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

Aroch Fugellie, P.

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Negating the Negation: Realizing the Promise

Totality is to be opposed by convicting it of nonidentity with itself –  
of the nonidentity it denies, according to its own concept.

T. W. Adorno 1983 (1966): 147

As the epigraph suggests, the present chapter is preposterously inspired by Adorno's idea that a critique of a system can only be realized by negating its negation, that is to say, by negating its constitutive exclusion. The constitutive exclusion of postcolonial theory that I have addressed in this study is that of the postcolonial other. Postcolonial theory is thematically centered on that exclusion, yet it is geo-economically, institutionally and theoretically possible precisely because of that exclusion, sometimes even functioning as its metonymic substitution. Here I intend to realize, in the Adornian sense of the term, the critique I have conveyed so far by switching my attention from postcolonial theorists towards two authors that in different ways represent – perhaps embody – the excluded voices that postcolonial theory promises to incorporate yet simultaneously forecloses.

One of those authors is Julius Kambarage Nyerere, the other, Salvador Allende. Hence, I engage with two organic intellectuals that espoused Marxist ideology while not being allied with the Soviet Union during their respective presidencies of Third-World countries in the Cold-War era. As Ranjana Khanna has argued, the concept of organic intellectual has been, together with the subaltern, among the mainstays of postcolonial theory (2003: 17, 20).<sup>312</sup> While I have focused previously on the problem of representation in relation to the subaltern and the contemporary academic intellectual that endeavors to represent her, here I introduce this third figure to explore the way in which it reconfigures the debate and may offer the building blocks for a different approach.

The institutionalized political power held by Nyerere and Allende may lead some to question their characterization as organic intellectuals, yet I choose to focus on them precisely for this apparent contradiction. As has been argued frequently, for example by Timothy Brennan in 2006 and by Arif Dirlik in 2007, postcolonial theory has traditionally been concerned with political

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<sup>312</sup> Ever since Said's usage of the term in *Orientalism*, it is "suffused for us with Gramscian connotations" (Khanna 2003: 17). For a critique of postcolonialist appropriations of Gramsci, see Brennan 2001.

rather than economic forms of power. As Brennan and Dirlik also argue, that has often led to an undue equation between oppression and political power on the one hand, and a negation of the pervasiveness of economic dominance on the other. Exploring how Allende and Nyerere contest hegemony, I intend to counteract the reduction of repressive power to institutional politics and the correlated underestimation of economic forms of violence.

Although, in terms of origin, the organic intellectual is defined as “a figure who emerges from the people rather than from political society,” in terms of ideological praxis, the organic intellectual is he or she “who does the work of finding forms of representation rather than seeking consent to one already formulated” (Khanna 2003: 17).<sup>313</sup> Committed to the term especially in that latter sense, I offer a literary exegesis of a discourse by each of the two presidents to trace the intersections between their political positions of representation and their aesthetic acts of representation, thus allowing their texts to participate in a dialogue with the problems of representation as faced by postcolonial theory.<sup>314</sup>

I discuss two speeches pronounced by Allende in 1970 and 1973, the second of these being radiobroadcast. Media-specificity is confronted with content, rhetoric and the historical embeddedness of the acts of enunciation and reception. Other genres I tackle in this chapter are a translation of an Elizabethan dramatic piece (Nyerere 1969) and a public letter in the realm of politics. The latter, which I explore in a briefer fashion than the presidential pieces, was written by an organic intellectual in the full sense of the term, the spokesman for the Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional, Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, in Mexico, 2004. In sum, I turn to texts that are at a distance from those I have explored so far not only in terms of their socio-historical conditions of enunciation, but also with regard to their mediums of expression. Yet, those very

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<sup>313</sup> The distinction between “the people” and “political society” is not always straightforward, specifically in the cases of Nyerere and Allende, both of whom entered political office as a consequence of grassroots movements. In addition, the questioning of the distinction between organic and traditional intellectuals is widespread. As Khanna explains, “[t]he problematic distinction between the two concepts of intellectual has been highlighted recently by David Lloyd and Paul Thomas, who argue that ‘traditional intellectual’ and his or her structural similarity to or differentiation from the ‘organic intellectual’ is inadequately explained in the context of modern hegemony ... the modern prince, or the scholarly ruler, would be both traditional and organic, rather like Fanon’s bourgeois intellectual in *The Wretched of the Earth*” (2003: 19). For a case study in this latter conception, see Mazrui (Ali) 1990.

<sup>314</sup> As put forward earlier, Spivak distinguishes between “representation as ‘speaking for,’ as in politics, and representation as ‘re-presentation’ as in art or philosophy” (1994: 70). Those two forms of representation may be distinguished by the German words *vertretung* and *darstellung* respectively. The first refers to representation as an act of persuasion; it is transformative. The second refers to representation as a trope, and it is descriptive rather than transformative (72).

differences will allow me to return to the rift between represented and addressed other that preoccupies postcolonial theorists from a widened perspective.<sup>315</sup>

In my concern with the intersections of political economy and the specificity of linguistic acts, I frame my objects for this chapter as melancholic remainders of postcolonial theory. In the same spirit as in the previous chapter, rather than criticize their fetishistic possibilities, I take their ideological promise at face value and push for its realization because, as Adorno has observed, only such a realization would transcend the ideology at stake (1983: 147). The notion of the fetish allows me to conclude, in a more systematic manner than before, the discussion I opened up in Chapter One regarding the contradictions and continuities between geo-political and internal otherness. As U.S. literary theorist W. J. T. Mitchell has observed, the notion of commodity-fetishism was “a brilliant tactical maneuver,” by which Marx turned “the rhetoric of iconoclasm on its principal users,” thus displacing, at a time of imperialist expansion, the fetish from the “unknown, blank space” outside Western Europe to the heart of the capitalist system (1986: 205).<sup>316</sup>

### **The Fetish and its Negation**

In the previous chapter, I have advocated relating to the postcolonial other as a melancholic remainder to emulate a writer’s relationship to canonic citations, thus attaining a circumscribed redistribution of cultural capital across the international division of labor (IDL). However, such a practice is not without its disturbing complicities. In “Melancholy and the Act,” Slavoj Žižek claims that among the unwritten rules that regulate social interaction and uphold the status quo is the one, operative among contemporary academics, which demands the “politically correct” gesture of celebrating melancholy over mourning (2000: 657). Failing to meet this request, argues Žižek, “can have dire consequences – papers are rejected, applicants don’t get jobs because they express the ‘wrong’ attitude towards melancholy” (657-58). According to Žižek, this is due to the fact that the structure of melancholy is the structure by which ideology operates today.

As Žižek argues in a lecture on the same topic, the symptom, understood as the return of a repressed truth in the context of an organized lie, used to be crucial to decipher ideological

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<sup>315</sup> These genres imply different conventions than those of scholarly criticism. In consequence, they also privilege a different range of textual subject positions, and the ways in which these positions articulate with extra-discursive subjects and thus operate as cultural capital also differs. For a discussion of the subject position as cultural capital, see Chapter Four.

<sup>316</sup> On the melancholic remainder, see Chapter Four. On internal and external otherness, see Chapter One.

configurations (2002b: min. 17.36).<sup>317</sup> Today, however, melancholy, understood as an attachment to the fetish, which is the symptom's opposite, prevails. Žižek claims that the fetish may be understood as the particular lie that allows one to endure the truth; the truth of social inequality, of one's participation in it, etcetera (2002b: min. 19). In the article, he clarifies that the reversal of Freud's valorization of mourning and melancholy that is currently advocated in the academy serves the safeguarding of that ideological structure (2000: 658-959).

According to Sigmund Freud, melancholia is pathological, whereas mourning is not (1975 [1915]: 243). As I put forward in Chapter Four, for Freud mourning implies successful sublimation, a coming to terms with loss through processes of symbolization and internalization. Melancholia, on the other hand, is the narcissistic identification with the thing lost. Proceeding along Freud's line of thought, Žižek argues that melancholic attachment precedes and anticipates the actual loss of the object. The melancholic still has the object but has lost the cause of his desire. What makes him sad is not that he will lose the object (which he exaggeratedly mourns), but the possibility that he will lose desire itself. Thus, his attachment elides the object and the latter functions as the positivization of a lack (659-663).

Whereas in mourning one renounces the object but keeps its meaning by internalizing it, in melancholy what prevails is the attachment to the object in its particularity. Asserting that the contemporary *doxa* is to reverse the Freudian valorization of the two terms, Žižek emphasizes how today the only possible form of true and politically correct fidelity is taken to be a fidelity to a fetishistic remainder. He exemplifies that academic trend with the case of postcolonial studies:

The melancholic link to the lost ethnic Object allows us to claim that we remain faithful to our ethnic roots while fully participating in the global capitalist game. One should raise the question to what degree the whole project of postcolonial studies is sustained by this logic of objective cynicism. To make things absolutely clear: what is wrong with the postcolonial nostalgia is not the utopian dream of a world they never had (such a utopia can be thoroughly liberating) but the way this dream is used to legitimize the actuality of its very opposite, of the full and unconstrained participation in global capitalism. (Žižek 2000: 659)

Here, I wish to assess the question Žižek raises. I do so by exploring texts that, operating at the borders of the socio-political, historical and geo-cultural corpus of postcolonial studies, could easily be appropriated as such "lost ethnic Objects," namely, Allende's discourse and Nyerere's translation. With this characterization, I do not wish to allude to any intrinsic quality of the texts

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<sup>317</sup> As elaborated in Chapter Two, I contend that a symptomatic reading of culture continues to be pertinent today.

themselves, but to the implications of summoning them in particular ways and in particular discursive contexts.

The problem sketched by Žižek does not relate to what the fetish promises to make recoverable and available, but to its failure to fulfill that promise, a failure that defines the fetish as an ideological construct. As argued in Chapter One, Adorno argues that the act of synthesis that characterizes thought (and ideology as a mode of thought) always abuses the reality it alleges to account for, as it is simultaneously and inevitably an act of exclusion (1983: 146-48). Every concept and every ideology is a violation, in the sense that it excludes something and at the same time negates its own act of exclusion. Therefore, a critique of ideology must necessarily employ the tools it sets out to criticize. It must negate the negation that defines the ideology under scrutiny. This negation of the negation is brought about by *realizing* within the concept or the ideology what the concept or ideology promises and yet denies (Adorno 1983: 147).

In my earlier analyses of postcolonial discourses, I have put emphasis on the constitutive exclusion by which those discourses are shaped; namely, that of the postcolonial other as an actual subject. If the inclusion of remainders that stand in for that excluded subject indeed managed to keep their promise, that is, to incorporate the postcolonial other as an actual subject, then, in Adornian terms, that aspect of postcolonial theory would transcend its own ideological status. In an effort to negate the constitutive negation of postcolonial theory, I turn my attention away from it and towards a contrapuntal object of analysis, discourses articulated by organic Third-World intellectuals. I contend that these discourses perform a productive critique of postcolonial theory insofar as they bring about a realization of its unfulfilled promise.<sup>318</sup> At the same time, with this action I also enact a typically postcolonial move; a move through which I seek to positively probe the possibilities offered by “the promise” of postcolonial theory, and by its characteristic inclusion of the remainder of the “lost ethnic” other, to which Žižek refers. Towards that end, I focus on the degree to which and modes in which the texts analyzed intervene in that unfulfilled promise, and the import of this to the field of postcolonial studies.

