton, *The Burdens of History: British Feminists, Indian Women, and Imperial Culture, 1865–1915* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1994). Javed Majeed, *Ungoverned Imaginings: James Mill’s “The History of British India” and Orientalism* (New York, 1992), has shown how British Orientalism around the turn of the nineteenth century was concerned with British as much as with Asiatic society, providing a means for philosophical radicalism to fashion its critique. More generally, Linda Colley has argued, in “Britishness and Otherness: An Argument,” *Journal of British Studies* 31 (1992): 309–29, that possession of the empire united British society, an argument that is more fully developed in John M. MacKenzie’s work on empire and British popular culture. See MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880–1960* (Manchester, 1984); and the introduction to his *Imperialism and Popular Culture* (Manchester, 1986), 1–16. See also Bill Schwarz’s collection, *The Expansion of England: Race, Ethnicity, and Cultural History* (New York, 1996), in particular the articles by Couze Venn, “History Lessons: Formation of Subjects, (Post)colonialism, and an Other Project,” 32–60; and Catherine Hall, “Imperial Man: Edward Eyre in Australasia and the West Indies, 1833–66,” 130–70. The anthropologists Richard Handler and Daniel A. Segal have cogently argued that European nationalism was a product of the colonial project. See R. Handler and D. A. Segal, “How European Is Nationalism?” *Social Analysis* 32 (1992): 1–15; and Handler and Segal, “Introduction: Nations, Colonies and Metropoles,” *Social Analysis* 33 (1993): 3–8 (this whole special edition is interesting). See also Shula Marks, “History, the Nation and Empire: Sniping from the Periphery,” *History Workshop Journal* 29 (1990): 111–19.

to Eurocentrism is more Eurocentrism, Said's shift reflects the development, largely in response to *Orientalism*, of a widespread concern with Europe's reciprocal dependence on those whom it subordinated. Ideologically, the production of the European bourgeois self relied significantly on the colonized (savage or barbarian) not-self in a manner congruent with the way in which the productivity of Manchester cotton mills relied on the coercion of labor in Louisiana, India, and Egypt.<sup>96</sup> In one sense, this brings us back to M. N. Roy. When stressing Europe's dependence on colonialism, however, Roy had refused any dilution of its spatio-racial specificity. Colonial and metropolitan labor regimes were not homogeneous. On the contrary, colonialism had enabled the relative cossetting of a domestic aristocracy of labor, whose quiescence reflected its status as colonialism's beneficiary. Roy's view maintained the structure but reversed the value of Hobson's liberal fear "that the arts and crafts of tyranny, acquired and exercised in our unfree Empire, should be turned against our liberties at home."<sup>97</sup> The operative difference between Roy and Hobson was, of course, their antithetical positioning in relation to the colonial divide. The clarity of this distinction has regularly been called into question. It has already been observed, for instance, that imperialism could be conceived without reference to spatial separation. Hybridity also undermines colonial boundaries, as do synthetic analyses in which race, gender, and class figure as distinct but mutually encoding (in Anne McClintock's formula, as "neither separable from nor reducible to" each other<sup>98</sup>). In more direct relationship to Hobson's concern, the colonies have been seen as a laboratory in which ideological and disciplinary regimes have been developed before being brought back home to regulate metropolitan society.<sup>99</sup> Roy, however, remains provocative. After all, fingerprinting may have been pioneered in Bengal, but Englishmen were immeasurably more likely to be cautioned of their rights first.<sup>100</sup>

QUESTIONS OF BALANCE ASIDE, the fact remains that Europe and its others were co-produced in and through their unequal interactions. Discursively, this meant that, in constructing its other as an object of thought, Europe constructed itself as subject. From the Enlightenment on, this was a curiously unstated, transparent type

<sup>96</sup> This mutuality was expressed in the title of the 1984 Essex symposium "Europe and Its Others," whose published proceedings have had a major influence on postcolonial theorizing. See Francis Barker, Peter Hulme, and Margaret Iversen, eds., *Europe and Its Others: Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature, July 1984*, 2 vols. (Colchester, 1985). See also the same editors' *Colonial Discourse/Postcolonial Theory* (New York, 1994). Ann Laura Stoler recurrently addresses this issue in her *Race and the Education of Desire: Foucault's History of Sexuality and the Colonial Order of Things* (Durham, N.C., 1995).

<sup>97</sup> J. A. Hobson, *Imperialism: A Study* (New York, 1902), 160.

