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Who's Afraid of National Allegory?  
Jameson, Literary Criticism, Globalization

**F**redric Jameson's proposal that all third world texts be read as "national allegories" has been one of the more influential and important attempts to theorize the relationship of literary production to the nation and to politics. Unfortunately, its influence and importance has thus far been primarily *negative*. For many critics, Jameson's essay stands as an example of what *not* to do when studying third world literature from the vantage point of the first-world academy. His attempt in the now infamous essay, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," to delineate "some general theory of what is often called third-world literature" has been attacked for its very desire for generality.<sup>1</sup> The presumption that it is possible to produce a theory that would explain African, Asian, *and* Latin American literary production, the literature of China *and* Senegal, has been (inevitably) read as nothing more than a patronizing, theoretical orientalism, or as yet another example of a troubling appropriation of Otherness with the aim of exploring the West rather than the Other. The most well-known criticism of Jameson's essay along these lines remains Aijaz Ahmad's "Jameson's Rhetoric of

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Otherness and the 'National Allegory.'"<sup>2</sup> More informally and anecdotally, however, within the field of postcolonial literary and cultural studies, Jameson's essay has come to be treated as little more than a cautionary tale about the extent and depth of Eurocentrism in the Western academy, or, even more commonly, as a convenient bibliographic marker of those kinds of theories of third world literature that everyone now agrees are limiting and reductive.<sup>3</sup>

Looking back on Jameson's essay through the haze of fifteen years of postcolonial studies, as well as the through the equally disorienting smoke thrown up by the explosion of theories and positions on globalization, one wonders what all the fuss was about. In hindsight, it appears that almost without exception critics of Jameson's essay have willfully misread it. Of course, such misreadings are to be expected. The reception given to this or that theory has as much to do with timing as with its putative content. As one of the first responses to postcolonial literary studies from a major critic outside the field, the publication of Jameson's essay in the mid-1980s provided postcolonial critics with a flash point around which to articulate general criticisms of dominant views of North-South relations expressed within even supposedly critical political theories (like Marxism). It also provided a self-definitional opportunity for postcolonial studies: a shift away from even the lingering traces of Marxist interpretations of imperialism toward a more deconstructive one exemplified by the work of figures such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Homi Bhabha.<sup>4</sup> While criticisms of Jameson's views may have thus been useful or productive in their own way, they have nevertheless tended to obscure and misconstrue a sophisticated attempt to make sense of the relationship of literature to politics in the decolonizing world. I want to argue here that Jameson's "general" theory of third world literary production offers a way of conceptualizing the relationship of literature to politics (and politics to literature) that goes beyond the most common (and commonsense) understanding of the relations between these terms.<sup>5</sup> Indeed, the concept of *national allegory* introduces a model for a properly materialist approach to postcolonial texts and contexts, one that resonates with Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks's recent characterization of postcolonial studies as "interested above all in materialist critiques of power and how that power or ideology seems to interpellate subjects within a discourse as subordinate and without agency."<sup>6</sup>

Crooks's description of the aims of postcolonial studies emerges out of

her analysis of the malaise or melancholia that has beset postcolonial studies as it enters the new millennium. It seems to me that revisiting Jameson's theory of third world literature — both its problems and its productive potentialities — provides a (perhaps unexpected) way out of this malaise. One of the things for which Jameson has been criticized throughout his career is his insistence on totality as a central concept in social and political criticism. In the context of postcolonial studies, it is easy enough to see how this appeal to totality could be mistaken as a Eurocentric, universalist claim par excellence.<sup>7</sup> But this is to conceive of the concept of totality far too rigidly and unimaginatively, and in the process of doing so, to “fall back into a view of present history as sheer heterogeneity, random difference, a coexistence of a host of distinct forces whose effectivity is undecidable.”<sup>8</sup> It seems to me that what is missing in most theories of postcolonial literary production (and what thus produces the malaise that Crooks points to) is just such a map of the relative effectivity of different forces in the globalscape: in the absence of some general theory of the structure of contemporary social and political life, there is instead a rough assemblage of literary-critical commonplaces concerning power, identity, representation, language, and so on, that originate almost solely from within the hermetically sealed space of academic criticism.<sup>9</sup> In any case, my argument here should also be taken as an implicit argument on behalf of totality — not the “bad” totality that legitimates theories of modernization of development, but the totality constructed by an antitranscendental and antiteleological “insurgent science” that “is open, as open as the world of possibility, the world of potential.”<sup>10</sup> Here, at least, totality appears as the possibility of metacommentary — not as a secondary step in interpretation but as a condition of interpretation per se; and as I argue here, what national allegory itself names are the conditions of possibility of metacommentary at the present time.<sup>11</sup> The question I pursue, then, is the relationship of allegory (as a mode of interpretation) to the nation (as a specific kind of sociopolitical problematic) and what this relationship entails for a global or transnational literary or cultural criticism.

In an effort to uncover the possibilities and limits of the concept of national allegory, I first reexamine Jameson's development of the concept of national allegory in “Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism.” I then turn to a consideration of the history of this term in Jameson's own work. While it has been stressed that Jameson's comments concerning third world literature arise out of meditations on a different mat-

ter entirely (that is, the debates in the American academy in the mid-1980s over the revision of the literary canon), almost no critic has made reference to the fact that the concept of national allegory does not originate in this essay.<sup>12</sup> Finally, I ponder the relationship between nation and allegory by looking at Jameson's recent writings on globalization in order to consider its significance for contemporary cultural theory and criticism.



One of the first things that has to be made clear about Jameson's account of third world literature is that the concept of national allegory is exhausted by neither of its component terms. Jameson is aware of the fact that the *nation* and *allegory* are concepts that have both fallen into disrepute: the nation, because of the historical experiences of first and third world countries with the virulent nationalisms of the twentieth century, as well the vigorous criticism that has been directed toward the nation over the past several decades; allegory, because of the naive mode of one-to-one mapping that it seems to imply, a presumed passage from text to context that is epistemologically and politically suspect. Attaching these terms to a theory of third world texts has a tendency to conjure up once again the whole specter of development theory and practice, in which technologies that have become antiquated in the West are passed along to countries where such outmoded technologies (including conceptual technologies such as the *nation* and *allegory*) might, in Hegelian fashion, still be of some use. There is no doubt that some of the initial discomfort felt by many critics with the concept of national allegory arises out of a resistance to the political implications of each of its component terms—to the sense, that is, that either of these terms still have a relevance for the “underdeveloped” third world that they have (as Jameson admits) lost in the “developed” first (in this way becoming the literary-critical equivalent of pesticides long banned in the West that continue to be produced in the United States for sale in the third world).

