Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism

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Judging from recent conversations among third-world intellectuals, there is now an obsessive return of the national situation itself, the name of the country that returns again and again like a gong, the collective attention to "us" and what we have to do and how we do it, to what we can't do and what we do better than this or that nationality, our unique characteristics, in short, to the level of the "people." This is not the way American intellectuals have been discussing "America," and indeed one might feel that the whole matter is nothing but that old thing called "nationalism," long since liquidated here and rightly so. Yet a certain nationalism is fundamental in the third world (and also in the most vital areas of the second world), thus making it legitimate to ask whether it is all that bad in the end.[1] Does in fact the message of some disabused and more experienced first-world wisdom (that of Europe even more than of the United States) consist in urging these nation states to outgrow it as fast as possible? The predictble reminders of Kampuchea and of Iraq and Iran do not really seem to me to settle anything or suggest by what these nationalisms might be replaced except perhaps some global American postmodernist culture.

Many arguments can be made for the importance and interest of non-canonical forms of literature such as that of the third world,[2] but one is peculiarly self-defeating because it borrows the weapons of the adversary: the strategy of trying to prove that these texts are as "great" as those of the canon itself. The object is then to show that, to take an example from another non-canonical form, Dashiell Hammett is really as great as Dostoyevsky, and therefore can be admitted. This is to attempt dutifully to wish away all traces of that "pulp" format which is constitutive of sub-genres, and it invites immediate failure insofar as any passionate reader of Dostoyevsky will know at once, after a few pages, that those kinds of satisfactions are not present. Nothing is to be gained by passing over in silence the radical difference of non-canonical texts. The third-world novel will not offer the satisfactions of Proust or Joyce; what is more damaging than that, perhaps, is its tendency to remind us of outmoded stages of our own first-world cultural development and to cause us to conclude that "they are still writing novels like Dreiser or Sherwood Anderson."

A case could be built on this kind of discouragement, with its deep existential commitment to a rhythm of modernist innovation if not fashion-changes; but it

would not be a moralizing one—a historicist one, rather, which challenges our imprisonment in the present of postmodernism and calls for a reinvention of the radical difference of *our own* cultural past and its now seemingly old-fashioned situations and novelties.

But I would rather argue all this a different way, at least for now[3]: these reactions to third-world texts are at one and the same time perfectly natural, perfectly comprehensible, *and* terribly parochial. If the purpose of the canon is to restrict our aesthetic sympathies, to develop a range of rich and subtle perceptions which can be exercised only on the occasion of a small but choice body of texts, to discourage us from reading anything else or from reading those things in different ways, then it is humanly impoverishing. Indeed our want of sympathy for these often unmodern third-world texts is itself frequently but a disguise for some deeper fear of the affluent about the way people actually live in other parts of the world—a way of life that still has little in common with daily life in the American suburb. There is nothing particularly disgraceful in having lived a sheltered life, in never having had to confront the difficulties, the complications and the frustrations of urban living, but it is nothing to be particularly proud of either. Moreover, a limited experience of life normally does not make for a wide range of sympathies with very different kinds of people (I'm thinking of differences that range from gender and race all the way to those of social class and culture).

The way in which all this affects the reading process seems to be as follows: as western readers whose tastes (and much else) have been formed by our own modernisms, a popular or socially realistic third-world novel tends to come before us, not immediately, but as though already-read. We sense, between ourselves and this alien text, the presence of another reader, of the Other reader, for whom a narrative, which strikes us as conventional or naive, has a freshness of information and a social interest that we cannot share. The fear and the resistance I'm evoking has to do, then, with the sense of our own non-coincidence with that Other reader, so different from ourselves; our sense that to coincide in any adequate way with that Other "ideal reader"—that is to say, to read this text adequately—we would have to give up a great deal that is individually precious to us and acknowledge an existence and a situation unfamiliar and therefore frightening—one that we do not know and prefer *not* to know.

Why, returning to the question of the canon, *should* we only read certain kinds of books? No one is suggesting we should *not* read those, but why should we not also read other ones? We are not, after all, being shipped to that "desert island" beloved of the devisers of great books lists. And as a matter of fact—and this is to me the conclusive nail in the argument—we all do "read" many different kinds of texts in this life of ours, since, whether we are willing to admit it or not, we spend much of our existence in the force field of a mass culture that is radically

different from our "great books" and live at least a double life in the various compartments of our unavoidably fragmented society. We need to be aware that we are even more fundamentally fragmented than that; rather than clinging to this particular mirage of the "centered subject" and the unified personal identity, we would do better to confront honestly the fact of fragmentation on a global scale; it is a confrontation with which we can here at least make a cultural beginning.

A final observation on my use of the term "third world." I take the point of criticisms of this expression, particularly those which stress the way in which it obliterates profound differences between a whole range of non-western countries and situations (indeed, one such fundamental opposition—between the traditions of the great eastern empires and those of the post-colonial African nation states—is central in what follows). I don't, however, see any comparable expression that articulates, as this one does, the fundamental breaks between the capitalist first world, the socialist bloc of the second world, and a range of other countries which have suffered the experience of colonialism and imperialism. One can only deplore the ideological implications of oppositions such as that between "developed" and "underdeveloped" or "developing" countries; while the more recent conception of northern and southern tiers, which has a very different ideological content and import than the rhetoric of development, and is used by very different people, nonetheless implies an unquestioning acceptance of "convergence theory"—namely the idea that the Soviet Union and the United States are from this perspective largely the same thing. I am using the term "third world" in an essentially descriptive sense, and objections to it do not strike me as especially relevant to the argument I am making.

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In these last years of the century, the old question of a properly world literature reasserts itself. This is due as much or more to the disintegration of our own conceptions of cultural study as to any very lucid awareness of the great outside world around us. We may therefore—as "humanists"—acknowledge the pertinence of the critique of present-day humanities by our titular leader, William Bennett, without finding any great satisfaction in his embarrassing solution: yet another impoverished and ethnocentric Graeco-Judaic "great books list' of the civilization of the West," "great texts, great minds, great ideas."[4] One is tempted to turn back on Bennett himself the question he approvingly quotes from Maynard Mack: "How long can a democratic nation afford to support a narcissistic minority so transfixed by its own image?" Nevertheless, the present moment does offer a remarkable opportunity to rethink our humanities curriculum in a new way—to re-examine the shambles and ruins of all our older "great books," "humanities," "freshman-introductory" and "core course" type traditions.

Today the reinvention of cultural studies in the United States demands the reinvention, in a new situation, of what Goethe long ago theorized as "world literature." In our more immediate context, then, any conception of world literature necessarily demands some specific engagement with the question of third-world literature, and it is this not necessarily narrower subject about which I have something to say today.

