Postcolonial Criticism and Indian Historiography

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One of the distinct effects of the recent emergence of postcolonial criticism has been to force a radical re-thinking and re-formulation of forms of knowledge and social identities authored and authorized by colonialism and western domination. For this reason, it has also created a ferment in the field of knowledge. This is not to say that colonialism and its legacies remained unquestioned until recently: nationalism and marxism come immediately to mind as powerful challenges to colonialism. But both of these operated with master-narratives that put Europe at its center. Thus, when nationalism, reversing Orientalist thought, attributed agency and history to the subjected nation, it also staked a claim to the order of Reason and Progress instituted by colonialism; and when marxists pilloried colonialism, their criticism was framed by a universalist mode-of-production narrative. Recent postcolonial criticism, on the other hand, seeks to undo the Eurocentrism produced by the institution of the west's trajectory, its appropriation of the other as History. It does so, however, with the acute realization that postcoloniality is not born and nurtured in a panoptic distance from history. The postcolonial exists as an aftermath, as an after — after being worked over by colonialism.[1] Criticism formed in this process of the enunciation of discourses of domination occupies a space that is neither inside nor outside the history of western domination but in a tangential relation to it. This is what Homi Bhabha calls an in-between, hybrid position of practice and negotiation,[2] or what Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak terms catachresis; "reversing, displacing, and seizing the apparatus of value-coding."[3] In the rest of this essay, I describe this catachrestic reinscription and the anxieties it provokes in the field of Indian historiography where postcolonial criticism has made a particularly notable appearance.

The Ambivalence of Postcolonial Criticism

A prominent example of recent postcolonial criticism consists of the writings in several volumes of *Subaltern Studies* (edited and theorized most extensively by Ranajit Guha) which challenge existing historiography as elitist and advance in its place a subaltern perspective.[4] A collective of historians writing from India, Britain, and Australia, the *Subaltern Studies* scholars use the perspective of the subaltern to fiercely combat

the persistence of colonialist knowledge in nationalist and mode-of-production narratives. It is important to note that their project is derived from marxism, or from the failure of the realization of the marxist collective consciousness. For it is this failure of the subaltern to act as a class-concious worker that provides the basis for representing the subaltern as resistant to the appropriation by colonial and nationalist elites, or to various programs of modernity. The subaltern is a figure produced by historical discourses of domination, but it nevertheless provides a mode of reading history different from those inscribed in elite accounts. Reading colonial and nationalist archives against their grain and focusing on their blind-spots, silences and anxieties, these historians seek to uncover the subaltern's myths, cults, ideologies and revolts that colonial and nationalist elites sought to appropriate and conventional historiography has laid to waste by their deadly weapon of cause and effect. Ranajit Guha's *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency* (1983) is a powerful example of this scholarship which seeks to recover the peasant from elite projects and positivist historiography. In this wide-ranging study full of brilliant insights and methodological innovation, Guha provides a fascinating account of the peasant's insurgent consciousness, rumors, mythic visions, religiosity, and bonds of community. From Guha's account, the subaltern emerges with forms of sociality and political community at odds with nation and class, and they defy the models of rationality and social action that conventional historiography uses. Guha argues persuasively that such models are elitist insofar as they deny the subaltern's autonomous consciousness, and are drawn from colonial and liberal-nationalist projects of appropriating the subaltern. Brilliantly deconstructive though such readings were of the colonial-nationalist archives, the early phase of the *Subaltern Studies* was marked by a desire to retrieve the autonomous will and consciousness of the subaltern. This is no longer the case in their more recent writings, but even in their earlier writings the desire to recover the subaltern's autonomy is repeatedly frustrated because subalternity, by definition, signifies the impossibility of autonomy.

