

FORECLOSING OTHERS IN CULTURAL REPRESENTATION

By

HUEI-JU WANG

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This document is dedicated to my sisters, Huei-Fen Wang and Huei-Rung Wang.

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Huei-ju Wang

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Chair: John P. Leavey Jr.
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This dissertation investigates the representation of racial Others in James Fenimore Cooper's *The Pioneers*, Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* and Joseph Conrad's *Nostramo*. The project appropriates Gayatri G. Spivak's critique in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* of the invocation and foreclosure of the "native informant" in Western epistemology and David Harvey's argument in *The New Imperialism* that "accumulation by dispossession" has long been the lynchpin of the capitalist mode of production in its geographic history. First examining American director Alexander Payne's film, *About Schmidt*, in which a retired American man wrote letters to his adopted son, an African boy in Tanzania, it argues that the political unconscious of invoking and foreclosing the non-Western Other is still being practiced in the Western cultural production. It then proceeds to examine the three novels produced during the 19th and early 20th century capitalist society when the history of accumulation of Western capital based on the expropriation of the natives had been ideologically justified as regrettable but inevitable, as part of capitalist development and progress. It thus examines the dialectical link

between accumulation of capital and the dispossession of the native Other in *The Pioneers* and *Nostramo*. It also explores the conscription of the Islamic Orient in *Moby Dick* and Melville's subversion of conventional Orientalism by his refusal to explain the Oriental Other. It finally explores the possibility of self representation of non-Western Others in the age of globalization by looking at Chinese director Zhang Yimou's role as native informant/cultural translator. It argues that even in his film, *Not One Less*, that deals with the problem of rural poverty and migration in contemporary China, the figure of (young) migrant worker is still being invoked and foreclosed.

CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION: THEORIZING SPIVAK'S RECONFIGURATION OF THE
NATIVE INFORMANT

The age of capital is also the age of Other. After all, the primitive accumulation of Western capital is based on the colonization of non-Western Others, and the accumulation of modern capital relies on its irreducible Other, wage labor, whose surplus labor is the source of profit. The expansion of capitalism as the dominant world system after the fall of Soviet Union in 1991 makes the world more interconnected and dependent of each other while under the tighter control of transnational capital. It also makes the structure of what David Harvey calls in *The New Imperialism* “accumulation by dispossession” more essential to the system’s survival and rejuvenation. As unfettered capital intensifies its search for its Other, cheap labor, both at home and abroad, it is called on to deal with the question of Other. While globalization of capital and migration of labor create tensions among workers of different races, ethnicities and nationalities competing for the limited jobs available, mass consumption of Other in the form of commodities, both in the North and the South, results in huge profit for capital. How to theorize and represent various Others that have been systematically marginalized in or excluded from the Western mode of representation regulated by gender and sexual norms and sustained by racial and class hierarchies thus becomes one of the urgent and difficult tasks facing progressive knowledge workers and activists both inside and outside of the universities. It is especially so in the age of the Internet when the “imagined communities” of Others claim their own space both on-line and off-line to challenge the

dominant norms of gender, sexuality and race as well as the hegemony of capital and to demand social justice for all.

A significant number of literary and cultural critics have sought over the years to intervene in Western discourse that in the process of representing Self by way of its racial/ethnic Others had produced a hierarchy between the master (Self) and the native (Other). Among them, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak has recently put the spotlight on the figure of the native informant, a marginal figure she re-examined in her book *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, in her efforts to deconstruct such a hierarchy and to advance a theory of radical alterity. The targets of her critique included the three influential European Enlightenment thinkers Kant, Hegel and Marx, and other historical and cultural narratives. In doing so, she said she hoped to enable a new politics of reading that confronted head-on what she called “sanctioned ignorance,” an allusion to indifference in the West to the history of the Western colonization of the globe, including Asia, Africa and America. Her call for the re-examination of the figure of the native informant was largely prompted by a developing trend in postcolonial discourse that has increasingly relied on two prominent figures, the hybrid migrant and the postcolonial, to examine the social and cultural logic of globalization of finance capital. The shift, in her view, runs the risk of displacing the figure of the native informant. More troubling for her is that these two figures were also found to have masqueraded as the foreclosed native informant (6; 17-8). Finally, Spivak’s call for the re-examination of the figure of the native informant serves to highlight the representational problems associated with this figure that had been enlisted early on to serve the interest of the master discourse. That is, the figure of the native informant is fraught with paradoxes that bring into relief the

problems of representation, the unequal power relations between the represented and their narrator, and, more important, the larger historical, economic and cultural contexts that enabled the representation of the natives by the West that approaches them as the objects of study.

Under the scrutiny of Spivak's deconstructive reading, the figure of the native informant, a concept she borrowed from ethnography, proves to be a bit of a misnomer. As she demonstrates, the native is often invoked in the master's narrative but only to be foreclosed. Thus, what the native paradoxically discloses is the hidden structure of the invocation and foreclosure of the native who functions to consolidate the Western narrator's perspective and version of the trajectories of world history. Being a deconstructive theorist who insists on dismantling the hierarchy between the master and the native without reproducing a reversed hierarchy, Spivak then rearticulates this marginal, ethnic figure as the ethical Other or radical alterity that constantly brushes against the boundary of the Western self without being essentialized or ossified. Her attention to the radical alterity, and therefore her deconstructive politics of ethics, also leads her to propose that not even the so-called "authentic native" can occupy the position of the native informant in order to preserve the space of ethnic and ethical Other or subalternity. "When a line of communication is established between a member of subaltern groups and the circuits of citizenship or institutionality, the subaltern has been inserted into the long road to hegemony," she cautioned (310).

Although Spivak tracks the figure of the invoked and foreclosed native informant in the philosophical and economic texts of the three Enlightenment thinkers, the deployment of the native informant can also be seen in a number of literary

representations that were produced in the 19th and 20th centuries when Western powers dominated the world and controlled its natural resources through colonization and imperialism. They include James Fenimore Cooper's *The Pioneers*, Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* and Joseph Conrad's *Nostramo*, which will be the focus of my dissertation that seeks to examine the hidden structure of the invoked and foreclosed figure, the ethnic/racial Other, in Western representation, as well as the historical and material conditions that help produce it. Even in today's Western cultural representations disseminated through the vectors of economic and cultural globalization, we can still detect the double operation of the invoked and foreclosed native informant, thanks to Spivak's critique. One such recent example is the Hollywood movie *About Schmidt*, first released in December 2002 in the United States. Directed and co-written by Alexander Payne, who gained wider name recognition for *Sideways* (2004), the movie is ostensibly concerned with its title character, played by Jack Nicholson, from mid-West America. In Warren Schmidt, the *New York Times* movie critic A.O. Scott sees an archetype for the average (white) American male, whose "loneliness, defeat and occasional glory" have been dramatized in literature for much of the 20th century, including Arthur Miller's Willy Loman, Sinclair Lewis's George Babbitt and John Updike's Rabbit Angstrom (*New York Times* Dec. 8, 2002). However, much of the film's narrative about this ordinary (white) Omaha family man is essentially hinged on an African boy living far away in a remote Tanzanian village whom Schmidt adopts as a foster child. As the movie progresses, it becomes clear that the invocation of the boy by Schmidt as his audience, and through him the viewers, allows for the unfolding of Schmidt's narrative on his life that, the film suggests through the recurrent motif of cows Schmidt keeps running into,

mirrors the life cycle of the cow, in that both the character and the animal are “used up, consumed and discarded” in a hyper-consumer society (Scott), as well as on the road trip on his Winnebago he undertakes to reclaim his paternal authority over his only daughter who is about to marry an unkempt salesman despite his reservation.

Foreclosed Native Informant in *About Schmidt*

What makes *About Schmidt* relevant to my discussion of the invocation and foreclosure of the native informant in Western representation is the film’s mode of narration. Despite or because of its title, the film relies on a mode of narration, which I, following Spivak, will call the foreclosed perspective of the native informant, the marginal figure she highlighted in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. In tracking the figure of the native informant in Kant’s *The Critique of Judgment*, Spivak points out the paradox or the problem that occurred when Kant contemplated the final cause of human existence in nature. That is, in Kant’s philosophical system driven by teleological reasoning that climaxes in the invocation of the (Christian) God as the final cause of being both in nature and humans, thus turning what is supposed to be a critical philosophy into theology, the native is enlisted to affirm Kant’s order of things. The natives briefly summoned up by Kant during his contemplation—the inhabitants of New Hollander (Australia) and Tierra del Fuego—turned out to be a convenient rhetorical device on Kant’s part and were eventually excluded from the world constructed by Kant. Thus, in thinking about the final cause of human existence in nature, Kant excludes the indigenes of New Hollander and Tierra del Fuego from obtaining the status of being human subjects, though invoking them in his thought process (284). This representational invocation and exclusion, Spivak notes, are symptomatic of the workings of discursive imperialism that produced the figure of the native informant due to the fact that non-

Western subjects “cannot be theorized as functionally *completely* frozen in a world where teleology is schematized into geo-graphy (writing the world)” (30; italics original).

About Schmidt enlists the help of the foreclosed native informant for the better part of the filmic narration. Warren Schmidt, a recently retired insurance executive in Omaha, Nebraska, narrates his life largely by writing to an African boy named Ndugu Umbo, whom he adopts as his foster child after responding to a TV ad by *Childreach*, a non-profit charity organization that helps children in poor countries. The agency also urges the child sponsor to include “personal information” while sending the monthly check of \$22. Those letters, which start with “Dear Ndugu,” help narrate Schmidt’s life while revealing his inner thoughts and releasing his pent-up emotions, which are on the verge of outburst after his reluctant retirement and brought to the forefront after the sudden death of his wife, Helen. The film’s examination of Schmidt’s life thus relies on the letters he wrote to Ndugu, who is six years old and, according to his aid worker, does not read or speak English. A *Newsweek* movie critic, David Ansen, took note of the significance of the “voice-over letters” in the film’s narrative structure, which he said allowed the viewers to “overhear Schmidt wrestling with his dawning awareness of the emptiness inside him” (64). The “brilliant stroke,” as Ansen described the voice-over letters, turned out to be the film’s Achilles’ heel as well, as they exposed the hidden structure of the invocation and foreclosure of the Tanzanian boy Ndugu.

Worth mentioning and commenting on here is that the rambling letters Schmidt wrote to Ndugu were actually an addition to Louis Begley’s 1996 novel of the same name from which the movie was adapted (“Via Hollywood”). Yet this addition, which forms the backbone of Schmidt’s narration, relies heavily on the simultaneous invocation and

foreclosure of Ndugu, whose only appearance in the film is a photograph of him sent to Schmidt by *Childreach* after the sponsorship begins. Throughout the entire film, Ndugu remains a mute and shadowy figure, hovering or haunting over Schmidt's narrative voice, until at the end of the film when his "presence" is once again being felt through a letter written on his behalf by an aid worker. The letter, which informs Schmidt that Ndugu has recently recovered from an eye infection, also includes a drawing by Ndugu of an adult and a child linked by a rope to thank Schmidt's generosity and kindness. As the invoked and foreclosed figure residing at the margin of the film, Ndugu makes it possible for Schmidt, his American sponsor and narrator of the film, to reflect on his own life and the journey he has taken and to release his pent-up emotions. Ndugu, which means "brother" in Swahili ("Via Hollywood"), thus has a haunting effect on the film, haunting the viewer's consciousness despite his muteness, as Schmidt reads out the letters to him. Thus, paradoxically, the additional letters by the film's writers, Payne and his screenwriting partner, Jim Taylor, turn out to be a "dangerous supplement," to use Derrida's concept-metaphor, that both anchors the film's narration and points to the film's hidden narrative structure.

Through the simultaneous invocation and foreclosure of Ndugu, we learn that Schmidt was once an ambitious young man seeking to emulate the success stories of Henry Ford and Walter Disney until his responsibility for his young family forced him to take safer career choices, which eventually landed him the job of the vice president of the Woodmen of the World, an insurance company in Omaha, from which he just recently retired or was forced to retire. In the first letter written to Ndugu, Schmidt also reveals his dissatisfaction about his wife of 42 years, including her supposed obsession for trying out

new restaurants. Although he takes pride in his only daughter, Jeannie, he is disappointed at her choice for her husband, a waterbed salesman, who in his view is “not up to snuff” nor “in her league.” In the second letter, Schmidt informs Ndugu that his wife, Helen, has died suddenly from a blood clot in the brain. He also confesses that he missed his Helen, advising Ndugu to “appreciate what you have while you still have it,” and regrets for the unkind remarks he made about his wife in the first letter. The act of writing letters to Ndugu functions for Schmidt as a kind of therapy, more so after the death of his wife. In addressing Ndugu, he is reasserting his patriarchal authority that has been undermined due to his recent (possibly forced) retirement and his daughter’s marriage choice. The sponsorship of Ndugu, an act to fill the void following his retirement while doing charity work, could also be seen as a symbolic act by Schmidt to replace the daughter he is losing to an “unpromising” salesman who is obsessed with his investment plans or “pyramid schemes.”

In ethnography, Spivak points out, the native informant “*is a blank*” deprived of autobiography, but enables the inscription of the Other by the West (6; italics original). Sourayan Mookerjea also notes that in that discipline the figure of the native informant as an “imaginary other” is needed to construct a fictional dialogue between the Western Self and its racial/ethnic Other, thus making the ethnographic text intelligible and constructing the West’s humanity (“Native Informant” 143-44). Schmidt’s relationship to Ndugu in *About Schmidt* is, to a certain extent, comparable to the fictional relationship an ethnographer has with his or her native informant, but with a twist. In *About Schmidt*, the object of study is reversed: the focus is on the American child sponsor to highlight his humanity and compassion instead of Ndugu, the African Other. But through the invoked

and foreclosed Other, we get a glimpse of Schmidt's life. Schmidt's monologue with the invoked and foreclosed Ndugu in the letters is not intended to seek an understanding of his foster child living in a remote African village. Rather, it attempts to examine his own life and helps Schmidt, who has been replaced at his job by someone who is younger and more attuned to the needs of the fast-changing and high-tech capitalism, to reckon with his own mortality, a thought rendered all the more poignant after the sudden death of his wife. As *About Schmidt* testifies, Ndugu the native informant is needed as the foreclosed dialogical Other so that Schmidt can reach deep into his past and inner self to come to terms with his current existence as a retired widower facing his own predictable mortality.

On the other hand, Schmidt's relation with Ndugu parallels the one that Kant had with the New Hollanders and Fuegians. As narrator, both Schmidt and Kant invoke the native but only to enact a violent act of foreclosure: Schmidt (or the film's writers) forecloses Ndugu's voice and perspective until the very end of the movie while Kant excludes the natives from obtaining the status presumably reserved for civilized/cultured European subjects capable of the faculty of reason, freedom of desire and morality. What *About Schmidt* finally demonstrates, without being self-conscious of it, is that a film that connects the West with Africa in the era of intensified cultural and economic globalization through an act of generosity and kindness nonetheless hinges on the hidden structure of the invocation and foreclosure of the native informant, who reveals less about himself than about this very hidden narrative foreclosure. The Schmidt-Ndugu plot, the addition to the original story, thus exposes the "political unconscious" of the movie.

Schmidt's relationship with Ndugu also echoes and reverses the one formed between Robinson Crusoe and Friday in Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. The semi-reenactment of the colonial relationship is evidenced in Schmidt's third letter, which relays his road trip across Nebraska and Kansas before visiting his daughter in Denver to persuade her to call off her wedding. Schmidt decides to take the road trip after his daughter declines his help with her upcoming wedding except in the form of checks. In a compact economy, the third letter takes us to Schmidt's childhood home in Nebraska, now a tire shop; to his alma mater, University of Kansas, in Lawrence, Kansas; and to tourist sites in Nebraska, including a historical museum commemorating American pioneers (where, he told Ndugu, he met a "real Indian," a sales clerk who informed him that the Native Americans got "a raw deal") and Buffalo Bill's house. The third letter on the road trip thus allows the film to present a slice of Schmidt's history and American history through those personal, institutional and tourist sites. The letter with its "educational" content is supposed to lighten up the foster child, but the film undermines that and Schmidt's paternal authority with Ndugu's drawing of an adult and a child connected by a rope. The reversal of the quasi-colonial relationship occurs in the last scene of the movie when Schmidt, who has tried to enlighten Ndugu with the letters, bursts into tears after being moved by the drawing, which simultaneously reminds him of his loneliness and connection with others. Despite the movie's gesture to reconstruct the relationship between the West and its Other through Schmidt and Ndugu, the film's narrative on Schmidt's life is nevertheless built upon the invocation and foreclosure of the African Other. Moreover, the film remains within the ideological horizon of capitalism that addresses the problem of poverty in Africa and elsewhere through

individual charity rather than critically examining the social, economic and global structures that produce and perpetuate it in the first place.

Spivka's Critique of the Native Informant and its Reconfiguration

Spivak has been studying the operation of the native informant as the Other consolidating the Western Self in Western epistemology since the late 1980s. She explains the stakes involved in invoking the native informant in the West in a passage that I quote at length because it lays out her concern with the use of the Other as both a means and an end to reaffirm the knowing Western subject. She writes:

If one looks at the history of post-Enlightenment theory, the major problem has been the problem of autobiography: how subjective structures can, in fact, give objective truth. During these same centuries, the Native Informant, who was found in these other places, his stuff was unquestioningly treated as objective evidence for the founding of so-called sciences like ethnography, ethnolinguistics, comparative religion, and so on. So that, once again, the theoretical problems only relate to the person who knows. The person who *knows* has all of the problems of selfhood. The person who is *known*, somehow, seems not to have a problematic self. These days, it is the same kind of agenda that is at work. (qtd. in Mookerjea 141-42)

In this passage, she makes two important observations about the state of the post-Enlightenment history. First, the major problem with the history of post-Enlightenment theory lies in its own autobiography: it has used the figure of the native informant to mask "subjective structures" as "objective truth." Second, in doing so, it has uncritically assumed as unproblematic the subjectivity of the Other who consolidates the knowing Western subject and provides him or her with indigenous information. Spivak's observations also show that behind the figure of the native informant lie the questions of knowledge, power and representation, the questions that still dominate current discussions on how to theorize and empower the Other without falling into the pitfalls of essentialism and binary opposition. From her deconstructive perspective, the Other, despite being subordinated in the discourse of imperialism, is no less problematic than the

Western self that inscribes it to validate its subordination. Thus, she calls for a rethinking of the Other as a “trace-structure” or “effacement in disclosure” (*A Critique* 310) to preserve the critical edge of radical alterity, a crucial point which I will take up later.

As part of her efforts to demonstrate “how deconstruction can serve reading,” Spivak zeroes in on the figure of the native informant in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*. This marginal figure, which has been invoked and foreclosed in the Western production of knowledge, notably in German Enlightenment philosophy, she notes, is both needed and foreclosed in the writings of three major Enlightenment thinkers: Kant, Hegel and Marx. In Kant, the New Hollanders (the Australian Aboriginal) and the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego are needed and foreclosed in the thought process of the philosopher of reason contemplating the “final cause” of men’s existence. In Hegel, India and other Oriental countries are invoked and excluded to facilitate the teleological movement of the Spirit from the East to the West where it ultimately gains “self-knowledge” in World History. In Marx, the concept of Asiatic Mode of Production is needed and foreclosed as Marx wrestled with the question of difference against the “normative” concept of capitalist mode of production. From Spivak’s standpoint, that the figure of the native informant briefly appears in different forms and then is bypassed in the three German philosophers’ texts points to the teleological thought in their texts and thus exposes the Eurocentrism in their reasons and their “complicity” in perpetuating the culture of Western imperialism and its exclusionary logic.¹ Furthermore, the critique of the foreclosure of the Aboriginal, as Dina al-Kassim notes, also offers an account of “our

¹ Even though Marx can be faulted for his Eurocentrism and foreclosing of the women from the working class in the earlier development of capitalism, as some have argued, his sustained critique of the capitalist mode of production with in-built internal contradictions and crises remains a valuable source for understanding the globalizing system.

complicity with the exclusionary logic that subtends it,” resulting from the fact that we are “inescapably situated within” the domain of reason and the institutions that legitimize it (172). Kassim’s comment only highlights the difficulties or dilemmas of critiquing some of the assumptions of the Enlightenment by using the same conceptual tools that enabled them in the first place. Nevertheless, acknowledging one’s own complicity with the logic of exclusion makes one more vigilant to the foreclosure and marginalization of the Others in both discourse and society.

In her reading of Kant’s *The Critique of Judgment*, Spivak demonstrates how the figure of the native informant operates in Kant’s philosophical system by reading two critical “anthropological moments” in the text. One deals with the Kantian notion of the sublime, the feeling that the forces of nature excite from cultured European man, and the other with his teleological reasoning of man’s existence. In “Analytic of the Sublime,” Kant describes the feeling of the sublime as “a feeling of pain, arising from the want of the accordance between the aesthetical estimation of magnitude formed by the Imagination and the estimation of the same formed by Reason” (119). He goes on to say that the feeling of the sublime at the same time includes an excited pleasure, “arising from the correspondence with rational Ideals of this very judgment of the inadequacy of our greatest faculty of Sense.” A few pages later, Kant points out that for “the uneducated man” who has not developed moral ideas and has not been prepared by culture, the sublime is being (mis)interpreted as “the terrible” (130). From Kant’s remarks on the sublime and the terrible, Spivak uncovers the figure of the “uneducated man” who reads the sublime as the terrible as a result of having not been initiated into culture (12-13). Although the uneducated in Kant often refer to the child, the poor and the woman, Spivak

proposes to read the “uneducated man” as “man in the raw” [*dem rohen Menschen*], thus suggestive of “the savage and the primitive” (13). The raw man unequipped by the culture (of the higher classes), Spivak points out, is finally named in “Analytic of the Teleological Judgment” when Kant makes a casual allusion to the Australian aboriginal and the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego in his discussion of the final cause of men’s existence (26). As Kant remarks in an after-thought manner:

For example, grass is needful for the ox, which again is needful for man as a means of existence, but then we do not see why it is necessary that men should exist (a question this, which we shall not find so easy to answer if we sometimes cast our thoughts on the New Hollanders or the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego). So conceived, the thing is not even a natural purpose, for neither it (nor its whole genus) is to be regarded as a natural product. (284)

In this critical “anthropological moment” in Kant, where he is on the way to sublimate physical teleology as theology, meaning finally attributing God as the final cause of being, Spivak uncovers the figure of the native informant in both the New Hollanders and the Fuegians. Furthermore, this uncovering exposes the “lack” in the Kantian subject of teleological reason, whose formulation is based on the exclusion of the Aboriginal.

Crucial to Spivak’s critique of the figure of the native informant in Kant’s text is the paradoxical role it is assigned to play. Both the New Hollanders and the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego inserted in the parentheses are “both needed and foreclosed.” Despite being “only a *casual* object of thought,” in Spivak’s words, they are needed to supplement Kant’s contemplation of the final cause of men’s existence, which Kant later attributes to be the work of God. But at the same time they are foreclosed to becoming the Kantian subject of reason. Equally important, as they operate in Kant’s frame of intelligibility, which as I have pointed out hinges on teleological reasoning and sublates God as the final purposes of beings, the Aboriginal of the New Hollander and Tierra de

Fuego cannot hope to become the subjects endowed with speech. Within the “axiomatics of imperialism,” Spivak notes, it is imperative that the natives “*cannot* be the subject of speech or judgment in the world of the *Critique*” (26). She adds that “the subject as such in Kant is geopolitically differentiated” (26-27), thus excluding those who live outside the West. On the other hand, their exclusion by Kant based on geographical consideration is strategic because it works to solidify Kant’s view of the difference between cultured European bourgeois society and other non-Western societies that have yet to follow in the steps of Europe (31-32). This geographical and cultural difference thus constitutes his Eurocentrism, which legitimizes the view that “Europe is the global legislator” (33). As the “dangerous supplement,” to use Jacques Derrida’s concept-metaphor, the New Hollanders and the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego show how the non-Western subjects are often excluded in the Western mode of representation, though being invoked as the racial/ethnic Other at the margin of the text. Spivak’s uncovering of the figure of the native informant in Kant thus makes visible “the foreclosure of the subject whose lack of access to the position of narrator is the condition of possibility of the consolidation of Kant’s position” (9).

By demonstrating the foreclosure of the Aboriginal as human subjects in Kant Spivak also highlights the “lack” at the “origin” of Enlightenment philosophy (Kassim 172). The lack marked by the rejection (*Verwerfung*) of the Aboriginal allows for the construction of the cultured European subject endowed with freedom of desire and morality in Kant’s philosophy (Spivak 26-27; 32n). The notion of foreclosure (*Verwerfung*), Spivak notes, is taken from Lacanian psychoanalysis (4). In *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*, J. Laplanche and J.-B. Pontalis track the use of foreclosure in Lacan,

developed through Freud's Wolf Man case and "Negation," to include the senses of refusal, reputation, disavowal, withdrawal and expulsion. Using Freud's "Negation" as a basis, Lacan defines foreclosure as "a primary process . . . embodying two complementary operations: the *Einbeziehung ins Ich*, introduction into the subject, and the *Ausstossung aus dem Ich*, expulsion from the subject" (Laplanche and Pontalis 168). To simplify Lacan's more complex understanding of foreclosure, the notion of foreclosure describes a defense mechanism used by a psychotic subject to expel that which is repressed from the Symbolic, and it thus marks the subsequent return of the repressed in the Real (166-68). Foreclosure, for Lacan, thus marks the symbolization that fails to materialize and subsequently reappears in the Real. According to Spivak, the foreclosure of the Aboriginal from the subject in Kant follows a similar path in the Lacanian analysis: "*Einbeziehung ins Ich*, introduction into the reflective judgment; and *Ausstossung aus dem Ich*, expulsion from the subject, into the noumenon" (28-9). Even when Kant considers man as noumenon, the raw man still falls outside of Kant's conceptual frame because for the philosopher, as Spivak notes, "the uncultivated reason of the raw man cannot conceptualize man as noumenon either" (32). She further notes that the complicity between Kant's philosophy and the needs of cultural imperialism is "a permanent necessity."

For Spivak, Lacanian psychoanalysis also provides a useful technique for "reading the pre-emergence (Raymond Williams's term) of narrative as ethical instantiation" (4). By way of a literary transference, this Lacanian notion of foreclosure enables Spivak to read the New Hollanders and the inhabitants of Tierra del Fuego as simultaneously needed and foreclosed in Kant's text. They are introduced into the reflective judgment of

Kant, but are precluded from becoming the Kantian subject of reason and morality (28-29). As the para-subjects not yet initiated into (European) culture of higher classes, the natives of Australia and Tierra del Fuego cannot become full human subjects. For Kant, culture, along with civil legislation and faith, is a key element that initiates subjects into humanity capable of reason, morality, desire and other faculties. However, this determining element excludes non-Western cultures. Assessing the effect of the foreclosure of the native informant, Spivak notes that the aporia between the raw man and the Kantian subject should have made Kant's text unreadable but its readability is enabled by "ignoring the aporia, passing through it by way of the axiomatics of imperialism" (34). Spivak's counter-narrative that exposes the foreclosure of the native informant thus is her intervention into the discourse of the Enlightenment philosophy that has conspired, wittingly or unwittingly, with the needs of imperialism.

In addition to Lacan's notion of foreclosure, Spivak also credits the works of Paul de Man and Jacques Derrida for enabling her to detect the structure of the native informant in the discourse of the enlightenment philosophers and to "read it otherwise." Of de Man's version of deconstruction, Spivak notes that de Man has shown in his reading of Rousseau and others that what claims to be true is merely a trope. Moreover, the insight of de Man, says Spivak, is that following the tropological critique, he does not attempt to reinstate a "corrected" version of the truth. Instead, the second performative critique for de Man only seeks to "disclose how the corrective impulse within the tropological analysis is obliged to act out a lie in attempting to establish it as the corrected version of truth" (18-9). Of Derrida's body of work, Spivak says that Derrida's notion of the *parergon*, an addition to the *ergon*, or the work, is instrumental in her

detection of the figure of the foreclosed native informant in Kant and others (34). In *The Truth in Painting*, Derrida explains the operation of the *parergon* as “something which comes as an extra, *exterior* to the proper field . . . of pure reason . . . but whose transcendent exteriority comes to play . . . against the limit itself and intervene in the inside only to the extent that the inside is lacking. It is lacking *in* something and it is lacking *from itself* It needs the supplementary work” (56). This passage articulates deconstruction’s strategy of reading from the margin through the figure of the *parergon*, which helps destabilize the hierarchical relation between the inside and the outside. More important, this exterior/supplemental figure not only exposes the lack in the inside but also the lack within and thus its need for a supplement. Although Derrida is known to be interested in calling into question self-presence, thus his attention to the lack within, the notion of the relationship *between* the inside (Self) and the outside (Other) is indispensable for investigating and displacing binary oppositions.

Worth noting here is that Derrida uncovers the figure of *parerga* (translated as ornaments) in his attentive reading of Kant’s “Analytic of the Beautiful” in *The Critique of Judgment*. Kant explains *parerga*/ornaments as “those things which do not belong to the complete representation of the object internally as elements but only externally as complements, and which augment the satisfaction of taste” (76). He goes on to say that they appear in the form of “the frames of pictures, or the draperies of statues or the colonnades of palaces” (*ibid.*). This Kantian passage significantly informs Derrida’s own formulation of *parergon*. It also shows how Derrida engaged with Kant’s remarks on the aesthetic judgment on taste: by foregrounding the marginalized parentheses both in the main text and the footnote supplemented by Kant to bolster his argument in the main text

regarding the judgment of taste (45). Learning from Derrida's reading strategy that calls attention to the margin, Spivak notes that the raw man influencing the inside from outside the work in Kant is the gain yielded by the *parergon* (34). That is, the New Hollanders and the Fuegians operate like one of the *parerga* in Kant's third Critique. Of her deconstructive reading strategy, Spivak writes:

The challenge of deconstruction is not to excuse, but to suspend accusation to examine with painstaking care if the protocols of the text contains [sic] a moment that can produce something that will generate a new and useful reading . . . a *lever of intervention*. Such a lever . . . can be perceived as a moment of transgression in the text—or a moment of bafflement that discloses not only limits and but also possibilities to a new politics of reading. (98)

Her detection of the figure of the native informant operative in the texts of Kant, Hegel (the teleological movement of the Spirit from the East to the West) and Marx (Asiatic mode of production) thus is her intervention into the “master discourse” by seizing those moments of transgression or bafflement that simultaneously invoke and foreclose the non-Western Others in different incarnations.

In the end, Spivak's reading of the texts of the “three wise men” of European Enlightenment is as much about showcasing deconstruction's ethical concern about the Other residing at the margin of the text as about tracking the figure of the native informant. Of the margin, she writes:

[it] is the impossible boundary marking off the wholly other, and the encounter with the wholly other, as it may be figured, has an unpredictable relationship to our ethical rules. The named marginal is as much a concealment as a disclosure of the margin; and where s/he discloses, s/he is singular. (173)

This double gesture informs her deconstructive critical vigilance that the Other be effaced while being disclosed simultaneously.

Thus, Spivak's critique of the invocation and foreclosure of the native informant in Western epistemology is followed up by a second procedure to “read otherwise” this

ethnic/racial figure. She proposes to resignify it as the name marking the effect of difference that the West, as Derrida has noted, has tried unsuccessfully to contain (17). In “The Ends of Man,” Derrida points out that the West has tried to contain its racial Other not only by mastering it but also by “affecting itself with it” (113). In the same essay, Derrida also notes that the history of the concept of man has not been critically examined and is treated as if it “had no origin, no historical, cultural or linguistic limit” (116). In her view, Derrida’s comment on man can be said of the native and woman. Spivak’s rethinking of the figure of the native informant as the absolute Other, or alterity, continues Derrida’s critique of the humanist notion of the “authentic man” with self-presence. She makes it clear that she now resignifies “the ‘native informant’ as a name for that mark of expulsion from the name of Man—a mark crossing out the impossibility of the ethical relation” (6). The ethical relationship with the ethnic/racial Other is impossible, because, true to the paradoxical nature of deconstruction, ethics here is understood as a concept-metaphor, as “the experience of the impossible” (427). Spivak explains this paradox thus: along with justice and law, gift and responsibility, ethics and politics are “structureless structures” with the first item of each pair “neither available nor unavailable” (427). Ethics thus is being disclosed while being effaced, or marked but put under erasure. Spivak’s rethinking of the native informant as radical alterity or difference thus is her answer to Derrida’s call to disclose and efface the Other at the same time, reinforcing his politics of ethics.

