Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

CAN THE SUBALTERN SPEAK?

Women outside of the mode of production narrative mark the points of fadeout in the writing of disciplinary history even as they mime "writing as such," footprints of the trace (of someone? something?—we are obliged mistakenly to ask) that efface as they disclose. If, as Jameson suggests, the mode of production narrative is the final reference, these women are insufficiently represented or representable in that narration. We can docket them, but we cannot grasp them at all. The possibility of possession, of being haunted, is cut by the imposition of the tough reasonableness of capital's mode of exploitation. Or, to tease out Marx rather than follow Jameson, the mode of production narrative is so efficient because it is constructed in terms of the most efficient and abstract coding of value, the economic. Thus, to represent an earlier intuition, the ground-level value-codings that write these women's lives elude us. These codes are measurable only in the (ebb and flow) mode of the total or expanded form, which is "defective" from a rationalist point of view. We pay the price of epistemically fractured transcoding when we explain them as general exemplars of anthropological descriptions.[1]

As a feminist literary critic pulling deconstruction into the service of reading, I am more attentive to these elusive figures, although of course deeply interested in the accounts of women who are in step with the mode of production narrative, as participants/resisters/victims. If indeed the relationship between capitalism and socialism is that of a *pharmakon* (medicine in *différance* with poison), these elusive figures mark moments where neither medicine nor poison quite catches. Indeed, it is only in their death that

they enter a narrative *for us*, they become figurable. In the rhythm of their daily living the elusion is familiarly performed or (un)performed, since to elude constatation in the act is not necessarily a performance. I attend to these figures because they continue to impose the highest standards on our techniques of retrieval, even as they judge them, not in our rationalist mode. In fact, since they are outside of our efforts, their judgment is not intended. Following a certain statement of Derrida's, perhaps we should rather say: they are the figures of justice as the experience of the impossible.[2]

[Here] I will focus on a figure who intended to be retrieved, who wrote with her body. It is as if she attempted to "speak" across death, by rendering her body graphematic.[3] In the archives, Rani Gulari emerges only on call, when needed, as coerced agent/instrument/witness for the colonialism of capital. She is the "purer" figure of fadeout. This woman tried to join uncoerced intending (male) agents of anti-colonialism. She was born in Calcutta a hundred years later and understood "nationalism," another efficient coding.[4] Anticipating her production world-historically though not in intent, Gulari had been a letter in the alphabet of the discursive transformation that remotely set in motion the definition of "India" as a modern nation—miraculating site of state-as-intention—a word that could find enunciative completion only as object of "liberation" in order, then, to constitute "identity." The woman in this section tried to be decisive in extremis, yet lost herself in the undecidable womanspace of justice. She "spoke," but women did not, do not, "hear" her. Before I come to her, I will lay out, in a long digression, some of the decisive judgments that I risked, some years ago, in order to attend to her mystery.

Whatever power these meditations may command has been earned by a politically interested refusal to acknowledge the undecidable, to push to the limit the founding presuppositions of my desires, as far as they are within my grasp. This three-stroke formula, applied both to the most resolutely committed and to the most ironic discourse, keeps track of what Althusser so aptly named "philosophies of denegation," and Derrida, before psychoanalysis, "desistance."[5] Calling the place of the investigator into question remains a meaningless piety in many recent critiques of the sovereign subject. Although I attempt to sound the precariousness of my position throughout, I know such gestures can never suffice.

Some of the most radical criticism coming out of the West in the eighties was the result of an interested desire to conserve the subject of the West, or the West as Subject. The theory of pluralized "subject-effects" often provided a cover for this subject of knowledge. Although the history of Europe as Subject was narrativized by the law, political economy, and ideology of the

West, this concealed Subject pretended it had "no geo-political determinations." The much-publicized critique of the sovereign subject thus actually inaugurated a Subject. I will argue for this conclusion by considering a text by two great practitioners of the critique: "Intellectuals and Power: A Conversation between Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze."[6] In the event, just as some "third world women's" critique romanticize the united struggle of working-class women, these hegemonic radicals also allow undivided subjectivity to workers' struggles. My example is outside both circuits. I must therefore spend some time with the hegemonic radicals.

I have chosen this friendly exchange between two activist philosophers of history because it undoes the opposition between authoritative theoretical production and the unguarded practice of conversation, enabling one to glimpse the track of ideology. (Like the conference, the interview is a site of betrayal.) Earlier and elsewhere I have considered their theoretical brilliance. This is a chapter of another disciplinary mistake: telling life stories in the name of history.

The participants in this conversation emphasize the most important contributions of French poststructuralist theory: first, that the networks of power/desire/interest are so heterogeneous that their reduction to a coherent narrative is counterproductive—a persistent critique is needed; and second, that intellectuals must attempt to disclose and know the discourse of society's other. Yet the two systematically and surprisingly ignore the question of ideology and their own implication in intellectual and economic history.

Although one of its chief presuppositions is the critique of the sovereign subject, the conversation between Foucault and Deleuze is framed by two monolithic and anonymous subjects-in-revolution: "A Maoist" (*FD* 205) and "the workers' struggle" (*FD* 217). Intellectuals, however, are named and differentiated; moreover, a Chinese Maoism is nowhere operative. Maoism here simply creates an aura of narrative specificity, which would be a harmless rhetorical banality were it not that the innocent appropriation of the proper name "Maoism" for the eccentric phenomenon of French intellectual "Maoism" and subsequent "New Philosophy" symptomatically renders "Asia" transparent.[7]

Deleuze's reference to the workers' struggle is equally problematic; it is obviously a genuflection: "We are unable to touch [power] in any point of its application without finding ourselves confronted by this diffuse mass, so that we are necessarily led . . . to the desire to blow it up completely. Every partial revolutionary attack or defense is linked in this way to the workers' struggle" (*FD* 217). The apparent banality signals a disavowal. The statement

ignores the international division of labor, a gesture that often marks poststructuralist political theory. (Today's post-Soviet universalist feminist—"gender and development," United Nation style—dissimulates it; its rôle will come clear later.[8]

The invocation of *the* workers' struggle is baleful in its very innocence; it is incapable of dealing with global capitalism: the subject-production of worker and unemployed within nation-state ideologies in its Center; the increasing subtraction of the working class in the periphery from the realization of surplus value and thus from "humanistic" training in consumerism; and the large-scale presence of paracapitalist labor as well as the heterogeneous structural status of agriculture in the periphery. Ignoring the international division of labor, rendering "Asia" (and on occasion "Africa") transparent (unless the subject is ostensibly the "Third World"); reestablishing the legal subject of socialized capital—these are problems as common to much poststructuralist as to "regular" theory. (The invocation of "woman" is as problematic in the current conjuncture.) Why should such occlusions be sanctioned in precisely those intellectuals who are our best prophets of heterogeneity and the Other?

The link to the workers' struggle is located in the desire to blow up power at any point of its application. It reads too much like a valorization of *any* desire destructive of *any* power. Walter Benjamin comments on Baudelaire's comparable politics by way of quotations from Marx:

> Marx continues in his description of the *conspirateurs de profession* as follows: " . . . They have no other aim but the immediate one of overthrowing the existing government, and they profoundly despise the more theoretical enlightenment of the workers as to their class interests. Thus their anger—not proletarian but plebeian—at the *habits noirs* (black coats), the more or less educated people who represent [*vertreten*] that side of the movement and of whom they can never become entirely independent, as they cannot of the official representatives [*Repräsentanten*] of the party. Baudelaire's political insights do not go fundamentally beyond the insights of these professional conspirators. . . . "He could perhaps have made Flaubert's statement, "Of all of politics I understand only one thing: the revolt," his own.[9]

This, too, is a rewriting of accountable responsibility as narcissism, lower case; perhaps we cannot do otherwise, but one can tend. Or else, why speak of "the gift," at all?[10]

The link to the workers' struggle is located, simply, in desire. This is not the "desire" of *Anti-Oedipus*, which is a deliberate mis-name for a general flow (where the "subject" is a residuum), for which no adequate name can

be found: a nominalist catachresis.[11] I have admiration for that bold effort, especially for the ways in which it is linked with that other nominalist catachresis: value. To check psychologism, *Anti-Oedipus* uses the concept-metaphor of machines: Desire does not lack anything; it does not lack its object. It is, rather, the subject that is lacking in desire, or desire that lacks a fixed subject; there is no fixed subject except by repression. Desire and its object are a unity: it is the machine, as a machine of a machine. Desire is machine, the object of desire also a connected machine, so that the product is lifted from the process of producing, and something detaches itself from producing to product and gives a leftover to the vagabond, nomad subject.[12]

One of the canniest moments in deconstruction is its caution, from early days to the latest, that the catachrestic is bound to the "empirical."[13] In the absence of such a practical caution, the philosopher oscillates between theoretical catachresis and practical naive realism as a contradiction that *may* be harmless in a context, where much goodwill may perhaps be taken for granted. As we see daily, such a contradiction between theory and its judgment is dire if "applied" globally.

Thus desire as catachresis in *Anti-Oedipus* does not alter the specificity of the desiring subject (or leftover subject-effect) that attaches to specific instances of "empirical" desire. The subject-effect that surreptitiously emerges is much like the generalized ideological subject of the theorist. This may be the legal subject of socialized capital, neither labor nor management, holding a "strong" passport, using a "strong" or "hard" currency, with supposedly unquestioned access to due process. Again, the lineaments of the UN-style feminist *aparatchik* are almost identical; her struggles against patriarchal measures are altogether admirable in her location; but dire when "applied" globally. In the era of globalizing capital, the catachreses "desire" and "globe"—the global crust as body-without-organs—are contaminated by empirical paleonymy in particular ways. It is a (Euro-U.S.) cut in a (Group of Seven) flow.

Deleuze and Guattari consider the relations between desire, power, and subjectivity on the "empirical" or constituted level in a slightly off-sync mode: against the family, and against colonialism. This renders them incapable of articulating a general or global theory of interests textualized to the conjuncture. In this context, their indifference to ideology (a theory of which is necessary for an understanding of constituted interests within systems of representation) is striking but consistent. Foucault's work cannot work on the subject-constituting register of ideology because of its tenacious commitment to the sub-individual and, at the other end, the great aggregative apparatuses (*dispositifs*). Yet, as this conversational register shows, the

empirical subject, the intending subject, the self even, must be constantly assumed in radical calculations. Thus in his influential essay "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses (Notes towards An Investigation)," Louis Althusser must inhabit that unavoidable middle ground, and assume a subject even as he uses "a more scientific language" to describe abstract average labor or labor-power: "The reproduction of labour power requires not only a reproduction of its skills, but also at the same time, a reproduction of its submission to the ruling ideology for the workers, and a reproduction of the ability to manipulate the ruling ideology correctly for the agents of exploitation and repression, so that they, too, will provide for the domination of the ruling class 'in and by words' [*par la parole*]."[14]

When Foucault considers the pervasive heterogeneity of power, he does not ignore the immense institutional heterogeneity that Althusser here attempts to schematize. Similarly, in speaking of alliances and systems of signs, the state and war-machines, in *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari open up that very field.[15] Foucault cannot, however, admit that a developed theory of ideology *can* recognize its own material production in institutionality, as well as in the "effective instruments for the formation and accumulation of knowledge" (*PK* 102).[16] Because these philosophers seem obliged to reject all arguments naming the concept of ideology as *only* schematic rather than textual, they are equally obliged to produce a mechanically schematic opposition between interest and desire, when their catachreses inevitably bleed into the "empirical" field. Thus they unwittingly align themselves with bourgeois sociologists who fill the place of ideology with a continuistic "unconscious" or a parasubjective "culture" (or Bretton Woods activists who speak of "culture" alone). The mechanical relation between desire and interest is clear in such sentences as: "We never desire against our interests, because interest always follows and finds itself where desire has placed it" (*FD* 215). An undifferentiated desire is the agent, and power slips in to create the effects of desire: "power . . . produces positive effects at the level of desire—and also at the level of knowledge" (*PK* 59).[17]

This parasubjective matrix, cross-hatched with heterogeneity, surreptitiously ushers in the unnamed Subject, at least for those intellectual workers influenced by the new hegemony of pure catachresis. The race for "the last instance" is now between economics and power. Because, by the unacknowledged inevitable empirical contamination of catachreses, desire is tacitly and repeatedly "defined" on an orthodox model, it can be unitarily opposed to "being deceived." Ideology as "false consciousness" (being deceived) has been called into question by Althusser. Even Reich implied notions of collective will rather than a dichotomy of deception and undeceived desire: "We

must accept the screams of Reich: no, the masses were not deceived; at a particular moment, they actually desired a fascist regime" (*FD* 215).

These philosophers will not entertain the thought of constitutive contradiction—that is where they admittedly part company from the Left. In the name of desire, they tacitly reintroduce the undivided subject into the discourse of power. On the register of practice, Foucault often seems to conflate "individual" and "subject";[18] and the impact on his own concept-metaphors is perhaps intensified in his followers. Because of the power of the word "power," Foucault admits to using the "metaphor of the point which progressively irradiates its surroundings." Such slips become the rule rather than the exception in less careful hands. And that radiating point, animating an effectively heliocentric discourse, fills the empty place of the agent with the historical sun of theory, the Subject of Europe.[19]

It is not surprising, therefore, that upon the empirical register of resistance-talk, Foucault articulates another corollary of the disavowal of the rôle of ideology in reproducing the social relations of production: an unquestioned valorization of the oppressed as subject, the "object being," as Deleuze admiringly remarks, "to establish conditions where the prisoners themselves would be able to speak." Foucault adds that "the masses know perfectly well, clearly"—once again the thematics of being undeceived—"they know far better than [the intellectual] and they certainly say it very well" (*FD* 206, 207). The ventriloquism of the speaking subaltern is the left intellectual's stock-in-trade.

What happens to the critique of the sovereign subject in these pronouncements? The limits of this representationalist realism are reached with Deleuze: "Reality is what actually happens in a factory, in a school, in barracks, in a prison, in a police station" (*FD* 212). This foreclosing of the necessity of the difficult task of counterhegemonic ideological production has not been salutary. It has helped positivist empiricism—the justifying foundation of advanced capitalist neocolonialism—to define its own arena as "concrete experience," "what actually happens." (As in the case of capitalist colonialism, and *mutatis mutandis*, of exploitation-as-"Development." Evidence is daily produced by computing the national subject of the global South in this unproblematic way. And an alibi for globalization is produced by calling on the testimony of the credit-baited female.) Indeed, the concrete experience that is the guarantor of the political appeal of prisoners, soldiers, and schoolchildren is disclosed through the concrete experience of the intellectual, the one who diagnoses the episteme.[20] Neither Deleuze nor Foucault seems aware that the intellectual within globalizing capital, brandishing concrete experience, can help consolidate the international di-

vision of labor by making one model of "concrete experience" *the* model. We are witnessing this in our discipline daily as we see the postcolonial *migrant* become the norm, thus occluding the native once again.[21]

The unrecognized contradiction within a position that valorizes the concrete experience of the oppressed, while being so uncritical about the historical rôle of the intellectual, is maintained by a verbal slippage. Deleuze makes this remarkable pronouncement: "A theory is like a box of tools. Nothing to do with the signifier" (*FD* 208). Considering that the verbalism of the theoretical world and its access to any work defined against it as "practical" is irreducible, such a declaration (referring *only* to an in-house contretemps with hermeneutics), helps *only* the intellectual anxious to prove that intellectual labor is just like manual labor.

It is when signifiers are left to look after themselves that verbal slippages happen. The signifier "representation" is a case in point. In the same dismissive tone that severs theory's link to the signifier, Deleuze declares, "There is no more representation; there's nothing but action"—"action of theory and action of practice which relate to each other as relays and form networks" (*FD* 206–7).

An important point is being made here: the production of theory is also a practice; the opposition between abstract "pure" theory and concrete "applied" practice is too quick and easy.[22] But Deleuze's articulation of the argument is problematic. Two senses of representation are being run together: representation as "speaking for," as in politics, and representation as "re-presentation," as in art or philosophy. Since theory is also only "action," the theoretician does not represent (speak for) the oppressed group. Indeed, the subject is not seen as a representative consciousness (one representing reality adequately). These two senses of representation—within state formation and the law, on the one hand, and in subject-predication, on the other—are related but irreducibly discontinuous. To cover over the discontinuity with an analogy that is presented as a proof reflects again a paradoxical subject-privileging.[23] *Because* "the person who speaks and acts . . . is always a multiplicity," no "theorizing intellectual . . . [or] party or . . . union" can represent "those who act and struggle" (*FD* 206). Are those who act and *struggle* mute, as opposed to those who act and *speak* (*FD* 206)? These immense problems are buried in the differences between the "same" words: consciousness and conscience (both *conscience* in French), representation and re-presentation. The critique of ideological subject-constitution within state formations and systems of political economy can now be effaced, as can the active theoretical practice of the "transformation of consciousness." The banality of leftist intellectuals' lists of self-knowing, politically canny

subalterns stands revealed; representing them, the intellectuals represent themselves as transparent.