It would be presumptuous to offer some general theory of what is often called third-world literature, given the enormous variety both of national cultures in the third world and of specific historical trajectories in each of those areas. All of this, then, is provisional and intended both to suggest specific perspectives for research and to convey a sense of the interest and value of these clearly neglected literatures for people formed by the values and stereotypes of a first-world culture. One important distinction would seem to impose itself at the outset, namely that none of these cultures can be conceived as anthropologically independent or autonomous, rather, they are all in various distinct ways locked in a life-and-death struggle with first-world cultural imperialism—a cultural struggle that is itself a reflexion of the economic situation of such areas in their penetration by various stages of capital, or as it is sometimes euphemistically termed, of modernization. This, then, is some first sense in which a study of third-world culture necessarily entails a new view of ourselves, from the outside, insofar as we ourselves are (perhaps without fully knowing it) constitutive forces powerfully at work on the remains of older cultures in our general world capitalist system.

But if this is the case, the initial distinction that imposes itself has to do with the nature and development of older cultures at the moment of capitalist penetration, something it seems to me most enlightening to examine in terms of the marxian concept of modes of production.[5] Contemporary historians seem to be in the process of reaching a consensus on the specificity of feudalism as a form which, issuing from the break-up of the Roman Empire or the Japanese Shogunate, is able to develop directly into capitalism.[6] This is not the case with the other modes of production, which in some sense must be disaggregated or destroyed by violence, before capitalism is able to implant its specific forms and displace the older ones. In the gradual expansion of capitalism across the globe, then, our economic system confronts two very distinct modes of production that pose two very different types of social and cultural resistance to its influence. These are so-called primitive, or tribal society on the one hand, and the Asiatic mode of production, or the great bureaucratic imperial systems, on the other. African societies and cultures, as they became the object of systematic colonization in the 1880s, provide the most striking examples of the symbiosis of capital and tribal societies; while China and India offer the principal examples of another and quite different sort of engagement of capitalism with the great empires of the so-called

Asiatic mode. My examples below, then, will be primarily African and Chinese; however, the special case of Latin America must be noted in passing. Latin America offers yet a third kind of development—one involving an even earlier destruction of imperial systems now projected by collective memory back into the archaic or tribal. Thus the earlier nominal conquests of independence open them at once to a kind of indirect economic penetration and control—something Africa and Asia will come to experience only more recently with decolonization in the 1950s and 60s.

Having made these initial distinctions, let me now, by way of a sweeping hypothesis, try to say what all third-world cultural productions seem to have in common and what distinguishes them radically from analogous cultural forms in the first world. All third-world texts are necessarily, I want to argue, allegorical, and in a very specific way: they are to be read as what I will call *national allegories,* even when, or perhaps I should say, particularly when their forms develop out of predominantly western machineries of representation, such as the novel. Let me try to state this distinction in a grossly oversimplified way: one of the determinants of capitalist culture, that is, the culture of the western realist and modernist novel, is a radical split between the private and the public, between the poetic and the political, between what we have come to think of as the domain of sexuality and the unconscious and that of the public world of classes, of the economic, and of secular political power: in other words, Freud versus Marx. Our numerous theoretical attempts to overcome this great split only reconfirm its existence and its shaping power over our individual and collective lives. We have been trained in a deep cultural conviction that the lived experience of our private existences is somehow incommensurable with the abstractions of economic science and political dynamics. Politics in our novels therefore is, according to Stendhal's canonical formulation, a "pistol shot in the middle of a concert."

I will argue that, although we may retain for convenience and for analysis such categories as the subjective and the public or political, the relations between them are wholly different in third-world culture. Third-world texts, even those which are seemingly private and invested with a properly libidinal dynamic—necessarily project a political dimension in the form of national allegory: *the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society.* Need I add that it is precisely this very different ratio of the political to the personal which makes such texts alien to us at first approach, and consequently, resistant to our conventional western habits of reading?

I will offer, as something like the supreme example of this process of allegorization, the first masterwork of China's greatest writer, Lu Xun, whose neglect in western cultural studies is a matter of shame which no excuses based on ignorance

can rectify. "Diary of a Madman" (1918) must at first be read by any western reader as the protocol of what our essentially psychological language terms a "nervous breakdown." It offers the notes and perceptions of a subject in intensifying prey to a terrifying psychic delusion, the conviction that the people around him are concealing a dreadful secret, and that that secret can be none other than the increasingly obvious fact that they are cannibals. At the climax of the development of the delusion, which threatens his own physical safety and his very life itself as a potential victim, the narrator understands that his own brother is himself a cannibal and that the death of their little sister, a number of years earlier, far from being the result of childhood illness, as he had thought, was in reality a murder. As befits the protocol of a psychosis, these perceptions are objective ones, which can be rendered without any introspective machinery: the paranoid subject observes sinister glances around him in the real world, he overhears tell-tale conversations between his brother and an alleged physician (obviously in reality another cannibal) which carry all the conviction of the real, and can be objectively (or "realistically") represented. This is not the place to demonstrate in any detail the absolute pertinence, to Lu Xun's case history, of the pre-eminent western or first-world reading of such phenomena, namely Freud's interpretation of the paranoid delusions of Senatspräsident Schreber: an emptying of the world, a radical withdrawal of libido (what Schreber describes as "world-catastrophe"), followed by the attempt to recathect by the obviously imperfect mechanisms of paranoia. "The delusion-formation," Freud explains, "which we take to be a pathological product, is in reality an attempt at recovery, a process of reconstruction."[7]

What is reconstructed, however, is a grisly and terrifying objective real world beneath the appearances of our own world: an unveiling or deconcealment of the nightmarish reality of things, a stripping away of our conventional illusions or rationalizations about daily life and existence. It is a process comparable, as a literary effect, only to some of the processes of western modernism, and in particular of existentialism, in which narrative is employed as a powerful instrument for the experimental exploration of reality and illusion, an exploration which, however, unlike some of the older realisms, presupposes a certain prior "personal knowledge." The reader must, in other words, have had some analogous experience, whether in physical illness or psychic crisis, of a lived and balefully transformed real world from which we cannot even mentally escape, for the full horror of Lu Xun's nightmare to be appreciated. Terms like "depression" deform such experience by psychologizing it and projecting it back into the pathological Other; while the analogous western literary approaches to this same experience—I'm thinking of the archetypal deathbed murmur of Kurtz, in Conrad's "Heart of Darkness," "The horror! the horror!"—recontains precisely that horror by transforming it into a rigorously private and subjective "mood," which can only be

designated by recourse to an aesthetic of *expression*—the unspeakable, unnameable inner feeling, whose external formulation can only designate it from without, like a symptom.