Spivak further re-envisioned the figure of the native informant as a deconstructive reading strategy, as “the imagined and (im)possible perspective,” hence her formulation of “the native informant” as (im)possible perspective (9; 49). Although she demonstrates

the invocation and foreclosure of the natives in Kant, Spivak does not call for restoring their foreclosed perspectives. On the contrary, she critiques the notion of the “authentic ethnic” who claims to speak for the hitherto foreclosed ethnic/racial Other of the West, a (mis)representation that she thinks tarnishes some writings on Third Worldism (60). The elite of the global South, in her view, often hides behind such unexamined “nativism” to oppress their people. Moreover, she seeks to preserve the space of the absolute Other (figured as the subaltern, as the woman, as the native informant) by insisting on the (im)possible perspective of the native informant. The value of insisting on the (im) of the (im)possibility of the native perspective, says Spivak, is that it pre-empts the emergence of a totalizing one, a pivotal deconstruction lesson (*In Other Worlds* 308; 81n). For Spivak, the reconfigured native informant is, in effect, a tropological figure that turns to become the “imagined and (im)possible perspective” that resides at the margins of her reading. One of Spivak’s goals in reading otherwise is to make determined concepts turn, or to suspend the determination (*Bestimmung*) in them, in order to produce what she calls a new, useful reading.

Spivak reinforces this notion of the native informant as an (im)possible perspective in her deconstructive reading of Hegel’s reading of *Gita*, an addition to the Hindu scripture, *Mahabharata*. While one can imagine oneself as occupying the position of “the implied reader contemporary with the Gita” in reading Hegel’s comments on Gita, Spivak argues that this kind of reading strategy fails to address the problem of unexamined culturalism or nativism. She insists that neither the colonial subject nor the postcolonial subject can inhabit the (im)possible perspective of the native informant or the implied contemporary reader or receiver (62). Similarly, in reading South African

writer J.M. Coetzee's *Foe*, a short novel that reworks Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Spivak suggests that the native, Friday, who is incapable of speech because of the mutilation of his tongue, is the "unemphatic agent of withholding in the text" and should not be interpreted as an informant (190). The withholding of information as to the conditions that led to the cruelty visited upon Friday can be read as a secret that cannot be unlocked, she argues. In other words, the (im)possible perspective of the native informant is Spivak's deconstructive reading strategy that disclose the figure of the native informant but refuses to restore this foreclosed perspective in order to preserve that critical space of the absolute Other. The (im)possible perspective of the native informant, as Spivak puts it, is "a desire for permanent parabasis" (362), by which she means "sustained interruption from a source relating 'otherwise' (*allegorien* = speaking otherwise) to the continuous unfolding of the main system of meaning" (430). The term parabasis, as Mark Sanders points out, has its origin in Greek drama: literally meaning stepping aside, it refers to the intervention of the chorus and that of the author in theater (par. 7). Sanders also notes that the permanent parabasis, as embedded in the Spivakian figure of the native informant that makes visible "shadowy counterscene" in master discourse (37), stems from Paul de Man's *Allegories of Reading* where parabasis emerges as a figure of interruption in de Man's recasting of allegory in terms of parabasis and irony. As "permanent parabasis," the (im)possible perspective of the native informant in Spivak is the figure that haunts and disrupts the text with the problem of the irreducible Other.

To sum up Spivak's re-examination of the figure of the native informant, the figure taken from ethnography: the native is both needed to provide information for the ethnographer and at the same time is foreclosed to obtaining the subject-position or

becoming a narrator. Under her deconstruction reading strategy, the figure of the native informant as a determined concept is being turned; it is being transformed into a reader's perspective, among others. But it is a perspective that does not seek to restore the lost perspective of the native informant, and as such, it is called as the (im)possible perspective of the native informant. The (im)possible perspective of the native informant is one that is yet "to come" or "on the way" (Spivak, "Response" 211), all the while exposing the double structure of invocation and foreclosure of the native in master discourse, dismantling the hierarchy between master and native and showing the complicity between native hegemony and the axiomatics of imperialism (37).

Native Informant and Accumulation by Dispossession

My dissertation takes the figure of the native informant as a starting point, using this marginal figure to examine the representation of the ethnic/racial Other in three novels by James Fenimore Cooper, Herman Melville and Joseph Conrad. In doing so, I also examine three historical specific phenomena in American continent the figure of the native/Other discloses and forecloses: primitive accumulation of capital through the dispossession and privatization of Indian land (*The Pioneers*), U.S. literary Orientalism and Western territorial imperialism (*Moby Dick*), and primitive and modern accumulation of capital through the exploitation of indigenous labor and Western capitalist imperialism (*Nostramo*). While Spivak's subaltern deconstruction politics of reading emphasizes the native informant as an (im)possible perspective, my dissertation project focuses on the dialectic and dynamic relations between literary representation and historical and material conditions. I am interested in interrogating the Western mode of narration that invokes and forecloses the Other that consolidates the West as the guarantor of truth, power and representation, and in the conscription and foreclosure of the Others to either justify the

primitive accumulation of capital and bourgeois right to private property or to critique modern accumulation of capital and Western imperialism. Melville's appropriation of the Islamic Other, however, does not fit neatly with the above description as his contains both reactionary and subversive threads. Thus, in my reading of the three novels I supplement Spivak's critique of the foreclosure of the native informant with Marx's notion of primitive accumulation and David Harvey's recent articulation of "accumulation by dispossession." The two major frames that run through my dissertation chapters help ground my project in the tradition of post-colonial criticism that examines the Western cultural hegemony and Marxist class politics that foregrounds the issue of labor.

In *Capital, Vol. One*, Marx points out that the colonization of America through state-sponsored violence constitutes one of "the chief moments of primitive accumulation" (915). Building on Marx's insights, Harvey in his recent work, *The New Imperialism*, argues that the primitive accumulation that Marx saw as the pre-history of modern capital has not ceased to exist in the capitalist mode of production. Moreover, following Hannah Arendt in *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Harvey maintains that "accumulation by dispossession" is "an important and continuing force in the historical geography of capital accumulation through imperialism" (143). For Harvey, the concept of accumulation by dispossession encompass many predatory capitalist practices including commodification of "cultural forms, histories and intellectual creativity" (148). Its most powerful mechanism, however, is privatization of public sectors, a global neo-liberal economic policy that is represented as "economic reforms" in post-Communist Russia and China and other countries. Harvey also cites the Asian financial crisis of

1997-98 as one of the many examples in which accumulation by dispossession was in use to help resolve the crisis of capital overaccumulation, idle capital not employed in either productive or speculative use. Harvey clearly uses the concept of accumulation by dispossession to articulate the modern mechanisms, including national debts and international credit system, through which contemporary global capitalism attempts to solve its crises of overaccumulation. However, in reading *The Pioneers* and *Nostramo*, I appropriate his concept to underscore the historical processes in which the West expropriated the indigenous of their lands and natural resources and created material conditions in which appropriation of surplus labor could be extracted. Although I did not pursue the direct link between accumulation of capital through the expropriation of the non-Western Others in *Moby Dick*, it should be pointed out that the Oriental fever in America and Europe in the 19th century followed Napoleon's conquest of Egypt in 1798. Thus, Harvey's concept of accumulation by dispossession connotes for me in the following chapters both the expropriation of indigenous land and (surplus) labor for the accumulation of capital, in addition to the neo-liberal dispossessions mentioned above.

To illustrate the invocation and foreclosure of the native/Other as a predominant, though sometimes hidden, narrative pattern in Western literary representation, I propose to read three Western classics, James Fenimore Cooper's *The Pioneers* (1823), Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851) and Joseph Conrad's *Nostramo* (1904). Although there are many literary works that deal with the representation of the Others and globalization of capital, the three texts are particularly useful for my geographic mapping of "accumulation by dispossession" and for my analysis of the dialectical relationships between the literary representation and the historical and material conditions that gave

rise to the representation. More importantly, the three novels allow me to demonstrate the ways in which the literary figure of the native/Other both discloses and forecloses the dispossession of the indigenous people and/or the appropriation of their voices and culture by Western writers. The fact that each of the three works concerns itself with a non-Western Other shows that how each novelist was haunted by the Other of his time. It also illustrates how Western imagination, more often than not, relies on an Other in the literary production, somewhat mirroring the primitive accumulation of Western capital by way of expropriating various ethnic/racial Others.

Writing in 1820s, Cooper was still preoccupied by the problem of dispossessed Indians and the related questions of law and justice. In *The Pioneers*, he attempted to solve the Indian problem and racial conflicts by giving voices to the expropriated natives. The “Indian” voices, which both disclose and foreclose the primitive accumulation of capital as I will show, end up justifying the dispossession of the Indians and asserting bourgeois right to property on the American frontier, which is further maintained by the bourgeois heterosexual family. The foreclosure of the Indian perspective and naturalization of accumulation by dispossession thus work hand in hand to perpetuate the “myth of the frontier” that misrepresents America as “a wide-open land of unlimited opportunity for the strong, ambitious, self-reliant individual to thrust his way to the top” (Slotkin 5). This colonialist ideology, Richard Slotkin suggests in *Regeneration Through Violence*, becomes the “structuring metaphor of the American experience” that nevertheless resorts to violence against the Indians to seize their land and regenerate wealth for the white colonialists (ibid.). More than a quarter century later, Melville took bourgeois right to property as a given, as the law of both the land and the sea. And he was

preoccupied with another historical phenomenon of his time: Oriental revival that swept both America and Europe in the 19th century following Napoleon's conquest of Egypt in 1798. Influenced by Oriental fever, Melville appropriated Oriental images and customs to supplement his tale on the American whaling and the hunt for the elusive white whale. In doing so, he also questioned the efforts to explain the Oriental Other to the West by the act of subversive foreclosure. At the dawn of the 20th century, Conrad was critical of imperialism as capital extended its reach around the globe through the export of finance capital. He thus explored this issue in his political fiction set in South America, depicting how American and European capital is flowing into Costaguana to exploit that nation's rich silver mine worked by the indigenous workers and to build railway to facilitate its transportation to the overseas markets. His critique of imperialist capitalism, however, forecloses the perspectives of the indigenous miners whose labor produces wealth for capital.

The act of invoking and foreclosing the Other, be it Native Americans in *The Pioneers*, the Islamic Orient in *Moby Dick*, or the Amerindians in *Nostramo*, thus reproduces the West's cultural hegemony, though in *Moby Dick* Melville also enacts a subversive foreclosure to resist antebellum American cultural imperialism. The three texts, on the other hand, provide a window into the economic, social and cultural needs of Euro-American capitalism and imperialism. They are useful texts, among the many Western literary and cultural productions, in mapping the production of wealth and literature and culture by the United States and Europe through the various appropriations of their racial Others. Those appropriations include those of indigenous land and voice after the American Revolution (*The Pioneers*), those of Islamic culture and customs

during the territorial expansion of the United States into the West and the South as a young empire (*Moby Dick*) and those of indigenous natural resources and forced and wage labor during Spanish colonialism and after independence (*Nostramo*).

Second, those texts, despite their differences, rely on non-Western Others to construct a (white/European) national identity or nationhood. As novelist and literary critic Toni Morrison suggests in *Playing in the Dark*, slavery and racial alterity are essential to the construction of American national identity. “Africanism is the vehicle by which the American self knows itself as not enslaved, but free; ... not damned, but innocent; not a blind accident of evolution, but a progressive fulfillment of destiny,” she notes (52). Malini Johar Schueller in her study of U.S. Orientalisms advances Morrison’s insights to suggest that U.S. literary Orientalism in its subversive vein was “the site of a triadic encounter in which the Africanist and Native American presences returned to haunt and question the cultural and political hegemony of the New World” (9-10). Indeed, in those texts we can see the convergence of nation and empire building through the conscription of the various racial and ethnic Others. The resolution of the Indian problem in *The Pioneers* paves the way for the construction of white American identity and nationhood (Scheckel 3-14). The invocation of the Islamic Orient in *Moby Dick* helps foster an American identity formed around the whaling industry, which until the early 19th century was regarded as a national industry contributing to the wealth of the nation. The surplus labor of the indigenous miners in *Nostramo* helps finance the separatist movement led by Europeans and Creoles in Sulaco and the birth of a new nation, Sulaco, with the aid of the United States military and finance capital.

The history of Western capitalism is incomplete without taking into account the question of the land and the natives indigenous to it. As Marx and Engels described the embryonic moments of capitalist globalization,

The discovery of America, the rounding of the Cape, opened up fresh ground for the rising bourgeoisie. The East-Indian and Chinese markets, the colonization of America, trade with the colonies, the increase in the means of exchange and in commodities generally, gave to commerce, to navigation, to industry, an impulse never before known, and thereby, to the revolutionary element in the tottering feudal society, a rapid development. (Tucker, “Manifesto” 474)

This remarkable passage, remarkable from the vantage point of contemporary globalization or what Harvey in *Spaces of Hope* calls “uneven geographical developments” (chapters 4-5), shows how globalization of industrial capitalism in its earlier phase depended as much on the appropriation and privatization of land and colonization of the indigenous population as on the production of commodities and the production of means of communications and transportation. In *Facing West, the Metaphysics of Indian-hating and Empire-building*, Richard Drinnon concurs the Marxist view of primitive accumulation or accumulation by dispossession in his study of the genocide of the natives in the Pequot War of 1636 and his critique of European imperialism (46). The appropriation of land as an alienable commodity to be sold on the market and the dispossession of the natives made possible the production of capitalist space secured by the bourgeois right to private property. The reproduction of capitalist social relations in turn depended on the regulation of gender and sexuality secured by the bourgeois heterosexual family, an important bourgeois institution to secure the transfer of private property.

In Chapter 2 on Cooper’s *The Pioneers*, I use the figure of the native informant to examine how Cooper wrestled with the question of the dispossession of the Indians and

the means through which he naturalized accumulation by dispossession. I argue that Cooper's "Indian" voices embodied by the old Indian chief Chingachgook and appropriated by Edward Oliver Effingham, a white man who passes as the native named Oliver Edwards to reclaim his family's property, actually work to justify white ownership of the Indian land and defend bourgeois property right. So is Leatherstocking's. Their "Indian" voices also work to justify the ideology of the "vanishing American," a prevailing ideology of Cooper's time that justified the dispossession of the Indians as inevitable. Above all, the concealment and disclosure of Effingham's white identity and patronym allows Cooper to fundamentally shift the land dispute between the Mohegans and Judge Temple to one between two white old friends—Effingham's birth father and the Judge. The leitmotif of the veil, which conceals the friendship and business relationship between Effingham's father and the Judge and hides Effingham's white lineage, thus functions to cover up the provenance of Judge Temple's landed property. The land dispute also foregrounds the stake involved in taking on a name, a patronym. As Judith Butler points out, "the name is a token of a symbolic order, an order of social law . . . The name as patronym does not only bear the law, but institutes the law" (*Bodies* 152-54). The appropriation of the Indian name and lineage and their abandonment coupled with the resumption of the real white patronym as a solution to the land dispute in Cooper thus show how the name of the father in an emerging capitalist community, Templeton, is both tied up with and secured by the law of private property, which is further cemented by the "institution of sexual difference and compulsory heterosexuality" (152), that is, the bourgeois heterosexual family. So, it comes no surprise that Cooper ends *The Pioneers* in a happy note, with the marriage between Young Effingham and

Judge Temple's daughter, Elizabeth, since their union helps perpetuate the bourgeois model of family founded on heterosexuality and private property. Also in the union between the young couple, Cooper asserts patriarchal rule of law.

I thus argue that *The Pioneers* with its conscription and foreclosure of native voice is an excellent text in which we can see the privatization of Indian land on the one hand, and accumulation of landed property in the hands of the white settlers and the reproduction of patriarchal capitalist social relations through the hegemony of heterosexuality and private property on the other. The devices of "Indian" voice, "concealment and unveiling" and marriage used by Cooper in *The Pioneers* are similar to what Fredric Jameson calls "a strategy of ideological containment"—a procedure in representation that works to prevent a deeper understanding of the social relations in its totality from emerging, and thus helps preserve the status quo (53). In this chapter, I also look at the native informant as an (im)possible perspective by examining the historical and material conditions that led to the disappearing of the Indian tribes. I argue that what makes it impossible to maintain the perspectives of the native informants is the effect of the political, territorial and economic changes that contribute to the deterritorialization and dispossession of the Indians. Cooper's representation of Chingachgook and his dying tribe seems to suggest this view.

Global capitalism, despite its colonization of the indigenous peoples in Americas and elsewhere with violence, had contributed to globalization of commodities, as well as culture and religion, and continues to do so. Capitalist globalization, as Marx and Engels wrote in "Manifesto," creates the material conditions in which "we have intercourse in every direction ... The intellectual creations of individual nations become common

property” (476-77). On the literary and cultural front, it creates a material condition from which rises “a world literature” from among “the numerous national and local literatures” (477). It is in such a historical context that we should theorize the rise of modern Orientalism and that of the U.S. literary Orientalism. The West’s interest in the Islamic Orient in the 18th and 19th centuries reflected the flow of knowledge through commerce and navigation on the one hand and construction of the West through the Other on the other. The rise of modern Orientalism, as Edward Said has argued in *Orientalism*, cannot be separated from Western imperialism and colonialism. For example, Napoleon’s conquest of Egypt in 1798 helped fuel the Egyptian revival in both Europe and America. The opening of trade in the Indian Ocean and China Sea helped give rise to the genre of Oriental tale in American fiction in the 1780s (Luedtke 63). *The Arabian Nights’ Entertainment*, published in 1794, became a best seller in America, selling more than 40,000 copies in its first decade to become a favorite for children and adults alike (64). Melville, Hawthorne and Poe are among the writers touched by “its magic” (ibid.). The popularity of another Oriental tale, *The Arabian Nights*, helped intensify the rage for the Orient in the United States during the first two decades of the 19th century; the tales in *The Arabian Nights* were to have “a direct impact” on Melville’s early writing (ibid.).

While the Islamic Orient would not become Melville’s subject matter until his later work, *Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land* (1876), the appropriation of Oriental images and Oriental allusions abound in his earlier works, especially in *Moby Dick*, which on the surface is an American tale about a captain haunted by an elusive white whale, and allegorically a tale about the future of the United States, as symbolized by the whale ship, divided by the issue of slavery. The many allusions to the Islamic

Orient in *Moby Dick*, such as Ramadan, the Ottoman Empire, the harem and Egyptian hieroglyphics and pyramids, are indicative of the currency of Orientalism in the 19th American literary scenes. By the middle of the 19th century, the Orient had become a fertile ground for Western literary imagination (*Orientalism* 192).

In Chapter 3 on Melville's *Moby Dick*, I focus on his use of the Islamic Orient, which I argue operates in some instances as the "native informant" that is both invoked and foreclosed in Ishmael's narrative. Moreover, I scrutinize the tensions in Melville's conscription of the Orient by examining the two contending forces in his Orientalism. That is, I contend that the Orientalism in *Moby Dick* has two opposing pulls, encompassing both conformist and subversive Orientalism. What marks those two forms of Orientalism is the nature of foreclosure. In his traditional mode of Orientalism, Melville invoked the Orient, as other writers of his time did, as a literary fashion to accommodate the reading public's curiosity about the Orient. Thus, we find Ishmael often invokes the Orient to exalt the American whaling industry and assert its supremacy or to spice up his tale about the leviathan that travels around the globe. The Orient thus invoked is also simultaneously foreclosed and functions as the Other supplementing or complementing the West. On the other hand, Melville subverted the dominant form of Western Orientalism by *foreclosing* what the Orient is supposed to signify. This form of critical foreclosure thus calls into question the efforts by the West, as in Egyptology, to explain and unveil the Orient to the West, undermining its authority as the holder of knowledge and truth on the Orient. This double use of foreclosure in *Moby Dick*, however, poses challenges to the reading of the mystic Oriental figure, Fedallah. Melville scholars have divided on how to read Fedallah's foreclosed perspective. One camp reads

the foreclosure of his perspective as signs of Western cultural imperialism, while the opposite camp regards it as Melville's attempt to resist the imperialist impulse to speak for or through the Other. Either way, the debate on the foreclosure foregrounds the dilemmas of reading and representing the Other in post-colonial and anti-colonial discourse in the West.

While historicizing the genesis of industrial capital, Marx notes that the conquest and plunder of native America, India and Africa by European nations contributed to the primitive accumulation of capital. With regard to the subjugation of the American indigenous peoples, he points to the major cause: that continent's rich mineral resources. As he writes, the "discovery of gold and silver in America, the extirpation, enslavement and entombment in mines of the indigenous population of that continent," were among the atrocities that characterized "the dawn of the era of capitalist production" (*Capital Vol. One* 915). Marx thus exposes some chief moments of primitive accumulation of capital in history that relied on the forces of the state as an economic and military power to colonize the indigenous in the American continent and to exploit their labor. In the early 20th century, Conrad launched his own critique of capitalism of his time and its relentless pursuit of material interests. In "Autocracy and War" (1905), Conrad writes,

Industrialism and commercialism—wearing high-sounding names in many languages . . . —stand ready, almost eager, to appeal to the sword as soon as the globe of the earth has shrunk beneath our growing numbers by another ell or so. And democracy, which has elected to pin its faith to the supremacy of material interests, will have to fight their battles to the bitter end . . . unless (107)

In *Nostromo*, Conrad fictionalizes his critique of capitalism, using the fictional San Tome silver mine to show the devastating effects of relentless pursuit of material interests by the representative of industrial capital, Charles Gould, who pins his "faith on material interests" (100), and his ally, finance capital. Moreover, he dramatizes the so-called

“resource curse” haunting Sulaco, a port town in a fictional South American country by showing how those haunted by the silver mine or its ingots become alienated from their fellow human beings. *Nostromo*, a dramatization of what Harvey calls accumulation by dispossession, thus provides us a glimpse into the exploitation of the American continent and its natural resources as well as the seemingly endless revolutions and counterrevolutions fought over its natural resources in the early 20th century, with finance capital originating from the United States and Europe pulling the strings behind different warring factions.

In Chapter 4 on Conrad’s *Nostromo*, again I deploy the figure of the native informant to open up the text for a reading that foregrounds the invocation and foreclosure of the Indian miners of the San Tome mine. Despite being rendered mute, the Indian miners constitute the material base of the silver mine that is the central figure of Conrad’s analysis of capitalist imperialism and its relentless pursuit of material interests. Residing at the margin of the novel, the indigenous miners have been neglected by most Conrad scholars but they, as I will show, haunt the novel’s narrative and intrude upon the consciousness of other European characters, some of whom narrate the history of the San Tome mine and its miners. Significantly, the haunting both discloses and forecloses accumulation by dispossession in its primitive and modern forms. The foreclosure of the indigenous perspective, I also argue, is the effect of Conrad’s mode of representation: the native miners are being represented by the Europeans who own or govern the mine. The exclusion of their voice thus is symptomatic of the unequal class and race structures in the imaginary country of Costaguana. Furthermore, their foreclosure is the condition of possibility for the novel’s title character Nostromo, the Italian sailor, to emerge as a

representative of the People. In this chapter, I also attempt to develop a Marxist reading of spectrality by examining the haunting elements in the novel, including Mrs. Gould's watercolor painting of the San Tome gorge that is a stand-in for capital. I therefore argue that what is really haunting the mine, the Goulds, the town of Sulaco and Costaguana, is the specter of global capitalism, especially finance capital that flows from North America and Europe to develop and colonize this silver-rich country. The primitive accumulation of capital during the Spanish colonialism and later the accumulation of the Goulds' wealth that finances Sulaco's latest counter-revolution, as Conrad's narrative shows, are impossible without the exploitation of labor: the labor of the Sulaco Indian miners.

Perhaps, it is (un)befitting that I end the introduction with a brief turn to Hegel, the master of Other, and his *Phenomenology of Spirit*. There, through the rhetorical language on the dialectic between lordship (the lord) and bondage (the bondsman), Hegel shows that in order to become self-conscious, the Spirit has to rely on an other by recognizing its existence, thereby its own. Recognition of the other, thus, becomes the enabling condition for the Spirit to eventually regain self-knowledge and obtain absolute knowledge. Despite Hegel's idealism and teleological reason, his theory of the alienation of the Spirit puts his fingers on an important facet of human relationship, recognition of the self through the other. To a certain extent, the construction of the Other by the Western Self follows this seemingly inescapable path, but often at the cost of marginalizing the non-Western Other.

In deploying the figure of the native informant to read the three Western classics, I have attempted to show how the marginal or marginalized figures—the dispossessed native Americans, the Islamic Orient and the exploited Amerindians—are what Derrida

calls the “dangerous supplement” that haunts the so-called center (American nationhood, American identity and finance capital) from the margin. This figure of the non-Western Other also helps expose accumulation of capital by dispossessing its various Others directly or indirectly. Rousing the native informant from the Western mode of narration that relies on the invocation and foreclosure of the Other is only the first step toward a more rigorous investigation of the construction of the Other in Western literature, but it is a beginning, one that could yield more insights by critically examining the historical and material conditions that gave rise to such a representation.

CHAPTER 2
PASSING IN COOPER'S *THE PIONEERS*: NATIVE INFORMANTS, PATRONYM
AND PRIVATE PROPERTY

Among its many concerns, Cooper's third novel *The Pioneers* (1823), as Susan Scheckel points out, is particularly concerned with origins and history, both individual and national. Described by Cooper as a "descriptive tale," the novel depicts American frontier scenes, including a Christmas Turkey shoot, maple sugar harvesting, pigeon shooting and bass fishing, an influence that could be traced to Cooper's contemporary writer James Kirke Paulding for its American materials (Philbrick 581; 584). But Cooper was also interested in how to account for early American history, both before and after the American Revolution, through the "charm of fiction," that is, through a fiction about the founding of Templeton, a fictional frontier town in New York that resembles in some ways Cooperstown, the New York town that bears the name of Cooper's father, Judge William Cooper. To account for this history of revolution and conquest and the forming of national identity, Scheckel also notes, Cooper was compelled to confront one of the political problems of his day: how to justify the removal of the Indians from their ancestral lands. The Indian problem is a problem of historical import in early 19th-century America because it had a huge impact on the expansion of the white settlements on the lands the Revolution had won from the British crown. Janet E. Dean calls *The Pioneers* a historical novel for confronting the crisis of Cooper's day. The novel, in her view, fits Marxist critic Georg Lukacs's model of the historical novel, a genre that he defined in *The Historical Novel* as expressing "artistically a great crisis in society by

bringing extreme, opposing forces . . . into a human relationship with one another” (qtd. in Dean 8).

The Indian problem also paradoxically helped establish Cooper as the first American writer who portrayed the Indians as having both “noble” and “savage” qualities (House 47). Lydia Maria Child’s *Hobomok*, published in 1824, is another early American literary text that features an Indian character and made a connection between male dominance and white supremacy (Karcher, “Introduction” xx). However, some critics have also pointed out that Cooper reductively classified his fictional Indians as either “good” or “bad” depending on their alliance with the British or the French. Moreover, according to Roy Harvey Pearce, the author of *The Savages of American: A Study of the Indian and the Idea of Civilization*, after Cooper “imaginative realization of the idea of savagism became a prime means to the understanding of American progress in its glories, tragedies and risks” (197). Despite Cooper’s nuanced and binary portrayal of the Indian, he relies on the ideology of “vanishing American,” a prevailing ideology of his day that justified the dispossession of the Indians as inevitable (House 61). As Kay Seymour House puts it, the notion of “vanishing American” “hangs like a nimbus over most of his [Cooper’s] warriors and is personified in the chiefs who are his most admirable Indians” (61).

On the other hand, the publication of *The Pioneers* in 1823 coincided with the legal case of *Johnson and Graham’s Lessee v. McIntosh*, in which the Supreme Court was asked to examine the basis of American rights to Indian lands. Studying both the fiction and the legal case and their impact on the formation of American national identity, Susan Scheckel notes that both Cooper and Chief Justice John Marshall in their own way were

struggling to articulate one central question: “Who has the right to own and govern the land originally possessed by Indians and inherited through the Revolution” (17). Furthermore, both sought unsuccessfully to reconcile the contradictions arising from asserting the American rights to the Indian lands. Following Benedict Anderson’s argument in *Imagined Communities* that “[i]f nation-states are widely conceded to be ‘new’ and ‘historical,’ the nations to which they give political expression always loom out of an immemorial past, and, still, more important, glide into a limitless future” (11-12), Scheckel suggests that both Cooper and Chief Justice Marshall framed the issue of legitimacy in a past each constructed to justify the legal ownership of the Indian lands. She explains that Cooper and Marshall did not see that the rights of the new nation originated with the Revolution because such a view would have suggested patricide. Instead, both sought to legitimate the American claims to the Indian land through “principles of inheritance,” and in doing so, they needed to construct a past that would justify the American sovereignty over the Indian lands. The thorny Indian problem that led Cooper and Marshall to wrest with the legality and morality of dispossessing the Indians would re-emerge a few years later in the legal and political debate over the forced removal by the Andrew Jackson government of the Cherokee Indians from Georgia. The U.S. government policy, however, would generate a public interest in the dispossessed Indians, perceived as the victims of civilization (House 60-61).

Cooper scholars have commented quite extensively on Cooper’s Indians and well documented his sources of Indian lore. This chapter joins that endeavor by offering an alternative reading of the first of his Leatherstocking tales: by way of Gayatri Spivak’s critique of native informant both in Kant and ethnography, Philip J. Deloria’s discussion

of Indian play by white male colonialists before the American Revolution and thereafter and Marxist notion of accumulation by dispossession as I outlined in the introduction. Specifically, I explore the ways in which Cooper as narrator uses the figure of the native informant, including passing the whites as native informants, to justify the dispossession of the Indians and to legitimate bourgeois rule of law based on private property, despite showing sympathy toward the natives' expropriation and being critical of the new socio-economic order at times. I also examine the effects of passing or "playing Indian" on race, class and property right; I contend that through Indian play Cooper eventually naturalizes accumulation by dispossession. In Kant's framework, the native inhabitants are briefly invoked not to inform their indigenous knowledge but to reinforce his thoughts on the question of being. In doing so, he forecloses the perspectives of the invoked New Hollanders and Fegans while consolidating his own authority. Unlike Kant, Cooper in *The Pioneers* puts the last chief of the Mohegan tribe at the center of the novel, giving voices to the Mohegans and their indigenous right to tribal lands before finally asserting the legal ownership of the Indian land by the white settlers. But those "Indian" voices, I argue, actually reinforce the prevailing ideology of the "vanishing American" of Cooper's time and thus pave the way for justifying the white ownership of the Indian tribal land. In this sense, Cooper ends up extinguishing Chingachgook's voice disputing Judge Temple's ownership of the Indian ancestral land.

This chapter consists of three major parts that trace three major "Indian" voices: those of Chingachgook, the Mohegan chief; young Effingham who poses as a half-Indian seeking to reclaim his Anglo-American patrimony; and Natty Bumpoo, who has taken on Mohegan ways of life and ostensibly advocates the Indian rights. It will also examine

their role as a native informant or passing as one. Cooper's relation with Chingachgook, his primary native informant, and the other two who pass as native by either assuming an Indian identity or adopting the Indian way of life, parallels the relation between an ethnographer and her native informant: as the narrator of the novel he determines the frames of intelligibility. That is, what is being written and made available to the reader is slanted through Cooper's own ideology that eventually works to naturalize accumulation by dispossession: the ideology of the "vanishing American" and of the rule of law based on private ownership. I thus argue that behind those voices advocating the Indian right to land lie Cooper's attempts to justify the white ownership of the Indian land by upholding the rule of law based on the bourgeois notion of private property. That is, Cooper is *passing* the voice of the white property owner *off* as that of Indian, a passing that is hidden from view but governs other passings in the novel. He does this also by surreptitiously diffusing the voice of bourgeois law as embodied by Judge Temple in the three informants, who all end up endorsing white ownership of the disputed land, thus becoming Temple's allies, willingly or unwillingly, in his defense of the legality of his own ownership. The overriding perspective of *The Pioneers*, I argue, is the bourgeois perspective that protects property right and ensures the transfer of white patrimony of Indian origin among whites, despite showing sympathy to the dispossessed Mohegans. Chingachgook's death, young Effingham's revelation of his true white identity, and Leatherstocking's exit from Templeton under intensified development at the end of the novel all indicate that the path Cooper chose to resolve the tensions arising from the land dispute is by fading out those who clash with Judge Temple's rule of law that protects private property.

