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Outlining the Global/Historical Subject

What now was this particular social problem which, through the chances of birth and existence, became so peculiarly mine? At bottom and in essence it was as old as human life. Yet in its revelation, throughout the nineteenth century, it was significantly and fatally new: the difference between men; differences in their appearance, in their physique, in their thoughts and customs; differences so great and so impelling that always from the beginning of time, they thrust themselves forward upon the consciousness of all living things. Culture among human beings came to be and had to be built upon the knowledge of these differences.

—W. E. B. DU BOIS, *DUSK OF DAWN*

Why has the productive force of the *analytics of raciality,* which Du Bois already articulated in the 1930s, been missed in both critical racial theorizing and postmodern critiques of modern thought? Though I could explore how theoretical and methodological choices—actually, the impossibility of forfeiting these choices to explore how they have become the only ones available—limit their comprehension of the political-symbolic operatives in the contemporary global configuration, I will engage what I think is the most crucial determination, that is, the assumption that the racial is a "'scientific' fabrication," a signifier of colonial always already white anxiety and economic interests, that refigures neither universality nor historicity, the descriptors the *transparency thesis* authorizes. Holding onto the promises of historicity, which Renan articulated in the late nineteenth century, the

works that compose the critical arsenal recuperate the universality of differentiation to write the "others of Europe" as always already historical subjects, and then move to capture a moment before racial subjection, where they are already historical, enjoying transparency before engulfment. While productive, this inclusive gesture has crowded the politics of recognition with numerous historical subjects parading and yelling their cultural differences. It has also shown that having a "voice," being heard as a subaltern *transparent "I,"* does not dissipate the effects of raciality.

Why? Because the crucial effect of the resolution of previous moments of the analytics of raciality, the science of man and anthropology, into the sociohistorical logic of exclusion, which writes the racial as an unbecoming (bad and dangerous) strategy of power, has been to "naturalize" racial subjection, that is, to write it as an effect of the "natural (divine) law"—namely, by placing the causes of racial subjection in that account of nature that precedes its appropriation in the various versions of the play of reason—*universal nomos, universal poesis, transcendental poesis, and productive nomos*—that is, in the theater of divine nature. For this reason, every later deployment of the tools of productive *nomos,* which address racial subjection, would rewrite racial difference as an "empirical" given, as something that needs not to be theorized, something belonging neither to the *scene of regulation* (universality) nor to the *scene of representation* (historicity), but an "individual" God-given attribute that has mistakenly (irrationally) become an operative factor in modern social configurations.

My task in this chapter is to describe how the national text recuperates the political subjects proliferating in the contemporary global configuration as specimens of *homo modernus,* an account of self-consciousness that acknowledges both historicity and globality as horizons of existence. Following Foucault's (1994) argument that the modern episteme emerged in the nineteenth century—and Hobsbawm's (1994a) account that registers the emergence of the complete outline of a modern political subject, the nation-state, in the late nineteenth century—I manufactured the national text to engage narratives of the nation as instances of the articulation of political subjects that necessarily combine strategies deployed in both fields of modern representation. That is, as a critical analytical tool, the national text rewrites national narratives as composed by the

political-symbolic arsenal deployed in later versions of the play of reason, transcendental poesis and productive *nomos.*

What my reading of statements that write two early postcolonial polities, the United States and Brazil, as modern social configurations describes is how both historic and scientific strategies institute the national subject as a modern subject. Because both globality and historicity constitute the modern political (ontoepistemological) context, historical and scientific political-symbolic strategies produce the context of the emergence of the subject. While it is a historic text, one ruled by transcendentality, I show that the national subject constitutes a specimen of *homo modernus,* fully a product of modern representation, precisely because it is an effect of the nation, the historic (interior-temporal) signifier, one that institutes it as a particular subject of transcendental poesis and of the racial, the (exterior-spatial) signifier of globality, the one that produces the subject as an effect of the tools of productive *nomos.* What my reading shows is that the racial constitutes an effective political-symbolic strategy precisely because, when deployed in historic texts, it produces a moral context in which placing both the transparent I and the affectable "other" before the horizon of death does not entail the ethical crisis to be expected in the social configurations the transparency thesis describes.

WHENCE CALIBANS?