As Mitchell argues, the fetish is an object into which life and value have been transferred and then forgotten (1986: 193, 196). Hence, the negation of the fetish’s negation implies not only the remembrance and back tracing of the projection that constituted it (i.e., a negation of its constitutive exclusion), but also the realization of its promise to deliver the qualities and values it

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<sup>318</sup> Here Bal’s operative presupposition that the “object” can “speak back” acquires a central role, concerning both the methodological and the ontological dimensions of the word “object” (2002: 45).

allegedly possesses. Only this (im)possible task would undo the fetish as a fetish.<sup>319</sup> In selecting discourses by Nyerere and Allende as remainders of a time and place outside so-called “Western” or, more accurately, First-World academic postmodernity, I pursue the fulfillment of their promise by allowing their congealed values to operate in relation to the context in which I recall them. In other words, I intend to realize them as historically operative sites of ideological contestation in the context of the present hegemony. In so doing, I assess the degree to which the connection with these objects as one that “allows us to claim that we remain faithful to our ethnic roots while fully participating in the global capitalist game” may be transcended (Žižek 2000: 659).

The fetish is not an object – such a conception would imply avowing the fetishistic ideology by which the abstraction in question is reified as an object – but a particular form of relating to it. Hence, I refer to Allende’s and Nyerere’s discourses as “fetishes” only insofar as they are framed here as paradigmatic remainders of the excluded other that, throughout this study, I have attempted to trace. Before turning to my exploration of the first of those, suffice it to add that both of them, while having characteristics that allow them to operate as the typically “lost ethnic Object” of postcolonial studies, also exceed that enclosure. Not only because the socio-political position of their authors is greatly privileged within their respective national contexts, but also because the ideological projects of which they are a part systematically exclude ethnic categorization and focus on a critique of capitalism in its global dimension. If, for Žižek, the problem with “the lost ethnic Object” is how it “is used to legitimize ... the full and unconstrained participation in global capitalism,” then the fact that Allende’s and Nyerere’s discourses can be seen as such objects while still participating as voices that share Žižek’s concern may help to re-elaborate the terms of the debate (2000: 659).

### **The Promise at the Interstices of Language**

In 1969, Julius Nyerere, Tanzania’s first independent president, translated William Shakespeare’s *The Merchant of Venice* into Swahili. I approach that translation, *Mabepari wa Venisi*, as a literary piece in its own right. I have argued, by way of Michel Foucault, that the author is not a person, but a “rational entity” that is “assigned a ‘realistic’ dimension” by conflating the writer (a social agent) and the “author-function” (the articulating principle of the text) into a single figure (1977: 124). Thus, the author is retroactively constructed in reception, at least partially so. That construction is a

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<sup>319</sup> I follow Spivak’s usage of “(im)possibility”; see 1987: 263, 308.

naturalized site of coherence, at which we situate the sense of “sense” a text makes for us. I contend that Nyerere, who was largely responsible for making the country what political theorists have described as the exception to the failure of the nation-state in Africa, was a person of great authority and popularity, in whom mechanisms parallel to those of the author figure in the West found their convergence.<sup>320</sup>

More than twenty years in office, spanning from independence until his resignation, Nyerere was the imaginary articulating principle of what Benedict Anderson has called an “imagined community” (1983). Because of this, Nyerere may be thought of as the author of the nation. I do not mean to suggest that the nation was built through his agency, but quite the opposite. I refer to Nyerere as the author of the nation in the Foucauldian sense of “author”; Nyerere as the receptacle of the idea of the nation. Nyerere’s political ideology and the policies he implemented are known as *Ujamaa* (familyhood) and *Kujitegemea* (self-reliance), which have been translated together as “African Socialism,” although *Ujamaa* is also used generically. With a historical experience in which forms of political organization had cohered around people rather than institutions, the *Ujamaa* family metaphor extended to Nyerere as the head of the nation-wide family. The nation, as a “rational entity,” was “assigned a ‘realistic’ dimension” in the person of Julius Nyerere (Foucault: 124). In this context, the meaning produced by *Mabepari* is not so much the result of the continuities between the sense it makes and the social agent who wrote it in Swahili, but rather the result of the infiltration of the author-effect produced by Nyerere as the articulating principle of the nation into *Mabepari*.

*Ujamaa* was also, so to speak, a translation of Marxism into the Tanzanian context as well as a critique of it from a postcolonial perspective. In this process of translation, African Socialism drew on a wider range of ideologies, for which reason it has been criticized as lacking in discursive autonomy and methodological rigor.<sup>321</sup> I contend that similarly ethnocentric criteria operate in the dismissal of Nyerere’s literary pieces. While *Mabepari* is usually regarded by modernist Western critics as merely a translation, in East Africa it is part of the established literary canon.

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<sup>320</sup> See Pels (1999: 2). Pels mentions but does not endorse that view of Tanzania, because celebratory approaches to Tanzanian nationalism focus only on State agency.

<sup>321</sup> Through *Ujamaa*, Nyerere sought to address those questions which escaped Marxism as a Eurocentric perspective and that concerned Tanzania as an extremely poor nation in the context of the Cold War and increasing globalization. Although Nyerere followed a policy of non-alignment, the pressures he was subject to were far greater from the capitalist side. Even though Tanzania was one of the poorest countries in the world, Nyerere resisted the entrance of the World Bank and the IMF into the country for nearly two decades after Tanzania’s (then Tanganyika’s) independence in 1961.

I approach *Mabepari* as a literary work in its own right because it is written from a new site of authority, because it is written in interaction with a different historical context, and because it requires the manipulation of a different language. This last aspect is important since, as Frankfurt scholar Walter Benjamin has argued, we “generally regard as the essential substance of a literary work what it contains in addition to information” (2007). Crucially, I approach *Mabepari* as an autonomous work because it is regarded as such from within the literary tradition to which it belongs.

In Tanzania, Nyerere’s Shakespearean translations have been instituted as literature in the full sense of the term. Even in neighboring Kenya, Nyerere’s translations occupy a place in syllabuses of Swahili literature, and they are assumed to be proper literary pieces by both local anthologists and the general public (see Mazrui [Alamin] 1996: 67-68). John Allen, who belonged to a conservative school of literary appreciation, took up the task of a formal literary analysis of Nyerere’s use of the Swahili language. From his modernist understanding of literature, Allen implicitly argued for Nyerere’s admittance into the literary canon, to the point of comparing him with Chaucer (1964: 54).

Focusing on how *Mabepari* produces a sense of its own by exploiting something other than the explicit or constative level of the play’s discourse, I depart from a performative understanding of language. The performative dimension of language has long been a central concern in the Swahili literary tradition. This fact questions the relevance of “ontological rather than epistemological” questions that, as van Alphen observes, characterizes discussions of postcolonial in opposition to Western, modernist literature (2003: 121).

Technically, *Mabepari* is still a translation. But precisely due to its nature as a translation, it allows me to explore how “the other” is constructed from this East African site, a place that in Western criticism is usually essentialized as that of the Other, while rarely being considered as a site of enunciation discussing the question of otherness itself.<sup>322</sup> For this reason, I focus on the play’s

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<sup>322</sup> Since the absorptive capacity of Swahili language has played a crucial role in the construction of its culture and literature, Alamin Mazrui argues for undoing the translation-original opposition when considering East African literature (1996). In a response to Mazrui, Alwi Shatry writes that the “literary class” that Mazrui represents is composed by a political and economic elite, who speak Swahili only as a second or third language, and know nothing of its traditions. Shatry argues that the emphasis Mazrui places on literature as textuality is insufficient. That stance, he continues, dismisses the fact that translations awaken a sense of otherness that cannot be overcome: “Translations cannot conceivably and entirely subvert that sense of otherness by the simple process of trans-textualizing. An appreciation of translations as *literature* would presumably include a faithful transposition of the basic components that created the original: text, meaning and especially the context.” (1996: 74; emphasis in text)

employment of a formal literary device I term “migratory cliché,” which produces meaning by structuring the audience’s relationship with otherness.

The term “cliché,” which is now used to denote a stereotyped expression, initially referred to the carved-out surface from which copies were made in printing. Thus, the cliché was, to the receptor, a pseudo-original, since she could only deduce it from a printed copy (Imbs 1997: 913). According to the Oxford English Dictionary (*OED*), the contemporary meaning of the term makes its first appearance in an English text in 1892. The usage historically coincides with the emergence of modernist art, which, in its concern for originality, reduced the cliché to the sphere of kitsch.<sup>323</sup>

Because they are stereotyped forms of expression, clichés denote how and where particular meanings are fixed within a culture. Clichés may thus be understood as meaningfully biased condensations of knowledge, silent referents in the construction of discourse, and assumed categories in the construction of everyday life. As in Foucault’s notion of *savoir*, the bias here is not to the detriment of knowledge but constitutive of it (2002: 200-205). Thus, clichés offer an account of how a particular image is fused with a particular knowledge, across generations, in a given cultural context. Yet, while clichés thrive on the receptor’s familiarity with the image and on the receptor’s cultural presuppositions, they may also be creatively exploited to produce not only identification, but also estrangement. As pointed out by Dutch sociologist Anton Zijderveld, that was the declared attempt in the employment of clichés in Brechtian theatre and Dadaist art (1979: 99-100).

A similar double effect is provoked by the clichés in *Mabepari*, which not only inhabit their original context, but also travel. As clichés are culturally embedded, the distance to the original context brings about estrangement. Simultaneously, the cliché characters and sceneries also establish relatively fixed associations according to the cultural experience of the context of reception. As a form of shorthand to their new context, migratory clichés awaken in the audience the immediate identification of elements in the fiction with corresponding elements in their own cultural experience. As deferred links to the original context, migratory clichés clash with local conventions and expectations, thus triggering critical distance. Because identification and estrangement are provoked simultaneously, and because they are triggered by the same cliché character or scenery, the processes of identification and estrangement in migratory clichés function

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<sup>323</sup> Zijderveld states that “when clichés rule the sphere of art ... we speak of kitsch,” because its products are “easy to consume and easy to digest,” while “aesthetic renewal and originality are not its aim” (1979: 98). As Bagnall relates, in Western canonical art of previous periods, clichés were highly valued. Writers exploited the possibilities clichés offered for inter-textual evocation, irony and rhythmic usages (1985: 11-27).

in a constant and mutually constitutive tension. When the tension between these superposed processes is recognized (yet not necessarily resolved) by a receptor, a dialectical synthesis is achieved.

That recognition implies the constant sway between an “outsider” or etic and an “insider” or emic appreciation of a given cliché.<sup>324</sup> That is to say, the receptor is taken to appreciate the cliché as it plays out in her culture, and as it plays out in the “other” culture. Yet, that perspectival sway exceeds anthropological enclosure. Appealing to both the audience’s emic and etic positions, migratory clichés evidence not only a relational understanding of those categories, but also a heightened awareness of the preposterous construction of cultural difference. Thinking along Adorno’s line of thought, it may be said that the constitutive exclusion of cultural difference (particularly in the context of 1969 Tanzania) is the unity of the underlying economic system through which colonizer and colonized territories are polarized into contrasting and supposedly independent cultures. Migratory clichés may be said to perform a negation of that constitutive exclusion. In order to explore how this occurs, let us now turn to the text.

Nyerere’s translation is faithful to the original to the degree that even the character’s names and place names are the same as in Shakespeare. They are accommodated only insofar as it is necessary for them to be pronounced fluently according to Swahili phonetics. These phonetic adaptations facilitate an immediacy of articulation between the fiction and the context of reception, literally inserting the referents into the new context. A series of associations between text and place of reception are thus facilitated from the start. This simple move is a key displacement for identification to operate in the play’s clichés; another reason for which I call them migratory.