The first part traces Chingachgook's role as Cooper's primary native informant and shows how Cooper uses him, especially his name change, to narrate the dispossession of the Mohegans. It also examines the silence of the Iroquois, who are foreclosed from voicing their perspectives challenging Chingachgook's narrative on the rivalry between the two tribes. Like Chingachgook, who is a native informant on the dispossession of the Mohegans and their tribal wars with the Iroquois, also known as the Six Nations, the much reviled Iroquois are native informants, but they belong to the ones who are both invoked and excluded. And unlike Chingachgook who informs the reader of those histories, the Iroquois are conspicuously missing in *The Pioneers*; their physical absence thus marks the hidden structure in Chingachgook's utterance that both includes and excludes his ethnic Others. The lack of voice representing the Iroquois' perspective highlights Spivak's insistence on the (im)possible perspective of the native informant, her contribution to the critique of the native informant in ethnography and enlightenment philosophy and an insight of hers that precludes possibilities of misrepresentation in the name of the "authentic" native informant.

In the second part, I examine how Cooper attempts to resolve the Indian land problem largely through the mechanism of "concealment and disclosure" or that of passing or racially crossing by Oliver Edwards/Edward O. Effingham. The first act of concealment allows Cooper to pursue the Indian rights argument, appearing to wrestle with the legality and morality of the dispossession of the Indians, while the second act of disclosure enables him to quietly perform the Indian removal, thus returning what once was the Mohegan tribal land to two white propertied families whose right to property is both affected by the American Revolution and sanctioned by the ensuing Constitution.

The passing or Indian play enacted by Effingham thus allows Cooper to express sympathy to the dispossessed Mohegans while asserting the bourgeois right to property, the overriding perspective finally revealed by Effingham's assuming his true identity and reclaiming his family fortune. Effingham's "Indian" voice thus eventually proves to be one that seeks to reinstate his family property and his inheritance right. As I will show, Cooper enacts a triple veiling of voice through Chingachgook, Effingham and Leatherstocking that ends up validating bourgeois property rights and the ideology of the "vanishing American," or naturalizing accumulation by dispossession. Since the core of the land dispute involves both Indians' "natural right" and bourgeois property right and inheritance, I will also explore the significance of the father's name in Cooper's plot to legitimate white land ownership. With Effingham's passing as a Mohegan heir and the revelation of his white identity as the heir to Major Effingham, the patronym emerges as a site that determines his property right sanctioned by the law. Which patronym Effingham assumes thus affects the terms of his argument for reclaiming Judge Temple's estate.

The third part examines how the quasi-native Natty Bumpoo/Leatherstocking is coping with the privatization of land under the ascending capitalist order presided by Judge Temple, an order marked by the transformation of space in the judge's massive estate. The clash between the two men over the uses of natural resources on the privatized lands in Templeton marks two distinctive modes of existence: use value (needs) vs. exchange value (market economy). The exit of Leatherstocking from Templeton to seek another frontier not touched by the forces of capitalist development signals the triumph of property right and of the ideology of the "vanishing American." It also signals the

passing of an era when Leatherstocking can adopt the Indian way of life and the coming of a new one where the voices asserting the Indian right to land are made to disappear from Templeton.

Native Informants and Dispossession

In narrating the history of European dispossession of Native Americans and depicting his fictional Indians, Cooper appears to establish himself as someone who was knowledgeable about that part of history and the language and customs of his favorite tribe, the Delaware also known as the Mohegan. For example, Cooper points out that language difference and internecine wars are the two major factors that led to the “original” internal split in the natives, “the original owners of the soil,” before their dispossession by the Europeans/Christians (78). But Eric Cheyfitz challenges this perception of Cooper as “an authority on European/Indian political history, on northeastern Native American ethnohistory, and as an expert translator of Indian languages” (“Savage Law” 119). Instead, he argues that in a fiction that triumphs property, Cooper relied on “a Western idea of genealogy” to write “a Western fiction of Native American history,” thus rewriting the French and Indian War in which the “good” Indians, the Delaware, fight on the side of the “good guys,” the British (120-21). Cooper scholars have also pointed out that Cooper’s knowledge of the Delaware and the Iroquois, the rival tribes in *The Pioneers*, largely derived from his reading of John Heckewelder’s *Account of the History, Manners and Customs of the Indian Nations Who Once Inhabited Pennsylvania and the Neighbouring States*, which was published in 1819. They also noted that as a Moravian missionary to the Delaware, the Rev. Heckewelder was a partisan to the tribe’s culture. And as a result of that, Cooper, who did not know Indian languages, had absorbed uncritically Heckewelder’s favored view of the Delaware at the

expense of the Iroquois. Cooper's depiction of the Delaware-Iroquois relations was more or less skewed by the white man's patriarchal prejudice and confusion (House 63).

Despite the criticism made of Cooper for coming short of history and accuracy, Cooper's narrative on his fictional Indians offers us a glimpse of his sense of history and his ideology that helps shape the characterization of his Indians. More important for my study of *The Pioneers* partly through Spivak's critique of native informant both in ethnography and Kant's philosophical system, the representation of the Indians in the novel allows us to trace how Cooper as the narrator enlists them as informants to both justify the Indian removal as a regrettable but inevitable occurrence and assert white settlers' right to landed property. The figure of the Indian Other, I suggest, operates to both disclose and foreclose Marx's notion of primitive accumulation or Harvey's more general description in *The New Imperialism* of the historical and ongoing capitalist process of accumulation by dispossession (137-82). Under Cooper's representation, there are three types of native informants in the novel. The Mohegans represented by Chingachgook belong to the first type and are given what appears to be an Indian voice, speaking of their people's dispossession and Indian right. As the second type, the Iroquois are both invoked to show their vices and excluded from voicing their counter perspective. Much has been written on Chingachgook and his being the "vanishing American," among other things, but critics have said little, if at all, about the Iroquois' silence. The silence itself is symptomatic of the simultaneous invocation and exclusion of the Iroquois that constitutes the pattern of Chingachgook's utterances. Representing the third form of native informants through whom Cooper appropriates "Indian" voices to attempt to resolve the land dispute between the Indians and the whites are young

Effingham who passes as a Delaware in order to reclaim his Anglo-Saxon patrimony and Leatherstocking who, despite being a white, adopts an Indian way of life based on meeting one's needs by appropriating nature. Both passing as Indian in their own way speak for the Indian rights, specifically for the rights of the Mohegans to their ancestral land, but Cooper's endorsement of bourgeois property right, or naturalization of accumulation by dispossession, undermines their "Indian" voices, turning them into Temple's allies.

Chingachgook, the last chief of the Mohegan tribe, is clearly Cooper's primary native informant in *The Pioneers*. George Dekker described the Indian chief as "a repository of the skills and wisdom of the primitive society which Judge Temple's settlers have displaced" (50). It is through Chingachgook and other so-called "Indian" voices that Cooper attempts to resolve the historical land dispute between the Native Americans and the white colonialists in his novel. In one of the earlier scenes, Cooper carefully establishes Chingachgook as the source of indigenous knowledge, especially of a native bark medicine. In the scene in which the Mohegan, well-known for his "great skill" in treating bodily ailments, cuts and bruises, is called in by Judge Temple to help treat Oliver Edwards's gunshot wound, Cooper goes out of his way to describe the native's bark medicine, a "pounded bark, moistened with a fluid that he had expressed from some of the simples of the woods" (83-84). Cooper's narrative further reveals that while the Indian is attentively dressing the patient's wound, another white doctor, Dr. Elnathan Todd who has extracted a bullet from Edwards's shoulder, not only pays attention to the contents of Mohegan's medicine basket but also quietly takes possession of the "sundry fragments of wood and bark" without anyone's knowledge (84). Dr. Todd,

Cooper tells us, is later able to discover from which type of trees Mohegan has extracted the bark after analyzing the component parts of the bark. The bark medicine with a distinct flavor, Cooper further relates, is used years later to save the live of one settler who is among the many agents of “civilization,” as well as the lives of more American soldiers fighting the British in another war between the two countries. This episode not only establishes Chingachgook as Cooper’s primary native informant with indigenous knowledge but also shows how Cooper uses his native informant to subvert the notion of “western” medicine, which as practiced by Dr. Todd afterwards is paradoxically at its “origins” already contaminated by indigenous knowledge and medicine.

Another way through which Cooper uses Chingachgook as a native informant to narrate the dispossession of the Mohegans is through the changes in the chief’s name. Richard Slotkin rightly argues that with the play on Chingachgook’s name Cooper showcases the conflicts between the Indian and white world and perception (*Regeneration* 488). Moreover, I think that through the name change we can see the expropriation of the Indians on the one hand, and the accumulation of capital on the other. In narrating Chingachgook’s life story, Cooper uses the territoriality and deterritorialization of Chingachgook’s name, the name changes effected by the loss of his tribal land, to indicate the process of his becoming as well as to mark the effects the political and social changes associated with it have on him and his tribe (here the notion of territoriality and becoming is taken from Deleuze and Guattari’s *A Thousand Plateaus*). Chingachgook, or “Great Snake” in English, is the native name the Indian acquires in his youth for “his skill and prowess in war” (81). As Chingachgook, he was the proud Indian warrior and chief and the nominal owner of the land his people

inhabited. But he acquires another “mournful” appellation, Mohegan, at old age when he becomes “the last of his family and his particular tribe” (ibid.) and uses alcohol to drown his sorrows. As Mohegan, he thus becomes the symbol of the sole survivor of his tribe. Chingachgook, who corroborated with the whites, also assumes a Christian name, John, after being baptized by the Moravians who have become friends with the Delawares. He is known among the white settlers as Indian John, or John Mohegan, a combination of his baptismal name and his tribal name. As Indian John or John Mohegan, described by Cooper as in “a mixture of the civilized and savage states” (ibid.), he becomes another symbol of the (incomplete) assimilation of the natives by the Christian missionaries. The name changes correspond more or less to the shrinking and eventually the loss of Chingachgook’s tribal land, to the passing of his Indian heritage, as well as to his assumption of Christian faith and his addiction to the white men’s rum. His name changes thus signify his diminished status as a Native American in the changing environment of the American frontier where the forces of commerce and profit are making a beachhead, commercializing land as private property and thus trampling the rights of the Indians. Moreover, they signal the expansion of bourgeois property right in the American frontier. To put it another way, Chingachgook’s name change allows us to discern the accumulated effect of accumulation by dispossession in *The Pioneers*.

While Cooper enlists Chingachgook to help narrate the dispossession of the Mohegan tribe, Cooper’s invocation of the native informant is not free of the typical problem of representation: ideology. Cheyfitz, who took issue with Cooper’s authority in representing the Indians, also raised another important question concerning the representation of the Other. In “Literally White,” his other essay on *The Pioneers*, he

asked: “what does it mean to give voice to those whom one is depriving of a voice in this act of representation?” (56). In Cheyfitz’s view, the act of representing the Other and/or translating the Other’s language in Cooper and others could potentially amount to that of “colonization” or “disappearing the other” (“Literally White” 71; “Savage Law” 121). He also noted that the authority that Cooper projected through his narrator who apparently knew of the Delaware language, in effect, masks Cooper’s own political agenda in portraying the Indians (“Savage Law” 119-20). The notion of the “vanishing American” that runs through Cooper’s representation of the Indians exemplifies the act of making the Other disappear while naturalizing accumulation by dispossession.. So does his unfavorable treatment of Chingachgook’s ethnic rivals, who are often reviled by Chingachgook and Leatherstocking for what they perceived as their crimes against the Mohegans. In *The Pioneers*, as in other Leatherstocking tales, the Mingoies are known for their “blood lust,” “stealth” attacks and “treachery” while the Mohegans are courageous and virtuous (Wallace, “Cooper’s Indians” 424). In light of Cheyfitz’s critique, it is worthwhile to take up his thought-provoking question again and consider the implications of representation of the Other and by the West.

Cheyfitz’s question: “what does it mean to give voice to those whom one is depriving of a voice in this act of representation” applies both to Cooper’s representation of the Mohegans and the Mingoies, previously referred to as the Iroquois. In fact, Cooper’s representation of the two rival tribes, whose voice is either quietly erased or outright foreclosed, showcases the problems of representing the natives and using them as informants. For Spivak, the problem with the native informant in ethnography is that the figure “*is a blank*” enlisted by the Western ethnographer to inscribe the native culture

and identity (6; italics original). She thus insists on the (im)possible perspective of the native informant to preclude the usurpation of the native voice to produce knowledge for the West. For Cooper, Chingachgook functions much like the native informant for the Western ethnographer: the Mohegan, who has deep knowledge of his tribe's history including its long-running feud with the Mingoes, is designated as the major spokesperson for his dying tribe. As Cooper's primary native informant, he not only speaks against his tribe's dispossession and for its Indian rights, but also rails against his tribe's sworn enemy. A major part of his narrative, which is uttered sometimes in his native language, the Delaware, and translated by his loyal friend, Leatherstocking, for the reader's benefit, is however filled with othering and gendering that invoke the Mingoes but exclude the perspectives of his ethnic rivals. Chingachgook's self-representation thus points to the limits of the perspective of the native informant. That is, his "native" perspective, while giving voice to his tribe's history—its rivalry with the Mingoes before its dispossession by the whites—forecloses that of his ethnic rival tribe. Chingachgook's inclusion and exclusion of his ethnic other thus raises questions about Cooper's own politics of representation, which favors the Mohegans over the Mingoes.

Chingachgook's invocation and foreclosure of the Mingoes takes place especially when he is (re)gendering his ethnic rivals. For example, when the old Indian chief boasts of his shooting skill, he says: "When John [his Christian, baptismal name] was young, eyesight was not straighter than his bullet. The Mingo squaws cried out at the sound of his rifle. *The Mingo warriors were made squaws*. When did he ever shoot twice!" (176; italics mine). Here Chingachgook is re-gendering the male Mingoes, who claimed the role of men for having militarily defeated the Mohegans, as women by invoking them but

without giving them a voice. His reverse gendering not only reflects Cooper's patriarchal notion of gender but also naturalizes the ideology of feminizing one's enemy with whom he was locked in a territorial struggle. Cooper as narrator also takes part in gendering that invokes the Mingoes but excludes their perspective. Earlier in furnishing the history of the white dispossession of the Indians, Cooper notes that Chingachgook's people have allowed themselves to be "called *women* by their old enemies, the Mingoes or Iroquois" (79; italics original). The feminization of Chingachgook's tribe is the result of losing battles to the Iroquois, who subsequently assume the role of "*men*" entrusted with the defense while the Delawares are assigned the labor of cultivating "the arts of peace" (80; italics original). Despite all the talks on gendering on Chingachgook's and Cooper's part, the women of both tribes are conspicuously missing in Cooper's representation of the natives. Their lack of representation in a novel concerning the ownership of the Indian tribal land may say something about bourgeois patriarchy, the rule of the propertied father, which Cooper is defending. Cooper's representation of the Mingoes thus shows that how he can invoke them in name without giving them a perspective countering that of Chingachgook. So is his representation of the dispossessed Mohegans, whose voice is being exploited to defend the right of young Effingham, passing as an Indian heir, to reclaim his family property, before being quietly erased with the resumption of his true identity.

Passing, Patronym and Patrimony

In *Playing Indian*, his study of the construction of American national identity through the Indian Other, Philip Deloria writes that 18th century colonialists initially appropriated "so-called savage Indians" to define the boundary and character of their civilization, but they later enlisted this exterior Other to further their "revolutionary ends"

in their fight against the rule of the British crown. “Colonial propaganda brought symbolic Indians inside the boundaries of colonial identity, adapting the figures in order to convey revolutionary messages” (30), he notes. For the male colonialists, he also writes, the ritual of playing Indian—smearing one’s face, speaking pidgin English and donning Indian dresses—helps foster psychologically the sense of resistance and rebellion against the British. Among the rebellious groups, the Boston Tea Party resorted to “Indian play” to fight for their trampled freedom. By playing Indian, the Mast Tree rioters in New England “evoked and invented local understandings about freedom, naturalness and individualism of native custom,” suggesting “these qualities lay embedded in the American continent itself” despite conflating Indians and land (25-26). Deloria also points out that in *The Redskins: Indian and Injin* (1846), Cooper dramatizes the antirent riots by the poor white tenants against their rich landlord with the rioters donning Indian disguises to protest the establishment (38-39). In *The Pioneer*, the act of “playing Indian” by Effingham, as I will show, on the surface appears to critique the violence of colonial conquest, but in fact works to eventually justify accumulation by dispossession. Young Effingham’s passing or playing Indian also discloses the significance of one’s patronym in patriarchal society founded on bourgeoisie property right.

Cooper uses the name change in Chingachgook to signal the epochal change in the land ownership of his tribal land, informing the extinction of his tribe and its territorial dispossession. With Edward Oliver Effingham, Cooper again resorts to name change, having him adopt an Indian identity in order to pursue his scheme to reclaim his Anglo-American patrimony. The name change in Effingham’s case, however, operates first to

disclose accumulation by dispossession until the resumption of his white identity that simultaneously works to obscure and justify it. Edward, who is the grandson of Oliver Effingham, a former major in the British army and the legal owner of the estate now under the possession of Judge Marmaduke Temple, is now *passing* or racially crossing as a half-Indian, assuming the identity of Oliver Edwards, also known as “Young Eagle,” and claiming to have the blood of the Delawares. With the Indian cover, young Effingham is also masquerading as a native informant with a veiled motive. His role as a pseudo native informant, as I will show, is part of Cooper’s design to enlist “Indian” voice to justify the removal of the Indians and legitimate the white ownership of the Indian land. In her discussion of Willa Cather’s *My Antonia*, Judith Butler points out the significance or “burden” of patronym and its effect on “gendered and sexual meanings,” noting the “appropriation and displacement of the patronym in Cather displaces the social basis of its identity-conferring function” (*Bodies That Matter* 154). The “burden” of the patronym in *The Pioneers*, I would argue, is evidenced in Effingham’s passing as an Indian and its effect on his efforts to reclaim his family inheritance. In such a context when the patronym and property right are intertwined, which family name Effingham/Edwards assumes greatly affects how his legal claim to Judge Temple’s massive real estates will play out. The effect of assuming which patronym also significantly shifts the terms of debate concerning the disputed Indian tribal land under Temple’s possession. The importance of being Effingham or Edwards, as Charles Hansford Adams points out, has the two following major consequences (74). As Edwards, Effingham is assumed to have no future in the fast-changing Templeton, whose development will soon destroy the aboriginal way of life, thus putting him “out of time.”

But when he becomes Effingham again by “removing a veil” (*The Pioneers* 404), he discovers himself “in time” again, uniting the past, the present and the future as the new owner of Templeton. Since Adams, like some critics, writes off the Indians’ future in Templeton, the stakes of being Edwards or Effingham are high.

Effingham using the alias of Oliver Edwards has recently appeared as a hunter at Judge Temple’s forested estate and harbors strong hostility toward the judge. It is generally understood that behind his impassioned resentment toward Judge Temple, now increased after the latter accidentally shoots and injures the young hunter, lies his Indian lineage. And he is believed to have “some of the blood of the Delaware tribe” (135), which makes him (and the reader) think that he is entitled to the land that now is owned by Judge Temple. Mr. Grant, the parson preaching at Templeton, tries to explain the law and the current situation to both Mohegan and Edwards, but to no avail. His effort fails to appease the expropriated old Indian chief and provokes a rebuttal from him. As Mohegan tells the parson:

Go to the highest hill, and look around you. All that you see from the rising to the setting sun ... is his. He [Edwards] has Delaware blood, and his right is strong. But the brother of Miquon [William Penn] is just: he will cut the country in two parts ... and will say to the ‘Young Eagle,’ Child of the Delawares! Take it—keep it—and be a chief in the land of your fathers. (135)

Mohegan’s statement shows his belief that as heir of his tribe, Edwards/Young Eagle is entitled to the tribal land, even though only to half of it. Here Cooper uses Mohegan’s role as a native informant to construct a speech that appears to advocate the Indian rights to the tribal land but ends up justifying the status quo. Mohegan’s “Indian” voice is co-opted by British colonialism, accepting its rule and justice and thus forgetting the violence the Europeans have used to seize the native land under the euphemism of what critics of American colonial history call “doctrine of discovery.” Further, when Cooper

finally discloses Edwards/Young Eagle's true identity, it will become clear that Mohegan's endorsement of his "strong right" to the expropriated tribal land is, in effect, a veiled endorsement of the dispossession of the Mohegans and capital accumulation.

Edwards's reaction to the parson's remark is more hostile; he denounces Judge Temple's ownership of his ancestral land as no better than the deeds committed by "the wolf of the forest" (135). He also dismisses the parson's explanation and justification for the change in the land ownership as "the effect of political changes" that has "lowered the pride of kings, and swept mighty nations from the face of the earth" (135-36). Edwards goes even further to defend his right to the tribal land by reaffirming his Indian lineage. As he remarks, "I am proud of my descent from a Delaware chief, who was a warrior that ennobled human nature. Old Mohegan was his friend and will vouch for his virtues" (136). Edwards again reaffirms his lineage by reassuring Mohegan that "I am of your family" (177). Here again, Cooper is constructing Edwards/Young Eagle as a native informant, giving him an "Indian" voice while establishing his Indian credentials to pave the way for his claim to the tribal land and thereby obscuring accumulation by dispossession. But Edwards's, like Mohegan's voice, will turn out to be supporting the whites' right to private property, regardless of its Indian origin, when his British-American identity is finally revealed. Under Cooper's design, the passing by Effingham as an Indian heir is aimed to secure the rule of law: the law of private property as personified in Judge Temple. His passing, in effect, is the means through which Cooper legitimates Temple's property right, thus the Effinghams'.

The lineage Edwards is claiming here can be traced back to Fire-eater, who saved the life of young Chingachgook who then persuaded his tribe to give away its land to

Fire-eater in a fire council in exchange for protection and material goods. By claiming a kinship to Fire-eater but withholding his true identity as Major Effingham, young Effingham is able to pass as a legitimate heir to the Mohegan tribal land. By playing upon Edwards's "blood ties" to the Delawares, Cooper "conflates the question of Indian rights with questions of inheritance, thus simplifying the path toward structural and narrative resolution" (Scheckel 21). The conflation meanwhile allows young Effingham to hide behind his Indian identity to challenge Judge Temple's legal right to his landed property, a challenge sanctioned by Mohegan. Also through the name of Fire-eater, Cooper as narrator is able to both masquerade Effingham as an Indian and his (also Cooper's) perspective of the white propertied class as that of Indian. In a dialogue with Elizabeth, Judge Temple's daughter and heiress to his estate, the old Indian chief recounts that all the land that ranges "from where the blue mountain stands above the water to where the Susquehanna is hid by the trees" once belonged to Fire-eater. As he notes, "All this, and all that grew in it, and all that walked over it, and all that fed there. They gave to the Fire-eater... for it was his" (382). Here Mohegan reaffirms Fire-eater's ownership of the Mohegan land. The withholding of Fire-eater's true identity allows Cooper to legitimate the right of the Indians to alienate their tribal land and thus Judge Temple's right to the disputed land. But the land, the Indian points out, has passed away from the hands of Fire-eater and his descendants and to the hands of Judge Temple (385). This recount of the past event, which asserts Fire-eater's and hence Edwards's right to the disputed land, then prompts Elizabeth to defend her father's right to his landed estate, which from her standpoint is acquired legally according to the law of commerce and "the custom of the whites." As she rationalizes, "Do not the Delawares fight, and exchange their lands for

powder, and blankets, and merchandise?" (382). Mohegan refutes this claim that legitimates the transactions of the tribal lands, and instead insists on the robbery nature of the transactions. Elizabeth, eager to defend her father's name and right to property, again retorts. As she explains to the Indian, "If you knew our laws and customs better, you would judge differently our acts. Do not believe evil of my father, old Mohegan, for he is just and good" (383). Marmaduke Temple can only be "just and good" in so far as one accepts bourgeois property right, as does his daughter.

Between writing *The Spy* (1821) and *The Pioneers* (1823), Charles Hansford Adams points out, Cooper was concerned with the problem of "the split between the legal and private selves" and the conflicts that came with it (64). Judge Temple who embodies this split is embroiled in such conflicts after asserting his legal authority over the affairs of Templeton. The split, Adams argues, allows Cooper to raise the possibility that the private self can hide behind the public law to advance one's personal interest. Moreover, Cooper's interest in the split between the legal and private selves, Adams suggests, lies in his keen political and social awareness that early American law was in a period of significant transition that created an environment for tyrannical personality to emerge (65). He concludes that the legal persona that Temple assumes as the administer of law and justice is the "mask" that Temple wears to indirectly protect and secure his personal property. Exemplifying this is the clash Judge Temple has with Edwards over Leatherstocking's transgression of the game laws by killing a deer out of season. Effingham's passing as an Indian heir, as I will show, not only does not fundamentally challenge Temple's property right, but upholds the same law that protects the judge's property right.

Judge Temple comes to the defense of his property and asserts his legal authority over Templeton after Edwards raises questions about his land ownership, while challenging his authority, in the course of pleading for Leatherstocking's case. The confrontation between the judge and Edwards, however, exposes Temple's private interest in upholding the law. When the judge refuses to bend the law in favor of the old hunter, who has recently saved his daughter from a panther, Edwards in a "burst of passion" questions his very land ownership. As he notes, "Ask your own conscience, Judge Temple. ... Whence came these riches, this vale, those hills, and why am I their owner? ... the appearance of Mohegan and the Leatherstocking, stalking through the country, impoverished and forlorn, would wither your sight" (329). Here Cooper again passes Edwards off as an advocate for the Indian right, ostensibly to prod Judge Temple's conscience to make concessions over Leatherstocking's offense, but Edwards's invocation of Mohegan only works secretly toward his real goal of reclaiming the Effingham property. Edwards's confrontation with Judge Temple only highlights how Cooper is actually eliding the voice of the dispossessed Mohegans while appearing to give them a voice through Edwards. The passing enacted by Effingham, in effect, works to suppress the perspective of the dispossessed Indians and justify the status quo. In this sense, Effingham is very much in agreement with Temple's argument that the law recognizes "the validity of the claims that have transferred the title to the whites" (329). To put in another way, Effingham's passing and his invocation of the Indian chief and Temple's invocation of the law all work to legitimate accumulation by dispossession.

If law helps form Temple's selfhood as a property owner, then patronym helps define who Edwards/Effingham is. Cooper implicitly makes this point when Temple,

who earlier had trouble placing Edwards's "familiar" face with a name (35), asks for Edwards's name after having the latter's gunshot wound treated and gets the reply: "I am called Edwards, Oliver Edwards" (87). Cooper continues to develop this patronym/identity subplot when the dispute over Leatherstocking's illegal hunting leads Temple to fire Edwards as his domestic secretary. Edwards, who accepted the position offered by the judge as a compensation for having injured him so as to pursue his scheme to reclaim his inheritance right, later regrets the dismissal, however, with an ambiguous statement. Confiding to Elizabeth, he says: "Miss Temple, I have forgotten myself— forgotten you" (330). Here the connection between patronym and identity is obliquely suggested. One can, of course, read the veiled statement "I have forgotten myself" as Edwards's admission for having spoken out of line as a domestic servant to Judge Temple, but he could be committing a Freudian slip, unconsciously alluding to his lineage and identity. But at this point, it is not clear from which lineage and family name Edwards is speaking. Is he speaking as the offspring of Fire-eater or as the grandson of Major Effingham? The meanings of this ambiguous statement will not be settled until when Edwards finally reveals his true identity and Fire-eater's, a double revelation that significantly shifts the terms of the land dispute that so far have been cast as white-Indian dispute. Effingham's passing allows Cooper to cast the land dispute as involving the Mohegans and Judge Temple, but its unveiling will enable Cooper to recast the dispute as involving two white propertied families, thus removing "the native owners of the soil" from the dispute and justifying the primitive accumulation of capital by expropriating the indigenous.

By way of Effingham's passing, Cooper weaves the material connection between patronym and inheritance right. The effect of posing as Oliver Edwards/Young Eagle is that the inheritance right Effingham seeks to reclaim is the "natural right" to the land that once belonged to the Delawares and then to Fire-eater. In other words, his passing as half-Indian has the effect of making the land dispute as one between the Mohegans and Judge Temple—a dispute that, from the perspective of Judge Temple and his daughter, has no merit, as the acquisition of the land and his estate is sanctioned by bourgeois law and property right. Defending the ownership of his estate, Temple says: "the Indian title was extinguished so far back as the close of the old war, ... I hold under the patents of the Royal Governors, confirmed by an act of our own State Legislature, and no court in the country can affect my title" (226). Here Temple traces the legal ownership of his estate and its legitimacy to both the old British crown and the new U.S. Constitution. His look into the past and the present orders to validate his ownership is Cooper's attempt to legitimate the white ownership of the Indian land, thus paving the way for young Effingham to reclaim his inheritance. Through Temple and the law of private property he upholds, Cooper reinforces bourgeois right to landed property and thus accumulation by dispossession.

The reappearance of Major Effingham near the end of the novel helps Cooper to resolve the white-Indian land dispute by quietly justifying the dispossession of the Indians and thus the white property right. The reappearance of Major Effingham, Scott Bradfield suggests, represents "both the return of the king and the return of the disenfranchised Indian" (46). This double return is symbolically suggested in the attire and foot-ware the fragile old man wears in his surprise return after years of

disappearance. The major is described as having on a dress that was worn by “the wealthiest classes” despite being “threadbare and patched” and “a pair of moccasins, ornamented in the best manner of Indian ingenuity” (416). The major’s return helps to cement his grandson’s inheritance right, but not the Indians’ “natural right.” The return, as Bradfield argues, helps to “institute a permanent system of proprietorship” over the now developed Templeton while resolving the conflicts between bourgeois and aristocrat, Loyalist and Tory, and nature and government (48). But rather than “heal” the original violence of both the American revolution and British imperialism as Bradfield argues, young Effingham’s inheritance of Templeton, I would argue, helps to mask or even erase the violence of dispossessing the Indians. The concealment of Fire-eater’s white identity as Major Effingham and his reappearance are part of Cooper’s design to justify the dispossession of the “original owners of the soil,” thus legitimating the white ownership.

The disclosure of Fire-eater’s true identity as the “lost Major Effingham,” thus the true identity and lineage of Edwards, allows Cooper to perform ideological containment and justifications for the new capitalist order emerging in Templeton. The double disclosure shifts the land dispute from one between the Mohegan tribe and Judge Temple to one between two old friends—Judge Temple and his college friend, Edward Effingham, young Effingham’s father who was believed to have drowned in a sea accident. Ashamed of going to business, the aristocratic Edward Effingham secretly entrusted Temple to manage his finances, which he had inherited from his father Major Effingham. That is, Judge Temple does not fully own the property that appears to be under his possession, but only manages it as Edward Effingham’s trustee—a secret agreement between the two friends. The “veil” that conceals the business arrangement

(32) thus makes what is to become Templeton a paradoxical “neutral ground” between Temple and the Effinghams. George Dekker points out that the term “neutral ground” has a special meaning for Cooper who borrowed it from Sir Walter Scott’s *Waverley* novels and refashioned it to mean the “most lawless and morally equivocal place of all” (33). The reappearance of Major Effingham, which prompts Temple to reveal his own will that details the veiled business arrangement, thus serves to convert the land dispute between the Mohegans and Judge Temple as one between Judge Temple and the Effinghams. The moment Judge Temple acknowledges in the person of an “old” and “decrepit stranger” as the “lost Major Effingham” (417), the conversion of the nature of the land dispute is quietly accomplished. Before this, the reader has been led to see the land dispute as one between the Mohegans and Judge Temple. The deception is being helped by Cooper’s artful manipulation of his native informants, who appear to voice the Indian right to land, but only to ensure the property right of the Effinghams in the end. It thus can be argued that Cooper has deployed his native informants in Mohegan, Edwards and Leatherstocking and their “Indian” voices to naturalize accumulation by dispossession.