<sup>98</sup> McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 361.

<sup>99</sup> Bernard S. Cohn has recently cited the development of fingerprinting in British India by the civil servant William Herschel. See Cohn, *Colonialism and Its Forms of Knowledge: The British in India* (Princeton, N.J., 1996), 11.

<sup>100</sup> To put it in Gramscian terms, the balance between civil and political hegemony (ideologically elicited consent and direct repression) shifted radically between the metropolis and the colonies. For a developed argument ("how professions of bourgeois democracy were violated in the practice of imperialism"), see Ranajit Guha, "Dominance without Hegemony and Its Historiography," *Subaltern Studies* 6 (1989): 210-309.

of subjectivity, a universal taken-for-grantedness in relation to which difference could only constitute default. In *Writing Degree Zero*, Roland Barthes provided a model for this elusive concept, associating the first cracks in bourgeois hegemony with the emergence of a concern with style—a concern which, in conceding that writing was not simply “white,” a neutral medium for the copying of reality, conceded the disruptive possibility of alternatives.<sup>101</sup> Like nature itself, white writing is just there<sup>102</sup>; its power lies in its authorlessness (hence the embarrassing egotism of some postmodernist writing). To resist this kind of power—to tackle the Mercator behind the projection—it is first of all necessary to denaturalize it, to bring out the idiosyncrasy of universal categories. Thus the concerted poststructuralist assault on Reason, Progress, the Nation, the Citizen, etc.

So far as historians are concerned, this assault would seem to have reached an end of sorts in Dipesh Chakrabarty’s disconcerting conclusion that Europe is the subject of history—that the very historical project itself, regardless of its contents or emphases, is inherently and inescapably Eurocentric.<sup>103</sup> At first sight, Chakrabarty might seem to have mistaken history for geography. After all, as should be clear by now, Europe may occupy a fixed portion of the map, but its history is ubiquitous. But this (I think) is Chakrabarty’s whole point—through inscribing its creole genealogy, we begin to undo Europe’s arrogation of universal subjectivity.<sup>104</sup> In its positive or critical aspect, therefore, his ostensibly pessimistic thesis enjoins an invigorating politics, the project of provincializing Europe. Chakrabarty’s position is informed by the Subaltern Studies collective’s longstanding aversion to the prosopopoeia that replaces active consciousness with prefabricated scripts rehearsing the teleological Mission of the class or institution that historical actors are deemed to represent.<sup>105</sup> The other side of this coin is the problematic of exteriority: what can evade European discourse, and how to recover it?<sup>106</sup> Hence the labor of recovering subalternity from between the lines of colonial

<sup>101</sup> Roland Barthes, *Writing Degree Zero*, Annette Lavers and Colin Smith, trans. (London, 1976).

<sup>102</sup> In Jacques Derrida’s influential variation on this theme, white mythology, “an invisible design covered over in the palimpsest,” deftly combines race and the metaphysics of presence: “the white man takes his own mythology, Indo-European mythology, his own *logos*, that is, the *mythos* of his idiom, for the universal form that he must still wish to call Reason”; Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, Alan Bass, trans. (Chicago, 1982), 213. For a sustained and very stimulating series of analyses of the racial politics of the disinterested subject of judgment in Kant (the “Subject without properties”), see David Lloyd, “Analogies of the Aesthetic: The Politics of Culture and the Limits of Materialist Aesthetics,” *New Formations* 10 (1990): 109–26; “Race under Representation,” *Oxford Literary Review* 13 (1991): 62–94; and (for the prehistory of the argument) “Arnold, Ferguson, Schiller: Aesthetic Culture and the Politics of Aesthetics,” *Cultural Critique* 2 (1986): 137–69. Analogously, Uday Mehta, “Liberal Strategies of Exclusion,” *Politics and Society* 18 (1990): 427–54; and Etienne Balibar, *Masses, Classes and Ideas* (London, 1994), 194–96, have pointed to the racial coding of liberal universalism. Exegetically, Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (New York, 1990), provides a good author-by-author account of the key postulates of some of the more prominent postcolonial thinkers.

<sup>103</sup> Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for ‘Indian’ Pasts?” *Representations* 37 (1992): 1–26. For a radical precedent for this perspective, see Oliver Cromwell Cox, *The Foundations of Capitalism* (New York, 1959), 19.

<sup>104</sup> The term creole genealogy is taken from Handler and Segal, “Introduction,” 4.