The concept of a subaltern history, derived from its simultaneous possibility and impossibility in discourses of domination, exemplifies the ambivalence of postcolonial criticism: formed in history, it reinscribes and displaces the record of that history by reading its archives differently from its constitution (in Spivak's sense of catachresis). This ambivalent criticism is observable also in writings that, with a somewhat different focus than the *Subaltern Studies*, subject forms of knowledge, culture and "traditions," canonized by colonial and western discourses, to searching scrutiny and radical reinscription. Examinations of the nineteenth-century reformist attempts to suppress and outlaw the practices of widow sacrifice (*sati*), for example, rearticulate them by revealing that these colonial rulers and Indian male reformers formulated and used gendered ideas to

enforce new forms of domination even as they questioned the burning of widows; studies of criminality point to power relations at work in classifying and acting upon "criminal tribes" even as threats to life and property were countered; and inquiries into labor servitude depict how the free-unfree opposition concealed the operation of power in the installation of free labor as the natural human condition while it provided a vantage-point for challenging certain forms of corporeal domination.[5] The aim of such studies is not to unmask dominant discourses but to explore their faultlines in order to provide different accounts, to describe histories revealed in the cracks of the colonial archaelogy of knowledge.

In part, the critical gaze that these studies direct at the archaeology of knowledge enshrined in the west arises from the fact that most of them are being written in the first-world academy where the power of hegemonic discourses about India is so palpable. This is not to say that the reach of these discourses does not extend beyond metropolitan centers; but outside the first world, in India itself, the power of western discourses operates through its authorization and deployment by the nation-state — the ideologies of modernization and instrumentalist science are so deeply sedimented in the national body politic that they neither manifest themselves nor function exclusively as forms of imperial power.[6] In the west, on the other hand, the production and distribution of Orientalist concepts continue to play a vital role in projecting the first world as the radiating center around which others are arranged. It is for this reason that postcolonial criticisms produced in the metropolitan academy evince certain affinities with deconstructive critiques of the west.[7] In this respect, both Michel Foucault's and Jacques Derrida's critiques of western thought intersect with postcolonial criticism. Michel Foucault, because his account of the genealogies of the west provides a powerful critique of the rule of modernity that the colonies experienced in a peculiar form. Derrida's relevance is not obvious but is no less important because, exposing how structures of signification effect their closures through a strategy of opposition and hierarchization that edit, suppress, and marginalize everything that upsets founding values, he provides a way to undo the implacable oppositions of colonial thought — east-west, traditional-modern, primitive-civilized. If these oppositions, as Derrida's analysis of the metaphysics of presence shows, aim relentlessly to suppress the other as an inferior, as a supplement, their structures of signification can also be rearticulated differently.

> Metaphysics — the white mythology which reassembles and reflects the culture of the West: the white man takes his own mythology, Indo-European mythology, his own *logos*, that is, the *mythos* of his idiom, for the universal form that he must still wish to call Reason... White mythology — metaphysics has erased within itself the fabulous scene that has produced it, the scene that nevertheless remains active

> and stirring, inscribed in white ink, an invisible design covered over in the palimpsest.[8]

If the production of White mythology has nevertheless left "an invisible design covered over in the palimpsest," the structure of signification, of *différance*, can be rearticulated differently than that which produced the west as Reason. For postcolonial theorists, the value of Derrida's insight lies in the disclosure that the politics displacing other claims to the margins can be undone by rearticulating the structure of differences that existing foundations seek to suppress and that strategies for challenging the authority and power derived from various foundational myths (History as the march of Man, of Reason, Progress, Modes-of-Production) lie inside, not outside, the ambivalence that these myths seek to suppress. From this point of view, critical work seeks its basis not without but within the fissures of dominant structures. Or, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak puts it, the deconstructive philosphical position (or postcolonial criticism) consists in saying an "impossible 'no' to a structure, which one critiques, yet inhabits intimately."[9]