How does the national text depart from existing critical strategies? To answer this question, I briefly return to the tale of Prospero and Caliban, where I find a prefiguring of globality, the ontological context that could emerge only when universal reason was transformed into a productive and regulative force, that is, productive *nomos.* My first move here is to recognize the kind of power reason displaces, magic, as a productive strategy. When reading *The Tempest* one cannot miss how it describes the process Foucault (1994) calls the demise of resemblance, the kind of knowledge that magic signifies, which is how Prospero's sorcery and the subject it governs belong in the New World. Back in Naples, Prospero's unbecoming power has no utility, nor does he need his subject in exile, Caliban, the unbecoming (undesirable and improper) subject, whose deformed body, affectable mind, and dangerous *place* represent conditions that not only depart from those found in Europe but also have no

significance for the exercise of Prospero's proper power at home. Nevertheless, if Caliban is nothing but a product of Prospero's magic, and if this power does not belong in Europe, one can argue that the relationship instituted in the "first encounter" on Sychorax's island, in that it produced a ruler and a ruled being, produced Prospero and Caliban as such. That is, if Caliban as a subject is a product of magic, the same productive power institutes Prospero as a master. This is not another version of Hegel's lordship and bondsman allegory, though. When Prospero is also conceived as an effect of the power of his books, not of his mind or his firearms, his proper place, his place of "origin," also becomes an effect of the magic that has instituted the political relationship between Prospero and Caliban. Put differently, I am suggesting that Prospero's particularity is also the effect of that what establishes his "difference" from Caliban, and so are his proper place and subjects. Perhaps the most crucial effect of the play is to produce Prospero's powers as signifiers of spatial distance, the ocean between Sychorax's island (America) and Naples (Europe)—and therefore Prospero's dislocation—which separates the powers that mark him as a political subject: the unbecoming power that produced him as Caliban's master and the blood relationship (his being Miranda's father) that will enable his exercise of his proper (patriarchal) power in his place of origin, the European space, through his heirs.

The postmodern or global reader may ask, What if Prospero abandons his unbecoming power and the subject it produces on Sychorax's island precisely because the spirits his magic mobilizes are indigenous to that place? Perhaps. Because Shakespeare was a very early modern writer, his plays and poems chronicle precisely the period during which the idols Bacon abjures and Don Quijote's windmills are written in the past, as belonging to the world of resemblance (Foucault 1994). Nevertheless, contra critical rewritings of reason as the force of "progress," I choose to appropriate the tale of Caliban's subjection as a metaphor that reads global subjects otherwise. Because they are products of "books," (i.e., *modern text*), which are as productive as Prospero's book, the "voices" crowding the postmodern salon at the apogee of the politics of representation can be "heard," comprehended. For they emerge in modern political grammar, in the political-symbolic moment of the nation-state, the foremost modern political subject—the juridical, economic, and moral collective that universal reason sustains—which now struggles for sovereignty in an increasingly Hobbesian global space. Throughout the twentieth century, under the rule of the principle of nationality, I contend, both former European colonial powers and the others of Europe (on the American continent, in the colonies of Asia and Africa, and in other areas never under official colonial subjection) deployed the historical signifier (the nation) and the global signifiers (the racial and the cultural) to write their particular version of the subject of transcendental poesis. Neither the citizen, the "individual," subject of the state and the juridical (universal) thing of liberal theorizing, nor the national subject, the moral (historical) thing, can describe them because the political things inhabiting the contemporary global configuration are global/historical subjects. To be sure, their political demands would not hold without the arsenal the analytics of raciality, that circumscribes the region of application of the principles, self-determination and universality, presupposed in their demands for recognition.

What the strategies of engulfment of the arsenal of raciality, the racial and the cultural, accomplish is to resolve and reconcile the *places* of deployment of Prospero's powers by writing the difference between Europe and other global regions as an effect of that which has been claimed to mark post-Enlightenment Europe's particularity to sustain the claim that its social configurations actualize a self-determined transparent (interior-temporal) I. From the initial deployment of racial difference as a social scientific signifier, it has consistently rewritten post-Enlightenment European social configurations and social subjects in transparency. On the one hand, it constructs the heirs of yesterday's natives as modern Calibans, "strangers" whose racial difference produces the affectable (unbecoming/pathological) moral configurations bringing about their subjection. On the other hand, it entails signifying strategies that engulf the globe—namely "civilization," "modernization," and "globalization"—which retain as a presupposition the science of man's writing of Africa, Asia, and Latin America as subaltern global regions. By addressing these effects of raciality simultaneously, I indicate that, rather than an effect of unbecoming (improper cultural or ideological) strategies of power the racial configures the globe as a modern signifying context, and in doing so it announces-postpones the "Other" ontological horizon globality threatens to refigure, the horizon of death. For this reason

welcoming the moral ease the sociohistorical logic of exclusion allows the critical "post" (-modern, -colonial, -Marxist, -structuralist) writer to remain fully safe in the *stage of interiority,* suspicious of scientific signification and yet reverent toward scientific claims of innocence, as the refusal to engage productivity belies, he is unable to engage globality as a modern ontoepistemological context.

