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Cartographies of Transnationalism in Postcolonial Feminisms



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Cartographies of Transnationalism in
Postcolonial Feminisms

Geography, Culture, Identity, Politics

Jamil Khader

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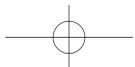
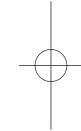
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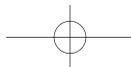
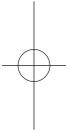
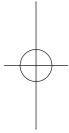
“It will transpire that the world has long been dreaming of something that
it can acquire if only it became conscious of it.”

—Karl Marx, “For a Ruthless Criticism of Everything Existing”





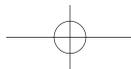
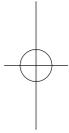
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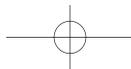
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Introduction

The Poetics and Politics of Displacing

The Extimate Locations of Postcolonial Feminisms

[B02.0]

The visual image that is used on the cover of the paperback edition of Benjamin Barber's book, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How the Planet is Both Falling Apart and Coming Together*, offers an interesting point of departure for framing the main theoretical problems that I deal with in this book. The cover features the image of a Muslim woman wearing a black veil, with only her eyes peering through a horizontal slit across the veil, and holding a can of Pepsi; the image is superimposed on a dark background which intensifies her dark features. This image stages the complex ways in which postcolonial women writers negotiate the contradictions among gender, nation, and globalization, and the critical reception of, or more accurately the silence over a certain current in these writings—radical politics—and their (mis)appropriation for the dissemination of cosmopolitan identities in the global literary market today. In his analysis of the current conflict between the local and the global, the national and the transnational, Barber posits the colonizing forces of McWorld that produce a vision of global cultural homogeneity underwritten by American commercial interests and popular culture against the parochial impulses of what he calls Jihad, or the diverse forms of difference and resistance to McWorld that are grounded in ethnic particularity, ethnonationalism, and religious fundamentalism. For Barber, McWorld and Jihad are locked in a vicious, antagonistic struggle for power and global hegemony that will undermine the possibility of any cosmopolitan democratic future, making it clear that there is no possible dialectical resolution for this struggle in sight.¹

[B02.1]

The visual on the book's cover, however, suggests a different narrative of synthetic reconciliation between the particular and the universal, Jihad and McWorld. The visual frames the battle between the forces of Jihad and McWorld within the structure of commodity fetishism that not only displaces the social relations of power and domination through the capitalist fantasy of compulsive consumption and surplus enjoyment that can accrue within the framework of consensual hybrid exchanges between the postcolonial subject and American/ Western consumerism, but also projects them onto the bodies of Third World women as the ultimate site where that battle is clearly waged. That a Muslim woman has been chosen to stand for the local in its relationship to the global is not surprising at all. Needless to say, the image of the Muslim woman reinforces the dominant representations of Third World women as an Other in Western academic discourses and popular culture through typical Orientalist tropes.² As such, the Muslim (Third World) woman stands for the eruption of atavistic nationalisms in the Third World (Jihad as a symbol of the dark and irrational forces of nationalism), and with its backwardness (the veil in liberal Western discourses as a sign of the universal victimization and oppression of Muslim women). Equally as problematic is the suggestion that the only possible resolution of this tension in the lives of Third World women is their embrace of the libidinal drive of the neoliberal market economy through hybridity and limitless consumerism. Indeed, she operates as a site for the totality of symbolic and imaginary identifications made available within the neoliberal global capitalist system: the extremes of her identity are viewed as simultaneous networks of sociability and belonging that suture her symbolic efficiency as a hybrid consumer citizen-subject into the neoliberal capitalist order, by eliminating the excess and contradictions that are constitutive of the formation of the subject. Although this idea may well seem aligned with the current valorization of hybridity and cosmopolitan forms of citizenship in postcolonial studies and transnational feminisms, what Gayatri Spivak refers to as "hybridist triumphalism" (1999, 449), it not only distorts the struggles of these women against the regulative and disciplinary pressures of nationalism and globalization, but also occludes the more politically informed choices these women make in their negotiation of these pressures in their lives and writings.³

[B02.2]

This book problematizes the uncritical celebration of hybridity and the concomitant emphasis on traveling, migrancy, diaspora, and nomadism, in the critical reception of postcolonial women's writings especially, in what is commonly known as cosmopolitics theory.⁴ Cosmopolitics theory promotes moral visions of world citizenship such as the Kantian cosmopolitanism as a blueprint for world peace, by virtue of our membership to the larger "family of man," or world community of the human race. Such a vision is predicated upon three normative-philosophical claims: First, cosmopolitics theory embraces openness to Otherness, predicated upon the inscription of a repertoire

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The Poetics and Politics of Displacing

of cross-cultural competencies to manage the unfamiliar and the strange, including multilingualism, translation, and hybridity. At the same time, however, such an approach to alterity usually overlooks the libidinal and aesthetic investment in the Other, a catachresis that is still problematically embedded in a manichean imperial economy and discourses of the white man's burden and *mission civilizatrice*. Second, cosmopolitics discourses celebrate the pleasures and the freedom that obtain from the unrestrained mobility that all individuals, citizens and non-citizens alike, can enjoy by virtue of living in an allegedly borderless world.⁵ In hegemonic academic narratives of cosmopolitics, therefore, the postcolonial is viewed more often than not as “a cultural traveler, or an ‘extra-territorial,’ than national” (Boehmer 1995, 233), a disembodied voice that exists in a condition of historical weightlessness (Rushdie 1991), whose lives constitute a smooth terrain for the work of hybridity. Such a claim, however, reifies mobility and the subject's phantasmagoric location everywhere and nowhere, failing to take into account the material (socioeconomic) conditions and the geopolitical context in which national subjects cross borders in actuality. After all, not all travelers are privileged subjects backed by the power of their social class and government's travel documents that allow them to cross borders almost anywhere without harassment in search of the “home-plus” experience.

[B02.3]

And finally, cosmopolitics promotes the utopian possibilities of a postnational world that can facilitate the subject's (usually disembodied) modes of sociability and belonging in and out of communities at will, disregarding the extent to which the nation-state is still the most important site for the protection of millions of disenfranchised communities from the encroachment of predatory capitalism around the world.⁶ Consequently, cosmopoliticians subtract the dialectical articulation of national modes of sociability into international narratives of solidarity and struggle, omitting and suppressing thus histories of oppositional narratives of anti-colonial resistance, what Edward Said calls the “grand narratives of emancipation and enlightenment” especially, Marxist narratives of revolutionary internationalism (Said 1995, 5). In short, in its dismissal and parodying of the project of national culture, premature inauguration of a post-national world, valorization of hybridity and diaspora discourses, normalization of discourses of human rights, and its reconfiguration of the site of contemporary struggles from economics and politics to culture, cosmopolitics presents itself as the foundational post-political myth of global capitalism.

[B02.4]

In their promotion of these normative-philosophical claims as universal values, cosmopoliticians assume that the modernist and postmodernist sensibilities underwriting cosmopolitan subjectivities can be smoothly translated into the grammar of postcolonial praxis. As such, cosmopolitics conceals the specificity of the economic, cultural, and historical conditions that leave the postcolonial subject especially, the postcolonial female subject, no choice but

to leave his or her homeland. Indeed, there are millions of disenfranchised subjects around the world who would rather not leave their countries, but are forced to migrate in search of work within the current economic politics of the international division of labor and the structural adjustment programs that have sapped and ravaged their national economies (Brennan 1997). For many women in the Third World, in particular, their insertion into the global capitalist economy in the form of surplus labor as migrant workers (legal and illegal), refugees (internally or externally displaced persons), sex workers, nannies, maids, and professionals, has intensified the feminization of poverty that have rendered many of them invisible and disposable.⁷ Consequently, it can be said, the current popularity of cosmopolitics is just another attempt at recodifying the exploitation of Third World women's bodies and labor within the integration of peripheral world economies and their citizens into networks of consumerist ideologies and practices in the global economy.⁸ In this sense, hybridity and cosmopolitics discourses do not only serve as an alibi for U.S. global hegemony and global capitalist ideology in the current academic climate, but also mystify the significance of these national cultures for fulfilling the promises of liberation and the project of decolonization.

The postcolonial women writers under discussion in this book, including Tsitsi Dangarembga, Louise Erdrich, Aurora Levins Morales, Rosario Morales, Esmeralda Santiago, Raymonda Tawil, Michelle Cliff, and Rigoberta Menchú, demonstrate that the production of hybrid, cosmopolitan, and post-national identities cannot clearly articulate the contradictions among gender, nation, and globalization in postcolonial feminist writings. These modalities of identity prove to be problematic especially, for these postcolonial women writers, whose texts emerge from within current histories of struggle against, and resistance to, what can be called "actually-existing colonialisms" today.⁹ In the works of Aurora Levins Morales, Rosario Morales, Esmeralda Santiago, Louise Erdrich, and Raymonda Tawil, these anachronistic forms of actually-existing colonialisms are embodied in the U.S neo-imperial domination of Puerto Rico, the Native American histories of internal colonization and forcible relocation, and Israel's apartheid and illegal military occupation of Palestine. In the case of Tsitsi Dangarembga, the events of her novel unfold during the British colonization of Southern Rhodesia (Zimbabwe), but the current economic realities of postcolonial Zimbabwe bear witness to neo-colonial and neo-imperial paradigms of domination and underdevelopment. Much like Dangarembga, Michelle Cliff's and Rigoberta Menchú's writings about Jamaica and Guatemala, respectively, are inscribed within the contemporary geography of uneven development—the realities of U.S. military intervention in Latin America and various forms of neo-colonial economic domination within the structural adjustment programs of global financial institutions.