Infamously, Jameson writes that “all third-world texts are necessarily . . . allegorical, and in a very specific way they are to be read as what I will call *national allegories*.”<sup>13</sup> Here again, the claim that Jameson makes about third world texts (“by way of a sweeping hypothesis”) cannot help but distract from his broader aim, which is not to pass aesthetic judgment on third world texts, but to develop a system by which it might be possible to consider these texts *within* the global economic and political system that produces the third

world as the third world.<sup>14</sup> For Jameson, third world texts are to be understood as national allegories specifically *in contrast* to the situation of first world cultural and literary texts. He argues that there is a political dimension to third world texts that is now (and has perhaps long been) absent in their first world counterparts. This corresponds to a difference between the social and political culture of the first and third worlds—a difference that must, of course, be understood as broad and conceptual, and that should not be seen as unreflectively rendering homogenous what are two extraordinarily heterogeneous categories.<sup>15</sup> Jameson believes that in the West, the consequence of the radical separation between the public and the private, “between the poetic and the political,” is “the deep cultural conviction that the lived experience of our private existences is somehow incommensurable with the abstractions of economic science and political dynamics.”<sup>16</sup> In terms of literary production, this “cultural conviction” has the effect of limiting or even negating entirely the political work of literature: in the first world, literature is a matter of the private rather than the public sphere, a matter of individual tastes and solitary meditations rather than public debate and deliberation. The relations between the public and the private in the third world are entirely different: they have not undergone this separation and division. Literary texts are thus never *simply* about private matters (although, as Michael Sprinker points out in his review of Jameson’s essay, they are never *simply* private in the first world either, however difficult it might be to see this now.)<sup>17</sup> In the third world, Jameson claims, “*the story of the private individual destiny is always an allegory of the embattled situation of the public third-world culture and society.*”<sup>18</sup>

This claim is strong and sweeping, one whose precise meaning in “Third-World Literature in the Age of Multinational Capitalism” can be grasped only by careful attention to Jameson’s description of allegory, his claims about the relationship of psychology to politics in the first and third worlds, and his description of the significance of the term *culture* and the relationship between culture and politics more generally. Of the concept of allegory, Jameson writes that “our traditional concept of allegory—based, for instance, on stereotypes of Bunyan—is that of an elaborate set of figures and personifications to be read against some one-to-one table of equivalence: this is, so to speak, a one-dimensional view of this signifying process, which might only be set in motion and complexified were we willing to entertain the more alarming notion that such equivalencies are them-

selves in constant change and transformation at each perpetual present of the text.”<sup>19</sup> Read in this more expansive way, the allegorical mode is not limited to the production of morality tales about public, political events—tales that could just as well be described in journalistic terms as in the narrative structure of novels or short stories. On the contrary, “the allegorical spirit is profoundly discontinuous, a matter of breaks and heterogeneities, of the multiple polysemia of the dream rather than the homogenous representation of the symbol.”<sup>20</sup> If in the third world, private stories are *always* allegories of public situations, this does not thereby imply that of necessity third world writing is narratively simplistic or overtly moralistic, or that all such texts are nothing more than exotic versions of Bunyan, as might be supposed in the terms of a more traditional sense of allegory. The claim is rather that the text speaks to its context in a way that is more than simply an example of Western texts’ familiar “auto-referentiality”: it necessarily and directly speaks to and of the overdetermined situation of the struggles for national independence and cultural autonomy in the context of imperialism and its aftermath.<sup>21</sup>

*Why* third world texts speak more directly of and to the national situation has to do with what Jameson sees as the very different “relationship between the libidinal and the political components of individual and social experience” in the first and third worlds.<sup>22</sup> One of the results of the deep division between the public and private spheres in the first world is that “political commitment is recontained and psychologized or subjectivized.”<sup>23</sup> Again, for Jameson, the very opposite is the case in the third world. The division between public and private that is characteristic of the West is *not* characteristic of most third world societies, or perhaps this should be read (in 1986 if not in 2001) as “not yet” or “not yet completely.”<sup>24</sup> This assertion could be taken (again, in Hegelian fashion) as a claim that socially and aesthetically, the third world lags behind the first in its development.<sup>25</sup> But—and I think that this is how Jameson intends it—it also highlights a genuine, material difference between the first and third worlds that is expressed socially and culturally. The attempt to maintain a different form of social life while accepting the material and technological advantages offered by the West has constituted one of the major challenges faced by non-Western societies for whom modernity *has* been belated; it does not seem to me inconceivable to imagine a different organization of private and public in societies that were the subjects of colonialism as opposed to its agents.<sup>26</sup> In any case, the lack of a

corresponding division between public and private in the third world means for Jameson that “psychology, or more specifically, libidinal investment, is to be read in primarily political and social terms.”<sup>27</sup> If political energies in the first world are psychologically interiorized in a way that divests them of their power, it could be said that in the third world the “sphere” of the psychological does not function as a containment device in which what is dangerous in the public is sublimated and defused. In the first world, these sublimated energies may, of course, return to the public sphere in the mediated form of various cultural products; even so, unlike the situation of the third world, in the first world such cultural products would nevertheless be taken to be imbued with only *private* significance or with only the most banal form of larger public meaning, *that is*, as indicators of “styles” or “trends,” the Hegelian *Geist* reborn as successive waves of (essentially similar) commodities. Another way of characterizing this division between first and third worlds within Jameson’s own vocabulary is to say that the history that is everywhere actively repressed in the first world is still a possible subject of discourse in the third world (consider, for instance, his discussion of the repressed spaces of Empire in British modernism.)<sup>28</sup> Of course, this characterization of the large-scale societal differences between the first and third worlds, Jameson adds, must be read as “speculative” and general, and open to “correction by specialists.”<sup>29</sup>

Jameson’s characterization of the different relationships in the first and third worlds between private and public, and so also of the psychological or the libidinal, must be read further in terms of his subsequent discussion of the concept of *cultural revolution*; otherwise, it is possible at this point to see his characterization of the vast social, political, and cultural gulf separating the first and the third worlds as a form of Eurocentrism or exoticism in which—as in the early moments of Modernist art—what is lacking in the civilized West is found at the heart of its “uncivilized” exterior. Jameson links the idea of “cultural revolution,” which has most commonly been used to refer to the massive set of social and cultural changes undertaken by communist regimes (and in China in particular), to the work of figures with “seemingly very different preoccupations”: Antonio Gramsci, Wilhelm Reich, Frantz Fanon, Herbert Marcuse, Rodolph Bahro, and Paolo Freire. It is in the connection that Jameson makes between cultural revolution and “subalternity” that the significance of “national allegory” as an interpretive strategy for third world texts begins to come into focus:

Overhastily, I will suggest that “cultural revolution” as it is projected in such works [Gramsci, Reich, et al.] turns on the phenomenon of what Gramsci called “subalternity,” namely the feelings of mental inferiority and habits of subservience and obedience which necessarily and structurally develop in situations of domination—most dramatically in the experience of colonized peoples. But here, as so often, the subjectivizing and psychologizing habits of first-world peoples such as ourselves can play us false and lead us into misunderstandings. Subalternity is not in that sense a psychological matter, although it governs psychologies; and I suppose that the strategic choice of the term “cultural” aims precisely at restructuring that view of the problem and projecting it outwards into the realm of objective or collective spirit in some non-psychological, but also non-reductionist or non-economistic materialist fashion. When a psychic structure is objectively determined by economic and political relationships, it cannot be dealt with by means of purely psychological therapies; yet it equally cannot be dealt with by means of purely objective transformations of the economic and political situation itself, since the habits remain and exercise a baleful and crippling residual effect. This is a more dramatic form of that old mystery, the unity of theory and practice; and it is specifically in the context of this problem of cultural revolution (now so strange and alien to us) that the achievements and failures of third-world intellectuals, writers and artists must be placed if their concrete meaning is to be grasped.<sup>30</sup>

So the concept of national allegory points to the ways in which the psychological points to the political and the trauma of subalternity finds itself “projected outwards” (allegorically) into the “cultural.” Very crudely, the cultural is what lies “between” the psychological and the political, unifying “theory and practice” in such a way that it is *only* there that the “baleful and crippling” habits that are the residue of colonialism can be addressed and potentially overcome. A “cultural revolution” aims to do just this—to produce an authentic and sovereign subjectivity and collectivity by undoing the set of habits called subalternity. While these are not habits that can be modified by the transformation of political and economic institutions alone, this does not mean the exclusive attention to the subjective (the psychological) *or* to the cultural is sufficient in and of itself either. The idea of *habit* is for this reason a particularly apt way of understanding the legacy of subalternity, since it draws attention to the ways in which subalternity cannot be reduced

simply to “mental” or “psychological” states, but must be seen as residing in the unconscious and inscribed somatically in a whole range of bodily dispositions. The problem of cultural revolution accounts for the presence of the political in the psychological by means of a level of mediation comprised of cultural objects like literary texts, and provides a framework in which it is possible to assess “the achievements and failures of third-world intellectuals” with respect to the task of reclaiming something positive from the colonial experience.<sup>31</sup>

The relationship between the cultural and subalternity may be seen, of course, as almost generically definitive of the intellectual work that has been produced under the sign of “postcolonial” theory and criticism. For example, to point to one of the earliest works (retrospectively) in postcolonial criticism, what other than the “habit” of subalternity does Frantz Fanon address in *Black Skin, White Masks*? One of the most important things that postcolonial critics have added to our understanding is the degree to which cultural and discursive domination was (and is) a necessary and essential aspect of colonialism and imperialism. Where Jameson differs from most postcolonial critics, however, is in his insistence that “culture”

is by no means the final term at which one stops. One must imagine such cultural structures and attitudes as having been themselves, in the beginning, vital responses to infrastructural realities (economic and geographic, for example), as attempts to resolve more fundamental contradictions—attempts which then outlive the situations for which they were devised, and survive, in reified forms, as “cultural patterns.” Those patterns themselves then become part of the objective situation confronted by later generations.<sup>32</sup>

He continues,

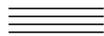
Nor can I feel that the concept of cultural “identity” or even national “identity” is adequate. One cannot acknowledge the justice of the general poststructuralist assault on the so-called “centered subject,” the old unified ego of bourgeois individualism, and then resuscitate this same ideological mirage of psychic unification on the collective level in the form of a doctrine of collective identity. Appeals to collective identity need to be evaluated from a historical perspective, rather than from the standpoint of some dogmatic and placeless “ideological analysis.” When a third-world writer invokes this (to us) ideological value, we

need to examine the concrete historical situation closely in order to determine the political consequences of the strategic use of this concept.<sup>33</sup>

There are then (at least) two levels of mediation that must be considered in the movement from the psychological to the political (and back again) through the cultural. Culture mediates; to understand precisely how it does so, it must be understood that the cultural forms and patterns that produce this mediation are themselves the product of an earlier process of mediation—now reified into the forms and patterns of culture that are to be used as the raw materials of cultural production. Few critics now would object to the need for the analysis of any form of cultural production to take into account the circuits of economics and politics that make the text possible in the first place, but the significance of this second mode by which culture mediates remains all too often unexplored. In other words, what is often missing is the realization that all mediation in the present takes place through the reified cultural forms (and culture in general) of the past; all attempts to resolve the “fundamental contradictions” of the present through cultural production must pass through the concretized history of previous attempts to solve the contradictions of earlier infrastructural realities that have since changed in form and character. This is not to say that culture must be understood as somehow necessarily belated, or that it therefore always “misses” the present, which is to misunderstand in any case what it might mean for cultural forms to attempt to resolve historical contradictions. It is, rather, to point out the need for a more complicated understanding of the process of mediation that considers not simply the site of mediation (say, the text), but also the way in which this site is itself the product of mediation. It is this sense of mediation to which Adorno was trying to draw our attention, too, when he said that “mediation is . . . not between the object and the world, but in the object itself.”