What I am highlighting here is the predicament entailed by the insistence of "post" critics of modern thought that historicity constitutes the only road to emancipation. Though I have advanced this argument in the previous pages, I return to it here to indicate why, instead of embracing historicity to articulate another demand for the expansion of universality, I choose to displace both descriptors not by rejecting them but by charting their context of emergence, namely, the modern text. To situate my argument, I will engage a recent addition to the critical library to explore other effects of embracing the transparency thesis. In *Provincializing Europe,* Dipesh Chakrabarty (2000) introduces a version of historicity with which he attempts to recuperate the Indian postcolonial trajectory from what he calls the "ideology of historicism." At the core of this ideology, in which "historical time" becomes a "measure of cultural distance," is the argument that "progress or 'development,'" which started first in Europe, would, in time, necessarily reach all regions of the globe (8). This argument locates the others of Europe in the "not yet" of history, which Chakrabarty defines as the "global ideology" that facilitates European domination of the global space by telling the colonized "to wait." In postcolonial scholarship, the pervasiveness of historicism, combined with a need to engage "secular universals" determined by their commitment to social justice, prevails in accounts that treat local intellectual traditions "as truly dead, as history." What his project of "provincializing Europe" provides, he argues, is a reconceptualization of history and the political itself that captures "the experience of political modernity in a country like India" (6) because it advances a conception of the political that includes the histories of "gods and spirits," the ones that enter postmodern or modern historiography as always already outside the movement of universal (rational-scientific) history.

When attempting to recuperate these histories of "gods and spirits," Chakrabarty returns to classical historical materialism, which, stripped of its own version of the "stagiest theory of history" and

combined with Heidegger's concern with "questions of belonging and diversity," allow him to manufacture a strategy of historical analysis that will "destabilize this abstract figure of the universal human" that the ideology of historicism has inherited from the scientific construction of time (19). In Marx's account of capital, he identifies two histories: History 1, the empty history of capital, and History 2, which assumes that under the capitalist mode of production there exist "ways of being human [which] will be acted out in manners that do not lend themselves to the reproduction of the logic of capital" and allows for a "politics of human belonging and diversity" (67). Embracing "History 2," Chakrabarty recuperates Herder's *interiorized poesis,* through Heidegger's version of it, from the yoke of productive *nomos* and the disenchanted "master" and "subaltern" histories that it produces. If the reader has any doubt, I will make it explicit: we have reached a *better* history, not the one of the historians "from below," not Hegel's "true universality," but a *truly inclusive* history that, without mediation, without the assumption of universality (the universality of the productive *nomos,* that is), reconstitutes human beings as differentiated solely in terms of the "unities of multiplicity" that Herder's interiorized poesis produces. What this version of historicity produces, Chakrabarty argues, is a "pluralist history," one that includes histories in which "gods and spirits" are subjects, a history like that of the Bengali elites, for whom "Labor, as the activity of producing, is seldom a completely secular activity in India; it often entails, through rituals big and small, the invocation of the divine or superhuman presence" (72), the one that "secular histories" ignore because it is "disenchanted history, it is the idea of a godless, continuous, empty, and homogeneous time, which history shares with other social sciences and modern political philosophy as a basic building block" (75). What Chakrabarty's version of history allows, he claims, is a philosophical engagement with these "subaltern histories," "with questions of difference that are elided in dominant traditions of Marxism" (94).

With this invitation to contemplate the other ways of "being and belonging" and the histories they write, Chakrabarty fully returns to universal poesis. Never explicit, though it is suggested all along as he invokes Heidegger, Gadamer, Marx, Weber, and Nietzsche—all dissatisfied German "historicists" on their own terms, but never Leibniz or Herder—this invitation to reconsider my qualms with

historicity dissipates as the limits of his historical rewriting of the others of Europe become more evident. How? When Chakrabarty defines precisely the kind of "subaltern history" he wishes to include in the scene of representation. What "subaltern pasts" capture are the histories of "gods and spirits," which "do not belong exclusively to socially subordinate or subaltern groups, not to minority identities alone. Elite and dominant groups can also have subaltern pasts to the extent that they participate in life-worlds subordinated by the 'major' narratives of the dominant institutions" (101). How would such a "subversive" history, Chakrabarty's own version of universal poesis, look like? He answers this question in the second part of his book, where he revisits the Bengali nationalist elite texts to write an "affective" history. I will not follow him all the way there. Instead I ask why he chose the Santals' rebellious god to construct the nationalist elites' history as a "subaltern past," one that invites us to contemplate other possibilities of being human, other modes of "being in the world," and to appreciate a history that belongs to "gods and spirits."