If such a critique and such a project are not to be given up, the shifting distinctions between representation within the state and political economy, on the one hand, and within the theory of the Subject, on the other, must not be obliterated. Let us consider the play of *vertreten* ("represent" in the first sense) and *darstellen* ("re-present" in the second sense) in a famous passage in *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, where Marx touches on "class" as a descriptive and transformative concept in a manner somewhat more complex than Althusser's distinction between class instinct and class position would allow. This is important in the context of the argument from the working class both from our two philosophers and "political" third world feminism from the metropolis.

Marx's contention here is that the descriptive definition of a class can be a differential one—its cutting off and difference from all other classes: "in so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that cut off their mode of life, their interest, and their formation from those of the other classes and place them in inimical confrontation [*feindlich gegenüberstellen*], they form a class."[24] There is no such thing as a "class instinct" at work here. In fact, the collectivity of familial existence, which might be considered the arena of "instinct," is discontinuous with, though operated by, the differential isolation of classes. In this context, one far more pertinent to the France of the 1970s than it can be to the international periphery, the formation of a class is *artificial* and economic, and the economic agency or *interest* is impersonal because it is systematic and heterogeneous. This agency or interest is tied to the Hegelian critique of the individual subject, for it marks the subject's empty place in that process without a subject which is history and political economy. Here the capitalist is defined as "the conscious bearer [*Träger*] of the limitless movement of capital."[25] My point is that Marx is not working to create an undivided subject where desire and interest coincide. Class consciousness does not operate toward that goal. Both in the economic area (capitalist) and in the political (world-historical agent), Marx is obliged to construct models of a divided and dislocated subject whose parts are not continuous or coherent with each other. A celebrated passage like the description of capital as the Faustian monster brings this home vividly.[26]

The following passage, continuing the quotation from *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, is also working on the structural principle of a dispersed and dislocated class subject: the (absent collective) consciousness of the small peasant proprietor class finds its "bearer" in a "representative" who appears

to work in another's interest. "Representative" here does not derive from "*darstellen*"; this sharpens the contrast Foucault and Deleuze slide over, the contrast, say, between a proxy and a portrait. There is, of course, a relationship between them, one that has received political and ideological exacerbation in the European tradition at least since the poet and the sophist, the actor and the orator, have both been seen as harmful. In the guise of a post-Marxist description of the scene of power, we thus encounter a much older debate: between representation or rhetoric as tropology and as persuasion. *Darstellen* belongs to the first constellation, *vertreten*—with stronger suggestions of substitution—to the second. Again, they are related, but running them together, especially in order to say that beyond both is where oppressed subjects speak, act, and know *for themselves*, leads to an essentialist, utopian politics that can, when transferred to single-issue gender rather than class, give unquestioning support to the financialization of the globe, which ruthlessly constructs a general will in the credit-baited rural woman even as it "format"s her through UN Plans of Action so that she can be "developed." Beyond this concatenation, transparent as rhetoric in the service of "truth" has always made itself out to be, is the much-invoked oppressed subject (as Woman), speaking, acting, and knowing that gender in development is best for her. It is in the shadow of this unfortunate marionette that the history of the unheeded subaltern must unfold.

Here is Marx's passage, using *vertreten* where the English uses "represent," discussing a social "subject" whose consciousness is dislocated and incoherent with its *Vertretung* (as much a substitution as a representation). The small peasant proprietors

> cannot represent themselves; they must be represented. Their representative must appear simultaneously as their master, as an authority over them, as unrestricted governmental power that protects them from the other classes and sends them rain and sunshine from above. The political influence [in the place of the class interest, since there is no unified class subject] of the small peasant proprietors therefore finds its last expression [the implication of a chain of substitutions—*Vertretungen*—is strong here] in the executive force [*Exekutivegewalt*—less personal in German; Derrida translates *Gewalt* as violence in another context in "Force of Law"] subordinating society to itself.[27]

Such a model of social incoherence—necessary gaps between the source of "influence" (in this case the small peasant proprietors), the "representative" (Louis Napoleon), and the historical-political phenomenon (executive control)—imply a critique of the subject as *individual* agent but a

critique even of the subjectivity of a *collective* agency. The necessarily dislocated machine of history moves because "the identity of the *interests*" of these proprietors "fails to produce a feeling of community, national links, or a political organization." The event of representation as *Vertretung* (in the constellation of rhetoric-as-persuasion) behaves like a *Darstellung* (or rhetoric-as-trope), taking its place in the gap between the formation of a (descriptive) class and the nonformation of a (transformative) class: "In so far as millions of families live under economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life . . . *they form a class*. In so far as . . . the identity of their interests fails to produce a feeling of community . . . *they do not form a class*." The complicity of *vertreten* and *darstellen*, their identity-in-difference as the place of practice—since this complicity is precisely what Marxists must expose, as Marx does in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* —can only be appreciated if they are not conflated by a sleight of word.

It would be merely tendentious to argue that this textualizes Marx too much, making him inaccessible to the common "man," who, a victim of common sense, is so deeply placed in a heritage of positivism that Marx's irreducible emphasis on the work of the negative, on the necessity for defetishizing the concrete, is persistently wrested from him by the strongest adversary, "the historical tradition" in the air.[28] I have been trying to point out that the uncommon "man," the contemporary philosopher of practice, and the uncommon woman, the metropolitan enthusiast of "third world resistance," sometimes exhibit the same positivism.

The gravity of the problem is apparent if one agrees that the development of a transformative class "consciousness" from a descriptive class "position" is not in Marx a task engaging the ground level of consciousness. Class consciousness remains with the feeling of community that belongs to national links and political organizations, not with that other feeling of community whose structural model is the family. Although *not* identified with nature, the family here is constellated with what Marx calls "natural exchange," which is, philosophically speaking, a "placeholder" for use value.[29] "Natural exchange" is contrasted to "intercourse with society," where the word "intercourse" (*Verkehr*) is Marx's usual word for "commerce." This "intercourse" thus holds the place of the exchange leading to the production of surplus value, and it is in the area of this intercourse that the feeling of community leading to class agency must be developed. Full class agency (if there were such a thing) is not an ideological transformation of consciousness on the ground level, a desiring identity of the agents and their interest—the identity whose absence troubles Foucault and Deleuze. It is a contestatory *replacement* as well as an *appropriation* (a *supplementation*) of something

that is "artificial" to begin with—"economic conditions of existence that separate their mode of life." Marx's formulations show a cautious respect for the nascent critique of individual and collective subjective agency. The projects of class consciousness and of the transformation of consciousness are discontinuous issues for him. Today's analogue would be "transnational literacy" as opposed to the mobilizing potential of unexamined culturalism.[30] Conversely, contemporary invocations of "libidinal economy" and desire as the determining interest, combined with the practical politics of the oppressed (under socialized capital) "speaking for themselves," restore the category of the sovereign subject within the theory that seems most to question it.

No doubt the exclusion of the family, albeit a family belonging to a specific class formation, is part of the masculine frame within which Marxism marks its birth.[31] Historically as well as in today's global political economy, the family's rôle in patriarchal social relations is so heterogeneous and contested that merely replacing the family in this problematic is not going to break the frame. Nor does the solution lie in the positivist inclusion of a monolithic collectivity of "women" in the list of the oppressed whose unfractured subjectivity allows them to speak for themselves against an equally monolithic "same system."

In the context of the development of a strategic, artificial, and second-level "consciousness," Marx uses the concept of the patronymic, always keeping within the broader concept of representation as *Vertretung*: The small peasant proprietors "are therefore incapable of making their class interest valid in their proper name [*im eigenen Namen*], whether through a parliament or through a convention." The absence of the nonfamilial artificial collective proper name is supplied by the only proper name "historical tradition" can offer—the patronymic itself—the Name of the Father (in a not dissimilar spirit Jean Rhys had denied that name to her fictional [Rochester] character): "Historical tradition produced the French peasants' belief that a miracle would occur, that a man *named* Napoleon would restore all their glory. And an individual turned up"—the untranslatable *es fand sich* (there found itself an individual?) demolishes all questions of agency or the agent's connection with his interest—"who gave himself out to be that man" (this pretense is, by contrast, his only proper agency) "because he carried [*trägt*—the word used for the capitalist's relationship to capital] the Napoleonic Code, which commands" that "inquiry into paternity is forbidden." While Marx here seems to be working within a patriarchal metaphorics, one should note the textual subtlety of the passage. It is the Law of the Father (the Napoleonic Code) that paradoxically prohibits the search for the natural father. Thus, it is according to a strict observance of the historical

Law of the Father that the formed yet unformed class's faith in the natural father is gainsaid.

I have dwelt so long on this passage in Marx because it spells out the inner dynamics of *Vertretung*, or representation in the political context. Representation in the economic context is *Darstellung*, the philosophical concept of representation as staging or, indeed, signification, which relates to the divided subject in an indirect way. The most obvious passage is well known: "In the exchange relationship [*Austauschverhältnis*] of commodities their exchange-value appeared to us totally independent of their use value. But if we subtract their use-value from the product of labour, we obtain their value, as it was just determined [*bestimmt*]. The common element which represents itself [*sich darstellt*] in the exchange relation, or the exchange value of the commodity, is thus its value.[32]

According to Marx, under capitalism, value, as produced in necessary and surplus labor, is computed as the representation/sign of objectified labor (which is rigorously distinguished from human activity). Conversely, in the absence of a theory of exploitation as the extraction (production), appropriation, and realization of (surplus) value *as representation of labor power*, capitalist exploitation must be seen as a variety of domination (the mechanics of power as such). "The thrust of Marxism," Deleuze suggests, "was to determine the problem [that power is more diffuse than the structure of exploitation and state formation] essentially in terms of interests (power is held by a ruling class defined by its interests)" (*FD* 214).

One cannot object to this minimalist summary of Marx's project, just as one cannot ignore that, in parts of the *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari build their case on a brilliant if "poetic" grasp of Marx's *theory* of the money form. Yet we might consolidate our critique in the following way: the relationship between global capitalism (exploitation in economics) and nation-state alliances (domination in geopolitics) is so macrological that it cannot account for the micrological texture of power.[33] Sub-individual micrologies cannot grasp the "empirical" field. To move toward such an accounting one must move toward theories of ideology—of subject formations that micrologically and often erratically operate the interests that congeal the micrologies and are congealed in macrologies. Such theories cannot afford to overlook that this line *is* erratic, and that the category of representation in its *two* senses is crucial. They must note how the staging of the world in representation—its scene of writing, its *Darstellung*—dissimulates the choice of and need for "heroes," paternal proxies, agents of power—*Vertretung*.

My view is that radical practice should attend to this double session of representations rather than reintroduce the individual subject through totalizing concepts of power and desire. It is also my view that, in keeping the

area of class practice on a second level of abstraction, Marx was in effect keeping open the (Kantian and) Hegelian critique of the individual subject as agent.[34] This view does not oblige me to ignore that, by implicitly defining the family and the mother tongue as the ground level where culture and convention seem nature's own way of organizing "her" own subversion, Marx himself rehearses an ancient subterfuge.[35] In the context of poststructuralist claims to critical practice, however, Marx seems more recuperable than the clandestine restoration of subjective essentialism.

The reduction of Marx to a benevolent but dated figure most often serves the interest of launching a new theory of interpretation. In the Foucault-Deleuze conversation, the issue seems to be that there is no representation, no signifier (Is it to be presumed that the signifier has already been dispatched? There is, then, no sign-structure operating experience, and thus might one lay semiotics to rest?); theory is a relay of practice (thus laying problems of theoretical practice to rest) and the oppressed can know and speak for themselves. This reintroduces the constitutive subject on at least two levels: the Subject of desire and power as an irreducible methodological presupposition; and the self-proximate, if not self-identical, subject of the oppressed. Further, the intellectuals, who are neither of these S/subjects, become transparent in the relay race, for they merely report on the nonrepresented subject and analyze (without analyzing) the workings of (the unnamed Subject irreducibly presupposed by) power and desire. The produced "transparency" marks the place of "interest"; it is maintained by vehement denegation: "Now this rôle of referee, judge and universal witness is one which I *absolutely refuse* to adopt." One responsibility of the critic might be to read and write so that the impossibility of such interested individualistic refusals of the institutional privileges of power bestowed on the subject is taken seriously. The refusal of sign-system blocks the way to a developed theory of ideology in the "empirical." Here, too, the peculiar tone of denegation is heard. To Jacques-Alain Miller's suggestion that "the institution is itself discursive," Foucault responds, "Yes, if you like, but it doesn't much matter for my notion of the apparatus to be able to say that this is discursive and that isn't . . . given that my problem isn't a linguistic one" (*PK* 198). Why this conflation of language and discourse from the master of discourse analysis?

Edward W. Said's critique of power in Foucault as a captivating and mystifying category that allows him "to obliterate the rôle of classes, the rôle of economics, the rôle of insurgency and rebellion," is pertinent here, although the importance of the name of "power" in the sub-individual is not to be ignored.[36] I add to Said's analysis the notion of the surreptitious subject of power and desire marked by the transparency of the intellectual.

This S/subject, curiously sewn together into a transparency by denegations, belongs to the exploiters' side of the international division of labor. It is impossible for contemporary French intellectuals to imagine the kind of Power and Desire that would inhabit the unnamed subject of the Other of Europe. It is not only that everything they read, critical or uncritical, is caught within the debate of the production of that Other, supporting or critiquing the constitution of the Subject as Europe. It is also that, in the constitution of that Other of Europe, great care was taken to obliterate the textual ingredients with which such a subject could cathect, could occupy (invest?) its itinerary—not only by ideological and scientific production, but also by the institution of the law. However reductionistic an economic analysis might seem, the French intellectuals forget at their peril that this entire overdetermined enterprise was in the interest of a dynamic economic situation requiring that interests, motives (desires), and power (of knowledge) be ruthlessly dislocated. To invoke that dislocation now as a radical discovery that should make us diagnose the economic (conditions of existence that separate out "classes" descriptively) as a piece of dated analytic machinery may well be to continue the work of that dislocation and unwittingly to help in securing "a new balance of hegemonic relations."[37] In the face of the possibility that the intellectual is complicit in the persistent constitution of the Other as the Self's shadow, a possibility of political practice for the intellectual would be to put the economic "under erasure," to see the economic factor as irreducible as it reinscribes the social text, even as it is erased, however imperfectly, when it claims to be the final determinant or the transcendental signified.[38]

Until very recently, the clearest available example of such epistemic violence was the remotely orchestrated, far-flung, and heterogeneous project to constitute the colonial subject as Other. This project is also the asymmetrical obliteration of the trace of that Other in its precarious Subject-ivity. It is well known that Foucault locates one case of epistemic violence, a complete overhaul of the episteme, in the redefinition of madness at the end of the European eighteenth century.[39] But what if that particular redefinition was only a part of the narrative of history in Europe as well as in the colonies? What if the two projects of epistemic overhaul worked as dislocated and unacknowledged parts of a vast two-handed engine? Perhaps it is no more than to ask that the subtext of the palimpsestic narrative of imperialism be recognized as "subjugated knowledge," "a whole set of knowledges that have been disqualified as inadequate to their task or insufficiently elaborated: naive knowledges, located low down on the hierarchy, beneath the required level of cognition or scientificity" (*PK* 82).

This is not to describe "the way things really were" or to privilege the narrative of history as imperialism as the best version of history.[40] It is, rather to continue the account of how *one* explanation and narrative of reality was established as the normative one. A comparable account in the case(s) of Central and Eastern Europe is soon to be launched. To elaborate on this, let us consider for the moment and briefly the underpinnings of the British codification of Hindu Law.

Once again, I am not a South Asianist. I turn to Indian material because I have some accident-of-birth facility there.

Here, then, is a schematic summary of the epistemic violence of the codification of Hindu Law. If it clarifies the notion of epistemic violence, my final discussion of widow-sacrifice may gain added significance.

At the end of the eighteenth century, Hindu Law, insofar as it can be described as a unitary system, operated in terms of four texts that "staged" a four-part episteme defined by the subject's use of memory: *sruti* (the heard), *smriti* (the remembered), *sāstra* (the calculus), and *vyavahāra* (the performance).[41] The origins of what had been heard and what was remembered were not necessarily continuous or identical. Every invocation of *sruti* technically recited (or reopened) the event of originary "hearing" or revelation. The second two texts—the learned and the performed—were seen as dialectically continuous. Legal theorists and practitioners were not in any given case certain if this structure described the body of law or four ways of settling a dispute. The legitimation, through a binary vision, of the polymorphous structure of legal performance, "internally" noncoherent and open at both ends, is the narrative of codification I offer as an example of epistemic violence.