<sup>105</sup> “What, however, the practitioners of the gentle art of prosopography have not sufficiently emphasized in their writings on Indian history, is that the ‘human ants’ were also thinking animals”; Ranajit Guha, *A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement* (Paris, 1963), 19.

<sup>106</sup> Since well before *Orientalism*, scholars writing on India have been doing forms of discourse analysis on the modernity of tradition, generally focusing on the codifications of Hindu law that were

and nationalist discourse. Hence, too, Chatterjee's project of claiming "for us, the once-colonized, our freedom of imagination."<sup>107</sup>

The notion of exteriority is, of course, unsatisfactory here, since exteriority is not freestanding but is a determinate residue of interiority. Yet it is extremely difficult to find a better word. This difficulty itself illustrates the depth of the problem, which is one of the starting points of deconstruction. Subaltern discourse is not simply a mirroring negation of colonizing discourse. Hindu-Muslim communalism, for instance, is not some feudal survival, a transcendent essence that repetitively recruits human agents to frustrate postcolonial modernity. Rather, communalism is an integral component of modernity, concretely and specifically grounded in the complex modern consciences of those who participate in it. (The point recalls the distinction between undevelopment and underdevelopment.) To narrate the phenomenology of practical historical consciousness (in this case, of the subaltern), it is necessary to confound the essences and teleologies that colonial discourse ceaselessly disseminates; in Gyan Prakash's phrase, it is necessary to write "post-foundational" histories.<sup>108</sup>

To adopt Homi Bhabha's much-adopted terminology, the modern condition that includes but also exceeds colonialism's binomial categories can be expressed as hybridity. In Bhabha's theory, which represents a high point in the aestheticization of race, the concept of hybridity registers the (post)colonial co-production of Europe and its others, going beyond notions of colonial discourse as a unilateral projection to open up the reciprocal complexities of the colonial encounter. Hybridity confronts colonial discourse with the threat of recognition; the other is like, but only partially like, self—"almost the same but not quite/white."<sup>109</sup> With an unerring eye for contradiction, Bhabha repetitively points to the effort that colonial discourse was obliged to put into rehabilitating stereotypes that, though meant to be eternal, were constantly subject to historical change. In its anxious renovation of the racial essences that underpinned domination, colonial discourse betrayed a

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drawn up by Orientalists in consultation with Brahmin pandits around the turn of the nineteenth century. See, for instance, J. D. M. Derrett, "The Administration of Hindu Law by the British," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 4 (1961): 10-52; Lloyd I. Rudolph and Susanne Hoeber Rudolph, "Barristers and Brahmins in India: Legal Cultures and Social Change," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 8 (1965): 24-49. With the benefit of Foucault, such studies have proliferated, though the essentialized notion of a "real" tradition that was distorted by the process of codification has proved resilient. It is certainly discernible in Bernard Cohn, "The Command of Language and the Language of Command," *Subaltern Studies* 4 (1985): 276-329. See also Lata Mani, "Contentious Traditions: The Debate on SATI in Colonial India," *Cultural Critique*, no. 7 (1987): 119-56; Ashis Nandy, "Shamans, Savages and the Wilderness: On the Audibility of Dissent and the Future of Civilizations," *Alternatives* 14 (1989): 263-77; David Ludden, "Orientalist Empiricism: Transformations of Colonial Knowledge," in Carol A. Breckenridge and Peter van der Veer, eds., *Orientalism and the Postcolonial Predicament: Perspectives on South Asia* (Philadelphia, 1993), 250-78.

<sup>107</sup> Chatterjee, *Nation and Its Fragments*, 13.

<sup>108</sup> Gyan Prakash, "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography," *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 32 (1990): 383-408. Prakash has written a number of expositions of the Subaltern Studies collective's approach. See also his "Postcolonial Criticism and Indian Historiography," *Social Text* 31-32 (1992): 8-19, as well as his more recent contribution to the *AHR Forum* on subaltern studies, "Subaltern Studies as Postcolonial Criticism," *AHR* 99 (December 1994): 1475-90.

<sup>109</sup> Homi K. Bhabha, "Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse" (1984), rpt. in Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York, 1994), 89.

profound ambivalence. On the one hand, it strove to domesticate—to assimilate—the native; on the other, it was undone—deauthorized, disavowed—by the partial resemblance, the “difference between being English and being Anglicized” that was thus produced.<sup>110</sup> Sincere or not, sly or not, imitation was a profoundly threatening form of flattery. The scornful stereotype of the Indian mimicking Englishness attested to the colonizer’s fear of that which was held back in mimicry, of the recalcitrant brownness that mocked even as it mimicked. Recognizable in a brown skin, Englishness broke down.