Perhaps this is the wayward social scientist in me, but she cannot be held responsible for my inability to appreciate and celebrate better historicity. She cannot explain why I agree with Spivak that the subaltern cannot speak, that when emerging in modern representation, through whatever version of the play of reason (universal *nomos,* universal poesis, transcendental poesis, or productive *nomos*), the subaltern is always already inscribed in the larger text, the context of signification in which the others of Europe acquire the names one deploys today even in the most radical and brilliant critics of the text that delimits their place of emergence. When sublating and reducing the peasant Santals into the Bengali elites' "history," Chakrabarty rewrites "subaltern history" as a sort of transcendental history. Because, much like universality, the descriptor *historicity* is resolved in transcendentality, it institutes the others of Europe (a) as "not yet" modern, (b) as always already anthropological subjects, or (c) as subjects of "resisting" or as enchanted subjects of "singular histories" of gods and spirits. My point is that reincarnating Herder via Heidegger to write "history" against Hegel or Marx's "History 1" is a smart trick, but it is no subversive magic. I hear Prospero's laugh as Caliban now rehearses his productive power by selectively reading his books. I hear Nietzsche's madman laughing at Nietzsche's

own limited comprehension of the predicament he intuited. I find the dead subject, *homo historicus,* resuscitated in texts that aim to reenact his killing by choosing his (interior or historic) soul over his (exterior or scientific) body, his warm blood over his dead flesh.

The predicament of the postcolonial critic of modern representation resides not in that the interested disciplines—anthropology, sociology, and history—cannot forfeit productive *nomos* and will necessarily write the others of Europe as a contemporaneous *before;* it lies, instead, in an inability to fully engage their *now.* For, like the modern poet, they rewrite the scene of representation, from which they denounce "'scientific' fabrications." What this return to poesis, to a reopening of the universe of human possibilities—as Chakrabarty's own choice of literate elites indicates—assumes is no more than a conception of difference that is immediately translated back into a comprehensible grammar and lexicon, the text of interiority, which allows the forfeiting of the mediation of scientific universality. For the subject of "gods and spirits," written against or despite the subjects of productive *nomos,* remains a (modern) subject of historicity, for its "singularity" is only another example of humanity's (universal) productive force; it is a self-consciousness, a thing not determined from without, one that cannot signify the disturbing, deferring trace, as Chakrabarty hopes it will do, because it resists in "plurality and diversity," because it brings "others" into the scene of representation but never disassembles the theater it shares with the scene of (scientific) regulation. The politics of representation finds its limit in its own conditions of possibility, namely, the modern text. To embrace historical signification, to opt for writing the "subaltern past" against what is empty (chronological history and scientific signification), is but to add another version of the founding statements of modern thought, where the rewriting of the play of reason as transcendental poesis renders it evident that the transparent I, *homo historicus,* could not come into being without displacing, negating, or engulfing all that challenges its claim to self-determination, without statements that seek to comprehend anything that renders it but another mode of being human.

For this reason, because the choice between the universality of regulation and the universality of representation keeps "post" critics fully within the text they attempt to deconstruct, I have chosen to embrace this predicament. Instead of searching for other forms

of poesis to once again challenge *nomos,* I have decided to indicate how the region of subalternity, the position of those who cannot be brought into modern representation without being resolved into one of these dimensions of modern representation, has come to be delimited. Not, as said before, by identifying other moments of exclusion but by reading the texts that reproduce their exteriority, the ones that, though never fully closing the possibility that they would participate in the rituals of modern political existence, the rituals of democracy, have ensured that they will never benefit from the entitlements it presumes. Although Chakrabarty's approach does address the kind of linearity introduced by scientific rewritings of history, his writing of historicism as an ideology that produces the colonized as eternally unprepared for self-determination stops short of the radical critique of modern ontology that it promises. What I am suggesting here is that Chakrabarty, much like other "post" critics I engaged earlier, for he moves toward an interpretation of Indian nationalist elites' history in which, rather than a contradiction, he finds a rejection of what he calls a "stagiest theory of history," reproduces the very distinction between modern political subjects that informs the kind of "historicism" he denounces. Put differently, from Indian particularity he moves on to describe this particular historical subject without further investigating the ways in which that particularity need not be translated, for it makes sense only in the grammar that institutes it. In short, before Indian could become a "nonmodern" historical subject, it had to be constructed as an other of Europe, a global subaltern subject, something to which India's elites may have contributed and from which they have certainly benefited, but it was neither of their own (nor of the British imperialist) making because it was the context within which their (racial/cultural) difference could be represented.

BEFORE HISTORICITY

What I am proposing here is neither a philosophy nor a theory of the subject. My modest move is to recuperate globality as a modern ontoepistemological context. Though, as noted earlier, I acknowledge the centrality of historical signification, I am convinced that without an engagement with scientific signification our critical strategies will remain at best irrelevant and at worst will add to the political-symbolic arsenal that consistently (re)produces the others of Europe

as global subaltern subjects. To situate this critical strategy, I return to historical materialism, where instead of better historicity I find a critique of modern thought, a delineation of a social ontology that more productively challenges both the *scene of regulation* (Locke's version of universal *nomos*) and the *scene of representation* (in Herder's interiorized poesis and Hegel's transcendental poesis). Precisely because it does so by rewriting the scene of representation, historical materialism both promises to produce and avoids producing a social ontology that acknowledges that modern subjects presume both ontological contexts, namely, historicity and globality. Beginning with the "promises," I read the notion of material production as an attempt to recuperate exteriority from the entrails of transcendental poesis. Beyond the "inversion" of Hegel's dialectical account of history and the radicalizing of Adam Smith's conception of labor, the historical materialist rebuilding of the stage of interiority constitutes a powerful critique of modern thought precisely because of how it deploys scientific universality to produce a social ontology that centers *affectability*—one that addresses the relationships in which human beings engage in the (re)production of material (bodily and social) existence. What the rewriting of labor as a tool of productive *nomos* promises to fully explore but does not is the possibility that the stage of exteriority constitutes the privileged ontoepistemological moment.