Far from reducing the complexity of third world literary production, the concept of national allegory enables us to consider these texts as the extremely complex objects that they are and *not* just as allegories of one kind or another of the Manichean binaries produced out of the encounter of colonizer and colonized (however ambivalently one might want to understand these). It also foregrounds (metacritically) the cultural/social situation of the reader of the texts, and indeed, the very fact that every interpretation or reading is a kind of translation mechanism that it is best to acknowledge rather than to hide the workings of; the critic, too, works out of a cultural situation

that is the product of earlier mediations that form the raw material for his or her readings.<sup>34</sup> Understood through the lens of the idea of cultural revolution that Jameson outlines here, the concept of national allegory suggests a number of things about how we should think about postcolonial or third world texts in the context of the period of decolonization and globalization. First, postcolonial literary production needs to be understood as forming a “vital responses to infrastructural realities . . . as attempts to resolve more fundamental contradictions.” In other words, it is productive to look at this form of cultural production as a particular kind of cultural strategy, rather than “read” simply and immediately as “literature,” in the sense in which this concept is well understood in the first world academy.<sup>35</sup> Second, careful attention needs to be paid to the deployment of “ideological values” by third world writers themselves, values that sometimes have a resonance in the Western academy because of the ways in which they politically reempower the project of Western literary criticism. One of the most important of these may be that of the “nation” and its strategic use in the literature produced during decolonization; another is to be found in the unquestioned assumption on the part of many critics of the almost necessary social significance of postcolonial literature (or at least, its significance in a straightforward way), when literature may in fact have a relatively marginal role in the postcolony. Another way of putting this last point is that in the examination of postcolonial literature, what needs to be considered are the conditions of possibility for the practice of writing *literature* in these regions, for it is only in this way that we can understand the precise and complicated ways in which this older, imported “technology” participates in the task of cultural revolution that is so important to third world societies.<sup>36</sup>



Whatever one might think of this formulation of mediation and of its utility for postcolonial literary studies, it might nevertheless seem as if I have come far afield from the initial concept of national allegory in producing it. This elaboration of national allegory appears to be more or less akin to the general interpretive schema that Jameson has developed with remarkable consistency over the course of his career, specifically in works such as *The Political Unconscious*. And if *this* is what national allegory is finally about, one has to wonder why Jameson would have generated a neologism that cannot help but invite confusion. Why, after all, *national* allegory and not some-

thing else? In elaborating how this mode of interpretation has specific relevance to the theorization of the role and function of culture and literature in the era of globalization, I want to briefly review the history of national allegory in Jameson's own work. For if there is anything that is troubling about the use of national allegory as a mode of analysis of third world literary texts, it is to be found in the changes that this concept undergoes throughout Jameson's work, coming to be, finally, nothing less than a substitute term for the kind of dialectical criticism that he would like to apply to *all* cultural texts—whether third world or not.<sup>37</sup> National allegory names a possibility and a limit for texts that Jameson first sees in the fiction of Wyndham Lewis, then in third world texts, and finally, as a condition of contemporary cultural production as such. What is missing in Jameson's discussion of national allegory is a discussion of the *nation* to match that of *allegory*. Though it might seem as if the nation has an important role to play in understanding third world texts, on the question of the nation itself, Jameson has surprisingly little to say in "Third-World Literature": the nation is more or less simply conflated with the "political" and, when it is not, it becomes a term that seems to make reference to a kind of collectivity or community that is idealized when it should be placed into question. In this lack of attention to the issue of the nation in the concept of national allegory the strains of the transposition of this concept from an earlier formulation become apparent. While there are thus limits to national allegory within "Third-World Literature," it seems to me that looking at some of Jameson's more recent reflections on the nation in the context of globalization can help to locate the nation within his dialectical mode of analysis in a way that brings national allegory forward into the global present even as it clarifies the conceptual work that the nation performs in his analysis of third world texts.

The term *national allegory* first appears in *Fables of Aggression* as a description of Wyndham Lewis's novel, *Tarr*. As it is presented in this early work, national allegory originates as a much more straightforward concept than it comes to be in the discussion of third world texts: it refers to the way in which individual characters with different national origins stand in for "more abstract national characteristics which are read as their inner essence."<sup>38</sup> When dealing with any one such correspondence between character and national essence, this allegorical mode becomes a form of "cultural critique." For Jameson, the unique characteristic of Lewis's texts is to have assembled numerous national types into one setting, thereby producing "a

dialectically new and more complicated allegorical system . . . that specific and uniquely allegorical space between signifier and signified.”<sup>39</sup> In *Fables of Aggression*, *national allegory* is thus the name for a specific, formal characteristic of Lewis’s novel, rather than a concept that suggests an entire system or mode of reading and interpretation. Indeed, the more general logic that Jameson suggests as the only way to properly account for the possibility in Lewis’s novel of this “now outmoded narrative system” seems to have become transformed with reference to third world texts into the principle of what is now national allegory itself.<sup>40</sup> In characteristic form, Jameson draws attention to the fact that an explanation for national allegory as a formal principle of *Tarr* can only be found in history—though not in the sense that historical conditions “caused” the formal organization of *Tarr* or that the novel is “a ‘reflexion’ of the European diplomatic system.”<sup>41</sup> Instead, he suggests, our direction should be directed toward

the more sensible procedure of exploring those semantic and structural givens which are logically prior to this text and without which its emergence it inconceivable. This is of course the sense in which national allegory in general, and *Tarr* in particular, presuppose not merely the nation-state itself as the basic functional unit of world politics, but also the objective existence of a system of nation-states, the international diplomatic machinery of pre-World-War-I Europe which, originating in the 16th century, was dislocated in significant ways by the War and the Soviet Revolution.<sup>42</sup>

According to Jameson, all literary and cultural forms provide an “unstable and provisory solution to an aesthetic dilemma which is itself the manifestation of a social and historical contradiction.”<sup>43</sup> National allegory can therefore be seen as a once but no longer viable formal attempt “to bridge the increasing gap between the existential data of everyday life within a given nation-state and the structural tendency of monopoly capital to develop on a world-wide, essentially transnational scale.”<sup>44</sup> In other words, the formal qualities of *Tarr* point to the fact that life in England can no longer be rendered intelligible with the “raw materials” of English life alone; narrative resources must be sought elsewhere, and what lies “outside” England is for Lewis (objectively and structurally) a system of nation-states (and their attendant national cultures): “The lived experience of the British situation is domestic, while its structural intelligibility is international.”<sup>45</sup>

It is striking that the words Jameson uses to describe the “problem” to which Lewis’s national allegory is a solution are almost exactly those he uses to later describe modernism’s characteristic spatiality.<sup>46</sup> Jameson suggests that “space” is a formal symptom of modernist texts *in general*, because they, too, encounter the representational crisis exemplified in Lewis’s *Tarr*: the need to make sense of life in a “metropolis” whose immanent logic—that of imperialism—lies beyond its national borders. As in his discussion of *Tarr*, Jameson’s emphasis is on form, even though in his discussion of Forster’s *Howard’s End*, the term *national allegory* is not used. It is significant that in the reemergence in the third world of what was described as an “outmoded” category by the time of the Soviet Revolution, Jameson’s discussion of national allegory is no longer posed in terms of the work of form on specific “aesthetic dilemmas,” nor in the form of a “representational crisis” that involves and invokes the bounded space of the nation. Instead, national allegory names the condition of possibility of narration itself in the third world. It names it, further, as a *positive* condition, one in which there remains a link, however threatened, tenuous, and political, between the production of narrative and the political. This connection in the first world has been shattered so completely that third world texts appear “alien to us at first approach.”<sup>47</sup>