*Mabepari*’s plot is practically identical to that of *The Merchant*. Antonio is a rich man, but his wealth is presently at sea. So, he seeks out Shailoki, a professional moneylender, to obtain a loan. But Antonio, given his habit of lending people money without asking for interest, has long inspired Shailoki’s hatred. Thus, Shailoki designs a contract that promises him a pound of Antonio’s flesh were he unable to pay back on time. Antonio thoughtlessly accepts. The female protagonist, Poshia, devices an artifice to save Antonio when he cannot pay back the debt. In her countryside residence of Belimonti, Poshia had at first been presented to us as a beautiful

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<sup>324</sup> As mentioned in the previous chapter, in anthropology, the methodological questions brought forth by the place the anthropologist holds in relation to the culture she is studying is discussed through the terms *etic* and *emic* (see fn. 304). While identification and estrangement hold an analogous dialectic to that held between the emic and the etic, the former only refer to the *effects* produced. However, emic and etic refer to the cultural sites of enunciation and reception. Thus, they allow me to name the specific geo-historical sites involved in the sense of cultural otherness mobilized by *Mabepari*.

aristocratic heiress, a prototype of femininity, investing her time and energy in matters of love and courtship exclusively. Yet, the artifice she devises requires her to travel to Venisi and dress up as a man. She appears in complete control of the situation at the court where the Shailoki-Antonio trial is being held, admirable in her authority, wit and intelligence. She acts as the depositary and executioner of law and rationality.

It has been postulated by Derrida (2001), among others, that in *The Merchant*, Portia's performance violently enforces the existing regime of power, because she employs the rhetoric and authority of Christianity at the court of law to subjugate the Jewish Shylock. Derrida's analysis is centered on Portia's usage of the word "mercy." Technically speaking, the same interpretation can be attained when reading *Mabepari*. However, the translator displaces emphases to the point that such a reading can hardly stand concerning the translation.

While Jew vs. Christians is the racial tension that has received the greatest attention in criticism of Shakespeare's text, Nyerere seems to be less concerned with the racist questions surrounding Shailoki, which are openly problematized, than with the taken-for-granted-ness of associations established by common language usages such as "fair." The translator undoes the association of "fair" with blondness, justice and beauty that reiteratively takes place in *The Merchant*. (Shakespeare 1994: 389, 392-93, 402-03, 406; cf. Nyerere 1969: 6, 15, 17, 49, 50, 51, 58). Similarly, Nyerere exceptionally intervenes at the constative level of discourse when racism is naturalized through the use of racist material for comic effect (see Shakespeare: 406; cf. Nyerere: 61). Overall, he modifies the racist material of the original only where and when it is not subjected to a dialectics of identification and critical distance.

Furthermore, when taking into account *Mabepari's* site of re-articulation, new elements are set into play. Tanzanian cultural experience offers a series of dialogical counterpoints that turn Venisi and Belimonti into functional clichés in their contemporaneous context. In Africa, the urban enclave was associated with colonialist exploitation. Colonial economy caused a disarticulation between the forms of production and ways of life in urban and rural areas respectively. As argued by political economist Claude Ake, the urban enclaves were regarded as "alienated, hostile and incomprehensible to their environment"; "these centers were a piece of Europe in Africa" (1981: 44). Dar es Salaam, the main Tanzanian city and seaport, was the node articulating colony and metropolis. Even before European colonialism, it had been exploited as a nucleus of foreign-profited commerce by the sultanate of Oman. The Arab-biased cities and the association of their

economic power with the written word of the Koran preceded the European legitimization of cultural supremacy through the written text.

Furthermore, the rural-urban opposition in Nyerere's political ideology and governmental policies plays into that cliché opposition in the text. *Ujamaa* and *Kujitegemea* inherited the historical opposition between the urban and the rural. Taking into account Tanzania's neo-colonial economy, *Kujitegemea* departed from the premise that Tanzania should attain development by means of the country's greatest riches: land and the agricultural workforce rather than industry and foreign investment. The policies involved in *Ujamaa* included the re-settling of population in small rural villages with communitarian production systems and the decentralization of the urban-centered economy. These villages were designed according to the ideal prototype of pre-colonial rural societies. As Abdul Babu points out, these societies were conceived in romanticized terms as niches of brotherhood and mutual-respect, based on the right to work and to share equally the outcome of production (1981: 55). Thus, the very foundations of African Socialism (both economic and moral) are held up by a bucolic ideal. In the play, Belimonti awakens this bucolic ideal, while Venisi becomes associated with a foreign-influenced, text-legitimized urban enclave.

Venisi is associated with the absurd (written) contract and a wearisome legalist rhetoric. Meanwhile, in the rural area of Belimonti the contract that takes place is a verbal oath, and, despite the fanciful atmosphere, ensures a just and adequate outcome for everyone. In it, Poshia promises her dying father to take as a husband the man who chooses out of three caskets the one containing her portrait. At Belimonti, the conversations are full of language usages that allude to ancestral oral traditions. The contrivance of Poshia's father, although apparently a matter of a lucky guess, is actually a rational trial. In opposition to Antonio's rash promise in the urban context, later to be enforced by the authority of the written law, the fact that Poshia must keep her word is not a technicality, but a filial duty to fulfill, a way of honoring (the word of) her ancestor(s). Moreover, while it is men that occupy the urban scene, it is "women's talk" that prevails at Belimonti. Because of those associations and the way that they articulate in their context, the city and its legal institutions, associated with masculine rationality, appear to be *subverted* rather than reinforced by their rural and feminine counterpart, personified by Poshia in disguise.

In *Mabepari*, the only reason Poshia can access the court is a letter handed to the clerk and read by him out loud upon her entrance. The letter, supposedly written by a wise judge, indicates that his (male) assistant (that is, Poshia) will deliver the verdict. During her performance, Poshia calls the court's attention to the word for word phrasing of the bond and of Venisi's laws,

legitimizing her argument through the written text in its most literal reading. Her argumentation to save Antonio is based on taking the legalist discourse to its ultimate consequences, to the point that it proves itself absurd. Poshia concludes that Shailoki is entitled to the pound of flesh. However, she argues, the contract does not mention any blood. So, were Shailoki to spill a drop of Antonio's blood in the process, he would be severely judged, as stated in the city's laws (see Nyerere 1969: 67-74; Cf. Shakespeare 1994: 408-411).

In this way, strict rationality, despotically dictated by the written word, is exposed by Poshia's actions in all its absurdity when taken literally and independently of the socio-cultural context that actualizes its meaning. This text-legitimized law, which is associated with foreign intrusion in the Tanzanian context, is exposed as obtuse and shortsighted in its circular logic, and may only be challenged from its spatial and symbolically gendered margins. The letter, a written text of (faked) male authority and authorship, is paradoxically what sets the stage for the rural/feminine subalternity to enter the urban/masculine space. The urban/masculine site of power exerts its rule by means of the written word. With discourse being its site of hegemony, authority may only be subverted by a strategic *performance* of it.

Given that power and its language are hegemonic, Poshia's subversive practice can only be articulated in the language of authority itself. In translating *The Merchant*, Nyerere, much like Poshia, at once cites and converts English, the language of colonial authority, into Swahili, also known as the language of African Socialism. As in Poshia's strategy, in Nyerere's act of translation the quotation of hegemonic discourse is strict and to the letter, while the performative act of translation displaces the dominant discourse, making subversive use of its power. However, this parallelism between Nyerere and Poshia can only appear as evident from an emic position of reception.

On the Swahili coast, "woman" was traditionally employed as a metaphor to discuss (male) political subordination. The use of the metaphor provided security by working as a cover-up story, shielding the speaker from accusation and reprimand through ambiguity. Furthermore, this accustomed form of undercurrent intelligence played a central role in one of the three major literary pieces in the area, a poem entitled *Utenzi wa Mwana Kupona* (The Poem of Madame Kupona). A classic of the oral tradition, the poem is widely known in the area. Apparently, the poem is at odds with the epic and religious contents customary in classic Swahili poetry. It narrates the instructions a mother leaves her daughter on her deathbed, relating what is expected of her as a woman and how to deal with her husband. But, as is widely accepted and as Africanist linguist at Yale, Ann

Biersteker (1991) elaborates, the poem offers a second reading in which the husband stands for legal authority and the instructions indicate how to manipulate this authority from a subaltern position.

Besides the anecdotic parallelism between *Mwana Kuponu* and the instructions left to Poshia by her dying father, the poem is also indicative of the cultural usage of the feminine as metaphor for the subaltern. The feminine-masculine relationship in the fiction can be understood as metaphoric of subaltern-authority relationships in the public realm of politics. Nyerere's conversion of the language of colonial authority into Swahili resonates with Poshia's conversion of legalist rhetoric into an instrument of subversion. But this resonance is only possible if the receptor shares the codes allowing him to access the double *entendre*. For the Nyerere-Poshia parallelism to be achieved and imagined as a deliberate subtext, the receptor must be an insider. But, while the receptor's sense of proximity and familiarity is exploited, an estrangement effect simultaneously takes place.

Starting from the play's title, Nyerere seeks to establish a critical distance between the audience and what is represented in the fiction. Swahili language, due to a ten-century-long history of international commerce in the area, offers a wide range of synonyms for the word "merchant." But Nyerere disregards all and translates *The Merchant* as *Mabepari*. While *bepari* means "capitalist," the *ma-* prefix converts the noun into a plural. Hence, *Mabepari wa Venisi* literally means "The Capitalists of Venice." In situating the play in the socio-economic and ideological framework that gave birth to it, that title achieves an immediate distancing effect. It distinguishes a geographically, socially and ideologically situated "them" at a distance from the audience.

That distance is increased by the fact that the cover illustration of Nyerere's approved edition portrays Shailoki alone rather than more characters or Antonio on his own, since he is, after all, the merchant of Venice. Thus, it is Shailoki, the immoral, greedy character, who serves as the cliché to illustrate "The Capitalists of Venice." Furthermore, as Tanzanian-Canadian historian at Oxford, Faisal Devji, has argued, Shailoki is not to be taken as a Jew, but as representative of the Indian commercial bourgeoisie of East Africa, whose class interests were opposite to Nyerere's socialism. Devji rests his case, firstly, on the fact that "mabepari" can also be taken to mean "shopkeeper," which was the traditional occupation of Indian migrants in the area. Secondly, Devji's assertion that Shailoki is to be taken as Indian relies on a visual analysis of the illustrations of the published translation (2000: 182).

I concur with Devji, yet believe that the point must be taken further. While the translator does open up Shailoki's ethnic identity to ambiguity, Shailoki's Jewish identity also persists. The effect of this is that Shailoki's specific ethnicity is blurred, but the fact of discrimination as based on racial difference is highlighted. Thus, the emphasis is shifted from a particular identity to racial discrimination as such. As suggested by Žižek's interpretation of the figure of the Jew in certain contemporary discourses, particular ethnic groups tend to be essentialized as *the* place of racial difference in specific historical contexts (2008). In Nyerere's context, that tendency was particularly problematic due to the reactionary racism emerging after political independence.<sup>325</sup> The racially indefinite portrayal of Shailoki serves to disassociate given ethnic identities, whichever they may be, from particular moral qualities. In this sense, Nyerere's portrayal of the character transcends racist ideology. Employing the logic provided by Adorno, we may conceive of the constructedness of race as the constitutive exclusion of racist ideology. Shailoki's ambiguity, denying the actual existence of the category, serves to negate that constitutive exclusion.

While Shailoki brings up contending ethnic referents, a single identity is stressed regarding class. Hence, while both class difference and racial difference are exposed, only a particular class, and not a particular ethnic group, is targeted. *Mabepari* equates Shailoki with a capitalist class in other ways as well. When Shakespeare's Shylock talks of his Jewish countrymen, he refers to them as his "tribe." But Shailoki uses the term *taifa* (nation). There is an equivalent for "tribe" in Swahili, *kabila*. It is clearly distinct from the notion of *taifa* chosen for Shailoki, but Nyerere disregards it (Nyerere: 12, 57; cf. Shakespeare: 391, 405.) Since *kabila* does not have the pejorative connotation that "tribe" has in English, Nyerere's avoidance of the term cannot be attributed to that. The choice of *taifa* relocates *Shailoki* (stereotypical of capitalist immorality) from a position of ethnic subalternity (wherein he belongs to a "tribe") to one of equivalence with the other "Capitalists of Venice" (wherein both Europeans and Jews define themselves in terms of a "nation"). With this further step, Shailoki's ethnic identity is destabilized once more, since he can now also be taken to represent Europeans, the ethnic group most closely associated with capitalism in postcolonial Tanzania.