Consider the often-quoted programmatic lines from Macaulay's infamous "Minute on Indian Education" (1835):

> We must at present do our best to form a class who may be interpreters between us and the millions whom we govern; a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect. To that class we may leave it to refine the vernacular dialects of the country, to enrich those dialects with terms of science borrowed from the Western nomenclature, and to render them by degrees fit vehicles for conveying knowledge to the great mass of the population.[42]

The education of colonial subjects complements their production in law. One effect of establishing a version of the British system was the development of an uneasy separation between disciplinary formation in Sanskrit studies and the native, now alternative, tradition of Sanskrit "high culture."

Elsewhere, I have suggested that within the former, the cultural explanations generated by authoritative scholars matched the epistemic violence of the legal project.

Those authorities would be *the very best* of the sources for the nonspecialist French intellectual's entry into the civilization of the Other.[43] I am, however, not referring to intellectuals and scholars of colonial production, like Shastri, when I say that the Other as Subject is inaccessible to Foucault and Deleuze. I am thinking of the general nonspecialist, nonacademic population across the class spectrum, for whom the episteme operates its silent programming function. Without considering the map of exploitation, on what grid of "oppression" would they place this motley crew?

Let us now move to consider the margins (one can just as well say the silent, silenced center) of the circuit marked out by this epistemic violence, men and women among the illiterate peasantry, Aboriginals, and the lowest strata of the urban subproletariat. According to Foucault and Deleuze (in the First World, under the standardization and regimentation of socialized capital, though they do not seem to recognize this) and mutatis mutandis the metropolitan "third world feminist" only interested in resistance within capital logic, the oppressed, if given the chance (the problem of representation cannot be bypassed here), and on the way to solidarity through alliance politics (a Marxist thematic is at work here) *can speak and know their conditions*. We must now confront the following question: On the other side of the international division of labor from socialized capital, inside *and* outside the circuit of the epistemic violence of imperialist law and education supplementing an earlier economic text, *can the subaltern speak*?

ANTONIO GRAMSCI'S WORK on the "subaltern classes" extends the class-position/class-consciousness argument isolated in *The Eighteenth Brumaire*. Perhaps because Gramsci criticizes the vanguardistic position of the Leninist intellectual, he is concerned with the intellectual's rôle in the subaltern's cultural and political movement into the hegemony. This movement must be made to determine the production of history as narrative (of truth). In texts such as *The Southern Question,* Gramsci considers the movement of historical-political economy in Italy within what can be seen as an allegory of reading taken from or prefiguring an international division of labor.[44] Yet an account of the phased development of the subaltern is thrown out of joint when his cultural macrology is operated, however remotely, by the epistemic interference with legal and disciplinary definitions accompanying the imperialist project. When I move, at the end of this essay, to the question of

woman as subaltern, I will suggest that the possibility of collectivity itself is persistently foreclosed through the manipulation of female agency.

The first part of my proposition—that the phased development of the subaltern is complicated by the imperialist project—is confronted by the "Subaltern Studies" group. They *must* ask, Can the subaltern speak? Here we are within Foucault's own discipline of history and with people who acknowledge his influence. Their project is to rethink Indian colonial historiography from the perspective of the discontinuous chain of peasant insurgencies during the colonial occupation. This is indeed the problem of "the permission to narrate" discussed by Said.[45] As Ranajit Guha, the founding editor of the collective, argues,

> The historiography of Indian nationalism has for a long time been dominated by elitism—colonialist elitism and bourgeois-nationalist elitism . . . shar[ing] the prejudice that the making of the Indian nation and the development of the consciousness—nationalism—which confirmed this process were exclusively or predominantly elite achievements. In the colonialist and neo-colonialist historiographies these achievements are credited to British colonial rulers, administrators, policies, institutions, and culture; in the nationalist and neo-nationalist writings—to Indian elite personalities, institutions, activities and ideas.[46]

Certain members of the Indian elite are of course native informants for first-world intellectuals interested in the voice of the Other. But one must nevertheless insist that the colonized subaltern *subject* is irretrievably heterogeneous.

Against the indigenous elite we may set what Guha calls "the *politics* of the people," both outside ("this was an *autonomous* domain, for it neither originated from elite politics nor did its existence depend on the latter") and inside ("it continued to operate vigorously in spite of [colonialism], adjusting itself to the conditions prevailing under the Raj and in many respects developing entirely new strains in both form and content") the circuit of colonial production.[47] I cannot entirely endorse this insistence on determinate vigor and full autonomy, for practical historiographic exigencies will not allow such endorsements to privilege subaltern consciousness. Against the possible charge that his approach is essentialist, Guha constructs a definition of the people (the place of that essence) that can be only an identity-in-differential. He proposes a dynamic stratification grid describing colonial social production at large. Even the third group on the list, the buffer group, as it were, between the people and the great macro-structural dominant groups, is itself defined as a place of in-betweenness. The classification falls

into: "dominant foreign groups," and "dominant indigenous groups at the all-India and at the regional and local levels" representing the elite; and "[t]he social groups and elements included in [the terms "people" and "subaltern classes"] represent[ing] *the demographic difference between the total Indian population and all those whom we have described as the "elite."*[48]

"The task of research" projected here is "to investigate, identify and measure the *specific* nature and degree of the *deviation* of [the] elements [constituting item 3] from the ideal and situate it historically." "Investigate, identify, and measure the specific": a program could hardly be more essentialist and taxonomic. Yet a curious methodological imperative is at work. I have argued that, in the Foucault-Deleuze conversation, a postrepresentationalist vocabulary hides an essentialist agenda. In subaltern studies, because of the violence of imperialist epistemic, social, and disciplinary inscription, a project understood in essentialist terms must traffic in a radical textual practice of differences. The object of the group's investigation, in this case not even of the people as such but of the floating buffer zone of the regional elite—is a *deviation* from an *ideal*—the people or subaltern—which is itself defined as a difference from the elite. It is toward this structure that the research is oriented, a predicament rather different from the self-diagnosed transparency of the first-world radical intellectual. What taxonomy can fix such a space? Whether or not they themselves perceive it—in fact Guha sees his definition of "the people" within the master-slave dialectic—their text articulates the difficult task of rewriting its own conditions of impossibility as the conditions of its possibility. "At the regional and local levels [the dominant indigenous groups] . . . if belonging to social strata hierarchically inferior to those of the dominant all-Indian groups *acted in the interests of the latter and not in conformity to interests corresponding truly to their own social being*.[49] When these writers speak, in their essentializing language, of a gap between interest and action in the intermediate group, their conclusions are closer to Marx than to the self-conscious naivete of Deleuze's pronouncement on the issue. Guha, like Marx, speaks of interest in terms of the social rather than the libidinal being. The Name-of-the-Father imagery in *The Eighteenth Brumaire* can help to emphasize that, on the level of class or group action, "true correspondence to own being" is as artificial or social as the patronymic.

It is to this intermediate group that the second woman in this chapter belongs. The pattern of domination is here determined mainly by gender rather than class. The subordinated gender following the dominant within the challenge of nationalism while remaining caught within gender oppression is not an unknown story.

For the (gender-unspecified) "true" subaltern group, whose identity is its difference, there is no unrepresentable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself; the intellectual's solution is not to abstain from representation. The problem is that the subject's itinerary has not been left traced so as to offer an object of seduction to the representing intellectual. In the slightly dated language of the Indian group, the question becomes, How can we touch the consciousness of the people, even as we investigate their politics? With what voice-consciousness can the subaltern speak?

My question about how to earn the "secret encounter" with the contemporary hill women of Sirmur is a practical version of this. The woman of whom I will speak in this section was not a "true" subaltern, but a metropolitan middle-class girl. Further, the effort she made to write or speak her body was in the accents of accountable reason, the instrument of self-conscious responsibility. Still her Speech Act was refused. She was made to unspeak herself posthumously, by other women. In an earlier version of this chapter, I had summarized this historical indifference and its results as: the subaltern cannot speak.

The critique by Ajit K. Chaudhury, a West Bengali Marxist, of Guha's search for the subaltern consciousness can be taken as representative of a moment of the production process that includes the subaltern.[50] Chaudhury's perception that the Marxist view of the transformation of consciousness involves the knowledge of social relations seems, in principle, astute. Yet the heritage of the positivist ideology that has appropriated orthodox Marxism obliges him to add this rider: "This is not to belittle the importance of understanding peasants' consciousness or workers' consciousness *in its pure form*. This enriches our knowledge of the peasant and the worker and, possibly, throws light on how a particular mode takes on different forms in different regions, *which is considered a problem of second order importance in classical Marxism*."[51]

This variety of "internationalist Marxism," which believes in a pure, retrievable form of consciousness only to dismiss it, thus closing off what in Marx remain moments of productive bafflement, can at once be the occasion for Foucault's and Deleuze's rejection of Marxism *and* the source of the critical motivation of the Subaltern Studies groups. All three are united in the assumption that there *is* a pure form of consciousness. On the French scene, there is a shuffling of signifiers: "the unconscious" or "the subject-in-oppression" clandestinely fills the space of "the pure form of consciousness." In orthodox "internationalist" intellectual Marxism, whether in the First World or the Third, the pure form of consciousness remains, paradoxically, a material effect, and therefore a second-order problem. This often

earns it the reputation of racism and sexism. In the Subaltern Studies group it needs development according to the unacknowledged terms of its own articulation.

Within the effaced itinerary of the subaltern subject, the track of sexual difference is doubly effaced.[52] The question is not of female participation in insurgency, or the ground rules of the sexual division of labor, for both of which there is "evidence." It is, rather, that, both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If, in the contest of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow.

. . . The regulative psychobiography of widow self-immolation will be pertinent in both cases. . . . Let us remind ourselves of the gradual emergence of the new subaltern in the New World Order.

The contemporary international division of labor is a displacement of the divided field of nineteenth-century territorial imperialism. Put in the abstractions of capital logic, in the wake of industrial capitalism and mercantile conquest, a group of countries, generally first-world, were in the position of investing capital; another group, generally third-world, provided the field for investment, both through the subordinate indigenous capitalists and through their ill-protected and shifting labor force. In the interest of maintaining the circulation and growth of industrial capital (and of the concomitant task of administration within nineteenth-century territorial imperialism), transportation, law, and standardized education systems were developed—even as local industries were destroyed or restructured, land distribution was rearranged, and raw material was transferred to the colonizing country. With so-called decolonization, the growth of multinational capital, and the relief of the administrative charge, "development" did not now involve wholesale state-level legislation and establishing education *systems* in a comparable way. This impedes the growth of consumerism in the former colonies. With modern telecommunications and the emergence of advanced capitalist economies at the two edges of Asia, maintaining the international division of labor serves to keep the supply of cheap labor in the periphery. The implosion of the Soviet Union in 1989 has smoothed a way to the financialization of the globe. Already in the mid-seventies, the newly electronified stock exchanges added to the growth of telecommunication, which allowed global capitalism to emerge through export-based subcontracting and postfordism. "Under this strategy, manufacturers based in developed countries subcontract the most labor intensive stages of production, for example, sewing or assembly, to the Third World nations where

labor is cheap. Once assembled, the multinational re-imports the goods—under generous tariff exemptions—to the developed country *instead of selling them to the local market*." Here the link to training in consumerism is almost snapped. "While global recession has markedly slowed trade and investment worldwide since 1979, international subcontracting has boomed. . . . In these cases, multinationals are freer to resist militant workers, revolutionary upheavals, and even economic downturns."[53]

Human labor is not, of course, intrinsically "cheap" or "expensive." An absence of labor laws (or a discriminatory enforcement of them), a totalitarian state (often entailed by development and modernization in the periphery), and minimal subsistence requirements on the part of the worker will ensure "cheapness." To keep this crucial item intact, the urban proletariat in what is now called the "developing" nations must not be systematically trained in the ideology of consumerism (parading as the philosophy of a classless society) that, against all odds, prepares the ground for resistance through the coalition politics Foucault mentions (*FD* 216). This separation from the ideology of consumerism is increasingly exacerbated by the proliferating phenomena of international subcontracting.

In the post-Soviet world, the Bretton Woods organizations, together with the United Nations, are beginning to legislate for a monstrous North/South global state, which is coming into being as micrologically as the trade-controlled colonial state. . . . If Macaulay had spoken of a class of persons, Indian in blood and colour, but English in taste, in opinions, in morals, and in intellect; and Marx of the capitalist as *Faust*'s "mechanical man," there is now an impersonal "Economic Citizen," site of authority and legitimation, lodged in finance capital markets and transnational companies.[54] And if under postfordism and international subcontracting, unorganized or permanently casual female labor was already becoming the mainstay of world trade, in contemporary globalization, the mechanism of "aid" is supported by the poorest women of the South, who form the base of what I have elsewhere called globe-girdling struggles (ecology, resistance to "population *control*"), where the boundary between global and local becomes indeterminate. This is the ground of the emergence of the new subaltern—rather different from the nationalist example we will consider later. To confront this group is not only to represent (*vertreten*) them globally in the absence of infrastructural support, but also to learn to represent (*darstellen*) ourselves. This argument would take us into a critique of a disciplinary anthropology and the relationship between elementary pedagogy and disciplinary formation. It would also question the implicit demand, made by intellectuals who choose the "naturally articulate" subject of oppression,

that such a subject come through a history that is a foreshortened mode-of-production narrative.

Not surprisingly, some members of *indigenous dominant* groups in the "developing" countries, members of the local bourgeoisie, find the language of alliance politics attractive. Identifying with forms of resistance plausible in advanced capitalist countries is often of a piece with that elitist bent of bourgeois historiography described by Ranajit Guha.

Belief in the plausibility of global alliance politics is increasingly prevalent among women of dominant social groups interested in "international feminism" in the "developing" nations as well as among well-placed Southern diasporics in the North. At the other end of the scale, those most separated from any possibility of an alliance among "women, prisoners, conscripted soldiers, hospital patients, and homosexuals" (*FD* 216) are the females of the urban subproletariat. In their case, the denial and withholding of consumerism and the structure of exploitation is compounded by patriarchal social relations.

That Deleuze and Foucault ignored both the epistemic violence of imperialism and the international division of labor would matter less if they did not, in closing, touch on third-world issues. In France it is impossible to ignore the problem of their *tiers monde*, the inhabitants of the erstwhile French African colonies. Deleuze limits his consideration of the Third World to these old local and regional indigenous elite who are, ideally, subaltern. In this context, references to the maintenance of the surplus army of labor fall into reverse-ethnic sentimentality. Since he is speaking of the heritage of nineteenth-century territorial imperialism, his reference is to the nation-state rather than the globalizing center:

> French capitalism needs greatly a floating signifier of unemployment. In this perspective, we begin to see the unity of the forms of repression: restrictions on immigration, once it is acknowledged that the most difficult and thankless jobs go to immigrant workers; repression in the factories, because the French must reacquire the "taste" for increasingly harder work; the struggle against youth and the repression of the educational system. (*FD* 211–12)

This is certainly an acceptable analysis. Yet it shows again that the Third World can enter the resistance program of an alliance politics directed against a "*unified* repression" only when it is confined to the third-world groups that are directly accessible to the First World.[55] This benevolent first-world appropriation and reinscription of the Third World as an Other is the founding characteristic of much third-worldism in the U.S. human sciences today.

Foucault continues the critique of Marxism by invoking geographical discontinuity. The real mark of "geographical (geopolitcal) discontinuity" is the international division of labor. But Foucault uses the term to distinguish between exploitation (extraction and appropriation of surplus value; read, the field of Marxist analysis) and domination ("power" studies) and to suggest the latter's greater potential for resistance based on alliance politics. He cannot acknowledge that such a monist and unified access to a conception of "power" (methodologically presupposing a Subject-of-power) is made possible by a certain stage in exploitation, for his vision of geographical discontinuity is geopolitically specific to the First World:

> This geographical discontinuity of which you speak might mean perhaps the following: as soon as we struggle against *exploitation*, the proletariat not only leads the struggle but also defines its targets, its methods, its places and its instruments; and to ally oneself with the proletariat is to consolidate with its positions, its ideology, it is to take up again the motives for their combat. This means total immersion [in the Marxist project]. But if it is against *power* that one struggles, then all those who acknowledge it as intolerable can begin the struggle wherever they find themselves and in terms of their own activity (or passivity). In engaging in this struggle that is *their own*, whose objectives they clearly understand and whose methods they can determine, they enter into the revolutionary process. As allies of the proletariat, to be sure, because power is exercised the way it is in order to maintain capitalist exploitation. They genuinely serve the cause of the proletariat by fighting in those places where they find themselves oppressed. Women, prisoners, conscripted soldiers, hospital patients, and homosexuals have now begun a specific struggle against the particular form of power, the constraints and controls, that are exercised over them. (*FD* 216)

This is an admirable program of localized resistance. Where possible, this model of resistance is not an alternative to, but can complement, macrological struggles along "Marxist" lines. Yet if its situation is universalized, it accommodates unacknowledged privileging of the subject. Without a theory of ideology, it can lead to a dangerous utopianism. And, if confined to migrant struggles in Northern countries, it can work against global social justice.