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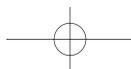
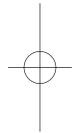
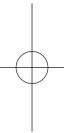
The Poetics and Politics of Displacing

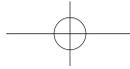
[B02.6]

Negotiating and mediating the contradictions between gender and the nation, on the one hand, and between the nation and neocolonial, global capitalist system, on the other, postcolonial women writers, as I argue in this book, construct complex *extimate* subjectivities, what Audre Lorde refers to as “sister outsider,” Spivak as “catachresis,” and Trinh T. Minh-ha as “outside in inside out,” that are formed in their excess through the dialectical relation between the intimate and the external, the inside and the outside, as they occupy an intimately or internally external location vis-à-vis these dominant power structures. In *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, Jacques Lacan coined the neologism extimacy (*extimité*) to refer to a paradoxical mode of subjectivity that can be defined as interior-exteriority that results from the interplay of binary oppositions between the inside, or the intimate, and the outside, or the foreign (Lacan 1992, 71). For Lacan, extimacy designates what is neither fully inside nor fully outside the system, but what concurrently exists both inside and outside the system at once. As Jacques-Alain Miller notes in his extended commentary on Lacan’s term, extimacy reveals that “the intimate is Other—like a foreign body, a parasite,” adding that in extimate structures “the most interior has a quality of exteriority,” and vice versa. Miller thus points out that “the subject contains as the most intimate (intime) of its intimacy the extimacy of the Other” (Miller 1994, 75). In other words, extimacy designates the way in which the inside and the outside turn into one another and in-determine each other.¹⁰

[B02.7]

In this internally external location, postcolonial women writers produce extimate subjectivities that (dis)position them from within and from without the dominant power structures and ownership systems that vie over their bodies and labor. The production of extimate subjectivities occurs at that moment when the insider “steps out from the inside,” because her position as a pure insider becomes no longer tenable, affording her the unique vantage point of “looking in from the outside while also looking out from the inside” (Minh-ha 1991, 190). This extimate subjectivity is thus construed in the process of negotiating the dialectic of inside and outside, the internal and the external, sameness and difference, the particular and the universal, from that difficult position that emerges in the dialectics between conjunctive and disjunctive logics, the overlapping and the contradictory. In other words, extimacy is structured by the concurrent operation of the logics of *neither/nor* as well as *both/and*. At stake here is the excess that typifies the social field itself in terms of what Alain Badiou calls the “relation of nonrelation.” As Molly Rothenberg explains, the social dimension of subjectivity is “irremediably *excessive*,” adding that the production of the social subject’s extimacy “leaves a remainder or indeterminacy, so that every subject bears some un-specifiable excess within the social field” (Rothenberg 2010, 10; emphasis in original). Paradoxically, this excess is what renders our symbolic efficiency and “meaning as social beings” uncertain to us and incomprehensible to





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others, but which at the same time is “the necessary ingredient of the social field within which we obtain the only meaning that we will ever have, however uncertain” (Rothenberg 2010, 10).

The constitutive excess that marks production of these extimate subjectivities, therefore, requires constant negotiation and mediation as they are constructed without a chance of closure or resolution. In her explication of Lorde’s notion of “sister outsider,” for example, Gloria Hull writes:

[B02.8]

When Audre Lorde calls herself “sister outsider,” she is claiming the extremes of a difficult identity. I think we tend to read the two terms with a diacritical slash between them—in an attempt to make some separate, though conjoining, space. But Lorde has placed herself *on that line between* the either/or and both/and of “sister outsider”—then erased her chance for rest or mediation. (Hull 1989, 253; emphasis added)

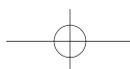
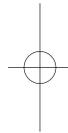
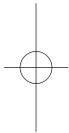
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As they operate through the logics of *neither/nor* and *both/and*, the extimate subjectivities of postcolonial feminists indelibly inscribe them in the enviable position of constant interrogation, questioning, reframing, and recodification. For Rothenberg, thus, the meaning of extimate subjects is “not in their own control,” and as such they “will always be in contention for the right to define themselves, and . . . will always be vulnerable to the appropriation of their meaning by others” (Rothenberg 2010, 45). Hence, she maintains that living with such uncertainty that results from the ineradicable excess “means that the subject can never live in absolute peace and harmony: some form of discord is inevitable” (Rothenberg 2010, 45). What must be emphasized here, however, is that the extimate subjectivities of postcolonial women are restless not simply because, as some would argue, of modernist or postmodernist angst, but because their extimate subjectivities are inscribed within the specific socio-political conditions that mark their positionalities within the global capitalist system. Lorde, for instance, encodes this sister/outsider position for U.S. minority/ Third World women in the context of her interrogation of the ways in which the global capitalist system produces its outsiders and exploits them as, in her words, “surplus people” in the global economy of profit. She states “In a society where the good is defined in terms of profit rather than in terms of human need, there must always be some group of people, who through systematized oppression, can be made to feel surplus, to occupy the space of the dehumanized inferior” (Lorde 1984, 114).

[B02.10]

Framing the production of extimate subjectivities within the excessive dimension of subjectivization in the specific context of social relations under global capitalism cannot thus be accounted for through purely external or immanent causality. Rothenberg thus proposes extimate causality as an alternative to the impasse in traditional Marxist and Foucauldian theorization of social change through external and immanent causation, respectively. While for Foucault power is so deeply entrenched that “resistance is never in a position of exteriority with respect to power” (Foucault 1978, 94–95), tradi-

[B02.11]



tional Marxism lacks the “means for distinguishing causes from their consequences in a way that would enable an analysis” (Rothenberg 2010, 9). Disarticulating the subject from overly deterministic causal relations, this extimate position affords postcolonial women the opportunity to interrogate the hegemonic power structures at the deeper level of their underlying or fundamental antagonism—that is, at the level of the formal constitution of the system itself. As such, these extimate subjectivities allow postcolonial women writers to clear a space not only for developing an alternative paradigm for the critique of hegemonic ideology, but also for articulating the contradictions that typify their condition through a repetition of the fundamental antagonism that is left out of the symbolic order around histories and narratives of anti-colonial internationalism.¹¹

[B02.12] In their extimate subjectivities, therefore, postcolonial women can be more effectively represented through what Jacques Rancière refers to as *sans-part* or “the part of no part” (Rancière 1995), which the Slovenian philosopher Slavoj Žižek considers to be, in his discussion of the slum dwellers and the favelas inhabitants in the Third World, a point of inherent exclusion or exception that unravels the violent founding gestures of the universality of the neoliberal capitalist system (Žižek, *Ticklish* 201).¹² Unlike the slum dwellers in Žižek’s analysis, nonetheless, postcolonial women writers do not exist completely “outside the structured social field” in extra-judicial spaces and beyond state control where the nation-state itself is suspended (Žižek 2006, 425). Rather, these women’s extimate subjectivities emerge from the problematic excessive positionality that women occupy in the modern patriarchal nation-state within the global capitalist social field. While the *sans-part* and slum dwellers do not count, and hence, they are unaccounted for within the social hierarchy, the lives and bodies of postcolonial women turn into a site of contestation where this social hierarchy is reproduced and reaffirmed. Unlike the non-recognition of the *sans-part*, that is, the exclusion of third world women operates in terms of their over-recognition within the totality of social relations. Women, as some Western feminists and postcolonial critics maintain, are not only excluded from the “fraternity” of the sovereign nation (Anderson 1983, 16) and displaced from the metaphysics of the nation as tropes and symbols of its timelessness and purity (Chatterjee 1983; Kandiyoti 1994), but are also subordinated by means of the state’s disciplinary processes that produce and regulate the citizen-subject (Alarcón, Kaplan, and Moallem 1999, 12).¹³

[B02.13] Indeed, as Judith Butler asserts, the state’s juridical power systems produce the subject that they come subsequently to represent, and therefore, the feminist subject, who is constituted by the very political system that is supposed to facilitate her emancipation, is in essence complicit with her own oppression (Butler 2000, 8). Hence, some critics contend that postcolonial women should automatically assume an antagonistically exterior position

vis-à-vis the nation-state from where they can resist the state's regulatory and disciplinary powers. But postcolonial feminists bear more resemblance to Butler's Antigone, not only because Antigone's "representative function is itself in crisis," as her incestuous relationship does not position her seamlessly within the kinship system, but also because she is implicated in the same power she opposes (Butler 2000, 2). The language of kinship that Antigone uses is not mutually exclusive of the rhetoric of the state, but rather both are interdependent and "chiasmically related." Hence, Butler brings these two discourses into a productive tension or crisis, by demonstrating that since kinship claims are made within the language of the state, Antigone "absorbs the very language of the state against which she rebels, and hers becomes a politics not of oppositional purity but of the scandalously impure" (Butler 2000, 3). As such, Antigone will never be able to make her claim "outside the language of the state," and the state will never be able to fully assimilate her claim within its institutions (Butler 2000, 28).

But Antigone, even in Butler's interpretation, is doomed and her defiance of state authority does not provide a viable form of political agency that can shore up an act that can make it possible for women to change the coordinates of the system. Recognizing the potentialities of the interstices, as it is common in postcolonial criticism, that result from the nation's self-division is not sufficient to resolve this contradiction either. No alternative form of politics can come out from simply acknowledging that the nation is internally marked by self-division, as various contending counternarratives compete against each other and create a surplus or an excess that forecloses the possibility of total regulation, determination, and control (Bhabha 1994, 145). Similarly, the common appeal in recent postcolonial and feminist criticism to an ethics of the fragmented multitude will not extract postcolonial women from their aporiatic condition, since these ethics are mostly embodied in the ideals of international civil society and transnational social movements that remain grounded in the abstract language of rights of hegemonic, neoliberal capitalism. These two themes intersect in most postcolonial feminist criticism that develops a postmodern critique of the state's relationship to women. In *Between Women and Nation*, for example, Norma Alarcón, Caren Kaplan, and Mino Moallem allege that the in-between (interstitial) space enables women to deconstruct the signifiers woman and nation as historically contingent markers of identity, making it possible for them to forge local community networks that can facilitate the emergence of a "civil arena to counter masculinist nationalist agendas" (Alarcón, Kaplan, and Moallem 1999, 12).