But this representational power of Lu Xun's text cannot be appreciated properly without some sense of what I have called its allegorical resonance. For it should be clear that the cannibalism literally apprehended by the sufferer in the attitudes and bearing of his family and neighbors is at one and the same time being attributed by Lu Xun himself to Chinese society as a whole: and if this attribution is to be called "figural," it is indeed a figure more powerful and "literal" than the "literal" level of the text. Lu Xun's proposition is that the people of this great maimed and retarded, disintegrating China of the late and post-imperial period, his fellow citizens, are "literally" cannibals: in their desperation, disguised and indeed intensified by the most traditional forms and procedures of Chinese culture, they must devour one another ruthlessly to stay alive. This occurs at all levels of that exceedingly hierarchical society, from lumpens and peasants all the way to the most privileged elite positions in the mandarin bureaucracy. It is, I want to stress, a social and historical nightmare, a vision of the horror of life specifically grasped through History itself, whose consequences go far beyond the more local western realistic or naturalistic representation of cut-throat capitalist or market competition, and it exhibits a specifically political resonance absent from its natural or mythological western equivalent in the nightmare of Darwinian natural selection.

Now I want to offer four additional remarks about this text, which will touch, respectively, on the libidinal dimension of the story, on the structure of its allegory, on the role of the third-world cultural producer himself, and on the perspective of futurity projected by the tale's double resolution. I will be concerned, in dealing with all four of these topics, to stress the radical structural difference between the dynamics of third-world culture and those of the first-world cultural tradition in which we have ourselves been formed.

I have suggested that in third-world texts such as this story by Lu Xun the relationship between the libidinal and the political components of individual and social experience is radically different from what obtains in the west and what shapes our own cultural forms. Let me try to characterize this difference, or if you like this radical reversal, by way of the following generalization: in the west, conventionally, political commitment is recontained and psychologized or subjectivized by way of the public-private split I have already evoked. Interpretations, for example, of political movements of the 60s in terms of Oedipal revolts are familiar to everyone and need no further comment. That such interpretations are episodes in a much longer tradition, whereby political commitment is re-psychologized and accounted for in terms of the subjective dynamics of *ressentiment* or the authorita-

rian personality, is perhaps less well understood, but can be demonstrated by a careful reading of anti-political texts from Nietzsche and Conrad all the way to the latest cold-war propaganda.

What is relevant to our present context is not, however, the demonstration of that proposition, but rather of its inversion in third-world culture, where I want to suggest that psychology, or more specifically, libidinal investment, is to be read in primarily political and social terms. (It is, I hope, unnecessary to add that what follows is speculative and very much subject to correction by specialists: it is offered as a methodological example rather than a "theory" of Chinese culture.) We're told, for one thing, that the great ancient imperial cosmologies identify by analogy what we in the west analytically separate: thus, the classical sex manuals are at one with the texts that reveal the dynamics of political forces, the charts of the heavens at one with the logic of medical lore, and so forth.[8] Here already then, in an ancient past, western antinomies—and most particularly that between the subjective and the public or political—are refused in advance. The libidinal center of Lu Xun's text is, however, not sexuality, but rather the oral stage, the whole bodily question of eating, of ingestion, devoration, incorporation, from which such fundamental categories as the pure and the impure spring. We must now recall, not merely the extraordinary symbolic complexity of Chinese cuisine, but also the central role this art and practice occupies in Chinese culture as a whole. When we find that centrality confirmed by the observation that the very rich Chinese vocabulary for sexual matters is extraordinarily intertwined with the language of eating; and when we observe the multiple uses to which the verb "to eat" is put in ordinary Chinese language (one "eats" a fear or a fright, for example), we may feel in a somewhat better position to sense the enormous sensitivity of this libidinal region, and of Lu Xun's mobilization of it for the dramatization of an essentially social nightmare—something which in a western writer would be consigned to the realm of the merely private obsession, the vertical dimension of the personal trauma.

A different alimentary transgression can be observed throughout Lu Xun's works, but nowhere quite so strikingly as in his terrible little story, "Medicine." The story potrays a dying child—the death of children is a constant in these works—whose parents have the good fortune to procure an "infallible" remedy. At this point we must recall both that traditional Chinese medicine is not "taken," as in the west, but "eaten," and that for Lu Xun traditional Chinese medicine was the supreme locus of the unspeakable and exploitative charlatanry of traditional Chinese culture in general. In his crucially important *Preface* to the first collection of his stories,[9] he recounts the suffering and death of his own father from tuberculosis, while declining family reserves rapidly disappeared into the purchase of expensive and rare, exotic and ludicrous medicaments. We will not sense the

symbolic significance of this indignation unless we remember that for all these reasons Lu Xun decided to study western medicine in Japan—the epitome of some new western science that promised collective regeneration—only later to decide that the production of culture—I am tempted to say, the elaboration of a political culture—was a more effective form of political medicine.[10] As a writer, then, Lu Xun remains a diagnostician and a physician. Hence this terrible story, in which the cure for the male child, the father's only hope for survival in future generations, turns out to be one of those large doughy-white Chinese steamed rolls, soaked in the blood of a criminal who has just been executed. The child dies anyway, of course, but it is important to note that the hapless victim of a more properly state violence (the supposed criminal) was a *political* militant, whose grave is mysteriously covered in flowers by absent sympathizers of whom one knows nothing. In the analysis of a story like this, we must rethink our conventional conception of the symbolic levels of a narrative (where sexuality and politics might be in homology to each other, for instance) as a set of loops or circuits which intersect and overdetermine each other—the enormity of therapeutic cannibalism finally intersecting in a pauper's cemetery, with the more overt violence of family betrayal and political repression.

This new mapping process brings me to the cautionary remark I wanted to make about allegory itself—a form long discredited in the west and the specific target of the Romantic revolution of Wordsworth and Coleridge, yet a linguistic structure which also seems to be experiencing a remarkable reawakening of interest in contemporary literary theory. If allegory has once again become somehow congenial for us today, as over against the massive and monumental unifications of an older modernist symbolism or even realism itself, it is because the allegorical spirit is profoundly discontinuous, a matter of breaks and heterogeneities, of the multiple polysemia of the dream rather than the homogeneous representation of the symbol. Our traditional conception of allegory—based, for instance, on stereotypes of Bunyan—is that of an elaborate set of figures and personifications to be read against some one-to-one table of equivalences: this is, so to speak, a one-dimensional view of this signifying process, which might only be set in motion and complexified were we willing to entertain the more alarming notion that such equivalences are themselves in constant change and transformation at each perpetual present of the text.

Here too Lu Xun has some lessons for us. This writer of short stories and sketches, which never evolved into the novel form as such, produced at least one approach to the longer form, in a much lengthier series of anecdotes about a hapless coolie named Ah Q, who comes to serve, as we might have suspected, as the allegory of a certain set of Chinese attitudes and modes of behavior. It is interesting to note that the enlargement of the form determines a shift in tone or

generic discourse: now everything that had been stricken with the stillness and emptiness of death and suffering without hope—"the room was not only too silent, it was far too big as well, and the things in it were far too empty"[11]—becomes material for a more properly Chaplinesque comedy. Ah Q's resiliency springs from an unusual—but we are to understand culturally very normal and familiar—technique for overcoming humiliation. When set upon by his persecutors, Ah Q, serene in his superiority over them, reflects: "'It is as if I were beaten by my own son. What is the world coming to nowadays . . .' Thereupon he too would walk away, satisfied at having won."[12] Admit that you are not even human, they insist, that you are nothing but an animal! On the contrary, he tells them, I'm worse than an animal, I'm an insect! There, does that satisfy you? "In less than ten seconds, however, Ah Q would walk away also satisfied that he had won, thinking that he was after all 'number one in self-belittlement,' and that after removing the 'self-belittlement' what remained was still the glory of remaining 'number one.'"[13] When one recalls the remarkable self-esteem of the Manchu dynasty in its final throes, and the serene contempt for foreign devils who had nothing but modern science, gunboats, armies, technology and power to their credit, one achieves a more precise sense of the historical and social topicality of Lu Xun's satire.