The topographical reinscription of imperialism never specifically informed Foucault's presuppositions. Notice the omission of the fact, in the following passage, that the new mechanism of power in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries (the extraction of surplus value without extra-economic coercion is its marxist description) is secured *by means of* ter-

ritorial imperialism—the Earth and its products—"elsewhere." The representation of sovereignty is crucial in these theaters: "In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, we have the production of an important phenomenon, the emergence, or rather the invention, of a new mechanism of power possessed of highly specific procedural techniques . . . which is also, I believe, absolutely incompatible with the relations of sovereignty. This new mechanism of power is more dependent upon bodies and what they do than the Earth and its products" (*PK* 104).

Sometimes it seems as if the very brilliance of Foucault's analysis of the centuries of European imperialism produces a miniature version of that heterogeneous phenomenon: management of space—but by doctors; development of administrations—but in asylums; considerations of the periphery—but in terms of the insane, prisoners, and children. The clinic, the asylum, the prison, the university—all seem to be screen-allegories that foreclose a reading of the broader narratives of imperialism. (One could open a similar discussion of the ferocious motif of "deterritorialization" in Deleuze and Guattari.) "One can perfectly well not talk about something because one doesn't know about it," Foucault might murmur (*PK* 66). Yet we have already spoken of the sanctioned ignorance that every critic of imperialism must chart.

BY CONTRAST, the early Derrida seemed aware of ethnocentrism in the production of knowledge.[56] (We have seen this in his comments on Kant . . . . Like "empirical investigation, . . . tak[ing] shelter in the field of grammatological knowledge" obliges "operat[ing] through 'examples,'" *OG* 75.)

The examples Derrida lays out—to show the limits of grammatology as a positive science—come from the appropriate ideological self-justification of an imperialist project. In the European seventeenth century, he writes, there were three kinds of "prejudices" operating in histories of writing which constituted a "symptom of the crisis of European consciousness" (*OG* 75): the "theological prejudice," the "Chinese prejudice," and the "hieroglyphist prejudice." The first can be indexed as: God wrote a primordial or natural script: Hebrew or Greek. The second: Chinese is a perfect *blueprint* for philosophical writing, but it is only a blueprint. True philosophical writing is "independen[t] with regard to history" (OG 79) and will sublate Chinese into an easy-to-learn script that will supersede actual Chinese. The third: that the Egyptian script is too sublime to be deciphered.

The first prejudice preserves the "actuality" of Hebrew or Greek; the last two ("rational" and "mystical," respectively) collude to support the first,

where the center of the logos is seen as the Judaeo-Christian God (the appropriation of the Hellenic Other through assimilation is an earlier story)—a "prejudice" still sustained in efforts to give the cartography of the Judaeo-Christian myth the status of geopolitcal history:

> The concept of Chinese writing thus functioned as a sort of *European hallucination*. . . . This functioning obeyed a rigorous necessity. . . . It was not disturbed by the knowledge of Chinese script . . . which was then available. . . . A "*hieroglyphist prejudice*" had produced the same effect of *interested blindness*. Far from proceeding . . . from ethnocentric scorn, the occultation takes the form of an hyperbolical admiration. We have not finished demonstrating the necessity of this pattern. Our century is not free from it; each time that ethnocentrism is precipitately and ostentatiously reversed, some effort silently hides behind all the spectacular effects to *consolidate an inside* and to draw from it some domestic benefit. (*OG* 80; Derrida italicizes only "hieroglyphist prejudice")

This pattern operates the culturalist excuse for Development encountered, e.g., in John Rawls's *Political Liberalism*, as it does all unexamined metropolitan hybridism.[57]

Derrida closes the chapter by showing again that the project of grammatology is obliged to develop *within* the discourse of presence. It is not just a critique of presence but an awareness of the itinerary of the discourse of presence in one's *own* critique, a vigilance precisely against too great a claim for transparency. The word "writing" as the name of the object and model of grammatology is a practice "only within the *historical* closure, that is to say within the limits of science and philosophy" (*OG* 93).

Derrida calls the ethnocentrism of the European science of writing in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries a symptom of the general crisis of European consciousness. It is, of course, part of a larger symptom, or perhaps the crisis itself, the slow turn from feudalism to capitalism via the first waves of capitalist imperialism. The itinerary of recognition through assimilation of the Other can be more interestingly traced, it seems to me, in the imperialist constitution of the colonial subject and the foreclosure of the figure of the "native informant."

CAN THE SUBALTERN SPEAK? What might the elite do to watch out for the continuing construction of the subaltern? The question of "woman" seems most problematic in this context. Confronted by the ferocious standardizing benevolence of most U.S. and Western European human-scien-

tific radicalism (recognition by assimilation) today, and the exclusion of the margins of even the center-periphery articulation (the "true and differential subaltern"), the analogue of class-consciousness rather than race-consciousness in this area seems historically, disciplinarily, and practically forbidden by Right and Left alike.

In so fraught a field, it is not easy to ask the question of the subaltern woman as subject; it is thus all the more necessary to remind pragmatic radicals that such a question is not an idealist red herring. Though all feminist or antisexist projects cannot be reduced to this one, to ignore it is an unacknowledged political gesture that has a long history and collaborates with a masculist radicalism that operates by strategic exclusions, equating "nationalist" and "people" (as counterproductive as the equation of "feminist" and "woman").

If I ask myself, How is it possible to want to die by fire to mourn a husband ritually, I am asking the question of the (gendered) subaltern woman as subject, not, as my friend Jonathan Culler somewhat tendentiously suggests, trying to "produce difference by differing" or to "appeal . . . to a sexual identity defined as essential and privileg[ing] experiences associated with that identity."[58] Culler is here a part of that mainstream project of Western feminism which both continues and displaces the battle over the right to individualism between women and men in situations of upward class mobility. One suspects that the debate between U.S. feminism and European "theory" (as theory is generally represented by women from the United States or Britain) occupies a significant corner of that very terrain. I am generally sympathetic with the call to make U.S. feminism more "theoretical." It seems, however, that the problem of the muted subject of the subaltern woman, though not solved by an "essentialist" search for lost origins, cannot be served by the call for more theory in Anglo-America either.

That call is often given in the name of a critique of "positivism," which is seen here as identical with "essentialism." Yet Hegel, the modern inaugurator of "the work of the negative," was not a stranger to the notion of essences. For Marx, the curious persistence of essentialism within the dialectic was a profound and productive problem. Thus, the stringent binary opposition between positivism/essentialism (read, U.S.) and "theory" (read, French or Franco-German via Anglo-American) may be spurious. Apart from repressing the ambiguous complicity between essentialism and critiques of positivism (acknowledged by Derrida in "Of Grammatology as a Positive Science"), it also errs by implying that positivism is not a theory. This move allows the emergence of a proper name, a positive essence, Theory. And once again, the position of the investigator remains unquestioned. If and when this ter-

ritorial debate turns toward the Third World, no change in the question of method is to be discerned. This debate cannot take into account that, in the case of the woman as subaltern, rather few ingredients for the constitution of the itinerary of the trace of a sexed subject (rather than an anthropological object) can be gathered to locate the possibility of dissemination.

Yet I remain generally sympathetic to aligning feminism with the critique of positivism and the defetishization of the concrete. I am also far from averse to learning from the work of Western theorists, though I have learned to insist on marking their positionality as investigating subjects. Given these conditions, and as a literary critic, I tactically confronted the immense problem of the consciousness of the woman as subaltern. I reinvented the problem in a sentence and transformed it into the object of a simple semiosis. What can such a transformation mean?

This gesture of transformation marks the fact that knowledge of the other subject is theoretically impossible. Empirical work in the discipline constantly performs this transformation tacitly. It is a transformation from a first-second person performance to the constatation in the third person. It is, in other words, at once a gesture of control and an acknowledgement of limits. Freud provides a homology for such positional hazards.

Sarah Kofman has suggested that the deep ambiguity of Freud's use of women as a scapegoat may be read as a reaction-formation to an initial and continuing desire to give the hysteric a voice, to transform her into the *subject* of hysteria.[59] The masculine-imperialist ideological formation that shaped that desire into "the daughter's seduction" is part of the same formation that constructs the monolithic "third-world woman." No contemporary metropolitan investigator is not influenced by that formation. Part of our "unlearning" project is to articulate our participation in that formation—by *measuring* silences, if necessary—into the *object* of investigation. Thus, when confronted with the questions, Can the subaltern speak? and Can the subaltern (as woman) speak?, our efforts to give the subaltern a voice in history will be doubly open to the dangers run by Freud's discourse. It is in acknowledgment of these dangers rather than as solution to a problem that I put together the sentence "White men are saving brown women from brown men," a sentence that runs like a red thread through today's "gender and development." My impulse is not unlike the one to be encountered in Freud's investigation of the sentence "A child is being beaten."[60]

The use of Freud here does not imply an isomorphic analogy between subject-formation and the behavior of social collectives, a frequent practice, often accompanied by a reference to Reich, in the conversation between Deleuze and Foucault. I am, in other words, not suggesting that "White men

are saving brown women from brown men" is a sentence indicating a *collective* fantasy symptomatic of a *collective* itinerary of sadomasochistic repression in a *collective* imperialist enterprise. There is a satisfying symmetry in such an allegory, but I would rather invite the reader to consider it a problem in "wild psychoanalysis" than a clinching solution.[61] Just as Freud's insistence on making the woman the scapegoat in "A child is being beaten" and elsewhere discloses his political interests, however imperfectly, so my insistence on imperialist subject-production as the occasion for this sentence discloses a politics that I cannot step around.

Further, I am attempting to borrow the general methodological aura of Freud's strategy toward the sentence he constructed *as a sentence* out of the many similar substantive accounts his patients gave him. This does not mean I will offer a case of transference-in-analysis as an isomorphic model for the transaction between reader and text (here the constructed sentence). As I repeat in this chapter, the analogy between transference and literary criticism or historiography is no more than a productive catachresis. To say that the subject is a text does not authorize the converse pronouncement: that the verbal text is a subject.

I am fascinated, rather, by how Freud predicates a *history* of repression that produces the final sentence. It is a history with a double origin, one hidden in the amnesia of the infant, the other lodged in our archaic past, assuming by implication a preoriginary space where human and animal were not yet differentiated.[62] We are driven to impose a homology of this Freudian strategy on the Marxist narrative to explain the ideological dissimulation of imperialist political economy and outline a history of repression that produces a sentence like the one I have sketched: "White men are saving brown women from brown men"—giving honorary whiteness to the colonial subject on precisely this issue. This history also has a double origin, one hidden in the maneuverings behind the British abolition of widow sacrifice in 1829,[63] the other lodged in the classical and Vedic past of "Hindu" India, the *Rg-Veda* and the *Dharmaṣāstra*. An undifferentiated transcendental preoriginary space can only too easily be predicated for this other history.

The sentence I have constructed is one among many displacements describing the relationship between brown and white men (sometimes brown and white women worked in).[64] It takes its place among some sentences of "hyperbolic admiration" or of pious guilt that Derrida speaks of in connection with the "hieroglyphist prejudice." The relationship between the imperialist subject and the subject of imperialism is at least ambiguous.

The Hindu widow ascends the pyre of the dead husband and immolates herself upon it. This is widow sacrifice. (The conventional transcription of

the Sanskrit word for the widow would be *sati*. The early colonial British transcribed it *suttee*.) The rite was not practiced universally and was not caste- or class-fixed. The abolition of this rite by the British has been generally understood as a case of "White men saving brown women from brown men." White women—from the nineteenth-century British Missionary Registers to Mary Daly—have not produced an alternative understanding. Against this is the Indian nativist statement, a parody of the nostalgia for lost origins: "The women wanted to die," still being advanced . . . [65]

The two sentences go a long way to legitimize each other. One never encounters the testimony of the women's voice consciousness. Such a testimony would not be ideology-transcendent or "fully" subjective, of course, but it would constitute the ingredients for producing a countersentence. As one goes down the grotesquely mistranscribed names of these women, the sacrificed widows, in the police reports included in the records of the East India Company, one cannot put together a "voice." The most one can sense is the immense heterogeneity breaking through even such a skeletal and ignorant account (castes, for example, are regularly described as tribes). Faced with the dialectically interlocking sentences that are constructible as "White men are saving brown women from brown men" and "The women wanted to die," the metropolitan feminist migrant (removed from the actual theater of decolonization) asks the question of simple semiosis—What does this signify?—and begins to plot a history.

As I have suggested elsewhere, to mark the moment when not only a civil but a good society is born out of domestic confusion, singular events that break the letter of the law to institute its spirit are often invoked. The protection of women by men often provides such an event. If we remember that the British boasted of their absolute equity toward and noninterference with native custom/law, an invocation of this sanctioned transgression of the letter for the sake of the spirit may be read in J. D. M. Derrett's remark: "The very first legislation upon Hindu Law was carried through without the assent of a single Hindu." The legislation is not named here. The next sentence, where the measure is named, is equally interesting if one considers the implications of the survival of a colonially established "good" society after decolonization: "The recurrence of *sati* in independent India is probably an obscurantist revival which cannot long survive even in a very backward part of the country."[66]

Whether this observation is correct or not, what interests me is that the protection of woman (today the "third-world woman") becomes a signifier for the establishment of a *good* society (now a good planet) which must, at such inaugurative moments, transgress mere legality, or equity of legal

policy. In this particular case, the process also allowed the redefinition as a crime of what had been tolerated, known, or adulated as ritual. In other words, this one item in Hindu law jumped the frontier between the private and the public domain.

Although Foucault's *historical narrative*, focusing solely on Western Europe, sees merely a tolerance for the criminal antedating the development of criminology in the late eighteenth century (*PK* 41), his *theoretical description* of the "episteme" is pertinent here: "The *episteme* is the 'apparatus' which makes possible the separation not of the true from the false, but of what may not be characterized as scientific" (*PK* 197)—ritual as opposed to crime, the one fixed by superstition, the other by legal science.[67]

The leap of *suttee* from private to public has a clear but complex relationship with the changeover from a mercantile and commercial to a territorial and administrative British presence; it can be followed in correspondence among the police stations, the lower and higher courts, the courts of directors, the prince regent's court, and the like.[68] (It is interesting to note that, from the point of view of the native "colonial subject," also emergent from the "feudalism-capitalism" transition—necessarily askew because "colonial"—*sati* is a signifier with the reverse social charge: "Groups rendered psychologically marginal by their exposure to Western impact . . . had come under pressure to demonstrate, to others as well as to themselves, their ritual purity and allegiance to traditional high culture. To many of them *sati* became an important proof of their conformity to older norms at a time when these norms had become shaky within.")[69]

If the mercantile-territorial/feudal-capitalist transitions provide a first historical origin for my sentence—"white men are saving brown women from brown men"—that origin is evidently lost in the more general history of humankind as work, its origin placed by Marx in the material exchange or "metabolism" between the human being and Nature, the story of capitalist expansion, the slow freeing of labor power as commodity, the narrative of the modes of production, the transition from feudalism via mercantilism to capitalism.[70] As my first chapter has argued, even the precarious normativity of this narrative is sustained by the putatively changeless stopgap of the "Asiatic" mode of production, which steps in to sustain it whenever it might become apparent that the story of capital logic is the story of the West, that only imperialism can aggressively insist upon the universality of the mode of production narrative, that to ignore or invade the subaltern today is, willy-nilly, to continue the imperialist project; in the name of modernization, in the interest of globalization. The origin of my sentence is thus lost in the shuffle between other, more powerful discourses. Given that the abolition

of *sati* was in itself admirable, is it still possible to wonder if a perception of the origin of my sentence might contain interventionist possibilities?