The problem here in part is that the void of the interstices can still function as the locus for ideological inscription, including the language of rights, citizenship, and global civil society that simply redoubles and recycles the dominant narrative of the global capitalist system. As Spivak correctly points

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[B02.15]



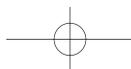
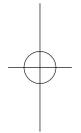
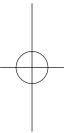
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out, the rhetoric of subaltern empowerment can be appropriated to mobilize “subalternity into hegemony” and “legitimize globalization” (Spivak 1999, 309–310). Hence, postcolonial women writers refuse to wish their nations away, demonstrating the impossibility of writing outside the nation per se for communities that have been ravaged and sapped by the neoliberal global capitalist system. The nation-state for these women remains a site that, to use Spivak’s words, “one cannot not want to inhabit, yet must criticize” (Spivak 1993, 64). As such, postcolonial feminists reject the aporiatic condition ascribed to them by most critics and approach the problem, by focusing on their dialectical articulation of the contradictions between state and gender through an emphasis alternative histories and structures of sociability that are specifically grounded in genealogies of anti-colonial internationalism. Reconfiguring the locations and subjectivities of postcolonial women writers in their extimacy, as internally external, can provide a more viable form of political agency that can shore up an act that can make it possible for women to change the coordinates of the system.¹⁴

[B02.16] I will refer to postcolonial feminist texts that give form to this extimate subjectivity that embodies their constant negotiation of their intimately external locations within hegemonic structures and discourses of power as *narratives of displacing*. As I use it here, textualities of displacing refer to modes of writing in which postcolonial feminists construct their extimate subjectivities within the contradictions that define the relationships between gender and nation, on the one hand, and the nation-state and the neoliberal global capitalist regime, on the other, articulating these contradictions dialectically through narratives and histories of anti-colonial internationalist struggle. Grounded in a commitment to the future of the postcolonial nation and the project of decolonization and liberation within the ever-encroaching, neo-colonial global capitalist system, postcolonial women’s narratives of displacing offer not only an alternative mode of ideological critique of scripted and commonly-inherited discourses of identity, home, culture that obfuscate the fundamental antagonism at the core of the social totality, but also ways of changing them through practices of radical politics.

[B02.17] Postcolonial feminists’ narratives of displacing, therefore, permit four intersecting, dialogic strategies: travel, unhomeliness, multiple and shifting subject positions, and transnational alliances, through which postcolonial women’s extimate subjectivities are constantly negotiated and constructed. Each one of these strategies decenters the hegemonic narratives that I reference in the subtitle of this book namely, geography, culture, identity, and politics, respectively. First, specific strategies of travel, voluntary and involuntary, within the disjunctures among local, national, regional, and global networks that relocate postcolonial women writers in a multi-dimensional and conjunctural space, neither here nor there and both here and there, foregrounding their locations as internally external. Second, tactics of unhomeli-



ness that rewrite the traditional fabulations of home and culture in the language of contingent belonging, by uncovering traces of the foreign, an elsewhere, in the edifice of the familiar through which their recognition of their excessive locations in the social field serves as the basis for interrogating dominant discourses of belonging. Third, techniques of multiple and shifting subject positions based on a recognition of the excess of the extimate subject that unravels not only the contingency of the subject's ontic properties, but also the subject's shifting locations in the interplay of oppression and privilege within the multiplicity of power structures that form the neoliberal global capitalist system, opening up an ethical dimension toward the Other. And fourth, strategies of building political solidarity with transnational and transethnic communities of struggle that are grounded in the concrete Universality of the excluded communities, through which they construct alternative political discourses about agency and transformation that are embedded in histories of anti-colonial internationalism for the greater struggle of liberation and emancipation.

In narratives of displacing, traveling constitutes a specific form of mobility that is grounded in histories of colonial dispossession, patriarchal oppression, national liberation struggles, military dictatorships, forced migration, and involuntary relocation within the geography of uneven development and the push and pull forces of the international division of labor. Traveling in narratives of displacing should therefore not be hastily conflated, as common in the critical reception of postcolonial women's writings and in cosmopolitan theory, with the popular postmodern celebration of travel and mobility such as the modernist rhetoric of exile (Probyn 1990; Kaplan 1996), tourism culture with its the imperial gaze and the commodification of the Other (Shohat and Stam 1994), or disembodied modes of being in transit that can find their most productive expression in heterotopic sites especially, airports.¹⁵ At stake here is the uncritical appropriation of all forms of travel as inherently subversive practices that can have radical epistemological and ontological implications for reconfiguring the ethical relationship between Self and Other. Traveling, in other words, does not possess any immanent radical potentiality as such; quite the opposite, traveling may not only reproduce the same cultural biases and structures of inequality through the travelers' aesthetic and erotic investment in the Other, but may also be used to testify to the alleged superiority of the West in its tolerant attitudes and openness toward the backward Other. Consequently, postcolonial feminists' narratives of displacing are inscribed within alternative forms of travel that find expression in circular migrancy that reconfigures the universalism of Euro-American (imperial) tourism culture; working-class narratives that rewrite the myth of upward mobility and the American Dream; discourses of

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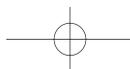
hemispheric (trans-American) indigenous solidarity and struggle; illegal border crossings; returning migration; international leftist journeys; and the multiple itineraries of revolutionary and socialist internationalism.

[B02.19] For postcolonial women writers, therefore, traveling allows for staging the realities of the relocation and integration of postcolonial women into the international division of labor, permitting a critical engagement with the socioeconomic realities of the uneven development in both West and East, North and South. Moreover, travel in narratives of displacing functions as a site for problematizing postcolonial women's locations along reified geometrical binaries such as margin/center, diaspora/nation, and global/local. Instead, they write both poles of these spatial geometrics into each other, clearing a space for recognizing the internally external locations that many disenfranchised subjects inhabit. The issue here concerns the understanding of the ways in which global capitalism has invariably increased the wealth gap between the rich and the poor all over the world, even though the Northern countries still possess most of the wealth and resources in the world today. Drawing attention to this condition, for example, Minh-ha notes:

[B02.20] [The] Third World has moved West (or North, depending on where the dividing line falls) and has expanded so as to include even the remote parts of the First World. What is at stake is not only the hegemony of Western cultures, but also their identities as unified cultures. [The] Third World dwells on diversity; so does [the] First World . . . The West is painfully made to realize the existence of a Third World in the First World, and vice versa. (Minh-ha 1989, 98)

[B02.21] Traveling thus relocates postcolonial feminists in a multidimensional and conjunctural space, in which the local and the global in-determine each other, offering a new way for rethinking the stability of points of origin and points of destination, the traditional semantics of departure and arrival, and the closure of coming and going. Although Minh-ha seems hopeful that the increasing pockets of poverty around the world, or class struggle as the fundamental social antagonism at a deeper level of analysis, can be "painfully" recognized, she tends to underestimate the power of the neoliberal capitalist ideology to thwart the symbolization of this antagonism in the social field.¹⁶

[B02.22] This socio-political dimension of travel remains grounded in postcolonial women's national modes of sociability, but which each writer negotiates differently according to her ideological positioning, social practices, and political discourses. Hence, I distinguish these forms of politicized travel from other modalities of travel that seek, as Paul Gilroy contends in regards to the diasporic formations of the black Atlantic, to "transcend both the structures of the nation state and the constraints of ethnicity and national particularity" (Gilroy 1993, 19). Gilroy affirms multiple national loyalties and roots in the



experiences of diasporic subjects, instead of articulating, as postcolonial women writers do, a clear commitment to the fate of the nation-state, while remaining open, as I will explain below, to the possibility of identifying with and participating in transnational and transethnic communities that are forged in struggle. The main problem with Gilroy's theory is its inability to resolve the underlying tension between his unrestrained celebration of hybrid cultural formations such as double-consciousness, in this case being *both* black *and* British, and the identity formations constructed in the specific postcolonial histories of travel as being both *inside* and *against* or outside modernity, British civic culture, and neoliberal global capitalism. While Gilroy recognizes that "Sometimes, inside and against isn't going to be habitable or even possible," he seems reluctant to probe the radical consequences of his recognition of the willingness of the diasporic subjects to embark on such a challenging journey (Gilroy 1993, 233). In part, this has to do with Gilroy's own troubled relationship with Marxism and revolutionary politics especially, the work of the British Marxist Raymond Williams, which is symptomatic of the cosmopolitical suppression and displacement the Marxist subtext of much of their theories. While Gilroy acknowledges that global forms of domination today require transnational forms of solidarity and alliances, he nonetheless either disavows or places under erasure ethnicity, nation, and class as alternative organizing structures for such a language of solidarity. Although he claims to reinscribe the black Atlantic within James Clifford's dialectic of roots and routes, to wit, the roots of Gilroy's fractal itineraries of the transnational forms of political solidarity, which can be made possible through the transnational and intercultural formations of the black Atlantic, remain yet to be articulated.

Traveling through the overdetermined networks of relocation and integration within the international division of labor opens up a space for acknowledging the inevitable discord and disharmony underlying social life, unraveling the contingency of belonging and producing *unheimlich* effects, or the impossibility of home, for postcolonial women. For Freud, the *unheimlich*—that is, the fearful and the frightening that can be traced back to the foundation of the homey and the known, emerges from the discrepant experiences of insiders and outsiders in relation to what it means to be "at home." Hence, what for insiders is familiar, for outsiders is impenetrable. In narratives of displacing, in contrast, postcolonial women writers unravel the dialectical conceptualization of the homely as both homely and unhomely, familiar and impenetrable, by placing the grammar of belonging under erasure. Anzaldúa, for example, notes that her intimacy with other worlds produced a sense of "fracture," a splitting, in her mythic conception of home; she returns home only to find out the "uncomfortable feeling of no longer fitting, of having lost my home, of being an outsider" (Anzaldúa 1992, 218). But as Teresa de Lauretis demonstrates in her discussion of the works of Chicana feminists

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such as Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga, giving up this homey place for another place does not simply mean renouncing one's original home for a new one that is more safe, but entails substituting one unsafe and risky place for another that is as equally "tentative, uncertain, unguaranteed" (de Lauretis 1990, 138).