IN ITS BASIC FORM, HYBRIDITY is, of course, a palpably material outcome of the primary subversion of the colonial divide. Wherever they have gone, male colonizers have impregnated native women.<sup>111</sup> This notwithstanding, issues of gender and sexuality (especially homosexuality) have until relatively recently been marginalized in scholarly discussions of imperialism.<sup>112</sup> Over the past decade or so, however, our understanding of the complexities of the colonial encounter has been enriched and transformed by an emergent body of work whose significance can hardly be overstated. To survey this work would require an article on its own. I shall merely indicate a few directions here.

As in so many areas, feminist scholars of imperialism have been obliged to labor the most elementary of points before being able to move on to more demanding questions. Thus they have had to remind us (or, at least, too many of us) that women were there too and that women have colonized and been colonized in different ways to men. Much of this work has been recuperative, rereading the imperial archive to disclose its female dimension.<sup>113</sup> White women in the colonies have emerged in all their variety, exploding the stereotypical opposition that James Buzard has characterized as “the Spinster Abroad and the Memsahib, the eccentric

<sup>110</sup> Bhahba, “Of Mimicry and Man,” 89–90.

<sup>111</sup> The anthropologist Ann Laura Stoler’s treatment of this and related topics is enlightening. See her “Making Empire Respectable: The Politics of Race and Sexual Morality in 20th-Century Colonial Cultures,” *American Ethnologist* 16 (1990): 634–60; “Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power: Gender, Race and Morality in Colonial Asia,” in Micaela di Leonardo, ed., *Gender at the Crossroads of Knowledge: Feminist Anthropology in a Postmodern Era* (Berkeley, Calif., 1991), 55–101; and “Sexual Affronts and Racial Frontiers: European Identities and the Cultural Politics of Exclusion in Colonial Southeast Asia,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 34 (1992): 514–51. By contrast, despite the title and suggestive cover illustration, Robert J. C. Young, *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory, Culture and Race* (New York, 1995), is disappointingly thin, consisting mainly of literary criticism and hardly touching on the material processes of colonialism. (Chapter 6, for instance, “White Power, White Desire: The Political Economy of Miscegenation,” has no economics and, if it can be called politics, only of the most genteel variety.)

<sup>112</sup> Ronald Hyam regularly broaches this topic, though not in any great depth, in *Empire and Sexuality: The British Experience* (Manchester, 1990). Richard C. Trexler, *Sex and Conquest: Gendered Violence, Political Order, and the European Conquest of the Americas* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1995), falls ironic victim to one of its own claims, since the repression of detailed reportage on homosexuality, even among the Amerindians of whom it was routinely and formulaically reported, repeatedly reduces the author to guesswork.

<sup>113</sup> This ever-growing literature is much too extensive for representative citation. Some of the many notable contributions not already mentioned include Napur Chaudhuri and Margaret Strobel, eds., *Western Women and Imperialism: Complicity and Resistance* (Bloomington, Ind., 1992); Cynthia Enloe, *Bananas, Beaches and Bases: Making Feminist Sense of International Politics* (London, 1989); Patricia Grimshaw, *Paths of Duty: American Missionary Wives in Nineteenth-Century Hawaii* (Honolulu, 1989); Margaret Strobel, *European Women and the Second Empire* (Bloomington, 1991).

traveler and the pampered Hill Station denizen."<sup>114</sup> Attempts by female scholars from the West to recover Third World women's experiences from against the grain of patriarchal discourse have, however, provoked controversy. A number of scholars, mainly from the Third World, have objected that the sharing of gender does not entitle Western women to claim a sharing of experience substantial enough to transcend the colonial divide from which they themselves have historically benefited.<sup>115</sup> Moreover, in taking up the cudgels on behalf of brown women against brown men, Western feminists have resuscitated a stock justification for colonialism. As Gayatri Spivak and, following her, Lata Mani have argued (their common example is *sati* in British India), the championing of native women's rights provided colonial authorities with a pretext for imposing their own order on native society.<sup>116</sup> Who, then, can speak for subaltern women who lack access to the academy? The very existence of an academic discourse on colonial discourse attests to the hazards of ethnographic ventriloquism.<sup>117</sup>

Gender is not, however, restricted to women. Rather, as Joan Scott so influentially stated, it is a way of encoding power relations.<sup>118</sup> Following up some hints in Said's *Orientalism*,<sup>119</sup> a number of scholars have analyzed the inherent genderedness of the colonial project. This has been most apparent when colonialism has functioned as a discourse on land, which, in settler colonies in particular, has

<sup>114</sup> James Buzard, "Victorian Women and the Implications of Empire," *Victorian Studies* 36 (1993): 443.