I will later place the mobilizing of woman into *Sati* with the place of the epic instance of "heroism"—suicide in the name of "nation"; "martyrdom"—suicide in the name of "God"; and other species of self-"sacrifice." These are transcendental figurations of the (agent of the) gift of time. The feminist project is not simply to stage the woman as victim; but to ask: why does "husband" become an appropriate name for *radical* alterity? Why is "to be" equal to "to be wife?" This may even lead to such questions as the contemporary equation of "to be" with "to be gainfully employed."[71] Let us stop this line of questioning, for it will no longer allow the general reader to keep *sati* contained within the particularisms of "cultural difference"—that allowed imperialism to give itself yet another legitimation in its "civilizing mission," today recoded, it bears repetition, as the more tolerable phrase "gender and development," the copula "and" (with its concealed charge of supplementation) replacing the more transparent earlier phrase "woman in development."[72]

Imperialism's (or globalization's) image as the establisher of the good society is marked by the espousal of the woman as *object* of protection from her own kind. How should one examine this dissimulation of patriarchal strategy, which apparently grants the woman free choice as *subject?* In other words, how does one make the move from "Britain" to "Hinduism"? Even the attempt shows that, like "Development," "Imperialism" is not identical with chromatism, or mere prejudice against people of color. To approach this question, I will touch briefly on the *Dharmaṣāstra* and the *Rg-Veda*. Although two vastly different kinds of texts, they can represent "the archaic origin" in my homology from Freud. My readings are an interested and inexpert examination, by a female expatriate, of the fabrication of repression, a constructed counternarrative of woman's consciousness, thus woman's being, thus woman's being good, thus the good woman's desire, thus woman's desire. Paradoxically, these same moves allow us to witness the unfixed place of woman as a signifier in the inscription of the social individual. Thus "woman" is caught between the interested "normalization" of capital and the regressive "envy" of the colonized male.[73] The "enlightened" colonial subject moves toward the former, without asking the less "practical" question of psychobiography. *Sati* returns—once again grasped as victimage versus cultural heroism—in the rift of the failure of decolonization. It is the somewhat fanatical Melanie Klein who has given this writer the confidence to suggest that to ignore the rôle of violence in the development of conscience is to court the repetition of suicide as accountability.[74]

What is it to ask the question of psychobiography? I should need much greater learning to be a real player here. But it is part of the tragic narrative of the atrophy of classical learning that the scholar cannot ask the radical questions.[75]

The two moments in the *Dharmaṣāstra* that I am interested in are the discourse on sanctioned suicides and the nature of the rites for the dead.[76] Framed in these two discourses, the self-immolation of widows seems an exception to the rule. The general scriptural doctrine is that suicide is reprehensible. Room is made, however, for certain forms of suicide which, as formulaic performance, lose the phenomenal identity of being suicide. The first category of sanctioned suicides arises out of *tattvajnāna*, or the knowledge of right principles. Here the knowing subject comprehends the insubstantiality or mere phenomenality (which may be the same thing as nonphenomenality) of its identity. At a certain point in time, *tat tva* was interpreted as "that you," but even without that, *tattva* is thatness or quiddity. Thus, this enlightened self truly knows the "that"-ness of its identity. Its demolition of that identity is not *ātmaghāta* (a killing of the self). The paradox of knowing the limits of knowledge is that the strongest assertion of agency, to negate the possibility of agency, cannot be an example of itself. Curiously enough, the self-*sacrifice* of gods is sanctioned by natural ecology, useful for the working of the economy of Nature and the Universe, rather than by self-knowledge. In this *logically* anterior stage, inhabited by gods rather than human beings, of this particular chain of displacements, suicide and sacrifice (*ātmaghāta* and *ātmadāna*) seem as little distinct as an "interior" (self-knowledge) and an "exterior" (ecology) sanction.

This philosophical space, however, does not accommodate the self-immolating woman. For her we look where room is made to sanction suicides that cannot claim truth-knowledge as a state that is, at any rate, easily verifiable and belongs in the area of *sruti* (what was heard) rather than *smriti* (what is remembered). This third exception to the general rule about suicide annuls the phenomenal identity or irrationality of self-immolation if performed in certain places rather than in a certain state of enlightenment. Thus we move from an interior sanction (truth-knowledge) to an exterior one (place of pilgrimage). It is possible for a woman to perform *this* type of (non)suicide.[77]

Yet even this is not the *proper* place for the woman to annul the proper name of suicide through the destruction of her proper self. For her alone is sanctioned self-immolation on a dead spouse's pyre. (The few male examples cited in Hindu antiquity of self-immolation on another's pyre, being proofs of enthusiasm and devotion to a master or superior, reveal the structure of domination within the rite.)

This suicide that is not suicide may be read as a simulacrum of both truth-knowledge and piety of place. If the former, it is as if the knowledge *in a subject* of its own insubstantiality and mere phenomenality is dramatized so that the dead husband becomes the exteriorized example and place of the extinguished subject and the widow becomes the (non)agent who "acts it out": the logical consequence of placing agency in alterity: transforming ethics into an institutional calculus which supposedly codes the absent agent's intention. If the latter, it is as if the metonym for all sacred places is now that burning bed of wood, constructed by elaborate ritual, where the woman's subject, legally displaced from herself, is being consumed. It is in terms of this profound ideology of the displaced place of the female subject that the paradox of free choice comes into play. For the male subject, it is the felicity of the suicide, a felicity that will annul rather than establish its status as such, that is noted. For the female subject, a sanctioned self-immolation, even as it takes away the effect of "fall" (*pātaka*) attached to an unsanctioned suicide, brings praise for the act of choice on another register. By the inexorable ideological production of the sexed subject, such a death can be understood by the female subject as an *exceptional* signifier of her own desire, exceeding the general rule for a widow's conduct.

In certain periods and areas this exceptional rule became the general rule in a class-specific way. Ashis Nandy relates its marked prevalence in eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Bengal to factors ranging from population control to communal misogyny.[78] Certainly its prevalence there in the previous centuries was because in Bengal, unlike elsewhere in India, widows could inherit property. Thus, what the British see as poor victimized women going to the slaughter is in fact an ideological battleground. As P. V. Kane, the great historian of the *Dharmaṣāstra*, has correctly observed: "In Bengal, [the fact that] the widow of a sonless member even in a joint Hindu family is entitled to practically the same rights over joint family property which her deceased husband would have had . . . must have frequently induced the surviving members to get rid of the widow by appealing at a most distressing hour to her devotion to and love for her husband" (*HD* II.2, 635).

Yet benevolent and enlightened males were and are sympathetic with the "courage" of the woman's free choice in the matter. They thus often accept the production of the sexed subaltern subject: "Modern India does not justify the practice of *sati*, but it is a warped mentality that rebukes modern Indians for expressing admiration and reverence for the cool and unfaltering courage of Indian women in becoming *satis* or performing the *jauhar* for cherishing their ideals of womanly conduct" (*HD* II.2, 636).

This patriarchal admiration is consonant with the logic of the practice. By contrast, the relationship between British benevolence and that logic is in fact "a case of conflict . . . that cannot be equitably resolved for lack of a rule of judgment applicable to both arguments. One side's legitimacy does not imply the other's lack of legitimacy."[79] Historically, legitimacy was of course established by virtue of abstract institutional power. Who in nineteenth-century India could have waited for the women's time here?

> In the differend, something "asks" to be put into phrases, and suffers from the wrong of not being able to be put into phrases right away. This is when the human beings who thought they could use language as an instrument of communication learn through the feeling of pain which accompanies silence (and of pleasure which accompanies the invention of a new idiom), that they are summoned by language, not to augment to their profit the quantity of information communicable through existing idioms, but to recognize that what remains to be phrased exceeds what they can presently phrase, and that they must be allowed to institute idioms which do not yet exist.[80]

It is of course unthinkable that such an allowance could ever be made or seized for or through the agency of nonbourgeois women in British India, as it is unthinkable in globalization in the name of feminism today. In the event, as the discourse of what the reformers perceived as heathen ritual or superstition was recoded as crime, one diagnosis of female free will was substituted for another. In the last movement of this chapter we will bear witness to what may have been an effort to institute an idiomatic moment in the scripting of the reproductive body. It was not read or heard; it remained in the space of the differend.

It must be remembered that the self-immolation of widows was not *invariable* ritual prescription. If, however, the widow does decide thus to exceed the letter of ritual, to turn back is a transgression for which a particular type of penance is prescribed.[81] With the local British police officer supervising the immolation, to be dissuaded after a decision was, by contrast, a mark of real free choice, a choice of freedom. The ambiguity of the position of the indigenous colonial elite is disclosed in the nationalistic romanticization of the purity, strength, and love of these self-sacrificing women. The two set pieces are Rabindranath Tagore's paean to the "self-renouncing paternal grandmothers of Bengal," and Ananda Coomaraswamy's eulogy of *suttee* as "this last proof of the perfect unity of body and soul."[82]

Obviously I am not advocating the killing of widows. I am suggesting that, within the two contending versions of freedom, the constitution of the

female subject in *life* is the place of the differend. In the case of widow self-immolation, ritual is not being redefined as patriarchy but as *crime*.[83] The gravity of *sati* was that it was ideologically cathected as "reward," just as the gravity of imperialism was that it was ideologically cathected as "social mission." Between patriarchy and Development, this is the subaltern woman's situation today. Thompson's understanding of *sati* as "punishment" is thus far off the mark:

> It may seem unjust and illogical that the Moguls, who freely impaled and flayed alive, or nationals of Europe, whose countries had such ferocious penal codes and had known, scarcely a century before suttee began to shock the English conscience, orgies of witch-burning and religious persecution, should have felt as they did about suttee. But the differences seemed to them this—the victims of their cruelties were tortured by a law which considered them offenders, whereas the victims of suttee were punished for no offense but the physical weakness which had placed them at man's mercy. The rite seemed to prove a depravity and arrogance such as no other human offense had brought to light.[84]

No. As in the case of war, martyrdom, "terrorism"—self-sacrifice in general—the "felicitous" *sati* may have (been imagined to have) thought she was exceeding and transcending the ethical. That is its danger. Not all soldiers die unwillingly. And there are female suicide bombers.

All through the mid- and late-eighteenth century, in the spirit of the codification of the law, the British in India collaborated and consulted with learned Brahmans to judge whether *suttee* was legal by their homogenized version of Hindu law. *Sati* was still contained within the interested use of cultural relativism. The collaboration was often idiosyncratic, as in the case of the significance of being dissuaded. Sometimes, as in the general Sastric prohibition against the immolation of widows with small children, the British collaboration seems confused.[85] In the beginning of the nineteenth century, the British authorities, and especially the British in England, repeatedly suggested that collaboration made it appear as if the British condoned this practice. When the law was finally written, the history of the long period of collaboration was effaced, and the language celebrated the noble Hindu who was against the bad Hindu, the latter given to savage atrocities:

> The practice of Suttee . . . is revolting to the feeling of human nature. . . . In many instances, acts of atrocity have been perpetrated, which have been shocking to the Hindoos themselves. . . . Actuated by these considerations of the Governor-General in Council, without intending to depart from one of the first and most important principles of the system of British Govern-

> ment in India that all classes of the people be secure in the observance of their religious usages, so long as that system can be adhered to without violation of the paramount dictates of justice and humanity, has deemed it right to establish the following rules. . . . (*HD* 11.2, 624–25)

(Topically, it is a celebration of Safie over the Monster in *Frankenstein*.)

That this was an alternative ideology of the graded sanctioning of varieties of suicide as exception, rather than its inscription as "sin," was of course not understood. *Sati* could not, of course, be read with Christian female martyrdom, with the defunct husband standing in for the transcendental One; or with war, with the husband standing in for sovereign or state, for whose sake an intoxicating ideology of self-sacrifice can be mobilized. It had to be categorized with murder, infanticide, and the lethal exposure of the very old. The agency was always male; the woman was always the victim. The dubious place of the free will of the constituted sexed subject as female was successfully effaced. There is no itinerary we can retrace here. Since the other sanctioned suicides did not involve the scene of this constitution, they entered neither the ideological battleground at the archaic origin—the tradition of the *Dharmaṣāstra*—nor the scene of the reinscription of ritual as crime—the British abolition. The only related transformation was Mahatma Gandhi's reinscription of the notion of *satyāgraha*, or hunger strike, as resistance. But this is not the place to discuss the details of that sea change. I would merely invite the reader to compare the auras of widow sacrifice and Gandhian resistance. The root in the first part of *satyāgraha* and *sati* are the same.

Since the beginning of the Puranic era (the earliest Puranas date from the 4th century B.C.), learned Brahmans debated the doctrinal appropriateness of *sati* as of sanctioned suicides in sacred places in general. (This debate still continues in an academic way.) Sometimes the caste provenance of the practice was in question. The general law for widows, that they should observe *brahmacarya*, was, however, hardly ever debated. It is not enough to translate *brahmacarya* as "celibacy." It should be recognized that, of the four ages of being in Hindu (or Brahmanical) *regulative* psychobiography, *brahmacarya* is the social practice anterior to the kinship inscription of marriage. The man—widower or husband—graduates through *vānaprastha* (forest life) into the mature celibacy and renunciation of *samnyāsa* (laying aside).[86] The woman as wife is indispensable for *gārhasthya*, or householdership, and may accompany her husband into forest life. She has no access (according to Brahmanical sanction) to the final celibacy of asceticism, or *samnyāsa*. The woman as widow, by the general law of sacred doctrine, must regress to an anteriority transformed into stasis. The institutional evils attendant upon this law are well known; I am considering its asymmetrical

effect on the ideological formation of the sexed subject. It is thus of much greater significance that there was no debate on this nonexceptional fate of widows—either among Hindus or between Hindus and British—than that the *exceptional* prescription of self-immolation was actively contested.[87] Here the possibility of recovering a (sexually) subaltern subject is once again lost and overdetermined.

This legally programmed asymmetry in the status of the subject, which effectively defines the woman as object of *one* husband, obviously operates in the interest of the legally symmetrical subject-status of the male. The self-immolation of the widow thereby becomes the extreme case of the general law rather than an exception to it. It is not surprising, then, to read of heavenly rewards for the *sati*, where the quality of being the object of a unique possessor is emphasized by way of rivalry with other females, those ecstatic heavenly dancers, paragons of female beauty and male pleasure who sing her praise: "In heaven she, being solely devoted to her husband, and praised by groups of *apsarās* [heavenly dancers], sports with her husband as long as fourteen Indras rule" (*HD* II.2, 631).

The profound irony in locating the woman's free will in self-immolation is once again revealed in a verse accompanying the earlier passage: "As long as the woman [as wife: *strī*] does not burn herself in fire on the death of her husband, she is never released [*mucyate*] from her female body [*strisarir* —i.e., in the cycle of births]." Even as it operates the most subtle general release from individual agency, the sanctioned suicide peculiar to woman draws its ideological strength by *identifying* individual agency with the supraindividual: kill yourself on your husband's pyre now, and you may kill your female body in the entire cycle of birth.

In a further twist of the paradox, this emphasis on free will establishes the peculiar misfortune of holding a female body. The word for the self that is actually burned is the standard word for spirit in the noblest impersonal sense (*ātman*), while the verb "release," through the root of salvation in the noblest sense (*muc* › *moksa*) is in the passive, and the word for that which is annulled in the cycle of birth is the everyday word for the body. The ideological message writes itself in the benevolent twentieth-century male historian's admiration: "The Jauhar [group self-immolation of aristocratic Rajput war-widows or imminent war-widows] practiced by the Rajput ladies of Chitor and other places for saving themselves from unspeakable atrocities at the hands of the victorious Moslems are too well known to need any lengthy notice" (*HD* II.2, 629).[88]

Although *jauhar* is not, strictly speaking, an act of *sati*, and although I do not wish to speak for the sanctioned sexual violence of conquering male armies, "Moslem" or otherwise, female self-immolation in the face of it is a

legitimation of rape as "natural" and works, in the long run, in the interest of unique genital possession of the female. The group rape perpetrated by the conquerors is a metonymic celebration of territorial acquisition. Just as the general law for widows was unquestioned, so this act of female heroism persists among the patriotic tales told to children, thus operating on the crudest level of ideological reproduction. It has also played a tremendous rôle, precisely as an overdetermined signifier, in acting out Hindu communalism. (The Internet produced spurious statistics on Hindu "genocide" in Bangladesh.)[89] Simultaneously, the broader question of the constitution of the sexed subject is hidden by foregrounding the visible violence of *sati*. The task of recovering a (sexually) subaltern subject is lost in an institutional textuality at the archaic origin.

As I mentioned above, when the status of the legal subject as property-holder could be temporarily bestowed on the *female* relict, the self-immolation of widows was stringently enforced. Raghunandana, the late fifteenth-/sixteenth-century legalist whose interpretations are supposed to lend the greatest authority to such enforcement, takes as his text a curious passage from the *Rg-Veda*, the most ancient of the Hindu sacred texts, the first of the *Srutis*. In doing so, he is following a centuries-old tradition commemorating a peculiar and transparent misreading at the very place of sanction. Here is the verse outlining certain steps within the rites for the dead. Even at a simple reading it is clear that it is "not addressed to widows at all, but to ladies of the deceased man's household whose husbands were living." Why then was it taken as authoritative? This, the unemphatic transposition of the dead for the living husband, is a different order of mystery at the archaic origin from the ones we have been discussing: "Let these whose husbands are worthy and are living enter the house, tearless, healthy, and well adorned" (*HD* II.2, 634).