For an example of this deconstructive strategy that rearticulates a structure that one inhabits intimately, let us turn to archival documents dealing with the abolition of *sati*, or Hindu widow sacrifice in the early nineteenth century. The historian encounters these as records documenting the contests between the British "civilizing mission" and Hindu heathenism, between modernity and tradition; and of previous readings about the beginning of the emancipation of Hindu women and about the birth of modern India. This is so because, as Lata Mani has shown,[10] the very existence of these documents has a history involving the fixing of women as the site for the colonial and the indigenous male elite's constructions of authoritative Hindu traditions. The accumulated sources on *sati* — whether or not the burning of widows was sanctioned by Hindu codes, did women go willingly or not to the funeral pyre, on what grounds could the immolation of women be abolished — come to us marked by early nineteenth-century colonial and indigenous-patriarchal discourses. And just as the early nineteenth-century encounter between colonial and indigenous elites and textual sources was resonant with colonial-patriarchal voices, the historian's confrontation today with sources on *sati* cannot escape the echo of that previous rendezvous. In repeating that encounter, how does the historian today *not replicate* the early nineteenth-century staging of *sati* as a contest between tradition and modernity (or different visions of tradition), between the slavery of women and efforts towards their emancipation, between barbaric Hindu practices and the British civilizing mission? Lata Mani accomplishes this task brilliantly by showing that the opposing arguments were founded on the fabrication of the law-giving scriptural tradition as the origin of Hindu customs: both those who supported and those who opposed *sati* sought the authority of textual

origins for their beliefs. During the debate, however, the whole history of the fabrication of origins was effaced, as was the collusion between indigenous patriarchy and colonial power in constructing the origins for and against *sati*. Consequently, as Spivak states starkly, the debate left no room for the woman's enunciatory position. Caught in the contest over whether traditions did or did not sanction *sati* and over whether the woman self-immolated willingly or not, the colonized subaltern woman disappeared: she was literally extinguished for her dead husband in the indigenous patriarchal discourse, or offered the disfiguring choice of the western notion of the sovereign, individual will.[11] The problem here is not one of sources (the absence of woman's testimony), but that the very staging of the debate left no place for the widow's enunciatory position: she is left no position from which she can speak. Spivak makes this silencing of the woman speak of the limits of historical knowledge, but the critic can do so because the colonial archive comes with a pregnant silence.[12]

Spivak very correctly marks the silencing of the subaltern woman as the point at which the interpreter must acknowledge the limits of historical understanding; it is impossible to retrieve the woman's voice when she was not given a subject-position from which to speak. But this refusal to retrieve the woman's voice because it would involve the conceit that the interpreter speaks for her does not disable understanding; rather, Spivak manages to reinscribe the colonial and indigenous patriarchal archive when she shows that the tradition-versus-modernization story was told by obliterating the colonized women's subject-position. Here, the interpreter's recognition of the limit of historical knowledge does not disable criticism but enables the critic to mark the space of the silenced subaltern as *aporetic*. The recognition of the subaltern as the limit of knowledge, in turn, resists a paternalist "recovery" of the subaltern's voice and frustrates our repetition of the imperialist attempt to speak for the colonized subaltern woman. This argument appears to run counter to the radical historians' use of the historiographical convention of retrieval to recover the histories of the traditionally ignored — women, workers, peasants, and minorities. Spivak's point, however, is not that such retrievals should not be undertaken but that they mark the point of the subaltern's silencing in history. The project of retrieval begins at the point of the subaltern's erasure; its very possibility is also a sign of its impossibility, and represents the intervention of the historian-critic whose discourse must be interrogated persistently and whose appropriation of the other should be guarded against vigilantly.[13]

Capitalism and Colonialism

These directions of postcolonial criticism make it a disturbing and ambivalent practice, perched between traditional historiography and its failures,

between the elite and the subaltern, within the folds of dominant discourses and seeking to rearticulate their pregnant silence — outlining "an invisible design covered over in the palimpsest." How do these strategies fare when compared with a powerful tradition of historiography of India that seeks to encompass its colonial history in the larger narrative of the development of capitalism? Does not the concern with rearticulating colonial discourses necessarily neglect the story of capitalist exploitation and imperialist profits?