As I have argued, the clichés of the play are naturalized into their context of reception. However, they are still enacted in a story that takes place in the original socio-historical setting.

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<sup>325</sup> Those associations, insidious in Tanzanian society at the time, were a major concern for Nyerere as both ideologue and policy maker. At a time of great resentment towards the colonizers, and despite finding serious opposition from within, Nyerere struggled for equal rights for Tanzanian-born ethnic Europeans. His central objective was to avoid any racial criteria, whatever its purpose or direction, to be instituted in national laws and procedures. See Nyerere 1967.

Thus, Venice becomes Venisi; it does not become Dar es Salaam. Although Dar es Salaam may function as the most immediate reference to an audience trying to make sense of the urban dynamics at stake, still, the audience is made aware that the city portrayed is not the Tanzanian city-port, but the Italian one. The estrangement effect is thus also reached by the clash produced between the contending, superimposed images.

In Shakespeare's play, Venice is the archetype of the nascent bourgeois city-port and the splendor attained by mercantilism. As is evidenced by the English title, mercantilism is the central contextual referent of the play. The plot is triggered by a feature characteristic of mercantilism: the birth of credit-systems and their relationship to the increased geographical and socio-economic mobility of the population. Venice is also archetypal of the European city-port as the articulating node of the importing and consumer colonies. Venice's extreme accumulation of wealth is only possible at the expense of exploitation elsewhere. The richness brought to the port through the seas is constructed upon incipient European colonialism and global capitalism. Venice represents the nascent economic and ideological core of both.

Thus, when Dar es Salaam is invoked as an image attached to Venisi, it instantly clashes with it and functions not only as referent, but as also an extreme dialogical counterpoint. At the other end of the seas, at the other end of the colonial enterprise, at the other end of capitalist exploitation, and at the other end of the historical episode, Dar es Salaam's relation to Venice can never be a simple matter of analogy. Through the superimposition of the two city-referents, Nyerere invokes their continuity, a narrative held together by the singularity of the economic system that historically brought them into contact with each other and continues to do so. The foregrounding of that continuity is, once more, the negation of the constitutive negation of the belief in cultural difference as a foundational category.

Another migratory cliché provoking estrangement is Launseloti, the clown in *Mabepari*. Launseloti resonates with the figure of the traditional African bard of pre-colonial societies, who exploited the literary possibilities of language while narrating historical episodes and bringing news from neighboring villages. Initially, this resonance awakens the contrasting associations of the rural-urban opposition. In his rural environment and in his virtuous display of oral wit, Launseloti may solicit immediate empathy. However, something else immediately jumps out. Once the cliché evokes a local referent, this referent in turn contrasts with the fictional figure that produced it. In comparison with the traditional African bard, Launseloti causes estrangement, since his entertaining function is not associated with an informative one, as would be expected. To transmit news for the

community is not his purpose. He is a clown employed for the entertainment of a European aristocracy.

That superimposition leads the audience to recognize a similar yet crucially different performative tradition. Staged theatre was introduced in Tanzania for the consumption of the non-European masses only until the *Ujamaa* period. Thus, the audience is confronted in Launseloti with a figure that, from the emic point of view, is more akin to “theater” than the event in which they are presently watching him. This effect is heightened by the fact that Launseloti recites riddles in rhymed verse, the accustomed form of speech in Tanzanian theatrical practices. Identifying him as the traditional African bard, the audience is led to seek out the intricate social allusions that are customary and central to his performances. But Launseloti makes none. Nevertheless, precisely because of this fact, he *is* one. In the estrangement provoked by the silenced Launseloti, the audience is confronted with the difference between two forms of “theater.” Launseloti produces a meta-theatrical effect in the Tanzanian postcolonial context; he is the play-within-the-play. In Launseloti, as a migratory cliché, the audience is led to an estrangement before their own place and time; before the performance of which they are a part.

As I have argued, *Mabepari* produces a coherent discourse that significantly diverges from that of *The Merchant*. This discourse is situated at the point of encounter between text and receptor. Although, strictly speaking, my own encounter with the text is all I can account for, I have focused on the meaning produced in the relationship between *Mabepari* and its Tanzanian site of trans-contextualization to argue that Nyerere preposterously functions as author of the play in a reception that exceeds my own. Given that the meaning produced by this relationship is not a result of the constative statements made in the play, but of forms of re-articulation that have the effect of commenting on the constative level of discourse, the meaning produced by *Mabepari* may be described as meta-discursive. *Mabepari* comments not only on the original (con)text, but also on its own nature as a translation. In the Nyerere-Poshia parallelism, *Mabepari* comments on itself as a translation of dominant (written) discourse; in Launseloti, it comments on itself as a translation of theatrical form; and in Shailoki’s ethnic indeterminacy it comments on itself as a trans-contextualization. In its ultimate migratory cliché, *Mabepari wa Venisi* rebels against any claim of authorship through its mechanism of multiplication and superimposition. To Shakespeare and Nyerere the translator, Nyerere the president is added, and these three contending referents lead the receptor to recognizing that the referent she author-izes is, in fact, a choice, a construct of reception.

Migratory clichés structure contending referents into formal mechanisms of meaning-production. A singular image is loaded with two or more culturally shaped and historically consolidated semantic charges. Their superimposition, converging identification and estrangement into interdependent processes, allows for recognition to take place. Based on the interplay between the emic and the etic, recognition is the mechanism that best allows for an understanding of the ways in which *Mabepari* relates to its own situatedness: producing otherness as a by-product of identity, but also producing identity as a by-product of otherness. Thus, otherness is not positioned as an essential quality but understood as a relative function. As I have examined in Chapter One, this is precisely the understanding of otherness that a number of writings in postcolonial theory fail to recognize. The failure implies that epistemological insights such as the one articulated by *Mabepari* are largely ignored, given the preponderant use of African works merely as signs of difference. Oftentimes, the analysts' fetishistic conceptualization of the African other is implied by their overcautious refusal to allege the capacity to represent that other, in sharp contrast with their constant and unproblematized claim of representing the voice of Western writers, whether it be through literary exegesis of fiction or the discussion of other theorists' work.

The African other continues to be excluded from those dialogues largely because, in contemporary discourse, Africa is aligned with the idea of a blank space as much as it was in the modernist tradition. Ernst van Alphen explains with reference to *Heart of Darkness*:

Conrad's narrator, Marlow, recalls how, as a little boy, he used to be fascinated by the blank spaces on maps, in particular the blank space in the interior of Africa ... Marlow confuses the map with what it represents. If the map is blank then the corresponding area in the real world must also be an empty space, waiting for conquest ... The blank spaces on Marlow's map represent the unknown and instigate an epistemological desire, which is supposed to legitimize the imperialist expansion. The cognitive desire to conquer the unknown results in the imperialist desire to conquer the land as the embodiment of the unknown ... (2003: 126)

Van Alphen further proposes that the equation between Africa and the blank space persists in contemporary works, even if in the latter these spaces "do not provoke the epistemological wish to explore the unknown; instead, they provoke 'ontological improvisation'" (126). The change responds to the fact that the blank space functions as a recipient of the onlooker's imagination, and imagination itself is historically conditioned. In van Alphen's words:

Imagination is not like a blank space. It is also a space filled with words and images that come from elsewhere and that have their own history. Bakhtin has argued that words and images do not forget where they have been, they carry the meanings produced by earlier uses of them. This means, importantly for our discussion, that representations of Africa that refrain from mimetic claims and which produce Africa through textual play can be as harmful or as ideologically stained as so-called realist representations can be. (2003: 127)

Representation changes in kind, yet it is still there in both cases. The representation of postcolonial otherness as a blank space, devised as a way in which some contemporary theorists seek to elude the imposition of their own power/knowledge, is still a representation.

As I have argued in previous chapters, postcolonial theorists such as Spivak recognize the virtual inescapability from representation, yet they find a refuge from it in performativity. Thus, the postcolonial other is constantly associated with the performative aspect of language, whether at the level of the theorist's individual act of enunciation, or with regard to a wider sphere of social discursive practices. As indicated in Chapter One, Rey Chow (1998) denounces the first of these because, when the geo-cultural other is reduced to that which in the Western theorist's act of enunciation elides representation, there is a substitution of internal for external otherness that responds to the class interest of such theorists. Regarding the second, Spivak advocates the association of the subaltern other with the performative aspect of language. She argues that, in the sphere of postcolonial subalternity, "the history of the Enlightenment episteme is 'cited' ... as the script is cited for an actor's interpretation" (Spivak 1993a: 48). While Western hegemony is associated with the overt, dominant discourse, the subaltern episteme is aligned with pure performativity, and, as Spivak implies elsewhere, the place of the performative is located in the silences or blank spaces of language (1993b: 181).

By analyzing a translation, I have been able to focus on this silent (postcolonial) agency operating at the margins of the constative and associated to the performative aspect of language. In so doing, I have sought to probe the degree to which and modes in which the blank space as a fetish of the postcolonial other may fulfill its promise. Unlike the blank space on the map facing Marlow, however, the association of the postcolonial other with the interstices of language – an association paradigmatically linked to Bhabha (1994) – does not promise virgin land in expectation of conquest. Yet, much like the blank space faced by Marlow, the interstices of language that postcolonial theory associates with the geo-cultural other instigate the onlooker's epistemological desire and, confusing blankness as representation with blankness as impossibility to represent,

legitimize the political pertinence of the latter's gaze. The blank space of a text holds a promise that, as van Alphen argues, is informed by the place from which it is appreciated.

Yet, blank spaces are also the places of articulation *par excellence*. As both a syntactic conjunction and as a representation of silences in pronunciation, those spaces in a text form the counterweight that, distinguishing parts, assemble a totality. While blank spaces are sites of ambiguity, they are also places of definition, which specify discourse by setting its boundaries. This is why it is relevant to emphasize what Nyerere himself leaves out, the constitutive exclusion of *Mabepari*, which, I argue, is the structuralist principle of internal coherence. As I have mentioned, *Ujamaa* extensively appropriated material from diverse sources, ranging from Marxism to Liberal Humanism and Christianity. Consequently, Nyerere's political writings have been disregarded as eclectic and excluded from political theory.

In Western circles, the Argentinean philosopher Federico Álvarez argues, the opposition between eclecticism and synthesis traditionally served the debate on whether a corpus of writings should be considered theory or not. When defenders and opponents of Marxism were debating whether it should be legitimized as a theory or taken simply as an ideology, both sides centrally agreed on the fact that those categories were distinct and that the distinction was a matter of whether Marxism achieved dialectical synthesis or remained simply eclectic. The foundational agreement was possible because both opponents and defenders shared a structuralist view of theory as being self-sufficient, internally coherent and having inner mechanisms for self-validation (2002: 43, 49, 256-261). Yet, as Álvarez goes on to argue, the eclecticism vs. dialectic synthesis opposition is undermined once we understand eclecticism as an open system: a coherent whole, but founded upon external discursive referents and untraceable to a unique origin (257-263).

The underestimation of Nyerere's political theory on the grounds of its eclecticism is re-enacted in the realm of the aesthetic when Nyerere's translation is disregarded because of structuralist preconceptions of the literary work as autonomous, enjoying a coherence based exclusively on internal articulations. In that way, and as a silent co-narrative of *The Merchant*, *Mabepari* exposes what Chakrabarty (2000) would call the "provincial" nature of the Western conception of a canonical literary work, which has dominated since the Renaissance. As the place of reification of the postcolonial other, *Mabepari* is a blank space that acquires positive qualities by exploiting the re-articulation of specifically situated referents, and thus producing a meaning that denies, just as it fulfills, what our historically conditioned expectations promise.