But this crucial transposition is not the only mistake here. The authority is lodged in a disputed passage and an alternate reading. In the second line, here translated "Let these wives first step into the house," the word for first is *agré*. Some have read it as *agné*, "O fire." As Kane makes clear, however, "even without this change Aparārka and others rely for the practice of *Sati* on this verse" (*HD* IV.2, 199). Here is another screen around one origin of the history of the subaltern female subject. Is it a historical oneirocritique that one should perform on a statement such as: "Therefore it must be admitted that either the MSS are corrupt or Raghunandana committed an innocent slip" (*HD* II.2, 634)? It should be mentioned that the rest of the poem is either about that general law of *brahmacarya*-in-stasis for widows, to which *sati* is an exception, or about *niyōga*—"appointing a brother or any near kinsman to raise up issue to a deceased husband by marrying his widow."[90]

If P. V. Kane is the authority on the history of the *Dharmaṣāstra*, Mulla's *Principles of Hindu Law* is the practical guide. It is part of the historical text of what Freud calls "kettle logic" that we are unraveling here, that Mulla's textbook adduces, just as definitively, that the *Rg-Vedic* verse under consideration was proof that "remarriage of widows and divorce are recognized in some of the old texts."[91]

One cannot help but wonder about the rôle of the word *yoni*. In context, with the localizing adverb *agré* (in front), the word means "dwelling-place." But that does not efface its primary sense of "genital" (not yet perhaps specifically *female* genital). How can we take as the authority for the choice of a widow's self-immolation a passage celebrating the entry of adorned wives into a dwelling place invoked on this occasion by its *yoni*-name, so that the extracontextual icon is almost one of entry into civic production or birth? Paradoxically, the imagic relationship of vagina and fire lends a kind of strength to the authority-claim.[92] This paradox is strengthened by Raghunandana's modification of the verse so as to read, "Let them first ascend the *fluid* abode [or origin, with, of course, the *yoni*-name—*ā rohantu jalayōnimagné*], O fire [or of fire]." Why should one accept that this "probably mean[s] 'may fire be to them as cool as water'" (*HD* II.2, 634)? The fluid genital of fire, a corrupt phrasing, might figure a sexual indeterminacy providing a simulacrum for the intellectual indeterminacy of *tattvajnāna* (truth-knowledge). . . . These speculations are certainly no more absurd than the ones I have cited. Scriptural sanction, in other words, is a gesture of evidence, rather than rational textual support.

I have written above of a constructed counternarrative of woman's consciousness, thus woman's being, thus woman's being good, thus the good woman's desire, thus woman's desire. This slippage can be seen in the fracture inscribed in the very word *sati*, the feminine form of *sat*. *Sat* transcends any gender-specific notion of masculinity and moves up not only into human but spiritual universality. It is the present participle of the verb "to be" and as such means not only being but the True, the Good, the Right. In the sacred texts it is essence, universal spirit. Even as a prefix it indicates appropriate, felicitous, fit. It is noble enough to have entered the most privileged discourse of modern Western philosophy: Heidegger's meditation on Being.[93] *Sati*, the feminine of this word, simply means "good wife."

In fact, *sati* or *suttee* as the proper name of the rite of widow self-immolation commemorates a grammatical error on the part of the British, quite as the nomenclature "American Indian" commemorates a factual error on the part of Columbus. The word in the various Indian languages is "the burning of the *sati*" or the good wife, who thus escapes the regressive stasis of the widow in *brahmacarya*. This exemplifies the race-class-gender over-

determinations of the situation. It can perhaps be caught even when it is flattened out: white men, seeking to save brown women from brown men, imposed upon those women a greater ideological construction by absolutely identifying, *within discursive practice*, good-wifehood and self-immolation on the husband's pyre by an ignorant (but sanctioned) synecdoche. On the other side of thus constituting the *object*, the abolition (or removal) of which will provide the occasion for establishing a good, as distinguished from merely civil, society, is the Hindu manipulation of female *subject*-constitution which I have tried to discuss.

(I have already mentioned Edward Thompson's *Suttee*, published in 1928. I cannot do justice here to this perfect specimen of the justification of imperialism as a civilizing mission. Nowhere in his book, written by someone who avowedly "loved India," is there any questioning of the "beneficial ruthlessness" of the British in India as motivated by territorial expansionism or management of industrial capital.[94] The problem with his book is, indeed, a problem of representation, the construction of a continuous and homogeneous "India" in terms of heads of state and British administrators, from the perspective of "a man of good sense" who would be the transparent voice of reasonable humanity. "India" can then be represented, in the other sense, by its imperial masters. My reason for referring to *suttee* here is Thompson's finessing of the word *sati* as "faithful" in the very first sentence of his book, an inaccurate translation that is nonetheless an English permit for the insertion of the female subject into twentieth-century discourse.[95] After such a taming of the subject, Thompson can write, under the heading "The Psychology of the '*Sati*'," "I had intended to try to examine this; but the truth is, it has ceased to puzzle me.")[96]

Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the "third-world woman" caught between tradition and modernization, culturalism and development. These considerations would revise every detail of judgments that seem valid for a history of sexuality in the West: "Such would be the property of repression, that which distinguishes it from the prohibitions maintained by simple penal law: repression functions well as a sentence to disappear, but also as an injunction to silence, affirmation of non-existence; and consequently states that of all this there is nothing to say, to see, to know."[97] The case of *suttee* as exemplum of the woman-in-imperialism would challenge and deconstruct this opposition between subject (law) and object-of-knowledge (repression) and mark the place of "disappearance" with something other than silence and nonexistence, a violent aporia between subject and object status.[98]

Sati as a woman's proper name is in fairly widespread use in India today. Naming a female infant "a good wife" has its own proleptic irony, and the irony is all the greater because this sense of the common noun is not the primary operator in the proper name.[99] Behind the naming of the infant is *the* Sati of Hindu mythology, Durga in her manifestation as a good wife.[100] In part of the story, Sati—she is already called that—arrives at her father's court uninvited, in the absence, even, of an invitation for her divine husband Siva. Her father starts to abuse Siva and Sati dies in pain. Siva arrives in a fury and dances over the universe with Sati's corpse on his shoulder. Visnu dismembers her body and bits are strewn over the earth. Around each such relic bit is a great place of pilgrimage.

Figures like the goddess Athena—"father's daughters self-professedly uncontaminated by the womb"—are useful for establishing women's ideological self-debasement, which is to be distinguished from a deconstructive attitude toward the essentialist subject. The story of the mythic Sati, reversing every narrateme of the rite, performs a similar function: the living husband avenges the wife's death, a transaction between great male gods fulfills the destruction of the female body and thus inscribes the earth as sacred geography. To see this as proof of the feminism of classical Hinduism or of Indian culture as goddess-centered and therefore feminist is as ideologically contaminated by nativism or reverse ethnocentrism as it was imperialist to erase the image of the luminous fighting Mother Durga and invest the proper noun Sati with no significance other than the ritual burning of the helpless widow as sacrificial offering who can then be saved. May the empowering voice of so-called superstition (Durga) not be a better starting point for transformation than the belittling or punitive befriending of the white mythology of "reasonableness" (British police)? The interested do-gooding of corporate philanthropy keeps the question worth asking.[101]

If the oppressed under postmodern capital have no necessarily unmediated access to "correct" resistance, can the ideology of *sati*, coming from the history of the periphery, be sublated into any model of interventionist practice? Since this essay operates on the notion that all such clear-cut nostalgias for lost origins are suspect, especially as grounds for counterhegemonic ideological production, I must proceed by way of an example.[102]

A YOUNG WOMAN of sixteen or seventeen, Bhubaneswari Bhaduri, hanged herself in her father's modest apartment in North Calcutta in 1926. The suicide was a puzzle since, as Bhubaneswari was menstruating at the time, it was clearly not a case of illicit pregnancy. Nearly a decade later, it was discov-

ered, in a letter she had left for her elder sister, that she was a member of one of the many groups involved in the armed struggle for Indian independence. She had been entrusted with a political assassination. Unable to confront the task and yet aware of the practical need for trust, she killed herself.

Bhubaneswari had known that her death would be diagnosed as the outcome of illegitimate passion. She had therefore waited for the onset of menstruation. While waiting, Bhubaneswari, the *brahmacārini* who was no doubt looking forward to good wifehood, perhaps rewrote the social text of *sati*-suicide in an interventionist way. (One tentative explanation of her inexplicable act had been a possible melancholia brought on by her father's death and her brother-in-law's repeated taunts that she was too old to be not-yet-a-wife.) She generalized the sanctioned motive for female suicide by taking immense trouble to displace (not merely deny), in the physiological inscription of her body, its imprisonment within legitimate passion by a single male. In the immediate context, her act became absurd, a case of delirium rather than sanity. The displacing gesture—waiting for menstruation—is at first a reversal of the interdict against a menstruating widow's right to immolate herself; the unclean widow must wait, publicly, until the cleansing bath of the fourth day, when she is no longer menstruating, in order to claim her dubious privilege.

In this reading, Bhubaneswari Bhaduri's suicide is an unemphatic, ad hoc, subaltern rewriting of the social text of *sati*-suicide as much as the hegemonic account of the blazing, fighting, familial Durga. The emergent dissenting possibilities of that hegemonic account of the fighting mother are well documented and popularly well remembered through the discourse of the male leaders and participants in the Independence movement. The subaltern as female cannot be heard or read.

I know of Bhubaneswari's life and death through family connections. Before investigating them more thoroughly, I asked a Bengali woman, a philosopher and Sanskritist whose early intellectual production is almost identical to mine, to start the process. Two responses: (a) Why, when her two sisters, Saileswari and Raseswari, led such full and wonderful lives, are you interested in the hapless Bhubaneswari? (b) I asked her nieces. It appears that it was a case of illicit love.

I was so unnerved by this failure of communication that, in the first version of this text, I wrote, in the accents of passionate lament: the subaltern cannot speak! It was an inadvisable remark.

IN THE INTERVENING YEARS between the publication of the original essay and this revision, I have profited greatly from the many published

responses to it. I will refer to two of them here: "Can the Subaltern Vote?" and "Silencing Sycorax."[103]

As I have been insisting, Bhubaneswari Bhaduri was not a "true" subaltern. She was a woman of the middle class, with access, however clandestine, to the bourgeois movement for Independence. . . . Part of what I seem to have argued in this [essay] is that woman's interception of the claim to subalternity can be staked out across strict lines of definition by virtue of their muting by heterogeneous circumstances. Rani Gulari [discussed earlier in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*] cannot speak to us because indigenous patriarchal "history" would only keep a record of her funeral and colonial history only needed her as an incidental instrument. Bhubaneswari attempted to "speak" by turning her body into a text of woman/writing. The immediate passion of my declaration, "the subaltern cannot speak," came from the despair that, in her own family, among women, in no more than fifty years, her attempt had failed. I am not laying the blame for the muting on the *colonial* authorities here, as Busia seems to think: "Gayatri Spivak's 'Can the Subaltern Speak?'—section IV of which is a compelling explication of this role of disappearing in the case of Indian women in British legal history."[104]

I am pointing, rather, at her silencing by her own more emancipated granddaughters: a new mainstream. To this can be added two newer groups: one, the liberal multiculturalist metropolitan academy, Susan Barton's great-granddaughters; as follows:

As I have been saying all along, I think it is important to acknowledge our complicity in the muting, in order precisely to be more effective in the long run. Our work cannot succeed if we always have a scapegoat. The postcolonial migrant investigator is touched by the colonial social formations. Busia strikes a positive note for further work when she points out that, after all, I am able to read Bhubaneswari's case, and therefore she *has* spoken in some way. Busia is right, of course. All speaking, even seemingly the most immediate, entails a distanced decipherment by another, which is, at best, an interception. That is what speaking is.

I acknowledge this theoretical point, and also acknowledge the practical importance, for oneself and others, of being upbeat about future work. Yet the moot decipherment by another in an academic institution (willy-nilly a knowledge-production factory) many years later must not be too quickly identified with the "speaking" of the subaltern. It is not a mere tautology to say that the colonial or postcolonial subaltern is defined as the being on the other side of difference, or an epistemic fracture, even from other groupings among the colonized. What is at stake when we insist that the subaltern speaks?

In "Can the Subaltern Vote?" the three authors apply the question of stakes to "political speaking." This seems to me to be a fruitful way of extending my reading of subaltern speech into a collective arena. Access to "citizenship" (civil society) by becoming a voter (in the nation) is indeed the symbolic circuit of the mobilizing of subalternity into hegemony. This terrain, ever negotiating between national liberation and globalization, allows for examining the casting of the vote itself as a performative convention given as constative "speech" of the subaltern subject. It is part of my current concerns to see how this set is manipulated to legitimize globalization; but it is beyond the scope of this essay. Here let us remain confined to the field of academic prose, and advance three points:

1 Simply by being postcolonial or the member of an ethnic minority, we are not "subaltern." That word is reserved for the sheer heterogeneity of decolonized space.
2 When a line of communication is established between a member of subaltern groups and the circuits of citizenship or institutionality, the subaltern has been inserted into the long road to hegemony. Unless we want to be romantic purists or primitivists about "preserving subalternity"—a contradiction in terms—this is absolutely to be desired. (It goes without saying that museumized or curricularized access to ethnic origin—another battle that must be fought—is not identical with preserving subalternity.) Remembering this allows us to take pride in our work without making missionary claims.
3 This trace-structure (effacement in disclosure) surfaces as the tragic emotions of the political activist, springing not out of superficial utopianism, but out of the depths of what Bimal Krishna Matilal has called "moral love." Mahasweta Devi, herself an indefatigable activist, documents this emotion with exquisite care in "Pterodactyl, Puran Sahay, and Pirtha."

And finally, the third group: Bhubaneswari's elder sister's eldest daughter's eldest daughter's eldest daughter is a new U.S. immigrant and was recently promoted to an executive position in a U.S.-based transnational. She will be helpful in the emerging South Asian market precisely because she is a well-placed Southern diasporic.

> For Europe, the time when the new capitalism *definitely* superseded the old can be established with fair precision: it was the beginning of the twentieth century. . . . [With t]he boom at the end of the nineteenth century and the crisis of 1900–03 . . . [c]artels become one of the foundations of the whole of economic life. Capitalism has been transformed into imperialism.[105]

Today's program of global financialization carries on that relay. Bhubaneswari had fought for national liberation. Her great-grandniece works for the New Empire. This too is a historical silencing of the subaltern. When the news of this young woman's promotion was broadcast in the family amidst general jubilation I could not help remarking to the eldest surviving female member: "Bhubaneswari"—her nickname had been Talu—"hanged herself in vain," but not too loudly. Is it any wonder that this young woman is a staunch multiculturalist, believes in natural childbirth, and wears only cotton?

NOTES

This iteration of the essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak," appears as the closing section of a chapter entitled "History" in Gayatri Spivak's *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999), pp. 244–311. The text appears unchanged except where specific reference has been made to earlier sections of the chapter, the most substantive of which concern the account of the Rani Gulari of Sirmur.

1 Therefore, the UN must first rationalize "woman" before they can develop her. Yet, the Rani of Sirmur and Bhubaneswari Bhaduri (*vide infra*), indeed Lily Moya and Rigoberta Menchú (see Shula Marks, *Not Either an Experimental Doll* [Bloomington: Indiana Univ, Press, 1987]; and *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*, tr. Ann Wright [London: Verso, 1984], will be instructive if they remain singular and secretive (for "secret," see *IM* xxv). They must exceed the system to come to us, in the mode of the literary. Capital remains the accessible abstract in general—the matheme still contaminated by the human. Psychocultural *systems*—regulative psychobiographies, psychoanalysis included—tend toward it. In search of the discursive abstractions that are the condition and effect of the concrete singular, Foucault was smart to choose the rarefied rather than the "thick" (for documentation, see Spivak, "More on Power/Knowledge," *Outside*, pp. 25–51). But we must also attend to Menchú, reading her too against the grain of her necessarily identity-political idiom, borrowing from a much older collective tactic against colonial conquest: "Of course, I'd need a lot of time to tell you about all my people because it's not easy to understand just like that. And I think I've given some idea of that in my account. Nevertheless, I'm still keeping my Indian identity a secret. I'm still keeping secret what I think no-one should know. Not even anthropologists or intellectuals, no matter how many books they have, can find out all our secrets" (p. 247). That text is not in books, and the secret keeps us, not the other way around.