Ah Q is thus, allegorically, China itself. What I want to observe, however, what complicates the whole issue, is that his persecutors—the idlers and bullies who find their daily pleasures in getting a rise out of just such miserable victims as Ah Q—they too are China, in the allegorical sense. This very simple example, then, shows the capacity of allegory to generate a range of distinct meanings or messages, simultaneously, as the allegorical tenor and vehicle change places: Ah Q is China humiliated by the foreigners, a China so well versed in the spiritual techniques of self-justification that such humiliations are not even registered, let alone recalled. But the persecutors are also China, in a different sense, the terrible self-cannibalistic China of the "Diary of a Madman," whose response to powerlessness is the senseless persecution of the weaker and more inferior members of the hierarchy.

All of which slowly brings us to the question of the writer himself in the third world, and to what must be called the function of the intellectual, it being understood that in the third-world situation the intellectual is always in one way or another a political intellectual. No third-world lesson is more timely or more urgent for us today, among whom the very term "intellectual" has withered away, as though it were the name for an extinct species. Nowhere has the strangeness of this vacant position been brought home to me more strongly than on a recent trip to Cuba, when I had occasion to visit a remarkable college-preparatory school on the outskirts of Havana. It is a matter of some shame for an American to witness the cultural curriculum in a socialist setting which also very much identifies itself

with the third world. Over some three or four years, Cuban teenagers study poems of Homer, Dante's Inferno, the Spanish theatrical classics, the great realistic novels of the 19th-century European tradition, and finally contemporary Cuban revolutionary novels, of which, incidentally, we desperately need English translations. But the semester's work I found most challenging was one explicitly devoted to the study of the role of the intellectual as such: the cultural intellectual who is also a political militant, the intellectual who produces both poetry and praxis. The Cuban illustrations of this process—Ho Chi Minh and Augustino Nieto—are obviously enough culturally determined: our own equivalents would probably be the more familiar figures of DuBois and C.L.R. James, of Sartre and Neruda or Brecht, of Kollontai or Louise Michel. But as this whole talk aims implicitly at suggesting a new conception of the humanities in American education today, it is appropriate to add that the study of the role of the intellectual as such ought to be a key component in any such proposals.

I've already said something about Lu Xun's own conception of his vocation, and its extrapolation from the practice of medicine. But there is a great deal more to be said specifically about the *Preface*. Not only is it one of the fundamental documents for understanding the situation of the third world artist, it is also a dense text in its own right, fully as much a work of art as any of the greatest stories. And in Lu Xun's own work it is the supreme example of the very unusual ratio of subjective investment and a deliberately depersonalized objective narration. We have no time to do justice to those relationships, which would demand a line-by-line commentary. Yet I will quote the little fable by which Lu Xun, responding to requests for publication by his friends and future collaborators, dramatizes his dilemma:

> Imagine an iron house without windows, absolutely indestructible, with many people fast sleep inside who will shortly die of suffocation. But you know that since they will die in their sleep, they will not feel the pain of death. Now if you cry aloud to wake a few of the lighter sleepers, making those unfortunate few suffer the agony of irrevocable death, do you think you are doing them a good turn?[14]

The seemingly hopeless situation of the third-world intellectual in this historical period (shortly after the founding of the Chinese Communist Party, but also after the bankruptcy of the middle-class revolution had become apparent)—in which no solutions, no forms of praxis or change, seem conceivable—this situation will find its parallel, as we shall see shortly, in the situation of African intellectuals after the achievement of independence, when once again no political solutions seem present or visible on the historical horizon. The formal or literary manifestation of

this political problem is the possibility of narrative closure, something we will return to more specifically.

In a more general theoretical context—and it is this theoretical form of the problem I should now like at least to thematize and set in place on the agenda—we must recover a sense of what "cultural revolution" means, in its strongest form, in the marxist tradition. The reference is not to the immediate events of that violent and tumultuous interruption of the "eleven years" in recent Chinese history, although some reference to Maoism as a doctrine is necessarily implicit. The term, we are told, was Lenin's own, and in that form explicitly designated the literacy campaign and the new problems of universal scholarity and education: something of which Cuba, again, remains the most stunning and successful example in recent history. We must, however, enlarge the conception still further, to include a range of seemingly very different preoccupations, of which the names of Gramsci and Wilhelm Reich, Frantz Fanon, Herbert Marcuse, Rudolph Bahro, and Paolo Freire, may give an indication of their scope and focus. Overhastily, I will suggest that "cultural revolution" as it is projected in such works turns on the phenomenon of what Gramsci called "subalternity," namely the feelings of mental inferiority and habits of subservience and obedience which necessarily and structurally develop in situations of domination—most dramatically in the experience of colonized peoples. But here, as so often, the subjectivizing and psychologizing habits of first-world peoples such as ourselves can play us false and lead us into misunderstandings. Subalternity is not in that sense a psychological matter, although it governs psychologies; and I suppose that the strategic choice of the term "cultural" aims precisely at restructuring that view of the problem and projecting it outwards into the realm of objective or collective spirit in some non-psychological, but also non-reductionist or non-economistic, materialistic fashion. When a psychic structure is objectively determined by economic and political relationships, it cannot be dealt with by means of purely psychological therapies; yet it equally cannot be dealt with by means of purely objective transformations of the economic and political situation itself, since the habits remain and exercise a baleful and crippling residual effect.[15] This is a more dramatic form of that old mystery, the unity of theory and practice; and it is specifically in the context of this problem of cultural revolution (now so strange and alien to us) that the achievements and failures of third-world intellectuals, writers and artists must be replaced if their concrete historical meaning is to be grasped. We have allowed ourselves, as first-world cultural intellectuals, to restrict our consciousness of our life's work to the narrowest professional or bureaucratic terms, thereby encouraging in ourselves a special sense of subalternity and guilt, which only reinforces the vicious circle. That a literary article could be a political act, with real consequences, is for most of us little more than a curiosity of the literary history of Czarist

Russia or of modern China itself. But we perhaps should also consider the possibility that as intellectuals we ourselves are at present soundly sleeping in that indestructable iron room, of which Lu Xun spoke, on the point of suffocation.