Elsewhere, I have argued that we cannot thematize Indian history in terms of the development of capitalism and simultaneously contest capitalism's homogenization of the contemporary world. Critical history cannot simply document the process by which capitalism becomes dominant, for that amounts to repeating the history we seek to displace; instead, criticism must reveal the difference that capitalism either represents as the particular form of its universal existence or sketches it only in relation to itself.[14] This argument has drawn the criticism that my position commits me to view capitalism as a "disposable fiction," and reveals a simplistic understanding of the relationship between capitalism and heterogeneity. It is suggested that we recognize the structure of domination as a totality (capitalism) which alone provides the basis for understanding the sources of historical oppression and formulating critical emancipatory positions.[15]

Does a refusal to thematize modern Indian history in terms of the development of capitalism amount to saying that capitalism is a "disposable fiction," and that class relations are illusory? Not at all. My point is that making capitalism the foundational theme amounts to homogenizing the histories that remain heterogenous with it. It is one thing to say that the establishment of capitalist relations has been one of the major features in India's recent history but quite another to regard it as the foundation of colonialism. It is one thing to say that class relations affected a range of power relations in India — involving the caste system, patriarchy, ethnic oppression, Hindu-Muslim conflicts — and quite another to oppose the latter as "forms" assumed by the former. The issue here is not that of one factor versus several; rather, it is that, as class is inevitably articulated with other determinations, power exists in a form of relationality in which the dominance of one is never complete. For example, although colonial rule in India constructed the labor force according to the economy of the free-unfree opposition, this domestication of otherness (of "Hindu" and "Islamic" forms of "slavery") as unfreedom also left "an invisible design covered over in the palimpsest."[16] It is precisely by highlighting the "invisible design" that capitalism's attempts, to either subsume different structures or polarize them, can be shown as incompletely successful. Only then can we, as critics, examine the fault-lines of this discourse, and make visible the ambivalence and alterity present in the constitution of

capitalism as a foundational theme. This means listening attentively when the culture and history that the critic inhabits make capitalism name and speak for histories that remained discrepant with it. To the extent that these discrepancies are made to speak in the language of capitalism — as "precapitalist" peasants, "unfree laborers," "irrational" peasants — its "foundational" status is not a "disposable fiction." But it is equally true that in domesticating all the wholly-other subject positions as self-consolidating otherness (*pre*capitalist, *un*free laborers, *ir*rational peasants), capitalism is also caught in a structure of ambivalence it cannot master. This is why study after study show that capitalism in the third world, not just in India, was crucially "distorted," "impure," mixed with "pre-capitalist survivals." To think of the incompleteness and failures of capitalist modernity in the third world in critical terms, therefore, requires that we reinscribe the binary form in which capitalism's partial success is portrayed, that we render visible processes and forms that its oppositional logic can appropriate only violently and incompletely. Of course, historians cannot recover what was suppressed, but they can critically confront the effects of that silencing, capitalism's foundational status, by writing histories of irretrievable subject-positions, by sketching the traces of figures that come to us only as disfigurations. Again, not to restore the "original" figures, but to find the limit of foundations in shadows that the disfigurations themselves outline.

To write of histories at the point of capitalism's "distorted" and "impure" development in India does not amount to disregarding class or abandoning marxism. At issue here is the irreducible heterogeneity of metropolitan capital with the colonial subaltern, a heterogeneity that an unexamined Eurocentric marxism would have us overlook. I am not suggesting that acknowledging Marx's Eurocentrism requires abandoning marxism altogether. But students of Indian history, who know only too well the Eurocentricity of Marx's memorable formulation that the British conquest introduced a history-less India to History, cannot now regard the mode-of-production story as a normative universal. In fact, like many other nineteenth-century European ideas, the staging of the Eurocentric mode-of-production narrative as History should be seen as an analogue of nineteenth-century territorial imperialism. From this point of view, Marx's ideas on changeless India — theorized, for example, in his concept of the "Asiatic mode of production" — appear not so much mistaken as the discursive form produced by the universalization of Europe, by its appropriation of the absolute other into a domesticated other. Such a historicization of the Eurocentrism in nineteenth-century marxism enables us to understand the collusion of capitalism and colonialism, and to undo the effect of that collusion's imperative to interpret third-world histories in terms of capital's logic. To suggest that we reinscribe the effects of capitalism's foundational status by writing about histories that