2 Since this writing, the textualist study of history has taken on a life of its own. For the U.S. literary critic, the pages of the journal *Representations* would yield the richest harvest. Other prominent texts are Carlo Ginzburg, *Myths, Emblems, Clues*, tr. John and Anne C. Tedeschi (London: Hutchinson, 1990); Martin Jay,

Force Fields: Between Intellectual History and Cultural Critique (New York: Routledge, 1993). Peter de Bolla gives an account of poststructuralist history in "Disfiguring History," *Diacritics* 16 (Winter 1986): 49–58. The list could go on. Joan Wallach Scott has productively unpacked LaCapra's transferential analogy by "historiciz[ing] both sides of [the relationship between the power of the historian's analytic frame and the events that are the object of his or her study] by denying the fixity and transcendence of anything that appears to operate as a foundation . . . " ("Experience," in Judith Butler and Joan W. Scott, eds., *Feminists Theorize the Political* [New York: Routledge, 1992], p. 37). Scott's model can get "responsibility" going—asymmetrically. But with the Rani the asymmetry is so great that "responsibility" cannot catch. On the cusp of colonialism, she is pre-emergent for colonial discourse. In the pre-colonial dominant "Hindu" discourse she is absent except as a corpse by way of a funerary list. Indeed that dominant discourse goes underground by her living, precisely as (wife and mother) woman. There is no possibility of provincializing Europe here, as Dipesh Chakrabarty would have it, no possibility of catching at semes, as Jay Smith would like (Chakrabarty, "Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for 'Indian' Pasts?" *Representations* 37 [Winter 1992]: 1–26; Smith, "No More Language Games: Words, Beliefs, and the Political Culture of Early Modern France," *American Historical Review* 102.5 [Dec 1997]: 1416). What emerges on the figure of the Rani is interpretation as such; any genealogy of that history can see her as no more than an insubstantial languaged instrument. She is as unverifiable as literature, and yet she is written in, indeed permits the writing of, history as coloniality—so that the postcolonial can come to see his "historical self-location" as a problem (Vivek Dhareshwar, "'Our Time': History, Sovereignty, Politics," *Economic and Political Weekly*, 11 Feb. 1995, pp. 317–324).

3 For the argument that all Speech Acts are graphematic, see Derrida, "Signature Event Context," *Margins*, pp. 307–330.

4 Understood and exceeded, keeping her secret, as we shall see in the rest of this chapter, in spite of the most tremendous effort to "speak." Benedict Anderson (*Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* [London: Verso, 1983]) and Partha Chatterjee (*Nationalist Thought and the Colonial World: A Derivative Discourse* [London: Zed, 1986] and *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993]), together offer us an exhaustive gloss on the mechanics of this coding but, as Homi K. Bhabha points out in "DissemiNation" (*Nation and Narration* [New York: Routledge, 1990], pp. 291–322) with reference to Anderson in particular, accounts of coding cannot account for excess or "incommensurability." Bhabha's argument relates specifically to the unresolvability of the minority; mine, here, as Irigaray's in "The Necessity for Sexuate Rights" (Margaret Whitford, ed. *The Irigaray Reader* [Cambridge: Blackwell, 1991], pp. 204–211) to the excess of the "sexuate" (see Spivak, "Who Claims Sexuality in the New World Order?" forthcoming in a collection edited by Elizabeth Grosz and Pheng Cheah). It is in

the excess of the sexuate, forever escaping formalization . . . that Bhubaneswari speaks, keeps her secret, and is silenced. The rest of the text circles around this enigma, by way of the psychocultural *system* of *Sati*.

5 Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, tr. Ben Brewster (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1971), p. 66. Derrida, "Desistance," in Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, *Typography: Mimesis, Philosophy, Politics* tr. Christopher Fynsk (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1989), pp. 1–42.

6 Michel Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice: Selected Essays and Interviews*, trans. Donald Bouchard and Sherry Simon (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1977), pp. 205–217 (hereafter cited as *FD*). I have modified the English version of this, as of other English translations, where faithfulness to the original seemed to demand it. It is important to note that the greatest "influence" of Western European intellectuals upon U.S. professors and students happens through collections of essays rather than long books in translation. And, in those collections, it is understandably the more topical pieces that gain a greater currency. (Derrida's "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in Richard Macksey and Eugenio Donato, eds., *The Structuralist Controversy: The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man* [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1972], is a case in point.) From the perspective of theoretical production and ideological reproduction, therefore, the converstion under consideration has not necessarily been superseded. In my own meagre production, interviews, the least considered genre, have proved embarrassingly popular. It goes without saying that one does not produce a Samuel P. Huntington (*The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 1996]) to counter this. More about Huntington later.

7 There is an implicit reference here to the post-1968 wave of Maoism in France. See Michel Foucault, "On Popular Justice: A Discussion with Maoists," *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings 1972–77*, tr. Colin Gordon *et al.* (New York: Pantheon, 1980), p. 134 (hereafter *PK*). Explication of the reference strengthens my point by laying bare the mechanics of appropriation. The status of China in this discussion is exemplary. If Foucault persistently clears himself by saying "I know nothing about China," his interlocutors show toward China what Derrida calls the "Chinese prejudice."

8 This is part of a much broader symptom, as Eric Wolf discusses in *Europe and the People Without History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982).

9 Walter Benjamin, *Charles Baudelaire: A Lyric Poet in the Era of High Capitalism*, tr. Harry Zohn (London: Verso, 1983), p. 12. It is interesting that Foucault finds in Baudelaire the typecase of modernity (Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment," in Paul Rabinow, ed., *The Foucault Reader* [New York: Pantheon, 1984], pp. 39–42).

10 "Even if the gift were never anything but a simulacrum, one must still *render an account* of the possibility of this simulacrum. And one must also render an account of the desire to render an account. This cannot be done against or without the *principle of reason* (*principium reddendae rationis*), even if the latter finds there its limit as well as its resource" (Derrida, *Given Time*, p. 31).

11 Deleuze and Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, p. 40–41 and *passim*.

12 Ibid., p. 26.

13 "What is writing? How can it be identified? What certitude of essence must guide the empirical investigation? . . . Without venturing up to the perilous necessity of the question or the arche-question 'what is,' let us take shelter in the field of grammatological knowledge" (*OG* 75). In "Desistance," Derrida points out that the critical is always contaminated by the dogmatic and thus makes Kant's distinction "speculative." In *Glas* philosophemes are typographically mimed, rather than "acted out" in intended behavior, as in the conversation we are discussing.

14 Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy*, pp. 132–133; translation modified.

15 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, tr. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1987), pp. 351–423.

16 On this see also Stuart Hall, "The Problem of Ideology—Marxism without Guarantees," in Betty Matthews, ed., *Marx: A Hundred Years On* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1983), pp. 57–84.

17 For a more appreciative interpretation that attempts to bypass this risk, though never, of course, fully, see Spivak, "More on Power/Knowledge."

18 For one example among many see *PK* 98.

19 It is not surprising, then, that Foucault's work, early and late, is supported by too simple a notion of repression. Here the antagonist is Freud, not Marx. "I have the impression that [the notion of repression] is wholly inadequate to the analysis of the mechanisms and effects of power that it is so pervasively used to characterize today" (*PK* 92). The delicacy and subtlety of Freud's suggestion—that under repression the phenomenal identity of affects is indeterminate because an unpleasure can be desired as pleasure, thus radically reinscribing the relationship between desire and "interest"—seems quite deflated here. For an elaboration of this notion of repression, see *OG* 88,333–34 and Derrida, *Limited inc. abc* (Evanston: Northwestern Univ. Press, 1988), p. 74–75. Again, the problem is the refusal to take on board the level of the constituted subject—in the name of uncontaminated catachreses.

20 Althusser's version of this particular situation may be too schematic, but it nevertheless seems more careful in its program than the argument under study. "Class *instinct*," Althusser writes, "is subjective and spontaneous. Class *position* is objective and rational. To arrive at proletarian class positions, the class instinct of proletarians only needs to be *educated*, the class instinct of the petty bourgeoisie, *and hence of intellectuals*, has, on the contrary, to be *revolutionized*" (*Lenin and Philosophy*, p. 13). It is the effortful double bind, the always already crossed aporia, of this careful program that may be one reading of Derrida's current insistence upon justice as an experience of the impossible, upon decisions being always categorically insufficient to their supposed premises (see Appendix).

21 "Is the repetition really useful here?" my anonymous reader asks. I cite one among a hundred random examples: a conference on "Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary: Negotiating the Margin" at Columbia University on 7 November 1997. The entire conference turned on amity among various minorities in the United

States (read New York) as the end of radical feminism, an end that seemed altogether salutary in the face of the vicious identitarian conflict raging under the surface. A strengthened multicultural U.S. subject, the newest face of postcoloniality, still does nothing for globality and may do harm. The point remains worth repeating, alas.

22 Foucault's subsequent explanation (*PK* 145) of this Deleuzian statement comes closer to Derrida's notion that theory cannot be an exhaustive taxonomy and is always normed by practice.

23 Cf. the suprisingly uncritical notions of representation entertained in *PK* 141, 188. My remarks concluding this paragraph, criticizing intellectuals' representations of subaltern groups, should be rigorously distinguished from a coalition politics that takes into account its framing within socialized capital and unites people not because they are oppressed but because they are exploited. This model works best within a parliamentary democracy, where representation is not only not banished but elaborately staged.

24 Marx, *Surveys from Exile*, p. 239.

25 Marx, *Capital* 1:254.

26 Ibid., p. 302.

27 This is a highly ironic passage in Marx, written in the context of the fraudulent "representation" by Louis Napoleon and the regular suppression of the "revolutionary peasants" by bourgeois interests (*Surveys*, p. 239). Many hasty readers think Marx is advancing this as his own opinion about all peasantry!

28 See the excellent short definition and discussion of common sense in Errol Lawrence, "Just Plain Common Sense: The 'Roots' of Racism," in Hazel V. Carby, et al., *The Empire Strikes Back: Race and Racism in 70s Britain* (London: Hutchinson, 1982), p. 48. The Gramscian notions of "common sense" and "good sense" are extensively discussed in Marcia Landy, *Film, Politics, and Gramsci* (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1994), pp. 73–98.

29 "Use value" in Marx can be shown to be a "theoretical fiction"—as much of a potential oxymoron as "natural exchange." I have attempted to develop this in "Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value," in *In Other Worlds*, pp. 154–175.

30 Developed in Spivak, "Teaching for the Times," in Bhikhu Parekh and Jan Nederveen Pieterse, eds., *The Decolonization of the Imagination* (London: Zed, 1995), pp. 177–202; "Diasporas Old & New: Women in a Transnational World," in *Textual Practice* 10.2 (1996): 245–269; and, with specific reference to India, in Biju Mathews *et. al.*, "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam: The Hindu in the World," unpublished MS.

31 Derrida's "Linguistic Circle of Geneva" (in *Margins*), especially pp. 143–144, can provide a method for assessing the irreducible place of the family in Marx's morphology of class formation.

32 Marx, *Capital* 1:128. This is common sense. Marx then goes beyond this to show that value means abstraction in both use and exchange. To develop that reading is beside the point here.

33 The situation has changed in the New World Order. Let us call the World Bank/IMF/World Trade Organization "the economic;" and the United Nations "the political." The relationship between them is being negotiated in the name of gender ("the cultural"), which is, perhaps, micrology as such.

34 I am aware that the relationship between Marxism and neo-Kantianism is a politically fraught one. I do not myself see how a continuous line can be established between Marx's own texts and the Kantian ethical moment. It does seem to me, however, that Marx's questioning of the individual as agent of history should be read in the context of the breaking up of the individual subject inaugurated by Kant's critique of Descartes.

35 Marx, *Grundrisse*, pp. 162–163.

36 Edward W. Said, *The World, the Text, the Critic* (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1983), p. 243.

37 Carby, *Empire*, p. 34.

38 This argument is developed further in Spivak, "Scattered Speculations." Once again, the *Anti-Oedipus* did not ignore the economic text, although the treatment was perhaps too allegorical. In this respect, the move from schizo- to rhyzo-analysis in *A Thousand Plateaus* was not, perhaps, salutary.

39 See Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*, tr. Richard Howard (New York: Pantheon, 1965), pp. 251, 262, 269.

40 Although I consider Fredric Jameson's *Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1981) to be a text of great critical weight, or perhaps *because* I do so, I would like my program here to be distinguished from one of restoring the relics of a privileged narrative: "It is in detecting the traces of that uninterrupted narrative, in restoring to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality of this fundamental history, that the doctrine of a political unconscious finds its function and its necessity" (p. 20).

41 For a detailed account of a this transformation in the case of temple dancers, see Kunal Parker's forthcoming work.

42 Thomas Babington Macaulay, *Speeches by Lord Macaulay: With His Minute on Indian Education*, ed. G. M. Young (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, AMS Edition, 1979), p. 359.

43 I have discussed this issue in greater detail with reference to Julia Kristeva's *About Chinese Women*, tr. Anita Barrows (London: Marion Boyars, 1977), in "French Feminism in an International Frame," *In Other Worlds*, pp. 136–141.

44 Antonio Gramsci, *The Southern Question*, tr. Pasquale Verdicchio (West Lafayette, IN: Bordighera, 1995). As usual, I am using "allegory of reading" in the sense suggested by Paul de Man.

45 Edward W. Said, "Permission to Narrate," *London Review of Books* (16 Feb. 1984).

46 Guha, *Subaltern Studies* (Delhi: Oxford Univ. Press, 1982), 1:1.

47 *Ibid.*, p. 4.

48 *Ibid.*, p. 8. The usefulness of this tightly defined term was largely lost when *Selected Subaltern Studies* was launched in the United States under Spivak's initia-

tive (New York: Oxford Univ. Press, 1988). A new selection with a new introduction by Amartya Kumar Sen is about to appear from Duke Univ. Press. In the now generalized usage, it is precisely this notion of the subaltern inhabiting a space of difference that is lost, e.g., in statements such as the following: "The subaltern is force-fed into appropriating the master's culture" (Emily Apter, "French Colonial Studies and Postcolonial Theory," *Sub-Stance* 76/77, vol. 24, nos. 1–2 [1995]: 178); or worse still, Jameson's curious definition of subalternity as "the experience of inferiority" ("Marx's Purloined Letter," *New Left Review,* no. 209 [1994]: 95).

49 Guha, *Subaltern Studies*, 1:1.

50 Since then, in the disciplinary fallout after the serious electoral and terrorist augmentation of Hindu nationalism in India, more alarming charges have been leveled at the group. See Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures* (New York: Verso, 1992), pp. 68, 194, 207–211; and Sumit Sarkar, "The Fascism of the Sangh Parivar," *Economic and Political Weekly* 30 Jan. 1993, pp. 163–167.

51 Ajit K. Chaudhury, "New Wave Social Science," *Frontier* 16–24 (28 Jan. 1984), p. 10 (italics are mine).

52 I do not believe that the recent trend of romanticizing anything written by the Aboriginal or outcaste ("dalit" = oppressed) intellectual has lifted the effacement.

53 "Contracting Poverty," *Multinational Monitor* 4, no. 8 (Aug. 1983): 8. This report was contributed by John Cavanagh and Joy Hackel, who work on the International Corporations Project at the Institute for Policy Studies (italics are mine).

54 Saskia Sassen, "On Economic Citizenship," in Losing Control?: Sovereignty in An Age of Globalization (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1996), pp. 31–58.

55 The mechanics of the invention of the Third World as signifier are susceptible to the type of analysis directed at the constitution of race as a signifier in Carby, *Empire*. In the contemprary conjuncture, in response to the augmentation of Eurocentric migration as the demographic fallout of postcoloniality, neocolonialism, end of the Soviet Union, and global financialization, the South (the Third World of yore, with shifting bits of the old Second World thrown in) is being reinvented as the South-in-the-North. Even so brilliant a book as Etienne Balibar and Immanuel Wallerstein, *Race, Nation, Class: Ambiguous Identities*, tr. Chris Turner (New York: Verso, 1991) starts from this invention as unquestioned premise.

56 Subsequently, as I indicate at length elsewhere (*Outside*, pp. 113–115; "Ghostwriting," pp. 69–71, 82), his work in these areas has speculated with the tendencies of computing migrancy or displacement as origin; in the figure of the absolute *arrivant*, of the marrano, and, most recently, in his seminars, hospitality. He would figure the indigenous subaltern, from the perspective of the metropolitan hybrid, as a correlative of cultural conservatism, topological archaism, ontopological nostalgia (*Specters*, p. 82). Here, too, he speculates with already existing tendencies. Just as pedigreed Marxists have been told, by Derrida among others, that Marx must be read in Marx's way, *as if* the reader were haunted by Marx's ghost; so might one deconstruct deconstruction (as Klein Freuded Freud): do not accuse, do not excuse, make it "your own," turn it around and use—with no guarantees—except that this formula too will become useless tomorrow—or in

the moment of its saying: "each time that ethnocentrism is precipitately and ostentatiously reversed, some effort silently hides behind all the spectacular effects to consolidate an inside and to draw from it some domestic benefit."

57 John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1993).

58 Jonathan Culler, *On Deconstruction: Theory and Criticism after Structuralism* (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1982), p. 48.