The matter of narrative closure, then, and of the relationship of a narrative text to futurity and to some collective project yet to come, is not, merely a formal or literary-critical issue. "Diary of a Madman" has in fact two distinct and incompatible endings, which prove instructive to examine in light of the writer's own hesitations and anxieties about his social role. One ending, that of the deluded subject himself, is very much a call to the future, in the impossible situation of a well-nigh universal cannibalism: the last desperate lines launched into the void are the words, "Save the children . . ." But the tale has a second ending as well, which is disclosed on the opening page, when the older (supposedly cannibalistic) brother greets the narrator with the following cheerful remark: "I appreciate your coming such a long way to see us, but my brother recovered some time ago and has gone elsewhere to take up an official post." So, in advance, the nightmare is annulled; the paranoid visionary, his brief and terrible glimpse of the grisly reality beneath the appearance now vouchsafed, gratefully returns to the realm of illusion and oblivion therein again to take up his place in the space of bureaucratic power and privilege. I want to suggest that it is only at this price, by way of a complex play of simultaneous and antithetical messages, that the narrative text is able to open up a concrete perspective on the real future.

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I must interrupt myself here to interpolate several observations before proceeding. For one thing, it is clear to me that *any* articulation of radical difference—that of gender, incidentally, fully as much as that of culture—is susceptible to appropriation by that strategy of otherness which Edward Said, in the context of the Middle East, called "orientalism." It does not matter much that the radical otherness of the culture in question is praised or valorized positively, as in the preceding pages: the essential operation is that of differentiation, and once that has been accomplished, the mechanism Said denounces has been set in place. On the other hand, I don't see how a first-world intellectual can avoid this operation without falling back into some general liberal and humanistic universalism: it seems to me that one of our basic political tasks lies precisely in the ceaseless effort to remind the American public of the radical difference of other national situations.

But at this point one should insert a cautionary reminder about the dangers of the concept of "culture" itself: the very speculative remarks I have allowed myself to make about Chinese "culture" will not be complete unless I add that "culture" in this sense is by no means the final term at which one stops. One must imagine

such cultural structures and attitudes as having been themselves, in the beginning, vital responses to infrastructural realities (economic and geographic, for example), as attempts to resolve more fundamental contradictions—attempts which then outlive the situations for which they were devised, and survive, in reified forms, as "cultural patterns." Those patterns themselves then become part of the objective situation confronted by later generations, and, as in the case of Confucianism, having once been part of the solution to a dilemma, then become part of the new problem.

Nor can I feel that the concept of cultural "identity" or even national "identity" is adequate. One cannot acknowledge the justice of the general poststructuralist assault on the so-called "centered subject," the old unified ego of bourgeois individualism, and then resuscitate this same ideological mirage of psychic unification on the collective level in the form of a doctrine of collective identity. Appeals to collective identity need to be evaluated from a historical perspective, rather than from the standpoint of some dogmatic and placeless "ideological analysis." When a third-world writer invokes this (to us) ideological value, we need to examine the concrete historical situation closely in order to determine the political consequences of the strategic use of this concept. Lu Xun's moment, for example, is very clearly one in which a critique of Chinese "culture" and "cultural identity" has powerful and revolutionary consequences—consequences which may not obtain in a later social configuration. This is then, perhaps, another and more complicated way of raising the issue of "nationalism" to which I referred earlier.

As far as national allegory is concerned, I think it may be appropriate to stress its presence in what is generally considered western literature in order to underscore certain structural differences. The example I have in mind is the work of Benito Perez Galdos—the last and among the richest achievements of 19th century realism. Galdos' novels are more visibly allegorical (in the national sense) than most of their better-known European predecessors:[16] something that might well be explained in terms of Immanuel Wallerstein's world-system terminology.[17] Although 19th century Spain is not strictly *peripheral* after the fashion of the countries we are here designating under the term third world, it is certainly *semi-peripheral* in his sense, when contrasted with England or France. It is therefore not terribly surprising to find the situation of the male protagonist of *Fortunata y Jacinta* (1887)—alternating between the two women of the title, between the wife and the mistress, between the woman of the upper-middle classes and the woman of the "people"—characterized in terms of the nation-state itself, hesitating between the republican revolution of 1868 and the Bourbon restoration of 1873.[18] Here too, the same "floating" or transferable structure of allegorical reference detected in Ah Q comes into play: for Fortunata is also married, and the alterna-

tion of "revolution" and "restoration" is likewise adapted to her situation, as she leaves her legal home to seek her lover and then returns to it in abandonment.

What it is important to stress is not merely the wit of the analogy as Galdos uses it, but also its optional nature: we can use it to convert the entire situation of the novel into an allegorical commentary on the destiny of Spain, but we are also free to reverse its priorities and to read the political analogy as metaphorical decoration for the individual drama, and as a mere figural intensification of this last. Here, far from dramatizing the identity of the political and the individual or psychic, the allegorical structure tends essentially to separate these levels in some absolute way. We cannot feel its force unless we are convinced of the radical difference between politics and the libidinal: so that its operation reconfirms (rather than annuls) that split between public and private which was attributed to western civilization earlier in our discussion. In one of the more powerful contemporary denunciations of this split and this habit, Deleuze and Guattari argue for a conception of desire that is at once social and individual.

> How does a delirium begin? Perhaps the cinema is able to capture the movement of madness, precisely because it is not analytical or regressive, but explores a global field of coexistence. Witness a film by Nicholas Ray, supposedly representing the formation of a cortisone delirium: an overworked father, a high-school teacher who works overtime for a radio-taxi service and is being treated for heart trouble. He begins to rave about the educational system in general, the need to restore a pure race, the salvation of the social and moral order, then he passes to religion, the timeliness of a return to the Bible, Abraham. But what in fact did Abraham do? Well now, he killed or wanted to kill his son, and perhaps God's only error lies in having stayed his hand. But doesn't this man, the film's protagonist, have a son of his own? Hmmm. . . . What the film shows so well, to the shame of psychiatrists, is that every delirium is first of all the investment of a field that is social, economic, political cultural, racial and racist, pedagogical, and religious: the delirious person applies a delirium to his family and his son that overreaches them on all sides.[19]

I am not myself sure that the objective consequences of this essentially social and concrete gap, in first-world experience, between the public and the private can be abolished by intellectual diagnosis or by some more adequate theory of their deeper interrelationship. Rather, it seems to me that what Deleuze and Guattari are proposing here is a new and more adequate *allegorical* reading of this film. Such allegorical structures, then, are not so much absent from first-world cultural texts as they are *unconscious,* and therefore they must be deciphered by interpretive mechanisms that necessarily entail a whole social and historical critique of our current first-world situation. The point here is that, in distinction to the uncon-

scious allegories of our own cultural texts, third-world national allegories are conscious and overt: they imply a radically different and objective relationship of politics to libidinal dynamics.

