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Unrealized promises: the subject of postcolonial discourse and the new international division of labor

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Chapter Four

The Subject Incorporate:
Scholarly Invocations and the Production of Value

By turning his money into commodities which serve as the building materials for a new product ..., by incorporating living labour into their lifeless objectivity, the capitalist simultaneously transforms value, i.e. past labour in its objectified and lifeless form, into capital, value which can perform its own valorization process, an animated monster which begins to “work”, “as if its body were by love possessed”.

Karl Marx 1990 [1873]: 302

If introjection, as Abraham and Torok conceive it, is part of the stuff of everyday, a critical agency would arise only when introjection did not take place: that is, when incorporation, leading to a haunting, would exist in its place.

Ranjana Khanna 2003: 262

Starting with its title, *In My Father's House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture* (1992), by British-Ghanaian philosopher at Princeton, Anthony Appiah, is framed as a story. While the preface is largely an account of Appiah's personal history, his childhood, his family trajectory, his beliefs and motivations, the epilogue offers a tale told from beginning to end. It accounts for an episode in Appiah's life in Ghana. It narrates the family feud over the place, manner and date of the funeral of Joe Appiah, Anthony's father. Through this narration, Appiah exposes the politics behind the family feud, which deal with typically postcolonial subject matters such as the tensions between local pre-colonial and national state authorities. But the style in which the story is told is close to that of fictional story-telling, and asks for the reader's commitment to a “suspension of disbelief.” As may be deduced from my previous chapters, this is contrary to the way in which much postcolonial criticism is written, since usually authors invest a lot of effort in subverting that suspension.

Following French philosopher Jean-Francois Lyotard (1924-1998), Appiah develops the understanding that postmodernity, while declaring the end of meta-narratives, is in itself a meta-narrative account (227). Since “[t]o theorize certain central features of contemporary culture as *post* anything, is, of course, inevitably to invoke a narrative,” postcolonial theory is implied in Appiah's

denunciation as well (227, emphasis in text). Since narrative cannot be avoided, Appiah does not attempt to do so. Rather than calling attention to the constructed character of his own discourse through self-referential rhetorical strategies, he tells a story. His critique thrives not on the disruption, but on the exacerbation of precisely those narrative qualities that are inescapable in any textual account. Note the tone as well as the creation of diegetic spaces and atmosphere that Appiah calls forth:

Home is a house my parents built just before independence. Downstairs, two doors come off the front veranda; one to the house, one to my father's legal office. As children, we would go to school in the mornings past the many people who gathered from early morning on that veranda to see him. Many of them were very poor and they brought chickens ... (1992: 309)

Here, Appiah foregrounds his own intervention as storyteller and, consequently, the arbitrariness of his position. He does so explicitly when he speculates on how his so-called Western reader might perceive the world he narrates as “an almost fairytale world of witchcraft and wicked aunts and wise old women and men” (295). Hence, it could be said that Appiah is concerned with the critique of metanarrative that he describes as characteristic of postmodernity, but his way of going about it varies significantly from the ways in which authors that I have explored earlier, such as Spivak, Bhabha or even Canclini go about it.²⁷³

In the first two chapters, I have associated the metonymic tendency of postcolonial discourses with the disruption of teleology at the level of the smallest units of discourse. Take, for example, Homi Bhabha's break away from the logical conventions of grammar in “Democracy De-realized.” The scale at which Appiah works towards making his writing self-reflexive is considerably larger. He does not play with the conventions of language, but with those of literature. In other words, he does not comment on the arbitrariness of signs, nor on their teleological subsequence, but accepts these conventions in order to be able to comment on something else. Nonetheless, his foregrounding of the literary qualities of his narration reminds the reader of the conventional basis on which the discourse as a whole is constructed. This focus leads Appiah to

²⁷³ Much like Canclini, Appiah does not enact a performative demonstration of his incidence in the text as its enunciating principle, but situates himself in relation to the historical specificity from which he narrates. Yet, unlike Canclini, he does not use his social agency as a writer to enact self-reflexivity, but constructs himself into the text at the level of explicit discourse. Where Canclini's self-emplacement is implicit, performative and geo-economic, Appiah's is explicit, discursive and autobiographical. He writes, for example: “It became clear in the seventies, and increasingly in the eighties, that organisations in Kumasi like the Methodist church (to which my father belonged) and smaller churches (such as my mother's) were becoming more and more central in organising ...” (274)

open up the possibility of exploiting a performative recourse that is only available when the author reflects critically on large scale narrative conventions, rather than those of the letter in the strict sense. One such convention is the employment of citation. Appiah suggests the use of quotations as a way in which to democratize access to the position of enunciation and thus put to practice what he preaches. Yet, that suggestion is implicit and only timidly brought about by himself. I take the possibility he opens up and seek to push it further. Towards that end, I benefit from the work of Ranjana Khanna.

In *Dark Continents* (2003), Khanna elaborates on the critical agency that is traditionally associated with melancholia in Freudian psychoanalysis. In contrast to mourning, which implies the assimilation of the lost object, in melancholia “the lost object is swallowed whole” (2003: 22).²⁷⁴ Hence, explains Khanna,

the subject is effectively stuck with the lost object, and therefore begins criticizing it, even though the subject *cannot recognize* and *does not know* what it is he or she criticizes. This means that the subject criticizes him or herself for attributes one would associate more readily with the lost object. While melancholia is paralyzing in Freud’s terms, the inassimilable paradoxically becomes the site of what Freud calls “critical agency.” (22, emphases in text)

In her project of reclaiming this critical potential, Khanna clarifies that, unlike Freud, who “would eventually transfer the critical agency found in melancholia into the normalizing function of the superego,” she “would salvage it, putting the melancholic’s manic critical agency into the unworking of conformity, and into the critique of the status quo” (2003: 23).

Also unlike Freud, Khanna distinguishes incorporation from introjection, borrowing for this purpose from the work of French-Hungarian psychoanalysts Nicolas Abraham and Maria Torok.²⁷⁵ Khanna observes that “[i]ntrojection refers to the full psychical assimilation of a lost object or abstraction”; hence, it implies a sublimating process and is in this sense “rather like Freud’s mourning” (23). Conversely, “[i]ncorporation, like the swallowing whole described above, can be the cause of the breakdown of signification.” This breakdown “blocks assimilation” and so

²⁷⁴ Following Freud’s discussion on narcissism, Khanna employs metaphors of orality when distinguishing mourning and melancholia.

²⁷⁵ They, in turn, borrow from Hungarian psychoanalyst Sándor Ferenczi (1873-1933). In more general terms, Khanna’s concept of colonial melancholy is adapted from the work of the French founder of the Algiers School of psychiatry, Antoine Porot.

incorporation is a term that “refers to unsuccessful mourning.” In incorporation one treasures rather than digests “the inaccessible remainder” that is “the kernel of melancholia” (24).²⁷⁶

Khanna explains that the block brought about by incorporation “can be carried through generations as a phantom that haunts speech ... For Abraham and Torok the work of psychoanalysis is to identify the phantom, and bring it back into unhindered signification through assimilation” (24). Yet, for the purpose of *social* analysis, Khanna argues, the emphasis on healing proves inadequate. Furthermore,

the purported “success” of the work of mourning is tenuous because there will always be some remainder of the lost object. In fact, to do away with this remainder would be an impossible and unethical assimilation of otherness, a denial of loss and of an engagement with the damage brought about by that loss. (24)

The recognition of such a remainder and the exploration of its critical potential as it presents itself through the process of incorporation is one of the central propositions of *Dark Continents*.

My usage of Khanna’s concept of incorporation in this chapter responds to the wish to investigate the possible manifestation of the subject of postcolonial discourse as one such remainder, incorporated in texts of postcolonial theory that circulate in First-World academic circles, and/or as the subject that undergoes that process of incorporation in relating to that remainder. Hence, in my discussion of the different textual subject positions at stake in theoretical texts such as Appiah’s, I want to take Khanna’s distinction between introjection and incorporation in the most literal way.

Consider the epigraphs above as an example. Please note how, in the case of Khanna’s fragment, the reference to Abraham and Torok is “digested” in the sense that she uses her own words to describe their proposals. The larger discourse of psychoanalysis that is brought forth by the epigraph, while substantiated by the work of a number of authors besides the two French-Hungarian ones, is wholly assimilated, functioning as either given concepts or discursive preconditions. Thus, for example, the use of the concept of “critical agency” in Freud’s sense, or the passage’s implicit reliance on the work of Sándor Ferenczi. In contrast, in the epigraph where I quote Karl Marx, the relationship between Marx’s text and his direct quotation of the German writer

²⁷⁶ The breakdown in signification caused by incorporation “manifests itself linguistically in terms of silence and demetaphorization” (Khanna 2003: 24). In this respect, Khanna’s salvaging of the critical potential of demetaphorization in principle opposes my own arguments on metaphor and metonymy in the first two chapters of this study. The tension between Khanna’s point of departure and my own will be addressed in the following chapter.

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) can be conceived as what Khanna terms an incorporation, a “swallowing whole.” The words from Goethe’s *Faust* find their articulating principle in a distinct source that is external to Marx’s *Capital*. This allows them to operate as a site of resistance within *Capital* itself. Here, I do not use the term “resistance” in an explicitly political nor strictly ideological sense, but simply to name the presence of a different logic that, articulated from an external point of cohesion, defies complete assimilation at the *material* level by the main authorial voice of *Capital*.

In his analysis of Marx’s quotation of Goethe, Thomas Kemple is impressed by how Goethe’s words serve as a “moment of interruption” in Marx’s own thought (1995: 31). In that way, Kemple implicitly points to the intervention of the remainder of the other that the quote entails. In his comparative analysis of the scene from *Faust* and the part of *Capital* that are brought together in this passage, he concludes that in the quoted episode of the play, as in Marx’s act of quotation, “words substitute for thoughts” (40). Hence, Kemple also implicitly points to the fact that we are witnessing an *objectified* remainder of another subjectivity. Marx’s citation of Goethe is originally unreferenced; yet, as both Kemple and Michael DeGolyer, have indicated, the phrase from *Faust* would rarely escape Marx’s contemporary readers (Kemple 1995: 30; DeGolyer 1992: 109).²⁷⁷

Indeed, naming the source is not essential because the material dimension of Goethe’s *Faust* is literally incorporated into the text. The fragment of Goethe’s play in Marx’s *Capital* is physically distinguishable: it has its own material dimension and is separated from the rest of the text by quotation marks. In other words, unlike Abraham and Torok’s ideas in the epigraph taken from Khanna’s *Dark Continents*, Goethe’s ideas in Marx’s text have a corresponding *body*.²⁷⁸

In that sense, Goethe as quoted by Marx would qualify as a material remainder of a subject that is other to the text. Yet, insofar as the fragment of this extraneous body resists full assimilation to the work of the quoting author, the bodily dimension of the fragment does not negate but rather foregrounds Goethe in his capacity as author, as the abstract articulating principle of the words. In the quote from *Faust* in *Capital*, Marx functions as the incorporate subject: a subject whose subjectivity cannot be located in the words themselves, but who is nonetheless presupposed as their meta-articulating principle. Like Marx’s *surrounding* words, the words in the quote from *Faust* cohere around a presupposed autonomous subjectivity associated to the physical dimension of the

²⁷⁷ Canadian sociologist Thomas Kemple works at the University of British Columbia. DeGolyer is a political scientist at Hong Kong Baptist University.

²⁷⁸ Of course, like Khanna’s text, Marx’s also benefits from a number of other assimilated sources, yet the analysis of that continuity is not pertinent here.

letter. Insofar as they operate in this way, they can function as a site of critical agency in relation to the wider logical and discursive complex in which they are inserted.