59 Sarah Kofman, *The Enigma of Woman : Woman in Freud's Writings*, tr. Catherine Porter (Ithaca: Cornell Univ. Press, 1985).

60 Freud, "'A Child Is Being Beaten': A Contribution to the Study of the Origin of Sexual Perversion," *SE* 17. For a list of ways in which Western criticism constructs "third world woman," see Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," in Mohanty et al., eds., *Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism* (Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1991), pp. 51–80.

61 Freud, "'Wild' Psycho-Analysis," *SE* 11. A good deal of psychoanalytic social critique would fit this description.

62 Freud, "'A Child Is Being Beaten,'" p. 188.

63 For a brilliant account of how the "reality" of widow-sacrificing was constituted or "textualized" during the colonial period, see Lata Mani, "Contentious Traditions: the Debate on *Sati* in Colonial India," in *Recasting Women*: *Essays in Colonial History* (Delhi: Kāli for Women, 1989), pp. 88–126. I profited from discussion with Dr. Mani at the inception of this project. Here I present some of my differences from her position. The "printing mistake in the Bengali translation"(p. 109) that she cites is not the same as the mistake I discuss, which is in the ancient Sanskrit. It is of course altogether interesting, that there should be all these errancies in the justification of the practice. A regulative psychobiography is not identical with "textual hegemony" (p. 96). I agree with Mani that the latter mode of explanation cannot take "regional variations" into account. A regulative psychobiography is another mode of "textualist oppression" when it produces not only "women's consciousness" but a "gendered episteme" (mechanics of the construction of objects of knowledge together with validity-criteria for statements of knowledge). You do not have to "read verbal texts" here. It is something comparable to Gramsci's "inventory without traces" (Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from the Prison Notebooks*, tr. Quintin Hoare and Geoffrey Nowell Smith [New York: International Publishers, 1971], p. 324). Like Mani (p. 125, n. 90), I too wish to "add" to Kosambi's "strategies." To the "supplement[ation of the linguistic study of problems of ancient Indian culture] by intelligent use of archaeology, anthropology, sociology and a suitable historical perspective" (Kosambi, "Combined Methods in Indology," *Indo-Iranian Journal* 6 [1963]: 177), I would add the insights of psychoanalysis, though not the regulative psychobiography of its choice. Alas, in spite of our factualist fetish, "facts" alone may account for women's oppression, but they will never allow us to approach gendering, a net where we ourselves are enmeshed, as we decide what (the) facts are. Because of epistemic prejudice, Kosambi's bold and plain speech can and has been misunderstood; but

his word "live" can take on board a more complex notion of the mental theater as Mani cannot: "Indian peasants in villages far from any city *live* in a manner closer to the days when the Purānas were written than do the descendants of the brahmins who wrote the Purānas" (emphasis mine). Precisely. The self-representation in gendering is regulated by the Puranic psychobiography, with the Brahmin as the model. In the last chapter I will consider what Kosambi mentions in the next sentence: "A stage further back are the pitiful fragments of tribal groups, usually sunk to the level of marginal castes; they rely heavily upon food-gathering and have the corresponding mentality." Kosambi's somewhat doctrinaire Marxism would not allow him to think of the tribal episteme as anything but only backward, of course. After the *sati* of Rup Kanwar in September 1987, a body of literature on the contemporary situation has emerged. That requires quite a different engagement (see Radha Kumar, "Agitation Against Sati 1987–88," in *The History of Doing* [Delhi: Kāli for Women, 1993], pp. 172–181.)

64 See Kumari Jayawardena, *The White Woman's Other Burden: Western Women and South Asia During British Colonial Rule* (New York: Routledge, 1995). Envy, backlash, reaction-formation; these are the routes by which such efforts may, in the absence of ethical responsibility, lead to opposite results. I have repeatedly invoked Melanie Klein and Assia Djebar in this context. See also Spivak, "Psychoanalysis in Left Field," pp. 66–69.

65 The examples of female ventriloquist complicity, quoted by Lata Mani in her brilliant article "Production of An Official Discourse on *Sati* in Early Nineteenth Century Bengal," *Economic and Political Weekly* 21.17 (26 Apr. 1986), p. WS-36, proves my point. The point is not that a refusal would not be ventriloquism for Women's Rights. One is not suggesting that only the latter is correct free will. One is suggesting that the freedom of the will is negotiable, and it is not on the grounds of a disinterested free will that we will be able to justify an action, in this case against the burning of widows, to the adequate satisfaction of all. The ethical aporia is not negotiable. We must act in view of this.

66 J. D. M. Derrett, *Hindu Law Past and Present: Being and Account of the Controversy Which Preceded the Enactment of the Hindu Code, and Text of the Code as Enacted, and Some Comments Thereon* (Calcutta: A. Mukherjee, 1957), p. 46.

67 Kosambi comments on such shifts as a matter of course. Of the much admired widow remarriage reform, e.g., he writes: "[t]hat he [R.G. Bh nd rkar] spoke for a very narrow class in the attempt to speak for the whole of India never struck him, nor for that matter other contemporary 'reformers.' Still, *the silent change of emphasis from caste to class was a necessary advance*" (D. D. Kosambi, *Myth and Reality: Studies in the Formation of Indian Culture* [Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 1962], p. 38, n. 2; emphasis mine). We would say "shift" rather than "advance"; for it is this silent century-old epistemic shift that allows today's Hindu nationalism to proclaim itself anti-casteist, nationalist—even "secular." Incidentally, to confine the construction of *Sati* to colonial negotiations, and finally to the Ram Mohun Roy-Lord William Bentinck exchange, is also to avoid the question of "subaltern consciousness." For further commentary on the differences between

Mani and Spivak, see Sumit Sarkar, "Orientalism Revisited: Saidian Frameworks in the Writing of Modern Indian History," *Oxford Literary Review* 16 (1994): 223. I remain grateful to Professor Sarkar for noticing that "Mani's article stands in marked contrast to the much more substantive discussion of pre-colonial and colonial discourses on sati in Spivak, 'Can the Subaltern Speak?'" To claim that caste or clitoridectomy is no more than a colonial construction advances nothing today. Romila Thapar tells me that the seventh-century historian Bānabhatta objected to *Sati*. There may be something Eurocentric about assuming that imperialism began with Europe.

68 Today, interference in women's cultural privacy remains a project of making rural women available for micro-enterprise in the economic sphere, and a project of bettering women's lives in the political. Demands for a more responsible tempo—woman's time—so that the violence of the change does not scar the episteme, are often impatiently rejected as cultural conservatism.

69 Ashis Nandy, "Sati: A Nineteenth Century Tale of Women, Violence and Protest," *Rammohun Roy and the Process of Modernization in India*, ed. V. C. Joshi (Delhi: Vikas Publishing House, 1975), p. 68.

70 Marx, *Capital* 3:958–959.

71 Spivak, "Diasporas," p. 248.

72 In "The Supplement of Copula: Philosophy Before Linguistics," (*Margins*, pp. 175–205), Derrida argues that every copula is a supplement. In his own work, he has reopened the copula by working on the ethical. The copula in this sentence may mean that the relationship between men and women is patriarchal until rationalized. Not very far from either consciousness-raising or classical Marxism. These suggestions call for a mourning-work hinted at in "Foucault and Najibullah."

73 I am using "Envy" in the sense established by Melanie Klein in "Envy and Gratitude," in *Envy and Gratitude and Other Works* (New York: Free Press, 1975), pp. 176–235.

74 Klein, "The Early Development of Conscience in the Child," *Love, Guilt and Reparation and Other Works (1921–1945)*, p. 257.

75 It is in this spirit that Assia Djebar asked the help of an Arabic scholar to allow her to read certain Arabic chronicles imaginatively in order to write *Far From Medina,* tr. Dorothy Blair (London: Quartet, 1994). I have been energized by Peter van de Veer's approbation in "Sati and Sanskrit: The Move from Orientalism to Hinduism,"in Mieke Bal and Inge E. Boer, eds., *The Point of Theory: Practices of Cultural Analysis* (New York: Continuum, 1994), pp. 251–259.

76 Since I am no expert, the following account leans heavily on Pandurang Vaman Kane, *History of the Dharmasastra* (Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Institute, 1963) (hereafter cited as *HD*, with volume, part, and page numbers).

77 Upendra Thakur, *The History of Suicide in India: An Introduction* (Delhi: Munshi Ram Manohar Lal, 1963), p. 9, has a useful list of Sanskrit primary sources on sacred places. This laboriously decent book betrays all the signs of the schizo-

phrenia of the colonial subject, such as bourgeois nationalism, patriarchal communalism, and an "enlightened reasonableness."

78 Nandy, "Sati."

79 Jean-François Lyotard, *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, tr. Georges Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: Univ. of Minnesota Press, 1988), p. xi.

80 Ibid., p. 13.

81 *HD*, II.2, p. 633. There are suggestions that this "prescribed penance" was far exceeded by social practice. In the passage below, published in 1938, notice the Hindu patristic assumptions about the freedom of female will at work in phrases like "courage" and "strength of character." The unexamined presuppositions of the passage might be that the complete objectification of the widow-concubine was just punishment for abdication of the right to courage, signifying subject status: "Some widows, however, had not the courage to go through the fiery ordeal; nor had they sufficient strength of mind and character to live up to the high ascetic ideal prescribed for them [*brahmacarya*]. It is sad to record that they were driven to lead the life of a concubine or *avaruddha stri* [incarcerated wife]." A. S. Altekar, *The Position of Women in Hindu Civilization: From Prehistoric Times to the Present Day* (Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1938), p. 156.

82 Quoted in Dineshchandra Sen, *Brhat-Banga* (Calcutta: Univ. of Calcutta Press), 2:913–914.

83 In *The Gift of Death*, Derrida has suggested how an Abrahamic sacrifice today would be docketed as crime (pp. 85–86).

84 Thompson, *Suttee*, p. 132.

85 Here, as well as for the Brahman debate over *sati*, see Mani, "Production," pp. 71f.

86 We are speaking here of the regulative norms of Brahmanism, rather than "things as they were." See Robert Lingat, *The Classical Law of India*, trans. J. D. M. Derrett (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1973), p. 46.

87 Both the vestigial possibility of widow remarriage in ancient India and the legal institution of widow remarriage in 1856 are transactions among men. Widow remarriage is very much an exception, perhaps because it left the program of subject-formation untouched. In all the "lore" of widow remarriage, it is the father and the husband who are applauded for their reformist courage and selflessness. As Kosambi would remind us, we are only considering caste-Hindu India here.

88 Middle-class Bengali children of my generation received this indoctrination through Abanindranath Tagore, *Raj-Kahini* (Calcutta: Signet,1968), a lovely imaginative reconstruction of the famous *Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan* (London: Oxford University Press, 1920) by James Tod (1782–1835).

89 Biju Mathews et al., "Vasudhaiva Kutumbakam."

90 Sir Monier Monier-Williams, *Sanskrit-English Dictionary* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), p. 552. Historians are often impatient if modernists seem to be attempting to import "feministic" judgments into ancient patriarchies. The real question is, of course, why structures of patriarchal domination should be un-

questioningly recorded. Historical sanctions for collective action toward social justice can only be developed if people outside of the discipline question standards of "objectivity" preserved as such by the hegemonic tradition. It does not seem inappropriate to notice that so "objective" an instrument as a dictionary can use the deeply sexist-partisan explanatory expression: "raise up issue to a deceased husband"!

91 Sunderlal T. Desai, *Mulla: Principles of Hindu Law* (Bombay: N. M. Tripathi, 1982), p. 184.

92 I am grateful to Professor Alison Finley of Trinity College (Hartford, Conn.) for discussing the passage with me. Professor Finley is an expert on the *Rg-Veda*. I hasten to add that she would find my readings as irresponsibly "literary-critical" as the ancient historian would find it "modernist"

93 Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, tr. Ralph Mannheim (New York: Doubleday Anchor, 1961), p. 58.

94 Thompson, *Suttee*, p. 37.

95 Thompson, *Suttee*, p. 15. For the status of the proper name as "mark," see Derrida, "My Chances/*Mes Chances*: A Rendezvous with Some Epicurean Stereophonies," in Joseph H. Smith and William Kerrigan, eds., *Taking Chances: Derrida, Psychoanalysis, and Literature*, (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Univ. Press, 1984), p. 1–32.

96 Thompson, *Suttee*, p. 137.

97 Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality*, 1:4.

98 The European context is different here. In the monotheist tradition, as it has been argued by Derrida in his discussions specifically of Kierkegaard in *The Gift of Death*, the moment of sacrifice—Abraham ready to kill his son—turns love into hate and displaces the ethical. What is it to introduce woman into this narrative, Derrida has asked, and John Caputo has attempted to construct a benevolent American-feminist answer by speaking in various voices, as provided by the historically male imagining of women; he has even attempted to acknowledge "[t]he name of Sarah . . . [as] the name of violence. In order to protect the heritage of her son, Isaac, Sarah had Abraham take Hagar, Abraham's concubine and the Egyptian slave of Sarah, and Ishmael, the illegitimate son of Abraham and Hagar, out to the desert and abandon them. The descendants of Ishmael, the 'Ishmaelites,' became a wandering tribe of nomads, the outcasts . . . " (John Caputo, *Against Ethics: Contributions to a Poetics of Obligation With Constant Reference to Deconstruction* [Bloomington: Indiana Univ. Press, 1993], pp. 145–146). But if, for the sake of time, we remember no more than Freud's intuition, the maternal sacrifice must perhaps invoke, not merely the peoples of the Book, but the pre- and para-monotheistic world (Freud, "Moses and Monotheism," *SE* 22:83). It is not only Abraham who can be imagined—as he is by Caputo's "Johanna de Silentio" (feminine of Kierkegaard's Johannes)—"in a world without others, a world without the law" (Caputo, *Against Ethics,* p. 141). In *Beloved* Toni Morrison gives us maternal sacrifice, Sethe, the slave about to be freed (neither African nor American), historically in that world without the law. History asks for the maternal

sacrifice on the impossible passage, and does not stay the mother's hand. The ring of the covenant—the brand on Sethe's nameless mother's breast—does not ensure continuity. Historiality is not changed into genealogy. The matrilineality of slavery is ruptured on the underground railroad. Sethe does not understand her mother's tongue. On the cusp of the violent change from animisim to dehegemonised Christianity is the maternal sacrifice. It marks an obstinate refusal to rational allegorization. It is only after this shedding of blood that the first African-American is born—Denver, named after the white woman who assisted at her birth. U.S. civil society (and, of course, culture—Morrison's next book is *Jazz*) has domesticated the cusp. And *Beloved* remains a story not to pass on, the beloved ghost laid to rest. In spite of the Latin American Indian (what a multiple errant history in that naming) topos of claiming secrecy in the face of the conquistador, I remain somewhat persuaded by Doris Sommers's placing of the theme of secrecy in Morrison and Menchú together (Doris Sommers, "No Secrets," in Georg M. Gugelberger, ed., *The Real Thing: Testimonial Discourse and Latin America* [Durham: Duke Univ. Press, 1996], pp. 130–157).

99 The fact that the word was also used as a form of address for a well-born woman ("lady") complicates matters.

100 It should be remembered that this account does not exhaust her many manifestations within the pantheon.

101 I have taken this question further, in an analysis of metropolitan multiculturalism, in "Devi," essay for an exhibition on the Great Goddess at the Arthur M. Sackler gallery at the Smithsonian. See "*Moving Devi*," in Vidya Dehejia, ed., *Devi: The Great Goddess*, pp. 181–200. Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institute, 1999.

102 A position against nostalgia as a basis of counterhegemonic ideological production does not endorse its negative use. Within the complexity of contemporary political economy, it would, for example, be highly questionable to urge that the current Indian working-class crime of burning brides who bring insufficient dowries and of subsequently disguising the murder as suicide is either a *use* or *abuse* of the tradition of *sati*-suicide. The most that can be claimed is that it is a displacement on a chain of semiosis with the female subject as signifier, which would lead us back into the narrative we have been unraveling. Clearly, one must work to stop the crime of bride burning *in every way*. If, however, that work is accomplished by unexamined nostalgia or its opposite, it will assist actively in the substitution of race/ethnos or sheer genitalism as a signifier in the place of the female subject.

103 Abena Busia, "Silencing Sycorax: On African Colonial Discourse and the Unvoiced Female," *Cultural Critique* 14 (Winter 1989–90): 81–104. Leerom Medovoi et al., "Can the Subaltern Vote?" *Socialist Review* 20.3 (July-Sept. 1990): 133–149.

104 Busia, "Silencing," p. 102.

105 V. I. Lenin, *Imperialism: The Highest Stage of Capitalism: A Popular Outline* (London: Pluto Press, 1996), pp.15, 17.

PART TWO

CONTEXTS AND TRAJECTORIES