<sup>115</sup> See Valerie Amos and Pratibha Parmar, "Challenging Imperial Feminisms," *Feminist Review* 17 (1984): 3–19; Chandra T. Mohanti, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," *Feminist Review* 30 (1988): 61–88; Marnia Lazreg, "Feminism and Difference: The Perils of Writing as a Woman on Women in Algeria," *Feminist Studies* 14 (1988): 81–107; Laura E. Donaldson, *Decolonizing Feminisms: Race, Gender and Empire Building* (London, 1992). See also Julie Stephens, "Feminist Fictions: A Critique of the Category 'Non-Western Woman' in Feminist Writings on India," *Subaltern Studies* 6 (1989): 92–125. Buzard, "Victorian Women," deals effectively with the problems posed for some feminist accounts by the fact that gender cuts across race—white women could be vigorous colonizers.

<sup>116</sup> An early version of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's well-known paper is "Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculations on Widow-Sacrifice," *Wedge* 7–8 (1985): 120–30. Mani, "Contentious Traditions." See also Anand Young, "Whose Sati? Widow-Burning in Early Nineteenth-Century India," in Cheryl Johnson-Odim and Margaret Strobel, eds., *Expanding the Boundaries of Women's History* (Bloomington, Ind., 1992), 74–98; Ania Loomba, "Dead Women Tell No Tales: Issues of Female Subjectivity, Subaltern Agency and Tradition in Colonial and Post-Colonial Writings on Widow Immolation in India," *History Workshop Journal* 36 (1993): 209–27. For a comparable and superbly constructed analysis of the ways in which discourse on the issue of female genital mutilation in between-the-wars Kenya cut across the colonial divide, see Susan Pedersen, "National Bodies, Unspeakable Acts: The Sexual Politics of Colonial Policy-making," *Journal of Modern History* 63 (1991): 647–80.

<sup>117</sup> "The subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with 'woman' as a pious item. Representation has not withered away. The female intellectual as intellectual has a circumscribed task which she must not disown with a flourish"; Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg, eds., *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (Chicago, 1988), 308 (from which article the brown women/brown men line is also adapted). Though acknowledging the problems, others have adopted more pragmatic approaches. See, for example, two of the contributions to the *AHR Forum* on subaltern studies; Cooper, "Conflict and Connection," 1528–30; Mallon, "Promise and Dilemma," 1507. The phrase "ethnographic ventriloquism" comes from my "Should the Subaltern Dream? 'Australian Aborigines' and the Problem of Ethnographic Ventriloquism."

<sup>118</sup> Joan W. Scott, "Gender: A Useful Category of Historical Analysis," *AHR* 91 (December 1986): 1053–75, rpt. in her *Gender and the Politics of History* (New York, 1988), 28–52. A powerful forerunner to this style of analysis was the anthropologist Sherry Ortner's "Is Female to Male as Nature Is to Culture?" in Michelle Zimbalist Rosaldo and Louise Lamphere, eds., *Woman, Culture and Society* (Stanford, Calif., 1984), 67–87.

<sup>119</sup> See, for instance, Said, *Orientalism*, 6.

figured as waiting to be penetrated, opened up, made fertile, and so on (“Guiana . . .,” as Walter Raleigh remarked, “hath yet her maydenhead”).<sup>120</sup> As gender provides a model and precedent for the dominated, so, by the same logic, does it construct the dominator as male—or, in Catherine Hall’s more complete formulation, which restores race as well as gender to the account, as white, male, and middle class.<sup>121</sup>