remained heterogenous with the logic of capital, therefore, is not to abandon marxism but to extricate class analysis from its nineteenth-century heritage, acknowledging that its critique of capitalism was both enabled and disabled by its historicity as a European discourse.

The alternative would have us view colonialism as *reducible* to the development of capitalism in Britain and in India. The conflation of the metropolitan proletariat with the colonized subaltern that this produces amounts to a homogenization of irreducible difference. Of course, it could be argued that capitalism, rather than homogenizing difference, is perfectly capable of utilizing and generating heterogeneity. But the notion that capitalism is a founding source responsible for originating and encompassing difference amounts to appropriating heterogeneity as a self-consolidating difference, that is, refracting "what might have been the absolutely Other into a domesticated Other...."[17] This assimilation of difference into identity becomes inevitable when capitalism is made to stand for History; the heterogeneity of histories of the colonized subaltern with those of the metropolitan proletariat is then effaced, and absolute otherness is appropriated into self-consolidating difference.

The issue of the heterogeneity of social identities and cultural forms raised by the relationship of colonialism to capitalism is not one that can be resolved easily by the extension of the race-class-gender formula; the question of colonial difference is not one of the adequacy of a single (class) versus multiple factors, nor are we constrained to choose forms of sociality other than class. What is at issue in the articulation of class with race, caste, gender, nation, ethnicity and religion is that these categories were not equal; woman as a category was not equal to worker; being an upper-caste Hindu was not a form of sociality equal with citizenship in the nation-state that the nationalists struggled to achieve. Thus, the concept of multiple selves, incorporating a variety of social identities and so popular with the contemporary liberal multiculturalists, cannot be adequate for conceiving colonial difference. Instead, we have to think of the specificity of colonial difference as class overwriting race and gender, of nation overinscribing class, ethnicity, and religion, and so forth — an imbalanced process, but nevertheless a process that can be re-articulated differently. This is the concept of heterogeneity and cultural difference as it emerges from postcoloniality.

The Question of Heterogeneity

The postcolonial disruption of master narratives authorized by imperialism produces an insistence on the heterogenity of colonial histories that is often mistaken for the postmodern pastiche. Though the present currency of such concepts as decentered subjects and parodic texts may provide a receptive and appropriative frame for postcolonial criticism, its emphasis on heterogeneity neither aims to celebrate the polyphony of

native voices nor does it spring forth from superior value placed on multiplicity. Rather, it arises from the recognition that the *functioning* of colonial power was heterogenous with its founding oppositions. Not only were colonies the dark underside, the recalcitrant supplement that subverted the self-same concepts of Modernity, Civilization, Reason, and Progress with which the west wrapped itself, but the very enunciation of colonial discourses was ambivalent. Thus, the postcolonial insistence on heterogeneity emanates from the insight that colonial discourses operated as the structure of *writing*; and that the structure of their enunciation remained heterogenous with the binary oppositions that colonialism instituted in ordering the discursive field to serve unequal power relations. Homi Bhabha's analysis of colonial mimicry outlines the postcolonial critic's distinct notion of difference.