[B02.24] Such an unheimlich strategy allows these postcolonial feminists to rewrite the traditional mythologies of home in the semantics of infinite displacement that delinks the idea of the nation from territoriality and nativity, without abandoning the idea or emotional attachment to home. As such, postcolonial feminists deny that the sentimental attachment to any home can guarantee a language of intimacy and wholeness, rendering home instead as a site of ambivalent psychic identification. The point here is neither simply to destabilize the certitude of centers as the origins of authority, legitimacy, and authenticity nor to prematurely inaugurate a postnational world order, but to reject the temptation to recover an illusory ideal unity at the core of the fantasy of home, culture, and nation. Indeed, it is about uncovering, as Jacques Derrida argues in *The Other Heading*, the non-identity of culture, in the sense that a culture will "not to be able to identify itself, to be able to say 'me' or 'we' [but] to be able to take the form of a subject only in the non-identity to itself, if you prefer, only in the difference with itself" (Derrida 1992, 9–10). Furthermore, as Biddu Martin and Chandra Mohanty posit in their discussion of Minnie Bruce Pratt's autobiographical act, the unhomey foregrounds an "awareness of the price at which secure places are bought, the awareness of the exclusions, the denials, the blindnesses on which they are predicated" (Martin and Mohanty 1986, 206). Postcolonial women writers thus recognize that those conventional homely sites, including family, community, culture, place, tradition, land, memory, and nation, which are supposed to secure essential social desires, operate in fact through acts of violence, exclusion, and repression that are often directed against these women themselves. Finally, the dialectic of the familiar and the unknown at the core of the idea of unhomeliness ultimately inscribes an elsewhere, the traces of the foreign and the unfamiliar, into home, and here into there, allowing for decoupling the state from the nation and from territory. For the Italian philosopher Giorgio Agamben, for instance, such a trace of the unfamiliar, the excess that latches itself onto the homely edifice, both coincides with and exceeds the national imaginary at once, clearing a space for the production of a new geographics where the "exterior and interior in-determine each other" (qtd. in Rothenberg 2010, 52).

[B02.25] Unhomeliness for postcolonial feminists is most of all about maintaining a critical edge, a sense of restlessness about where they come from and where they are going, which is necessary for unsettling the comfortability and closure that circumscribe any space called home. In the words of bell hooks, "Home is that place which enables and promotes varied and ever-changing

perspectives, a place where one discovers new ways of seeing reality, frontiers of difference” (hooks 1990, 148). As such, conditions of unhomeliness underscore the ceaseless slippages of postcolonial feminists from any safe and stable location from which they can speak. In trading comfort and safety for a space of risk and uncertainty, postcolonial feminists interrogate their complicity with dominant power structures and discourses, shaking up the normalized and naturalized foundations of the mythic spaces of self, home, family, and nation. Nevertheless, the extimate subjectivities that postcolonial women construct within the contradictions between gender, nation, and global capitalism enable them to remain vigilant about falling into such complacency. As Hull writes in regards to Lorde, “she becomes uneasy at the comfortableness (which is, to her, a signal that something critical is being glossed over) and proceeds to rub athwart the smooth grain to find the roughness and the slant she needs to maintain her difference-defined, complexly constructed self” (Hull 1989, 155–156). Unhomeness, in short, reconfigures the language of belonging to home in terms of disidentification, marking the ontological slippages that render suturing these feminists to any fantasy of home completely impossible.

Again, it is important to distinguish between this form of unhomeness from its postmodernist cosmopolitical reiterations which have appropriated this trope in the representations of diasporic communities as disembodied citizens of the world who seem to entertain no second thoughts about renouncing their sense of belonging to, identification with, or nostalgic yearning for their national culture and the idea of home. For many of these cosmopolitical theorists, “homecoming” is impossible, because they misrecognize postcolonial forms of migrancy as modes of being and living “always in transit,” a mode of being that more adequately describes frequent travelers who spend most of their lives in and between airports than postcolonial subjects who, as Iain Chambers, for instance, writes, “the promise of a homecoming—completing the story, domesticating the detour” becomes an unrealizable feat (Chambers 1994, 5). Symptomatic of the dominant cosmopolitical and diasporic celebration of the extraterritoriality of exilic and migrant subjectivities, Chambers overlooks the material conditions within which homecoming becomes quite an impossibility. In narratives of displacing, home/ coming is impossible only in the sense that the experience of home, or the lack of it thereof, for many women in the postcolonial world has been mediated through material histories of colonial subjugation, patriarchal oppression, military conquest, internal displacement, forced relocation, house arrest, and capitalist exploitation. As Bhabha correctly argues, “the unhomely moment relates the traumatic ambivalences of a personal, psychic history to the wider disjunctions of political existence” (Bhabha 1994, 144). In Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/ La Frontera*, for example, the restless location of the mestiza between incompatible cultures produces unheimlich effects that

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do not eradicate, but in fact exacerbate, the traumatic pain, the dis-ease, that results from the material conditions underpinning the experience of unhomeliness. As she looks around in the Valley and talks with her brother about the bankruptcy of agribusiness, she reinscribes unhomeliness within the realities of the poverty, unemployment, and home foreclosures that were caused by histories of colonial conquest, international trade agreements, and the global economic recession (Anzaldúa 1987, 89–90).

[B02.27] Recognizing the contingency of belonging and the ontological slippages in the construction of unified discourses of home, culture, and nation, postcolonial feminists reconstruct their extimate subjectivities within an intersectional model that reconfigures the subject at both the ethical and political levels. They thus not only unravel the contingency of the subject’s symbolic properties and her shifting positionalities within the structures of privilege and power that mark the global heteronormative and neoliberal capitalist system, but also map out an ethical dimension that refuses to locate the excess that is constitutive of all subjects strictly in the Other. In textualities of displacing, extimate subjectivities are negotiated within the contradictions of intersecting and interlocking narratives of identity be it gender, race, social class, sexuality, national citizenship, religion, and so on, that are understood as managed properties that are organized through institutional structures. The idea here is not simply to celebrate the fragmented subject of postmodernism or multiculturalism, but to relocate the extimate subject within the “relation of nonrelation” in a way that makes it possible for the subject to recognize in her multiple and shifting subject positions the excess of meaning to which she and others are stuck and, paradoxically, by which they stay apart (Rothenberg 2010, 44–45). Indeed, the excess that results from the intersections and contradictions of the subject’s multiple ontic *qua* managed properties underwrites the production of postcolonial women’s extimate subjectivities, revealing the extent to which all identities are contingent and functioning as a site for the production of an alternative form of universality .

[B02.28] Such an emphasis on multiple and shifting subject positions within this model of intersectionality in narratives of displacing, it must be emphasized, grew out of postcolonial/ U.S. minority feminists’ critique of the universal, bourgeois subject of Western feminism or the second wave, as it is commonly known, with its valorization of the role gender plays in the domination of women at the interpersonal and institutional levels.¹⁷ This universal model of women’s oppression, what Robin Morgan refers to as “global sisterhood” (Morgan 1970), called for unity among all women in the world on the basis of their status as an Other, an ontological victim, in the system of heteronormative oppression, regardless of their internal differences. For the postcolonial/ U.S. minority pioneers of the feminist Third Wave of the late 1970s and 1980s, however, it became quickly clear that these allegedly universal concerns of mainstream Western feminism were completely removed from the

issues that they and their communities have to struggle with and against in a racist, imperialist, and capitalist heteronormative culture. First of all, universal female victimization was never a rallying cry for postcolonial/ U.S. minority, because they and their communities have been oppressed by a network of cross-cutting and interlocking institutions and power structures that systematically exclude women and deny them their rights based not only on gender, but also on race, social class, sexuality, and nationality. Hence, postcolonial feminism is relational and contextual not only in the sense that “no single system of domination determines the totality of experience” (Friedman 1998, 48), but more importantly, in the sense that these cross-cutting power structures carry deep socioeconomic consequences for these women and their communities. Moreover, the liberation ideology underpinning mainstream Western feminism especially, the contention that subverting the private-public dichotomy by incorporating women into the workplace was empowering for women, turned out to be a smokescreen for the projection of their middle-class dreams. As many postcolonial/ U.S. minority women have argued, many of these women had already been working for wages and that such work was neither liberating nor was it empowering. Moreover, a genuine process of liberation in the context of their own specific histories can only happen through community organizing—that is, the politicization of the oppressed communities through which the promises of equality and justice for these communities can be fulfilled.

Reconfiguring their identities within an intersectional model predicated upon a recognition of the subject’s multiple and shifting positionalities has radical ontological and ethical implications for postcolonial feminists. First, postcolonial women writers’ extimate subjectivities unravel notions of self and alterity not only as socially constructed and contingent, but more importantly as sites of ontological ambiguity. Postcolonial feminists pull the ground from under what is considered to be the originary, authentic Self, foregrounding instead its ontological slippage into the realm of difference which will forever implicate the Self and the Other in a recognition of the inauthenticity of origins and subjectivity. As such, this ontological slippage makes it possible for postcolonial women to recognize the constant negotiation of an incomplete positionality that explodes all myths of plenitude, wholeness, and authenticity. Minh-ha captures this inauthenticity of Self and Other in her notion of the “in/appropriated Other,” the subject who constantly moves with “at least two/ four gestures: that of affirming ‘I am like you’ while persisting in her difference; and that of reminding ‘I am different’ while unsettling every definition of otherness arrived at” (Minh-ha 1991, 74).