Moreover, in unveiling his grandfather’s identity, young Effingham also reveals his real motive, thus Cooper’s, for advocating the Indian right to land. As Oliver Edwards presents to the judge his grandfather—who has been secretly ensconced in Leatherstocking’s hut and later in a cave—he tells the man whom he regards as having usurped his inheritance:

This man, whom you see helpless and feeble, was once a warrior so brave and fearless that even the intrepid natives gave him the name of the Fire-eater. This man ... was once the owner of great riches; and Judge Temple, he was the rightful proprietor of this very soil on which we stand. This man was the father of [Edward Effingham]—. (417)

Here Edwards finally reveals that he did not see the land dispute as between the Delawares and Judge Temple, the current owner of the Indian land, as he has led us to believe, but one between his grandfather, Major Effingham, and the judge. The revelation also shows that his resentment toward Temple has been that of a white property owner and his “structures of feeling,” to use Raymond Williams’s term, are thus produced by a social relation based on private property. Furthermore, the withholding of Fire-eater’s true identity from the reader until near the end of the novel is a clever ruse by Cooper to mislead the reader into believing that Cooper was interested in wresting with the legality and morality of dispossessing the Indians. The apparent concern with the Indian land rights, voiced by Edwards, Chingachgook and Leatherstocking, actually is a disguise for resolving the dispute between two white propertied families that firmly believe in the inheritance right. In the end, what lies behind Edwards’s “proper name” is the patronym, the name of the father, the white father who is a property owner.

As I have shown, Cooper uses the devices of “concealment and disclosure” and “Indian” voices of the native informants in *The Pioneers* to justify white land ownership and bourgeois property right. Those devices are similar to what Fredric Jameson calls “a strategy of ideological containment”—a procedure in representation that is aimed at preventing a deeper understanding of the social relations in its totality from emerging, and thus helps preserve the status quo (53). They work to obscure the dispossession of the Indians and capital accumulation through the seizure of the native lands and the genocide of the natives. Susan Scheckel also points out that Cooper enacted a series of displacements in *The Pioneers* through which he then defused the more radical implications of the questions that he had raised regarding the dispossession of the Indians

(22). So under the clever ruse of “concealment and disclosure,” Cooper quietly has Edwards/Effingham replace Chingachgook as the “wronged party,” thus erasing the Indian’s “natural right” to his ancestral land while legitimating bourgeois law and property right. More significantly, the voice Cooper gives to Mohegan expressing his Indian right to land, especially his repeated demand that Fire-eater’s heir, Oliver Edwards, be entitled to his ancestral land, is actually a voice that seeks to return the land under Judge Temple’s possession to its “rightful” owner, Major Effingham. Seen in this light, Mohegan’s “Indian” voice is being hijacked to express the voice of the white propertied class. As Cheyfitz has warned about colonizing and disappearing the Other in the culture of western imperialism, Cooper’s representation of the Indian chief does just that. In having Mohegan endorse Fire-eater’s and his descendants’ right to what is now Judge Temple’s Templeton, Cooper seems to support the view that the Indians had the right to alienate the tribal land but only to justify the white ownership.

The disclosure of young Effingham’s passing as an Indian heir apparent at the same time forces *another* passing of different degree to come to light. Until Judge Temple reveals his written document to return some of his accumulated wealth to the Effingham family, he has been passing as the rightful owner of his massive estate centered around Templeton. Temple’s passing as the legitimate owner of the Indian tribal land through his silence about the secret agreement with young Effingham’s father thus gives him the incentive to be the guardian of the law that protects private property. During his passing, he has invoked the law in his capacity as the judge of the frontier town to maintain law and order while protecting his own property, as in his intervention to stop an unauthorized mining and his penalizing Leatherstocking for hunting a deer out of season

on his property. The disclosure of his written will to compensate the Effingham heir only works to secure his own wealth, and is accompanied by another ruse: the marriage of his only child to young Effingham that will further displace the voice of the Indian right to land and consolidate white property.

Indeed, Cooper further reinforces bourgeois right to private property through the marriage of young Effingham to Elizabeth. In a conciliatory gesture, Temple announces his intention to the now unveiled Effingham that he is ready to return at least one half of his estate to the rightful owner. As he tells Effingham: “we have both erred; thou hast been too hasty, and I have been too slow. One half of my estates shall be thine as soon as they can be conveyed to thee, and if what my suspicions tell me be true, I suppose the other must follow speedily” (423). The marriage plot in *The Pioneers*, as Janet E. Dean suggests, serves to ensure the white possession of woman and land while allowing Cooper to perform the Indian removal (17). Cooper’s marriage plot is a revision of antebellum frontier romance that usually involves an Indian male and a white male competing for the love of the same woman, who can be white or Indian (Dean 5-8). Through the concealment of Edwards’s white identity and his passing as half-Indian, Cooper thus has Edwards playing the double role of the white man and the red man in one person. The unveiling of Edwards’s white identity later not only quietly performs the Indian removal but also ensures the white man’s possession of woman and land. In the marriage plot, Dean also points out, Cooper blends the myth of the “vanishing American” that was a cultural and ideological response to the dispossession of the Indians as a result of government Indian removal policy. And Elizabeth, as a “circulating woman” in the frontier romance, helps Cooper to make disappear the Indians who pose threats to

Temple's estate. Behind the romance between Elizabeth and Edwards actually is the logic of displacement through which Cooper defuses the white-Indian land dispute.

The union of Effingham and Elizabeth that helps end the property dispute at a happy note is, in effect, a veiled ruse by the white property-owning father. The marriage, though consented to by the young couple, is an effective means through which at least half of the disputed property is transferred and returned to another white father, Major Effingham, and his heir, thus ensuring patriarchal rule based on private property. Fathers are important figures in Cooper's novels because, as Mark R. Patterson suggests, fathers in Cooper's imagination are "tied quiet specifically to history" and invested with history's authority (86). Patterson names such (white) fathers as "historical fathers" who are often "associated with the disruptive forces of historical and revolutionary settlement" and whose authorities are founded "in institutions, laws and land" (95); and they include Judge Temple, Colonel Munro (*The Last of Mohicans*) and General Washington (*The Spy*). Cooper's fascination with fathers, Patterson notes, stems partly from his own father William Cooper, a judge who founded the Cooperstown of New York in late 1780s, the echo of which can be found in the fictional Templeton, and partly from his own sense of historical change and concern with the son's ability to carry on the father's virtues and authority. With the unveiling of young Effingham's true identity, Cooper adds a new member to the club of the white propertied fathers who would pass on their patrimony to their heirs. Through his marriage to Elizabeth, young Effingham also waits in line to succeed Judge Temple as the autobiographical and legal father of Templeton. Passing in *The Pioneers* thus takes on another significant meaning, the passing of Templeton to another future propertied father, thus furthering the process of erasing the traces of Indian

ownership of the land from a manufactured white history that protects its male citizens' right to private property.

Mourning of the Passing

As Susan Scheckel points out, pervading *The Pioneers* is also “the attitude of mourning,” which serves both to assuage a national guilt for the dispossession of the Indians and to assure a sense of continuity in the face of change (37). In Natty Bumpoo/Leatherstocking, Cooper finds the medium to mark and mourn the changes sweeping Templeton. As a figure of mourning for the unfenced forest not yet disturbed by the settlements, Leatherstocking is also acting as a native informant, as is Chingachgook, for Cooper, despite having no Indian blood. To the extent that he is a native informant for Cooper who narrates the passing of an era and the rise of a new one, Leatherstocking is given an “Indian” voice that still tries to preserve aboriginal ways of life in the midst of social and economic changes. Furthermore, Leatherstocking, who gets this nickname from the settlers for hunting the creatures of the woods to feed and clothe himself and to meet his other needs, is to a certain degree passing as an Indian for having adopted the aboriginal ways of life with Mohegan. And like the old Indian chief, he is facing the fate of being driven off from the land, which originally belonged to the Mohegans. But his “Indian” voice, as I will show, is compromised by his defense of Major Effingham’s property right.

The same historical, political, territorial and economic changes that combine to make Chingachgook the last of the Mohegans also make it impossible for Leatherstocking to continue to “go native” at Templeton. As Judge Temple asserts his property right by bringing in white settlers to develop and improve his forested estate, the natural and unbounded environment in which the veteran hunter has moved more or

less freely shrinks further. Moreover, Leatherstocking's mode of existence based on use value—hunting and fishing to meet his basic human needs—is also threatened. To a large extent, Leatherstocking's clash with Judge Temple and what Templeton represents is that of use value (needs) and exchange value (market economy). The veteran hunter tells the judge that those who are responsible for the scarcity of the game are the farmers at Templeton and not a hunter like him who only kills the creatures of the woods to satiate his hunger and meet his other needs. The farmers are already producing for a common market at Albany, producing wealth and prosperity for Judge Temple (206). By contrast, Leatherstocking still leads largely a life of self-sufficiency by appropriating nature to meet his immediate needs. Not only is his way of life molded by use value incompatible with the judge's settlements, he is also bothered by the conducts of the settlers. On several occasions, he chides other settlers in Templeton for the ways in which they squander nature's bounty. On the occasion when the villagers use nets to harvest the bass from the lake and report a bounty harvest, Leatherstocking denounces their wasteful ways. He explains to the judge: "I eat of no man's wasty ways, I strike my spear into the eels or the trout, when I crave the creators [creatures]; but I wouldn't be helping to such a sinful kind of fishing for the best rifle that was ever brought out from the old countries" (253-54). In his view, there is no justification for harvesting the bass from the lake "by the thousands" with nets unless they have fur, like a beaver, or hides, like a buck, that can be made use of. He thus calls it "sinful and wasty" to catch more than can be eaten at one time (254).

Cooper's depiction of Leatherstocking, John P. McWilliams Jr. notes, closely matches what John Locke described as "the just man in a state of nature" in *Second*

Treatise on Civil Government (102). And Judge Temple, by contrast, is Cooper's idea of the just man in a state of civilization. McWilliams also suggests that as farming increasingly replaces hunting as the major occupation at Templeton, civil justice upheld by the judge is replacing natural justice observed by Leatherstocking. The ending of the novel—with the exit of Leatherstocking, the last standing quasi-native following Chingachgook's death and Edwards's revealing of his Anglo-American lineage, from Templeton to seek another frontier—suggests that despite Cooper's sympathy for Leatherstocking and his values, civil justice prevails over natural justice in the new “composite order” of Templeton.

Many writers have used landscape to convey a sense of historical or social change, so has Cooper. H. Daniel Peck has astutely observed that space has played an important role in Cooper's imaginative world and it has been used to create meaning (91-2). Peck suggests that in *The Pioneers*, the geographical and moral center is the community of Templeton and its surrounding landscape. Indeed, Cooper opens the novel with a detailed description of the landscape surrounding what is to become Templeton, whose construction is also described in details suggesting lying behind its grand facade is a flawed plan executed awkwardly by two local architects. The development of Templeton not only causes a dramatic change in the landscape but also sows the seeds of conflict between Leatherstocking and Judge Temple. The clash between the two men is, in some sense, over the use of space, including Mt. Vision at the Otsego. Leatherstocking intuitively senses his hunting lifestyle is under threats when he, hosting Marmaduke Temple in his cabin, first learns of Temple's plans to develop the land around the lake of Otsego in their first encounter. The hunter subsequently withdraws his hospitality toward

Temple. In hindsight, Temple thinks that Leatherstocking may have considered “the introduction of the settlers as an innovation [invasion] on his rights” (226). He also notes that before the rise of Templeton, “Mount Vision”—the idyllic name Temple gives to the place where he first laid his eyes upon the lake—still laid “in the sleep of nature,” supplying “the wants of man” (221). Judge Temple also describes Mt. Vision as he first saw it: “the sight that there met my eyes seemed to me the descriptions of a dream” with the “unbounded forest” untouched and the lake “like a mirror of glass” (224). Here Cooper imagines a pristine landscape, laying out a vision of nature still in its untamed state before the intrusion of Templeton and its civilization. The Mt. Vision episode not only allows Cooper to mourn the loss of nature to settlements but also to subtly suggest that it is the course of bourgeois history.

Finally, the exit of Leatherstocking from Templeton signals not only the defeat of a mode of existence based on use value but also the triumph of bourgeois private property based on exchange value. His departure thus signals the passing of an era and the coming of a new order. The departure has other significance as well: some critics have pointed out that Leatherstocking’s departure, like Chingachgook’s death and Edwards’s resumption of his true identity, allows Cooper to quietly remove a voice critical of the white dispossession of the Indian land. His departure ostensibly to seek another woods that have not yet been “improved,” they have argued, allows for the forgetting of the land dispute between the Mohegans and Judge Temple. Indeed, Leatherstocking has been known for his criticism of the whites’ dealings with the Indians over the land. As he once tells the Mohegan chief, “I must say I’m mistrustful of such smooth speakers; for I’ve known the whites talk fair when they wanted the Indian lands most. This I will say,

though I'm white myself" (197). But Cooper's "concealment and unveiling" plot undercuts the interpretation of Leatherstocking as an Indian rights advocate. As I have shown earlier, lying behind what appears to be Indian voice of Chingachgook and Edwards is actually that of the white propertied class. Similarly, Leatherstocking's voice advocating the Indian right to land is undermined by the unveiling of Fire-eater's true identity. Like Chingachgook, Leatherstocking also argues that Fire-eater is the owner of the Indian land. Reminding the old Indian of the ownership of the Indian land, Leatherstocking says: "were they [the hunting grounds] not given in solemn council to the Fire-eater?" (158). In the end, despite his talks about the Indian right, what Leatherstocking has been defending is actually the property right of Major Effingham, who has adopted him as a young child (421). Cooper's "concealment and unveiling" device may be a "brilliant" plot to legitimize the white ownership of the Indian land, but it undermines Leatherstocking's credibility as an advocate for Indian right and use value. Leatherstocking thus joins Chingachgook and Edwards/Effingham as Cooper's native informants who work in unison to justify young Effingham's right to his family property, thus bracketing the memory of the dispossession of the Indians and obscuring the primitive accumulation of capital through violence.

The hidden perspective of *The Pioneers* thus is the bourgeois perspective that protects property right and ensures the transfer of white patrimony to the rightful owner, while erasing the voice of the "original owners of the soil." Cooper as narrator has disguised this overriding perspective through the use of native informants whose voices are molded to defend the Indian right to land, disputing Judge Temple's ownership. But as my analysis has shown, the so-called "Indian" voices turn out to be either representing

the views of the white propertied class, or endorsing them. Passing the bourgeois perspective off as that of the Indians perhaps is the most hidden passing in many of the passings I have discussed. As a strategy of ideological containment, it also raises questions about the credibility of the perspective of the native informant. To prevent the abuse of the native informant by those who are in the position to speak for others or represent them, Spivak has argued for turning the native informant as the (im)possible perspective. The indeterminacy between the possibility and the impossibility of such a perspective is to foreclose the emergence of a determined voice that is aimed to usurp the native voice as Cooper did to project his own interested perspective.

While showing sympathy toward the dispossession of the Mohegans, Cooper has vested interests in the preservation of the bourgeois order of things. The sketchy autobiography in the “Author’s Introduction” to the novel, where Cooper briefly mentioned his own father having “an interest in extensive tracts of land in [the] wilderness” in Otsego (vii), discloses Cooper’s personal ties to patriarchy and private property. This biographical “dangerous supplement” also shows the material connection between patronym and private property for the propertied class. Cooper’s biographers have also pointed out that as a young man, Cooper himself had spent great efforts in recovering his father’s inheritance (Patterson 90). Stephen Railton in his study of Cooper’s life and imagination observes that in lengthy legal proceedings Cooper had “consistently defended his father’s title to Cooperstown” (105), a land purchased by William Cooper after the American Revolution. The Otsego land, however, was contested by the Prevosts, the descendants of a George Croghan, who had purchased the land from the Indians before the Revolution, which led to its confiscation. Through the

devices of “Indian voices” of the native informant and passing—concealment and unveiling—Cooper artfully turns the land dispute between the Mohegans and Judge Temple into one between two white propertied families. In *The Pioneers*, Cooper has shown us how the native informants can be exploited to show sympathy to the dispossession of the Indians while endorsing the status quo or naturalizing accumulation by dispossession.

Otsego, an Indian word consisting of Ot, a place of meeting, and Segoo, a salutation used by the Indians of that region (vi), is indeed a place of meeting in Cooper’s tale where the outcome of the meeting of white settlers and the “original owners of the soil” is shown: the primitive accumulation of capital through the dispossession of the Indians. It is also a place where the Indian perspective is being hijacked by that of the white propertied class who engaged in a politics of collective amnesia that allows for the forgetting of the violence stemming from the dispossession of the Indians and capital accumulation. Nevertheless, the tale takes place at a time when the “origins” of the commodified land are still visible. Although “amnesia,” as Richard Godden notes, characterizes the resolution of *The Pioneers* (134), Cooper still felt obliged to include the Indians’ voice advocating their rights to their ancestral lands, though it turns out to be that of the white propertied class, to justify bourgeois right to private property and accumulation by dispossession.

CHAPTER 3
MELVILLE'S CONSCRIPTION AND SUBVERSION OF THE ORIENT AS "NATIVE
INFORMANT" IN *MOBY DICK*

In the aftermath of 9/11, the American public's interests in the Muslim world have phenomenally increased, as reflected in the reported increased sales of books and other publications on this particular subject. It was in this environment of heightened awareness of the Muslim world in the United States that I began to change my reading of Melville's *Moby Dick* from mapping the traces of 19th-century globalization in the novel and to peruse the novel with an eye on all things Oriental, with the help of a handful of scholarly works devoted to Melville's Orientalism. This change of focus has allowed me to see what it is not: the novel that helped give the world, increasingly connected and, in Thomas L. Friedman's view, "flattened" via the use of advanced technology and means of communications, the most recognized coffee brand on the planet is, after all, not all that American as had been thought. Rather, Ishmael's narrative on the American whaling industry and on Ahab's excess fixation on killing the elusive white whale is also a literary occasion for Melville to show off his extensive readings on the Orient before his travel to the region in 1856-57, which was recorded in his *Journals* and later transformed into a lengthy poetic meditation in *Clarel: A Poem and Pilgrimage in the Holy Land* (1876). The Islamic Orient, invoked very so often by Ishmael to exalt the American whalers, to critique and satirize religion and hierarchical society and to subvert Western Orientalism itself, is frequently foreclosed by most readings that saw *Moby Dick* as anything but Oriental. The exception is the few works devoted to Melville's Orientalism, notably

Dorothee Metlitsky Finkelstein's *Melville's Orienda*, Bruce H. Franklin's *The Wake of the Gods: Melville's Mythology* and John T. Irwin's *American Hieroglyphics: The Symbol of the Egyptian Hieroglyphics in the American Renaissance*.

The major readings of *Moby Dick* had long been dominated by the interpretations of the two major characters, Ahab and Ishmael. Over the years, the readings had expanded to include discussions of race and slavery, of American union and American empire, of race and sexuality and of class relations with the contextualization of both past and contemporary American politics. Those readings with their respective insights, however, had overlooked the double and conflicting operation of the Islamic Orient in the novel's narration. On the one hand, Ishmael the narrator invokes the Orient to exalt the American whaling industry and its whalers; the Orient so invoked is emptied of its inhabitants, making the invocation at the same time a foreclosure. In this regard, this form of invocation accompanied by a simultaneous foreclosure amounts to the 19th-century Western Orientalism that conscripted the Orient to illustrate or complement the West. In the United States, this form of Orientalism as a literary vogue found its way into the imagination of Melville, his friend Nathaniel Hawthorne, to whom the novel was dedicated, Edgar Allan Poe and other writers (Luedtke 63-67). On the other, Melville subverts this dominant form of Western Orientalism by *foreclosing* what the Orient is supposed to signify, as in Ishmael's acknowledgement of the impossibility to decipher the Egyptianized Leviathan. This form of critical foreclosure, unlike the one in the traditional Orientalism, calls into question the efforts by the West to explain its racial Others and the search for (absolute) truth and knowledge. This chapter will trace how these two contending versions of traditional and subversive Orientalism play out and play

off against each other as both the invoked and foreclosed native informant, and as an (im)possible perspective. In addition, it will examine how Melville appropriates the Islamic Orient to critique and satirize religions and hierarchical societies.

The Orient, which like the whale ship is Ishmael's Yale and Harvard, looms large in *Moby Dick*. It begins to loom in the opening chapter, "Loomings," set in the watery city of Manhattoes (Manhattan) that was enjoying bustling commerce with China. Just a few pages into the novel, an Oriental image begins to surface ("Unsealing the Sphinx" 283). It makes its debut when Ishmael, demonstrating his comic sense, says: "It is out of the idolatrous dotings of the Old Egyptians upon broiled ibis and roasted river horse, that you see the mummies of those creatures in their huge bake-houses the pyramids" (6). Oriental imagery and references, which are part of Ishmael's figures of speech, will continue to suffuse Ishmael's narrative of his whaling tale. Just quickly glance at some of Melville's figures of speech, we will see how deeply Melville has appropriated the Orient to Orientalize his characters and dramatize their actions. The American whalers who stuck together through vigilance, courage and hard work are compared to "an old Mesopotamian family" (159). Ahab, who "seemed a pyramid" in Stubb's "queer" dream, is described as having an "Egyptian chest" and a forehead showing "the Delta" of veins (142-43; 200; 526). Ahab's struggle with Moby Dick is cast in Oriental terms: "No turbaned Turk" could have stricken Ahab with "more seeming malice" than Moby Dick when the whale bit off Ahab's leg (199); "Ahab's harpoon had shed older blood than the Pharaohs'" (498). Ishmael compares the difficulty of spotting Moby Dick among the "boundless ocean" to trying to single out "a white-bearded Mufti in the thronged thoroughfares of Constantinople" (218). He describes the martial bones of the three non-

white harpooners as “Moorish scimeters in scabbards” that frighten off the steward Dough-boy (165). The Indian Tashtego is characterized as a “Turkish Muezzin calling the good people to prayers from the top of a tower” when he cries out for help after dropping through the air and landing on the summit of a captured whale (373). Ishmael also describes an unborn whale lying in a bent position as “a Tartar’s bow” (424). He even dubs the lamp lighted by sperm oil as “Aladdin’s lamp” (466).

It should come as no surprise that Ishmael, whose name is also suggestive of Arab descent in addition to its Biblical affinity (Parker and Hayford 18), often invokes the Orient to help with his narrative. The Orient thus invoked is the “native informant,” a figure of racial/ethnic Other that Spivak critiques as both being invoked and foreclosed in the Western mode of representation. Its simultaneous invocation and foreclosure conforms to a form of 19th-century literary Orientalism that conscripts the exotic Other to complement the Western Self. Due to their subject matter that deals with Americans travel in the Near East, *Clarel* and *Journals* have been considered by Melville scholars to be most representative of Melville’s Orientalisms. Malini Johar Schueller, for instance, has suggested that in both works Melville subverts the conventional US American Orientalism that posits a New World hero mastering the Oriental Other (*U.S. Orientalisms* 128-39). But I suggest in this chapter that in *Moby Dick* Melville has shown his attempt to subvert the imperial Orientalism that would be further explored after his journey to the Near Eastern Orient and in *Clarel* and *Journals*. The haunting presence of the Orient in *Moby Dick* often arises from Ishmael’s persistent endeavor to dive into the archives of the whales, making his narrative digress from the ongoing journey and labor activities of the Pequod. The conscription and subversion of the Orient as the native

informant in *Moby Dick* will be further examined below. But before proceeding, I will first review and contextualize some key historical developments that led to Melville's preoccupation with the Orient, especially the Near Eastern Orient.

Prior to the composition and publication of *Moby Dick* (1851), Herman Melville, the author of "*Typee, Omoo, Redburn, Mardi* and *White Jacket*," had shown sustained interests in the Orient in these works, drawing on Oriental imagery and customs and Orientalist figures as a source for his literary imagination and creativity. Melville's fascination with the Orient and what it signified for 19th-century America and Europe—both of which experienced an Oriental Renaissance (*Melville's Orienda; American Hieroglyphics*)—are best captured in *Mardi* when the allegorical novel's characters pay their tributes to the venerable Orienda. "Reverence we render thee, Old Orienda! Original of all empires and emperors!" exclaims King Media representing "common sense." "Mardi's father-land! grandsire of the nations," conjoins Mohi, the old historian. "Oh Orienda! thou wert our East, where first dawned song and science, with Mardi's primal mornings! But now, how changed! the dawn of light becomes a darkness," adds Yoomy, the young poet (551-52). Here the Orient, though revered as the cradle of civilization, has reached its sunset and is in decline, reminiscent of Hegel's notion of the linear movement of the Spirit/Reason/World History that starts from the East and culminates in the West, hence his version of Orientalism. Significantly, this Orientalized view of the Orient is a "consensus" held by the Oriental representatives of "common sense," history and poetry, that is, King Media, Mohi and Yoomy respectively. Despite this narrower view of the Orient circulating in both the official and popular Oriental literature he had access to, Melville also showed another side of his Orientalism in *Mardi* that embraces both the

East and the West in a harmonious unity. “It’s the old law:--the East peoples the West, the West the East; flux and reflux” (512).

Melville continued to use the Orient as his literary muse in *Moby Dick* and in his later works such as *Pierre* and *Clarel*. Melville’s awareness of and interest in the ancient Orient, which encompasses Arabia, Egypt, Turkey, Persia, Palestine and the fallen empires of the Assyrians and Babylonians, partly derived from his Calvinist religious upbringing, being instructed on Biblical texts (*Melville’s Religious Thought* 3-18). But more importantly, it is also a sign of his age, which experienced its own version of globalization of cultures, religions and commerce enabled by the technologies of sailing. Melville’s age, as Dorothee Metlitsky Finkelstein points out in *Melville’s Orienda*, her seminal work on Melville’s Orientalism, was fascinated by the archaeological discoveries of ancient Oriental artifacts. Giovanni Battista Belzoni’s explorations in Egypt, Jean Francois Champollion’s decipherment of the hieroglyphs and Sir Austen Henry Layard’s sensational excavations in Mesopotamia all happened in the first half of the 19th century, Melville’s formative and intellectual development years (Finkelstein 7), when two of the major Western empires of the time, Britain and France, sought domination in both the Islamic Orient and India (Said, *Orientalism* 221). In Melville’s imagery, Finkelstein also notes, his contemporary Orientalists like Belzoni, Champollion, Layard, and Sir William Jones who died a generation before, are “as integral a part of the Near Eastern historical landscape as the pyramids, the hieroglyphs, Nineveh, Zoroaster, and the Persian poets” (10). Melville’s preoccupation with the Orient and its customs and with empires thus formed part of his *historical* consciousness, finding its way into his literary creation, as did the domestic political debate of his day on the issue of slavery, union and American

territorial expansion (*Shadows over the Promised Land*; *Subversive Genealogy*; *Empire of Liberty*).

Melville's Orientalism, Finkelstein notes, was "nurtured in New York among a group of metropolitan literati" (16). His Orientalism was influenced by European romantic Orientalism, especially by Robert Southey's *Thalaba*, Thomas Morre's *Lalla Rookh* and Byron's Turkish tales. Melville's Orientalism, however, was different from Emerson's Transcendentalist Orientalism, which uses the Orient "functionally" to confirm its own view of the Universe that there was "a kindred principle at the bottom of all affinities" (14-15). After examining the American literary scene and its literary magazines from 1810 to 1850, including the *Knickerbocker Magazine* and its rival the *Democratic Review* and *Literary World* edited by Melville's publisher, Evert Duyckinck, Finkelstein observes that "the Near East was a literary force in New York when it became Melville's Yale and Harvard" (24). Edward Said also points out in *Orientalism* that by the middle 19th century, the Orient was a fertile ground for Western literary imagination or exploitation, increasing the public awareness of the Orient (192). Among the grids and codes of Western Orientalism, he also notes, the Orient as a distinct terrain outside of Europe is being re-presented for and in the West with the representation often stripping it of its humanity. The re-presentation that often excludes its contemporary inhabitants who help make Oriental cultures and customs thus signals the unequal power between those who re-present and those who are being re-presented. The Orient in *Moby Dick*, as I will show, is not the Orient in which the Orientals or the Western pilgrims actually live, but one conjured up from Melville's reading of travel writing, Oriental lore, Shakespeare, the Bible and other whaling sources. For some Melville scholars, this may be seen as a

complex question of one's belatedness to history, but I argue that it does display the deployment of the Orient as a trope in Melville's time. As a major source of his literary descriptions, transmutation and imagination, the Orient at many moments in the novel is a form of "native informant" that is structurally invoked and excluded in Ishmael's narrative. The foreclosure of the Orient as a living organism that develops and changes points to an uncritical part of Melville's Orientalism that still presumes the Orient is frozen in time and is made of "insulated, immemorial, unalterable countries" that "still preserve much of the ghostly aboriginalness of earth's primal generations" (252).

The degree to which Melville's exposure to the Oriental literature available to him through his use of New York libraries and other sources had affected his intellectual development can be seen in his metaphorical use of an Egyptian seed to describe his own intellectual development. In a June 1851 letter to Nathaniel Hawthorne with whom he formed a friendship during the composition of *Moby Dick*, Melville wrote:

My development has been all within a few years past. I am like one of those seeds taken out of the Egyptian Pyramids, which, after being three thousand years a seed and nothing but a seed, being planted in English soil, it developed itself, grew to greenness, and then fell to mould. So I. Until I was twenty-five, I had no development at all. From my twenty-fifth year I date my life. (*Correspondence* 193)

Significantly, Melville's appreciation of the enigmatic Pyramids helped him to form his philosophy that things are not as transparent as they seem to be and to create his signature symbols and characters that are polysemous in nature and thus resist a totalizing scrutiny and one single interpretation. This thinking paves the way for his subversion of the traditional Orientalism that seeks to explain the Orient and codify it as a "scientific" knowledge by foreclosing what it signifies. At his most defiant moment, Ishmael, paraphrasing Macbeth, declares that the elusive Leviathan is merely full of sounds, but

“signifying nothing” (157). Melville’s fascination with the Pyramids is also linked to his Calvinist upbringing, which taught that God is the creator of the universe. When visiting the Pyramids in Cairo in January 1857, he recorded the sensations that overwhelmed him upon seeing the Pyramids. “I shudder at idea of ancient Egyptians. It was in these pyramids that was conceived the idea of Jehovah” (*Journals* 75).

In *Moby Dick*, which in F.O. Matthiessen’s view helped establish his canonical stature in the American Renaissance literature (*American Renaissance* vii), Melville once again turned to the Orient as a literary and narrative device to help with the unfolding and digression of the narrative. To “see what whaling is” and to “see the world” are the official reasons Ishmael gave for signing up for the Nantucket whaling vessel, the Pequod, named after an almost extinct Indian tribe, Pequots, of Massachusetts.² But as the ship leaves the “slavery shore,” where the young America as a “westerling empire” built upon capitalist industry and commerce relying on both white wage labor and uncompensated black labor was divided over the issue of union and slavery, his narrative begins to digress from the ongoing journey to the Pacific. That is, as he dives further into the “matter of whaling” he takes us into the Oriental world rich with its Oriental imagery and geography. The mosaic Orient that emerges from Ishmael’s narrative is primarily drawn from the Biblical texts, Shakespeare, Oriental tales, travel literature on the Orient, contemporary archeological discoveries and other whaling sources. As such, the Orient is filtered through the lens of other Orientalists and along with it some of their conventional Orientalism, one that is different from what he would see when Melville later embarked on his journey through the region. As Schueller notes, the journals that recorded his Near

² For an in-depth analysis of the massacre of the Pequod tribe by the white Puritan settlers in the 17th century see Richard Drinnon’s *Facing West: The Metaphysics of Indian-Hating and Empire-Building*.

Eastern travels were fraught with “images of confusion, bewilderment, and terror that question the very agency” of the New World observer assumed to be capable of mastering and controlling the exotic, Oriental Other (129). Indeed, as Melville wrote of his experience of the labyrinthine Great Bazaar in Constantinople, “You lose self & are bewildered & confounded with the labyrinth, the din, the barbaric confusion of the whole” (*Journals* 60).

Nevertheless, the Orient conjured up from his extensive reading of the region is also the secondary and imaginative stage in *Moby Dick* supplementing the primary and physical one, the ivory Pequod whose quarter-deck provides the tableau for Ahab to render his Shakespearean speeches and for other members of the multi-national crew to perform their whaling duties. And into this imaginative and supplemental stage, Ishmael dives in order to exalt the American whaling industry and assert its supremacy; to satirize religions and hierarchical social relations aboard the ship by Orientalizing his major characters, including the whales, to create comic effect on a whaling tale that ends in catastrophe; to decipher the undecipherable Leviathan; to illustrate the existence of the sperm whales in time and space/place, hence their immortality and ubiquity; to map the genealogy of whalers; and to dramatize the whaling voyage and the “fiery hunt” for Moby Dick. To the extent that Ishmael appropriates the Orient to narrate his whaling tale, he is a literary Orientalist just as Melville is. In this regard, Ishmael/Melville is following a literary convention in vogue that invokes the exotic Other to complement his text, thus foreclosing the Oriental Other. The foreclosure underscores the imbalance of power in representation between the West and its racial Others. This is the first form of their Orientalism that conscripts the Other to help perform a service for the West. For example,

the ancient Egyptians are invoked to help restore the “glory and honor of whaling” and praise the unsung heroes of Nantucket whalers who had spent their hard labor and/or risked their lives hunting the whales around the world and producing the sperm oil—a valuable global commodity of the time. This supplemental Oriental stage will be closely dissected to illustrate how Melville/Ishmael conscripts the Orient as the Other/the native informant to achieve those multiple goals while at the same time turning this form of Orientalism on its head to critique Western epistemology, religions and social relations, thus opening a space for “subversive Orientalism,” the second and critical form of Melville/Ishmael’s Orientalism.