Following the version of reason as productive *nomos,* the historical materialist critique of modern thought attributes the main role in the scene of engulfment to a tool of scientific reason, the laws of material production. By displacing transcendental poesis as an "ideal," "illusory" rendering of the force of history, historical materialism briefly moves self-consciousness to the stage of exteriority. At the center of this transformation is a union of nature and history through the notion of labor, which now as a concept (an abstract construct) writes human self-productivity as the universal, the objective, producer of wealth, because it is the actualization not of freedom but of necessity. Although it attacks transcendental poesis with its own tools to reveal the latter as "ideology," its task is to aid in the realization of history, serving as an instrument of the last revolutionary class. When mapping post-Enlightenment social configuration, by describing the instruments and relations of material (economic) production and the juridical (state) and cultural forms,

the conditions under which "actual," "real" man "makes history," historical materialism follows the logic of discovery to deploy strategies that produce social phenomena as the effects of exterior determinants the operations of which can be made accessible and controlled by human beings, but which are not of their own making.

In *Grundrisse,* Karl Marx ([1857–68] 1993), anticipates the procedures he deploys in *Capital* ([1867] 1977) when he attacks the method of (liberal) political economic analysis. His first move is to deploy productive *nomos* to show how and why the social is a proper object of scientific reason. "The scientific correct method," he argues, is the one that assumes that economic categories already constitute a mental processing of "the concrete," representations of the "real subject" of history, society, where "individuals" are already differentiated according to their placement in material production (101), according to their particular "stage of [historical] development." That is, he introduces an account of relationship between knowledge and the "real" that is consistent with transcendental poesis, that is, as a movement of universalization. Not surprisingly, he chooses the United States as exemplary of a capitalist social configuration where there is "indifference towards any specific kind of labor [which] presupposes a very developed totality of real kinds of labor, of which no single one is any longer predominant" (104). The capitalist mode of production, "the most developed and the most complex historic organization of production," he argues—evidently substituting "economic development" for Herder's "moral development" and hijacking the Enlightenment notion of "progress,"—results from the laws of [material] development that account for the successive emergence and obliteration of the modes of production and social conditions that characterize the Marxist version of "world history." For it is precisely because this stage of material (economic) development, industrial production, results from exterior determinants that the "categories which express its relations, the comprehension of its structure . . . also allow insights into the structure and the relations of production of all the vanished social formation out of whose ruins and elements it built itself up, whose partly still unconquered remnants are carried along with it, whose mere nuances have developed explicit significance within it" (105). That is, in classic historical materialism, the universality of differentiation is the effect not of universal poesis, as in Herder, but of productive *nomos.*

Nevertheless, while productive *nomos* constitutes the "true" productive force of history, historical materialism does not write a social ontology premised on exteriority-spatiality. In *The German Ideology,* Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels's (1947) critique of early nineteenth-century Hegelian philosophers, the rewriting of History and self-consciousness as effects of a double exteriority—that is, that of universal regulation (laws of production) and social relationships—retains self-determination as the singular attribute of the *homo historicus.* Here they perform the famous inversion in which material (as opposed to spirit's, the "idea's") production—that is, the necessity of satisfying needs rather than freedom of will—becomes a universal productive force—the producer and product, cause and effect, of human self-productivity. "The way in which men produce their means of subsistence," they argue, "depends first of all on the nature of the actual means they find in existence and have to reproduce. This mode of production must not be considered simply as being the reproduction of the physical existence of the individuals. Rather it is a definite mode of life on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with what they produce and with how they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production" (8). For Marx and Engels, these conditions are those of the interdependent men and women who relate to each other in the production of their "conditions of existence," as the agents of History. With this statement they place relationships at the basis of history and refashion self-consciousness as a thing of "necessity," which is, as seen in Part 1, an attribute of that which is apprehended by the tools of the *nomos.* That is, it is "necessity," a mode of the regulating reason, that produces historical consciousness, the moral collectivities, which in Herder's version of universal poesis and in Hegel's transcendental poesis are guided by Spirit, the universal subject of poesis. "The production of ideas, of conceptions, of consciousness," they argue, "is at first directly interwoven with the material activity and the material intercourse of men, the language of real life. . . . The same applies to mental production as expressed in the language of the politics, laws, morality, religion, metaphysics of a people. Men are the producers of their conceptions, ideas, etc—real, active men, *as they are conditioned by a definite development of their productive forces and*

of the intercourse corresponding to these, up to its furthest form" (18, my emphasis). Nevertheless, even as it writes self-consciousness as an effect of the laws of history, as what expresses the "actual," conditions under which "individuals," as members of an economic ensemble (a class) exist, historical materialism retains the construction of exteriority introduced in the account of universal *nomos,* but now it both regulates and produces human beings' (re)production of their "material"/"actual" (physical reproduction and economic production, i.e., bodily and social) "conditions of existence" and, consequently, human consciousness.