What I think this suggests is that the nation *has* disappeared from third world national allegories. What Jameson describes as national allegory could just as easily have been called political allegory: the nation seems to serve little purpose here, and can only inhibit analyses of third world literary texts insofar as it seems to point to the nation as the (natural) space of the political in the third world. So again, why *national* allegory? It does not have to do with the historical reemergence of the international system of nation-states—or of the emergence of a new form of this system, which we might too hastily identify as globalization—that formed the “structural and semantic givens” for Lewis at the beginning of this century. Nor does it seem to me that third world literary texts face the representational problems of modernism: in the third world, lived reality is *never* seen as intelligible only in terms of the “national” situation, and so there is correspondingly no aesthetic or formal necessity to grapple with what amounts to the “absent cause” of lived experience. The “nation” means something else entirely, something different than simply the empirical community or collectivity for which the cultural revolution is undertaken. Jameson’s evocation of the nation in his discussion of third world literature should be taken instead as a reference to a reified

“cultural pattern” that “having once been part of the solution to a dilemma, then become[s] part of the new problem.”<sup>48</sup>



This is no doubt why the nation has become ever more prominent in Jameson's recent explorations of globalization. For even though it might now seem as if postcolonial literature circulates within a very different set of sociohistorical coordinates than the one that Jameson outlines in “Third-World Literature,” the nation remains an ineliminable structural presence within the contemporary “cultural pattern.” Far from rendering national allegory useless, globalization makes it an increasingly important interpretive mode or problematic. But here, too, problems arise unless we understand precisely what Jameson means by the nation and how in turn he imagines its relationship to globalization.

The nation has been one of the main sites of struggle in the attempt to understand and conceptualize globalization—whether globalization is understood as the name for a set of real, empirical processes that characterize variously the cultural, social, and economic dimensions of contemporary capitalism, or as the name for a number of competing narratives about the evolving shape of the contemporary political landscape and of the character of any future polity.<sup>49</sup> It has been frequently suggested that globalization has rendered the nation-state irrelevant, because (for instance) the nation no longer seems to retain any juridical power or control over capital or labor, both of which cross borders and evade state surveillance with increasing ease (though far more so in the case of capital and its associated modes of credit, finance, and the like, than in the case of the physical bodies of individual laborers). Then there is the (more or less) antithetical position, which holds that the decline of the nation and nation-state has been much exaggerated. Not only are most companies “tethered to their home economies and . . . likely to remain so,” but it is also only the actions of sovereign nation-states that have produced new forms of sovereignty in the form of international regulatory mechanisms like the GATT (General Agreement of Tariffs and Trades) and NAFTA (North American Free Trade Agreement), and also nation-states that have ensured compliance with the global operations of the market at a national level.<sup>50</sup> More recently, commentators have wanted to suggest that neither of these two poles adequately make sense of the complex, heterogeneous position of the nation-state within globalization. This

is, in part, as Jean and John Comaroff point out, because “there is no such thing, save at very high levels of abstraction, as *‘the nation-state’*”: in many polities, neither the “nation” nor the “state” exists as such, while in other places there exists a deep fissure between state and government that makes it impossible to speak of anything that approaches typical ideas about what a functioning nation-state looks like.<sup>51</sup> Put differently, “the processes by which millennial capitalism is taking shape do not reduce to a simple narrative according to which the nation-state either lives or dies, ebbs or flourishes. Its impact is much more complicated, more polyphonous and dispersed, and most immediately felt in the everyday contexts of work and labor, of domesticity and consumption, of street life and media-gazing.”<sup>52</sup>

Whether it has died or still lives, the nation-state has long represented the specifically modernist political project of creating citizen-subjects defined through their attachment to national identities. Connected to this project (which on its own it is easy to be suspicious of) is a whole history of left political engagement that has made effective use (or so the story goes) of this historical compromise between capital and labor to bring about the social gains associated with left activism over the past 150 years or so. Whether or not the powers of the nation-state have declined over the past several decades, the nation as such is thus frequently evoked or imagined as the only possible site of progressive politics (due largely, it seems, to its scale) and as thus something that should be fought for in order to maintain or preserve the political project of the left.<sup>53</sup> This desire for the possibilities (incorrectly) associated with the nation-state cannot help but be confused with more empirical analyses of its function within globalization, which is perhaps why the defense of the nation continues to be associated with a left that in the past sought to distance itself from nationalism.<sup>54</sup> Against this position, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have strongly asserted that “it is a grave mistake to harbor any nostalgia for the powers of the nation-state or to resurrect any politics that celebrates the nation.”<sup>55</sup> For them, the relative decline of the sovereignty of the nation-state is the result of a historical, structural process—the globalization of production and circulation, backed up by those supraterritorial agreements that have incurred the wrath of antiglobalization protestors—and is not “simply the result of an ideological position that might be reversed by an act of political will.”<sup>56</sup> They also point out that “even if the nation were still to be an effective weapon, the nation carries with it a whole series of repressive structures and ideologies”

of which a properly left politics should be appropriately wary.<sup>57</sup> Too-simple demands concerning the political or conceptual necessity of the nation or of the nation-state need to be treated with proper caution, or need to be seen as a potentially debilitating form of nostalgia for political possibilities that no longer exist.