Writing of the stereotypes and pseudoscientific theories that were commonly used in colonial discourse, Bhabha suggests that these were attempts to normalize the ambivalence produced in the contradictory enunciation of colonial discourses. This ambivalence arose from the "tension between the synchronic panoptical vision of domination — the demand for identity, stasis — and the counter-pressure of the diachrony of history — change, difference."[18] Under these opposing pressures, the colonial discourse was caught up in conflict, split between "what is always 'in place,' already known, and something that must be anxiously repeated . . . as if the essential duplicity of the Asiatic or the bestial sexual license of the African that needs no proof, can never really, in discourse, be proved."[19] If, on the one hand, the colonial discourse asserted that the colonizers and the colonized were fixed, unchanging identities, the repetition of this assertion, on the other hand, meant that discourse was forced to constantly reconstitute and refigure this fixity; consequently, the discourse was split between proclaiming the unchangeability of colonial subjects and acknowledging their changing character by having to reform and re-constitute subjects. If it created the colonizer-colonized opposition, it also produced figures and processes that its structure of power relations could not easily accomodate.[20] Bhabha traces an example of such an ambivalent functioning of discourse in the construction of the colonial stereotype of mimicmen applied to English-speaking Indians. He argues that if the British portrayal of the resemblance of Anglicized Indians with Englishmen as mimicry was a "strategy of reform, regulation, and discipline, which 'appropriates' the Other," the stereotype of mimicry was also the mark of a recalcitrant difference, "*a difference that is almost the same, but not quite.*"[21] If the colonial discourse produced a "reformed" Other — the Anglicized Indian (the infamous "Babu") who resembled the English — the strategy of assimilation acknowledged a recalcitrant difference: the Anglicized Indian was a Brown Englishman, at best — "not white/not quite." To be sure, the acknowledgement of

recalcitrant difference took the racist form of Macaulay's notorious formulation that these mimicmen were to be "Indian in blood and color, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect." But the use of racism also signifies a heterogeneity that could not be appropriated. Bhabha fastens on this blind-spot of the discourse to show that the flat assertion of stereotypes was also the moment of fear and anxiety in the discourse because the recalcitrant difference of the re-formed Babu turned micmicry into mockery; confronted with Englishness in the brown figure of the Indian, the authority of self-ness was put under profound stress.

Bhabha's analysis of colonial discourse at the point of its stress departs from the strategy of reversal practiced by previous criticism. For, at these moments of indeterminacy, when the discourse can be seen to veer away from the implacable logic of oppositionality, the critic can intervene, and, using historical work as a license for a strategy of critical reading, re-negotiate the terms of the discourse. The cultural difference that emerges from the re-negotiation of the discourse is not polymorphous diversity released from the straitjacket of binary oppositions; instead, it is a heterogeneity that the existing dichotomies themselves make simultaneously possible and impossible. Bhabha reads this heterogeneity in the native re-writing of the colonial text, in those "hybrid" moments when the colonized produce not a copy of the original but misappropriate it, thereby re-formulating the master text, exposing its ambivalence and denying its authority.[22] From this point of view, categories of racial, class, ethnic, gender, and national difference arise not as the result of a well-intentioned liberal gesture but as social identifications formed at the point of colonialism's conflictual and contingent mode of functioning.

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History and colonialism arose together in India. As India was introduced to history, it was also stripped of a meaningful past; it became a history-less society brought into the age of History. The flawed nature of history's birth in India was was not lost on the nationalists who pressed the nation-state's claim to the age of history, and marxists struggled against capital's collusion with colonialism to make the worker the agent of history. Consequently, history, flawed at birth, has lived an embattled life in India. These constitute the point of departure for postcolonial criticism.[23] For postcolonial historiography, the embattled and anxious enunciation of history as a form of being and knowledge provides the opportunity to seize and reinscribe it catachrestically, not to restore lost forms of telling and knowing but to pick apart the disjunctive moments of discourses authorized by colonialism and authenticated by the nation-state and rearticulate them in another — third — form of writing history. It is from the "scene that nevertheless remains active and stirring, inscribed in white ink, an invisible design covered over in the palimpsest"

that the colonial and the subaltern supplement reinscribes and revises the narratives of the modern, the west, and Man — white mythology.