I dedicate this chapter to an analysis of such forms of situated intertextual agency.²⁷⁹ The analysis will allow me to trace the place of the subject of postcolonial discourse in relation to the forms of citation that characterize (postcolonial) academic writing. As Mieke Bal argues in *Quoting Caravaggio: Contemporary Art, Preposterous History*: “[t]he subject whose ‘intention’ is involved” in practices such as painting, visual analysis or, what concerns me here, academic writing, inevitably “steps into a citational practice that is already whirling around” (1999:14). Because, as Bal explains with the aid of Derrida and philosopher Judith Butler, “performative utterances cannot succeed unless they ... quote ... an already coded, iterable utterance,” every utterance denotes the subject’s insertion in a historically specific tradition. Moreover, “the relation with what is quoted is established from the vantage point of the quoting text that is situated in the present” (14). Whether “the quoted artifact is enshrined or abducted, dispersed or unreflexively absorbed,” Bal continues, the analyst’s act of quotation functions as “proof of the presence of the cultural position of the analyst,” denoting the weight of “her own legacy of discursive precedents” in the analysis (15).

In those ways, quotation denotes a writer’s situatedness as well as the political character of his or her relationship with the quoted material, taking politics here as the choice to actualize a specific historical claim. As Michael Taussig proposes, calling forth (un)acknowledged histories often entails “a political fight over the past and its meanings” (2002: 327).²⁸⁰ By focusing on the particular forms and contents of quotation in postcolonial theory, I seek to understand how and to what effect concrete historical subjects are included or excluded as authorized subjects of enunciation. Hence, in this chapter I not only explore textual subject positions in writings of postcolonial theory as sites of critical agency, but am particularly concerned with the ways in which those positions are selectively made available to or foreclosed from specific subjects in the historical world. In this way, although quotations are much more than invocations of authority, my focus is on their role as such. Since etymologically “legitimate” is a word that “expresses status which has been conferred or ratified by some authority” I refer to socially valued positions of

²⁷⁹ “The term *intertextuality* was introduced by the Soviet philosopher of language Mikhail Bakhtin. It refers to the ready-made quality of ... linguistic ... signs, which a writer ... finds available in the earlier texts that a culture has produced” (Bal 1999: 8, emphasis in text). Yet, “the concept of intertextuality as deployed more recently implies ... that ... the sign borrowed, because it is a sign, inevitably comes with a meaning. Not that [the person who borrows the sign] necessarily endorses that meaning, but she or he will have to deal with it: to reject or reverse it, ironize it, or simply, often unawares, insert it into the new context.” (Bal 1999: 9)

²⁸⁰ The comment by Australian anthropologist at Columbia University, Michael Taussig here regards the “dialectical image” discussed by Walter Benjamin.

enunciation, the access to which is restricted, by means of that adjective (*Oxford English Dictionary – OED*).

Furthermore, I analyze not only literal quotations as possible sites of critical agency, but also more generally the conventions of referencing in academic writing. As the quotes from both Khanna and Marx in the epigraphs illustrate, incorporation implies a displacement between “spirit,” or, more appropriately, the articulating principle of an organic whole, on the one hand, and its material dimension, on the other. In that respect, incorporation is a process that tends to disrupt the usual distinctions between the living and the dead, animate and inanimate, subject and object. Inspired by Khanna’s idea of “haunting” and Marx’s metaphor of the “animated monster” in the epigraphs, in this chapter I approach the referencing system in academic writing as a system of *invocation*, not excluding the metaphysical associations that are attached to that term.

To conceive academic citation in that way is to understand the practice as one of the “enduring enchantments of modernity.” With that phrase, Indian postcolonial theorist at El Colegio de México, Saurabh Dube, undoes the opposition between tradition and modernity in contemporary postcolonial historiography, as well as that between “analytical categories of an academic provenance” and “the quotidian configurations of these entities, the demanding terms of everyday worlds” (2002: 744). Like Dube, I am not interested in “merely ... demystifying ... the enchantments of modernity” because “[t]hese enchantments constitute the formative entities and key coordinates of our worlds.” Therefore, it is crucial to “not simply cast these [enchantments] as ideological aberrations, and mistaken practices,” but rather to recognize “their dense ontological dimensions, which simultaneously name and work on the world” (751). Hence, my critique of the academic referencing system as legitimated by the act of invocation operates through the same conventions that are the object of my analysis. Yet, in attempting to dismantle them, I aim to explore more ideologically congruent ways in which to approach their continued operation.

Towards this end, the potential that Khanna associates with incorporation becomes crucial. The critical agency that, according to Khanna, is present in sites of incorporation presupposes a subject. Here the indeterminacy between the living and the dead, the animate and the inanimate, the subject and the object comes into play. Since I center my attention on quotations, the particular form of the subject-object indeterminacy that I am concerned with is the distinction between actual human individuals and textual subject positions.

In a helpful essay in her book *On Meaning Making*, Mieke Bal reconfigures the notion of trace through a re-reading of the work of French linguist Émile Benveniste (1902-1976). She argues

that “the trace, as symptom or index, relates to its co-text by contiguity” (1994: 105). In this way, Bal explains, the trace does not point to “the outcome of an original activity, but to the form of a structure” that emerges as “the *you* that constitutes the *I*, while the *I* presupposes an even unformulated *you*” (105, emphases in text). Once having established that structural basis of the text, Bal proposes to map out the different textual subject positions, such as “narrating voice/addressee,” focalizer/interpreter,” “according to their semiotic activities” (1994: 106). She adds:

These positions, and those of represented subjects/diegetic agents being plural by definition, the semantic network of such positions can be mapped for each discursive unit, thus providing the *traces* of subjectivity in the sense of *projection*. It is only at this point that the relations between this discursive subjectivity which is basically semantic, and the social, ultimately individual subjects of writer and readers and their subjecting environment can be rethought as the pragmatic dimension of the semiotic process. (106, emphases in text)

In this way, Bal offers the tools not only to distinguish the textual subject from the human individual when we engage in semiotic analyses, but also to identify how their customary conflation determines our reading of texts.

I advocate Bal’s approach for a situated analysis of subject positions within postcolonial discourses. However, since the texts I am interested in here are written within the conventions of theory and scholarly criticism, the subject positions that they map-out are not necessarily the same as those that are pertinent for the narratological analysis of literature or art, such as those to which Bal refers. While some of those subject positions may play a role in theoretical texts parallel to their role in fiction, others may be of less importance, while altogether new subject positions may emerge within the conventions of theory.

However, since I am not interested in textual subject positions per se, but only with respect to the ways in which they are differently legitimated across the new international division of labor (NIDL), I introduce the notion of “cultural capital,” the term coined by Pierre Bourdieu.²⁸¹ In examining the academic system of referencing or invocation I pay particular attention to how it functions as a circuit of value production in the cultural domain. I focus on how the restricted access to textual subject positions mediates that process and bring about the exploration through a close-reading of Appiah’s book.

²⁸¹ Concerning the New International Division of Labor see the Introduction to this study.

In My Father's House operates within the presupposition that textual subject positions (the place of enunciation in particular) are made available only to privileged subjects in the extra-textual, geo-political world. Appiah's methodology opens up what I call a circumscribed redistribution of cultural capital across the NIDL. For that reason, I take *In My Father's House* not only as my central object of analysis, but also as a critical source, allowing its conceptualization of the relationship between textual and social subjects to inform my own.

The Subject Position as Cultural Capital

In the previous chapter, I followed Spivak to argue that the self-reflexive act by which the subject is constituted as such is necessarily situated. As she argues, Western philosophers have failed to appreciate the mediation of cultural specificity in the ontological act (1993a). Yet the fact stands that self-reflexivity is still the decisive element in the constitution of the subject. This is visibly the case when one is concerned with *textual* subject positions, as I am in this chapter. Since the subject's historical situatedness is not intrinsic to a text as a text, the purely formal aspect of self-reflexivity becomes more clearly distinguishable.

That self-reflexive element may be spotted when a textual subject produces the effect that is described by Slavoj Žižek:

[T]here is no positive substantial determination of man: man is the animal which recognizes itself as man, what makes him human is this formal gesture of recognition as such, not the recognized content. Man is a lack which, in order to fill itself in, recognizes itself as something. (2006a: 44)²⁸²

At the textual level, represented subjects may be present exclusively as "recognized content." In principle, only the author can be aligned with the subject. Extrapolating Žižek's definition of "man" to textuality suggests the author is aligned, not with the signifier, nor with the signified, but with the formal gesture by which the chain of signifiers, in order to "fill itself in," recognizes itself as "something." Hence, drawing on another book by Žižek, let me conceive this textual subject as an

²⁸² See my general Introduction (esp. fn. 44) for a contextualization of this quote and Žižek's use of "man."

externality that emulates self-reflexive thought without having the ontological status of thought (1989: 19).²⁸³

Two extra-textual elements also participate in stressing that position as one of self-reflexivity. The first is that the author is the conflation in reception of the text's articulating principle with an actual ontological subject. The second element concerns the conventions of scholarly criticism. Within those conventions, a third subject position – besides those of the author and the represented subjects – arises. I am referring to citations that invoke other authors who function as sources of intellectual authority.²⁸⁴ This third position emerges at the conjunction of the textual and conventional specificity of academic writing. The cited author – particularly if just named rather than quoted – does not actually function as a structuring principle in the text that draws from his authority; yet, he is called forth in that capacity. Considering the etymological root of “invoke” as “to call upon, esp. as a witness or for aid,” we can say that the cited author functions as an invoked rather than a represented subject (*OED*). Furthermore, his distinct position is signaled by citational norms that distinguish him from represented subjects. By convention as well as common assumption, he is granted a position that is equivalent to, but once removed from, the citing author herself.

To address the connections between the three textual positions that I have distinguished – the author, the represented other and the invoked other – with the mechanisms of legitimation in which they are inscribed, I turn to the question of cultural capital. I use the adjective “cultural” in its restricted sense as “of or relating to intellectual and artistic pursuits” (*OED*). In the full compound use of the term, I also understand “cultural” in its specification as: “of, belonging or relating to the culture of a particular society, people or period” (*OED*).²⁸⁵ In this sense, my usage of the adjective is more evaluative than descriptive and allows me to approach that understanding of the cultural not only as an “ideological aberration,” but also as one that nonetheless “work[s] on the world” (Dube

²⁸³ Here I draw on Žižek's conception of the “real abstraction.” As explained in Chapter One, he proposes that it may be understood as “the form of thought external to the thought itself – in short, some Other Scene external to the thought whereby the form of the thought is articulated in advance.” (1989: 19)

²⁸⁴ As I have suggested, I concentrate on quotation as a form of invoking intellectual authority and do not delve into its function as a way in which to illustrate content or demonstrate that the issue is discussed by others as well, for example. The reason for this is that I am not presently interested in analyzing quotation as a cultural practice and exploring its multiple possibilities, but rather on how quotation participates in the production of academic value and what the implications of this are in terms of the West vs. Other inequality that concerns postcolonialism. For a more rounded approach to quotation see Bal 1999, esp. 1-25 (and 1991, esp. 27).

²⁸⁵ This is contrary to how I use the word throughout the rest of this study, outside of its combination with “capital” (as in “cultural analysis”). Nonetheless, here I use a definition that only refers to a restricted and hierarchical understanding of culture because my interest is to focus on the mechanisms of legitimation that distinguish such an understanding of it from culture in the more extensive sense.