As can and will be seen, my study of the Orient as the Other of the West in *Moby Dick* is indebted to Dorothee Metlitsky Finkelstein’s comprehensive study of Melville’s “Oriental Polysensua,” Edward Said’s critique of Western Orientalism, Gayatri Spivak’s critique of the “native informant,” Malini Johar Schueller’s notion of “subversive Orientalisms,” Timothy Marr’s notion of “conscription” and many others. Melville’s conscription of the Orient, or his Orientalism, is polysemous. That is, while he invokes the figure of the Orient to affirm the supremacy of the American whaling industry, he also appropriates it to critique the Western subject of knowledge as embodied in the Egyptologist and phrenologist and satirize Western and Eastern civilizations, including their hierarchical social relations and religions. In the analysis that follows, I often characterize Melville’s appropriation of the Orient as “conscription,” because I want to foreground the hidden hierarchical power relations between the Orient and the West, which is Said’s central critique of modern Western Orientalism. As an intellectual force in the 19th century, it produced enormous amounts of knowledge about the Orient not as

it is but as Orientalized so that the Western powers/empires can exercise authority and control over it, even claim ownership over it.

Conformist, Subversive or Both?

The best-known Oriental character in *Moby Dick* is the white-turbaned Persian Fedallah, attracting some critics' attention for his extremely quiet mannerism. Charles Child Walcutt notes that Fedallah has "no revealed consciousness or point of view," implying his frustration that little is revealed about the mystic Persian (310). But Timothy Marr takes an opposite view, arguing that Fedallah's silence marks Melville's attempt to break away from antebellum American cultural imperialism and to end his own complicity in aiding it by speaking through the ethnic (8). Still, some question the foreclosure of Fedallah's perspective as a hidden structure prevalent in the Western mode of representation. By contrast, Fedallah's Philippine aboriginal crew is often overlooked by Melville critics probably because they are nameless and speechless until the last few moments of their lives; the critics have yet to examine their role as what Spivak has called the invoked and foreclosed native informants. The foreclosure of both Fedallah's and the aboriginals' perspectives, I would argue, exemplifies the contending forces in Melville's Orientalism: the subversive and the conformist. These Orientals are secretly recruited by Ahab to help kill the elusive Moby Dick, but Melville does not explain why they agree to take on the task that would endanger their lives, nor give them a perspective. So the question to be asked is: In foreclosing their perspectives, is Melville simply a conformist Orientalist or subversive enough to undermine the traditional Orientalism or both? The answer to this question shall help us to assess Melville's Orientalism and his contribution to opening a space for subverting the institutionalized Orientalism, or his failure to do so, before (post)modern critiques of Western Orientalism

shed light on how the West has produced knowledge through the invocation and exclusion of its racial Others.

The Orient, as I have suggested, is harnessed as a supplementary tableau to accommodate the various needs of the narration. Other than the ample allusions to various Oriental figures drawn from Melville's reading, *Moby Dick* also has some Orientals voyaging with the ivory Pequod and its multi-ethnic crew. But Melville's representation of these Orientals, specifically Fedallah and his Philippine aboriginal crew, radically departs from his representation of the three major non-white harpooners—the Polynesian Queequeg, the African Daggoo and the Gay Head Indian Tashtego. Those non-white harpooners are given noble attributes to counter or subvert the racial stereotypes prevalent in the 19th-century American culture and society. For Fedallah and his crew, Elizabeth Schultz notes, Melville attributes to them “the degraded racial characteristics which the dominant culture of the nineteenth century assigned to non-white cultures and races” (32). That, in her view, reflects Melville's “contemporaries' fear and ignorance of the cultures of the Near and Far East” (57). That popular “fear and ignorance” can be seen in Ishmael's description of the aboriginal crew as belonging to “a race notorious for a certain diabolism of subtilty,” and in his emphasizing Fedallah's “one white tooth *evilly* protruding from its steel-like lips” (236; italic added). Melville's representation of Fedallah and his boatmen thus constitutes one of his Orientalist moments in which the Orient becomes synonymous with the diabolic and the evil. Furthermore, both Fedallah and his boatmen function as native informants in *Moby Dick* who are simultaneously discoursed and foreclosed. In what follows I will discuss their role as the invoked and foreclosed racial Others in the plot that leads to the final

encounter with Moby Dick, as well as the nature of their respective foreclosure as mirroring the Western construction of the racial and ethnic Others in Melville and the opposing forces in Melville's Orientalism.

As a ship that has among its crew "nearly all Islanders," "federated along one keel" (131-32), the Pequod presents Ishmael and his other white shipmates opportunities to meet with and to discourse about their racial and ethnic others. The latter social interaction, however, is not extended to Fedallah and the aboriginals, who are secretly recruited by Ahab to kill his sworn enemy Moby Dick, supplementing the regular crew on the official payroll to hunt whales for their lucrative oil. Ishmael's description of their first public appearance sets the stage for their "native informants" role in the narrative. They appear on the deck alongside Captain Ahab as "five dusky phantoms that seemed fresh formed out of air" (235), Ishmael says. Even before their public appearance, Fedallah and the "tiger-yellow" crew have become the subject of speculation among the Pequod's other crew members who have long suspected their shadowy presence in the ship's hold. But Melville does not explain why Fedallah and the Filipino aborigines have joined in Ahab's monomaniacal crusade and what their motives were. More important, Melville seems intent on withholding language from them. Hardly can they be said to be subjects of speech except for few fleeting moments. The natives finally utter few words, protesting in a collective voice against Ahab's order to continue the chase of Moby Dick, before they die; Fedallah speaks briefly only to reveal an elaborate prophecy foretelling Ahab's final encounter with Moby Dick, otherwise he remains a mysterious and mute figure. Melville's representation of the Oriental crew, "a dangerous supplement" to the regular crew hired by the Pequod's owners, thus signals a change from his previous mode

of representation in which he speaks, more or less, through his ethnic characters to disguise his textual appropriations (Marr 13; 16). The foreclosure of their perspectives, while making their motives undecipherable as Marr says of Fedallah's silence (22), also allows the racial stereotypes attached to their characterization to go unquestioned. The foreclosure of Fedallah's and the Filipinos' perspectives and the withholding of language from them amount to a subtle form of Orientalism, even though Ishmael does not seek to speak for them or explain them or their motives, precisely because Melville does not disclose their motives or allow them to speak their minds.

The foreclosure of their perspectives is reinforced by Melville's sustained efforts to portray Fedallah and the Filipinos as phantoms and shadowy figures with supposed evil intents. The first sound they ever make aboard the ship while still hiding in the hold is a disembodied laugh, suggesting phantom laugh. A "low laugh from the hold" is heard after Ahab thinks that he has secured the first mate Starbuck's tacit acquiescence to go along with his pursuit of Moby Dick and after Starbuck says "God keep me! —keep us all!" (179). The sighting of Ahab's secret Oriental crew reminds Ishmael of the "mysterious shadows" he has seen sneaking aboard the ship (239). Even after this spectacular event, Ishmael continues to describe them as "subordinate phantoms" (251), and suggests that the devil (Beelzebub) could easily find his way into the whalers as they circumnavigate around the world, picking up castaways to help man their ships. Stubb, the second mate, even goes so far as to suggest that Fedallah is "the devil in disguise" (355). Starbuck later also perceives Fedallah as "the evil shadow" that has commandeered Ahab's soul. What underlies those white men's perceptions of Fedallah

and of the aboriginal thus is the Western metaphysics that constructs its racial Others as shadows out of its Self as substance.

The metaphysics of shadow and substance that constructs the Filipino aboriginals as the Others of the American Self comes to a climax when Ahab denies them of their humanity, treating them as if they were his arms and legs. In his desperate and futile attempt to kill Moby Dick in the last and third day of the chase, Ahab forbids his supplemental crew to jump the boat and threatens to “harpoon” those who do. Strikingly, the order ends with this dehumanizing warning: “Ye are not other men, but my arms and my legs; and so obey me” (618). Ahab’s reduction of the Filipino natives to his arms and legs is all the more acute on account of his ordering of the white mates to return to the ship to repair the broken boats with the option not to return to him. He says to them: “Ahab is enough to die” (618). Here Ahab’s Oriental crew is given a “special mission” to die with or for Ahab and only as his “arms and legs.” Moreover, Ahab reinforces the rigid division of labor between brains and muscles, with him being the brain of course. In the end, the conscription of the Filipino crew is only meant to serve as Ahab’s arms and legs!

By contrast, the white-turbaned Fedallah, whose whole person is enveloped in black, suggesting him to be a dark figure like Faust’s Mephistopheles (236), is reduced to Ahab’s shadow. Ishmael first reports witnessing the blending together of Ahab’s and Fedallah’s shadow when Fedallah is scrutinizing the head of a right whale, which has recently been killed, and glancing between the creature’s deep wrinkles and the lines in his own hand. At this critical moment, Ishmael says, Ahab chances to stand in such a position that “the Parsee [Fedallah] occupied his [Ahab’s] shadow” and Fedallah’s shadow seems to “blend with, and lengthen Ahab’s” (358). Subsequently, Ishmael and

the crew begin to cast doubts on the whole being of Fedallah; they entertain the thought that “whether he were a mortal substance” with his “added, gliding strangeness” and “ceaseless shudderings” that shake his being. They even speculate that Fedallah’s being is “a tremulous shadow cast upon the deck by some unseen being’s body. And that shadow was always hovering there” (583). The speculation surrounding Fedallah, as I have argued earlier, is based on the metaphysics of substance and shadow that reduces the racial Others to shadowy figures. The metaphysics reaches its climax when Ishmael reports seeing during the whale watch by Ahab and Fedallah that “in the Parsee Ahab saw his forethrown shadow, in Ahab the Parsee his abandoned substance” (584).

So far, I have only discussed the foreclosure of the supplemental Oriental crew as a form of Orientalism that closes off the perspectives of the Others of the West, conforming to an unspoken Western norm in representing its racial and ethnic Others. This form of foreclosing the ethnic perspectives, as Dana D. Nelson has argued, is symptomatic of Melville’s conformity to “the same *structural* exclusivity of white male subjectivity in its own necessarily limited portray of [the racial Other’s] motives and goals, and ultimate humanity” (130; italics original). The foreclosure of the Philippine indigenous without doubt belongs to the type Nelson described above, but her critique is not adequate to explain that of Fedallah, whose foreclosure could be more than just conformist. So I will now consider the possibility that the foreclosure of the mystifying Fedallah as a subversive one that aims at disrupting the boundary of the institutionalized Orientalism that seeks to explain the Other to the West. At stake is how one is to do with the native informant and its potential critical forces of “permanent parabasis” (constant interruption) in the Western (Eurocentric) narrative, when it has been revealed that the

figure has been invoked, appropriated, conscripted, or co-opted to do the bidding of those who are in the position to represent the Other. Marr regards Ishmael's view that Fedallah shall remain "a muffled mystery to the last" (*Moby Dick* 252) as a sign that Melville was breaking away from "the imperial act of ethnic ventriloquism and his desire to preserve instead the powerful dignity of [his] inexpressible silence" (22), therefore his effort to refuse to draft the ethnic as he had done previously. Marr's argument is compelling to the extent that his view on Fedallah is consistent with Melville's view on other Orientalized symbols: the Orientalized leviathan (indecipherable hieroglyphics), the Persian fire ("incommunicable riddle") and the Polynesian Queequeg's enigmatic tattoos. Clearly, in those enigmatic cases Melville is using the Orient as a subversive force to call into question the search for (absolute) knowledge, truth and certainty. But Marr, I think, fails to consider another pole in Melville's Orientalism: behind Melville's subversive move to foreclose Fedallah's perspective is the conformist Orientalism that still seethes under the subversive one. So immediately after declaring Fedallah shall remain an enigmatic figure, Ishmael slides back to a perception of the Orient as frozen in time. Fedallah, he tells us, is a creature from the "unchanging Asiatic communities ... those insulated, immemorial, unalterable countries" (252).

Here we have two opposite views on the foreclosure in Melville, with Nelson arguing the foreclosure in Melville is "structural" and deprives the racial Others of their perspectives and Marr seeing it as a resistance on Melville's part to conscript the ethnic. The foreclosure of the Philippine aboriginals, as I have argued, is unequivocal: one that shows Melville's conformist side of Orientalism. But in the foreclosure of Fedallah, we can see the subversive and the conformist forces in Melville's Orientalism playing out

and playing off against each other. Anticipating the polarizing views on the voice and silence of the racial and ethnic Others and the dilemmas they pose for students of cultural studies and literary critics, Spivak reinscribes the native informant that has been invoked and foreclosed in the Western epistemology as an (im)possible perspective. That is, she foregrounds the inclusion and foreclosure of the native informant in Western representation but does not seek to restore that foreclosed perspective, which she insists shall remain lost forever. Her critical use of foreclosure as a precaution against the abuse of the native informant seems to align her with Marr's position, and also dovetails with Melville's another refusal to signify what the Leviathan is, which will be discussed later in Melville's critique of Egyptology. Whether or not Spivak's formulation of the "native informant" as an (im)possible perspective will help settle the debate on the possibilities and limitations of the foreclosure of the native informant or provoke more debates still remains to be seen. Meanwhile, I will focus on how Melville conscripts the Orient as the "native informant" while subverting the institutionalized Orientalism in the remaining parts of the chapter.

The Levant as the Foreclosed Native Informant

The Levant, which was "a favorite place for many Americans to travel in and write about" in the 19th century (Obeidat 99), figures prominently in *Moby Dick* as the site for the appearance of the Leviathan in both ancient and modern times. As with the ethnic in his earlier works, the Levant is conscripted by Melville to "disguise his textual appropriations" and to generate "a creative color for his own textual productions" (Marr 16; 13). The Levantine conscription also taps into the 19th-American reading public's interest in the region arising from the nation's "quest for trade and empire, the rise of the missionary movement, and curiosity for the exotic and the outlandish" (Obeidat 97). The

geography of the Holy Land, as James A. Field Jr. points out in *America and the Mediterranean World 1776-1882*, was familiar to the Bible-reading Americans, some of whom “had visited Egypt where Pharaoh had oppressed the Jews, ... had visited Jaffa, where Noah had built his Ark of gopher wood and where Jonah had been spewed up out of the whale’s belly” (102-03). Melville himself had planned to visit it in 1849 from London where he had expected the sale of *White Jacket* would help finance the trip. But “this glorious *Eastern* jaunt” planned with much enthusiasm was, however, canceled for financial reasons (*Melville Log* 321). It was not made until several years later in 1856-57, the by-product of which was *Clarel* and *Journals*. Nevertheless, the Levant with its Biblical lands remains an exotic and mysterious place for Melville inciting his imagination all the more for not seeing it in person, until his 1856-57 trip there shattered much of that perception. The 1856-57 visit to the Bible land also marks a transitional point in Melville’s Orientalism. Before that, the sources of his Oriental allusions and imagery largely derive from the Biblical texts, contemporary archeological discoveries and travel accounts by Hakluyt, Purchas and others. As a result of that, his Oriental landscape is filled with Biblical and historical figures like Jonah, kings of Babylon, Dey of Algiers, Cleopatra, Saladin, Tamerlane, Vishnoo (Maste Avatar), Xerxes, and the like. That in turn makes his Orientalism lack the kind of vitality and realism that the inclusion of the real contemporary Orientals would have helped create. Of this much-anticipated and delayed trip, Melville recorded having that “genuine, old Jonah feeling” while visiting the land that Jonah is said to have traveled (*Journals* 80-81). With the experience of having immersed himself in the narrowed streets of Constantinople and other holy sites crowded with its inhabitants, portrayals of the real Near Eastern people found their

way into his journal entries and *Clarel*. In *Clarel*, Melville transformed a guide, or dragoman, he met in Jerusalem into the character of Djalea, who is described as “a Druze of Lebanon,” and “rumored for an Emir’s son,” and who is the tour guide for Clarel and his American and European travel companions (Potter 155; *Clarel* 163).

The Levant as a setting is first cited in Father Mapple’s sermon on Jonah’s failed attempt to escape from God and the duty God confers on him as a Hebrew prophet. Jonah’s failed escape, while a Biblical story used by Father Mapple to goad his congregation to obey God, is also a story of journey in space and time. *Moby Dick*, as Charles Olson notes, is an experience of both time and space. If Jonah had succeeded, his planned escape from Joppa/Jaffa in Syria through a ship destined for Tarshish/Cadiz in Spain would have taken him on a journey crossing the Mediterranean. Jonah’s entombment in the whale for three days in the whirlpool of the Mediterranean sea has “hitherto unheeded meaning” lurking behind it (48). But it is not the Biblical one of “swift punishment, repentance, prayers, and finally the deliverance and joy of Jonah” as Father Mapple wants his congregation to discern (47). Melville uses this Biblical story to set the stage for Ishmael’s dive into the Levantine and Biblical land to account for the genealogy of the Leviathan and the whalemens. Furthermore, the account of Jonah’s journey in the whale paves the way for Ishmael’s comparative accounts of the whale stories drawn from the mosaic Oriental world of religions and mythologies. For example, later Ishmael will mention “the incarnation of the Vishnu in the form of leviathan” (286) and count the Hindu god as belonging to the club of whale men (397). The telling of Jonah’s entombment in the whale, shortly before the sail of the Pequod heading toward the Pacific Asia, also helps frame the spatial and temporal dimensions of *Moby Dick* that

encompass the whole watery world and covers both Islamic and Christian lands. So through Jonah's entombment in the whale, a prefiguration for circumnavigation by sea, Melville skillfully conscripts the Levant as one of the Oriental tableaux for the novel and foreclosing it at the same time, as the Pequod sails toward the Pacific, the real center of whale hunting grounds for the 19th-century whalers and the scene where the final battle between Captain Ahab and Moby Dick unfolds.

Edward Gibbon wrote in *The Decline and Fall of The Roman Empire* that "As in his daily prayers the Moslem of Fez or Delhi still turns his face towards the temple of Mecca, the historian's eye shall be always fixed on the city of Constantinople.... From an humble origin, the *Ottomans* arose, the scourge and terror of Christendom" (857; 859). Melville who may either have owned a copy of Gibbon's book or borrowed it (*Melville's Reading* 61) seems to have taken note of the historian's advice, maintaining a sustained interest in the fate of the weakening Ottoman Empire besides picking up the life story of Mohammed and Islamic customs from it (*Melville's Orienda* 6; 180-88). In *White Jacket*, Melville fictionalizes the 1827 Battle of Navarino in which the British, French and Russian joined forces to defeat an Ottoman fleet in the Levant. In *Moby Dick*, the city of Constantinople and the customs and social relations of the Ottoman Empire are conscripted to foreground the ubiquitousness of the Leviathan, satirize the rigid social relations between Ahab and his three mates and parody the sperm whale's social and sexual arrangement. In "The Affidavit," Melville again enlists Constantinople and the Levant, where the sperm whale was recorded to have been spotted both in ancient and modern times, to give authority to Ishmael's testimony on the Leviathan. According to Howard P. Vincent who documented Melville's whale and whaling sources for *Moby*

Dick, the source of the two whale-spotting citations in “The Affidavit” is an entry entitled “whale” by C. Hamilton Smith collected in John Kitto’s *A Cyclopaedia of Biblical Literature* (271-74). But given Melville’s familiarity with Gibbon’s work on the Roman Empire, the sighting of the sperm whale in the Mediterranean controlled once by the Roman Empire and by the Ottoman Empire and its European rivals during the 19th century may have been intended to foreground the longevity of the Leviathan that outlives some fallen empires. Here the sperm whale as elsewhere, as Ishmael’s narrative indicates, is a spatial and temporal figure. In “The Affidavit,” the Levant has been conscripted to trace the presence and activity of the sperm whale in time and space, thus haunting and disrupting the novel’s narrative on the Pequod’s voyage. Like squid, the “white ghost” that foreshadows the presence of the sperm whale (301), the Orient has a haunting presence in the Pequod’s whaling voyage. The Orient as “the native informant” that is both invoked and foreclosed thus has become the Other of the American whaling voyage, haunting and disrupting the ongoing whaling voyage. Metaphorically, the Orient’s relationship to the Pequod is similar to the one that a ship forms with the barnacles that stick to its bottom, whose presence is hidden most of the time, but comes to view from time to time.

Comic and Subversive Orientalism

In 1890, a year before his death, *Harper’s Magazine* considered Melville a “minor humorist” (Rosenberry 1). Of Melville’s comic methods and achievement, Edward H. Rosenberry writes in *Melville and the Comic Spirit* that *Moby Dick* stands at the apex of “a pyramidal pattern” that developed and matured during his more prolific years. The “pyramidal pattern” has four major phases: the *jocular-hedonic* with fun as the main goal; the *imaginative-critical* containing literary originality, sophisticated tone and

ulterior motives; the *philosophical-psychological* striving for balancing the ambiguities of life and the *dramatic-structural* that combines the three earlier phases to create a more balanced work of art (5-6). Rosenberry's study of Melville's comic spirit, however, downplays his appropriation of Oriental customs and society to create comic effects and mount social criticisms. The maturity of Melville's comic vision, though influenced by Shakespeare and Rabelais, both of whom are alluded to for their distinct forehead and jolly spirit respectively in the text (379; 465), is definitely helped by his appropriation of the Oriental material. Melville's Orientalism, as Finkelstein has noted, is multifaceted. It is more so in his experiments with comic Orientalism, a genre he explored to mount social commentaries with humor and satire without directly offending authorities. In this endeavor, he succeeded in opening up a critical space that subverts the traditional Orientalism by appropriating the Islamic Orient as a protective shield from censors of liberal ideas. By way of the Islamic Orient, which functions as the native informant both invoked and foreclosed in *Moby Dick*, Melville launches his thinly veiled attacks on religions and hierarchy societies while poking fun at the sociology of the Ottomanized sperm whales. But it came with a price: in making his social critiques he needed to re-enact the uncritical Orientalism by simultaneously invoking and foreclosing the Islamic Orient.

In *Moby Dick*, his comic and subversive Orientalism is manifested in three Oriental or Orientalized chapters, which I will examine below. In these chapters, Melville conscripts Islamic religion, customs and social structures to satirize religions, the hierarchical social relations among the Pequod's white officers, and the social and sexual mores among the amorous whales while creating comic relief along the way. In "The

Ramadan,” on the surface Melville uses the occasion of “Queequeg’s Ramadan” to have Ishmael, a supposedly “good Presbyterian Christian,” reflect on religions. But in reality he uses the Ramadan as a pretext and a cover to satirize the forms of religious practice and the overzealous observant. Queequeg’s turn to Islam or something like that is intriguing in itself, given that he has learned from the Christians that “it’s a wicked world in all meridians; I’ll die a pagan” (62). Also, the ways in which Queequeg observes his Ramadan are foreign, if not offensive, to devout Muslims for he not only shortens the month-long fast to a protracted single day but also invites his black idol Yojo to join him. Initially, Ishmael assures us that Queequeg knows what he is doing. But when the fast seems to go on forever, extending well beyond its daily duration, Ishmael cannot help but to intervene to save Queequeg from possible harms. The melodrama caused by Queequeg’s “modification” or distortion of the ritual leads Ishmael to contemplate on religions. Ishmael’s contemplation shows him to be tolerant of religions as long as the believers do not make “this earth of ours an uncomfortable inn to lodge in” (94). It also reveals his view on religious practice and doctrine when he says:

all these Lents, Ramadans, and prolonged ham-squattings in cold, cheerless rooms were stark nonsense; bad for the health, useless for the soul; opposed, in short, to the obvious laws of Hygiene and common sense ... all thoughts born of a fast must necessarily be half-starved ... hell is an idea first born on an undigested apple-dumpling; and since then perpetuated through the hereditary dyspepsias nurtured by Ramadans. (ibid.)

These words, Ishmael reports, fail to register with Queequeg who seems to know what a “true religion” is.

So through Queequeg’s “unaccountable Ramadan” Melville parodies Lent and Ramadan while subtly questioning the ill effects of such religious practices on one’s health and soul as well as advancing his own theory of fast and hell. The conscription of a

modified or distorted Ramadan serves Melville's purpose to criticize some aspects of religions but with humor and wit that enrich his comic spirit, though at the expense of Ramadan. Queequeg's "unaccountable Ramadan" thus can be seen as the "native informant" that is both invoked and foreclosed in Melville's satire. The superficial appropriation of Islam also helps give *Moby Dick* an aura of globalization, reflecting Melville's cosmopolitan view that "No custom is strange; no creed is absurd" (*Mardi* 13). It is also Melville's strategy to avoid unnecessary editorial censorship on the matter of religion. Earlier, Melville had received editorial objections for his comments in his first novel *Typee* (1846), denouncing the devastating effects brought about by Western civilization through proselytizing Christianity and trade on the Polynesian natives (*Ruthless Democracy* 160). Queequeg, on the other hand, emerges in this Ramadan episode ironically as a non-conformist. He not only brushes aside Ishmael's "lecture" on "that important subject," namely religion, but also demonstrates how he could take on a religion and subvert it with his own idea of what that religion should be practiced.

Oriental despotism has long been a staple in Western Orientalism, but Melville reenacts it to critique the dictatorship of Ahab, who is referred to as "Grand Turk," "Old Mogul" and "Khan of the plan" aboard the Pequod. As Malini Johar Schueller points out in *U.S. Orientalisms*, American literary Orientalisms are not monolithic, a handful of writers re-enact the Orientalist discourse to critique gender and racial inequalities at home and question the imperial-hermeneutic power of the New World subject ("Missionary Colonialism" 75-108; "Subversive Orientalisms" 109-40). Melville's appropriation of Muslim social ranks to critique and satirize the hierarchical social relations aboard the Pequod is evidently on display in "The Cabin-Table." This transmutation is achieved

through the use of a double-narrative; the officers themselves still live under the American social relations characterized by its rigid formality while Melville/Ishmael's narrative treats them rather hilariously as if they lived under a hierarchical Muslim society. Instead of addressing Ahab and his three subordinates as captain and mates on an American whaler, Melville transforms that social relationship into one between a sultan and his three emirs. Dubbed as "Grand Turk," Captain Ahab here is treated as a sultan lording over his emirs. While the rather pompous language is intended to "elevate" the social status of Ahab and his three mates, it only draws more attention to the social distance between each rank and their place in such a rigid social hierarchy.

After Dough-Boy, the ship's steward, paradoxically, sets the chain of command in motion by initiating the call to dinner to his "lord and master," the cabin-table chapter is narrated alternately between two sets of voices, representing two sets of social norms but equally hierarchical. Upon hearing Dough-Boy's dinner call, the "moody Ahab" commands his first mate to dinner, saying "Dinner, Mr. Starbuck" before disappearing into the cabin. The narrative then shifts to the Muslim gear with its comic tone, describing Starbuck as "the first Emir" who, after feeling assured that "the last echo of his sultan's step has died away" and thus inferring Ahab is presumably seated, gives his own order to his next subaltern, saying "Dinner, Mr. Stubb." Upon hearing the order, "the second Emir" Stubb steps into his place to participate in the ritual, calling out "Dinner, Mr. Flask" before stepping into the cabin. The "third Emir" Flask, after being called up to appear on the deck, makes his antic entrance to King Ahab's presence "in the character of the Abjectus, or the Slave" (162). The utterances by Ahab and his three mates highlight the formality they perform over the dinner calls while the Orientalized

commentary narrative helps to drive home Melville's critique of the "social czarship" perpetuated by the Pequod's captain and officers. Its foremost victim is Flask who, since his promotion to the "dignity of an officer," has "never known what it was to be otherwise than hungry" because "what he ate did not so much relieve his hunger, as keep it immortal in him" and because he is the "the last person down at the dinner" and "the first man up" (163).

More significantly, Melville's Orientalization of the official relations between Ahab and the mates who form the "first table" in the Pequod's cabin serves to contrast with the "frantic democracy" practiced by their three subaltern harpooners who eat after the officers but dine "like lords" among themselves. Here as elsewhere, the target of Melville's critique is not the Islamic social structure per se; he uses it to insinuate the unequal American social relations manifested in the "first table"; and in the process, the reader is also made aware of the social hierarchy in Islamic society. The conscription of the Muslim social titles and the non-white harpooners in this cabin table scene allows Melville to mount a social critique of the Pequod's ranked society. Both the Islamic Orient and the ethnic are strategically conscripted to achieve that effect, and with a comic overtone.

The Orient also provides Melville with a fertile ground to cull and invent his Melvillian puns and conceits, which in turn lighten up his Orientalism. For instance, the chapter titled "The Nut" is a clever pun on Nut, the mother of Isis and Osiris of the Egyptian myth (Franklin 71), and a witty conceit for the brain of the sperm whale. Melville's fascination with puns, Rosenberry writes, lies in his profound understanding of the principles of semantics (77). In *Mardi*, Melville writes that "words are but algebraic

signs, conveying no meaning except what you please” (269). The use of puns and conceits, or what Melville called “linked analogies” in *Moby Dick*, allows Melville to inject low comedy into a whaling expedition that will soon turn into a catastrophe. The combined use of pun and conceit is again seen in the “Schools and Schoolmasters” chapter devoted to the social and sexual behavior of the sperm whales, and its rendition is couched in Oriental terms. As Ishmael explains, the title of this chapter refers to the female sperm whales and their male counterparts. It is a witty punning on the whaling terminology, school, as in schools of whales, and an equally witty conceit for designating the schools of female whales as “harem” and the solitary gray male sperm whale as “a schoolmaster” teaching the folly of his youthful/lustful days. In this chapter, the male sperm whale is personified as an Ottoman lord, and his “gallantry” is demonstrated by the schools of female whales, or the harem he keeps. The gallantry of this “luxurious Ottoman,” also known as “Bashaw,” is further demonstrated in his efforts to fight off the invasion of his “domestic bliss” by a young and amorous male whale named Lothario. But “our Ottoman,” who leaves behind babies all over the world, eventually enters a new phase, the supposed “impotent, repentant, admonitory” stage of his life, disbanding his harem and becoming a solitary “schoolmaster” warning young male whales of the folly of his youthful/lustful days. On some levels, the Ottoman/male sperm whale comes across as the sultan of *The Lustful Turk* (1828), a popular book bordering on literature and pornography (Marcus, *The Other Victorians* 197-216).

This witty chapter on the sociology of the sperm whales demonstrates Melville’s sense of humor and his “imaginative power” to transform the whaling sources he had read into his own “literary chowder.” Comparing “The Grand Armada” and “Schools and

Schoolmasters” with the whaling sources from which Melville had borrowed, Howard Vincent notes that Melville’s powerful literary imagination often transformed scientific factual writings of Beale (*Natural History*), Bennett (*A Whaling Voyage*), Olmsted and Scoresby into a piece of great literary work rich with metaphors and images (*Trying-Out* 299-310). Vincent also praises Melville for achieving in *Moby Dick* William Wordsworth’s dictum that “the true use for the imaginative faculty of modern times is to give ultimate vivification to facts, to science, and to common life, endowing them with glories and final illustriousness” (310). Melville’s appropriation of the Islamic Orient helps him to create an ingenious pair of pun and conceit that vividly portrays the social and domestic mores of the sperm whales and their seasonal migration around the globe. The Ottomanization of the sperm whales also allows Melville to skillfully disguise his sources of the whale sociology, just as his conscriptions of the ethnic enable him to “hide the transgression of his own literary borrowings” (“Melville’s Ethnic Conscriptions” 12).

But Melville’s Ottomanization of the sperm whales also reveals the deep influence of European Orientalist thoughts on his literary creation and the constraints it imposed on him. This in turn helped foster in the Western mind the association of “the Orient with the freedom of licentious sex” (*Orientalism* 190). The effect was such that, Edward Said writes, “In time ‘Oriental sex’ was as standard a commodity as any other available in the mass culture with the result that readers and writers could have it if they wished without necessarily going to the Orient” (190). Said also suggests that the West’s fascination with the Oriental harem and polygamy was that they offered an alternative to monogamous sexual relationship demanded by the bourgeois social and cultural norms, obsessed with private possessions and private property. The Oriental harem thus constitutes an exotic

place where sexual fantasies restricted by bourgeois sexual morality and propriety can find a temporary outlet. In the end, this episode of Melville's comic Orientalism indirectly serves to perpetuate a generalization of the Oriental sexual practice by simply confirming what has been passed on and has been circulating in the Oriental archive created and compiled by the West and for the West.