These preliminary comments are perhaps somewhat unnecessary; as Comaroff and Comaroff suggest, the scholarly debate over the fate of the nation-state in globalization "has become something of a cliché."<sup>58</sup> I make them here only because in the absence of such ground-clearing or stage-setting, it is possible to mistake Jameson's recent interest in the nation as little more than nostalgia for a modernist form of politics (a politics that believes in the citizen rather than the consumer) in very much the same way that some critics have taken his interest in the third (or indeed, in the second) world as a search for an Other to a capitalism that "has no social goals."<sup>59</sup> A cursory reading of either of Jameson's most explicit attempts to theorize globalization does little to dispel this impression. In "Notes on Globalization As a Philosophical Issue," he laments the "tendential extinction of new national cultural, and artistic production" that is the consequence of the domination of the global cultural industries by the United States and endorses state support of culture in places like France and Canada.<sup>60</sup> He also makes the claim that in the first world the powers of the state "are what must be protected against the right-wing attempts to dissolve it back into private businesses and operations of all kinds," a point he reaffirms in "Globalization and Political Strategy," where he states outright that "the nation-state today remains the only concrete terrain and framework for political struggle," even though the struggle against globalization "cannot be successfully prosecuted to a conclusion in completely national or nationalist terms."<sup>61</sup>

While this might seem to be an affirmation of the kind of view of the nation that Hardt and Negri warn against, in the context of Jameson's supple examination of the contradictions and antinomies of globalization a different reason for foregrounding the nation emerges that is of a piece with its presence in his discussion of third world literature. In both of his recent articles on globalization, Jameson tries to gauge the significance of the global export of American mass culture (through its intersection with the economic, social, and technological) in order to understand what it might mean to try to oppose or to resist its spread around the world. This is, of course,

an expression of the cultural imperialist thesis in a nutshell: an understanding of globalization that while still predominant in the cultural imaginary of academics and the general public alike, has been criticized as misunderstanding the contemporary operations of culture and power.<sup>62</sup> But while on the surface Jameson seems merely to express a Western academic's worries about the disappearance of traditional ways of life, the reappearance of the nation as a conceptual concern complicates our desire to see globalization as something to be either lamented or celebrated. For instance, what Jameson finds disturbing about the global triumph of American cinema is that it marks

the death of the political, and an allegory of the end of the possibility of imagining radically different social alternatives to this one we now live under. For political film in the '60s and '70s still affirmed that possibility (as did modernism in general, in a more complex way) by affirming that the discovery or invention of a radically new form was at one with the discovery or invention of radically new social relations and ways of living in the world. It is those possibilities—filmic, formal, political, and social—that have disappeared as some more definitive hegemony of the United States has seemed to emerge.<sup>63</sup>

This demand for the persistence of other modes of national culture has little to do with the nation as such. It isn't the case, for example, that Jameson lauds French film because it is formally or thematically richer than American film, either due to its relationship to some purer national essence (say, summer misadventures in the provinces as an adolescent, an apparently inescapable theme for French filmmakers) or because it is produced outside of the strict demands of the market (as a result of state subsidies). Rather, in our present political and cultural circumstances, the nation names for Jameson the possibility of new social relations and forms of collectivity not just "other" to neoliberal globalization, but the possibility of imagining these kinds of relations at all. Such forms of collectivity are not to be found in some actual national space: "Today no enclaves— aesthetic or other—are left in which the commodity form does not reign supreme."<sup>64</sup> Rather, the nation is now part of the new problem of contemporary cultural revolution, a part of the problematic of globalization than one cannot avoid even if one shares Hardt and Negri's suspicions about the politics of actually existing nation-states; it once again names a reified "cultural pattern," though with

different valences and different connections to other concepts and problems than before.

The nation stands for three things in Jameson's recent reflections on globalization. It identifies, first, the possibility of other modes of social life that are organized in strikingly different ways than the American-led "culture-ideology of consumption." Other "national situations" offer models of different forms of collective and social life—not, it is important to add, in the form of "traditional" or "pre-lapsarian" modes of social being, but in the form of "rather recent and successful accommodations of the old institutions to modern technology."<sup>65</sup> Second, the nation is the name for a frankly utopic space that designates "whatever programmes and representations express, in however distorted or unconscious a fashion, the demands of a collective life to come, and identify social collectivity as the crucial centre of any truly progressive and innovative political response to globalization."<sup>66</sup> These words at the end of "Globalization and Political Strategy" are actually meant to define the word *utopian* rather than *nation*. The link between the two terms is made possible in a note that appears a few pages earlier, where Jameson claims that "the words 'nationalism' and 'nationalist' have always been ambiguous, misleading, perhaps even dangerous. The positive or 'good' nationalism I have in mind involves what Henri Lefebvre liked to call 'the great collective project,' and takes the form of the attempt to construct a nation."<sup>67</sup>

Finally, Jameson discusses the nation not in order to settle the case either for or against globalization—rejecting, for instance, the false universality of the "American way of life" in favor of one of so many other (rapidly evaporating) national models, which themselves have never yet yielded positive social alternatives—"but rather to intensify their incompatibility and opposition such that we can live this particular contradiction as our own historic form of Hegel's unhappy consciousness."<sup>68</sup> If "Globalization and Political Strategy" ends with a discussion of utopia, "Notes on Globalization" ends with a discussion of the necessity of the dialectic, and of the Hegelian dialectic in particular. The aim of the dialectic is to understand phenomena in order, finally, to locate the contradictions behind them: in Hegel's *Logic*, the discovery of the Identity of identity and nonidentity that reveals Opposition as Contradiction. But this is not the final moment: "Contradiction then passes over into its Ground, into what I would call the situation itself, the aerial view or the map of the totality in which things happen and History

takes place.”<sup>69</sup> Such a map of the moment when the nation is thought to have been superseded once and for all can only be produced if the nation, the Ground of an earlier moment, is put into play in the dialectic rather than suspended from the outset.

And here we find that we have looped back around to Jameson’s discussion of the ineliminable horizon of those objective “cultural patterns” that third world writers have to confront just as much as first world critics. Which is a long way of saying that far from obliterating the Marxian problematic, especially with respect to the contemporary use and abuse of culture, globalization makes it more important than ever.