2002: 751).²⁸⁶ The phrase's second term, "capital" is "value which, through its circulation, generates more value" (Žižek 2006a: 59).²⁸⁷ Thus, I take "cultural capital" to be the intellectual and artistic production of a particular society, people or period, which, through its circulation, generates more value.²⁸⁸

Pierre Bourdieu was the first to use the term. He conceives of "cultural capital" as one of three major types of capital: cultural, economic and social. While each of those categories accounts for a set of resources, Bourdieu also introduces the notion of "symbolic capital," which refers to a dimension of any of the three sets. That other dimension is the socially legitimized representational value of material resources. Since the conditions of transmission and acquisition of cultural capital are more disguised than those of other forms of capital, cultural capital is particularly "predisposed to function as symbolic capital" (1986: 245). In other words, it is most likely to "be unrecognized as capital and recognized as legitimate competence, as authority" (245). Endowing its possessors with distinction, cultural capital thrives on its existence as a scarce value.²⁸⁹

Bourdieu subdivides cultural capital into three different kinds: embodied, objectified and institutionalized. On cultural capital in its "embodied state," Bourdieu comments:

Most properties of cultural capital can be deduced from the fact that, in its fundamental state, it is linked to the body and presupposes embodiment. The accumulation of cultural capital in the embodied state, i.e., in the form of what is called culture, cultivation, *Bildung*, presupposes a process of em-bodiment, incorporation, which, insofar as it implies a labor of inculcation and assimilation, costs time, time which must be invested personally by the investor. Like the acquisition of a muscular physique or a suntan, it cannot be done at second hand. (224)

Bourdieu emphasizes that, since embodied capital is inherited from the family from early childhood, and moreover depends on the cultural capital already held by that family, it cannot be transmitted

²⁸⁶ See Appiah 1992: 32, where he explores the relationship between the two uses of "culture" as a descriptive and as an evaluative category.

²⁸⁷ Cf. Karl Marx (1952 [1873]: 71): "The value originally advanced, therefore, not only remains intact while in circulation, but adds to itself a surplus value or expands itself. It is this movement that converts it into capital."

²⁸⁸ In my own definition, I have paraphrased the *OED*, but have changed "pursuits" for "production" because the first implies intentionality and I am interested, rather, in addressing artistic and intellectual material products.

²⁸⁹ Bourdieu clarifies that symbolic capital is "capital – in whatever form – insofar as it is represented, i.e. apprehended symbolically, in a relationship of knowledge or, more precisely, of misrecognition and cognition." It "presupposes the intervention of the habitus." The habitus is the introjection of objective social structure into a personal set of cognitive and somatic dispositions. In other words, the habitus may be understood as a "socially constituted cognitive capacity" (255).

instantaneously (244-246). Furthermore, “[i]t cannot be accumulated beyond the appropriating capacities of an individual agent; it declines and dies with its bearer” (245). Hence,

[i]t follows that the use or exploitation of cultural capital presents particular problems for the holders of economic or political capital ... How can this capital, so closely linked to the person, be bought without buying the person and so losing the very effect of legitimation which presupposes the dissimulation of dependence? (245)

Bourdieu’s answer to this question is that the owners of the means of production may acquire the symbolic distinction associated with cultural capital by acquiring and consuming, either “in person or by proxy” (i.e. by hiring possessors of embodied cultural capital), cultural capital in its objectified and institutionalized forms (247).

In its objectified state, cultural capital

has a number of properties which are defined only in relationship with cultural capital in its embodied form. The cultural capital objectified in material objects and media, such as writings, paintings, monuments, instruments, etc., is transmittable in its materiality. (246)

Bourdieu adds that objectified cultural capital “presents itself with all the appearances of an autonomous, coherent universe which, although the product of historical action has its own laws, transcending individual wills” (247). Yet, he continues, “it should not be forgotten that it exists as symbolically and materially active, insofar as it is appropriated by agents and implemented and invested as a weapon at stake in the fields of cultural production (the artistic field, the scientific field, etc.)” (247).

Finally, the institutionalized state is “the objectification of cultural capital in the form of academic qualifications” (247). In this state, cultural capital is able to overcome the biological limits of its bearer. Through a certificate or other forms of legally and conventionally guaranteed value, “social alchemy produces a form of capital which has a relative autonomy vis-à-vis its bearer and vis-à-vis the cultural capital he effectively possesses at a given moment in time. It institutes cultural capital by collective magic” (248).

As may be gathered, the embodied state is the foundational form of cultural capital. Nonetheless, through its objectification and institutionalization it circulates and becomes subject to capitalist processes of appropriation and accumulation. Although in its embodied state cultural capital is indivisible from its bearer, in its objectified state, and even more so in its institutionalized

one, its symbolic value is maintained through the simulation of a strong and continued reliance on the subject positions that granted it legitimacy and distinction to begin with.

In Bourdieu's words, "[m]ost properties of cultural capital can be deduced from the fact that, in its fundamental state, it is linked to the body and presupposes embodiment," while "[c]ultural capital, in the objectified state, has a number of properties which are defined only in relationship with ... its embodied form" (224, 246). The objectified state of cultural capital is not only teleologically derived from its embodied form, it also emulates that form by presenting "itself with all the appearances of an autonomous, coherent whole" (247). In its institutionalized state, cultural capital is one step further removed from the biological limits of the possessor of embodied capital, and is not necessarily equivalent to the cultural capital "he effectively possesses" (248). Yet, the "social alchemy" by which the institutionalized forms of cultural capital are legitimated necessarily requires a belief in that equivalence and continues to rely on the figure of cultural capital in its embodied state, of which it is a validation. Ultimately, then, both the objectified and the institutionalized forms of cultural capital rely on a metaphysical claim.

Let me translate these issues to the sphere of differentiated textual subject positions in academic writing. In principle, the place of the phenomenological subject could be associated with the embodied state of cultural capital, while the textual subject could be associated with cultural capital in its objectified state. Just as the objectified state of cultural capital relies on its presupposition of and connections with the embodied form, the figure of the author relies on the conflation of the textual and phenomenological subject. This conflation constitutes the metaphysical claim. However, the equivalent of the institutionalized state of cultural capital also plays a role. Postcolonial theory and other critical endeavors entail not just texts in the abstract but specific discursive practices that are shaped by a particular set of conventions of reading and writing. The more these conventions intervene in the constitution of a given subject position, the more it may be regarded as an institutionalized form of cultural capital, and the greater distance it will have from its foundational support in the embodied state.

When approaching academic reading and writing as a cultural practice, the distinction between the objectified and the institutionalized dimensions of the subject position as a form of cultural capital becomes blurry. While in the case of the citing as well as the cited author both dimensions intervene, the objectified state plays a greater role in the configuration of the former. In the case of the cited author, the objectified state plays a lesser role and, if he is only called forth by name, none at all.

As I have mentioned, Foucault has established that the author emerged after the Renaissance in association with the entrance of literature into circuits of property values. The author is a “rational entity,” and “this construction is assigned a ‘realistic’ dimension” by conflating the writer (a social agent) and the “author-function” in a single figure. The “author-function” is the projection into this single figure of “our way of handling texts: . . . the traits we extract as pertinent, the continuities we assign, or the exclusions we practice” (1977: 127). I propose that such a conflation is as operative for the author as it is for what I have termed the invoked, or quoted, subject. However, while in the first case a formal self-reflexivity at the textual level does exist, in the latter self-reflexivity is either only presupposed or formally present but now with a greater degree of mediation.

When the invoked author is only summoned by his or her name, the claim to that name as a legitimate source of cultural capital is not only one step further removed from its source of validation in actual thought, but also holds no intrinsic relation with that source. The link is of an exclusively conventional nature. As in the case of the institutionalized form of cultural capital, the metaphysical claim that accompanies the author that is summoned in name only institutes itself “by collective magic,” that is, without the support of any emulation of thought at the material level of the text (Bourdieu 1986: 248).²⁹⁰

Conversely, when specific words of the invoked author are *incorporated* into the quoting text, the difference between cited and citing author is one of degree, not of kind. Because the subjectivity of the quoted author is implied formally, as is the quoting author’s, yet with a greater degree of (teleological) mediation, we may think of it as what Ingrid Fugellie, calls “protosubjectivity.”²⁹¹ In her critique of the art historical tradition that views subjectivity as invented rather than reconfigured during the Renaissance, she introduces the term to acknowledge the point of view from which the historically distant subjectivity is addressed (2009: 85). I employ the term to indicate that the quote’s capacity to trigger the presupposition of a coherent and autonomous articulating principle takes place across the temporal and material deferral of the mediating text. As its prefix signals, protosubjectivity is a subjectivity that is implied as the past or as the potential of the objectified remainder that we encounter in the text.

The forgetfulness of this deferral is what allows protosubjectivities to be naturalized as subjectivities and, once summoned, to be “endorsed as the historical ‘real’” so as to “appropriate the

²⁹⁰ Here the reader’s prior knowledge of the work of the summoned author, as well as the latter’s reputation in a given tradition, plays a crucial role, yet it is not centrally pertinent for my analysis at this point.

²⁹¹ Fugellie is a Chilean psychologist and art theorist at UNAM (Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México).

cultural inheritance” associated with the (canonical) author (Bal 1999: 15). As Bal explains, this move endows the quoting work “with the glamour of historical reference.” The recourse to the reconstructed past that endows a work with value in the present thus functions “as a trigger of melancholy” (15). The melancholic relation between the author and the invoked other reaches its climax when the words from the quoted writer are “swallowed whole” and incorporated into the text as an inassimilable remainder of a presupposed subject (Khanna 2003: 22).

Because of my concern with the way in which such validation of the past operates as its retroactive constitution, I turn to Marx’s theory of value. The possibility to produce cultural and symbolic capital and in particular to have access to the privileged position of the enunciating subject is a result of the unequal distribution of resources. Here I am only concerned with the question of the differentiated *value* assigned a posteriori to otherwise equivalent positions. The reason for this focus is that it allows me to understand how Third-World symbolic production is undervalued *despite its existence*, rather than focusing exclusively on how economic conditions foreclose such symbolic production in the first place. My focus does not entail a lack of interest in economic determinants, but rather a concern with how economic conditions *retroactively* foreclose the validation of Third-World intellectual and artistic production as cultural capital.

A resonant interpretation of Marx’s theory of value is elaborated by the Japanese economist and philosopher Kōjin Karatani.²⁹² Karatani argues that, contrary to general belief, Marx was one of the first critics of teleological accounts of history: “[f]or Marx, concepts of historical ‘origins’ are shaped by a projection of the present onto the ancient” (2009: 570). His interpretation of Marx’s theory of value is based on that understanding. Žižek sums it up as follows:

value is created in the production process; however, it is created there, as it were, only potentially, since it is actualized as value only when the produced commodity is sold, and the circle M-C-M’ is thus completed. This temporal gap between the production of value and its actualization is crucial: even if value is produced in production, without the successful completion of the process of circulation, there *strictu sensu* is no value, - the temporality here is that of the *future antérieur*: value “is” not immediately, it only “will have been,” it is retroactively actualized, performatively enacted. (2006a: 52)²⁹³

²⁹² Karatani is retired from Kinki University, Osaka.

²⁹³ Žižek elaborates: “he [Marx] treats it [value] as a Kantian antinomy, that is to say, value has to originate outside circulation, in production, *and* in circulation. Post-Marx ‘Marxism’ ... lost this ‘parallax’ perspective and regressed into the unilateral elevation of production as the site of truth against the ‘illusory’ sphere of exchange and consumption.” (2006a: 50; emphasis in text)

As this account of his position shows, Karatani transcends the traditional debate on whether the genesis of value is located in the process of production or circulation. The theory enables me to focus on the moment of retroactive production of cultural capital. More importantly, it enables me to do so while still viewing that moment as part of the causality by which labor operates as the foundational source of capitalist accumulation.²⁹⁴

My focus is on the different valorization of otherwise equivalent subject positions on a *worldwide* scale, that is to say, across the NIDL. To address the circulation of cultural capital in that global dimension, I now turn to Appiah's 1992 book, *In My Father's House (IFH)*. *IFH* is critical of the alignment of the opposition between self and other with the First and Third Worlds respectively, particularly with respect to Africa (251). Appiah claims that African intellectuals are treated as, and always at risk of becoming, "Otherness machines" (253). Following a chapter-long analysis of the contemporary construction of the African as other, he proposes that that demand is as much a feature of postmodernism as it was of modernism (253-254). Referring to Fredric Jameson's analysis of postmodernism as the logic of late capitalism, Appiah mentions "the commodification of 'cultures' as a central feature" of the former (232).