Second and within the (neo)colonial Manichean economy, this recognition of the ontological slippage underpinning the construction of extimate subjectivities does not simply lead to an ethics based on the recognition of the Other but to an ethical understanding of the Otherness of the Self, or the

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excess that is stuck to the subject as part of the relation of nonrelation. This does not entail, it is important to note here, turning the Other into a Self through strategies of textual morphing—the voluntary and haphazard appropriation of other identities at will, allowing the Self to know, simulate, or even become, the Other. Rather, it allows these writers to “redefine the other as a part of ourselves” (Keating 1996, 75). Lorde has even gone as far as claiming that the recognition of the Otherness of the Self exposes the oppressor inside each one of us. Moreover, it allows postcolonial feminists to acknowledge the “mutual contagion and subtle intimacies,” even an impossible love, between the Self and the Other, the victim and the oppressor (Gandhi 1998, 129). In her reference to Jamaica Kincaid’s *Lucy*, for instance, Spivak maintains that postcolonial texts that advocate love between Self and Other, victims and oppressor, lose “nothing of their cutting edge against the exploiters,” because they claim “the right/responsibility of loving, denied to the subject that wishes to choose agency from victimage” (Spivak 1999, 449). Love, as Julia Kristeva writes in *Tales of Love*, transforms the self into an Other, by allowing the self “to become lost in the other, for the other” (Kristeva 1987, 4). Love thus blurs the boundaries between Self and Other and enunciates a “desire to cross the boundaries of the self” (Kristeva 1987, 6). To this extent, narratives of displacing do not simply valorize the Other over the Self, but rather clear a space for reconsidering the incomprehensible inhumanity of the Other, whose motives and desires presumably exist outside the normative limits of human discourse and thought.

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Acknowledging the possibility of intimate connections with and love for the Other becomes the precondition for bearing an ethical responsibility for the persecutory Other. This sense of responsibility for the persecutor is predicated upon a structural, or preontological, condition of susceptibility that is impinged upon the subject. In “Substitution,” Emmanuel Levinas asserts that this structural susceptibility emerges “in suffering, in the *original traumatism* and return to self, where I am responsible for what I did not will, absolutely responsible for the persecution I undergo . . .” (qtd. in Butler 2005, 88–89). As Judith Butler explains, “That which persecutes me brings me into being, acts upon me, and so prompts me, animates me into ontology at the moment of persecution” (Butler 2005, 89). As such, responsibility for the Other, regardless of how the Other impinges or acts upon the Self, is a matter of “making use of an unwilled susceptibility as a resource for becoming responsive to the Other” (Butler 2005, 91). Levinas’s ethical model, however, requires that the victim as an ethical subject must give up her “own subjecthood to become the object that will rectify (in fantasy) the other’s lack” (Rothenberg 2010, 199). Postcolonial women, in contrast, locate the source of the excess that serves as the basis of the relation of nonrelation within

themselves rather than considering the excess as a lack or gap that some Other can fill, affecting thus nondefensive attitudes toward the Other (Rothenberg 2010, 206–207).

Reclaiming an ethical responsibility toward the Other through such non-defensive strategies in postcolonial women's writings, therefore, is not about preserving the Other's distinct existence, but about traversing the ethnocentric fantasy especially, the demonization and scapegoating of the Other for presumably either stealing the subject's *jouissance*, the source of enjoyment, or failing to supply what is lacking in the subject. As Žižek writes in the context of anti-Semitism, the Nazis “must recognize in the properties attributed to ‘Jew’ the necessary products of [their] very social system; [they] must recognize in the ‘excesses’ attributed to ‘Jews’ the truth about [themselves]” (Žižek 1989, 128). At stake here is the symbolic position of the Other, in this case “Jew,” as an ideologically overdetermined figure that, as Žižek points out, can then be related “to ‘what is in Jew more than Jew,’ what he calls, the “impossible real kernel” (Žižek 1989, 97). As a social fantasy, or a fetish, the Jew disavows and embodies, masks and discloses, the fundamental (structural) impossibility (void or blockage) of the closed, organic, and homogenous totality of the Third Reich. For him, there is a supplement produced here about the Jews as both master signifier and objet á that makes Jewishness different from itself, for any attempt at designating the Jew will necessarily leave something out. Hence, the Jew becomes a symptom (the repressed Real, a figure that resists symbolization) that displaces the immanent social contradictions of the Nazi ideological system, serving as “the point at which it becomes obvious that society doesn’t work” (Žižek 1989, 143). As such, the figure of the Jew serves as a source of pre-ideological enjoyment that embodies and denies the structural impossibility of an organic, racially pure *völkisch* totality. The Jew, in short, allows the Nazis to “escape a certain deadlock in [their] desire” (Žižek 1989, 48).

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However, the ethical model underwriting postcolonial women's writings does not serve as a basis for rethinking the relationship between Self and Other, oppressor and victim, in terms of the “culturalization of politics” (Žižek 2008, 119), blinding thus postcolonial feminists to the realities of oppression within the postcolonial economy of conflict for which this Other is responsible. Rather, postcolonial women writers unravel the imposed complicity and the inherent power asymmetry in which the slippages and convertability between persecutors and victims are continually re-enacted. Consequently, postcolonial feminists traverse the colonial fantasy of the Other, clearing a space for transposing the specific particularities and differences that typify the Manichean economy of the colonial, global capitalist system into a “quasi-universal dimension” (Fanon 1986, 95). In so far as this ethical responsibility for the Other drives a wedge between the subject and her ontic properties, evacuating the subject of her properties and rendering her as a

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part of the objective order, solidarity then becomes possible among subjects who encounter each other as objects. As Rothenberg explains in relation to Žižek's theory of revolutionary action: "The manifold differences or symbolic properties of individuals move to the background, while each subject, as identified with the object of the drive, find its way to the objective order, the only terrain on which meaningful change can occur" (Rothenberg 2010, 177). Consequently, postcolonial feminists begin mapping possible points of shared interests that can form the basis for "build[ing] those forms of solidarity and identification which common struggle and resistance make possible . . ." (Hall 1998, 28).

[B02.34] In their articulation of the politics of solidarity with those excluded communities of struggle, in particular, postcolonial feminists thus engage in anti-colonial and post-imperial acts of resistance not only to achieve self-actualization, but also to affect a total, structural transformation in the dominant discourses of power, identity, and culture, indeed, in the nature of human relations.¹⁸ Although the demands of these excluded communities remain particular and not universal, as Ernesto Laclau notes, a universal dimension nonetheless emerge out of them. As he states, "Only insofar as people excluded from many other sites within a situation (who are unnameable within the latter) perceive their common nature as excluded and live their struggles—in their particularity—as a part of a larger emancipatory struggle" (Laclau 2004, 131). To this extent, postcolonial feminists develop alternative forms of politics that re-connect them with transnational communities of struggle around the world, by constructing this universality "out of a plurality of sites whose particularity is equivalentially articulated but not eliminated" within the framework of that larger struggle for liberation and emancipation (Laclau 2004, 131). For Žižek, however, this hegemonized universality is constituted in a non-exclusive way that embodies the excluded elements of a social totality. Hence he states, "The only real universality is the political one: the universal link binding together all those who experience a fundamental solidarity, all those who became aware that their struggles are part of the very struggle which cut across the entire social edifice" (Žižek 2002, 177). The postcolonial women's writings under examination in this book offer alternative political formations of solidarity and struggle that intervene in the specific forms of "actually-existing" colonial and neocolonial domination and hegemony as a site of, to use Ernesto Laclau's words, a "universal equivalent" (Laclau 2004, 131). Such political formations include national liberation struggles for independence, decolonial and post-imperial politics, hemispheric indigenous activism for land rights, local resistance movements, international leftist activism, and revolutionary and socialist internationalism. At stake here is an Engelsian understanding of the dialectical relationship between national consciousness and such transnational forms of solidarity—what Engels in his letter to Kautsky regarding Polish independence

refers to as the “basis of any common international action,” an idea mirrored in Frantz Fanon’s argument that “national consciousness . . . is the only thing that will give us an international dimension” (Fanon 1968, 198). Indeed, this internationalism can be construed only by unraveling the “universal dimension” that lies at the heart of national identity, or in Žižek’s words, “the gap between the particular and the universal which destabilizes it from within” (Žižek 2008, 133).

By linking themselves with these transnational communities of struggle, postcolonial feminists construct, as Chandra Talpade Mohanty states, “an ‘imagined community’ of third world oppositional struggles,” structured around “not color or sex which constructs the ground for these struggles, [but around] the *way* we think about race, class, and gender—the political links we choose to make among and between struggles” (Mohanty 1991, 4). While Mohanty does not elaborate the specific way these political links can be articulated, it can be argued that the only way that these political links can be actualized is through the idea of concrete Universality, by grounding their politics in an identification with the “part of no part,” those individuals and communities that have been excluded from the global capitalist system, are uncounted, or for whom others speak. In so far as they occupy a shadowy and spectral existence within the hegemony of the neoliberal capitalist regime, postcolonial communities of struggle can be considered a point of inherent exclusion or exception, or in Žižek’s political theory, the “very site of political universality” (Žižek 2000, 213). For Žižek, universality is inherently exclusive not only in the simple sense of excluding the “underprivileged Other,” but more importantly in the sense of excluding “its own permanent founding gesture—a set of unwritten, unacknowledged rules and practices which, while publicly disavowed, are none the less the ultimate support of the existing power edifice” (Žižek 2000, 217). Needless to say, such exclusionary founding gestures are often grounded in violent practices, and this violence as Jodi Dean explains is the condition of possibility for the emergence of the “space of politicization” (Dean 2006, 121). Universality, according to Žižek, must thus be reconfigured not through the fantasy of an organic and originary social unity, but from these points of exclusion and violence, the fissures and antagonisms especially, the class struggle, of the social order. As Žižek remarks, “The thing to do is to change the entire field, introducing a totally different universal, that of an antagonistic struggle which, rather than taking place between particular communities, splits each community from within, so that the ‘trans-cultural’ link between communities is one of a shared struggle” (Žižek 2010, 53). Hence, the only way to challenge a given socio-symbolic order, where a pathological antagonizing excess is foreclosed, is to fully assume its repressed point of exclusion, since they are more than willing, as he states elsewhere, to “introduce a division of ‘Us’ versus ‘Them’” (Žižek 1999, 201). As such, it becomes possible to

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subvert the totality of the system, since the domain of politics proper, as he states, is not simply about “the negotiation of interests but aims at something more, and starts to function as the metaphoric condensation of the global restructuring of the entire space” (Žižek 1999, 208). As Dean notes, such a political act is not the mere policing of a particular experience, but a reinscription “in another register, a register beyond itself” that can “unsettle or challenge the existing order” (Dean 2006, 123). Indeed, for Anzaldúa this requires the invention of a “new mythos” (Anzaldúa 1987, 80), alternative paradigms and structures of feeling and thought that can serve as the only way to “dismantle the master’s house” (Lorde 1984, 123).