Egyptian Revival and Critique of Egyptology

Part of Melville's preoccupation with the Orient and its antiquities, as I have discussed earlier, reflects the sign of his age, which had experienced its own version of globalization of cultures, religions and commerce enabled by the technologies of oceanic navigation. Roughly between 1800 and 1850, America and Europe were swept by a great interest in the antiquities of Egypt. This Egyptian revival, John T. Irwin points out in *American Hieroglyphics*, helped contribute to the production of what was to become known as the American Renaissance literature, whose better known writers include Emerson, Poe, Thoreau, Whitman, Hawthorne and Melville (3-14). More importantly, it marked their works with the "mystic hieroglyphics." Like his contemporary fellow writers, Melville's interest in ancient Egypt was fueled by the archaeological discoveries initiated by Napoleon's invasion of Egypt in 1798. In *Moby Dick*, he conscripts ancient Egypt to help revive the "glory and honor" of the American whaling industry. Allusions to Egyptian images, mythologies, deities and historical figures abound in Ishmael's narrative seeking to articulate the genealogy of whaling and debunk what he sees as a widespread misconception about this profession. H. Bruce Franklin, for example, reads Ahab's struggle with Moby Dick as "an Egyptian myth incarnate," showing the to-the-death struggle is inspired by the myth of "Isis and Osiris," which is included in Plutarch's *Morals* cited in the "Extracts," and the Osiris-Typhon myth (71-83). Melville also

Orientalizes his major characters, Ahab, Starbuck, Queequeg, the whales and Moby Dick, endowing them with Egyptian attributes.

In “The Advocate,” Ishmael regards whaling as “that Egyptian mother, who bore offspring themselves pregnant from her womb” (119-20). The “Egyptian mother” mentioned here is Nut, the mother of Isis, Osiris and Typhon; Osiris impregnates Isis while still in Nut’s womb and becomes an archrival to his half-brother Typhon (Franklin 71). That “The Nut,” the chapter devoted to the brain of the sperm whale, begins with an Egyptianization of the sperm whale described as having the physiognomy of “a Sphinx” is an esoteric reference to “that Egyptian mother” (381). Here the Egyptian mother is invoked by Ishmael to honor the “anonymous” but “our heroic Nantucketers” who got no due recognition for their role in “civilizing” the “virgin wonders and terrors” of the South Sea as did Cooks and Krusensterns (120). But the invocation is quietly dropped as Ishmael goes on to praise the American whalers for breaking the hold of Spanish colonial rule in South America and bringing “eternal democracy” to this part of the world. What the invocation also performs effectively here is the foreclosure of ancient Egypt as Ishmael’s real aim is to pay tributes to American whalers for their liberty-building contribution. Ishmael’s narrative here, however, rehearses the dominant ideology of Melville’s day, the so-called “Manifest Destiny,” an ideology popularized by John L. O’Sullivan that sees America as a virtuous republic that seeks to bring liberty to the world. O’Sullivan advocated that America had a “manifest destiny” to spread its free institutions across the continent and coined that phrase in 1845 to promote the annexation of Texas (Rogin 72-73). Ishmael’s democratic rhetoric, as Timothy B. Powell points out, belies the nature of the 19th-century American capitalism that had just recently annexed

Mexico and California, expanding its territorial possessions. Until the Civil War, the “ruthless democracy” that “pick[ed] up Andrew Jackson from the pebbles” still relies on African slave labor. The slave ships crowded with human commodities crossing the Atlantic in “The Gam,” though at the margin of the narrative, only contradicts Ishmael’s democratic rhetoric. His is further undercut by the odes to empires (“Nantucket”) and to colonialism legalized as a form of private property (“Fast Fish and Lose Fish”).

In “The Advocate” chapter, we see a pattern emerging with regard to Melville’s conscription of the Orient. Ancient Egypt is used as a springboard to launch discourse concerning the real topic of Melville’s: the American whaling industry, which Senator Daniel Webster in 1828 praised for contributing to “national interest” and “national wealth” (“Extracts” xlix). This pattern of building up the Nantucket whaling on the back of the ancient Egypt is again seen in “The Mast-Head.” In explaining one of the most important jobs aboard a whaler—standing the mast-heads to serve as the eye of the ship for spotting the oil-rich whales—Ishmael credits the “old Egyptians” for being the “earliest standers of mast-heads” (167). Being the builders of the first pyramids for astronomical purposes, the Egyptians are “a nation of mast-head standers,” Ishmael asserts. He then goes on to ridicule the lifeless modern mast-head standers in the form of stone, iron and bronze statues for not being able to withstand “a single hail from below.” These lifeless sets include Napoleon’s in Vendome, Washington’s in Baltimore and Nelson’s in Trafalgar Square. The reference to Napoleon after the invocation of the old Egyptian mast-head standers is significant for two reasons: it not only continues the theme of empire and emperors/kings that permeates *Moby Dick* to show whaling is “imperial,” but also marks, though implicitly, the French invasion of Egypt in 1798 under

Napoleon that helped fuel the Egyptian revival in Europe and America. Nevertheless, the narrative of “The Mast-Head” that starts with the acknowledgment of the “old Egyptians” for their contribution to whaling returns to the Nantucket whaler itself as Ishmael warns the ship owners not to hire young dreamers like him who are more interested in meditating in “thought-engendering altitude” than in watching out for the presence of the whales.

The pattern of conscripting ancient Egypt as a launch pad to build up the American whaling or to dissect the Leviathan thus constitutes part of Melville’s Orientalism. This pattern is repeated again in “The Fossil Whale,” in which Ishmael traces the existence of the whales to “Egyptian tablets” so as to suggest their “antiquity” and “fossiliferous character” (499). He also takes us on a virtual tour of the Egyptian temple, Denderah, where upon its granite ceiling a discovery was made of “a sculptured and painted planisphere abounding in centaurs, griffins, and dolphins among them Old Leviathan swam as of yore ... centuries before Solomon was cradled” (499). Melville’s knowledge of the Denderah temple is taken from Vivant Denon who participated in Napoleon’s expedition to Egypt and later wrote *Travels in Upper and Lower Egypt, in Company with Several Divisions of the French Army, during the Campaigns of General Bonaparte* (*Melville’s Orienda* 129). Melville’s transliteration of Denon’s work, the “first authoritative account of the antiquities of Egypt” with “original illustrations” to reach the West (*ibid.*), thus reveals the historical circumstances that enabled Melville’s appropriation of the Oriental archive: the French Empire and the Egyptian revival to which it facilitated. The antiquity of the Leviathan is further fortified by a citation from the famed Barbary traveler John Leo, a 16th-century Moor whose North African

travelogue recorded an African temple made of whale bones. Through the “Egyptian tablets” and John Leo’s travelogue, Melville traces the footprint of the Leviathan to the Oriental world and North African shore, conscripting them as a tableau to unfold the narrative. Nevertheless, the allusion to ancient Egypt and North Africa eventually gives way to the Nantucket whale hunters, thus repeating a Melvillian mode of conscripting the Orient, which is both invoked and foreclosed at the same time, so as to complement the American Self.

On the other hand, Melville’s conscription of ancient Egypt has its critical and subversive side, challenging the “imperial-hermeneutic power” of the Orientalist (Schueller 109). It is evidenced in his appropriation of its mystic monuments and artifacts to contemplate the puzzles of the universe, especially the ones embodied by the Leviathan. His dive into this part of the Oriental world allows him to find the means to express his philosophical view of the universe as indefinite, inscrutable and incommunicable that any attempt to unlock its supposed secrets is doomed to failure. Egypt’s pyramids and hieroglyphics are the perfect metaphor to symbolize this view, and the sperm whale is the tenor for this metaphor. The Egyptianized Leviathan, under Melville’s imagination, thus becomes a text that cannot be deciphered, however hard one may try like Ishmael to dissect it inside and out. So earlier on in “Cetology” Ishmael forewarns his reader: “I promise nothing complete; because any human thing supposed to be complete, must for that very reason infallibly be faulty” (147). His refusal to say the definitive word on the classification of the whales would later morph into a subversion of explanatory Orientalism, namely Egyptology, by refusing to divulge the knowledge locked inside the silent sperm whale. This refusal thus constitutes Melville’s critical and

subversive use of foreclosure, unlike the one in his earlier invocation of the “Egyptian mother,” the “old Egyptians” and the Islamic Orient to exalt the American whaling or to complement the American self. To the extent that the Orient and the Leviathan represent the unrepresentable and unknowable, they are tropes for Melville to problematize the notions of absolute truth and full representation.

Ishmael, a self-professed whale author, espouses this view when examining the anatomy of the whale. In “The Blanket,” the chapter devoted to the blubber or the skin of the whale, where the oil is extracted, Ishmael tells us that the marks on the whales are “hieroglyphical,” comparable to “those mysterious cyphers on the walls of the pyramids hieroglyphics” (333). He therefore comes to see that “the mystic-marked whale remains undecipherable” (*ibid.*). Similarly, Ishmael later comes to see Queequeg’s tattooing in the same light, declaring that these “hieroglyphic marks,” while containing “a mystical treatise on the art of attaining truth,” shall remain “unsolved to the last” (524). The “hieroglyphic doubling,” as John T. Irwin points out, is a recurrent and dominant motif in *Moby Dick* (289). In “The Sphynx,” Ahab also comes to terms with the impossibility of wresting away the “secret thing” that is in a “hoary” whale. In a lengthy, Shakespearean soliloquy that Ahab addresses to a sperm whale head, which was just separated from its body and hung on the Pequod’s deck and which seemed to him like “the Sphynx’s in the dessert,” he asks the king of divers to divulge the horrible things it has seen at the bottom of the sea; but he gets no answer back. “Of all divers, thou hast dived the deepest. ... O head! thou hast seen enough to split the planets and make an infidel of Abraham, and not one syllable is thine!” (339-40). Ahab further resigns to the silence of the whale head when he mutters to himself: “O Nature, and O soul of man, how far beyond all utterance

are your linked analogies! (340). He thus eventually reconciles to the futile attempt to put into words “linked analogies” in both man and nature.

In “The Prairie,” the chapter on the sublime aspect of the sperm whale, the brow, Ishmael again reiterates the impossibility of deciphering the whale and its “god-like dignity inherent in the brow.” But his frustration leads him to appreciate the whale’s “pyramidal silence.” Although the sperm whale has never written a book or given a speech, Ishmael narrates, “his great genius is declared in his doing nothing particular to prove it. It is moreover declared in his pyramidal silence” (380). Here Melville suggests that the paradoxical power of silence to incite imagination and speculation is more than that of speech. However, Melville’s insight into the power of silence is immediately followed by his uncritical Orientalism; Ishmael tells us that “had the great Sperm Whale been known to the young Orient World, he would have been deified by their child-magian thoughts,” a not untypical view held by traditional Orientalists (380). Nevertheless, Melville also shows an ability to go beyond the confines of 19th-century Orientalism. Wrapping up the chapter, Melville writes:

Champollion deciphered the wrinkled granite hieroglyphics. But there is no Champollion to decipher the Egypt of every man’s and every being’s face. Physiognomy, like every other human science, is but a passing fable. If then, Sir William Jones, who read in thirty languages, could not read the simplest peasant’s face in its profounder and more subtle meanings, how may unlettered Ishmael hope to read the awful Chaldee of the Sperm Whale’s brow? I but put that brow before you. Read it if you can. (380)

In this remarkable passage invoking two of the well-known Orientalists, Melville deconstructs a form of Orientalism based on “citation” and/or “quotation” of an Orientalist authority or text. On the surface, Melville alludes to Jean Francoise Champollion, the French Egyptologist who deciphered the Rosetta Stone in 1820s, thus allowing him to read the hieroglyphics, and the famed British Orientalist Sir William

Jones, whose work published in the latter half of 18th century helped to develop Oriental studies at the height of British empire. The allusion itself constitutes a form of Orientalism that relies on “citation” and/or “quotation” from an Orientalist authority. The Orientalized Orient, as Said writes, is “less a place than a topos, a set of references, a congeries of characteristics, that seems to have its origin in a quotation, or a fragment of a text, or a citation from someone’s work on the Orient, or some bit of previous imagining, or an amalgam of all these” (177). But Melville’s allusion to the two Orientalists is at the same time a masked critique of the 19th-century Egyptology and other Orientalist efforts to explain the Orient for the benefit of the West as he later did in *Clarel* (Schueller 126). His subversive Orientalism thus points up the limits of Orientalist knowledge and representation: if with Champollion’s and Sir William Jones’s scholarship, one cannot hope to decipher the physiognomy of the common man and woman, then the “unlettered Ishmael” cannot hope to decipher the undecipherable whale’s brow, here Orientalized as the ancient Babylonian language. In contrast to the traditional Orientalists who sought to read the Orient for the Westerners, the Orient embodied here as the whale’s brow becomes a text for Melville that cannot be read. Melville’s critical and subversive foreclosure here seems to dovetail with Spivak’s reformulation of the native informant as an (im)possible perspective. As with Melville’s representation of the enigmatic Fedallah, his conscription of ancient Egypt highlights the pendulum swinging between the two contending forces in his Orientalism: the conformist and the subversive.

The post 9/11 world with its heightened interest in and awareness of the Muslim world and its diverse cultures helped change my approach to *Moby Dick*, but that does not upset my original approach to read it through the lens of 19th-century globalization,

whose aggressive form is capitalist imperialism and colonialism. Rather, the newly focused attention on the permeation of the Islamic Orient in Ishmael's narrative allows me to see more clearly the interconnection and interaction between the rise of modern Orientalism, including American literary Orientalism, and Western territorial colonialism/imperialism. Scholars critical of Western Orientalism have long pointed to the linkage between them. In *Orientalism*, Said has tried to show the linkage between modern Orientalism and imperialism and colonialism by documenting the literary representation of the Orient and Western powers' economic and geopolitical interests in that region (123). In *U.S. Orientalisms*, Schueller points out that U.S. Literary Orientalisms are an "indigenous discourse" that arose from its immediate historical conditions, and can be traced back to Columbus's quest for the Orient (20). The U.S. Orientalism was being revived again in the popular discourse in conjunction with patriotism after the 9/11 catastrophe. As Leti Volpp notes in "The Citizen and the Terrorist," the "redeployment of old Orientalist tropes" that helps subject people who appear to be "Middle Eastern, Arab or Muslim" to racial profiling underscores the U.S. history that constructs its national identity in opposition to "foreigners, aliens and others" (*September 11* 152-53).

Melville's conscription of the Orient as the native informant by invoking and foreclosing it, as I have argued, is a sign of his age that was fascinated by its cultural heritage and difference. The Oriental fever was both enabled by and reflected the long and on-going processes of globalization. But his was also an age that saw the world as divided between the colonizer, "fast fish," or the colonized, "loose fish." The Orient in the 19th century was among the many "loose fish" "harpooned" by the West both

territorially and culturally. But as Melville follows the literary trend of his time and “harpoons” the Orient as the “native informant” to color the Pequod’s whaling voyage, to exalt the American whaling industry and to map the genealogy of the Leviathan and whalers, he also uses it to question the absolute knowledge and representation as well as to satirize religions and hierarchical social relations while avoiding editorial censorship. The quest for knowledge, truth and certainty, for Melville, is a futile attempt like Ishmael’s doomed attempt to decipher the Egyptianized Leviathan that shall remain undecipherable. For those seekers of truth, Melville offers the cautionary tale of “the weakling youth lifting the dread goddess’s [Isis’s] veil at Sais [in Egypt]” (370). Melville’s subversive use of the foreclosure may be his most significant contribution to the critique of explanatory Orientalism, though he was also a part of that literary vogue that invoked and foreclosed the Orient to complement the West and to disguise his textual appropriations.

CHAPTER 4
SPECTRALITY IN CONRAD'S *NOSTROMO*: THE SAN TOME MINE, FOREIGN
CAPITAL AND THE NATIVE OTHER

In the opening chapter of *Nostramo*, three major things happen that ground the geographic location of Sulaco, a fictional port town. It is haunted by Spanish colonialism, during which time it nonetheless remains “an inviolable sanctuary from the temptations of a trading world.” It is haunted by the shadows that are floating in the sky, the shadows that are cast upon the windless gulf and the shadows that are cast by the snow-capped mountains until the rising sun drives them away. It is also haunted by a local legend involving two foreign *gringos* whom the locals believe to be still “spectral and alive” guarding the forbidden gold treasure they had discovered and died for on the secluded peninsula of Azuera. All this seems to suggest that a poetic of haunting is in the making. Although Conrad dismissed this story of “the enchanted treasure on Azuera” in a letter to a Swedish professor, Ernst Bendz, saying it “has nothing to do with the rest of the novel” (Watt 18), I suggest that we take a serious look at the haunting effects emitted by the ghosts and other specters in *Nostramo* because what drives the narrative and builds up its tensions has a lot to do with spectrality. One can even say that spectropoetic is a crucial aesthetic element of *Nostramo*. “A masterpiece,” as Jacques Derrida says of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet*, “always moves, by definition, in the manner of a ghost,” which haunts, causes, inhabits without residing (*Specters* 18). This, to a large extent, can be said of Conrad’s *Nostramo*, which has a handful of dead people haunting Costaguana with violent political history. In this chapter, I explore the representation of Sulaco’s

tumultuous history and its people and of the colonization of the silver-rich province by foreign capital by way of ghosts and haunting, a mode of inquiry and critique articulated by Derrida in *Specters of Marx*. Crucial to my reading of *Nostromo* also include Lenin's critique of export of capital as a form of capitalist imperialism in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, David Harvey's notion of accumulation by dispossession, Mary Louise Pratt's critique of South American travel writings in *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* and Gayatri Spivak's critique of the unexamined use of native informant.

How does the San Tome mine and its silver haunt the major characters in their pursuit of "material interests"? And how does the specter of the mine and the silver, or what Marx calls the fetishism of commodity, help obscure, if not distort, the social and labor relations that enable the production of wealth for its current owner, the Goulds, and the corrupt government they finance with the consent of foreign capital? In order to answer these questions, I will focus on the haunting effects emitted by the watercolor sketch on the San Tome gorge by Mrs. Gould on the Goulds, as well as by the *shadow* and substance of the mine and the silver on some of the characters. The haunting of the painting and that of the mine and the silver, I argue, cannot be separated from the specter of global capitalism making its inroads in Sulaco. The analysis will then focus on the construction of a new Sulaco railway to serve the mine, a significant event in *Nostromo* that not only highlights capitalist imperialism through the export of capital but also the foreclosure of the indigenous perspectives in a matter that would significantly change their way of life and culture. Then, the analysis will scrutinize the haunting of the indigenous miners in the narrative and the foreclosure of their indigenous history and of

them as subjects of speech and narrators in the narration of the history of the mine and the new state it helps finance. “Haunting,” as Derrida writes, “belongs to the structure of every hegemony” (37), which in turn is also “haunted by what it attempted to foreclose” (39). The foreclosure thus underscores the marginalization of the indigenous people in a society ruled by the European colonizers who now call Costaguana home. Moreover, the uncovering of the indigenous foreclosure helps magnify the source of the primitive and modern accumulation of capital—the *Others* of capital: the forced labor in Spanish colonial periods as well as the “paid labor” of the native miners employed by Gould Concession. The expropriation and exploitation of the Indian miners in *Nostramo* thus dovetails Harvey’s notion of accumulation by dispossession, a mechanism endemic to capital accumulation.

In *Specters of Marx*, Derrida renames his critique of the desire for ontology and presence in Western epistemology as hauntology. In insisting on the promise to come, or the temporal and spatial deferral of presence and ontology, Derrida unleashes the subversive forces of hauntology to critique the teleological and eschatological understandings of history in Hegelian thought (whose recent articulations include Francis Fukuyama’s *The End of History and the Last Man*), as well as to shake up what he perceived as the ossification of concepts in orthodox Marxism. In unleashing the subversive forces of hauntology, Derrida seems to share a kindred spirit with Conrad who also understood the forces of hauntology but in quite a different way. That is, Conrad is interested in the psychological effects of haunting on distorting the human and social relations on the one hand, and on destroying one’s interaction with the real world on the other. As the narrator comments on Charles Gould’s excess obsession with the mine, “A

man haunted by a fixed idea is insane. He is dangerous even if that idea is an idea of justice” (322). Haunting thus is a principal mode of inquiry and critique by Conrad in *Nostromo*, driving the narrative and building up its tensions. He also explores the haunting power of the shadow, in addition to the thing itself, on one’s psyche. Thus, through haunting and hauntology, the promise to come, he tackles and critiques the consequences of relentless pursuits of “material interests.” Conrad’s exploration of hauntology with his characters also shows the opposing pull elicited by it. That is, while haunting can prompt some of us into action, it can also lead others into personal paralysis or political inaction. Enchanted by the mine’s history and defying the wish of his dead father, Charles pursues reopening the eventful mine, believing that only “in the conduct of our action can we find the sense of mastery over the Fates” (86). But in the case of Charles’s father and *Nostromo*, we see the effects of haunting can produce detrimental ones: it can lead to personal paralysis and/or political inaction.

The nonlinear unfolding of *Nostromo* often disorients and confuses the first-time reader not expecting the time-shift method of the narrative. Cedric Watts, who is among those who have untangled and rechronicled Conrad’s analeptic narrative, notes that as Conrad’s time-shift method throws us about from one time to another by grafting one incident onto the ongoing scene, what remains constant is the scenic background that helps reorient the reader in the course of the narrative’s “convolutions and abruptness” (156-57). To the natural scenic fixtures, the Mt. Higuerota and the Golfo Placido, that Watts has identified, we can add the watercolor work rendered by Mrs. Gould on the mountain gorge before its development for the silver mine and hung upon the white wall of the Goulds’ residence. Moreover, emanating from those natural and domestic scenes

are the specters of haunting as well as the specter of global capitalism. That is, they have haunting effects on Sulaco, the major characters as well as the reader, as do the ghosts of the native miners who had perished in the Spanish colonial days and the current miners, whose marginalization and foreclosed perspectives in the narrative will be explored more fully in the last part of the chapter. The process of haunting, I would argue, allows the narrative to gradually unfold the history of Sulaco and its lifeblood and curse, the San Tome silver mine, as well as its colonization by European and American capital. As silent witnesses to the actions of the characters who are currently involved in the plotting of Sulaco's history, they also help impart the history of Sulaco and its social and racial relations no less effectively than other human narrators. Those non-human onlookers also provide a glimpse of the appearance in Sulaco of imperialist capital that, Lenin has theorized in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism*, increasingly depends on the export of capital to generate profit. In the narrative, their haunting effects, thus, cannot be separated from the specter of global capitalism, represented by the alliance between the mine, the American financier Holroyd, the British railway and steamships that serve the mine and are actively involved in transforming the town's political, social and environmental landscape.

Haunting and Hauntology

John D. Barbour, writing on the indifference of nature in *Nostramo*, comments that "the snowy dome of Higuerota" surfaces many times in the narrative, "always silently dominating the petty conflicts of humankind" (122). I would like to extend his comment to suggest that nature in *Nostramo* is more than indifferent and that the domination of the snow-capped Higuerota is more than silent. In effect, the snow-capped mountain exerts haunting effects on its viewers, commanding their gaze and attention, because of the

silver mine it houses. It is constantly in the background of the novel, observed from afar by the main European characters or described laboriously by the narrator, haunting their consciousness as well as that of the reader. In the opening chapter of “The Silver of the Mine,” the anonymous narrator describes “the shadows” passing through the snows of the mountain. Giorgio Viola, the Italian inn keeper at Sulaco, looks up at the “snowy dome of Higueroa” on the day of the riot by the rebels (55), the aim of which is to seize the control of the mine and the Custom House. When Sir John, the chairman of the British railway company, first arrives at Sulaco to survey the new local railroad project, the mountain becomes his object of gaze, haunting him as he ponders over the difficulty of conquering it to facilitate the construction of a new railway that will tunnel under it to serve the Gould mine (67). The “white, misty sheen of Higueroa” is within the view of Nostromo intruding upon his consciousness shortly after he comes to see he has been betrayed by the Sulaco European elite, intensifying his sense of betrayal and alienation (351). The attention to and the gaze on the “snowy dome of Higueroa” slowly build up the tension that culminates in a showdown between Charles Gould and the rebel leader Pedrito Montero over the very existence of the mine. After the Sulaco independence aided by American capital and American military intervention, the mountain that houses the silver treasure, the narrator says, casts its “gigantic shadow” upon Sulaco’s marketplace, symbolically still haunting the town and its people (395). Higueroa’s “gigantic shadow” with its haunting effects thus both foreshadows and embodies the specter of global capitalism that is haunting the Goulds, the mine and Sulaco.

At the same time, the snowy San Tome gorge assumes a symbolic role to function as a sort of “white wall” that figuratively covers up the black hole that is the silver mine.

In Chapter 6 of Part One, this larger “white wall” fades away, and in its place step in the white walls of the Casa Gould. This close-up on the Goulds’ white walls and then specifically on the watercolor sketch by Mrs. Gould has three-fold significance. First, the painting helps narrate an essential part of the history of the San Tome mine. That is, as the narrative moves from the snow-capped Higuerota to the painting, the spatial transformation of the mountain by the operation of the Gould Concession is being told. Second, the focus on the sketch brings to the fore the San Tome mine that has become a black hole, plaguing its workers and owners alike. Commentators have often observed that the psychological effects of the “impenetrable” and “inhospitable” of Golfo Placido on Martin Decoud and Nostromo contribute to their sense of alienation and to Decoud’s suicide, when they are stranded in the isolated island of Great Isabel in their aborted mission to smuggle the silver ingots out of Sulaco on the eve of the rebels’ attack. Through Mrs. Gould’s painting, I would like to suggest, Conrad also explores the psychological effects of the painting on the Goulds, revealing the growing gulf between the couple and the sense of alienation each feels toward the other. Moreover, the painting with its uncanny power to haunt the psyches of the couple helps reveal the consequences of relentlessly pursuing a “fixed” idea as Charles does in his unwavering determination to run the Gould Concession at any cost. Third, the painting helps mark the footprints of foreign capital in Sulaco in the name of development, progress and prosperity.

Mrs. Gould’s watercolor sketch of the San Tome mountain is one of the silent on-lookers in the novel, bearing witness to the changes in landscape brought about by the Gould Concession. Hung “alone” upon the “plastered white walls” of the Gould House (195; 89), the sketch in its black wooden frame helps preserve a scene of a waterfall that

has ceased to exist (116). When she and her husband first gaze upon the “jungle-grown solitude of the gorge,” they observe “the thread of a slender waterfall flashed bright and glassy through the dark green of the heavy fronds of tree-ferns” (116). Yet this memorable scene no longer exists after the mine under Charles’s ownership goes into production, producing in the process “the refuse of excavations and tailings,” and after the waterfall is dammed up to produce hydro-power for the mine. Now, only the memory of the waterfall with its amazing fernery is preserved in the watercolor sketch. The waterfall in the sketch marks a time when the gorge is still “the very paradise of snakes” (116), as described by Don Pepe, its manager. It is a time before Charles Gould re-opens the mine by clearing the wilderness, paving the road and cutting the new paths up the cliff face of San Tome (116-17), steps that fundamentally change the landscape.

The painting, on the other hand, haunts the couple, commanding their attention and gaze. On the eve of Sulaco’s siege, it helps make them become conscious for the first time of how far apart they have grown regarding each’s goal for the mine since they agreed to build their married life together around the enterprise. They also begin to register the grave consequences of re-developing the mine after its years of neglect and mismanagement. When they discuss the fate of the mine, both are drawn to it, directing their gaze at it. For Mrs. Gould, it signifies her desire to have left the mine alone. “Gazing” at the watercolor sketch of the San Tome mine gorge in its black wooden frame, Emilia confesses to Charles that “Ah, if we had left it alone, Charley!” Charles, however, rebuffs her, replying that “No, it was impossible to leave it alone.” Moreover, he goes on to remind Emilia, while “wav[ing] his hand towards the small water-color,” that “it is not now as it was when you made that sketch” and that “It is no longer a

Paradise of snakes. We have brought mankind into it, and we cannot turn our backs upon them to go and begin a new life elsewhere” (195). For Charles, the painting thus strengthens his resolve not to turn back after having disturbed the “many snakes.” Here Charles also economically summarizes the logic of capital: once set in motion, it cannot afford to stand still. Thus, the Goulds are haunted by the watercolor sketch, by the material interests of the capitalist drive for profits. Mrs. Gould is also haunted by the ghosts of the native miners who had perished in the mine during Spanish colonial rule, which I will turn to when I discuss the foreclosure of the indigenous perspectives.

The painting, which reveals the divisions growing between the couple, continues to haunt Charles after the rebels seize Sulaco. He consciously directs and fixes his gaze at it while recounting to Dr. Monygham his meeting with the rebel leader Pedrito Montero in which he makes it known that his personal safety is tied to the mine. “I tried to make him [Montero] see that the existence of the mine was bound up with my personal safety”— as he says those words to Dr. Monygham, the narrator tells us, Charles looks away from the doctor, “fixing his eyes upon the water-colour sketch upon the wall” (344). As Charles unusually breaks his trademark silence on the politics of Sulaco, blasting “Liberty, democracy, patriotism, government,” which all have a “flavor of folly and murder” to him, he continues “gazing at the sketch of the San Tome gorge upon the wall,” the narrator reports. The sustained gaze at the painting by Charles thus magnifies the passions the mine stirs up in him. The passions for the mine are such that they have replaced the love he once had for Emilia before taking on the task to re-develop the mine, thereby cutting himself off from a committed husband-wife relationship. From Charles’s excess obsession with the mine, Martin Decoud, a passionate lover himself seeking

Antonia's affection, sagaciously surmises this: "he lives for the mine rather than for her [Emilia]," "surrender[ing] her happiness and her life" "to the seduction of an idea" (219). At this moment, it becomes clear that the painting is a stand-in for the mine that is the demon lover who controls Charles's life, turning him into a rather mechanic and unresponsive human being.

The painting, which captures a scenery moment before the Gould mine goes into production, is also a stand-in for capital that ruthlessly tears down anything standing in its way in the name of development, progress and prosperity. It bears witness to the physical and environmental transformation of the mountain. The gorge is being disfigured and polluted to develop the mine and to install devices of "wooden shoots" that send down the silver ingots to stamp sheds where they are "stamped" before being transported to their market destinations. The disfigured and polluted scenes marked now by the "pale gold dust" also mark the colonization of Costaguana by the international brotherhood of capital—a money nexus between the mine, the railway, the shipping company and finance capital. The painting that haunts the Goulds is in turn haunted by the specter of global capitalism.

What propels the narrative of *Nostramo*, Paul Sheehan rightly suggests, is "the mechanism of obsession," specifically the obsession with the mine and the silver, which is also "a self-perpetuating of enslavement" (79). I would like to extend Sheehan's insight to suggest that underlying "the mechanism of obsession" is what Derrida calls hauntology. That is, the logic of haunting is at the core of Conrad's experiments with the play of substance and shadow in the narrative concerning the haunting effects of the mine and the silver, with the shadow of the mine and the silver exerting no less psychological

effects than their substance on those characters who become enthralled by them. What drives some of those enslaved by the mine or the silver over the edge thus is the shadow or the deferred presence of the thing. I argue that haunting and the logic of hauntology are the organic driving force of the narrative. Moreover, the blinding obsession with the mine or the silver by Charles Gould, his father, Colonel Sotillo and Nostromo is symptomatic of a fetishism, peculiar to capitalist mode of production, that not only naturalizes both the mine and the silver as a “thing,” but also obscures labor and social relations behind them. As Marx notes in *Capital One*, in bourgeois society where the form of commodities production has lost its historicity and becomes naturalized, the social relations between the producers “assume” in their eye “a fantastic form” as the social relations between objects (165). This inversion of social relations, which is endemic to capitalist society, also obscures one of the operating laws of capitalist mode of production: the value of a commodity is determined by the socially necessary labor time to produce a commodity or the abstract human labor (168). The haunting of the indigenous miners whose labor produces wealth for the mine’s past and current owners in *Nostromo*, which I will discuss in the last part of the chapter, only highlights the limits of fetishizing the mine and the silver as a thing/object to be possessed.