Appiah explores the way in which the commodification of African art is carried out by a postmodernist art exhibition in New York. He mock-paraphrases the organizers' justification for excluding one of the most geo-economically marginal participants in the exhibition, Leela Kouakou. Kouakou is not allowed to participate in the selection of the art works for the exhibition, a right granted to all the other participants:

[T]his authentic African villager, the message is, does not know what *we*, authentic postmodernists, now know: that the first and last mistake is to judge the Other on one's own terms. And so, in the name of this, the relativist insight, we impose our judgment – that Leela Kouakou may not judge sculpture from beyond the Baule culture-zone, because he will – like all the other African "informants" we have met in the field – read them as if they were meant to meet those Baule standards. (224, emphasis in text)

Appiah demonstrates how the more privileged co-curators, including David Rockefeller, are allowed to judge the works on their own terms, which are ethnocentric by all standards.

²⁹⁴ Earlier in this chapter, I have recalled Bal's book on preposterous history because the concept enables my investigation in a similar way. As I explained in Chapter Three, the notion of preposterous history operates as a challenge to teleology which nonetheless acknowledges the impact of historical situatedness in the articulation of that challenge (1999: 104, 267).

Appiah's emphasis on the word "authentic" in the mock-paraphrase is not gratuitous. It ironically comments on the fact that the organizers' pride of their anti-essentialist worldview is accompanied by their ignorance of the constructed character of Kouakou's ethnicity. Like so many other contemporary African "tribal" identities, the Baule one is the product of "colonial and postcolonial articulations" (225). And so, argues Appiah, "someone who knows enough to make himself up as a Baule for the twentieth century surely knows that there are other kinds of art" (225).

Still, Kouakou's criteria are not taken into account in the selection process. In other words, he may not participate as part of the structuring principle of the exhibition; his access to the subject position is foreclosed. His role is limited to particular content and his words, as Appiah indicates, "count only as parts of the commodification" (233). Appiah addresses his reader directly "to remind you, in short, of how important it is that African art is a *commodity*" (223, emphasis in text). He insists on the point by declaring that the postmodern art-commodity revolves around "the construction and the marketing of differences" (230).

In the conversion of the other-as-subject into the other-as-commodity, he is deprived of his subject status. Thus, Appiah exposes the rift between enunciating and enunciated subjects in conflation with specific geo-cultural zones. The distance between those two positions is critical when considering the question of cultural capital. The rift between the two is insurmountable because it stages the distance between the subject position of enunciation as the place of accumulation of cultural capital and the place of the enunciated object as a commodity form. In the following section, I substantiate this statement.

Academic Citation as a Source of Value

According to Karl Marx, labor – and its actualization in circulation – is key to understanding the production of value. In addition, as Gayatri Spivak postulates in "Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value," value production through labor is one of the ways in which the subject may be "predicated" and "subject predication is methodologically necessary" (1985: 73). Agreeing with Spivak, in this section I take Marx's theory of value to help me unravel the way in which subject positions are produced and circulate in scholarly texts (1985: 73).

Labor, I contend, is also key to understanding value when it operates in *objectified* forms of cultural capital, such as in the case of the conventional subject positions at the textual level of academic texts. What Marx calls commodity fetishism operates according to the same confusion as

the one between cultural capital in its embodied and objectified states, as discussed above. As Marx famously put forward in *Capital*: “There is a physical relation between things. But it is different with commodities ... There, it is a definite relation between men that assumes, in their eyes, the fantastic form of a relation between things ... This is what I call *fetishism* which attaches itself to the products of labour” (1952 [1873]: 31, emphasis in text). All products of labor “have one common quality, viz., that of having value.” Here, value is “a relation between persons expressed as a relation between things”; hence, “to stamp an object of utility as a value, is as much a social product as language.” Yet, this discovery “by no means dissipates the mist through which the social character of labour appears to us to be an objective character of the products themselves” (32).

Moreover, through the buying and selling of labor power the laborer himself is commodified. The ideological legitimization of capitalism requires that

the owner of the labour power should sell it [his labor power] only for a definite period, for if he were to sell it rump and stump, once and for all, he would be selling himself, converting himself from a free man into a slave, from an owner of a commodity into a commodity. (Marx 1952: 79)

But that mechanism serves more than ideological purposes because, through temporally limited contracts, wage laborers are constantly kept at the brink of unemployment. Hence, an excess of supply in relation to the demand of labor power is produced. Consequently, its value as a commodity in the market falls. Furthermore, the buyer of labor power usufructs from the product of labor before the laborer gets paid, that is, after a month or whatever the period fixed by the contract (82-83). Through these mechanisms, the market value of labor power is maintained constantly low, and the laborer constantly kept in debt, insuring that the worker remains structurally subjected to his position. Therefore:

The second essential condition to the owner of money finding labour power in the market as a commodity is this – that the labourer, instead of being in the position to sell commodities in which his labour is incorporated, must be obliged to offer for sale as a commodity that very labour power, which exists only in his living self. (80)

In this way, the wage laborer is deprived of her subject status.

In addition, the devaluation of the laborer’s subject status is the foundation stone for the appropriation and accumulation of value, and hence for the persistence of the capitalist system. The

value of a commodity is determined by the labor time invested in its production. This also holds true for labor power. In the case of labor power as a commodity, its value is determined by the labor time necessary for its production and reproduction. This labor time entails what is invested in the food, clothing, etcetera, necessary for the subsistence and maintenance of the laborer (81).²⁹⁵

But labor power has a fundamental characteristic that distinguishes it from all other commodities: it produces surplus value. If, for example, I grow potatoes but want to buy clothes, I sell a kilo of potatoes for a value that is established in the market at, say, five euro, and buy a sweater for the same price. My interest is in the use-value of the commodity I buy, and the value of what I sell and what I buy are equivalent because it is established by the market in accordance with the amount of labor time spent in the production of each. This is the circuit that Marx represents as C-M-C, Commodity-Money-Commodity (69-70).

However, if I am a capitalist, what I have to begin with is money, and what I want to obtain in the end is money. So I participate in the circulation of commodities, not because I am interested in their use-value, but because I am interested in exchange-value. I do not spend money, but merely advance it, buying a commodity I will later sell to obtain money again. This practice is represented by the diagram M-C-M, Money-Commodity-Money. As Marx comments, this exercise “at first sight appears purposeless, because tautological” (71). The value of commodities is fixed in the market according to the labor time spent for their production; so, unless it is by an accidental contingency that I manage to sell a commodity for a price higher than it is worth, or to buy it for a price lower than its market value, I will regularly only get back as much as I advanced to begin with.

Except for the fact that, as I have stated, labor power is a unique commodity in that it produces surplus value. The market value of labor power as a commodity is established by the labor time that is necessary for the laborer’s subsistence. Yet, the laborer’s work, while being a commodity, is a commodity that generates more commodities. Hence, she generates more money than she costs. This surplus value is appropriated by the capitalist. When he advances money to buy labor power as a commodity, he gets more money back than he advanced. Hence M-C-M is actually M-C-M’, Marx explains:

²⁹⁵ This value, however, is not universal, it is measured according to the differentiated labor time invested in training or education that a particular kind of work requires. Moreover, moral and cultural elements come into play (Marx 1952: 81).

where $M' = M + \Delta M$ = the original sum advanced, plus an increment. This increment or excess over the original value I call *surplus value*. The value originally advanced, therefore, not only remains intact while in circulation, but adds to itself a surplus value or expands itself. It is this movement that converts it into capital. (71, emphasis in text)

In this way, the capitalist occupies a privileged position that is reliant on the commodification of the other and the subsequent appropriation of the surplus value that is generated by him. The position of the capitalist is not only privileged in economic terms but also, when the mechanism is formally considered, privileged in the sense that it places the capitalist in the unique position of control over, rather than subjugation to, the processes of circulation. Given this structural advantage of his position and the fact that the position he occupies is exempt from commodification, it may be said that he occupies the equivalent of the universal subject position in the context of economic relations.

Furthermore, this may be connected with his participation in the M-C-M as opposed to the C-M-C cycle, for “both the money and the commodity represent only different modes of existence of value itself, the money its general mode, and the commodity its particular ... mode” (73). Hence, the mechanism is analogous to what Walter Mignolo describes as that which produces “the epistemic privilege of modernity.” As I have mentioned in previous chapters, Mignolo proposes that the superior element in a binary opposition has the benefit of being “on the one hand, part of the opposition paradigm itself and, on the other, the locus of enunciation of the paradigm itself”; furthermore, that element does so “while being able to make believe that the place of enunciation [is] a nonplace” (2002: 947, 935). Thus, the privileged element of a binary opposition functions as a disguised meta-position: it is simultaneously one of the enunciated binaries and the overall point of articulation. Because of this double standard, one of the opposing pairs can be seen as the place of the subject. Both content and structuring principle, the superior opposite appears to have the self-reflexivity that defines the subject as such.

My argument so far is not just meant to produce a fortuitous analogy between the capitalist position and that of the universal subject. Rather, subscribing to Marx’ analysis, I intend to account for two other issues. The most important of those is the role of the differentiated textual subject positions in the circulation of cultural capital within academic texts. To a lesser degree, I also address the direct intervention of economic forces in the constitution of such texts. Both questions are at stake in Anthony Appiah’s *IFH*.

Recall that the key point in Appiah's analysis of the postmodernist art exhibition in New York was that the usurpation of Kouakou's subject status was framed as its opposite: as a generously inclusive gesture towards the other. Appiah's example represents a wider practice to the extent that he describes postcolonialism as an offspring of postmodernism, arguing that "[p]ostcoloniality is the condition of what we might ungenerously call a comprador intelligentsia ... who mediate the trade in cultural commodities of world capitalism at the periphery" (240). As I have discussed in the previous chapter, Canclini also correlates the inclusion of the other as a commodity fetish in the global market and in the academic sphere, with her actual exclusion as a subject. He writes that:

North American cultural studies feverously debate the notions of the popular, the national, hybridity, modernity and post-modernity in Latin Americans, but seldom do they do so in connection to the cultural and social movements to which such concepts refer. (García Canclini 2004: 121)

Furthermore,

We know that, with the years, cultural studies has also become the *merchademic* formula in which those incipient efforts, yet to be systematized, were converted into Master's and Ph.D.s, into subaltern, post-colonial, post-disciplinarian canons, where knowledge is sometimes confused with access to tenure, and at other times converted into the sign of the impossibility to get it ... they offer a repertoire of citable authors, of authorized references, euphoric politicizations without addressee. (123)²⁹⁶

Canclini argues that a similar thing happens in the case of Eurocentric editorial policies, which are shaped by the interests of global capital. They sell the semblance of cultural diversity, while resolutely restricting access to sites of enunciation. Finally, he points to the totalizing economic and symbolic transnational markets as the blind spot of the postmodern celebration of fragments (142).²⁹⁷

²⁹⁶ Here and below, my translations. "los *cultural studies* norteamericanos debaten con fervor las nociones de lo popular, lo nacional, la hibridación, la modernidad y la postmodernidad de los latinoamericanos, pero rara vez lo hacen en conexión con los movimientos culturales y sociales a los que tales conceptos aluden" (121). "Sabemos que con los años *cultural studies* se volvió también la formula mercadémica en la que esas peripecias incipientes, aun poco sistemáticas, fueron convertidas en maestrías y doctorados, cánones subalternos, poscoloniales, posdisciplinarios, donde el saber se confunde a veces con el acceso al *tenure* y otras en el signo de la imposibilidad de alcanzarlo ... ofrecen un repertorio de autores citables, de citas autorizadas, politizaciones eufóricas sin destinatarios." (123)

²⁹⁷ After an analysis of empirical data evidencing how the circulation of Latin-American cultural, artistic and intellectual production is hegemonized precisely at the point of postmodernist declarations of wider inclusion and

From a similar vantage point, but in some contrast with Canclini, Appiah does not concentrate on critically addressing large-scale variables. Rather, he intervenes in a more localized and positive form: by actually *incorporating* those excluded others to which Canclini in *DDD* only refers as intellectual authorities in their own right. Appiah starts by engaging seriously with African philosophy (an objective that he declares in the preface [xii]). In the fifth chapter, he builds up from the insight that, as “the highest-status label in Western humanism,” the category of “philosophy” is operative as “cultural capital” (1992: 141).