[B02.36] It is through such alternative political formations or events, in the Badiouan sense, that political activity begins, since these events unravel the hidden political egalitarian dimension in which all subjects inhabit an equal horizontal position within the national imaginary. As Rothenberg explains in regards to Badiou’s theory of the event:

[B02.37] In the patient process of the day-to-day working out of the insight into the egalitarian dimension of a situation—a bringing to awareness of elements of the situation that were never expressly recognized within it . . . the individuals so engaged become “subjects” of truth procedures, processes by which the political truth of egalitarianism comes into being (or not) in the practical work of political activity. (Rothenberg 2010, 168)

[B02.38] As such, the egalitarian politics of transnational alliances in postcolonial women’s writings proceeds with the foreknowledge that first, there are no guarantees of transformational change, and second, that the solidarity community is provisional and incomplete. As Butler states regarding what she calls the “antifoundationalist politics of solidarity” (Butler 1990, 115), such an alternative political community does not only lack any determinate scenarios, precluding knowing “the shape and meaning of a coalitional assemblage . . . prior to its achievement” (Butler 1990, 15), but is also necessarily incomplete and provisional, requiring permanent negotiation of the contradictions and differences in power among the diverse groups and communities that make up the solidarity movement. Hence, this mode of transnational coalition is grounded in a moment of politics which, as Bhabha writes, challenges civic cultures to conceive “the time of political action and understanding as opening up a space that can accept and regulate the differential structure of the moment of intervention without rushing to produce a unity of the social antagonism or contradiction” (Bhabha 1994, 25). To this extent, this modality of transnational alliances in postcolonial feminism rejects dominant discourses of coalition based on identity politics and liberal consensus politics that advocate the politics of single issues and encourage a teleological trajectory founded on accomplishing an illusory unity in the diverse struggles that oppressed communities wage worldwide.

[B02.39]

In postcolonial women's narratives of displacing, the tensions that result from the act of reimagining radical politics projects from within the field of global capitalism take shape in the contradiction between the form and the content of these texts. Most of the texts under discussion here—autobiographies, fictionalized autobiographies, biomythographies, testimonios, memoirs, and coming-of-age novels are symptomatic of the counterhegemonic writings of the last four decades of the twentieth century that have valorized personal voice, by recentering the minoritarian subject in the act of recovering lost and suppressed histories. Despite the high premium placed on tropes of heterogeneity, multiplicity, difference, and contingency in these texts, that is, these narratives of displacing are still grounded in a pedagogy of personal voice that is constructed through the truth-claims made on the basis of the authority of personal experience. Rather than simply become another celebration of the culture of individualism, furthermore, the authority of the personal voice is encoded here as a signifier of the collective experiences of the material conditions of oppression be it colonial conquest, political disenfranchisement, or economic exploitation and deprivation. In this book, I approach the contradiction between form and content in each text through an interrogation of its most productive tactic, only to work my way through the dialogic formation of the other three. In each chapter, that is, I shall start with the central problematics that is refracted through the historical and material conditions that made the production of each text or constellation of texts possible and through which the fundamental social antagonism (class struggle) is ultimately articulated in these texts. In so far as this fundamental antagonism constitutes the universal dimension of these texts, it can only be embodied in the particular element in the situation as depicted in the texts. As I examine these texts in their specific contexts of production, therefore, this analysis foregrounds the texts' material and ideological discourses, allowing thus for a better appreciation of the heterogeneity of these narratives. In short, the analysis here is proffered as an interpretive map or an analytical framework, not as a totalizing theory, that can help disclose the complex discursive networks that postcolonial feminist subjects negotiate *differently* in the production of their extimate subjectivities.

[B02.40]

The first chapter examines the work of various Puerto Rican writers namely, Esmeralda Santiago, Aurora Levins Morales, and Rosario Morales, through the tactics of circular travel between Puerto Rico and the U.S. mainland that emerges from the history of the U.S. colonization, labor migration, and economic neo-colonialism of this Caribbean island. This shuttling back and forth between metropolitan and insular spaces, which must be interrogated and framed within the capitalist logic of the circulation of commodities, labor, and money, allows for rethinking first, the geographies of the Puerto Rican nation and its diaspora, as the United States, the Caribbean, and Latin America are perceived to be intersecting and overlapping, establishing a

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conjunctural trans-American space, in which New York becomes the largest metropolitan center in Puerto Rico. Second, the extimate positionality of Puerto Rican feminists not as immigrants but as an inflow of continental U.S. citizens who are in but not of the United States. The circular migrancy of Puerto Ricans within the specificities of the international division of labor and the U.S. empire clears a space for encoding counterhegemonic narratives of travel that foreground the urgency of the Puerto Rican struggle for independence within the context of Latin American liberation politics and socialist internationalism, and for the Moraleses in particular, narratives that insist on developing alternative modes of solidarity with the Palestinians through the critique of Israel's mythical elevation of Jewish victimization to an ontological level that can displace and erase the brutal record of her colonial and racist policies in Palestine.

[B02.41] The second chapter takes a closer look at the work of the Zimbabwean novelist and film director Tsitsi Dangarembga through her attempts to inscribe the unhomely locations of her female Shona characters. She depicts the extimate subjectivities of Shona women in the disjunctures between African discourses of nationalism, neocolonialism, and Christian missionaries, through their negotiation of their relationships with their mothers and their disavowal of Englishness. Rupturing the assumed overlap between culture, place, and identity that underlies the legacies of African nativism and nationalist ideologies, Dangarembga disidentifies these women from any fantasy of a harmonious home/stead and homeland. Neither patriarchal and nationalist ideologies nor imperial promises of progress and modernity through colonial education can guarantee these women agency and a space of genuine practices of liberty. Although Tambu ends her narrative with a recognition of the "process of expansion" in the formation of her subjectivity, the precise referent of this expansion remains open to interpretation. Far from construing this process of expansion within the semantics of cosmopolitical citizenship, nonetheless, this process should be read within the Fanonian politics that frames the novel with its commitment to an internationalist ethos that is clearly grounded in the history of the Second Chimurenga—the national liberation struggle against the White Rhodesian government. Although Nyasha's political mentorship of Tambu as well as her symbolic destitution, which leads to the passage à l'acte—that outburst of violent energy during her nervous breakdown—the full potential of this politics for Tambu and contemporary postcolonial subjects of difference remains yet to be explored.

[B02.42] The third chapter explores the works of the American-Indian writer Louise Erdrich through her interrogation of the contingency of the ontic properties, the difference within, the transracial indigenous subject, which is the product of international (hemispheric) histories of conquest, resistance, and cultural exchange. Although all her novels are concerned with the dilemmas confronting transracial subjects in their negotiation of discrepant topog-

ographies of identity and modes of sociability, Erdrich's fourth novel, *The Crown of Columbus* (1991) renders its transracial protagonist, Vivian Two-star, in her extimacy as both dislocated from the discrepant racial narratives that compete to lay claims upon her, and at once open to remapping her location within wider hemispheric spaces. In her twoness, the transracial subject here does not simply enjoy the pleasures of belonging to diverse Native American and European communities, but underscores through her own "lumpy" identities the difficulties of constructing transracial subjectivities within the specific hemispheric history of Native American oppression. As such, Erdrich ascribes a radically transformative potential to these transracial subjects, consequent upon their ability to remap their location within hemispheric circuits of indigenous politics that reinscribe them within the concrete Universality of the indigenous Pan-Indian "part of no part" in the Western hemisphere. The infinite possibilities in the production of transracial identities permit thus a shift from a politics of identity to a politics of solidarity within a political internationalist perspective. Understood in the context of the controversial commemoration of the Quincentenary in 1994, in particular, Erdrich's text does not only call for a politics of solidarity based on mutuality and love, but more importantly disinters the issue of land claim adjudication and tribal sovereignty that would reinstate Indian titles to their lawful landholders.

And the fourth chapter examines the ways in which the autobiography, *My Home, My Prison* (1978), of the Palestinian writer and journalist Raymonda Tawil articulates her extimate positionality within the interlocking structures of domination and oppression namely, Arab patriarchy, Israel's illegal military occupation of Palestine, apartheid structures, Zionist settler colonialism, and U.S. imperial policies in the Middle East, through both a radical ethical reconfiguration of the Otherness of the Self and the politics of solidarity and transnational alliance that are grounded in the concrete Universality of the excluded communities, the "part of no part," in Israel/ Palestine. From her extimate location within the contradictions between Zionist imperialism and Arab patriarchy, national consciousness and internationalism, Tawil negotiates the ethico-political contradictions that structured the Palestinian national liberation movement in two ways: On the one hand, Tawil describes the wholesale condemnation of the inhumanity of the Israeli colonizers in Palestinian and Arab national discourses, recognizing the internal ethical multiplicity of Israeli society regarding the question of the occupation, without succumbing nonetheless to the ideological mystification of the realities of the occupation. On the other, Tawil inscribes alternative forms of struggle for the Palestinian right for self-determination, national sovereignty, and territorial integrity through emergent modes of sociability and solidarity with the local, regional, and international networks of alliances and resistance, including Palestinian grass roots movements, local "dovish," Israeli

[B02.43]

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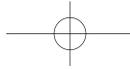
leftist groups, and key figures of the international intelligentsia who met at her home. Thus, she engages in a struggle against the colonial hegemony of the Israeli apartheid, affirming that the particularity of the Palestinian struggle can still obtain a universal dimension only through its equivalential articulation within the framework of the larger struggle for liberation and emancipation.