Just as Derrida deploys the subversive power of hauntology to critique ontology in political and philosophical theories, here Conrad explores the dark psychological power of hauntology to show how it can drive humans into alienation, which makes them oblivious to the objective social relations. The first to fall victim to the shadow of the mine is Charles Gould’s father, one of the wealthiest merchants in Costaguana. He is forced by the then corrupt and dictatorial government to take over the mine, which was

seized by one of its predecessors from a British company as a “national property,” in a privatization plan. As a reluctant concession-holder, he is also ordered by the authorities to “pay at once to the Government five years’ royalties on the estimated output of the mine” (76). The hand-picked elder Gould is so distressed by the “perpetual concession of the Sam Tome mine” that he suffers from not only physical pains but also “a worrying inability to think of anything else” (79). The “mine-ridden” Gould thus dies believing that the mine, as the embodiment of injustice and persecution, is a “poison” he is forced to swallow and a “burden” he is forced to shoulder (78-79). Most of all, he dies believing in the “apparently eternal character of that curse” (79). He has died, his son believes, under the “mere shadow” of the mine, which “had been enough to crush the life out of his father” (149). The capacity of the mine to haunt the elder Gould, thus contributing to his paralysis and death, shows the irony that it can destroy him with its “mere shadow.”

The mine, the narrator says, has over time gotten hold of Charles Gould with “a grip as deadly as ever it had laid upon his father” (338). For the son, the mine in the beginning is a source of enchantment despite the father’s persistent warnings against it. Charles believes that his father has not “grappled with it in a proper way” (83). The “redemption of the San Tome mine” (95), the son believes, lies in seeking and building an alliance with Holroyd, a San Francisco financier, the British Railway Company, the Oceanic Steam Navigation Company, as well as with the current government of Costaguana. All serve the “material interests” of the mine. The “proper way” to manage the mine, Charles thinks, is to “keep unchecked the flow of treasure he had started single-handed from the re-opened scar in the flank of the mountain” (149). Decoud, who plots a counter-revolution plan to save the mine, puts it bluntly: “This stream of silver must be

kept flowing north to return in the form of financial backing from the great house of Holroyd” (203). Over time, though, the mine begins to cast its shadow on Charles’s marriage, causing it to disintegrate and transforming him into a mechanical, cold-blooded human being. On the eve of the rebels’ attack, Emilia comes to realize with horror that the mine that begins simply as “an idea” in Charles’s mind has become “a fetish” and now “a monstrous and crushing weight” (204-05). Charles, in her painful moment of awakening, seems to “dwell alone within a circumvallation of precious metal, leaving her outside with her school, her hospital” (205). Decoud, who also detects the influence of the mine on Charles, describes the hold the mine has on Charles as “some men hold to the idea of love or revenge” (218). The shadow of the mine thus causes strains in the couple’s marriage as both reside on either side of the wall of silver bricks that grows between them. Figuratively, the mine as a sort of a demon lover not only controls its current owner, preventing him from loving his wife, but also those who seek the possession of the silver ingots or come into possession of them.

Just as the elder Gould falls victim to the shadow of the mine, Sotillo, the *Indio* colonel who temporarily seizes Sulaco after General Montero takes power in the short-lived coup, is played upon by the shadow of the silver ingots that Nostromo and Decoud tried but failed to smuggle out of Sulaco. Sotillo is led to believe that the silver ingots, which were shipped out of the mine following the military coup, were sunken at the bottom of the Sulaco harbor. The misled treasure hunter falls victim to Dr. Monygham’s brilliant plot that is premised on the “shadow of the treasure” rather than on the real substance. As Dr. Monygham triumphantly says of his plot to trick Sotillo in order to distract him from taking further military action, “the shadow of the treasure may do just

as well as the substance” (346). The plot is further supplemented by Nostromo’s suggestion that Sotillo be told of the hiding place—a place where the treasure can be “buried without leaving a sign on the surface” (384). Nostromo also makes an ironic comment on the haunting effect of the silver, ironic because it will happen to him as well. He tells Dr. Monygham, “There is something in a treasure that fastens upon a man’s mind. He will pray and blaspheme He will see it very time he closes his eyes. He will never forget it until he is dead ... There is no getting away from a treasure that once fastens upon your mind” (385). Consumed by the excess desire to possess the presumably lost silver ingots, Sotillo becomes derelict of his duty and finally loses his mind in his fruitless search. And he is heard saying: “And yet it is there! I see it! I feel it!” (403). The power of the silver treasure to haunt Sotillo highlights its spectrality, though in an ironic way: the spectre of the silver lies as much in its shadow as in its substance. Yet the spectrality of the silver, the extreme form of reification or fetishization, obscures the social and labor relations that lie behind the thing. As Marx notes in his analysis of the metamorphosis of commodities in *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, the “magic effect” of gold and silver is “by no means confined to the infancy of bourgeois society, but is the inevitable consequence of the inverted way in which their own social labor appears to the representatives of the world of commodities” (152). Earlier he also writes that “the body of the coin is now merely a shadow” (109), meaning what it embodies is the exchange value—the measurement of the labor-time expended in the production of a commodity. Sotillo’s excess obsession with the silver ingots, as Marx’s critique of the fetishism of commodity in both *Capital* and *A Contribution* shows, can be linked to the form of production, the production of commodities, which inverts the

real social relations of production as the relations between the products of labor rather than the relations between the producers. Marx's critique of fetishism of commodities also leads him to argue that under capitalist commodity production, it is the commodities that control the people and not the other way around (*Capital One* 167-68). Sotillo's case is one of the most compelling representations of characters controlled by the products of human labor.

Of the characters who fall victim to the silver's shadow and substance, Nostromo's case is most fascinating because of the irony involved. First, his desire to possess the silver begins to form only after he becomes conscious of the class and power structure in Sulaco. His failed mission to transport the mine's silver ingots out of Sulaco, ironically, enables him to see that he has been used as "a dog" to fight and hunt for the benefits of the rich (349; 379; 383). He is then able to "see clearly" the "facts of his situation": despite his "fidelity" to the ruling classes by ideologically controlling the imported dock workers, he has been betrayed by Sulaco's European elite (351). Still, Nostromo's emerging class consciousness does not shelter him from the "spell" of the silver. The man who before his political awakening has decorated his outfit and his riding gear (headstall and saddle) with silver, taking the fetishization of the silver to an extreme, is to be haunted by its substance and its specter. Therein lies the second irony. Nostromo has already identified himself with the sailors-turned foreign *gringos* haunting the Azuera treasure in the local legend before he is to be haunted by the Sulaco silver. On the eve of his most "desperate affair," shipping the Gould silver ingots out of Sulaco, he jokingly tells Viola's dying wife, Teresa, that he "shall linger on earth after I am dead, like those *gringos* that haunt the Azuera" (228). Nostromo, who has been immune from corruption

and known as “the Incorruptible,” nevertheless succumbs to their thrall and becomes their slave by unlawfully possessing the silver ingots. Now, instead of the Sulaco oligarchs, he pledges his allegiance to the silver ingots put under his charge. The dock captain renounces his old name and renames himself as Captain Fidanza. “The Capataz is undone, destroyed. There is no Capataz,” he thus declares (365). He chooses to become a “hunted outcast” and secretly engages in smuggling the silver ingots to “grow rich gradually” (416).

But the secret of keeping the treasure has not only made him feel subjected and enslaved, but also intensifies his feeling that he is like “the legendary *gringos*, neither dead nor alive, bound down to their conquest of unlawful wealth on Azuera” (435). His sense of paralysis further intensifies later when the innkeeper Viola offers his oldest daughter Linda to be his wife, forcing him to choose between his beloved, Giselle, Viola’s younger daughter, and the silver ingots. At this pivotal moment, “the shining spectre of the treasure rose before him, claiming his allegiance in a silence that could not be gainsaid,” and the “legendary *gringos*, neither dead nor alive” begin to haunt him again (438). His fear of losing the silver is so intense that he loses the ability to speak and says “nothing” to Viola’s proposal, which is then mistakenly thought of as a tacit acceptance and contributes to his untimely death later. His sense of paralysis brought by the haunting of the silver is again on display when on his deathbed he is unable to either agree to the anti-capitalist photographer’s request that he donates to the working-class cause so that “the rich must be fought with their own weapons [money]” or to condemn Dr. Monygham as “a dangerous enemy of the people” (462). In the end, the silver has become a spectre that haunts and torments Nostromo to his last hour. The last few words

of the “master and slave of the San Tome treasure” are “the silver has killed me. It has held me. It holds me yet” (456; 460). Like Charles Gould before him, both men have become more in love with the silver than with their wife and lover respectively. The silver treasure dubbed as “the Treasure House of the World” has become the specter that haunts its legal owner as well as illegal one.

Sulaco’s silver mine, in fact, informs the social, racial and economic relations and exercise of power in this Western province of Costaguana. The haunting effects of the Sulaco mine, however, obscure the social, racial and economic relations it embodies and the power it exerts in shaping the political and economic landscape. As a marker of economic globalization, dominated by finance capital from the U.S, its development is what David Harvey in *Spaces of Hope* has called the “uneven geographical development,” in which foreign capital flows to a region or a location and returns home with profits. Although embodying the capitalist mode of production and relations of production, the mine at times is dislodged from its material base to resurface as a marker of plural signification. It is described as “the symbol of the supreme importance of material interests” and that of “abstract justice” (230; 340). To the extent that it has consumed the labor and lives of the Indian miners, it metaphorically becomes the “black hole.” The “incorruptible metal,” meanwhile, is being turned into “a fetish” invested with “a protecting and invincible virtue” (260; 336) even by the native miners whose “laboring hands” (417) help make it a global commodity. As I have shown, the fetishizing of the mine or the silver by Charles Gould, his father, Sotillo and Nostromo works to obscure the social and labor relations. As well, I will show how it also works to obscure the operation of accumulation by dispossession in *Nostromo* by quietly eliding

the issue of labor, which is brought to the fore, however, by the haunting of the indigenous miners in the narrative, a crucial point I will discuss in the remaining of the chapter. But before I discuss the haunting of the Indian miners, which exposes the hidden structure of the narrative based on the foreclosure of the miners' perspectives, I will briefly discuss the construction of a new railway in Sulaco as it puts on display the penetration of foreign capital there through the operation of accumulation by dispossession—a mechanism that is also at work in the development of the San Tome mine. As Harvey argues in *The New Imperialism*, accumulation by dispossession is intrinsic to the accumulation of capital in its geographic history.

Foreign Capital and the Sulaco Railroad

What sets *Nostromo* apart from Conrad's other works such as *Lord Jim* and *Heart of Darkness*, David Adams suggests in *Colonial Odysseys*, is that it no longer occupies a space as "the periphery of empire" in Conrad's imaginary map (161). By the time *Nostromo* arrives at Sulaco, Adams points out, it has ceased to be a "backwater" colonial odyssey destination that his romantic, adventure-seeking counterparts Jim and Kurtz and Marlow have found in Patusan and the Congo Inner Station respectively. Moreover, Sulaco, despite its remoteness and isolation during Spanish colonialism, has been impacted by the arrival of modern technologies: the steamships of the Oceanic Steam Navigation Company, the telegraph-cable, the print press and the construction of a new railway connecting it with America and Europe. Thus transformed by modernity and modernization, Sulaco with its silver mine is emerging as a profit center for the foreign capital invested there. Adams's comments, in effect, dovetail with Lenin's analysis in *Imperialism, the Highest Stage of Capitalism* of capitalist imperialism in the form of finance capital in the early 20th century. By then, capital expands its octopus not only by

military force alone, but also by the export of capital. As Lenin points out, the rapid development of railways by Western powers “in colonies and in the independent or semi-independent states in Asia and America” is an index of the expansion of Western colonialism and finance capital, whose features include export of capital to the colonies (244). The construction of the Sulaco railway, financed by Charles Gould and his American financial backer Holroyd and using British technology, thus is a significant event in Sulaco’s history as it further deepens foreign capital’s grip on Sulaco through accumulation by dispossession.

Its construction, Guy L. Moyer argues, is Conrad’s attempt to link “the unbridled capitalism of America’s robber barons [such as Jay Gould] with its then growing global imperialism as then witnessed by Conrad during the writing of the novel” (“Inner Secrets” 241). The railway project would also further enhance what Luz Elena Ramirez calls “the technologies of empire—steamships, the port, ammunition” (“Rhetoric” 112). More important, like Mrs. Gould’s painting, the new railway, which is to tunnel under Mt. Higuerota, is another example in which one can see how accumulation by dispossession plays out in *Nostromo*, in addition to the changes in the use of public space brought about by capitalist privatization and globalization. The prospect of constructing the railway, a signpost of capitalist modernity and modernization, engenders in Sir John, the chairman of the British railway company, and its chief engineer a sense of “a subtle force that could set in motion mighty machines, men’s muscles, and awaken also in human breasts an unbounded devotion to the task” (67). Their sense of acquiring “a power for the world’s service” thus projects the confidence of capital in conquering the world through its technological advancement. Their capitalist sentiment, however,

obscures the consequences of accumulation by dispossession for the indigenous population who would be displaced along with their culture, which I will discuss shortly.

The narrative concerning the construction of the new Sulaco railroad is at the same time the one that inscribes the rise of the dictatorship/presidency of Vicente Ribiera and the colonization/regeneration of Sulaco by foreign capital. The narrative is abundantly infused with Conradian irony, obviously meant as a critique of government corruption and “material interests,” but is made difficult to fully appreciate due to the nonlinear narrative. As the narrator tells us, after Holroyd opens a credit at a bank adjacent to the eleven-story Holroyd Building in San Francisco, “the Ribierist party in Costaguana took a practical shape under the eye of the administrator of the San Tome mine” (145), with Ribiera being “voted” by Congress for a five-year presidency with “a specific mandate to establish the prosperity of the people on the basis of firm peace at home, and to redeem the national credit by the satisfaction of all just claims abroad” (143). The euphemism such as congressional “vote,” “mandate” for the people, “redemption” of national credit and “satisfaction of all just claims” used in the narrative thus ironically casts doubts on the legitimacy of the Ribiera government, given the fact that the regime is bankrolled by Holroyd’s credit money. The irony concerning Ribiera’s installation is even more glaring when we also consider Holroyd’s sarcastic characterization of Costaguana as “the bottomless pit of ten-per-cent loans and other fool investments” (94). Holroyd’s assessment of Costaguana acknowledges with brutal honesty the corrupt state of the Latin American nation. While he legitimizes the bribes as “loans” and the potential loss of his investment, he also discloses that sooner or later he will have to intervene in the politics of Costaguana, where “European capital has been flung into it with both hands for years,”

because of his capitalist conviction that “We shall be giving the word for everything: industry, trade, law, journalism, art, politics and religion” and that “We shall run the world’s business whether the world likes it or not” (94-95). Holroyd’s interest in Costaguana’s affairs, as Ramirez observes, is Conrad’s thinly veiled reference to the U.S. Monroe Doctrine, which gained currency in the U.S. foreign policy from 1880s until the turn of the century (104).

As Holroyd’s assessment of Costaguana’s situations shows, Ribiera is not only indebted to American capital, he also takes “loans” from Europe as well. As the narrator sarcastically observes, after granting a new loan to the Ribiera government, “Europe had become interested in Costaguana” (140). Thus, under the new reign of the “President-Dictator” Ribiera, a “Five-Year Mandate Law” is soon unveiled to regenerate the nation that has since fallen into anarchy and chaos after the death of the former dictator Guzman Bento. Yet the narrative also says that the masses see the “Ribierist reforms” for what they are: the taking away of the land from the people and giving it away to foreigners who made the railway and to the Catholic Church (184). In other words, the masses of Sulaco are not blind to the effects of accumulation by dispossession as they are the ones who suffer the most from it. Here through the effect of irony—the juxtaposition of two opposing descriptions of Ribiera and of two conflicting views on his new policy—we see the criticism of Ribiera’s ascendance to power and his “reforms.” But the biggest irony lies in the brutal honesty with which Sir John describes the railway project as a *colonization* plan by foreign capital through loans, or accumulation by dispossession. As he muses over the project, Sir John says: “there was a loan to the State, and a project for systematic colonization of the Occidental Province, involved in one vast scheme with the

construction of the National Central Railway” (125). The disregard for the corruption of the Ribiera regime that serves the “material interests” of foreign capital, is amply on display on Sir John’s part, and he is cavalier about describing the project as an act of colonization and as “one vast scheme.” Moreover, he sarcastically suggests that “Good faith, order, honesty, peace, were badly wanted for this great development of material interests” (ibid.). As it turns out, the capitalist project of seeking “great development of material interests” is based on accumulation by dispossession: expropriating the land and natural resources from the indigenous in Sulaco.

Foreclosure of Indigenous History and Perspectives

On the other hand, the European sentiment regarding the construction of the Sulaco railway points up the foreclosure of the indigenous history prior to Spanish colonialism and that of the indigenous perspectives on a local event that will directly result in the natives’ dislocation and have impacts on their native culture and customs. During a conversation with Sir John, Mrs. Gould laments the impending loss of a religious building from the Spanish colonial era to make way for the new railway. As she tells Sir John, “we are very proud of it. It used to be historically important. The highest ecclesiastical court, for two viceroyalties, sat there in the olden time” (62-63). Here the expression “the olden time” gives away Mrs. Gould’s notion of Sulaco history. Hers subscribes to a European understanding of South American history as cut off from pre-Columbus indigenous history that was made popular by the travel writings of Alexander von Humboldt (and those of his followers), who helped create a British investment boom and bust in Mexico in silver mining with his *Political Essays* and who was said to first introduce guano from Peru to Europe as a fertilizer (Pratt 131; 136). As Mary Louise Pratt observes in *Imperial Eyes*, the reinvention of South America as “a primal world of

nature” and “a new continent” not only naturalizes colonial rules and racial hierarchy but also deprives the indigenous peoples of their history, which in the European imagination only begins with the arrival of the Spanish conquerors (126; 130). In response to Mrs. Gould’s lament, Sir John murmurs: “We can’t give you your ecclesiastical court back again; but you shall have more steamers, a railway, a telegraph-cable—a future in the great world which is worth infinitely more than any amount of ecclesiastical past” (63). Here Sir John not only displays the European foreclosure of indigenous history but also uses what he “sees” as the “backwardness” of Sulaco as a justification for its development, thus capital’s colonization of it. And in stating the positive effect that the advent of technological inventions will have on the old ways of life, he deploys what Pratt calls an “anti-conquest” discourse, by which “European bourgeois subjects seek to secure their innocence in the same moment as they assert European hegemony” (7). She explains that the term “anti-conquest” was chosen because in travel and exploration writings the “strategies of innocence are constituted in relation to older imperial rhetorics of conquest associated with the absolutist era” (ibid.). Sir John thus can be said to be the figure of the “seeing-man” in the “anti-conquest” representation whose “imperial eyes passively look out and possess” (ibid.). Later at a ceremony on a steamboat, Mrs. Gould again expresses to him her sentiment about the dramatic change that is to come following the construction of the new railway. She reports seeing one day: “an Indian boy ride out of a wood with the red flag of a surveying party in his hand, I felt something of a shock. The future means change—an utter change” (127). Here the Indian boy is being invoked by Mrs. Gould to express her sentiment, her desire to preserve “simple and picturesque

things,” but he remains a silent figure as do the natives of Sulaco who are not given a voice in this matter.

Mrs. Gould’s misgivings about the coming change do not lead her to intervene to save the Indian land from being encroached by the railway company, although she intervenes on Viola’s behalf to save his cafe from the same fate. The Sulaco indigenous, as Rebecca Carpenter points out, are not given a voice to express their views on how the arrival of the railway will change their way of life (88; 90). On the contrary, Conrad not only has Mrs. Gould express her sentiment on behalf of the natives, but also has Charles Gould speak for them. The construction of the new railway will also make a popular Indian gathering site disappear. Charles, who wants the railway for the mine, sits in his carriage and observes a scene that will soon disappear just like the waterfall in the San Tome gorge: the scene of Indian women selling their food and music on the open market. This episode, I would argue, both discloses and forecloses the structure of accumulation by dispossession. The land on which this scene takes place belongs now to Sir John’s Railway company; it has been commodified as a private property, off limits to the indigenous inhabitants. And Charles, whom Conrad portrays as a man of few words, nevertheless comments that “there will be no more popular feasts held here” (130). Yet Charles’s sentimental comment, while disclosing the structure of accumulation by dispossession, ends up foreclosing it by leaving it at that, accepting the expropriation of the indigenous land as the outcome of progress and development. So the narrative shows that the natives have no say on this significant local event and that the ones who benefit the most do the talking for them. The lack of indigenous voices and self-representation thus is the political unconscious of the novel, an irony I maintain unintended by Conrad.

In fact, the foreclosure of pre-Columbian indigenous history and of the indigenous either as subjects of speech or narrators, and therefore their political agency, is the predominant pattern of the narrative in *Nostramo* just as the specter of haunting is. The foreclosure reveals that even in a text that claims to speak for the people and mounts an indictment of Euro-American capitalist imperialism in South America, the indigenous are still denied of full history and excluded from the speech and political communities that are reserved only for the Europeans who own and control the natural resources of Sulaco and for those who work for their material and political interests. The foreclosure of the indigenous population as subjects endowed with speech also highlights the hidden narrative structure in Western representation that the Europeans speak on behalf of their racial Others, except in some rare cases when the foreclosure is deployed as a subversive gesture to resist the dominant imperialist culture. Just as Nigerian novelist Chinua Achebe characterized as long overdue his criticism some thirty years ago of Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* for failing to confer language to Africans, I suggest that it is time to examine closely how the foreclosure of the history of the indigenous and their perspectives in *Nostramo* is being staged in the narrative narrated, and thus dominated, by the Europeans. The analysis is not meant to accuse or excuse, but to propose a new reading, as Spivak says of her critique of the unexamined use of native informant (81). It thus aims to show that the narrative of the history of Sulaco is based on the erasure of the Inca, Aztec or Maya civilization, just as that of San Tome mine is built on the hidden structure of the invocation and foreclosure of the indigenous, especially the native miners including those who perished during the Spanish colonial rule, and those employed by the Gould Concession. Moreover, the foreclosure entails the haunting of the native miners in

the discourse of the European characters with some doubling as narrators and informants. The haunting in turn exposes both the primitive accumulation of capital and the modern accumulation by dispossession articulated by David Harvey.

As a result of the narrative frame that builds around “Latin and Anglo-Saxon” characters (*Nostramo*, “Author’s Note” 32), political readings of Conrad’s *Nostramo* have often focused on its major Creole and European characters and their involvement in the Sulaco politics fueled by the wealth of the reputed San Tome silver mine. When the indigenous are discussed the spotlight is often on their corrupt leaders who hijack the cause of their people to achieve personal gain (Hay; Howe; Fleishman). The novel’s non-linear narrative with unexpected shifts in time and place has also led to analyses centering on its major European narrators as informants and the *inido* leaders whose rise and fall mark the tumultuous history of Costaguana scarred by a series of military coups (Lothe; Watts). The muteness of the indigenous people even escapes those critics examining language in *Nostramo*. For example, Cathy Brigham glossed over the silence of the indigenous even though she sought to analyze how the characters in *Nostramo* are being betrayed by both language and silence (157). The focused examinations of those European characters and narrators have no doubt contributed to our understanding of the novel’s complexity and depth, as well as Conrad’s political views. But they were done in ways that have marginalized at best the poorer *leperos* including Indians, “Negroes” and mestizos who combine to make the bulk of the Sulaco population.

The framing of *Nostramo* thus marginalizes the non-Europeans, above all those at the bottom of the socio-economic ladder. The marginalization of the people, on the other hand, is counterbalanced by the magnified role of Nostromo, meaning “our man,” as the

representative of the people. Conrad described in a letter to his literary friend Cunninghame Graham his design for Nostromo to be “a romantic mouthpiece of ‘the people’ which (I mean ‘the people’) frequently experience the very feelings to which he gives utterance” (Watts, *Joseph Conrad’s Letters* 157). The irony here, one that is often little noticed and appreciated, is that in order to have Nostromo represent the people and speak for them, the represented are rendered silent.

Despite comments made on the natives’ role in the labor unrest brewing in the newly independent Sulaco at the end of the novel, none has yet scrutinized how the miners operate in the novel’s unconventional narrative, which Jakob Lothe describes as analeptic for its jarring movement in time and place. Structurally speaking, the miners of an unnamed Indian tribe are framed outside what Christopher GoGwilt calls the “contending genealogies of an imaginary European political heritage projected onto the fictional Costaguana and momentarily united in the formation of the Occidental Republic [Sulaco]” (201). Consequently, GoGwilt notes, they are a “problematic collectivity” that never directly achieves political representation (206). The European political logic imposed on the fictional Costaguana, thus, forecloses the possibility of granting agency to the Sulacan indigenous. Yet they intrude on the reader’s consciousness from time to time in the analeptic narrative when being invoked to play their part in the making of Sulaco history, only not to be given any perspectives. Despite the foreclosure of the people’s perspectives on Conrad’s part, Avrom Fleishman suggests that the focus of *Nostromo* is the people who “permeat[e] the novel, densely filling the interstices between characters, providing motive and meaning to their actions,” and their representative (173).

The miners of the Gould Concession are what Spivak calls “native informants,” the marginal and marginalized figures who are simultaneously invoked and foreclosed in the discourse and narrative of the European characters and/or narrators. Moreover, she argues that the double operation of “native informant” helps consolidate the narrator’s point of view, thus establishing his or her authority over the representation. This is the case in *Nostromo*. The Indian miners are included in the narrative, discoursed by the European characters, but are precluded from becoming subjects of speech or narrating any part of *Nostromo*. Of the novel’s multiple perspectives, including those of Captain Mitchell, Martin Decoud, Mrs. Gould and, of course, the anonymous narrator, none is given to the miners who nevertheless are the foundation of the mine and the source of the profits that have financed a number of revolutions and propped up corrupt comprador governments. The irony of having *Nostromo* represent the people, as I have pointed out, is that the miners are simultaneously invoked and excluded. In what follows, I will also use the term “native informant” to highlight *Nostromo*’s hidden narrative structure: the simultaneous inclusion and exclusion of racial Others, and thus to mark the political unconscious of the narrative.

The representation of the native miners without turning them into subjects of speech or having them occupy the position of narrators has at least three immediate consequences. First, they cannot become the direct spokespersons for their struggle for indigenous freedom and rights. Second, the major European characters/narrators who rule them on behalf of capital will need to discourse about them and speak on their behalf without representing their real class interest. The third consequence, and the most important one, is that it helps mark Conrad’s narrative frame as Eurocentric, as one that

systematically denies subjectivity to non-Westerners and thus marks them as objects. Conrad's representation of Costaguana, Rebecca Carpenter notes, is similar to the representation of the Orient by the West (91). In the Orientalist mode of representation, the West, as Edward Said has shown us in his critique of Orientalism, is often the actor, studying, documenting and representing the native subjects: it is a representation without giving agency to the represented. Similarly, Conrad's depiction of Costaguana, which is meant for a composite South American nation, relies on his European characters and narrators who inform by observing, studying and classifying the indigenous people, but without conferring on them language. Furthermore, those observing informants are often described as having "humanity"—an attribute that is never ascribed to their objects of observation, the indigenous. The "observing" woman and men and their relations with the Sulaco natives in what Pratt calls "contact zone," a term she uses to describe "the space of colonial encounters, the space in which peoples geographically and historically separated come into contact with each other" (6-7), will be further discussed below.

Conrad does not withhold history from the Sulaco indigenous miners, but only offers them a truncated version that starts with Spanish colonialism with its colonial structures built by indigenous forced labor. Moreover, the history of their exploitation and oppression during and after Spanish rule and their current history under Gould Concession are told by those who own or manage the mine, and those who have served the "material interests" of foreign capital in Sulaco, in addition to the narrator. It is through Mrs. Gould that the history of the mine is being told. Mrs. Gould, who "know[s] the history of the San Tome mine" through her marriage to Charles, a third generation Costaguanan of British descent, relates that the mine in its colonial days was worked by

“means of lashes on the backs of slaves” (75). The old mine with a primitive method is shut down after failing to produce “a profitable return,” but not before “whole tribes of Indians” have perished (ibid.). According to her account, the mine’s revival comes after the War of Independence (from the Spanish rule) when a British company acquires the right to work its veins, turning the natives into “paid miners.” The miners in her account are the “native informants,” who are invoked and excluded at the same time to display Mrs. Gould’s compassion and humanity. Her account, however, performs an ideological service for the Gould Concession by treating the issue of class exploitation as coming to an end when the miners become paid workers, which is not the case from the Marxist perspective. In light of Sulaco’s socio-economic structure, which depends on the labor of the miners to create wealth for the Goulds, Mrs. Gould thus helps mask the exploitation of the “paid miners” despite her acknowledgment that the unpaid miners have perished in the mine during the Spanish colonial times. Moreover, she assumes that the primitive accumulation of capital ends with Spanish colonialism and that the Gould Concession starts with a “clean slate.” But as David Harvey argues in *The New Imperialism*, accumulation by dispossession in its various forms is the constant feature of capitalist mode of production. He also notes that state powers, finance capital and institutions of credit are the forces that bind together “the umbilical cord” between accumulation by dispossession and expanded reproduction (152).

Despite being a figure of compassion often associated with the statue of Madonna with a crowned child on her arm (Parry 101), Mrs. Gould’s compassion is Janus-faced. While she runs hospitals and schools for the well-being of the poor, she also actively participates in Sulaco’s political and social scenes, working for the mine’s “material

interests.” Moreover, her compassion is compromised by the hospitality and kindness she extends as the “first lady of Sulaco” to both corrupt government leaders and foreign investors and engineers involved in the development of the Sulaco mine and railway. Rebecca Carpenter, analyzing the gaps between imperial rhetoric and imperial practices in *Nostromo*, argues that Mrs. Gould, despite her compassion and charity work for the miners and the poor, is complicit with Charles and his business and political allies in exploiting the workers. Carpenter, in discussing British women’s role in maintaining the British Empire in the 19th and 20th century, also describes women like Mrs. Gould who participated in the colonization of the native population despite their moral convictions to help them as “‘kinder, gentler’ imperialists” (84). Her analysis of Mrs. Gould as one of the “maternal imperialists,” a phrase coined by Barbara N. Ramusack, thus brings into focus the profitable use of gender by imperialism. Her charity work, as Carpenter argues, is the front to legitimate imperial exploitation as the running of the hospitals, schools and other charities depends on the profits of the mine.

Mrs. Gould’s account, at the same time, contains an official account of the miners’ struggle against their British management after the independence. She relays this information documented in an official publication, *Diario Oficial*, saying the government formed after the miners’ revolt duly acknowledges their cause as “justly incensed at the grinding oppression of foreigners.” But the government also condemns them for acting out of gain rather than out of love of the country, thus creating the pretext for confiscating the mine as “national property.” Significantly, this official account appropriates the cause of the indigenous rebellion to justify its own action to confiscate the mine. It also conducts an ideological maneuver to misrepresent the struggle of the

miners against the owner as one fighting against “oppression of foreigners.” In doing so, it displaces class struggle onto struggles against foreigners and thus distorts class antagonism as antagonism against foreigners (racial difference) as if with their own kind the issue of class exploitation would not exist for the miners. And by repeating this official account, Mrs. Gould unwittingly helps contain the workers’ class struggle. To the extent that the history of the Indian workers is being told by the ruling and owning classes, the issue of class exploitation is conveniently bracketed, as if it were nonexistent. The telling of the San Tome mine history by Mrs. Gould thus is less about revealing the brutal history against the Indians than about making a justification for the Gould Concession. In doing so, she appears to condemn the primitive accumulation of capital under Spanish colonialism but sanctions the modern accumulation by dispossession by the Gould Concession.