#### Notes

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- 1 Fredric Jameson, “Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism,” *Social Text* 15 (1986): 65–88; quotation from 69.
- 2 Aijaz Ahmad, *In Theory: Class, Nations, Literatures* (New York, 1992), 95–122.
- 3 Though there has been a good deal of criticism of Jameson’s reading of third world literature, he has also drawn support for his attempt to offer an abstract, general model of literary production in the colonial and postcolonial world. Jean Franco has suggested that Jameson’s generalizations are useful because they “provoke us to think of exceptions” (“The Nation As Imagined Community,” in *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nations, and Post-colonial Perspectives*, ed. Anne McClintock, Aamir Mufti, and Ella Shohat [Minneapolis, 1997], 130–37; quotation from 131). With respect to contemporary cultural production in India, Geeta Kapur writes that “Jameson’s formulation about the national allegory being the pre-eminent paradigm for Third World literature continues to be valid . . . the allegorical breaks up the paradigmatic notion of the cause . . . it questions the immanent condition of culture taken as some irrepressible truth offering” (“Globalisation and Culture,” *Third Text* 39 [1997]: 21–38; quotation from 24–25). Michael Sprinker has misgivings about some of Jameson’s claims, but finds nevertheless that he puts forward a “provocative hypothesis” that needs to be carefully considered: “Is it not possible, as Jameson here maintains, that certain forms of collective life have until now persisted more powerfully outside the metropolitan countries? And if this be so, of what value are these, perhaps residual but still vital forms of social practice?” (“The National Question: Said, Ahmad, Jameson,” *Public Culture* 6 [1993]: 3–29; quotation from 7–8).
- 4 It is important to recognize just how foreshortened the history of postcolonial studies is within academic discourse. For instance, two of the formative essays in the field, Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculations on Widow Sacrifice” (*Wedge* 7/8 [1985]a: 120–30) and Bhabha’s “Signs Taken for Wonders” (*Critical Inquiry* 12.1 [1985]: 144–65) were published in 1985. Jameson’s essay is roughly contemporaneous with these essays and should

- be taken as an attempt to situate Marxist criticism within the general problematic being developed within postcolonial studies at the time.
- 5 All uses of the terms *first world* and *third world* should be understood, following Santiago Colás's suggestion, as being used *sous rature* so as to mark "both the inadequacy and the indispensability of the terms and the system of geopolitical designations to which they belong" ("The Third World in Jameson's *Postmodernism or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*," *Social Text* 31–32 [1992]: 258–70; quotation from 259).
  - 6 Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks, "At the Margins of Postcolonial Studies: Part 1," in *The Pre-Occupation of Postcolonial Studies*, ed. Fawzia Afzal-Khan and Kalpana Seshadri-Crooks (Durham, 2000), 3–23; quotation from 19.
  - 7 This is essentially the critique that Spivak makes of Jameson's theory of the postmodern in her *Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (Cambridge, MA, 1999), 312–37. See also Dipesh Chakrabarty's challenge to the "politics of historicism" in *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton, 2000).
  - 8 Fredric Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (Durham, 1991), 5.
  - 9 For example, Philip Darby has pointed to the failure of postcolonial theory to engage with international relations theory in his *Fiction of Imperialism: Reading between International Relations and Postcolonialism* (London, 1998). Chakrabarty's analysis of the politics of historicism, including those historicisms such as Ernst Mandel's and Jameson's which remain indebted to Marx's placement of capitalism at the leading edge of historical time, foregrounds the theoretical problems that arise in attempts to think a global totality. While he is right to criticize Eurocentrism of historicism, the difficulty of developing a different model of history that doesn't reduce it to "sheer heterogeneity" can be seen in his unproductive attempt to develop an alternative model of historicity that enables one to "think about the past and the future in a nontotalizing manner" only by passing through the ontological dead zone of Heidegger's thought (Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 249).
  - 10 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, "Totality," in "'Subterranean Passages of Thought': *Empire's* Inserts," *Cultural Studies* 16.2 (2002).
  - 11 "Every individual interpretation must include an interpretation of its own existence, must show its own credentials and justify itself: every commentary must be at the same time a metacommentary" (Fredric Jameson, "Metacommentary," *PMLA* 86 [1971]: 9–17; quotation from 10).
  - 12 Jameson writes that "this whole talk aims implicitly at suggesting a new conception of the humanities in American education today" ("Third-World Literature," 75). In his response to Ahmad's criticisms, Jameson states at the outset that "the essay was intended as an intervention into a 'first-world' literary and critical situation, in which it seemed important to me to stress the loss of certain literary functions and intellectual commitments in the contemporary American scene" (Jameson, "A Brief Response," *Social Text* 19 [1987], 26–28; quotation from 26).
  - 13 Jameson, "Third-World Literature," 69.
  - 14 *Ibid.*, 69.
  - 15 This is one of Ahmad's major criticisms of Jameson. By utilizing the "Three Worlds

- Theory” as his primary interpretive matrix, Ahmad suggests Jameson is unable to see that capitalism, socialism, and colonialism are *all* present within the third world. Colás also points out that there are “not only many ‘Third Worlds’ and many ‘First Worlds’; but there are also ‘Third Worlds’ within the ‘First World’ and vice-versa” (Colás “Third World,” 259). It is worth mentioning here Colás’s examination of the paradoxical function of the third world in Jameson’s *Postmodernism: Or, the Logic of Late Capitalism*, which is more or less repeated in his essay on third world literature: “It is *both* the space whose final elimination by the inexorable logic of late capitalist development consolidates the social moment—late capitalism—whose cultural dominant is postmodernism, *and* the space that remains somehow untainted by and oppositional to those repressive social processes which have homogenized the real and imaginative terrain of the ‘First World’ subject” (Colás, “Third World,” 258).
- 16 Jameson, “Third-World Literature,” 69. This claim, which can be redescribed as the loss of any genuinely historical thinking in the postmodern period, is one of the repeated themes in Jameson’s work.
- 17 Sprinker suggests that “we may wish to inquire, are First World allegorical forms so utterly unconscious of their potential transcoding into political readings? Leaving aside the whole rich territory of contemporary science fiction, about which Jameson himself has taught us so much, what about so-called film noir? Surely Fritz Lang, Billy Wilder, and the other émigrés who pioneered this form understood perfectly well that they were making sociopolitically coded films. On the contemporary scene, there is the massive presence of Francis Ford Coppola, not to mention David Lynch, filmmakers whose affinities with the supposedly disreputable mode of social allegory Jameson has discussed with great insight” (Sprinker, “The National Question,” 6). It is probably possible to cite endless counterexamples in this way; and yet it is important to note that this is to have somehow missed Jameson’s fundamental point entirely.
- 18 Jameson, “Third-World Literature,” 69.
- 19 *Ibid.*, 73.
- 20 *Ibid.*, 73.
- 21 *Ibid.*, 85.
- 22 *Ibid.*, 71.
- 23 *Ibid.*, 70.
- 24 Recently Jameson has noted that “it is very easy to break up such traditional cultural systems, which extend to the way people live in their bodies and use language, as well as the way they treat each other and nature. Once destroyed, those fabrics can never be recreated. Some third-world nations are still in a situation in which that fabric is preserved” (Jameson, “Notes on Globalization As a Philosophic Issue,” in *The Cultures of Globalization*, ed. Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi [Durham, 1998], 63).
- 25 Johannes Fabian has described this “time lag” as “allochronism”—a denial to the “other” of any possible contemporaneity with the West; see Johannes Fabian, *Time and the Other: How Anthropology Makes Its Object* (New York, 1983). See also my discussion of allochronism in the Canadian context, “Belated or Isochronic?: Canadian Writing, Time and Globalization,” *Essays on Canadian Writing* 71 (2000): 145–53.