Having approached the promise contained in the blank spaces that elide representation, I now want to turn to the promise of representation itself. In the following section, I focus on the relation between the subjects that represent others and the subjects that are addressed by that gesture. I explore the possibility of understanding the promise of the act of representation as a “compromise.” Leaving the term’s negative connotations aside, I employ it in the Spanish sense and now obsolete English sense as “mutual promise” (*OED*). That mutuality becomes critical when it is enacted across the new international division of labor (NIDL).

### **Compromising Subjects of Address**

In the general Introduction, I have referred to Simon Critchley to indicate my concern with the contemporary underestimation of the NIDL as an analytical category for the humanities. Here, I am concerned with how that underestimation correlates to the stereotypical location of theory in the First World, and case-specific studies in the Third. Critchley’s stance in this regard may be best appreciated in “Anarchic Metapolitics: Political Subjectivity and Political Action after Marx,” the last chapter of his book, *Infinitely Demanding: Ethics of Commitment, Politics of Resistance* (2007).

The book is divided into four chapters, preceded by an introductory section. Except for the last chapter, the book is dedicated to the philosophical analysis of ethical subjectivity. Throughout the chapters, the subject is treated as an abstract, universal entity, and discussed in relation to the work of major contemporary and classic philosophers from the Western cannon. In the last chapter, however, the author makes use of his previous analyses to propose a way in which political subjectivity should be understood and practiced in the contemporary global context. Advocating a neo-anarchist position, which he terms “anarchic metapolitics,” Critchley proposes a political subjectivity that is reliant on its ethical counterpart (92-93). Hence, both teleologically and conceptually, Critchley’s form of political subjectivity exists independently of, and prior to, the political context.

In the last chapter, Critchley asks: “Are we witnessing, as Marx and Engels foresaw with particular clarity in the *Manifesto*, a simplification of the class structure into the opposed poles of bourgeoisie and proletariat?” (97) The author answers as follows:

Let’s just say that I have my doubts. Rather than a simplification of class positions, one might talk of a multiplication of class actors in society, of society being made up by an

increasingly complex fabric of class identifications, rendered even more intricate by other sets of identifications, whether gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or whatever. (97)

Notice that, in this passage, class positions today are described as being in a situation of “multiplication”, as opposed to “simplification,” independently of “gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or whatever [*sic.*],” all identities that appear only as addenda, which “render even more intricate” the class multiplication that is already at stake. Notice also that, in his answer, Critchley does not discuss the issue of “class structure” that he announced when he formulated the question. He has switched to the question of “class identifications” in relation to “other sets of identifications.” Strictly speaking, class conscience can be seen as a form of identification, but class as such is an analytical category. Indeed, it is by virtue of its status as such that “Marx and Engels foresaw ... a simplification of the class structure into the opposed poles of bourgeoisie and proletariat.”<sup>326</sup>

Critchley’s analysis holds only insofar as it is limited to a (First-World) national context. As a consequence of his neo-anarchist worldview, Critchley reduces the site of repressive power to that of the Nation-State (see 92, 112-114, 148).<sup>327</sup> That removes from view the operative force of the NIDL. I argue that when a global perspective is taken into account, we are indeed witnessing today the polarization of class positions on each side of the international division of labor, as Marx and Engels foresaw. I sustain that argument through my analysis of Allende’s and Marcos’s discourses below. Before doing so, I round off this glimpse into Critchley’s methodological approach and representational claims.

Once he has established his position, Critchley sets out to “illustrate [his] argument with an example borrowed from the work of Courtney Jung” (105). There, Critchley’s account of political subjectivity in Mexican indigenous movements is three times removed from the object it claims to account for. First, because he only briefly derives the concept of “political subjectivity” from a much more in depth discussion of “ethical subjectivity” in earlier chapters. Secondly, because he draws from that a priori definition of “political subjectivity” to arbitrarily account for a historically

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<sup>326</sup> It is a separate issue that this structural simplification would lead to a heightened class consciousness, the latter being associated to the idea of the revolution of the proletariat. Moreover, as I discussed in Chapter Two, in the context of Bhabha’s critique of Jameson, the conflation between class as an analytical category pointing to an overall structure and class as a form of identification designating an ontic set of individuals is methodologically problematic. Furthermore, Critchley’s understanding of the political as the “interstitial distance” occurring “*within* the state” may also be read in the light of the association between subaltern otherness and the blank space discussed above (113, emphasis in text).

<sup>327</sup> Dutch philosopher at Erasmus University, Gijs van Oenen (2008), has devised the term “posh anarchism” to characterize Critchley’s position in this regard.

specific situation, which appears as a mere example to illustrate his arguments, but is allowed no incidence in the definition itself. And, finally, the illustration is attained through a single second hand source, authored by Courtney Jung.

Hence, it is no surprise that Critchley's account of contemporary indigenous movements in Mexico leaves out major issues. The thing that Critchley finds "fascinating" about "the example of Mexican indigenous political identity is the way in which a new political subject is formed against the repressive actions of the state" (107). In his discussion, Critchley signals the Mexican state as the sole repressive force at play without taking into consideration the role of transnational economic interests, nor the consequences of U.S.A. imperialism, past and present. His preconception of the State as an abstract category does not allow him to recognize the specificity of a Third-World, ex-colonial and neo-colonized state, nor its limitations and complicities in relation to ongoing economic and political interventions from abroad. His exploration of the role of transnational forces is therefore limited to a celebration of the positive impact of local alliances with the international civil community (107). In the contrasting degree of punctiliousness with which he approaches abstract discussions in ethics, on the one hand, and the Mexican example, on the other, Critchley shows a *de facto* belief that works in the Western philosophical canon require elaborate critical attention while a complex political situation in a far away Third-World country can be accounted for in a single, off-handed gesture.

Critchley's section on Mexican indigenous subjects is concluded by a brief "example of women's rights in the context of the French Revolution" (110). In both cases, he is concerned with how marginal subjects have become articulate, because "[t]he problem of political subjectivity is a question of *naming*, of naming a political subject and organizing politically around that name" (91, emphasis in text). He proposes that "[p]olitics is always about nomination" (103), and goes on to argue that,

[t]he logic of political nomination, I take it, is that a determinate particularity in society is hegemonically constructed into a universality ... That is, the universal is not read off from the script of some pre-given ontology but posited in a specific situation. (104)

I initially endorse Critchley's definition of political subjectivity and of the realm of the political. However, I am not at ease with the inconsistency he shows towards those definitions. In the juxtaposition of indigenous and female subjects, who become articulate and, hence, political, a

possible equivalent for Spivak's "subaltern" is thematized.<sup>328</sup> Yet, in contrast to her, Critchley argues that the subjects he represents are indeed articulate to the extent that they are aggregated around a name (103). His implicit claim is that the subaltern *can* speak, while that claim is achieved by departing from a "pre-given ontology" (his a priori reflection on ethical subjectivity), and by the manifold removals described above, through which he accounts for the "specific situation" of indigenous and female subaltern subjects. Hence, Critchley's affirmation that the subaltern can speak is imposed a priori and at a significant distance away from the supposed subjects of that speech. If "[p]olitics is always about nomination," and a book always-already "a question of naming," *Infinitely Demanding* is a paradigmatic example of the foreclosure of subaltern speech (103).

I now turn to Allende to explore whether that foreclosure may be transcended when representation is enacted in the context of a different cultural relation to language and from a different socio-historical locus.<sup>329</sup> In approaching this aesthetically and politically different configuration of representation, I also probe whether the promise implied in Critchley's definition of politics – that the subaltern *can* speak when aggregated around a name – can hold in this new discursive situation. Let me recall Allende's words:

Seguramente Radio Magallanes será acallada y el metal tranquilo de mi voz ya no llegará a ustedes. No importa. La seguirán oyendo.

[Radio Magallanes will surely be hushed and the tranquil metal of my voice will no longer reach you. It doesn't matter. You will keep on hearing it.]<sup>330</sup>

While the poetic qualities of these words might have us imagine otherwise, they were expressed impromptu and transmitted through live radio broadcast on September 11<sup>th</sup>, 1973, in a life-or-death situation. The poetic qualities of the words are produced by the heightened consciousness of language that they trace. That objectified self-reflexive relation is firstly enacted at the level of its phonetic textures, which I have failed to reproduce in English. In the Spanish audio, the long, first sentence has an elongated but secure cadence, achieved through the prominence of polysyllabic words and their patterns of accentuation, as well as a soothing alliteration in the constant repetition

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<sup>328</sup> For discussions of Spivak's 1994 (1985) text, see Chapters One, Two and Three.

<sup>329</sup> For an analysis of the role of language in Chilean society around this period, see Gräbner 2007: 76-120.

<sup>330</sup> A recording of the radio broadcasting of this discourse may be accessed at <<http://www.ciudadseva.com/textos/otros/sa-11sep.mp3>>. The transcript and translations here and below are mine.

of the “s” sound (note that in American Spanish the “z” is also pronounced as “s”). The turn of thought in the second sentence is accompanied by a clear change in rhythm. The brevity of the second sentence and the grave prosodic accent that the Spanish word “importa” demands over the “o,” gives it a weighty, conclusive character. The last sentence, brief but completing the alliterative pattern, may be seen as a synthesis of the two mechanisms. Thus, a proper way to accompany a sense of hope and the reassurance of sublimation that are discursively expressed is achieved.

Prosodically, Allende marks his full stops clearly with silences that persist just a bit longer than usual. While they may be read as a rhetorical device, allowing for his words to sink in and contributing to a sense of momentousness, it also points to the penetration of the speaker’s consciousness of language up to its smallest analytical unit, as sound structured by silences.

That heightened consciousness of language is also played out at the discursive level. Actually, that is the very issue at stake, more radically so when fully taken in context. Minutes after pronouncing the words, Allende would sacrifice his life in order to keep his word. Radio Portales and Radio Corporación, the two other media intermittently broadcasting Allende’s statements during the critical hours of the coup, have already been bombarded.<sup>331</sup> Likewise, Radio Magallanes will be bombarded; not “hushed.” Yet, Allende refers to the expected military attack as a gesture through which people are silenced, while metaphorically transforming his own voice into a “metal” weapon.

Allende’s speech denotes a profound and subtle concern for the relationship between the performative and the representational aspects of language. Yet, to use J. L. Austin’s (1976) phrase, his way of “doing things with words” exceeds a myopic conception of it as limited to the relationship between technical acts and the metaphysical claims implied in discourse, regardless of historical context. From *La casa de la moneda*, the Chilean presidential palace surrounded at the moment by the armed forces and roofed by a helicopter that offered the president a comfortable surrender and exile, Allende continues to address those by whom he was elected:

Ante estos hechos sólo me cabe decir a los trabajadores: Yo no voy a renunciar. Colocado en un tránsito histórico, pagaré con mi vida la lealtad del pueblo ... quiero agradecerles ... la confianza que depositaron en un hombre que sólo fue intérprete de grandes anhelos de

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<sup>331</sup> The CIA, headed by Henry Kissinger, plotted and financed the coup, co-opting large sectors of the Chilean military. Augusto Pinochet, who was to install himself as Chile’s dictator for the next 17 years, headed the overthrow. The U.S.A. government did not confirm its participation in the Chilean coup until recent declassification of documents related to the coup. Digital copies of these documents may be accessed through The George Washington University National Security Archive <<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB8/nsaebb8.htm>>

justicia, que empeñó su palabra en que respetaría la constitución y la ley, y así lo hizo ... Estas son mis últimas palabras y tengo la certeza de que mi sacrificio no será en vano, tengo la certeza de que, por lo menos, será una lección moral que castigará la felonía, la cobardía y la traición. (1973)

[Faced by these facts, I can only tell the workers: I will not surrender. Placed at a historical juncture, I will pay with my life the loyalty of the people ... I want to thank you ... for the faith that you deposited in a man who was only an interpreter of vehement desires for justice, that pawned his word to respect the constitution and the law and acted accordingly ... These are my last words and I have the certainty that my sacrifice will not be in vain, I have the certainty that, at least, they will be a moral punishment for felony, cowardice and treason. (1973)]<sup>332</sup>

In the recording, Allende's last words are followed by the sound of bombardments.