* * *

Now, before turning to the African texts, I remind you of the very special occasion of the present talk, which is concerned to honor the memory of Robert C. Elliott and to commemorate his life's work. I take it that the very center of his two most important books, *The Power of Satire* and *The Shape of Utopia,*[20] is to be found in his pathbreaking association of satire and the utopian impulse as two seemingly antithetical drives (and literary discourses), which in reality replicate each other such that each is always secretly active within the other's sphere of influence. All satire, he taught us, necessarily carries a utopian frame of reference within itself; all utopias, no matter how serene or disembodied, are driven secretly by the satirist's rage at a fallen reality. When I spoke of futurity a moment ago, I took pains to withhold the world "utopia," which in my language is another word for the socialist project.

But now I will be more explicit and take as my motto an astonishing passage from the novel *Xala,* by the great contemporary Senegalese novelist and film-maker Ousmane Sembène. The title designates a ritual curse or affliction, of a very special kind, which has been visited on a prosperous and corrupt Senegalese businessman at the moment in which, at the height of his fortune, he takes to himself a beautiful young (third) wife. Shades of *The Power of Satire*!, the curse is of course, as you may have guessed, sexual impotence. The Hadj, the unfortunate hero of this novel, desperately explores a number of remedies, both western and tribal, to no avail, and is finally persuaded to undertake a laborious trip into the hinterland of Dakar to seek out a shaman of reputedly extraordinary powers. Here is the conclusion of his hot and dusty journey in a horse-drawn cart:

> As they emerged from a ravine, they saw conical thatched roofs, grey-black with weathering, standing out against the horizon in the middle of the empty plain. Free-ranging, skinny cattle with dangerous-looking horns fenced with one another to get at what little grass there was. No more than silhouettes in the distance, a few people were busy around the only well. The driver of the cart was in familiar territory and greeted people as they passed. Sereen Mada's house, apart from its imposing size, was identical in construction with all the others. It was situated in the center of the village whose huts were arranged in a semi-circle, which you entered by a single main entrance. The village had neither shop nor school nor dispensary; there was nothing at all attractive about it in fact [Ousmane concludes, then he adds, as if in afterthought, this searing line:] There was nothing at all attractive about it in fact. Its life was based on the principles of community interdependence.[21]

Here, then, more emblematically than virtually any other text I know, the space of a past and future utopia—a social world of collective cooperation—is dramatically inserted into the corrupt and westernized money economy of the new post-independence national or comprador bourgeoisie. Indeed, Ousmane takes pains to show us that the Hadj is not an industrialist, that his business is in no sense productive, but functions as a middle-man between European multinationals and local extraction industries. To this biographical sketch must be added a very significant fact: that in his youth, the Hadj was political, and spent some time in jail for his nationalist and pro-independence activities. The extraordinary satire of these corrupt classes (which Ousmane will extend to the person of Senghor himself in *The Last of the Empire*) is explicitly marked as the failure of the independence movement to develop into a general social revolution.

The fact of nominal national independence, in Latin America in the 19th century, in Africa in the mid-20th, puts an end to a movement for which genuine national autonomy was the only conceivable goal. Nor is this symbolic myopia the only problem: the African states also had to face the crippling effects of what Fanon prophetically warned them against—to receive independence is not the same as to take it, since it is in the revolutionary struggle itself that new social relationships and a new consciousness is developed. Here again the history of Cuba is instructive: Cuba was the last of the Latin American nations to win its freedom in the 19th century—a freedom which would immediately be taken in charge by another greater colonial power. We now know the incalculable role played in the Cuban Revolution of 1959 by the protracted guerrilla struggles of the late 19th century (of which the figure of José Martí is the emblem); contemporary Cuba would not be the same without that laborious and subterranean, one wants to say Thompsonian, experience of the mole of History burrowing through a lengthy past and creating its specific traditions in the process.

So it is that after the poisoned gift of independence, radical African writers like Ousmane, or like Ngugi in Kenya, find themselves back in the dilemma of Lu Xun, bearing a passion for change and social regeneration which has not yet found its agents. I hope it is clear that this is also very much an aesthetic dilemma, a crisis of representation: it was not difficult to identify an adversary who spoke another language and wore the visible trappings of colonial occupation. When those are replaced by your own people, the connections to external controlling forces are much more difficult to represent. The newer leaders may of course throw off their masks and reveal the person of the Dictator, whether in its older individual or newer military form: but this moment also determines problems of representation. The dictator novel has become a virtual genre of Latin American literature, and such works are marked above all by a profound and uneasy ambivalence, a deeper ultimate sympathy for the Dictator, which can perhaps only be properly accounted

for by some enlarged social variant of the Freudian mechanism of transference.[22]

The form normally taken by a radical diagnosis of the failures of contemporary third-world societies is, however, what is conventionally designated as "cultural imperialism," a faceless influence without representable agents, whose literary expression seems to demand the invention of new forms: Manuel Puig's *Betrayed by Rita Hayworth* may be cited as one of the most striking and innovative of those. One is led to conclude that under these circumstances traditional realism is less effective than the satiric fable: whence to my mind the greater power of certain of Ousmane's narratives (besides *Xala,* we should mention *The Money-Order*) as over against Ngugi's impressive but problematical *Petals of Blood.*

With the fable, however, we are clearly back into the whole question of allegory. *The Money-Order* mobilizes the traditional Catch-22 dilemma—its hapless protagonist cannot cash his Parisian check without identity papers, but since he was born long before independence there are no documents, and meanwhile the money-order, uncashed, begins to melt away before an accumulation of new credits and new debts. I am tempted to suggest, anachronistically, that this work, published in 1965, prophetically dramatizes the greatest misfortune that can happen to a third-world country in our time, namely the discovery of vast amounts of oil resources—something which as economists have shown us, far from representing salvation, at once sinks them incalculably into foreign debts they can never dream of liquidating.

On another level, however, this tale raises the issue of what must finally be one of the key problems in any analysis of Ousmane's work, namely the ambiguous role played in it by archaic or tribal elements. Viewers may perhaps remember the curious ending of his first film, *The Black Girl,* in which the European employer is inconclusively pursued by the little boy wearing an archaic mask; meanwhile such historical films as *Ceddo* or *Emitai* seem intent on evoking older moments of tribal resistance either to Islam or to the west, yet in a historical perspective which with few exceptions is that of failure and ultimate defeat. Ousmane cannot, however, be suspected of any archaizing or nostalgic cultural nationalism. Thus it becomes important to determine the significance of this appeal to older tribal values, particularly as they are more subtly active in modern works like *Xala* or *The Money-Order.*

I suspect that the deeper subject of this second novel is not so much the evident one of the denunciation of a modern national bureaucracy, but rather the historical transformation of the traditional Islamic value of alms-giving in a contemporary money economy. A Muslim has the duty to give alms—indeed, the work concludes with just such another unfulfilled request. Yet in a modern economy, this sacred duty to the poor is transformed into a frenzied assault by free-loaders from all the levels of society (at length, the cash is appropriated by a

westernized and affluent, influential cousin). The hero is literally picked clean by the vultures; better still, the unsought for, unexpected treasure fallen from heaven at once transforms the entire society around him into ferocious and insatiable petitioners, in something like a monetary version of Lu Xun's cannibalism.