[B02.44]

In each one of these chapters, I will engage the intellectual context and debates, in which these texts were produced, by reading them with and/ or against the work of particular national public intellectuals. These texts, I will show, do not merely react to these debates, but rather seek to explore alternative spaces that can allow for the creative construction of a radical reworking of the aporiatic paradoxes in these debates. Thus, I will read Santiago and the Moraleses with/against various influential theorizations of Caribbean cultural formation, in general, and Puerto Rican cultural production, in particular, such as the works of Stuart Hall, Luis Rafael Sánchez, and René Marqués, respectively; Dangarembga with/against not only Chinua Achebe's seminal postcolonial novel, *Things Fall Apart*, but also the work of Frantz Fanon and Ngugi wa Thiongo'; Erdrich with/against Gerald Vizenor's works and the debate about the Columbian quincentenary; and Tawil with/against Simon de Beauvoir's feminist subject and Edward Said's influential theorization of exile and Palestinian dispossession.

[B02.45]

In the conclusion of this book, I will return to a theme implicit in the discussion of postcolonial women's writings namely, the extent of the (in)fidelity of postcolonial feminist writers to the idea of the revolutionary act or event itself. Indeed, the idea of a revolutionary act constitutes a gap in postcolonial feminist writing: While postcolonial feminists construct new intimate modes of sociability and subjectivization grounded in histories of anti-colonial internationalist struggle, they still stop short of actualizing a total revolutionary event in these writings. Cosmopoliticians, however, misconstrue this disconnect between anti-revolutionary praxis and the actualization of the revolutionary act, by reframing postcolonial feminist writings within an epistemological shift to the ethics of the fragmented multitude, global civil society, and human rights. In part, this has to do with the cosmopolitical suppression and omission of the history and discourses of anti-colonial internationalism from their narratives of cosmopolitanism. To varying degrees, both the cosmopolitical suppression of revolutionary internationalism and the postcolonial feminist disavowal of the revolutionary event should then be construed as symptomatic of the current academic disavowal of Marxist thought and politics.¹⁹ However, the gap of the revolutionary event in postcolonial women writers' narratives of displacing constitutes a structural aporia in theorization of the revolutionary act—the question of whether anti-colonial internationalism should be articulated in terms of a revolutionary rupture or lived in a state of permanent revolution remains



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subject to debate.²⁰ To me, nonetheless, the latter as embodied in postcolonial feminist writings serve as a more viable locus for the actualization of the larger project of emancipation and liberation. Only a true commitment to revolutionary internationalism, I conclude, that is bound to emerge from within the specific material conditions of postcoloniality where the field of revolutionary possibilities is still open, can affect the construction and stabilization of an alternative egalitarian world order, which the Left, including cosmopoliticians, today do not seem able to imagine in the context of this presumably post-political world.

Notes

[B02.46]

1. The literature on the relations between the local and the global is voluminous. For divergent views on the local/ global conflict, see Featherstone et al. 1995, King 1991, Robertson 1992, Friedman 1994, Hannerz 1996, Wilson and Dissanayake 1996, Jameson and Miyoshi 1997, and Mignolo 2000.

[B02n1]

2. Although Edward Said's opus magnum *Orientalism* discusses gender especially, in the section on Flaubert (1978, 186–190), postcolonial feminist critics took him to task, and rightly so, for ignoring the implications of Orientalist discourses on women. Thus, there has been an outpouring of work on the Orientalist representations of Third World women in both colonial literature and mainstream western feminism. See, for example, Ong 1988, Mohanty and Russo 1991, Lewis 1996, Alexander and Mohanty 1997, Boer 2003, Burke and Prochaska 2008.

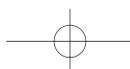
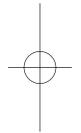
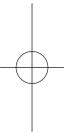
[B02n2]

3. The common celebration of hybridity in postcolonial studies as only a positive affirmation of exchange is problematic for the following reasons: First, hybridity circulates as an abstract, universal trope that is usually disconnected from the personal and political contexts in which it emerged. Hybridity thus fabulates the pleasures of living in a postmodern world of pastiche and obliterates the histories of struggle and coalition that typify postcolonial feminisms. Second, hybridity assumes that identity and culture are static essences that are always already identified in the translation between one context and another. The process of construction and the unpredictability of combinations in cultural exchanges is completely erased. Third, hybridity comfortably locates processes of exchange and synthesis in the periphery, while the West remains confidently a terrain of liberal pluralism, where cultural signs circulate in happy coexistence. Hybrid formations that interrupt the allegedly unadulterated space of metropolitan narratives of nation and race are quickly co-opted and commodified. And fourth, hybridity emphasizes global mutuality and interdependence, in such a way that covers up the persistence of tribalism and ethnic absolutism as well as the power asymmetries that inform the international scene. See also the discussion of hybridity in Young 1995, Brennan 1998, Canclini 2005, and Kraidy 2007.

[B02n3]

4. Although the heyday of cosmopolitics theory and the heated debate it has generated reached its peak a little over a decade ago, cosmopolitics continues to be at the center of many controversies in various disciplines in the human and social sciences today. The number of publications and academic conferences dedicated to the subject proliferate by the day, and the effort at institutionalizing the critical study of cosmopolitics in different encyclopedic and handbook projects is on its way. As far as gender is concerned, discussions of cosmopolitics in relation to women, in general, and to women of the global south, in particular, remain lacking. Indeed, cosmopolitanism by and large is framed within heteronormative Occidental paradigms of epistemology and political praxis. A curious case of this omission is the special issue of *Public Culture* on cosmopolitanism: In the introduction to the volume, Sheldon Pollock et al. call for the productive imbrication of feminism and cosmopolitanism, or what they refer to as cosmofeminism. Appropriating feminist poetics and politics for decentering and pluralizing normative Western discourses on cosmopolitanism, Pollock et al. consider feminism as a situated universalism that bears a radical potential for reconfiguring the masculine and Eurocentric, or universal, ideological subtext of the history and theory of cosmopolitanism. The plurality of

[B02n4]





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transnational feminisms, and their struggle with internal exclusionary practices and differentiation among women, offers thus an exemplary model for problematizing the history of a singular, universal cosmopolitanism and for clearing a space for recognizing “the plurality of modes and histories—not necessarily shared in degree or in concept regionally, nationally, or internationally—that comprise cosmopolitan practices and history” (Pollock 2000, 585). The problem, however, is that it lacks any concrete engagement with cosmofeminism, the same paradigm the editors set up as the model par excellence for theorizing cosmopolitics in the human and social sciences. Despite the appropriation of feminist poetic and politics, Pollock et al. apologetically state that “cosmofeminism is a space yet to be inhabited, even in this issue of *Public Culture*” (Pollock 2000, 585). This omission, I maintain, is symptomatic of the general invisibility of women from normative theories of cosmopolitics. On this issue of gender and cosmopolitanism, see Stivens 2006. For carious views on cosmopolitan theory and its implications for postcolonial discourse and theory, see Brennan 1997, Vertovec and Cohen 2003, Archibugi 2003, Appiah 2007, Krishnaswamy and Hawley 2008, and Wilson et al. 2010.

[B02n5]

5. Aihwa Ong (1999) examines the imbrication of transnational identity formation as privileged subjects within the fluid circuits of global capitalism, and Craig Calhoun (2008) warns against confusing the privileged specificity of the mobility of the mostly Western professionals and activists for universality (106). Calhoun also suggests that refugees, whose lives spanned the globe, “recognized these as particular, specific connections and didn’t confuse them for unambiguous tokens of a universalistic type: global connections” (106). Brennan (2003) pushes this a little further, suggesting that the only vehicle that can embody the global connections of the disadvantaged is, in fact, called internationalism (42).

[B02n6]

6. At the heart of this debate surrounding cosmopolitics is the problematic of the nation-state and national sovereignty and their relevance today in what is presumed to be a “borderless world.” Tim Brennan’s phenomenal book, *At Home in the World* (1997), offers by far the most eloquent defense of national sovereignty and the best critique of the premature inauguration of postnationality in the academy. Central to Brennan’s critique is the cosmopolitical complicity with neo-imperialism and the hegemony of U.S. power in this new world order, a fact that has clearly escaped cosmopoliticians but not the hordes of media pundits in the United States. that promote capitalism’s borderless world fantasy. For the debate on cosmopolitics and nationalism, see Brennan 1997, Robbins and Cheah’s 1998, and Tan 2004.

[B02n7]

7. The impact of globalization on women’s lives has been mostly discussed in terms of women’s location within the global restructuring of the economy and the international division of labor. See, for example, Mies 1986, Ong 1987, Tinker 1990, Moghadam 1994, Parreñas 2001, Ehrenreich and Hochschild 2002, Aguilar and Lacsamana 2004, and Lindio-McGovern and Wallimann 2009.

[B02n8]

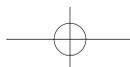
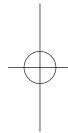
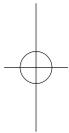
8. Gayatri Spivak has recently criticized the “current misuse, abuse, and overuse of the rubric cosmopolitanism” as another example of the “incessant recoding and reterritorializing of capital” (Spivak 2008, 247–248).