What does not take place here is the radical gesture that would turn modern representation on its head. Historical materialism would not inaugurate a social ontology premised on globality (exteriority-spatiality), one in which the political would constitute an effect neither of (constraining) self-regulation nor of (uniting) self-representation, but of the relationships necessary for the production of conditions of existence. For Marx and Engels's text retains the transparency thesis, the ontological assumption that writes self-consciousness as a self-determined thing. In the historical materialist's version of the play of engulfment, the moment of transparency is postponed to the moment when the proletariat recognizes the "true" nature of its existence as the dominated/exploited class, when the movement of history—the play of class struggles determined by the laws of production—comes to an end. What I am suggesting is that, because historical materialism does not relinquish interiority, it rewrites self-consciousness in transparency. In other words, its limits reside precisely in that, although classical historical materialism relies on the idea of law, universal reason as a constraining force (in its scientific instantiation)—in its centering of materiality (of the laboring body [the principal instrument] and of human relationships [at once agent and effect] of production), the privileging of the "real/divided" society over the "ideal/unified" nation, as the subject of History—retains recognition as the sine qua non of proletarian emancipation.

My point is that Marx's critique of transcendental poesis retains the promise of historicity, transparency, when reinstituting its limits as it rewrites the social back into the scene of regulation. Not surprisingly, "post" critics such as Spivak and Chakrabarty, like Gramsci and others before them, have no problem embracing better historici-

its resolution of historicity into scientific universality—the transparency thesis remains the ethical presupposition, as a promise, in the statement that the laws of material production, the tool of universal reason that entails universalization of "conditions of existence," became lived "reality" only in post-Enlightenment, post–Industrial Revolution social configurations. Only then, when the "true" productive forces (social labor) of History became transparent, did "actual" human beings achieve self-determination (self-consciousness) both (a) in the Cartesian/Lockean sense, as they actually decided upon their existence and essence and the juridico-economic conditions under which they existed as a collectivity, and, (b) in the Herderian/Hegelian sense, as they recognized that it was a product of their own self-productive capacity. Hence, the limits of historicity, its spatial/temporal termination, is once again reinstated in the deployment of scientific universality, which maintains that the moment of transparency has been achieved in the social configuration where the full development of material productive forces leads to the emergence of juridical (of law and the state) and cultural forms, and of a consciousness (self-consciousness) to which the "laws of history" have become transparent to its agents. Much like transcendental poesis, classic historical materialism locates the condition for this "world-historical" event, the proletarian revolution, and the new, just, social conditions it would entail, communism—the actualization of freedom—in Europe.

Nevertheless, classical historical materialism's rewriting of history as an effect of productive *nomos* indicates that, even though ruled by the principle of transcendentality, nineteenth-century writings of man and society as objects of scientific reason harbored a productive uneasiness. In the trajectory of the historical materialist project itself, the negative effects of this uneasiness appeared in self-defeating accusations of "scientificism" (determinism and positivism), which were returned with accusations of "historicism" (idealism and humanism), while its positive, productive effects appeared in twentieth-century rewritings that engaged precisely that which in the classic formulation remained incomplete, the need to address modern representation as a political moment, which became all the more central in the latter part of the nineteenth century, when the nation, which belongs to the scene of representation, became a nec-

My interest here is in the promises this uneasiness holds, the ones that appear in the historical materialist writing of the social as a domain of operation of power, which is neither a result of instituted laws, the ones "individuals" agree to obey, nor the product of self-consciousness already-in-the-moment-of-transparency. When writing consciousness as an effect of material production, Marx and Engels did more than introduce the social as an object of investigation, as teachers of sociology prefer to emphasize. More important, in the centering of "actual conditions," symbolic and actual relationships, the political moment opened up the possibility of a critical analysis of the social in which spatiality—where "being and meaning" emerge in exteriority-affectability—became the privileged moment of signification. Though, as noted before, it resolved this exterior-spatial in modern representation as an effect of universal (productive) *nomos,* by positing (social) relationships as also exterior producers of consciousness, it opened up the possibility that had been kept at bay as long as self-consciousness was not appropriated in the mode of signification ruled by exteriority, the field of science. By insisting that this is only a possibility, I acknowledge that the historical materialist critique remained fully within modern representation, for it ultimately reinstituted self-determination, the attribute of interior things, even though it came into being only after the dissipation of conditions of material production and the full realization (actualization) of the productive laws governing it. In Marx's account, affectability was once again resolved not through "partial" violence—displacement, negation, or engulfment of exteriority—but in a radical signifying gesture, an act of "total violence," the realization of the principle of death, which erased it as a possible ontological horizon, a mode of existence, as it could appear only in an account of History as an eschatology (Foucault 1994).