To begin to evoke the multifaceted fullness of imperialism, then, we not only have to bring it home, wherever that may be. We also have to trace its complex discursive intersections—not just around the triptych of race, class, and gender but, as noted, around (homo)sexualities and, it seems to me, the psychology of violence. Synecdoche—a cat massacre perhaps, or a Balinese cockfight—would seem to be favored. In her remarkable study of imperialism, which encompasses all these intersections, McClintock homes in on a filthy leather wrist-strap worn defiantly by Hannah Cullwick, working-class wife, servant, and cross-dressing partner in transgressive fantasy to a prominent Victorian lawyer. Cullwick’s “slave-band,” the imperial leather of McClintock’s book title, functions as a fetish, a nodal point for the intersection of imperialist discourses: “The cross-cultural experiences marked by the fetish fuse in the slave-band: in the triangular relations among slavery as the basis of mercantile capitalism; wage labor as the basis of industrial capitalism; and domestic labor as the basis of patriarchy.”<sup>122</sup>

A DIMENSION THAT DOES NOT SEEM TO CONVERGE ON Cullwick’s slave-band is that of territory, a precondition for any system of production. As a historian of European/indigenous relations in Australia, I find that, suggestive though recent writing on imperialism can be, much of it is irreducibly heterogeneous with Australian conditions, for the simple reason that, unlike Bhabha’s India (though like Said’s Palestine), Australia is a settler colony. For all the homage paid to difference, postcolonial theory in particular has largely failed to accommodate such basic structural distinctions.<sup>123</sup> To register them, and to trace their discursive ramifications, I suggest that Althusser provided a starting point, one that could be greatly

<sup>120</sup> See, for example, Louis Montrose, “The Work of Gender in the Discourse of Discovery,” *Representations* 33 (1991): 1–41, quote p. 12. The well-known feminization of the Bengali was class-specific, applying to the Anglicized clerical *babu* but not, say, to Muslim plantation labor in East Bengal. Compare Mrinalini Sinha, *Colonial Masculinity: The “Manly Englishman” and the “Effeminate Bengali” in the Late Nineteenth Century* (Manchester, 1995). It is hard to resist the suspicion that contemporary resentment of clever-clever postcolonialist Bengalis in the Western academy is cognate with this deeply imperialist trope. For an insightful analysis of the gendering of the American colonial landscape, see Annette Kolodny, *The Lay of the Land: Metaphors as Experience and History in American Life and Letters* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1975); and *The Land before Her: Fantasy and Experience of the American Frontiers, 1630–1860* (Chapel Hill, 1984). See also Ella Shohat, “Gender and the Culture of Empire: Toward a Feminist Ethnography of the Cinema,” *Quarterly Review of Film and Video* 13, nos. i–iii (1991): 45–84. An early (but still suggestive) example of gender analysis is Clare Le Corbeiller, “Miss America and Her Sisters: Personifications of the Four Parts of the World,” *Bulletin* (Metropolitan Museum of Art) 19 (1961): 209–23.

<sup>121</sup> Catherine Hall, *White, Male and Middle Class: Explorations in Feminism and History* (Cambridge, 1992).

<sup>122</sup> McClintock, *Imperial Leather*, 151.

<sup>123</sup> A recent, though hardly postcolonial, exception is Daiva Stasiulis and Nira Yuval-Davis, eds., *Unsettling Settler Societies: Articulations of Gender, Race, Ethnicity and Class* (London, 1995). See also

enhanced by bringing poststructuralist rigor to bear on materialist approaches to ideology. (Neo)structurally, the concept of social formation enables us to specify material conditions that favor the currency of particular colonial discourses. For instance, the narrative of the dying race, which harmonizes with the project of removing natives from the land, is congenial to settler colonization. It is incompatible with franchise colonization, where native labor is at a premium. Though black, therefore, Australian Aborigines have discursively figured as dying rather than as being endowed with a natural sense of rhythm. On the same basis, the colonization of Native Americans has been structurally distinct from the colonization of African Americans. In the main, Native (North) Americans were cleared from their land rather than exploited for their labor, their place being taken by displaced Africans, who provided labor to be mixed with the expropriated land, their own homelands having yet to become objects of colonial desire. Thus the two colonial relationships were (are) fundamentally opposed. The ramifications of this distinction extend to the present, particularly insofar as they affect the different constructions of "miscegenation" that have been applied to the two communities.<sup>124</sup> Briefly, while the "one-drop rule" has meant that the category "black" can withstand unlimited admixture, the category "red" has been highly vulnerable to dilution.<sup>125</sup> This is consistent with a situation in which, while black labor was commodified (so that white plantation owners fathered black children), red labor was not even acknowledged (so that white fathers generated "half-breeds" whose indigeneity was compromised). In Australia, the structural counterparts to African-American slaves were white convicts, which has meant that racial coding and questions of emanci-

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Donald Denoon, *Settler Capitalism: The Dynamics of Dependent Development in the Southern Hemisphere* (Oxford, 1983).