[B02n9]

9. The term “actually-existing colonialism,” to the best of my knowledge, has been coined after the phrase “actually-existing socialism,” but it is not clear where the term originates. However, the recent scattered dissemination of the term ostensibly demonstrates that postcolonial studies has finally moved beyond the controversies that raged in the 1990s over the precise referent of the prefix “post” which, as Jean Camaroff correctly point out, left out the “the political sociology of actually existing colonies” (Camaroff 2005, 128). *The Journal of Contemporary Thought* (Baroda, India) dedicated its Winter 2006 issue to this topic; the issue was edited by Gaurav Desai and featured articles on Puerto Rico, Hawai’i, the Pacific Islands, American Indians, Palestine, and other modalities of actually existing colonialisms grounded in racist biopolitical practices today (Desai 2006). Indeed, Desai had also organized a special panel on the issue at the annual conference of the Modern Language Association in Philadelphia in 2004, on which I presented an earlier version of my chapter on Tawil in this volume.

[B02n10]

10. Lacan and Miller use various figures and shapes such as the Mobius strip, the “internal eight” (huit intérieur), and the torus to represent this relation of extimacy. As Molly Rothenberg explains, Lacan’s “internal eight” figure is “twisted back on itself, so that it looks like a small circle within a large circle, with one point of connection” (Rothenberg 2010, 36). Rothenberg





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points out that this point of connection corresponds to the irreducible excess that attends social relations, providing the necessary minimal difference of the subject from itself, the constitutive gap that makes the social field itself possible in the first place.

11. My reconfiguration of extimate subjectivities at this point in the analysis departs from Rothenberg's, and can be considered in a sense as an attempt at salvaging an inherently radical Marxist potential to extimate subjectivities that allows postcolonial women writers to engage the formal constitution of the system itself through, as will shortly be evident, an emphasis on the articulation of anti-colonial internationalism as it is embedded in a larger project of liberation and emancipation. To this extent, my reconceptualization of the radical possibilities of extimate subjectivities distinguishes it from various articulations of "eccentric" subjectivities, to use Teresa de Lauretis's phrase (1991), and other binaristic models of analysis that pitted insiders against outsiders (Einhorn 2006), that were common in the last two decades of postcolonial/ feminist criticism. Even though this eccentricity in Lacanian psychoanalysis is *stricto sensu* ex-centric, locating the center of the Subject somewhere on the outside, either in the unconscious or the Symbolic order, most of these theories of subjectivity were mostly Foucauldian or deconstructionist in nature and did not consider ex-centricity in its specific technical Lacanian context and tended to reify the cultural field especially, the problematic of identity politics, as the primary site of contestation and struggle. Furthermore, most these theories seemed to reify this location into some interstitial space which, however undecidable it is, does not offer a locus for agency other than some vague outside that remains evacuated of any content. Bhabha, for example, discusses what he refers to as the "non-sentence" as being

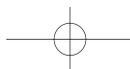
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not before (either as the past or a priori) or inside (either as depth or presence) but outside (both spatially and temporally ex-centric, interruptive, in between, on the borderlines, *turning inside outside*). . . . The space of the non-sentence is not a negative ontology: not *before* the sentence but something that *could have* acceded to the sentence and yet was outside it. This discourse is indeed one of indeterminism, unexpectability, one that is neither pure contingency or negativity nor endless deferral. . . . To interrogate the occidental stereotomy—inside/outside, space/time—one needs to think, outside the sentence. . . . I want to suggest that this outside not in simple spatial terms but as constitutive of meaning and agency. (Bhabha 1994, 186)

While I wholeheartedly agree that this this outside is "constitutive of meaning and agency," postcolonial critics continue to be reluctant to demonstrate the extent to which this exteriority has been dialectically articulated through narratives and discourses of anti-colonial internationalism. Interestingly enough, Bhabha does refer in passing to Lacan's extimacy, only to claim that it "produces another hybrid site or sign" (Bhabha 1994, 207). The point here is not merely to deconstruct reality, but to recognize the Real of the fundamental antagonism and change it (Žižek 1989).

12. The postcolonial subject of difference assumes an ambivalent position in Žižek's work, a position that evolves within the contradictions between his culturalist and political understanding of the postcolonial. On the one hand, there is a culturalist representation of the postcolonial (mostly Tibetan Buddhism) as a fetish, a fantasmatic object upon which the Western melancholic subject projects his own anxieties, embodying the lie that allows this subject to endure the unbearable truth that the source of his secret of enjoyment is to be found within, not somewhere else outside. On the other, there is a political representation that considers the postcolonial (mostly the favelas in Latin America and the slums in South East Asia) as a symptom of the logic of global capitalism, modernization, and developmentalism, which functions as the point of the return of the repressed truth of class antagonism within, in his words, the "field of global capitalist lies" (Žižek 2008, 424). In both cases, however, Žižek fails to reimagine the subject of postcolonial difference as a genuine locus of the revolutionary act, a subject-for-itself, opting instead for envisioning a true revolution emerging only from a Europe-centered "Second World," where it becomes possible to put up a resistance front to the global hegemony of the U.S.. For more on Žižek's approach to postcoloniality, see Khader (2013).

[B02n12]





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[B02n13] 13. On the problematic relationship between women and nationalism, see Jayawardena 1986, Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989, Kandiyoti 1994, and Chatterje 1995. As for the literature on women and the postcolonial state, see Diamond 1983, Afshar 1987, Charlton, Ellen, Everett, and Staudt 1989, Connell 1994, Rai and Lievesley 1996, Phillips 1998, Randall and Waylen 1998, Charrad 2001, and Rajan 2003.

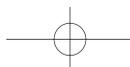
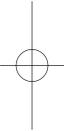
[B02n14] 14. Rajeswari Rajan's fascinating book, *The Scandal of the State* (2003), names this "unavoidable aporia" (Rajan 2003, 278) in the subaltern condition of Indian women in a way that also refracts the ambivalence of the critic herself regarding this internationalist history that I'm proposing here. Rajan maintains that a possible solution to the problem of the lack of full citizenship for Indian women and the failure of the law to guarantee equal protection for its female subjects lies in developing the idea of civil society within a liberal-constitutional framework (Rajan 2003, 167–173). However, she ends her book with the case of the notorious female dacoit, Phoolan Devi, in whose case she maintains the law should be made contingent in order to account for her abysmal socio-economic conditions and the corruption of state structures. Despite her sympathy for this "revolutionary bandit" (Rajan 2003, 218), Rajan can locate Devi's critique of the nation-state only within "alternative (local, community) structures of regulation and rule" (Rajan 2003, 234), obscuring once again the specific histories of revolutionary struggle that link local forms of resistance in India to anti-colonial internationalism.

[B02n15] 15. The prominent tropes in travel theory include diaspora (Gilroy 1993; Boyarin and Boyarin 1993; Chow 1993; Hall 1994; Radhakrishnan 1996; Lowe 1996; brah 1996; Clifford 1997), transmigrants (Schiller et al. 1992; Basch et al. 1994), and translocalities (Apudurai 1997). For a useful overview and critique of postmodern theories of travel, see Kaplan 1996.

[B02n16] 16. Žižek considers the class struggle to be the constitutive split in the formation of society or the hole that forecloses the possibility of any unified community, and as such it belongs to the register of the Real, in that it cannot be encountered directly, but can only manifest itself in different attempts at symbolization. Moreover, the ability of the subject to discern the truth of the antagonism of class struggle depends on the ideological perspective from which the subject encounters reality. In the current global capitalist system, neoliberal ideology covers up the failure in the symbolization of class struggle in the Real, and hence, those who are interpellated by neoliberal capitalism to believe in it as the end of history will not be able to traverse the fantasy of capitalism and see the truth of class struggle as the fundamental antagonism of the system (Žizek 2002, 101).

[B02n17] 17. The postcolonial/ U.S. third world feminist critiques of mainstream western feminism can be found in Moraga and Anzaldúa 1983, Hull et al. 1982, Anzaldúa 1990, Spivak 1988, Davies and Fido 1990, Sandoval 1991, Mohanty et al. 1991, and Gunew and Yeatman 1993. See also Friedman, for a very useful and schematic analysis of these discourses and the differences between them (1998, 18–25).

[B02n18] 18. There is an emerging tendency in the last decade in postcolonial criticism to downplay the importance of resistance in the current geopolitical context. This trend rejects resistance as a transparent act of opposition between colonizer and colonized, opting instead to examine processes of postcolonial transformation instead. For Bill Ashcroft, for example, the appropriation and transformation of colonial discourse and imperial technologies is a more effective and resilient form of resistance than military struggle against colonialism. Cultural resistance, he contends, refuses to be absorbed in colonial discourse. Rather, it takes imperial influences and alters them into tools for expressing the identity, history, and culture of the colonized (Ashcroft 2001, 18–44). This discourse is symptomatic of the ascendancy of post-political discourses in postcolonial studies which rushes to erase boundaries between Self and Other, colonizer and colonized, and celebrate their intimacies and mutual interdependencies, without paying any attention to the unequal power relations between postcolonial and metropolitan centers. Indeed, throughout his discussion of resistance, Ashcroft remains inattentive to the workings of the current global system, in which commodities from various parts of the globe circulate unevenly. While cultural transformation is valorized, the abysmal material conditions of the postcolonial world are left out. For a materialist critique of this discourse of transformation, see Ahmad 1992, San Juan 1997, Lazarus 1999, and Parry 2004.





Introduction

DRAFT

19. In *Wars of Position*, Tim Brennan maintains that contemporary cultural theory has displaced those “cultures of belief,” by which he names Marxist theory and praxis, with “cultures of being,” or different forms of identity politics. For Brennan, these modalities of cultural studies today are constructed “against the bogey that looms in the name of Marxism,” resulting in the ultimate elision of a rich intellectual history and “a pervasive rewriting of the past” (Brennan 2006, 6, 1). For an earlier critique of the disengagement of intellectuals aligned with the Left from Marxism, see Sprinker (1993).

[B02n19]

20. For more on this debate, see Rothenberg (2010).

[B02n20]