For this reason, because it takes exteriority as the starting point of an account that locates the moment of transparency after the destruction of the Stage of Life, while holding onto the promises of historicity that it extends beyond its "End"—where it points to what Jacques Derrida (1994) calls a hauntology—classic historical materialism peers into the theater of globality, the "Other" ontological context announced by exteriority, just to immediately enclose it between the a priori Law of Material Production (the necessity that moves History) and the a posteriori Life of Freedom (the social conditions

emerging "after" history, i.e., communism). And yet, precisely because in doing so classic historical materialism offers exteriority as a powerful point of departure for the critique of modern representation, it charts a terrain for a critical analysis of the social itself, which neither presumes nor immediately returns to the mapping of modern social conditions as a territory constituted solely by representations ruled by the principle of transcendentality. My point is that, as classic historical materialism itself has become another producer of accounts of the self-consciousness that refuse to presuppose transparency, it also exemplifies the cruciality of an engagement with scientific signification, which has from its very moment of emergence, as Marx and Engels's revolutionary desire indicates, been involved in the symbolic mapping of the social configurations they investigated. In the following, I pursue the promises of classic historical materialism to propose a critical strategy of social analyses, a remapping of the modern social configuration, which displaces both the transparency thesis and the "ideological" argument that prevail in "post" critiques of modern thought, in critical racial theorizing, and in critical analyses of the nation.

AN OUTLINE OF THE GLOBAL/HISTORICAL CONSCIOUSNESS

With the critical device *national text* I describe narratives of the nation as political-symbolic contexts that refigure both globality and historicity as ontological contexts. Precisely because it takes scientific signification seriously and reads exteriority as a tool and an effect of modern signification, unlike the ideological argument, the national text guides a critique of modern representation that does not crumble before the critical task. Neither reflexively embracing historicity nor presuming an untapped reservoir of "truth," of "reality," for it assumes that the latter can be sifted with "truly universal," scientific or historic gestures, the national text, avoids the deadlock of postmodern historicity, which either presupposes or produces transparent (ethical) collectivities. Not, as noted before, by seeking outside modern representation that not-yet-tapped reservoir of "innocence," but by reading it against the grain; that is, much like Foucault, I read the desire for "discovery" as an instance of the production of modern political-symbolic strategies, one that explores the "Other" possible ontological context, the Global, as the

privileged epistemological context for advancing a critique of modern representation, which is also a modern contra-ontology.

My chosen examples here are precisely the postcolonial nationalist statements that could not deploy "gods and spirits" to write the "singular" ways in which they are constituted as modern political subjects, as nation-states, as particular versions of the *homo historicus,* the transparent I. In my description of transcendental poesis, I indicate how, when Hegel refashioned the universal *nomos* and universal poesis, he identified the state and the nation as, respectively, the formal and substantive actualizations of the transcendental subject in the moment of the people or the nation. Precisely this version of the nation was consolidated in the last quarter of the nineteenth century. My argument here is that, though productive and consistent with the ontological privileging of interiority, Hegel's resolution has not been sufficient. For, as Arendt's (1979) analysis of imperialism and Hobsbawm's (1994a) history of the long nineteenth century suggest, the late nineteenth century saw the emergence of two distinct signifiers of human difference. In the period between 1875 and the 1930s, while the nation guided the reconfiguring of European borders, the racial would reorganize the global space. More important, the nation as a signifier of historicity would become a political signifier, for becoming a nationality, a transparent (interior-temporal) I would constitute a criterion for writing a collectivity as a modern political subject.[2] Following the prevailing tendency to write the racial as an unbecoming strategy of power, critical analyses of the nation (and nationalism) usually address its role as a political category that operates as a negative principle in narratives of the nation.

Most accounts of the "origin" of modern nation-states focus primarily on specifically European historical processes that culminated with the constitution of the territorial, economic, and political entities the world came to know in the nineteenth century (Tilly 1975). Nevertheless, even as they focus on "nationalism," the force producing the idea of the nation as an "objective entity," as the ideological strategy and write the nation as an "imagined community" or a "myth," critical analysts of the nation agree that by the end of the last century, producing a people as a national subject, as the product and agent of the temporal trajectory that actualizes its "intrinsic difference"—not as an isolated moral collective but as always already a moment, a particular actualization, of the transcendental I—would become central for defining their position in the global space. Under these conditions, the nation constituted a fundamental dimension of the modern political subject, because the construction of a collectivity as an interior-temporal thing, a transparent I, was central to support claims of sovereignty (self-determination), the juridical and military control of a given territory, and the right and ability to explore its economic resources, as well as the dominion of distinct peoples inhabiting the same territory and the colonial appropriation of other regions of the global space (Anderson 1983; Gellner 1983; Hobsbawm 1994b).