Notes

1.Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak speaks of postcoloniality in similar terms. "We are always *after* [emphasis in original] the empire of reason, our claims to it always short of adequate." "Poststructuralism, Marginality, Postcoloniality and Value," in *Literary Theory Today*, Peter Collier and Helga Geyer-Ryan eds. (London: Polity Press, 1990), 228.

2.Homi Bhabha, :"The Commitment to Theory," *Questions of the Third Cinema*, ed. J. Pines and P. Willemen, London: BFI Publishing, 1989, pp. 112-131.

3.Spivak, *loc. cit.*

4.The writings of this group include: *Subaltern Studies*, I-VI (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1981-89) ed. Ranajit Guha; Ranajit Guha, *Elementary Aspects of Peasant Insurgency in Colonial India* (Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1983); Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse?* (London: Zed Books, 1986); and Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Rethinking Working-Class History: Bengal 1890-1940* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1989).

5.Veena Das, "Gender Studies, Cross-Cultural Comparison and the Colonial Organization of Knowledge, " *Berkshire Review*, 21 (1986); Lata Mani, "Contentious Traditions: The Debate on Sati in Colonial India," *Cultural Critique*, 7 (Fall 1987), 119-56. For criminality, see Sanjay Nigam, "Disciplining and Policing the 'criminals by birth'," Parts I & II, *Indian Economic and Social History Review*, 27:2 (1990), 131-64 & 27:3 (1990), 257-87. For the discourse of freedom, see my *Bonded Histories: Genealogies of Labor Servitude in Colonial India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990).

6.Cf. Lata Mani, "Multiple Mediations: Feminist Scholarship in the Age of Multinational Reception," *Inscriptions*, 5 (1989), 1-23.

7.On poststructuralism, postcolonial criticism, and the critique of the West, see Robert Young, *White Mythologies: Writing History and the West* (London: Routledge, 1990).

8.Jacques Derrida, *Margins of Philosophy*, Alan Bass trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 213.

9."The Making of Americans, the Teaching of English, the Future of Colonial Studies," *New Literary History*, 21:4 (1990), 28.

10."Contentious Traditions."

11.Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Marxism and Interpretation of Culture*, Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg eds. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 271-313. See, in particular, pages 299-307.

12.For a similar argument about the colonized woman caught between indigenous patriarchy and the politics of archival production, see also Spivak's "The Rani of Sirmur: An Essay in the Reading the Archives," *History and Theory*, 24:3 (1985), 247-72.

13.Cf. Robert Young, *White Mythologies*, 164-65.

14."Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Prespectives from Indian Historiography," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 32:2 (1990), 383-408.

15.Rosalind O'Hanlon and David Washbrook, "After Orientalism: Culture, Criticism, and Politics in the Third World," *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 34:1 (January, 1992). My reply, "Can the 'Subaltern' Ride? A Reply to O'Hanlon and Washbrook," from which this essay draws, appears in the same issue.

16.For a study of the process of this covering over in the context of "unfree" laborers, see my *Bonded Histories*. Nicholas Dirks's *The Hollow Crown: Ethnohistory of an Indian Kingdom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), similarly, traces the marks of a relationship between caste and power in the process that hollowed out the political space in a south Indian kingdom and filled it with colonial power.

17.Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," *Critical Inquiry*, 12:1 (1985), 253.

18."Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," *October*, 34 (Fall 1985), 126.

19.Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question...," *Screen*, 24:6 (1983), 18.

20.Homi Bhabha, "The Other Question," 23-25.

21."Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse," 126.

22.Homi Bhabha, "Signs Taken for Wonders: Questions of Ambivalence and Authority under a Tree Outside Delhi, May 1817," *Critical Inquiry*, 12:1 (1985), 144-65.

23.For a related argument, see Dipesh Chakrabarty, "History as Critique and Critique(s) of History," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 26:37 (September 14, 1991), 2162-66.