These words, and the act of self sacrifice that ensues, are the keeping of a promise, made three years earlier, during Allende's first speech as elected president:

Yo les digo a ustedes compañeros, compañeros de tantos años, se los digo con calma, con absoluta tranquilidad: Yo no tengo pasta de apóstol, ni pasta de Mesías. No tengo condiciones de mártir, soy un luchador social que *cumple* una tarea, la tarea que el pueblo me ha dado, pero que lo entiendan aquellos que quieren desconocer la historia y desconocer a la voluntad mayoritaria de Chile. Sin tener carne de mártir no daré un paso atrás y que lo sepan: dejaré *La moneda* cuando *cumpla* el mandato que el pueblo me diera. No tengo otra alternativa, sólo acribillándome a balazos podrán impedir *cumplir* el programa. (1970, emphases added)

[I tell you companions, companions of so many years, I tell you with calmness, with absolute tranquility: I do not have the making of an apostle, nor the making of a Messiah. I do not have the conditions of a martyr, I am a social fighter *fulfilling* a task, the task that the people have given me. But let those who want to disavow history and disavow the majoritarian will of Chile understand: without having the flesh of a martyr I will not retract a single step, and let them know it: I will leave *La moneda* when I *fulfill* the mandate that the people have given me. I have no alternative, only by piercing me through with gunfire will they prevent *fulfilling* the program. (1970, emphases added)]<sup>333</sup>

<sup>332</sup> The quotation above is significantly abridged; the text spans across several paragraphs.

<<http://www.ciudadseva.com/textos/otros/sa-11sep.mp3>> Allende's last word, "treason," is framed elsewhere in this discourse as having an intricate relationship to words: "My words hold no bitterness but disappointment. Let them be a moral punishment for those who have betrayed their oath." ("Mis palabras no tienen amargura sino decepción. Que sean ellas el castigo moral para los que han traicionado el juramento que hicieron.")

<sup>333</sup> Pronounced on September 14<sup>th</sup>, 1970, at the Estadio Nacional, Santiago de Chile. A video-recording may be accessed at: <<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WEmvWWQkzRM&feature=related>>

I have added emphasis to the three times that Allende uses the verb “cumplir,” and as I have found no precise equivalent in English, I have opted to translate it catachrestically with the verb “to fulfill.” Although my translation accounts for the verb’s immediate meaning, it does not account for the verb’s second meaning as “to perform a duty *in the name* of another” (*Appleton’s New Spanish Dictionary* 1940: 116 emphasis added). That reiterated word is only one of the many in Allende’s speech that underline the stated conception of language as participating in a dialogic social engagement. Read retrospectively, Allende’s 1970 words are an act: the establishment of a promise, or more accurately, a “compromiso,” the Spanish word denoting a mutual promise, which is, simultaneously, a duty to be fulfilled.<sup>334</sup> In this way, Allende’s words denote his radical awareness of what Mieke Bal describes as the structural mutuality of the “I” and the “you” in a text.

As I have explained in Chapter Four, Bal engages with the contemporary questioning of the subject. She is concerned with the persistence of “the assumption of the subject as a human individual, however determined, disrupted and subjected s/he may be” (1994: 105). As a semiotician, she is particularly concerned with how this assumption plays into the analyses of texts (linguistic or otherwise). Hence, she points to the inconsistency of theoretical deconstructions of the subject that still “seek illustrations of their points in *representations* of subjects, in characters that is, instead of analyzing subjective positions in their multiplicity and difference” (106, emphasis in text).

Bal’s proposal of how that goal may be brought about is achieved through a re-conceptualization of the notion of trace, informed by Benveniste’s “linguistics of enunciation, necessarily a linguistics of subjectivity” (105). The trace, she argues, “relates to its co-text by contiguity,” and points 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). In that structural mutuality, “a radical break with the individual subject” is produced (105). Only “[o]nce this break is assumed, the possibility of a semantics of subjectivity unhampered by an ongoing search for unmediated social integration is laid open” (106).

Allende’s understanding of the relationship between “the *you* that constitutes the *I*, while the *I* presupposes an even unformulated *you*,” is historically informed, yet, he is consistent with its

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<sup>334</sup> As I have stated above, although the English word “compromise” used to have the same meaning, it has fallen out of use. The most immediate translation of “compromiso” to contemporary English would be “commitment,” but the latter does not include the mutuality of the relation between self and other by which the Spanish word is structured, nor the role of language within it. The question of “the promise” has been central to much Anglophone performativity theory. The possibilities that the Spanish words “compromiso” and “cumplir” open up in the field are cut short by monolingualism; the epistemic limits imposed by the latter are considered in Chapter Three.

literal implications to the ultimate consequences. Allende is aware that his position as the universal subject of enunciation is reliant on his addressee: “I will pay with my life the loyalty of the people ... I want to thank you ... for the faith that you deposited in a man who was only an interpreter of vehement desires for justice, that pawned his word ...” (1973). His self-reflexive words, both from a formal and a historical perspective, show his awareness that the privilege that he enjoys as the universal subject of enunciation is structured by his addressee, both as an implied textual position and an implied social position, the latter enunciated through the vote.

The radio-transmission format confronts the language-sensitive speaker with the paradoxical and intricate relations between selfhood, otherness and language. Allende speaks. Hence, he participates in an embodied performance, gesturing, oral articulation, the sound of his voice. He addresses millions. Yet, he speaks alone in a room. Not being consumed by the bodily presence of the addressed other, but neither being at the comfortable distance brought about by the technical mediation and temporal deferral of paper and pen, the speaker is confronted with the ambivalence of the addressed other as the presupposition of “an even unformulated *you*” and the addressed other as an actual subject. Hence, he is also necessarily confronted with the role of that ambivalence in the structuring of his own actions and relationship to himself.

Additionally, historical conditions are centrally at stake in Allende’s heightened consciousness of the mutuality of the “I” and the “you.” As documented by his intellectual and political trajectory, Allende is aware that he is not the historical agent of the Chilean socialist revolution. The revolution has its historical roots in mass popular worker’s movements, feminist and indigenous organized struggles at least as early as the 1920s and 30s. Allende merely stands in for the revolution’s historical fulfillment of the promise that aggregated those movements around the name of the coalition party that he represents, Unidad Popular (UP).<sup>335</sup>

The Chilean revolution, which came to be known as “the Chilean road to socialism,” was an unprecedented event in world history. It was unique in that a Marxist-socialist revolution was attained through bourgeois democracy, maintaining political and media pluralism, respect for civil liberties, institutions and law. Hence, Allende’s last words are not so much a statement, as they are

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<sup>335</sup> The triumph of the UP at the ballots was largely due to its capacity to organize, around its name, a large, inclusive base, ranging from the moderate Christian democratic party to previously clandestine revolutionary associations such as the Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria (MIR), as well as embracing a number of independent civil movements of workers, peasants, feminist and indigenous rights associations, and finally institutionalized parties such as the Communist party and the Socialist one. The second factor that can be associated with the triumph of the UP is that Chile held at the time of the elections one of the highest literacy rates worldwide. Concerning the country’s groundbreaking statistics in the case of higher educated women, for example, since the end of the nineteenth century and until the overthrow of the UP government, see Miller 1991: 49.

his *response* as an “other” who is addressed by the historical subject aggregated around the name he represents, that of Unidad Popular, his addressee. Since external and armed forces have disrupted that mutuality and are about to displace Allende from the bond that legitimates his position of enunciation, he will sacrifice himself to persist as one constituted by the “even unformulated *you*” rather than persist as an individual subject.

Much like Spivak’s subaltern, Bhuvanewari Bhaduri, Allende is reduced to a position where the hegemonic text may only be rewritten in the body, in blood, at the cost of one’s life (see Spivak 1994: 103-104). As is the case of Bhuvanewari Bhaduri’s suicide, Allende’s will also be rewritten by hegemony. But a major difference between the two figures persists. Bhuvanewari Bhaduri is in a position of absolute subalternity; Allende is a head of state. In the case of Spivak’s subaltern, the word that cannot be heard is her own, and she must sacrifice her life in the hope it will be heard. Allende is in a position of access to speech. Yet, he is also a symbol standing in for the subaltern other as a historical subject. With his last act, he validates his addressee as enunciating subject and reduces himself to the material support of that enunciation.

Allende’s 1973 words and the self-sacrifice that follows them are an act of responsibility toward his own promise, made in 1970. But that promise was always already structured by his “compromiso,” the mutuality of the promise that validates the “pawned word” as a social action. In the context of her re-reading of the “I” and the “you” in Benveniste, Bal argues that “this mutuality already holds, in fact, a radical break with the individual subject” (105). Once Allende’s pawned word can no longer stand in for his position as a subject of enunciation structured by his addressee, he takes the only consistent response possible to validate that mutuality: a radical break of himself *as* an individual subject.

At the historical moment in which Allende said, “Radio Magallanes will surely be hushed and the tranquil metal of my voice will no longer reach you. It doesn’t matter. You will keep on hearing it,” he spoke as a subject, yet not quite as an individual. These words would suggest that the self-reflexive act is not the foundational category. The fantasy, it would seem, is not so much the belief that we can represent the subaltern but that, when we do so, we are the only ones who speak. Let me take up this hint in Allende’s words. When the universal position of the enunciating subject (i.e. the postcolonial-as-intellectual) is taken to be structured not by the agency of a subject as an individual, but by a subject that is intersubjectively constituted, the reduction of the-postcolonial-as-subaltern to the sphere of representation may be, however subtly, destabilized. If what structures the act of enunciation is not the individual subject, but the intersubjective one, then, when the

individual writes, the organizational force of a field and the institutional and methodological conditions that foreclose access to the postcolonial-as-subaltern, also speak. Our mode of enunciation is structured by others and, by virtue of that, those others – whether social groups or individuals – are granted the position of subject. Taken as the structural determinants of our own modes of enunciation, marginalized positions could, however obliquely, accede to, and hence participate in the universal subject position.

The Australian historiographer Robert Austin narrates the consequences of the coup for Chilean history. Once the dictatorship was installed, Friedman's disciples at the University of Chicago were appointed to run the Chilean economy: "Controlling Chile's runaway inflation ... and establishing a deregulated free-market economy were immediate recommendations, to be achieved in Friedman's own words by "shock treatment," administered in what critics dubbed the Chicago Experiment – the people of Chile constituting the laboratory (1997: 29). In that way, one of the U.S.A. objectives in the plotting of the coup was achieved: to convert Chile into a laboratory for the neo-liberal model.<sup>336</sup> Furthermore, as Austin argues, "[t]he Pinochet dictatorship's Chicago Experiment of neoliberalizing the Chilean economy has had among its consequences the dismantling of one of the more productive and democratic higher education systems in the Americas" (1997: 25).<sup>337</sup>

Universities were privatized and the drop in enrolments soared up to 40% eight years into the dictatorship. Universities were restructured, practically abolishing the humanities, giving the remaining bastions a technocratic orientation. Philosophy (and sociology) suffered particularly, and technical training institutes thrived, designed to train Chileans for their proper role across the international division of labor (Austin [Robert] 1997: 50-53, Dominguez 2000: 350). As Austin comments: "There was also a political attraction away from the humanities: training in critical thought demonstrably put students at risk of expulsion from university, torture, exile, or a shortened

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<sup>336</sup> Other objectives of the coup were to recuperate transnational and U.S.A. economic interest zones in Chile and to prevent other Latin-American countries from following Chile's example.