As its title states, Appiah’s fifth chapter offers an assessment of “Ethnophilosophy and its Critics.” Since his interest is in philosophy as a form of cultural capital, he seeks to historicize rather than define the term.²⁹⁸ Engaging with the way in which French philosopher René Descartes (1596-1650), among others, employs as prime material what Appiah describes as traditional pre-reflexive belief systems, but converts this material into “philosophy” through critical analysis, he focuses on what legitimates philosophy as such. Appiah discerns philosophy’s coincidence with and divergence from the category of ethnophilosophy, to which African endeavors have been systematically reduced. Ethnophilosophy consists merely in the *description* of traditional belief systems. Even a “careful conceptual analysis” by ethnophilosophers of their findings is only “preliminary to the philosophical project,” because the latter seeks “to assess our most general concepts and beliefs, to look for system in them, to evaluate them critically, and, where necessary, to propose and develop new ways of thinking about the world” (154). In this concern with the way in which African philosophy has been reduced to a particular content, Appiah points to the lack of access of Africa as other to the structural site of enunciation, the place that would function as the critical organizing principle of the offered content. What has been categorized as African philosophy is characterized by the impossibility of Africans to occupy just that position.

Appiah’s critique of one of the papers compiled in Richard Wright’s *African Philosophy: An Introduction* (1979), namely, Helaine Minkus’s “Causal Theory in Akwapim Akan philosophy” is telling. Appiah blames Minkus for the absence of critical or value judgment regarding the

democratization of access, Canclini asks, “How to continue doing cultural studies without analyzing the consequences of these processes of concentration and alienation of resources?” (126). Like Appiah in his critique of the postmodernist construction of the African other as “neo-traditional,” he calls attention to the tendency amongst anthropologists and “enthusiastic postcolonials” to define Latin-American-ness by reducing it to its indigenous roots and idealizing the latter as a utopian reserve of Latin-American rebelliousness (Appiah: 1992: 225, García Canclini: 134). But, Canclini continues, “frequently, these non-indigenous allies confuse ethnic claims with ecologic ones. Ancient wisdom with esotericism and convert the complex plot of chants, ceremonies and labor into World Music compact discs.” (134)
²⁹⁸ Appiah suggests that “we start instead by examining the range of things that have come to be called ‘African philosophy’ and ask which one of these activities is worthwhile or interesting and in what ways” (136).

traditional belief systems she describes and documents. The absence points to an *absolute* value judgment: it disqualifies the object in question as worthy of critical engagement (153). Pointing to the fetishistic nature of Minkus's relation to the material, Appiah asks,

Why should anyone who is neither from Akwapim nor from Yorubaland take an interest in these papers? This question is raised particularly urgently for me because the Twi-speaking peoples of Akwapim share most of the concepts and the language of the Asante: my home ... even an unphilosophical Asante might wish to raise the question Minkus never addresses, the question of whether what the Akwapim Akan believe is *true*. (153, emphasis in text)

The ethnographic approach criticized by Appiah negates the material as a source of value and forecloses its power to access the position of legitimate (and legitimating) source for the academic referencing system.

Critical engagement with a source tends to perpetuate the legitimacy of that source as well as the work of the author who engages with it. That is precisely what capital is: "value which, through its circulation, generates more value" (Žižek 2006a: 59). The academic author's value is established with regard to the amount of publications and the number of appearances of his name in citation indexes. The work of the citing author gains value through reference to accepted sources, while these in turn increase in value by the number of citations to which they are subjected. As Appiah's analysis of the reduction of African philosophy to ethnophilosophy shows, the continent's theoretical production is excluded from the possibility of entering the place of accumulation of cultural capital. It may access the market not from the position of accumulation, but only as commodity-fetish, as the means for the accumulation of value elsewhere. One cannot but notice the likeness between the needs of industrialist capitalist expansion and the postmodern dilemma as discussed by Appiah in his account of the New York exhibition. In both cases, the geographical other is included into a system that, once having reached its local limit, expands in search of exploitable resources elsewhere.²⁹⁹

The contemporary tendency in academic and artistic spheres to include Third-World cultural and intellectual production tends to take in those contributions as mere commodities. Furthermore,

²⁹⁹ For an exploration of the relationship between the history of capitalist overseas expansion and a renewed understanding of ideology see Taussig 2002. Taussig focuses on "the history of the world as the economic history of three oceans" and how it recasts Marx's notion of commodity fetishism as the revelation of a public secret. He proposes that the point of Marx's notion of fetishism "was not, as many writers on this concept seem to think, that a more significant reality ... is occluded and people (other than intellectuals and party leaders) become blinded to reality. Rather, that reality is displaced and thereby, as with the labor of the negative underlying fantasy, propels strange flights of imagination and even stranger ways of juxtaposing time and space." (2002: 318)

Western postmodernist artistic and academic production thrives on that inclusion, what Appiah terms “the marketing of differences” (230). While in the academic value system the reification of certain subject positions, such as the names of canonical or accepted authors, function as value which, through its circulation, generates more value, the geo-economic other is systematically excluded from accessing that position.

Let me recall that, as established by way of Marx, commodities are the particular form of value, while money is its universal form. Always already inscribed as a cultural particularity, the geo-economic other can only participate in circulation as a commodity, the exchange of which produces value that is accumulated elsewhere. That is to say, his or her entrance to the process of circulation of cultural capital is always limited to the equivalent of the C-M-C formula. By contrast, those who, from the outset, occupy a place that, while being particular, is legitimized as the universal site of enunciation, gain more value by the inclusion of the cultural other in their work as a commodity form. Their entrance to the academic or artistic value system is structured as an equivalent of the M-C-M’ formula. In this way, the intellectual or artistic work of the geo-economic other is systematically exploited to produce more value for those who occupy the “capitalist” position within art or academia.

The geo-economic other is commodified in two ways. First, she is commodified by the selection criteria and marketing policies of publishers, citation indexes and other institutionalized forms of legitimation and distribution of cultural capital. Second, she is commodified in the textual practices themselves, as exemplified by Appiah’s critique of intercultural postmodernist discursive habits. Within those practices, the work of the citing author tends to gain value from the inclusion of cultural difference as a commodity. Meanwhile, the citing and cited authors legitimate each other as valid subject positions and objectified forms of cultural capital, thus propelling a process of circulation by which each other’s value is increased.

Nevertheless, the legitimating process at work ultimately relies on a metaphysical claim. While many contemporary critics insist on the pitfalls of representation, declaring the unfeasibility of engaging with the marginalized other precisely because of the metaphysical claims with which their discourse would become polluted, they seldom recognize the metaphysical nature of their own invocation of authors on whom the legitimacy of their claims rests. Understanding, as Dube does regarding the “enchantments of modernity,” that such metaphysical claims are not merely “mistaken practices,” but also “formative entities and key coordinates of our worlds,” in the following section,

rather than dismantle these procedures, I focus on how Appiah offers a politically more productive usage of them (2002: 751).

As I have suggested throughout this section, the citation of accepted authors is a form of value which, through its circulation, generates more value. However, only those aligned to one of the two sides of the international economic divide are in a position to capitalize from that circulation. As will be exemplified through the work of Appiah in the following section, the power implied by such a position may be employed for a circumscribed redistribution of cultural capital across the NIDL. Appiah uses his relative position of power to inaugurate relatively marginal sources as valid for critical engagement, giving space within his text for the realization of marginalized subject positions as objectified forms of cultural capital.

The Cited Subject

Below, I analyze the traces of subjectivity that *In My Father's House* provides and the socio-political impact of those traces when the text is taken in historical context. This leads me to an exploration of the critical role played by Appiah's particular use of quotations, epigraphs and proverbs. I also interpret the role of Appiah's father as a structural subject position in the text, Appiah's unfolding of his maternal inheritance, and the impact of both in the constitution of the realm of the symbolic. My emphasis, however, is not on the psychoanalytical aspects of that configuration, but on how it translates to the socialization of intellectual production.

Appiah's personal story acquires a historical dimension through the metaphorical extension of Joe Appiah's role as Anthony's father to his role within Ghanaian society. In the following passage, Anthony discusses the attitude of some of his relatives at Joe's funeral:

Their displeasure was compounded by the inescapable publicity of my father's death-bed repudiation of them. For the funeral, as the leave-taking of a Ghanaian statesman, a brother in law of the king, a leading lawyer, a member of an important *abusua* was, inevitably, a public event. Through a long career in public life, Papa (or Paa) Joe, as he was known, was a well-known figure in Ghana. (298)

Here Appiah relativizes the rift between public and private spheres by disrupting the customary equivalence between the public domain and colonial inheritance, on the one hand, and the private domain and pre-colonial inheritance on the other. Jean Franco, a British literary critic at Columbia University, explores the associations commonly linked to these spheres. Colonized space is usually

associated with tradition, the private sphere and the feminine while colonial power is associated with modernity, the public domain and masculinity (1994: 362- 364). In this context, she holds, the “mind/body polarity that separates metropolitan intellect from the sacrificial body of third-world peoples” emerges (360).

Appiah’s undoing of the public/private dichotomy may be associated with the relatively exceptional and privileged, yet nonetheless historically revealing, configuration of his personal inheritance. The ethnic and gendered configuration of his family history as the son of a British mother and a Ghanaian father partially disrupts those common associations. Written as a tribute to the intellectual and cultural legacy of Appiah’s father, and marginalizing the maternal figure to silence, *IFH* persists in the association of masculinity with enunciation and the production of meaning, on the one hand, and femininity with the lack of these, on the other. However, the book inverts the additional association of the former set with the West and of the latter with Africa.

Before elaborating further, let me address these issues of “meaning and masculinity, signification and gender” as taken up by psychoanalysis (Aydemir 2002: 123). Murat Aydemir examines “Lacan’s famous formulation of the phallus as signifier” in which the latter plays the double role of being at once a signifier, among others, and the privileged mark “that starts the digital or binary chain of meaning” (123). Aydemir points out that “a heated debate surrounds the concept of the phallus, particularly the question of whether or not the phallus ultimately refers to the penis” (124). One of the positions in the debate, that of Daniel Boyarin, indicates that the distinction between the penis and the phallus “is what allows the phallus to be reified as the pinnacle of power” (125). Rather than take sides in the debate, Aydemir proposes that the double standard of the phallus as a “privileged” and “veiled” signifier points to the “investments of a second person,” since “‘privileging’ and ‘veiling’ can only take place in somebody else’s eyes” (124). Hence:

In one and the same gesture, referentiality is both pre-empted and re-charged, and I suspect the debate concerning the phallus/penis distinction plays exactly into that double movement ... The play of reference, simultaneously prevented and recharged, takes place within a frame of deixis: the addressing and gesturing that goes on in the exchange between performer and viewer. (127)

Since it is in the paradoxical play of separation/union between the phallus and the penis that the former is reified, Aydemir’s recognition of the semiotic operativity of the phallus’s double standard

also serves to unravel the foundational role of deixis in other processes of reification, such as those involved in incorporation.

A key aspect of incorporation is that it salvages the remainder of the other; yet it does so by reifying that other. Since there is a “nagging return of the thing lost into psychic life,” we can talk of a fixation in which the objective remainder actively participates (Khanna 2003: 17). Like the “partial object” of psychoanalysis, what Khanna terms the inassimilable remainder behaves as an “undead excess” (Žižek 2006a: 17, 15). It is in principle an inanimate fragment, yet it behaves as if animate in its “nagging return” and in association with the organic whole of which it was once a part. This is why in incorporation the other tends to be reified in its remainder. Yet, reification is not an intrinsic property of the object that functions as its material support. As Aydemir observes, meaning is produced “at the brink between reference and deixis” (122). If we focus at the brink between reference and deixis, a new subject position arises which may relativize (if not escape) reification while still possessing a distinct phenomenological dimension as part of the text itself. How this is brought about in *IFH* will be discussed below. In order to do so, I first turn to the way the associations established by Franco and Aydemir above operate in Appiah’s book.