The same double historical perspective—archaic customs radically transformed and denatured by the superposition of capitalist relations—seems to me demonstrable in *Xala* as well, in the often hilarious results of the more ancient Islamic and tribal institution of polygamy. This is what Ousmane has to say about that institution (it being understood that authorial intervention, no longer tolerable in realistic narrative, is still perfectly suitable to the allegorical fable as a form):

> It is worth knowing something about the life led by urban polygamists. It could be called geographical polygamy, as opposed to rural polygamy, where all the wives and children live together in the same compound. In the town, since the families are scattered, the children have little contact with their father. Because of his way of life the father must go from house to house, villa to villa, and is only there in the evenings, at bedtime. He is therefore primarily a source of finance, when he has work.[23]

Indeed, we are treated to the vivid spectacle of the Hadj's misery when, at the moment of his third marriage, which should secure his social status, he realizes he has no real home of his own and is condemned to shuttle from one wife's villa to the other, in a situation in which he suspects each of them in turn as being responsible for his ritual affliction. But the passage I have just read shows that—whatever one would wish to think about polygamy in and of itself as an institution—it functions here as a twin-valenced element designed to open up historical perspective. The more and more frenzied trips of the Hadj through the great city secure a juxtaposition between capitalism and the older collective tribal form of social life.

These are not as yet, however, the most remarkable feature of *Xala,* which can be described as a stunning and controlled, virtually text-book exercise in what I have elsewhere called "generic discontinuities."[24] The novel begins, in effect, in one generic convention, in terms of which the Hadj is read as a comic victim. Everything goes wrong all at once, and the news of his disability suddenly triggers a greater misfortune: his numerous debtors begin to descend on someone whose bad luck clearly marks him out as a loser. A comic pity and terror accompanies this process, though it does not imply any great sympathy for the personage. Indeed it conveys a greater revulsion against the privileged new westernized society in which this rapid overturning of the wheel of fortune can take place. Yet we have all been in error, as it turns out: the wives have not been the source of the ritual

curse. In an abrupt generic reversal and enlargement (comparable to some of the mechanisms Freud describes in "The Uncanny"), we suddenly learn something new and chilling about the Hadj's past:

> "Out story goes back a long way. It was shortly before your marriage to that woman there. Don't you remember? I was sure you would not. What I am now" (a beggar in rags is addressing him) "what I am now is your fault. Do you remember selling a large piece of land at Jeko belonging to our clan? After falsifying the clan names with the complicity of people in high places, you took our land from us. In spite of our protests, our proof of ownership, we lost our case in the courts. Not satisfied with taking our land you had me thrown into prison."[25]

Thus the primordial crime of capitalism is exposed: not so much wage labor as such, or the ravages of the money form, or the remorseless and impersonal rhythms of the market, but rather this primal displacement of the older forms of collective life from a land now seized and privatized. It is the oldest of modern tragedies, visited on the Native Americans yesterday, on the Palestinians today, and significantly reintroduced by Ousmane into his film version of *The Money-Order* (called *Mandabi*), in which the protagonist is now threatened with the imminent loss of his dwelling itself.

The point I want to make about this terrible "return of the repressed," is that it determines a remarkable generic transformation of the narrative: suddenly we are no longer in satire, but in ritual. The beggars and the lumpens, led by Sereen Mada himself, descend on the Hadj and require him to submit, for the removal of his *xala*, to an abominable ceremony of ritual humiliation and abasement. The representational space of the narrative is lifted to a new generic realm, which reaches back to touch the powers of the archaic even as it foretells the utopian destruction of the fallen present in the mode of prophecy. The word "Brechtian," which inevitably springs to mind, probably does inadequate justice to these new forms which have emerged from a properly third-world reality. Yet in light of this unexpected generic ending, the preceding satiric text is itself retroactively transformed. From a satire whose subject-matter or content was the ritual curse visited on a character within the narrative, it suddenly becomes revealed as a ritual curse in its own right—the entire imagined chain of events becomes Ousmane's own curse upon his hero and people like him. No more stunning confirmation could be adduced for Robert C. Elliott's great insight into the anthropological origins of satiric discourse in real acts of shamanistic malediction.

I want to conclude with a few thoughts on why all this should be so and on the origins and status of what I have identified as the primacy of national allegory in third-world culture. We are, after all, familiar with the mechanisms of auto-

referentiality in contemporary western literature: is this not simply to be taken as another form of that, in a structurally distinct social and cultural context? Perhaps. But in that case our priorities must be reversed for proper understanding of this mechanism. Consider the disrepute of social allegory in our culture and the well-nigh inescapable operation of social allegory in the west's Other. These two contrasting realities are to be grasped, I think, in terms of *situational consciousness,* an expression I prefer to the more common term materialism. Hegel's old analysis of the Master-Slave relationship[26] may still be the most effective way of dramatizing this distinction between two cultural logics. Two equals struggle each for recognition by the other: the one is willing to sacrifice life for this supreme value. The other, a heroic coward in the Brechtian, Schweykian sense of loving the body and the material world too well, gives in, in order to continue life. The Master—now the fulfillment of a baleful and inhuman feudal-aristocratic disdain for life without honor—proceeds to enjoy the benefits of his recognition by the other, now become his humble serf or slave. But at this point two distinct and dialectically ironic reversals take place: only the Master is now genuinely human, so that "recognition" by this henceforth sub-human form of life which is the slave evaporates at the moment of its attainment and offers no genuine satisfaction. "The truth of the Master," Hegel observes grimly, "is the Slave; while the truth of the Slave, on the other hand, is the Master." But a second reversal is in process as well: for the slave is called upon to labor for the master and to furnish him with all the material benefits befitting his supremacy. But this means that, in the end, only the slave knows what reality and the resistance of matter really are; only the slave can attain some true materialistic consciousness of his situation, since it is precisely to that that he is condemned. The Master, however, is condemned to idealism—to the luxury of a placeless freedom in which any consciousness of his own concrete situation flees like a dream, like a word unremembered on the tip of the tongue, a nagging doubt which the puzzled mind is unable to formulate.

It strikes me that we Americans, we masters of the world, are in something of that very same position. The view from the top is epistemologically crippling, and reduces its subjects to the illusions of a host of fragmented subjectivities, to the poverty of the individual experience of isolated monads, to dying individual bodies without collective pasts or futures bereft of any possibility of grasping the social totality. This placeless individuality, this structural idealism which affords us the luxury of the Sartrean blink, offers a welcome escape from the "nightmare of history," but at the same time it condemns our culture to psychologism and the "projections" of private subjectivity. All of this is denied to third-world culture, which must be situational and materialist despite itself. And it is this, finally, which must account for the allegorical nature of third-world culture, where the telling of the individual story and the individual experience cannot but ultimately

involve the whole laborious telling of the experience of the collectivity itself.