<sup>124</sup> In other colonial situations, where native (as opposed to imported) labor is at a premium, people with combined ancestry can be counted as settler-become-native, as in the case of Latin American *mestizaje*. See, for example, Roger Bartra, *The Cage of Melancholy: Identity and Metamorphosis in the Mexican Character*, Christopher J. Hall, trans. (New Brunswick, N.J., 1992); Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden, eds., *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800* (Princeton, N.J., 1987); Magnus Mörner, *Race Mixture in the History of Latin America* (Boston, 1967); Mörner, ed., *Race and Class in Latin America* (New York, 1970); Jose Klor de Alva, "The Postcolonization of the (Latin) American Experience: A Reconsideration of 'Colonialism,' 'Postcolonialism' and 'Mestizaje,'" in Gyan Prakash, ed., *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements* (Princeton, 1995), 241-75, or something separate from either native or settler, as in Colette Guillaumin's sharp specification of South African "coloreds" as a "class formed by people belonging in fact to one and the other group [which] is declared to belong to neither one nor the other but to itself"; "Race and Nature: The System of Marks; The Idea of a Natural Group and Social Relationships," *Feminist Issues* 8, no. ii (1988): 25-43.

<sup>125</sup> The most comprehensive and systematic account of the one-drop rule is F. James David, *Who Is Black? One Nation's Definition* (University Park, Pa., 1991). See also Virginia R. Dominguez, *White by Definition: Social Classification in Creole Louisiana* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1994); Joel Williamson, *The Crucible of Race: Black-White Relations in the American South since Emancipation* (New York, 1984). For official classifications of Native Americans, see M. A. Jaimes, "Federal Indian Identification Policy: A Usurpation of Indigenous Sovereignty in North America," in Fremont J. Lyden and Lyman H. Legters, eds., *Native Americans and Public Policy* (Pittsburgh, 1992), 113-35; Jack D. Forbes, *Black Africans and Native Americans: Color, Race, and Caste in the Evolution of Red-Black Peoples* (Oxford, 1988); Native American Consultants, Inc., *Indian Definition Study* (Contracted Pursuant to PL 95-561, Title IV, s. 1147, Submitted to the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Education, Department of Education, Washington, D.C., January 1980). For a remarkable example of the contingencies of these classifications in juridico-bureaucratic practice, see James Clifford, "Identity in Mashpee," in Clifford, *Predicament of Culture*, 277-346.

pation have operated quite differently between the two countries. Where the respective indigenous populations have been concerned, however, there are substantial similarities between the racial calculations on which official policies toward them have been predicated. Such discursive distinctions, which survive the de-territorialization of imperialism, are clearly of considerable historical significance. They only make sense in relation to the material conditions that historically shaped the different colonial relationships concerned.<sup>126</sup> If we wish to produce histories that tell us enough about imperialism to suggest ways of resisting it, we should start with these conditions.

<sup>126</sup> I have attempted a historical reconciliation of official discourses on Australian Aboriginal people on the basis of the settler-colonial relationship in my "Nation and Miscegenation: Discursive Continuity in the Post-Mabo Era," *Social Analysis*, no. 34 (1994): 93–152. For official constructions of Aboriginality more generally, see Tom Clarke and Brian Galligan, "'Aboriginal Native' and the Institutional Construction of the Australian Citizen, 1901–48," *Australian Historical Studies* 26, no. 105 (1995): 523–43; Jeremy R. Beckett, "The Past in the Present, the Present in the Past: Constructing a National Aboriginality," in Beckett, ed., *Past and Present: The Construction of Aboriginality* (Canberra, 1988), 191–217. Gerald M. Sider has perceptively traced discursive continuities (in particular, the Indian as lone warrior/tracker) from seventeenth-century dispossessions of sedentary agriculturalists through to Native American enlistment patterns for the Vietnam War. See Sider, *Lumbee Indian Histories: Race, Ethnicity and Indian Identity in the Southern United States* (New York, 1993), 177–246. In *Colonialism's Culture: Anthropology, Travel and Government* (Cambridge, 1994), Nicholas Thomas stresses and illustrates the heterogeneity of colonialism.

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