In *IFH*, the connection between the father and the realm of signification is reinforced by the fact that Appiah writes that his father passed away while he was finishing the book (x). The dedication of *IFH* reads:

and in memory of my father
Joe Appiah
1918-1990

In this way, the book can be seen as a literal realization of the transmutation of the physical into the symbolic father figure. The transmutation is crucial not because of the personal issues it may index, but precisely because it liberates Africa from its bonds to the particular and the bodily. In the transmutation of the physical into the symbolic father, Appiah’s renewed relationship to his biological father is extended to include his African cultural inheritance at large.

As Anthony’s “Papa” becomes the public “Paa Joe,” and as this figure is further extrapolated to African (intellectual) authority at large, Africa is reframed as a legitimate site for symbolic elaboration, while Anthony marginalizes himself as the universal subject of enunciation (298). In the Epilogue, he quotes extensively from Joe Appiah’s autobiography, to the point that Anthony appears at times as a complementary narrator (see, for example, 295-297). The quotations

from his father's book are not only long, but also practically unabridged. They are rarely used to exemplify Anthony's points and they possess certain self-sufficiency. As relatively autonomous texts, those quotations are present as an objectified form of cultural capital, that is, as incorporated externalities that emulate thought. Hence, a non-essentialist notion of the other as subject may well be recuperated here.

The internal coherence of the quotes is due to an articulating principle which resides outside *IFH*. This relativization of Anthony's role as author is pushed further by the fact that Joe Appiah is one of his own "articulating principles" at both biological and symbolic levels. That filiation is reproduced, though less markedly, in the dialogue Appiah establishes with other African intellectual authorities throughout his chapters. Instituting an association between the phallus as signifier and the African continent, he points to that place as an unmarked site, proper for philosophical enunciation.

The extensive inclusion of another subject's discourse is recognition of his authorship. Since Joe Appiah is not a recognized intellectual or literary authority across the postcolonial epistemic divide, Anthony Appiah's recognition functions as a constitution of Joe's position of authority. This same process he technically repeats when dealing with other African thinkers and writers. Those other African authors also share, by extension and as part of his father's legacy, the symbolic weight of intellectual parents. Hence, Joe Appiah's proto-subjective position is not only established because its re-constitution by Anthony is actually its active constitution, but also because it operates as the model for the institution of other authoritative subject positions of African provenance. Appiah's African philosophical precursors are more widely quoted and discussed than their European or Anglo-American counterparts. More importantly, the African philosophers are not merely the object of his analysis, but, by and large, also serve as the authorities on which Appiah rests his claims. This is to say, he may quote academics in African universities such as philosophers Paulin Hountondji or Kwasi Wiredu for the same methodological and/or legitimating purposes that Spivak may quote Derrida, or Bhabha refer to Lacan.³⁰⁰

As I discussed above, Appiah's analysis of ethnophilosophy reveals that his form of engagement with African theoretical material does not imply a lack of criticism, but quite the opposite. A "critically intimate" approach with the other's words, rather than their condescending

³⁰⁰ Hountondji is based at the University of Cotonou in Benin. After having worked at the University of Ghana for over two decades, Wiredu now works at the University of South Florida in the U.S.A.

inclusion, is required if they are not to be treated as commodity forms.³⁰¹ Early in the book (30), for example, Appiah cites Ghanaian statesman and political theorist, Kwame Nkrumah (1909-1972). The passage quoted is from the *Autobiography of Kwame Nkrumah* (1973 [1957]) but, in that book, Nkrumah refers back to his 1952 speech in Liberia. Appiah reflects on the quote insofar as it evidences the racism Pan-Africanism inherited from Western discourses. Further ahead (262), Appiah returns to the same quote in order to elaborate on the relationships between racism, Pan-Africanism and the Ghanaian state.

Independently of content, Appiah's handling of the quote is formally dialogic. It surfaces to make a point in Appiah's introductory chapter, and then disappears only to return much later to make another point, citing the same words in a different context.³⁰² Therefore, Appiah's relationship with the quote grows insofar as his own discourse develops. Our perception of the quote is also enriched from the first citation to the second. Hence, the repeated quote acquires a self-reflexive quality in relation to its first place of enunciation. This effect is heightened by the fact that, within the quote, Nkrumah quotes his own words as expressed five years earlier. In this way, the self-reflexive effect is not only heightened, but also inscribed in the field of Nkrumah's self-relation and becoming. The fact that Nkrumah's book is one of three autobiographical sources in *IFH* points to Appiah's concern with what, in Chapter Three, I have termed the other's "self to self" relation in objectified form. While the relation of self to self is the classic place of subject constitution, in Appiah's work subjectification occurs in the combination of that practice and intersubjectivity.³⁰³

Several of Appiah's chapters are structured around a question he poses for the work of other intellectuals to answer:

In Chapter 4, I look at one answer that has been given to this important question: the answer of Wole Soyinka ... But Soyinka's answer to the question "What is Africa?" is one among others. In Chapter 5, I explore the responses of some contemporary African philosophers ... (39)

³⁰¹ As discussed in Chapter Three, I borrow the term "critical intimacy" from Bal who converts Spivak's neologism into a traveling concept: "*critical intimacy* reflects the concern of keeping together what only scholars would separate: 'form' (whatever that may mean), 'content,' and 'context'; issues that go by the name of cultural, social, or political." The term also "points to subjectivities – in the plural" (Bal 2002: 289, emphasis in text). Intersubjectivity, as Bal implies elsewhere, can only take place on "the basis of a common language" (2002: 22). Appiah's approach to the other as an objectified subjectivity establishes this common basis and it is from that starting point that he articulates the two other dimensions at stake.

³⁰² Actually, the second time the quote is abridged. Appiah substitutes this lack by making explicit reference to its previous appearance. In this way, the self-reflexive effect the second quote produces, and which I discuss below, is made evident to the reader who, 231 pages after its first appearance, might not recall its previous citation.

³⁰³ For a "conceptualization of authorial subjectivity as a communal construction" (95), see Gräbner 2007: 79-128.

This is not merely a rhetorical strategy to give a sense of coherence. During his analysis of Soyinka's fiction, Appiah comments:

Wole Soyinka writes in English. But this, like many obvious facts, is one whose obviousness may lead us to underrate its importance and its obscurities. For if it is obvious that Soyinka's language is English, it is a hard question whose English he writes. Amos Tutuola accustomed the western ear to "Nigerian English"; Soyinka's English is only "Nigerian" when he is listening to Nigerians, and then his ear is exact. But with the same precision he captures the language of the colonial, matter and manner: only someone who *listened* would have the British District Officer's wife say, as her husband goes off to deal with "the natives" in *Death and the King's Horseman*: "Be careful Simon, I mean, be clever." (118, emphasis in text)

Here Appiah's concern is the capacity to listen. Not just to pay attention to the idea conveyed, but also to the interest that is produced by phonetic subtleties. As suggested by Appiah, for *Death and the King's Horseman* to function as an effective critique, Soyinka's prior self-forgetfulness and genuine identification with the (words of) the colonizer is required. Appiah's own analysis benefits from that mode of listening.

That is why the fragment also gives a sense of Appiah's prioritization of formal subtleties in Soyinka's writing. The approach is quite exceptional. As Ernst van Alphen, a Dutch literary theorist at Leiden University, has observed, in contrast to avant-garde literature of formal experimentation, discussions of postcolonial fiction tend to center around "ontological rather than epistemological questions" (2003: 122). Moreover, the analysis of African literary production focuses on the constative aspects of the works in relation to their political contexts, while the texts' structural and stylistic aspects are rarely taken seriously. Yet, Appiah is concerned with the socio-political claims at stake insofar as they are the product of a self-reflexive articulating principle, which is observable at the formal level. In this way, Appiah approaches his objects of analysis with an epistemological interest parallel to that with which a modernist critic might approach a canonical piece of literature.

Appiah's dialogic approach is epitomized by his handling of epigraphs. Epigraphs are the most autonomous forms of citation. Not only do they endow the quoted text with relative independence in relation to the quoter's text that follows but, placed at the beginning, they symbolically function as the originating principle of the citer's discourse. As "[a] short quotation or pithy sentence placed at the commencement of a work, a chapter, etc. to indicate the leading idea or sentiment; a motto," an epigraph motivates and predisposes the subsequent text (*OED*). By the

“pithiness” that characterizes it, the epigraph holds, in condensed form, what is to be discussed in the passages that follow. Etymologically rooted in the Greek “inscription” and “to write upon,” to epigraph a text may also be understood as to superimpose upon it, in a gesture that is inextricably associated with the act of writing.

All of Appiah’s epigraphs are of African authorship. His fifth chapter, for example, may be literally taken as a systematic reflection on its epigraph, where Hountondji writes: “By ‘African philosophy’ I mean a set of texts, specifically the set of texts written by Africans themselves and described as philosophical by their authors themselves” (135). The role of the epigraph as the guiding thread of the chapter exceeds the implicit. Appiah discusses this definition at various points in his argument, as well as offering further quotes from the same source to bear on his discussion (see especially 143-144, 153, 168-170).

Appiah’s epigraphs not only motivate and at times organize the chapters in which they appear, but may also serve as a junction to articulate different chapters at key turning points in his argument. Appiah’s fourth chapter, for instance, is introduced by an epigraph in which Chinua Achebe in an interview reflects on the different identities by which he is constituted: Ibo, Nigerian, African, black and writer. The quote of Achebe’s answer to his interviewer concludes with an inversion: “This is what it means to be black. Or an African – the same: what does Africa mean to the world? When you see an African what does it mean to be a white man?” (116). Appiah benefits from Achebe’s words to elaborate on the African identity as constructed by the European gaze. The reflection leads Appiah to rethink and modify the conclusions he reached in previous chapters concerning race and African-American identity.

Two other factors, especially when considered in conjunction, point to the structural importance that Achebe’s passage has in the organization of *IFH*. The first of these is that, in his third chapter, before the epigraph itself appears, Appiah writes:

In a passage that provides the epigraph for the next chapter, Chinua Achebe reflects on the necessity for a modern African writer to examine intelligently the various identities he or she inhabits. And he ends by interrogating his identity as an African in these words: “What does Africa mean to the world? When you see an African what does it mean to be a white man?” Notice the presupposition ... (114)

Why would Appiah make anticipatory reference to the epigraph and go as far as to quote it partially? If the statement is relevant to his present discussion (that of chapter three), one would

expect to find the full quote there and backward reference to it later, if and when pertinent. However, that would reduce the quote's status as an epigraph. Hence, and also through his reluctance to fill in the epigraphic space with another text, Appiah points to the significance of that particular quote in that particular epigraphic entrance; in other words, to the importance of the quote's structural position. Furthermore, through this mechanism, Appiah creates an expectation in his reader, who, looking forward to the next chapter's epigraph, is likely to pay greater attention to it when it does arrive. Finally, the self-reflexive effect discussed in the case of Appiah's handling of Nkrumah's quote also enters into play here.

In conjunction with the rhetorical mechanism that I have described above, a second factor becomes significant. In the epigraph, Achebe's complication of African identity as constructed through the other's gaze runs parallel to his disruption of his role as interviewee, himself asking the interviewer: "When you see an African, what does it mean to be a white man?" (116). Achebe's inversion of the discursive, general construction of the African as other is intricately linked to this performative inversion of his immediate and situated subject position. Although Achebe is being interviewed in his capacity as an intellectual, his discourse is literally structured and circumscribed by his interviewer's questions.