- 26 Dipesh Chakrabarty's work has engaged directly with the need to simultaneously "think" and "unthink" modernity in the conceptualization of third world histories and third world politics; see his *Provincializing Europe*, especially chapter 1.
- 27 Jameson, "Third-World Literature," 72.
- 28 See Fredric Jameson, "Modernism and Imperialism," in *Nationalism, Colonialism, and Literature*, by Terry Eagleton, Fredric Jameson, and Edward W. Said (Minneapolis, 1990), 43–66.
- 29 Jameson, "Third-World Literature," 72.
- 30 *Ibid.*, 76.
- 31 *Ibid.*, 76.
- 32 *Ibid.*, 78.
- 33 *Ibid.*, 78.
- 34 Julie McGonegal has shown how Jameson's mode of national-allegorical interpretation reveals narratives that reading strategies which focus on "manichean" allegories cannot. Part of her point is that critics of Jameson have confused his elaboration of an interpretative hermeneutic ("third world texts are . . . to be read as national allegories") with the thing itself (third world texts *are* national allegories, the nation still has significance in the third world, the third world is homogeneous, etc.), and in so doing have missed his metacritical emphasis on the way in which third world texts necessarily appear to first world readers as "already read." See Julie McGonegal, "Post-Colonial Contradictions in Tsitsi Dangaremba's *Nervous Condition*: Toward a Reconsideration of Jameson's National Allegory," unpublished manuscript.
- 35 Raymond Williams provides an account of the historical development of the concept of literature in *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford, 1977).
- 36 I elaborate on this rather abstract formulation in my *Zones of Instability: Literature, Post-colonialism, and the Nation* (Baltimore, forthcoming).
- 37 This is intimated in the final footnote of "Third-World Literature": "What is here called 'national allegory' is clearly a form of just such a mapping of the totality, so that the present essay—which sketches a theory of the cognitive aesthetics of third-world literature—forms a pendant to the essay on postmodernism which describes the logic of cultural imperialism of the first world and above all of the United States" (88 n. 25).
- 38 Fredric Jameson, *Fables of Aggression* (Berkeley, CA, 1979), 90.
- 39 *Ibid.*, 90–91.
- 40 *Ibid.*, 93.
- 41 *Ibid.*, 94.
- 42 *Ibid.*, 94.
- 43 *Ibid.*, 94.
- 44 *Ibid.*, 94.
- 45 *Ibid.*, 95.
- 46 See Jameson, "Modernism and Imperialism."
- 47 Jameson, "Third-World Literature," 69.
- 48 *Ibid.*, 78.
- 49 For a perceptive taxonomy of the latter, see Michael Hardt, "Globalization and Democ-

- racy," McMaster University Institute for Globalization and the Human Condition Working Paper Series, May 13, 2001, online at <http://www.humanities.mcmaster.ca/~global/tableofcontents.html>.
- 50 Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson, *Globalization in Question: The International Economy and the Possibilities of Governance* (Cambridge, UK, 1996), 2.
- 51 Jean Comaroff and John L. Comaroff, "Millennial Capitalism: First Thoughts on a Second Coming," *Public Culture* 12.2 (2000): 291–343; quotation from 325.
- 52 *Ibid.*, 325. The complexities that exist here can be seen in the way in which globalization itself sometimes provides the basis for the reconstitution or concentration of national energies. Frederick Buell has suggested recently that in the United States globalization seems to be a form of "cultural nationalism for postnational circumstances" ("Nationalist Postnationalism: Globalist Discourse in Contemporary American Culture," *American Quarterly* 50.3 [1998]: 548–91; quotation from 550). R. Radhakrishnan makes a similar point when he suggests that "postnational developments are never at the expense of nationalist securities; if anything, they foundationalize nation-based verities and privileges to the point of invisibility" ("Postmodernism and the Rest of the World," in Afzal-Khan and Seshadri-Crooks, *The Pre-Occupation of Postcolonial Studies*, 33–70; quotation from 42).
- 53 See Timothy Brennan's "Cosmo-Theory," in this issue.
- 54 See Rosa Luxemburg, *The National Question*, ed. Horace Davis (New York, 1976). In Canada, for example, left nationalism represented by groups such as the Council of Canadians seems to have experienced a revival within the antiglobalization protest movement more generally.
- 55 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2000), 336.
- 56 *Ibid.*, 336.
- 57 *Ibid.*, 336.
- 58 Comaroff and Comaroff, "Millennial Capitalism," 318. The same could be said for other attempts to fix the particular spaces in which globalization is played out, although the very best discussions of the function of regionalism in globalization or of the new role played by cities does contribute to our understanding of the "polyphonous and dispersed" impact of globalization. See for example Leo Ching, "Globalizing the Regional, Regionalizing the Global: Mass Culture and Asianism in the Age of Capital," *Public Culture* 12.1 (2000): 233–57; Achille Mbembe, "At the Edge of the World: Boundaries, Territoriality, and Sovereignty in Africa," *Public Culture* 12.1 (2000): 259–84; and Saskia Sassen, "Spatialities and Temporalities of the Global: Elements of a Theorization," *Public Culture* 12.1 (2000): 215–32, among others.
- 59 Fredric Jameson, "Globalization and Political Strategy," *New Left Review* 4 (2000): 49–68; quotation from 62.
- 60 Jameson, "Notes on Globalization," 61.
- 61 *Ibid.*, 72; Jameson, "Globalization and Political Strategy," 65, 66.
- 62 See especially John Tomlinson, *Cultural Imperialism* (Baltimore, 1991). For an ethnographic consideration of the limits of the cultural imperialist thesis, see James L. Watson, ed., *Golden Arches East: McDonald's in East Asia* (Stanford, CA, 1997).

- 63 Jameson, "Notes on Globalization," 62.
- 64 *Ibid.*, 70.
- 65 *Ibid.*, 63.
- 66 Jameson, "Globalization and Political Strategy," 68.
- 67 *Ibid.*, 64 n.11.
- 68 Jameson, "Notes on Globalization," 64.
- 69 *Ibid.*, 76.