I hope I have suggested the epistemological priority of this unfamiliar kind of allegorical vision; but I must admit that old habits die hard, and that for us such unaccustomed exposure to reality, or to the collective totality, is often intolerable, leaving us in Quentin's position at the end of *Absalom, Absalom!*, murmuring the great denial, "I don't hate the Third World! I don't! I don't! I don't!"

Even that resistance is instructive, however; and we may well feel, confronted with the daily reality of the other two-thirds of the globe, that "there was nothing at all attractive about it in fact." But we must not allow ourselves that feeling without also acknowledging its ultimate mocking completion: "Its life was based on the principles of community interdependence."

NOTES

1. The whole matter of nationalism should perhaps be rethought, as Benedict Anderson's interesting essay *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 1983), and Tom Nairn's *The Breakup of Britain* (London: New Left Books, 1977) invite us to do.

2. I have argued elsewhere for the importance of mass culture and science fiction. See "Reification and Utopia in Mass Culture," *Social Text* no. 1 (1979), 130–148.

3. The essay was written for an immediate occasion—the third memorial lecture in honor of my late colleague and friend Robert C. Elliot at the University of California, San Diego. It is essentially reprinted as given.

4. William Bennett, "To Reclaim a Legacy," Text of a report on the Humanities, *Chronicle of Higher Education*, XXIX, 14 (Nov. 28, 1984), pp. 16-21.

5. The classic texts are F. Engels, *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) and the earlier, but only more recently published section of Marx's *Grundrisse*, often called "Pre-capitalist economic formations," trans. Martin Nicolaus (London: NLB/Penguin, 1973), pp. 471-514. See also Emmanuel Terray, *Marxism and "Primitive" Societies*, trans. M. Klopper, (New York: Monthly Review, 1972); Barry Hindess and Paul Hirst, *Pre-Capitalist Modes of Production* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1975); and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, "Savages, Barbarians, Civilized Men," in *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem, H.R. Lane, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota press, 1983), pp. 139-271.

Besides mode-of-production theory, whose validity is in any case widely debated, there have also appeared in recent years a number of important synthesizing works on third-world history as a unified field. Three works in particular deserve mention: *Global Rift*, by L.S. Stavrianos (Morrow, 1981); *Europe and the People without History*, by Eric R. Wolf (California, 1982), and *The Three Worlds*, by Peter Worsley (Chicago, 1984). Such works suggest a more general methodological consequence implicit in the present essay but which should be stated explicitly here: first, that the kind of comparative work demanded by this concept of third-world literature involves comparison, not of the individual texts, which are formally and culturally very different from each other, but of the concrete situations from which such texts spring and to which they constitute distinct responses; and second, that such an approach suggests the possibility of a literary and cultural comparatism of a new type, distantly modelled on the new comparative history of Barrington Moore and exemplified in books like Theda Skocpol's *States and Social Revolutions* or Eric Wolf's *Peasant Revolutions of the 20th Century*. Such a

new cultural comparatism would juxtapose the study of the differences and similarities of specific literary and cultural texts with a more typological analysis of the various socio-cultural situations from which they spring, an analysis whose variables would necessarily include such features as the interrelationship of social classes, the role of intellectuals, the dynamics of language and writing, the configuration of traditional forms, the relationship to western influences, the development of urban experience and money, and so forth. Such comparatism, however, need not be restricted to third-world literature.

6. See for example, Perry Anderson, *Lineages of the Absolutist State* (London: New Left Books, 1974), pp. 435-549.

7. Sigmund Freud, "Psychoanalytic Notes on an Autobiographical Account of a Case of Paranoia," trans. James Strachey, *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud* (London: Hogarth, 1958), Volume XII, p. 457.

8. See for example Wolfram Eberhard, *A History of China*, trans. E.W. Dickes, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. 105: "When we hear of alchemy, or read books about it we should always keep in mind that many of these books can also be read as books of sex; in a similar way, books on the art of war, too, can be read as books on sexual relations."

9. Lu Xun, *Selected Stories of Lu Hsun*, trans. Gladys Yang and Yang Hsien-yi (Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1972), pp. 1-6.

10. Ibid., pp. 2-3.

11. Ibid., p. 40.

12. Ibid., p. 72.

13. Ibid. I am indebted to Peter Rushton for some of these observations.

14. Ibid., p. 5.

15. Socialism will become a reality, Lenin observes, "when the *necessity* of observing the simple, fundamental rules of human intercourse" has "become a *habit*." (*State and Revolution* [Beijing: Foreign Languages Press, 1973], p. 122.)

16. See the interesting discussions in Stephen Gilman, *Galdós and the Art of the European Novel: 1867-1887* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981).

17. Immanuel Wallerstein, *The Modern World System* (New York: Academic Press, 1974).

18. For example: "El Delfin habia entrado, desde los últimos dias del 74, en aquel periodo sedante que seguia infaliblemente a sus desvarios. En realidad, no era aquello virtud, sino casancio del pecado; no era el sentimiento puro y regular del orden, sino el hastio de la revolución. Verificábase en él lo que don Baldomero habia dicho del pais: que padecia fiebres alternativas de libertad y de paz." *Fortunata y Jacinta* (Madrid: Editorial Hernando, 1968), p. 585 (Part III, chapter 2, section 2).

19. Deluze and Guattari, op. cit., p. 274.

20. Princeton University Press, 1960; and University of Chicago Press, 1970, respectively.

21. Sembène Ousmane, *Xala*, trans. Clive Wake, (Westport, Conn.: Lawrence Hill, 1976), p. 69.

22. I am indebted to Carlos Blanco Aguinaga for the suggestion that in the Latin American novel this ambivalence may be accounted for by the fact that the archetypal Dictator, while oppressing his own people, is also perceived as *resisting* North American influence.

23. *Xala*, op. cit., p. 66.

24. "Generic Discontinuities in Science Fiction: Brian Aldiss' Starship," *Science Fiction Studies* #2 (1973), pp. 57-68.

25. *Xala*, op. cit., pp. 110-111.

26. G.W.F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. A.V. Miller, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977): Section B, Chapter IV, Part A-3, "Lordship and Bondage," pp. 111-119. The other basic philosophical underpinning of this argument is Lukács' epistemology in *History and Class Conscious-*

ness according to which "mapping" or the grasping of the social totality is structurally available to the dominated rather than the dominating classes. "Mapping" is a term I have used in "Postmodernism, or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism," (*New Left Review* #146 [July-August, 1984], pp. 53-92). What is here called "national allegory" is clearly a form of just such mapping of the totality, so that the present essay—which sketches a theory of the cognitive aesthetics of third-world literature—forms a pendant to the essay on postmodernism which describes the logic of the cultural imperalism of the first world and above all of the United States.

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