The usage of a quote that has already been cited and discussed as an epigraph to a later chapter may appear counterintuitive. But this is largely compensated by the epigraphic space's capacity to place the drama between the abstract construction of the African as other and Achebe's situated intervention in it at center stage. Let me recall that the etymological root of "epigraph" is "to write upon." Appiah, by way of Achebe, writes upon the construction of Africans as objects of enunciation and as individuals who are displaced as "others" from their subject position. Appiah does so by handing the microphone over to someone who reaffirms his subject position not by speaking, but by pointing to the conditions that structure his speech.

Besides epigraphs, proverbs are another resource for Appiah to implicate other subjects through their textual remainders. It is noteworthy, however, that proverbs actually function as epigraphs in three of his chapters (see 172, 255, 294). Since proverbs are by definition of a communitarian and anonymous authorship, their placement as epigraphs produces a double standard. This is because the proverbs are located at the exact point where Appiah exploits the Western stylistic conventions to democratize access to the author position.

The inclusion of proverbs also contributes to the continuities between the public and the private, the academic and the personal, that I have indicated above. As I implied, the Preface and

the Epilogue directly allude to Appiah's personal experiences, while the eight chapters in-between deal with the usual academic subjects and obey the corresponding scholarly conventions. Nonetheless, Appiah weaves references to his personal experience throughout these middle chapters (see especially 255, 256, 272, 274, 278). Noteworthy here is not so much the fact those references appear at all, but rather the utter fluidity with which they are interwoven with the academic argumentation. Note the unproblematic flow between academic clarification and personal commentary in the following endnote to the translation of an Akan proverb:

Akan proverb. (Proverbs are notoriously difficult to interpret, and thus, also to translate. But the idea is that states collapse from within, and the proverb is used to express the sentiment that people suffer as a result of their own weaknesses. My father would never have forgiven the solecism of trying to explain a proverb!) (339)

The movement across the divide between the academic and autobiographical resonates with the movement of the narrating voice to and fro the postcolonial divide signaled by the opposition between West and other in Appiah's unstable use of "we" and "us," "here" and "there." Indeed, he uses the locatives interchangeably, depending on context, to refer sometimes to the West, sometimes to Africa. Likewise with the pronouns: the "we" to which Appiah refers is at times the West, at times its designated other (see especially 148, 189, 192, 195, 217-218, 263). Such a blurring of the frontiers between the individual and the various collective subjects in which he participates is also produced as an effect of Appiah's interweaving of proverbs with the narration in his own words.

As I have suggested, proverbs appear at key points such as epigraphs. Another key point in which the author introduces them is at the end of the book. The last paragraph of *IFH* reads:

Another proverb says: *Abusua te sɛ kwaeɛ, wowɔ akyiri a ɛyɛ kusuu, wopini ho a, na wohunu sɛ dua koro biara wɔ ne siberɛ.* "The matriclan is like the forest; if you are outside it is dense, if you are inside you see that each tree has its own position." So it now seems to me. Perhaps I have not yet disgraced my families and their names. But as long as I live I know that I will not be out of these woods. (313)

The fragment brings into play three questions that are of importance to the book as a whole. First, it addresses the problem of the emic and etic in anthropology, a discipline that strongly informs Appiah's enterprise.³⁰⁴

Second, the quoted fragment exposes the more complex nature of the gender associations at stake in *IFH*. While I based my analysis above on the associations between the father figure and the symbolic order, the socio-cultural legacy of Appiah's father is, indeed, a matriclan. As I have stated, *IFH* is written as a tribute to Appiah's paternal legacy and thus marginalizes the maternal figure to silence. By persisting on the traditional association of masculinity with enunciation and femininity with its lack, Appiah is able to reverse the additional association of the former set with the West and of the latter with Africa. Yet, in the context of Appiah's matriarchal paternal inheritance and the alignment of his own maternal figure with dominant European culture, I believe that continuity to be, by all means, strategic.

In *IFH* one can also view the maternal figure as the silent structuring principle that is equitable with the universal subject position, rather than as a silenced subaltern. One of the very few times that Appiah's mother is mentioned in *IFH* is to refer to a book that she was to co-edit with her son, and which was forthcoming at the time of *IFH*'s publication: *Bu Me Be: Proverbs of the Akans*.³⁰⁵ In this way, Peggy Appiah, even when not appearing as a subject of enunciation, is foregrounded as the organizer of the enunciation of a collective anonymous African subject. This disrupts not only the traditional associations between woman and object, man and subject, femininity and the collective, masculinity and the individual, but also suggests that Appiah's strategy for the re-appreciation of Africa's intellectual legacy, indirectly questions the equation between the father figure and the realm of the symbolic. It does so by revealing that association as culturally specific.

Finally, the third question brought into play by the fragment quoted above reflects on the former two: the issue of the family name. In that last paragraph of *IFH*, Appiah alludes to a previous episode in the book, in which he narrated his experience as a student leaving for

³⁰⁴ In anthropology, the methodological questions brought forth by the place the anthropologist holds in relation to the culture she is studying has been called "the insider/outsider debate" and is discussed under the terms *etic* and *emic*. For anthropologist Marvin Harris the etic and the emic are clear-cut categories, the emic comprising the insider's perception of events and the etic being the rendering of events as objectively perceived by an outsider. Linguist Kenneth Pike, instead, defines the etic not as objective per se but as an external point of view *relative to* the particular emic system under consideration (Harris, Headland and Pike 1990).

³⁰⁵ Since then the book has been published by Centre for Intellectual Renewal (2001), African World Press (2003), and Ayebia Clarke (2007).

Cambridge. There, he quoted his father's parting words: "Do not disgrace the family name" (295), and described his own reaction:

I confess that I was surprised by this injunction. So much an echo of high Victorian paterfamilias (or perhaps of the Roman originals that my father knew from his colonial education in the classics). But mostly I wondered what he meant. Did he mean my mother's family (whose tradition of university scholarship he had always urged me to emulate), a family whose name I did not bear? Did he mean his own *abusua* (not, by tradition, my family at all), from which he had named me Anthony Akroma-Ampim? Did he mean his legal name, Appiah, the name invented for him when the British colonial authorities decided (after their own customs) that we must have "family" names and that the "family" name should be the name of your father? When your father's family tradition casts you into your matriline and your mother's claims you for your father, such doubts are, I suppose, natural enough. (295)

The complexity of variables impedes the easy alignment of gender, ethnic and intellectual heritage in the configuration of Appiah's name, understood as an identity as well as his inscription into the realm of language and the symbolic. This accounts for the fluidity, as opposed to fetishism, with which Appiah travels from one tradition of knowledge to another. It also accounts for the non-coincidence with my earlier analysis of *IFH* according to the presuppositions of a more uniformly aligned patriarchal order. The complexity of Appiah's identity results from the somewhat exceptional convergence of a series of historical conditions. However, as suggested by the proverb at the end of his book, it may also be a matter of the emic or etic perspective from which we judge. The degree of complexity of any subject position, the quote would seem to suggest, is informed by how much we zoom in or out. Appiah's last proverb disrupts any universal claim, including my own attempt to locate "the subject of postcolonial discourse."

My study is guided by the following general question: who (or what) is the subject of postcolonial discourse? It would seem that for Appiah there is no Subject, just specifically and differentially situated subjects. Hence, rather than being preoccupied with the question of the universal subject vs. the subaltern, Appiah is concerned with the admittance into canonical discussions of *relatively* marginalized subject positions. By dialoguing with externalities in which the textual subject position and relatively marginalized, concrete individuals collide, he is able to incorporate them as a "what," that is, as objectified forms of cultural capital.

Appiah's approach sets him at a great distance from Gayatri Spivak in her claim that

For the people who are making the claims, the history of the Enlightenment episteme is “cited” even on an individual level, as the script is cited for an actor’s interpretation. (48)

Spivak’s subaltern does not have access to the (hegemonic) symbolic order. Hence, she is reduced to the strategic citing of someone else’s hegemonic words. But, in comparison to Spivak, the subject positions Appiah addresses are relatively privileged. Yet, they remain marginal *relative to* both authors, and are also marginal in relation to the generic position of the “even unformulated *you*” that the text presupposes (Bal 1994: 105). I emphasize the contrast between Appiah and Spivak because together they point to a question at the core of the postcolonial dilemma: the rift between the addressed and the represented other.³⁰⁶

Regarding that rift, let me recall that I initially addressed deixis by way of Bal (1994). There, the text was understood as trace that pointed to a structure, the latter being constituted by the mutuality of the “I” and the “you” of a text. Hence, it may be said that the dialogic nature of a text ultimately relies on the structural correspondence of its parts. The textual site of structural correspondence is the only possible place for Appiah to correspond with the “other” on the same basis. Above I quoted Appiah’s dedication of the book to his father. There, I left out the single, final line of that dedication. The full quote reads:

And in memory of my father
Joe Appiah
1918-1990
Abusua-dua yEntwa

I do not know Akan. Neither does the “even unformulated *you*” that the author presupposes and explicitly identifies as Western throughout the book. Nonetheless, the text in the quote remains untranslated. In fact, it is the only text left untranslated in the whole book. But perhaps it is not for us to read. Joe Appiah, Anthony’s father, displaces us as readers, literally occupying the textual position of addressee. The detail suggests Anthony Appiah’s key shift: addressing the position of

³⁰⁶ As I have shown in the previous chapter, Spivak’s “More on Power/Knowledge” is forcefully committed to the text’s structure of address, resulting in a strong sense of responsibility towards her reader and to her own position as a First World academic. However, the audience Spivak addresses occupies a historical position that is not too distant from her own. Hence, her emphasis on the dialogic structure of address as bringing otherness into play is largely irrelevant to the subjects she represents and that are those aligned with the underprivileged side of the West vs. Other opposition. Although Spivak’s approach does not enable a redistribution of cultural capital in its objectified state, her word of caution should not be overlooked. It remains useful to signal the rift between the intersubjectivity operative in the reader-writer relation and intersubjectivity foreclosed in relation to the marginalized other.

the other in terms that are formally and structurally corresponding with and co-constitutive of his own. He may address the other as an actual subject insofar as the latter is given access to a co-constitutive position of the text, for it is here that both subjects meet on corresponding terms.

Yet, Joe Appiah's position as addressee is not absolute. The text is published for us to read after his death. This play "at the brink between reference and deixis" is what grants Joe Appiah the double standard proper to the privileged subject (Aydemir 2002: 122). Paradoxically, it is due to Appiah's introduction of the postcolonial other at the material, objectified, level that he may address him on equal terms to the classic (Western) incorporate subject, in whose invocation academic value continues to rest.

In those ways, Appiah's work envisions a way out, even if a road only timidly traveled by himself, to the enclosure that Dutch cultural analyst at Leiden University, Isabel Hoving, describes as follows:

a considerable amount of post-colonial writing departs from the premise that (...) post-colonial otherness can not represent itself, nor can it be represented in any other way than through a subversion of colonial discourse, and through silence. Spivak's statement "the subaltern can not speak" is one of the articulations of this position. (1995: 44)

As Hoving elaborates, the "advocates of this position" are not centrally concerned with overcoming the enclosure, but with insisting on the fact that "no unequivocal anti-colonial position can be taken" (44). However, Appiah's approach also differs from the opposite position in the debate, which Hoving describes as the belief in "unified 'native' identities" untouched by colonial discourse (44). Appiah is able to articulate a third, non-essentialist yet not rhetorically enclosed, position by putting to *political* practice the knowledge that "language will always construct reality, not represent it" (Hoving 1995: 31).