<sup>337</sup> Under the UP government, the ministry of education had the highest percentage of the national budget (Navarro 1974: 107). The general population actively participated in adult literacy campaigns. The focus was to convert functional into actual and critical literacy, benefiting from the pedagogic theory of Paulo Freire but departing from it where it was considered to have indoctrinating tendencies (Austin 2003: 158, 169-186). In just three years, university enrolment was duplicated and the class bias of its population addressed. Scholarships and stipends for economically disadvantaged groups were extended, and night schooling was set up in factories and marginalized areas (Kirberg 1981: 171-85; 210-26; 241-43; 356-58). The gender and ethnic inequalities in access to all levels of education were also addressed (See Austin [Robert] 2003: 41, 134 and Crow [Joanna] 2007: 333).

life (Jaksic 1989: 176; Amnesty International 1981a).”<sup>338</sup> Culture and education were disarticulated from social movements, and the advancements in the ethnic, gender and class constitution of university students was reversed (Austin 1997: 40, 42).<sup>339</sup>

The structural relations between the events in Chile since 1973 and contemporary indigenous movements in Mexico are pointed out in a letter by Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos. Marcos is the spokesman of the EZLN, by far the most prominent group of the contemporary indigenous movements to which Simon Critchley refers in *Infinitely Demanding*. The letter is addressed “to the peoples of Chile” and was read aloud at the Victor Jara Stadium (named after a folk musician who was one of the cultural icons publicly tortured and executed by the coup) in Santiago de Chile, on October 8<sup>th</sup>, 2004. In it, Marcos establishes some of the historical continuities and parallels between the overthrow of Allende’s government and the present repression of indigenous peoples in Chiapas, Mexico. The letter is written in commemoration of Miguel Enríquez Espinosa, a member of the MIR fraction of Unidad Popular, who was killed by the dictatorship in 1974.

In the letter, Marcos directly engages with Allende’s last speech by quoting from it. As I reported, right after the speech Allende sacrificed his life to validate his addressee as enunciating subject and reduced himself to the material support of that enunciation. This prioritization of his symbolic function over a vital one informs his statement that “Radio Magallanes will surely be hushed and the tranquil metal of my voice will no longer reach you. It doesn’t matter. You will keep on hearing it.” Quoting Allende, Marcos foregrounds the illocutionary dimension of these words: he keeps on hearing and having Allende’s words heard.<sup>340</sup>

Marcos stresses the performative force of Allende’s utterance by preposterously confirming that “very act of utterance” as its own referent, a characteristic that, as Felman indicates, defines the performative (2003: 52). Here “[t]he referent is no longer simply a preexisting *substance*, but an

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<sup>338</sup> Furthermore, “free speech and open debate were among the first casualties of the coup ... At PUC Antofagasta [University] ... a military official was installed as rector ... A number of teaching staff were summarily dismissed, some executed, others exiled; humanities teachers were particularly vulnerable. The conformist psychological effects on remaining staff were predictable” (Austin 1997: 40). Intellectuals were prominent among the tens of thousands that were tortured and “disappeared,” also among the one million exiles.

<sup>339</sup> The reversals in higher education enrollment were concomitant with the ideological outlook of the dictatorship: “The anti-intellectual, authoritarian, and exaggeratedly macho character of Pinochetismo discouraged women’s pursuit of intellectual betterment, focusing instead on motherhood and unpaid domestic labor” (Austin 1997: 41). Furthermore, during the dictatorship there was a “social construction of the female body as a domain of patriarchal capital,” which “was intensified by a 1987 dictatorship decree whereby all prospective women employees could be subjected to gynecological examinations to check for pregnancy. Many women academics had been dismissed after the coup ... Those who stayed were often forced to confront traditional female roles for the first time.” (Austin 1997: 46)

<sup>340</sup> On the illocutionary dimension of speech acts, see Culler 2000: 506.

*act*, that is, a dynamic movement of modification of reality.” Thus, Marcos not only points to the performative nature of that utterance, but re-dimensions it since, in the performative, the referential “can only arise in a dialogic situation”; it can “inscribe itself only as an effect of structure; as a relation to a relation” (Felman 51; emphases in text).

In sum, with the act of quotation, Marcos takes up the promise that Allende’s words entail:

A Chilean Revolutionary ... Victor Jara ... said ... And another one, also Chilean, when the machine-gun was very, very close, searching for his heart, had the integrity and the wisdom to say, to tell us “sooner than later, the great poplar groves will reopen, where the free man may walk, to construct a better society” ... Latin America ... has in its blood ... not the Anaconda Copper, not the United Fruit, not the Ford Company ... but its workers ... its Mapuches ... its Salvador Allende, its Pablo Neruda ...<sup>341</sup>

Note how the transition Marcos makes in “to say, to tell us” serves to emphasize the social engagement that Allende’s words lay open. The part of Allende’s last discourse about the poplar groves that Marcos chooses to quote is one of the most famous lines by the Chilean social fighter, and has served as emblem of the promise of a better future that kept together the Chilean revolutionary coalition. In taking up that promise, the EZLN spokesman aggregates his own movement around it.<sup>342</sup>

In Marcos’s citation, Allende’s words are a remainder of a dream destroyed; they stand in for a possibility foreclosed by the contemporary geo-economic hegemony. In these ways, the invocation of that remainder could be said to resemble the melancholic link to the lost, excluded other of a Utopian past that Žižek criticizes in a different context. Yet Marcos’s relation to that remainder is not fetishistic in the sense that it does not function as a link that “allows us to claim that we remain faithful to our ethnic roots while fully participating in the global capitalist game” (Žižek 2000: 659). By allowing Allende’s words to actually operate in relation to the context in which he recalls them, Marcos strives for the fulfillment of their promise. Those words cannot function as a fetish insofar as they are taken up as a *historically operative* site of ideological

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<sup>341</sup> “Un revolucionario chileno ... Víctor Jara ... dijo ... Y otro uno, también chileno, aquí nomás cerca y bajo la metralla que le buscaba el corazón, tuvo la entereza y sabiduría para decir, para decirnos, “más temprano que tarde, de nuevo se abrirán las grandes alamedas por donde pase el hombre libre, para construir una sociedad mejor” ... América Latina ... tiene en la sangre ... no a la Anaconda Copper, no a la United Fruit, no a la Ford ... sino a sus obreros ... sus mapuches ... su Salvador Allende, su Pablo Neruda ...” The text is archived at: <<http://palabra.ezln.org.mx/>> and may be accessed by date of publication: 9 Oct. 2004 (the letter was read at the stadium on the 8<sup>th</sup>, but published in printed form until the following day).

<sup>342</sup> Recall that Critchley considers that the political task “is one of inventing a name around which a political subject can be aggregated.” (2007: 103)

contestation in the present. Therefore, they are not a symbol of what the contemporary hegemony negates, but a performance that negates that constitutive negation.

Elsewhere in his letter the Subcomandante employs rhetorical strategies such as repetition to emphasize the continuity between the UP's enemy and the EZLN's own:

Today, like yesterday, foreign military power, hand in hand with the powerful transnationals, seeks to hollow our lands, sometimes disguised in the uniforms of local armies ... / Today, like yesterday, the empire that institutes itself as world police and stamps over laws, reasons, peoples, is the same one ... / Today, like yesterday, the power that seeks to destabilize legal and legitimate governments that are not subordinate to it ... is the same ... / Today, like yesterday, we are warred, sometimes with bullets, sometimes with economic programs, always with lies ... (2004)<sup>343</sup>

Marcos's usage of adverbs of frequency is telling. While he employs "sometimes" to qualify the attacks brought about with "bullets" and those with "economic programs," he switches to "always" to qualify "lies." Moreover, the "always" arrives more forcefully after he has augmented the reader's expectation in crescendo through repetition. With that emphasis, Marcos reproduces the importance Allende assigned to the relation between enunciation and truth. His repetition of: "Today, like yesterday" serves to contest the popular belief – echoed in Critchley's *Infinitely Demanding* – that the concentration of power around the U.S. is a thing of the past, proper to the Cold War period but no longer operative in a world of multiple nodes of double-edged power and diffused accountability.

Marcos stresses the continuity between the struggle of the UP and the EZLN's, pointing to how the same geo-economic conditions of 1973 are those that threaten the EZLN's project in 2004. In the Introduction I have argued with reference to Klein (2007) that the 1973 Chilean coup may be viewed as the genesis of the contemporary global economic order and of the development of the IDL into the NIDL.<sup>344</sup> As I accounted above, Critchley believes that the New World Order reduces

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<sup>343</sup> The text above is in verse form. The extract is considerably abridged: the quoted sections expand over different stanzas. The translation is mine. "Hoy, como ayer, de la mano de las poderosas transnacionales, el poder militar extranjero pretende hoyar nuestros suelos, a veces embozado en uniformes de ejércitos locales ... / Hoy, como ayer, el imperio que se abroga el papel de policía mundial y atropella leyes, razones, pueblos, es el mismo ... / Hoy, como ayer, quien pretende desestabilizar a gobiernos legales y legítimos, pero que no le son subordinados ... es el mismo ... / Hoy, como ayer, se nos hace la guerra, en veces con balas, en veces con programas económicos, siempre con mentiras ..."  
<<http://palabra.ezln.org.mx/>>

<sup>344</sup> As explained there, the NIDL differs from the IDL in that it is less visible. Also, the classic IDL corresponds to the era during colonialism until the 1960s. Then, a polarization took place between "a few industrialized countries producing capital-goods and consumer-goods" and "the vast majority of underdeveloped countries," providing raw material (Fröbel *et al.* 1980: 44, 403). In the 1960s there occurs "a change in the conditions under which the valorisation of capital is taking place," such as the development of advanced transport and communications technology (44). The

the polarization of class difference. Marcos stresses how, at a global scale, this polarization of classes not only persists but has been aggravated ever since 1973.

The Subcomandante's letter establishes U.S.A. imperialism, complicit with transnational economic forces, as *the* source of repressive power; whether these forces are "disguised in the uniform of local armies" is a secondary issue. Notwithstanding the fact that Allende was head of state, Marcos' letter pays him homage. Furthermore, Marcos, far from criticizing the State, criticizes those who do not respect "legal and legitimate governments" that are not subordinate to transnational economic interest. That contradicts Critchley's assessment of the State per se as the single site of power against which the struggle of Mexican indigenous movements is organized. Critchley's faulty assessment goes hand in hand with his denial of the role of global capitalism in the configuration of the issue. Let me recall Simon Critchley's question: "Are we witnessing, as Marx and Engels foresaw with particular clarity in the *Manifesto*, a simplification of the class structure into the opposed poles of bourgeoisie and proletariat?" (97). The answer of the most prominent organized indigenous contemporary movement in Mexico, as stated in the quoted letter above, is "yes." Critchley's answer, as related above, is "no." Anyone may of course make up her own mind. The point here is that Critchley's answer is formulated *in the name of* the indigenous peoples of Mexico.

To discuss further the gap between those who Critchley claims to represent and the interests he represents de facto, I return to his definition of political subjectivity. Critchley's full statement is that "[t]he problem of political subjectivity is a question of *naming*, of naming a political subject and organizing politically around that name" (91, emphasis in text). The definition begs the question of the existing conditions that facilitate or foreclose organization around a name. While I have focused on Allende as an individual subject, I have pinpointed how his position was forged and sustained by the historical subject aggregated around the name of the left coalition party that he represented, Unidad Popular. The conditions that facilitated, and then foreclosed, organization around that name were of a historical nature and largely determined by economic interests at the other side of the IDL.