In *Imagined Communities,* Benedict Anderson (1983) describes the material (economic) and cultural conditions of emergence of these "imagined communities" of power, these "kingdoms of History." He defines the nation as a "cultural artifact" resulting from cultural transformations, such as European expansion, reformation, the Enlightenment, and the French Revolution, which entailed the demise of "religious community" and material transformations, such as "print capitalism," which enabled the emergence of a conception of "homogeneous, empty time." Though he provides an account of the emergence of the nation that more closely captures how it would constitute a privileged modern political category, as he identifies precisely the attributes of the nation spelled out in Hegel's and Renan's statements, the limits of Anderson's perspective become apparent when he turns to explain the emergence of national claims outside the European space. For instance, he argues that the post–Second World War "wave of nationalism" resulted from the "diffusion of the cultural and material conditions [of Europe] necessary for the emergence of this new form of community," which reflects the "achievements of industrial capitalism" that European imperialism had deployed in Africa and Asia. While this cannot be denied, Anderson's account fails to address the epistemological conditions under which the "diffusion" of European cultural (and material) constructs takes place, how the political-symbolic mapping of the global space determined the local appropriation of these "imports."[3] Much of the problem in comprehending earlier and later postcolonial national narratives derives, I think, from the pervasiveness of the sociohistorical logic of exclusion. Following the prevailing ethical rejection of the racial, critical analysts of the nation argue that the

claim for "racial commonality" is a negative, an added ideological strategy to institute national homogeneity, which as noted before has resulted in its being considered a political category only when it operates as an exclusionary strategy.[4]

My reading of the U.S. American and the Brazilian national texts departs from this view, for I engage in a charting of the effects of the deployment of raciality in statements that write these nations' particularity. My objective is to show how the particular appropriations of the signifying strategies produced by the science of man, anthropology, and race relations have enabled the writing of these American subjects within the moment of transparency. With this, I introduce a critical strategy of social analysis that privileges the political-symbolic moment of modern social configurations. Instead of historicity, I read statements that write national subjects as political (historic) texts that include signifiers of historicity and globality. I hope to indicate how the historical subject is always already a racial "I"; it emerges situated, always already produced in relation to an "other," a racial "other," for both are produced in signifying contexts constituted by historic and scientific strategies. In other words, I read the national subject, the particular subject of transcendental poesis, as also a product of the analytics of raciality.

The national text captures a full-fashioned *homo modernus,* a specimen of the *homo historicus* that stands, as another specimen of the *homo scientificus,* before the *affectable I*'s the racial institutes—that is, a global/historical subject. That is, the national text addresses narratives of the nation as an instance of productive violent political statements that reproduce the "others of Europe" as affectable consciousness (fully submitted to the tools of *nomos*) in order to re-place the national (historical) subject in transparency. My reading shows how, when deployed in these historical texts, the arsenal of raciality authorizes projects of social (re)configuration as it prescribes how its inhabitants participate in the nation's present and how they will perform in its future without ever accounting for their being placed in its past; it shows how the analytics of raciality institutes historical subjects; how it delimits the teleology, the particular version of transcendental poesis; how its political-symbolic strategies produce the national subject as a specimen of the *homo modernus,* that is, as a global/historical subject.

9

The Spirit of Liberalism

To me most certainly the United States did not seem a foreign country.
was simply English with a difference.

—JOHN G. BROOKS, *AS THE OTHERS SEE*

Notwithstanding the U.S. liberal-capitalist configuration, at the tu
of the twentieth century Europeans still questioned whether th
North American cousins were building a "modern civilizatio
Most doubted that its "progress," economic prosperity, and dem
racy actualized a particular historical collective, that the people
the United States constituted a "spiritual individuality," that is,
nation. In Brander Mathews's (1906) reply to an unnamed Fren
journalist, he indicates that such doubting could not be taken light
what Europeans call a "money-making" attitude behind U.S. ec
nomic prosperity, he says, was inherited from Pilgrim settlers wh
courage and aggressiveness were pivotal for the conquest of the w
American land. Many late nineteenth-century commentaries on
"American civilization" also noted the harmful effects of its juri
cal configuration, how "unlimited equality" affected the emergi
American "spirit," how it would prevent the development of disti
moral and aesthetic principles. Linking political equality and the
cline of "civilization" in this way was not new. Earlier in the ninetee
century, Tocqueville (1969) had observed that, of the principles U
Americans had inherited from their European ancestors, democr