Placing his father as the main invoked subject – one of the subject positions of accumulation in the circulation of cultural capital within academic writing – Appiah legitimates him as a source of value. Most importantly, in the transformation of the physical father into the symbolic father, Appiah necessarily extends this renewed bond to incorporate the whole of his African cultural and intellectual legacy. Appiah's handling of quotes from intellectuals based in Africa sets to work literary and critical resources that are capable of emphasizing the self-reflexive qualities that were already present in the quotes themselves. He foregrounds the structural capacity of their formal traits. By also engaging in critical analysis of the texts and in relying on their authority to further his

own argument, Appiah approaches them as objectified forms of cultural capital. The key issue making Appiah's procedure viable is that his subject position and that of the other are in a situation of correspondence at the textual level. That is, they share the same material basis or language for intersubjectivity to occur.

Value and the Subject Incorporate: A Conclusion

In this chapter, I set out to explore the political implications of the ways in which different subject positions in texts of postcolonial theory are handled. When understanding academic criticism as a specific form of writing and seeking to define the pertinent subject positions at stake, it is not sufficient to focus on the strictly linguistic level. When only that aspect is taken into account, the grammatical subject emerges as the unique subject position and any "other" subject is reduced to a sub-subjective position, only manifest at the level of what Hoving calls "the silences and gaps" of the dominant discourse (1995: 44). By focusing at the juncture between the strictly textual and the *conventional* elements proper to academic writing, its established literary uses, the addressed other, and, prominently in this chapter, the invoked other, emerge.

The subject position of the invoked other calls attention to what I have termed the subject incorporate. The subject incorporate refers to a meta-narrative position occupied by a subject that apparently lacks a material dimension. Even if the position is valued for that apparent lack, it is able to circulate in academic texts precisely because that lack is only apparent. Hence, the subject incorporate may also be imagined as the subject incorporated or the "Subject Inc.," in the sense that it is materialized in concrete textual configurations through which we may appreciate how value production mediates academic writing. I have turned to Appiah to discover ways in which to productively appropriate, rather than simply dismantle, that subject.

Incorporating the postcolonial other as the material remainder of a subject that is independent from the text at hand, Appiah salvages what Khanna claims forms the "inaccessible remainder" that "is the kernel of melancholia": the other's "critical agency" (2003: 24, 23). This is to say that Appiah acknowledges that other as an autonomous subjectivity associated with the material dimension of the letter. This autonomy is defined by the presupposed correspondence between the bodily dimension of a text – of which a fragment is extracted – and the abstract articulating principle of that other body conceived as an organic whole.

The political import of incorporating exogenous quotations is best appreciated when taking into account the referencing system in which they are inserted. As has been discussed, and as Marx comments in the epigraph, while value is “past labour in its objectified and lifeless form,” the valorization process by which it acquires its meta- or self-reflexive quality is, like the poisoned rat from the song in *Faust*, “an animated monster which begins to ‘work’, ‘as if its body were by love possessed’” (Marx 1990 [1873]: 302). Marx’s metaphor points to the disruption between the living and the dead that, as I clarified in the introduction, is implied by the process of incorporation.

Incorporation does not refer to an autonomous organism, but to an externally or artificially animate, yet not intrinsically or organically animated, body. As I suggested, it is like the “partial object” of psychoanalysis in that it functions as an “undead excess” (Žižek 2006a: 17, 15). In literary terms, it represents the difference between a “work” of fiction or theory understood as an autonomous whole, and a disarticulated (if not inarticulate), yet externally articulate(d) fragment, in which, as Kemple remarks in his comparative analysis of Marx and Goethe, “words substitute for thoughts” (40).

The undead partial object whose “nagging return” is entailed by incorporation leads “to a haunting” (Khanna 2003: 17, 262). For Khanna, this haunting is the source of critical agency since “haunting constitutes the *work of melancholia*” ; furthermore, “the work of melancholia has a critical relation to the lost and to the buried ... It calls for a response to the critical work of incorporation, and the ethical demand that such an incorporation has on the future” (25, emphasis in text). Yet, as I have elaborated, since incorporation implies a fixation on the partial object, that nagging remainder of the other, it can also entail a reification of that other and, consequently, a perpetuation of the status quo. As Taussig observes, “commodity fetishism creat[es] out of capitalist culture a ‘phantom objectivity’” (2002: 326).³⁰⁷

In the context of the textual and conceptual forms of fetishism that I have discussed in this chapter, the key issue is the qualitative difference that is established by the displacement from the represented to the addressed other. For Khanna, the subaltern other is unrepresentable, yet reified in the persistent return of its melancholic remainder.³⁰⁸ This places Khanna, along with Spivak, in the position that, as Hoving accounts, equates postcolonial subalternity with “the silences and the gaps” in the dominant discourse (1995: 44). Yet, Aydemir’s exploration of signification and the phallus

³⁰⁷ Here Taussig follows Hungarian philosopher Geörgy Lukács (1885-1971).

³⁰⁸ “the subaltern ... comes to be a remainder, necessarily betrayed as it enters the world of civil society ... Reading how the melancholic remainder manifests itself through haunting allows for the haunting justice affectively summoned by the unrepresentable subaltern.” (Khanna 2003: 19)

and Bal's conceptualization of "trace" allowed me to analyze how, when the role of deixis is taken into account in textual processes of incorporation, another phenomenally explicit, yet not necessarily reified, subject enters into view. Appiah puts this possibility to practice by granting the relatively subaltern others textual positions that formally and structurally correspond with and co-constitute his own. The subject position of the addressed other corresponds with that of the enunciator at the linguistic level of the text (the addressee being a *sine qua non* requirement for semiosis to occur). The position of the invoked other corresponds with that of the author at the *conventional* level that defines the text as an academic one and grants it the status of cultural capital. This conventional level begs the question of the mechanisms of production and circulation of value.

In the opening lines of "Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value," Spivak points out that one "of the determinations of the question of value is the predication of the subject. The modern 'idealist' predication of the subject is consciousness. Labor-power is a 'materialist' predication" (1985: 73). Though endorsing Spivak's distinction, I have put emphasis on the fact that a materialist predication of the subject does not necessarily negate consciousness, but merely does not grant it teleological anteriority to labor power. A materialist predication, much like van Alphen observed in relation to modernist literature, suggests a concern with epistemological rather than ontological questions. Instead of focusing on the subject's ontological consistency, that predication allows one to focus on elucidating the actual operation of the place, mode and fact of invoking that ontology.

Invocation, as I have suggested, is a political activity because calling forth a particular history entails a "fight over the past and its meanings" (Taussig 2002: 327). The same pertains to the act of citation, in which, as Bal notes "the Old Master art [or text] is endorsed as the historical 'real'" (1999: 15). The retroactive naturalization of a selected history relates to Khanna's understanding of melancholy, in which melancholia is "bound to the notion of temporality," insofar as it is "an affective state caused by the inability to assimilate loss, and the consequent nagging return of the thing lost into psychic life" (2003: 22, 17). Yet, the retroactive naturalization of a selected history described by Bal exceeds the melancholic relation, because it exposes the *conventional* nature structuring that affective inscription in time.

Like the "enchantments of modernity" analyzed by Dube, such retroactive naturalizations of an arbitrarily selected history and the melancholic relation to the objectified remainder of the other are not only "ideological aberrations," but also have "dense ontological dimensions, which

simultaneously name and work on the world” (2002: 751). Hence, I have not only exposed, but also explored and reused these conventions myself; seeking different ways of invoking and reconstituting what Fugellie would term protosubjectivities. As I have suggested, a protosubjectivity is a subjectivity that is implied as the past or as the potential of the objectified remainder that we encounter. Causally, the objectified remainder may be viewed as a trace of the past; structurally, it may be viewed as the trace of an implied potential. Yet, the important point here is that both readings coexist, and that in both cases subjectivity is defined as a *surplus* that (both logically and telologically) exceeds or precedes the trace. Fugellie’s definition of protosubjectivity suggests that we may understand it as what exceeds, yet is defined by, a given *convention*: “an internal space of doubt and interpretation, of transfiguration, of *imaginative reconstitution of the norm*” (Fugellie 2009: 85, emphasis added).³⁰⁹

Consequently, all the subjectivities that I have dealt with in this chapter may be described as protosubjectivities. This is because with the term “subject position,” I have merely referred to textual elements that summon *the operative presupposition* of such “an internal space.” But while I have in a sense equated subject positions with their institutional legitimation, Fugellie (obliquely) suggests that subjectivity may be understood precisely as the surplus or remainder of legitimate condensations of value, as the drive to articulate “beyond the official attributions of value and despite them” (89).³¹⁰ Paradoxically, that predication of the subject equates it to that in the elusion of which it is defined: value. As Spivak has observed, value itself “seems to escape the onto-phenomenological question: what is it” (1985: 75). In lacking any ontic substance, value may be conceived from a materialist perspective in purely conventional terms.³¹¹ Valuing, as Aydemir would comment in regard to “privileging” and “veiling,” is defined centrally by the “investments of a second person” (2002: 124).

As I have suggested above, Aydemir’s recognition of the semiotic operativity of the phallus’s double standard unravels the foundational role of deixis in the reification of the phallus. Similarly, deixis is central for the case of the double standard to which the valuing of the incorporate subject is committed. Throughout, I have attempted to emphasize that the incorporate subject (not unlike the phallus) is not bodiless, but requires to be at once body and not-body to transcend itself and thus be defined in terms of its self-reflexive capacity. As I commented in the

³⁰⁹ “un espacio interno de duda e interpretación, de transfiguración, de reconstitución imaginativa de la norma.”

³¹⁰ “más allá de las atribuciones oficiales de valor y a pesar de las mismas.”

³¹¹ By a “materialist perspective” here I mean one that does not regard the individual’s judging abilities, her consciousness and capacity for meaning-making as residing outside the conventional nature of semiosis.

case of Marx's quotation of Goethe, the bodily dimension of the quoted fragment does not negate but rather foregrounds Goethe as the abstract articulating principle of the words. Insofar as Goethe's words are articulated by a presupposed autonomous subjectivity associated with the physical dimension of the letter, they operate at the same level of Marx's surrounding words.

Hence, the subject may be conceived not only as that which exceeds (just as it is committed to) its own conventional limits, but also as that which exceeds (just as it is committed to) its own ontic limits. The latter is best exemplified in Spivak's formulation of the subject predication involving labor power: "the subject [is] defined by its capacity to produce more than itself" (Spivak 1985: 75). Spivak not only defines the subject in terms of its capacity to produce surplus value, but also uses the term "labor power," never "labor," whenever she refers to that definition, pointing in that way to the role of potentiality in the materialist predication of the subject. This emphasis on potentiality re-introduces the non-teleological conception of time that a materialist position *can* entail.

The surplus value that, according to Spivak, defines the subject from a materialist perspective, also defines capital's formal self-reflexivity in the economic context. As I claim, Marx's theory of value does not only serve to draw an analogy between capital and the self-reflexive incorporate subject in the sphere of literature but, more importantly, to understand the mechanisms of selection and exclusion that operate in the sphere of cultural capital, as well as to draw a causal relation between geo-economic factors and the distribution of legitimate subject positions across the international division of labor. While drawing such a narrative serves to distinguish cause from effect, it does not necessarily imply an irreflexive teleology. In this chapter, I have been committed to the interpretation of the Marxist theory of value that holds that value is created in the production process, yet actualized *post facto* during the process of circulation. Understood in that way, Marx's theory of value helps to appreciate the way in which the temporal disjuncture by which value is created plays into the creation of that very "consciousness" that is claimed for the subject.

As Bal argues, that preposterous relation is also intrinsic to citation, a process by which a selected history may be retroactively naturalized (1999: 15). In the case of citations as objectified forms of cultural capital, the lapse between the production of value and its accumulation is mediated by its actualization in circulation within academic texts. Therefore, the (postcolonial) theorist may intervene in the geo-economic configuration of the production of cultural capital, determining whether to actualize, and thus retroactively produce, the symbolic capital entailed by legitimate and

legitimizing subject positions on the preposterously marginalized side of the international division of labor. Conversely, she may prioritize the valorization of her own subject position, a process that requires the continued reliance on authorized sources and the unceasing introduction of new commodities from all over the globe.