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new situation "compels the increasing subdivision of manufacturing processes into a number of partial operations at different industrial sites throughout the world" and produces the industrialization of Third-World countries as a consequence (45). But while capital's place of valorization changes, its place of accumulation remains the same. The emergence of the NIDL "actually intensifies the tendency towards uneven development in the underdeveloped countries." (Fröbel *et al.* 1980: 403)

For those reasons, a definition of politics as aggregation around a name is insufficient. An understanding of political subjectivity as a *structuring of access to the place of enunciation* is required for the analysis of the EZLN itself to be taken into account in explanations of their situation. Politics understood as mere nomination risks the erasure of history, that force which, as Spivak often suggests, is operative as I write and as you read. Like all binaries, the poles of First and Third worlds, intellectual and manual labor, are mutually constitutive. From that perspective, and in the context of the present hegemony, places of enunciation may be said to be structurally reliant on the foreclosure of that possibility elsewhere, as the Chilean experience, among so many others in contemporary Africa, Asia and Latin America, demonstrates.<sup>345</sup>

Let me return to *Infinitely Demanding* one last time. Critchley affirms that what “we [are] witnessing” today is a “society being made up by an increasingly complex fabric of class identifications, rendered even more intricate by other sets of identifications, whether gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation or whatever” (97). What he says is true. But, like all truths, it is relative to the historical situatedness of the observer. The changes imposed on Chilean society with the institution of the neoliberal model after the coup strongly contradict Critchley’s claim that the New World Order brings with it a multiplication of class actors in society with respect to gender, sexual orientation and ethnic identities. Those identities were politically organized before and especially during the UP government, but the Friedman model required their erasure in the Third World (see Crow 2007; Austin 2003, 1997; Miller 1991). So, who is the “we” that “witness” the contemporary multiplication of ethnic identities? In Latin America, the unequal co-existence of numerous and substantially distinct ethnic identities has been an issue for over 500 years, and many areas of Africa and Asia have been confronted with similar experiences at least since the 19<sup>th</sup> Century.<sup>346</sup> Only until recent generations, however, the First World, particularly Western Europe, experiences the mass

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<sup>345</sup> Concerning the role of education in the structural mutuality between African impoverishment and the economic growth of colonial powers, see Rodney, 1972: 261-287.

<sup>346</sup> While, as Canclini observes (2004: 132-7), the Latin-American identity is largely constructed as “indigenous” from the outside, these indigenous groups are themselves configured by a large number of different cultural histories and languages and, as numerous studies of the colonial period reveal, clearly differentiated white, creole, mestizo, mulato and African-American identities have always been at stake, to name just the most prominent. Furthermore, since the elaborate racial taxonomies established by the settler-colonizers, those racial constructions have always-already been associated with unequal access to economic power, geographical mobility, access to means of expression, education, health-care, etcetera, thus contributing to the historical constitution of different racial identities into differentiated ethno-cultural groups. See: Romano 2004, Carrera 1998, Mattos 2006, Vinson 2004.

immigration of peoples from the continents that continue to be programmatically underdeveloped.<sup>347</sup>

Moreover, the foreclosure brought about by the U.S.A. government, in tandem with transnational economic interests, pointed to the international division of labor as the crucial force in the distribution of access to the place of enunciation. The stance taken by Subcomandante Insurgente Marcos, in his own act of enunciation, pointed to the persistence of that structuring force as the major issue at stake today. The rift between the representation of the problems of indigenous peoples in Mexico from a legitimate First-World academic position and the analysis offered by their own designated spokesman stages the rift between politics as nomination and politics understood as a structuring of access to the unmarked place of enunciation, the subject position.

### **The Failed Promise of Ideology: A Conclusion**

Aijaz Ahmad writes that the

structural inability of capitalism to provide for the vast majority of the populations which it has sucked into its own dominion constitutes the basic, incurable flaw in the system as a whole. Such a contradiction can be overcome neither by ..., nor by ..., nor indeed by ..., so long as the system itself remains. Negation of this contradiction can come only from outside the terms of this system as such. (1992: 316).

The project of African Socialism sought to build one such external position from which the contradictions intrinsic to capitalism could be negated. With *Ujamaa*, Nyerere took up the task of elaborating a political project outside the terms of the global system; yet, his project was inevitably inserted within and affected by that global context. Although, strictly speaking, the historical context at the time of *Mabepari*'s publication was that of the Cold War rather than global capitalism as we know it today, the changes in the valorization of capital, which Fröbel *et al.* locate in the 1960s, were already taking hold. Nyerere's government had to deal with pressures from the World Bank and the IMF; actually, *Kujitegemea* as a whole may be understood as a response to such pressures.

The will to be outside global capitalism, in conjunction with an unavoidable appurtenance to it, is the constitutive tension operating in Venisi as a migratory cliché. Each of Venisi's contending

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<sup>347</sup> See Rodney (1972) for an examination of the reliance of European capitalist accumulation on the programmatic underdevelopment of Africa.

geo-historical referents, Venice and Dar es Salaam, provide not only a different form of externality, but also a different form of interiority to capitalism. Hence, the tension Venisi's referents play out foregrounds the different effects of a geo-historical point of externality (Venice) and an ideological point of externality (Dar es Salaam) to the capitalist world order.

Nyerere's strategy of superimposing internal and external points of view of particular aspects of capitalist reality in order to turn capitalist ideology against itself is based on the same mechanism that Mitchell describes as Marx's "effective rhetorical move" of appropriating the notion of the fetish. Mitchell considers that "Marx's turning of the rhetoric of iconoclasm on its principal users was a brilliant tactical maneuver," since it occurred in the context of "nineteenth-century Europe's obsession with the primitive, oriental, 'fetishistic' cultures that were the prime object of imperialist expansion" (1986: 205). He elaborates:

Marx adopted fetishism as a metaphor for commodities at the moment when Western Europe ... was changing its view of the "underdeveloped" world from an unknown, blank space, a source of slave labor, to a place of darkness to be illuminated, a frontier for imperialist expansion and wage-slavery. "Fetishism" was a key word in the vocabularies of nineteenth century missionaries and anthropologists who went out to convert the natives to the privileges of enlightened Christian capitalism. Abolition had completed its work, and was being replaced by an evangelism that brought Puritan iconoclasm face to face with "the horror" of its own antithesis. (205)

Mitchell's words call attention to the association between the "'underdeveloped' world" and the "blank space" that van Alphen analyzes. Coincidentally, like van Alphen, Mitchell also points to that equation with reference to Conrad ("The horror! The horror!" 1973: 100).

But while van Alphen focuses on how the pervasive association persists from modernist to post-modernist forms of representation, Mitchell is concerned with the continuities between the modern and earlier forms of fetishism: "this modern form is both a repetition and inversion of traditional 'pagan' religious materialism. It repeats the structural elements of transference and forgetting" (196). Yet, in contrast to traditional forms of fetishism, the capitalist form entails a second act of forgetting. That second act is "the denial that there is anything magical" about the commodity-fetish (193; see also 196). Therefore, the second denial could be described as following a "logic of objective cynicism" not unlike the one on which the "lost ethnic Object" relies according to Žižek. But the denial in the situation described by Žižek does not concern the in-itself of the fetish so much as its function as the particular lie that allows one to endure the truth (2000: 659). That contextuality is what makes the fetish paradoxically symptomatic – understanding the

symptom, in Žižek's terms, as an emerging truth in the context of an organized lie – in the contemporary ideological constellation; reason for which I have recurred to the concept for my own analyses.

In principle, *Mabepari* could function as a paradigmatic fetish of the postcolonial other. It is highly representative of the adequacy between postcolonial other and the blank space. Yet, in its localized performative capacity, it reintroduces – if not reconfigures – the problem of the referent.<sup>348</sup> In mobilizing the referential capacity of language to complexify the play's meaning, *Mabepari* may be seen as a productive counterpoint to the “ideology of the signifier” as discussed in Chapter One. In recurring to the dialectics of identification and estrangement to bring about that meaning, *Mabepari* performs a critique of that which the audience is led to identify with. Yet, translation always entails a negotiation between two cultures, the overt aim of translation often being to stay as adequate as possible to the source text (Venuti 2007: 32). Hence, we could also say that by means of the play's migratory clichés Nyerere performs both a critique and an exploitation of the role of identification in the constitution of ideology.

As Adorno argues, “identity is the primal form of ideology. We relish it as adequacy to the thing it suppresses; adequacy has always been subjection to dominant purposes and, in this sense, its own contradiction” (148). The estrangement effect in migratory clichés functions as a placeholder of the internal contradiction that defines adequacy in relation to the object of our identification and, in that sense, it elides the fetishistic confusion (i.e. the transference and subsequent forgetfulness, in Mitchell's terms) between that cultural other at stake in the source text and our deferred adequacy to it. The acceptance of that deferral actualizes the relation between source and target text, a historicization which, as we have seen, selectively negates some of the constitutive exclusions of *The Merchant of Venice*.

Similarly, Allende's discourse brought about a negation of negation. Due to the perfect identity between Allende's word and his act, as well as the historical continuity in which Marcos inscribes this illocutionary act, it cannot function as a fetish. If the fetish is, according to Žižek, the particular lie that *makes bearable* and thus perpetuates the truths of the system as a whole, we may describe Critchley's act of representation as a melancholic attachment to the fetishistic remainder of an excluded other. Yet, the remainder to which Marcos returns is an utterance that, valuing one's social truth over one's individual life, projects itself from the time of its utterance, the genesis of our

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<sup>348</sup> In this sense *Mabepari* emulates performativity theory itself. See Felman 2003: 48, 50.

present order, into the utterance's future, this time that we and Marcos share, to denote the contemporary order in its radical *unbearableness*; a situation that demands transformative action.

Marcos returns to a reminder of the excluded other, as does Critchley. In Marcos's act of quotation, the other is the interrupted promise of a utopian world; for Critchley, it is the indigenous Mexicans. Yet, only in the case of Critchley's remainder is there, to employ Mitchell's terms, a transference and subsequent forgetting. This is to say that only in Critchley's case is there an *adequacy* between idea(1) and fetish. Adorno states that we relish in identity "as adequacy to the thing it suppresses; adequacy has always been subjection to dominant purposes and is, in this sense, its own contradiction" (148). In Marcos's case, there is a tracing back of that process of adequacy between the object and what it stands in for, a remembrance of the acts of transference and forgetting. In other words, the fetishistic possibility of the remainder is denied insofar as that remainder is brought back as a *performative*, which, acted out in contemporary political reality, negates its role as the static placeholder of an (im)possible other.

In the case of Allende, the relation between word and action is not only inadequate, it is perfectly identical. Allende's compromise is performative in the ideal understanding of the term, in which "[t]he act is thus identical with the utterance of the act. The signified is identical to the referent" (Benveniste qtd. in Felman 2003: 53).<sup>349</sup> Allende's act of self-annihilation also implies the self-annihilation of an adequacy that fulfils its promise to the extent of transcending itself. The act by which Allende fulfils his promise is the negation of the negation of identity (not only in existential, but also in conceptual terms) and, therefore (since "[i]dentity is the primal form of ideology" [Adorno, 148]), a transcendence of ideology as such.

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<sup>349</sup> Felman criticizes Benveniste's definition insofar as it is *too perfect* in comparison to J. L. Austin's conception of the performative, a misreading that all the more serves to stress my point. Felman writes that Benveniste's "reasoning is not without relevance, yet it draws false implications from Austin's thought. The performative is indeed self-referential, but for Austin this does not mean that it refers to an exhaustive specularity or to a perfect symmetry between statement and enunciation." (53)