The narrative that describes Mrs. Gould’s compassion for the people in her encounter with the Sulacan Creole landowners and the poor natives also shows that the indigenous are rendered mute subjects, withheld from language. While touring Sulaco, the contact zone, with her husband in search of labor for the mine, Mrs. Gould shows her compassionate side despite using her “imperial eyes” to search for the prospective laborers for the mine. She observes the toils of the Indians: “She saw the man under the silent, sad-eyed beast of burden. She saw them on the road carrying loads, lonely figures upon the plain, toiling under great straw hats” (103). Her “observing” eye thus shows her compassion for the indigenous. But notably the Indians she observes are mute subjects who quietly and stoically endure their daily hardships, and there are no verbal communications between her and them. The muteness of the natives, however, becomes

conspicuous, when considering Conrad's depiction of the Spanish landowning families, whose "great houses" Mrs. Gould also visits during her two-month surveying tour. The narrative says that she listens sympathetically to their "stories of political outrage; friends, relatives, ruined, imprisoned, killed in the battles of senseless civil wars," and that she finds "on all the lips" of the local Creoles, a collective desire for peace and a government that can bring about law, security and justice (103). The stark contrast between the representation of the two groups is hard to ignore: the natives quietly endure their hardships whereas the landowners express their grievances against government corruption. Since the Indians are not given a voice, though invoked, they need a spokesperson. In one instance, Don Pepe, who accompanies Mrs. Gould on the tour, makes a populist pronouncement on behalf of the people after she is struck by the legacy of Spanish colonial rule: the stone bridges and churches built by the forced labor of the conquered indigenous people. Don Pepe's pronouncement, which comes after Conrad's indictment of the rule of the king and the church, is in the form of an exclamation. "Poor Costaguana! Before, it was everything for the padres, nothing for the people; and now it is everything for these great *politicos* in Sta Marta, for Negroes and thieves" (104). In sum, the Amerindians are the figure of "native informants," who are observed, discoursed and denied of speech, in Mrs. Gould's account of the history of the San Tome mine and in the narrative of her surveying tour.

The narrative introducing Don Pepe as the governor of the mine relies on the invocation and foreclosure of the native miners and their families as well. To accentuate the "vein of genuine humanity" in Don Pepe (111), the narrative focuses on his sharp observation of the mining population under his charge. Unlike Mrs. Gould who cannot

tell one native from another as they all seem to her to carry “the same mould of suffering and patience,” Don Pepe is described as having an extraordinary ability to know the miners of over six hundred “individually,” or “all the innumerable Joses, Manuels, Ignacios” (111-12). He does this by classifying them according to their skin tones. The narrative says that he knows them so well that he can “distinguish them not only by their flat, joyless faces ... but apparently also by the infinitely graduated shades of reddish-brown, of blackish-brown, of coppery-brown backs” (112). Don Pepe’s interest in the difference in the color shades of the miners may say something about his fascination about the differences among the racial others, but, at the same time, it could be his attempt to classify the racial others according to the dominant color white, and to mitigate his racial anxiety. His anxiety can be seen in his need to “girt with a great sword” and to wear a uniform, though a “shabby” one “with tarnished bullion epaulettes of a senior major,” as he walks about “precipitous paths” up in the mountain (111). The act of classifying the racial other, thus, reveals the hidden anxiety of the narrative to contain the other, as it represents Don Pepe as a thinking subject who directs the white gaze at the objectified indigenous population. The act of classification thus is at once a form of domination and of containment of the racial Other.

Don Pepe’s prolonged gaze directed at the miners taking a break from work also is an act of *class* management that continues even during the break. As the narrative says of the miners of two shifts under his attentive watch:

stripped to linen drawers and leather skull-caps, mingled together with a confusion of naked limbs, of shouldered picks, swinging lamps, in a great shuffle of sandalled feet on the open plateau before the entrance of the main tunnel. It was a time of pause. The Indian boys leaned idly against the long line of little cradle wagons standing empty; the screeners and ore-breakers squatted on their heels smoking long cigars.... The heads of gangs, distinguished by brass medals hanging on their

bare breasts, marshalled their squads; and at last the mountain would swallow one half of the silent crowd, while the other half would move off in long files down the zigzag paths leading to the bottom of the gorge. (112)

This detailed description of the miners between shifts on their working day, as much as it demonstrates Don Pepe's ability to observe humanity, also discloses the bodies of the workers including young boys disciplined by the grueling demands of mining and the coercive power of capital that exploits and dominates them. As Michel Foucault writes in *Discipline and Punishment*, workshops are among the institutions that utilize disciplinary power to produce "subjected and practiced bodies, 'docile' bodies," and the instrument used by the worker helps mold the working body into a docile and utilitarian one (138; 145; 153). Thus, Foucault maintains, "disciplinary power" appears to be "a coercive link with the apparatus of production" (153). The Sam Tome mine thus not only produces silver for the Euro-American market and wealth for its owner and investors, but also "disciplined and docile bodies" out of its native miners. And they are so disciplined and docile that they act like soldiers as they "march off in long files" after work. However, the description also captures a momentary attempt to escape from the disciplinary power as in the older workers' taking their cigar-smoking break and the young boys standing idly during their break, acts that are at odds with the power that seeks to regulate the working body. The act of class management by Don Pepe is not only limited to the miners, it is extended to the miners' children and their families. As with the miners he knows so well, Don Pepe, the narrator says, seems "able with one attentive, thoughtful glance to classify each woman, girl, or growing youth of his domain" (113). His "imperial eyes" would also enable him to ascertain the parentage of the "brown children," and should it fail, by his "searching questions" (113). Don Pepe's enormous interest in

the mining population under his charge thus foregrounds the importance of labor as the *Other* of capital.

Don Pepe's "genuine humanity" is indeed well represented in his keen observations of those under his charge. But the narrative seeking to paint him as a man with "a vein of genuine humanity" is hampered by the operation of the invocation and silencing of the natives, who are the "silent crowd." Ironically, the one time the barefooted natives are shown to speak at all directly, is on the occasion when they greet him with a simple salutation—"Taita (father)" (111). It is greetings to anyone who wears shoes, one that acknowledges social and class distinction in Sulaco. Significantly, this simple utterance allowed the miners suggests that they know their place in Sulaco, thus reaffirming their inferior social status.

Another instance the miners are known to have said anything pertaining to the mine is when Nostromo uses them as a source to back up his claim that he knows there are mountains of wealth in the mine. He informs Decoud of his knowledge of the wealth the mine contains, while both are on a lighter attempting to ship the silver out of Sulaco harbor before the invasion of the Montero rebel forces. To further support his claim, Nostromo invokes the miners, noting that "the miners say that there is enough at the heart of the mountain to thunder on for years and years to come" (233). In this instance, the miners are clearly shown to be able to speak their mind, but still it is Nostromo who does the speaking for them. After gaining class consciousness, Nostromo continues to speak for the miners and the poor: how the rich have exploited the poor.

While capital employs and disciplines the body of the miners and eyes their offspring as the source of the future labor force, it also seeks to control their minds with

religion. Like Don Pepe, Father Roman, another Gould official who has intimate knowledge of the miners and their families and serves as their “spiritual pastor,” is also in the habit of meditating and gazing at the children of the miners (113). As the mine’s priest, Father Roman has been “marrying, baptizing, confessing, absolving, and burying the workers of the San Tome mine with dignity and unction” (337). Despite entertaining “feelings of paternal scorn” toward his flock, the priest shares Mrs. Gould’s “earnest interest” in the well-being of the miners and their families. Moreover, he feels “his own humanity expand” when talking with her about the “innumerable Marias and Brigidas of the villages” (337-38). In Father Roman’s discourse, the natives are again simultaneously invoked and excluded to display his own humanity.

The narrative also shows earlier that the priest discourages his flock from asking questions concerning a European resurrection picture donated by Mrs. Gould to the mine’s chapel. When “an inquisitive spirit” desires to know where Europe is (the native does speak), Father Roman shuts down the inquiry by saying:

No doubt, it is extremely far away. But ignorant sinners like you of the San Tome mine should think earnestly of everlasting punishment instead of inquiring into the magnitude of the earth, with its countries and populations altogether beyond your understanding. (114-15)

The significance of this reply is two-fold. First, Europe, which Father Roman says is “a country of saints and miracles, and much greater than our Costaguana” is a forbidden topic that cannot be questioned, let alone by the natives. Second, the form of the reply is more significant than its contemptuous, if not racist, content, because it shows the operation of the structure of “native informant.” That is, Father Roman’s pronouncement comes in the form of a direct quote; by comparison, the native’s question is being presented as part of the narrative. The native who asks questions about the resurrection

picture is being represented in a way that he or she does not speak directly to the reader, while Father Roman ends up speaking for him or her. This exchange between the inquiring native and Father Roman thus highlights the hidden structure of the “native informant”: the inclusion and exclusion of the native voice and perspective. And it is part of class management and control to keep the native flock in their place.

The structure of “native informant” is also operating in Captain Mitchell’s narrative on the “historical events” that led to the formation of the Occidental Republic, which is transforming itself in the image of foreign capital. Recounting how the Indian miners led by Don Pepe rescued Charles Gould before his execution ordered by the rebel Pedrito Montero, seven years later to a “privileged passenger,” a virtual captive audience on a tour of the newly independent Sulaco, he says:

the miners of San Tome, all Indians from the Sierra, rolling by like a torrent to the sound of pipes and cymbals, green flags flying, a wild mass of men in white ponchos and green hats, on foot, on mules, on donkeys. Such a sight, sir, will never be seen again. The miners, sir, had marched upon the town, Don Pepe leading on his black horse, and their very wives in the rear on *burros*, screaming encouragement, sir, and beating tambourines. (397)

Captain Mitchell’s narrative, embellished by his pompous speech, nevertheless is built on the structure of simultaneously including and excluding the miners and their encouraging wives. The indigenous are the heroes in the rescue and, as the result of the narrative frame, they are not allowed to speak of the event from their perspective. Instead their story is being told by Mitchell who the narrator says prides himself on “his profound knowledge of men and things in the country” (44). Moreover, Mitchell is given not only a narrating voice but also the freedom to color the event as he sees fit.

The relation between the narrated and the narrator, when examined closely, also reveals why Captain Mitchell has a personal interest in Sulaco’s history and Gould’s

rescue. Mitchell's interest in the Sulaco mine goes beyond his employment with the Oceanic Steam Navigation Company, which delivers the silver to overseas market. It grows out of his holding of "seventeen of the thousand-dollar shares in the Consolidated San Tome mine" (396). His (class) interest in the mine does not end when he retires from the shipping company and returns to England. His relatively comfortable retirement outside London depends on the seventeen shares of the San Tome mine he owns, the narrator reports (418). In other words, the surplus labor of the miners will help pay for Mitchell's investment and thus his retirement. His case as a small investor of the mine illustrates the hidden connection between labor and financial investment, made invisible by the ups and downs of the stock market. It also highlights how the newly independent Sulaco is more subjugated to foreign capital than ever before. After all, it is the military power of the United States that intervenes on behalf of the Holroyd finance powerhouse to help install the government of the new state. "The United States cruiser, *Powhattan*, is the first to salute the Occidental flag" after staging "an international naval demonstration, which put an end to the Costaguana-Sulaco war," Mitchell narrates (405). Holroyd's influence in the newly minted country goes beyond his financial investment in the mine. He also stages a "Protestant invasion of Sulaco" by seeking to proselytize with his Holroyd Missionary Fund, competing with Catholicism for the hearts and minds of the "wild Indians" (421).

Lastly, the anonymous narrator is another major source through whom the reader learns about the mine, its history and significance in both local and national politics. As such, he embodies what Mary Louise Pratt calls the figure of *transculturator* transporting

information about Sulaco to his reader. He unexpectedly introduces himself in Chapter 8 of Part One, although revealing little about his identity. His self-introduction begins with:

Those of us whom business or curiosity took to Sulaco in these years before the first advent of the railway can remember the steadying effect of the San Tome mine upon the life of that remote province. The outward appearances had not changed then as they have changed since, as I am told, with cable cars running along the streets of the Constitution, and carriage roads far into the country to Rincon and other villages, where the foreign merchants and the *ricos* [wealthy] generally have their modern villas, and a vast railway goods-yard by the harbor, which has a quay-side, a long range of warehouses, and quite serious, organized labour troubles of its own. Nobody had ever heard of labour troubles then. (108)

This brief first-person introduction, while demonstrating the narrator's familiarity with Sulaco and its mine, also reveals the profound changes brought about by the transport infrastructure serving the mine—the railway, the cable cars and the roads—and settlement of foreign merchant capital in Sulaco, as well as “organized labour troubles.” Significantly, it also foreshadows the labor unrest that will come to a head after Sulaco's independence at the end of the novel. The narrator as transculturator, however, is interested in the “subtle influence” the San Tome mine has on the locals (109). He thus takes us back to a time in Sulaco, the contact zone where *transculturation* occurs due to the contacts between different racial groups (Pratt 6), when “the stereotyped conveniences of modern life had not intruded yet” and his critical eyes noticed the cultural and sartorial impact the mine has had on its miners. So in the contact zone that is Sulaco, the narrator observes that the mine “had altered, too, the outward characters of the crowd on feast days on the *plaza* before the open portal of the cathedral,” as shown by the mine's signature color green the miners adopt in their holiday costume, including white ponchos with a green stripe and white hats with green cord and braid, which are sold by the Gould Concession for a small fee. As he notes, in those days a “peaceful *cholo*” wearing “these colors” ran little risks of being beaten up by the town police “on a

charge of disrespect” or of being “lassoed on the road” by the state’s military recruiters because the color green was the mine’s official color (109). He ends the account with Don Pepe’s comment on behalf of the people: “Poor people! . . . But the State must have its soldiers.” This account, seen through the critical eye of the narrator, highlights the commodification of the color green while at the same time showing that the miners “adopt” the mine’s official color as a survival strategy to avoid police harassment and the military draft by the state. However, it also shows that like other narrators’ accounts on the mine and the miners, his is a one-dimensional representation with the miners as his objects of observation. Moreover, in the transculturation, the miners are assimilated in ways that do not allow for the alternation of the mine’s culture. As Pratt notes, the problem with many of the travel accounts is that they are constructed from “bourgeois, author-centered ways of knowing,” in which heteroglossia provided by the natives is not able to occur (135-36). She thus points at the problem of the foreclosure of the native perspectives.

Shortly after the Monterists take over Sulaco with the goal to seize and control the mine, the eye of the narrative returns to the mine anxiously awaiting news about the safety of its owner. The focus, which covers the perspective of the mine’s officials, is mostly on Don Pepe who has Gould’s instructions to blow up the mine with dynamite should it fall into the rebels’ hands. Although the narrator informs the reader of the miners’ attitude toward the mine, it is done through himself and a local magistrate who views the mine as “the gifts of well-being, security, and justice upon the toilers” (336). The magistrate’s view on the mine seems ironic, if not dubious, because the reader has been informed earlier by Mrs. Gould and the narrator that the mine has been a scourge for

its workers and owners alike. Of the miners, the narrator says that the “harassed half-wild Indians” have developed “a sense of belonging to a powerful organization” over the years. He summarizes their sentiment as being “proud of” and “attached to” the mine because it has “secured their confidence and belief.” He goes on to say: “They invested it with a protecting and invincible virtues as though it were a fetish made by their own hands, for they are ignorant, and in other respects did not differ appreciably from the rest of mankind which puts infinite trust in its own creations” (336). Although the narrator seems to downplay the supposed “ignorance” of the miners by adding that “the rest of mankind” is just as ignorant when it comes to fetishizing the product of their own labor, he finally drives home the point that the local magistrate is just as “ignorant” as the miners because it “never entered the *alcade*’s head that the mine can fail in its protection and force” (336). He adds that for the *alcade* politics is “good enough for the people of the town and the Campo” (ibid.), echoing Decoud’s view that the poor peons and *indios* “knew nothing either of reason or politics” (173). Nicholas Visser notes that in *Nostramo*, the political crowd and their leaders are denied genuine political legitimacy and motivation (7-8). Visser’s comment can be extended to the treatment of the indigenous magistrate. The inclusion of the miners’ and magistrate’s views only highlight their “ignorance” and, by comparison, it highlights the narrator’s own intelligence. Ironically, the narrator, who seeks to ascertain how material changes sweeping Sulaco have affected the hearts and minds of the workers (417-18), reveals more about his own attitude toward the mine and the miners than he may have intended. His is a mindset that is similar to what Achebe has criticized Conrad for: “Travelers with closed minds can tell us little except about themselves” (16).

The analysis of the foreclosure of the indigenous as subjects of speech and narrators inevitably brings us back to this essential question of whether the subaltern can speak for themselves. Within the ideological horizon of *Nostromo*, the answer is clearly that they cannot, not because they cannot speak for themselves but because the representation does not allow them the political agency to directly advocate their indigenous rights and freedoms and to critique the political-economic system that exploits their surplus labor and destroys their indigenous space in the name of prosperity, progress and development. Thus, they need to be represented by the others, specifically by the owning and political classes of Sulaco, those who serve their political and material interests, Nostromo, the representative of the people, and the narrator. As the analysis of the invocation and foreclosure of the indigenous by the Goulds and their officials has shown, the simultaneous invocation and foreclosure is performed to maintain the class interests of the owning classes or the world system of accumulation by dispossession. The haunting of the indigenous miners and their families in the narrative thus is a sign that they are the irreducible Other of capital. While Sulaco would be nothing without the Gould Concession (397), as Captain Mitchell would have us believe, it is more accurate to say, from a Marxist perspective, that without the surplus labor of the miners, the mine is nothing. The reification of the mine thus obscures the social and labor relations in Sulaco.

The foreclosure of the indigenous perspectives, on the other hand, makes it imperative that Conrad's analysis and critique of "material interests" be rendered through the comments made by the major European characters. In his dying confession to Mrs. Gould, Nostromo again chides the rich for taking from the poor. When discussing the fate

of the newly independent Sulaco, Dr. Monygham tells Mrs. Gould that: “There is no peace and no rest in the development of material interests. They have their law, and their justice. But it is founded on expediency, and is inhuman” (423). In doing so, Dr. Monygham sums up the essence of accumulation by dispossession. He continues to predict that the time will come when “all that the Gould Concession stands for shall weigh as heavily upon the people as the barbarism, cruelty, and misrule of a few years back” (423). When Mrs. Gould questions his view, he even suggests that the miners are not likely to support her husband, as they have done in the Sulaco independence, in the upcoming unrest organized by secret societies of immigrants and natives. Dr. Monygham’s analysis of capitalism deeply upsets Mrs. Gould who thinks that her schools, hospitals and other charitable deeds have brought the good to the people of Sulaco. Nevertheless, she concedes the futility of pinning one’s faith, as her husband does, in material interests to bring order and justice. She now sees the San Tome mine in a new light: “feared, hated, wealthy” it is “more soulless than any tyrant, more pitiless and autocratic than the worst Government; ready to crush innumerable lives in the expansion of its greatness” (431). Here Mrs. Gould finally is able to acknowledge the effects of accumulation by dispossession on the people of Sulaco, a new perspective that was absent when she related the history of the San Tome mine and its colonial history under the Spanish and unwittingly bracketed the question of accumulation by dispossession. Father Corbelan, the aristocratic Catholic priest, also indicts the ills of material interests on behalf of the Sulaco people. “Let them [representatives of material interests] beware, then, lest the people, prevented from their aspirations, should rise and claim their share of the wealth and their share of the power” (422), says the priest. Thus

through the major European characters, Conrad wages his indictment of capitalist imperialism, which however simultaneously excludes the indigenous miners from voicing their opposition to the capitalist accumulation by dispossession. We are told at the end of the novel that Charles Gould is having troubles with the miners, indicating that they are asserting their agency in seeking a social change, but their voice is presented indirectly (456). The specter of the indigenous labor unrest, which the narrator briefly alludes to in his self-introduction in Chapter 8 of Part One, finally comes to a head at the end of *Nostromo*, threatening the continuing operation of accumulation by dispossession.

What haunts Sulaco politically and economically, in the final analysis, then is the specter of global capitalism, whose mode of organization of social labor and mode of use of time and space are aimed at private appropriation and accumulation. The reification of the San Tome mine as a spectral being, as in the case of the elder Gould, thus obscures the social relations of production and class struggles that are manifested in the use of space as well as in lived space. So is the fetishism exhibited by Sotillo and Nostromo on the silver, a global commodity that is essentially the product of dead or congealed labor. The ghosts of the native miners who perished in the maw under forced labor during Spanish colonial rule in turn haunt the history of the mine, as a spectral reminder of the source of primitive accumulation of capital. As Harvey argues, the primitive accumulation of capital that Marx saw as the pre-history of capital does not cease to exist in modern and postmodern world. Rather, the expanded capitalist mode of (re)production around the globe accelerates its *modus operandi*, accumulation by dispossession: in its various forms it includes privatization of public lands, social services and public institutions and enterprises. The building of the Sulaco railroad, that results in the

dislocation of the indigenous inhabitants, and the exploitation of the indigenous miners by both the Spanish colonial rulers and the Gould mine are two prime examples of accumulation by dispossession in *Nostramo*. The haunting of the indigenous in the narrative with multiple narrators points to both primitive accumulation of capital and modern capital accumulation by dispossession. The foreclosure of the indigenous perspectives thus works to elide the structure of accumulation by dispossession, which is nevertheless threatened, at least temporarily, by the coming of the labor unrest by the native miners.

Fredric Jameson writes in *Brecht and Method* that “every interpretation of a text is always protoallegorical” (122). If *Nostramo* is a political allegory of anything, it can be read as an allegory of fetishism of commodity and accumulation by dispossession. Moreover, the novel can be read as an allegory of contemporary Latin American plights and struggles in neo-liberal globalization. The specter of global capitalism produces its own specter, the specter of labor unrest wherever it operates. The growing indigenous anti-globalization movements in Latin American and elsewhere, since global capital aggravates its assaults on the poor indigenous population by imposing neo-liberal, free-market agendas in the post-Soviet era, clearly demonstrate that the exploited and oppressed indigenous peoples are in the vanguard of the working people in fighting back the ruthless profit-making machines that are making the divides between the rich and the poor even wider nationally and globally. For example, the indigenous in Bolivia, whose famed Potosi silver mine with forced labor for three centuries produced enormous wealth for the Spanish rulers and misery for its miners and their families (Galeano 17) and from which Conrad drew inspiration for his representation of the imaginary Costaguana and its

intriguing political history, currently are fighting this battle. They have waged street demonstrations demanding its corrupt government to cut economic ties from the multinational companies that have profited from the privatization of the nation's natural gas while leaving its people behind, and more destitute. The political actions taken by Bolivia's men and women, including peasants, miners, union workers and their allies, thus, are a resounding rejection of the view that the indigenous cannot represent themselves.

CHAPTER 5
CONCLUSION: ZHANG YIMOU AS NATIVE INFORMANT/CULTURAL
TRANSLATOR IN THE AGE OF GLOBALIZATION

Gayatri Spivak's deconstructive critique of the invocation and foreclosure of the Native/Other in Western Enlightenment philosophy has enabled an alternative reading of the three novels I examined in the previous chapters. Deploying the figure of the foreclosed native informant that illuminates the problems of representing Others by the West, the chapters have foregrounded the conscription of non-Western Others in the construction of Western national identities. These chapters, in some sense, answer Spivak's call to acquire a "transnational literacy" among students of postcolonial and cultural studies as we engage with the globalized world dominated by finance (*A Critique* 399). Fredric Jameson had also articulated the need to spatially map the world in late capitalism through the concept of cognitive mapping (*Postmodernism* 416). Thus, my dissertation is part of a larger Marxist and postcolonial project that seeks to map the globalized world from the sites of marginality. The working through of my dissertation also is, for the most part, a relearning process, a process of decolonization that deconstructs the hegemonic frame of Western epistemology that marginalizes the non-Western Others.

As we saw in the three previous chapters, the figure of the native informant was enlisted by Cooper, Melville and Conrad, authors writing at different stages of Western empires, to plot narratives of nation, both historical and imaginary. In those fictional narratives, the figure is invoked to legitimate America's proprietorial ownership of the

native land, or assert America's ambition as a new empire or seek national independence by expatriated Europeans in an imaginary South American locale. Under Cooper's design, the Mohegans are deployed as a Trojan horse to assert bourgeois right to landed property, a design furthered by the passing of a white bourgeois heir as the native. While the Mohegan tribe is given an "Indian" voice to express the grievance of the dispossession of the ancestral land, that voice is conveniently withdrawn with the unveiling of Edwards's true identity as the heir to the Effingham family and with the voluntary departure of Leatherstocking from Templeton. Cooper's conscription of the Native American thus is a strategy of ideological containment that succeeds in stamping out the traces of the history of Indians as the original owner of the New World and in giving a legitimacy to the white colonial settlers as the lawful owners of the land. To put it another way, through the figure of the Indian Other Cooper both discloses and forecloses accumulation by dispossession.

Melville's appropriation of the Orient Other to construct American identity is more complex and nuanced. On the one hand, his appropriation constitutes a form of unexamined Orientalism by simultaneously invoking and foreclosing the Other to elevate the American whaling industry. On the other, his Orientalism has critical and subversive strands. In the form of satire, the invocation of Islamic religion, social ranks and customs allows Melville to critique religion in general and American class hierarchy as embodied by Ahab and his three mates and other crew on board the whale ship. More important, while Melville invokes the Orient, he also insists on the impossibility to decipher the Other. Thus, for him, the Egyptianized Leviathan with mysterious marks and the mysterious Fedallah shall remain a cipher. His critical foreclosure of the Orient, in this

case, thus departs from Cooper's regressive foreclosure of the Mohegans, which is necessary to maintain the bourgeois claims to Indian land as the right to private property.

Both *The Pioneers* and *Moby Dick* are narrated by a white male, Cooper himself and Ishmael, who constructs their narratives through the figure of the native informant. While Conrad multiplies the narrator in *Nostromo*, he excludes the Indian miners from narrating any part of the novel, although they constitute the material base of the silver mine that is the source of Sulaco's political instability and play an important role in the founding of the new Western Republic of Sulaco. Instead, the native miners are being represented by their owners, manager and others who serve the interests of capital or by the anonymous narrator who professes an interest in the politics of Sulaco. In so far as the miners speak, they can only speak through their Western Others who may or may not speak for their class interests. The invocation of the native miners, however, both exposes and forecloses primitive and modern accumulation of capital. What these three novels demonstrate is that self-representation by the Other within the Western literary discourse is ideologically untenable during "high colonialism," the 19th and early 20th centuries when the colonization of the non-Western Others by the Western powers was done through brutal military forces and in plain view. The perspectives of the Others, as I have shown, are foreclosed for various reasons to maintain a Western order of things. In Melville's case, however, the foreclosure is also critical and subversive to disrupt American cultural imperialism that sought to speak for the Others. Furthermore, accompanying the foreclosure of the perspective the native is also denied of the gaze. In those novels, in one way or another, the West is the bearer of the gaze. Under such an

imperial gaze the non-Western Others are being turned into objects to be observed and studied by and for the West as it constructs modern narratives of Self.

Spivak's critique of the invocation and foreclosure of non-Western Others in Western epistemology has alerted us to the unequal power relations in the realm of representation and discourse. The figure of the native informant, as she notes, has been enlisted by Western ethnographers to inscribe the cultures of non-Western Others for the West. The inscription of the non-Western Others as the bearers of "primitiveness" often serves to contrast with Western modernity in hegemonic ethnography and anthropology. Their conscription in the Western epistemology thus has helped sustain the World Order in which the West has dominated and led the rest of the world economically, militarily, technologically, culturally and ideologically in modern history. In the so-called postcolonial and postmodern world, can the formerly perspectiveless native speak and represent herself? Spivak has argued that the perspective of the native informant is impossible to retain because once it makes itself available it runs the risk of being appropriated and exploited by the powers that be. Therefore, she reinscribes the native informant as an (im)possible perspective. As the conclusion to my study of the native informant in the Western representation, however, I would like to explore the possibilities that the native speaks and represents her nation and, more importantly, examine the conditions under which the speech and representation take place. The case I am exploring here is that of mainland Chinese director Zhang Yimou. Here I am using the native in a rather broad sense, in the context of China representing itself to the rest of the world. I am aware that China with Han as its major ethnic group has its own internal, colonized Others such as the Tibetans and the Mongolians. Specifically, I am interested in

exploring the role of the native informant as cultural translator in the age of global capitalism. The choice of Zhang and the China he helped project onto the international screen also allows me to explore briefly the effects of accumulation by dispossession on the reform-era China. As David Harvey points out in *The New Imperialism*, China's turn toward state-coordinated capitalism has resulted in "wave after wave of primitive accumulation" (153-54). Its noticeable manifestations are in the land seizures that have provoked waves of local protests in recent years in rural China as well as in the privatization of state-enterprises including the film industry. Official corruption at local and higher levels also makes the dispossession of the people to allow capital accumulation more hideous as China inserts itself further into the orbit of profit-driven global capitalism.

In the context of postcolonial immigration, Homi Bhabha notes: "Culture as a strategy of survival is both *transnational* and *translational*" ("Freedom's Basis" 48; italics original). For the hybrid migrant in the West, the culture she produces is both transnational and translational because she has "double consciousness" that mixes her native culture with that of her adopted country. For the native filmmaker who stays put, her product of labor, financed by transnational capital and circulated in the global market, can also be said to be both transnational and translational but in a different sense. In the case of China, where foreign capital has penetrated its film industry under China's economic reforms, the "Chinese" cultural product is marked as transnational and translational because of foreign capital's involvement and the product's circulation in the global market. However, I limit my discussion of translation to cultural translation and in the restricted sense of translation from the "original" source, or "raw material," to the

medium of film. Although linguistic translation as in English and other foreign-language subtitles is also an essential part of cultural translation as Chinese cinema as a cultural commodity circulates around the globe, it falls outside the scope of this chapter. I am also aware of the consequences of using the native informant as our cultural guide and translator into Chinese culture. They include essentializing the “Chineseness” of China and assuming the informant as the holder of truth—two major pitfalls that were exposed in the indigenous Chinese critics’ severe criticism of some of Zhang’s ethnic films.

Strictly speaking, Zhang, as China’s best-known director in the West, cannot be described as a subaltern despite his “black class” family background and his experiences as a farm and textile worker during his young adulthood before being admitted to the Beijing Film Academy in 1978 (*Reinventing China* 15-16; 29; 37-38). But as a filmmaker, he assumes the double role of native informant and cultural translator, representing China and its people to the world. Moreover, in the age of capitalist globalization, the cultural commodity he produces plays an increasingly important role in shaping the global multicultural subjectivities that are needed to ensure the longevity of transnational capitalism. Thus, I argue that in the age of unfettered globalization of capital and the (post)modern consumer society it fosters, the figure of the native informant has not become obsolete in understanding formation of global multicultural subjectivity based in part on the consumption of Others via mediated images. The native, as mentioned above, is understood in the context of China’s self-representation to the outside world. Further, I maintain that the figure of the native informant is as important as the figure of New Immigrant in the West in transporting and translating her native culture to the world. And with it, the native as both informant and cultural translator is

faced with a difficult task of meeting the demands coming from both her native land and the West. This is especially so in the globalized film industry in which a film, produced at local sites, is being circulated in the international film market, and continues its afterlife in the form of DVDs, videotapes and VCDs (video recorded on compact disks, popular in Asia).

To illustrate the complex relationship between native informant-cum-cultural translator and globalization of culture under transnational capitalism, I will use the trajectory of Zhang Yimou's film career as the point of entry. Sheldon Hsiao-peng Lu's essay, "National Cinema, Cultural Critique, Transnational Capital," on Zhang's film art and its reception both at home and abroad provides a useful entry into the debate in China over Zhang's representation of China and over the recognition of his artistic merits in the West and his relative marginalization in the 1990s at home. Zhang's film career, built around his ability to visualize and signify a tradition-bound "China" that oppressed its women to the Western audiences, marks the globalization of contemporary Chinese cinema (125). Yet Zhang's warm reception in Western art-film houses has also invited harsh criticism by indigenous Chinese critics for participating in (re)producing images of (fabricated) Chinese rituals for the consumption of Western viewers (128). More important, the critics says, the globalization of Zhang's films is an instance of "the global homogenization of local differences in the interest of Western cultural imperialism" (129). In what follows, I take up this debate over Zhang's exhibitionist Orientalism and argue that his is not simply to satisfy the West's "compulsory Orientalism" but to critique oppression of women in feudal China. In the second part of the chapter, I examine the ways in which state censorship in China and transnational capital that finances Zhang

Yimou's films have conspired to constrain his artistic and political visions. I argue that the *frame* of Zhang's films is being filtered and restricted by these two major concerns. Specifically, in my reading of Zhang's *Not One Less* (1999), I show that the film in allowing one village girl, Zhang's primary native informant, to tell her story of searching her missing student in the city actually blocks a more disturbing one from being told by another young girl migrant worker. The reading of the film thus contends that even within an ethnic self-representation, the native informant as in the figure of the rural migrant child worker cannot be fully represented in a globalized economy that depends on her cheap labor to produce commodities for global consumption. The foreclosure of the migrant worker in the film thus, wittingly or unwittingly, helps bracket the process of accumulation by dispossession. My critique, however, focuses on the censorship system and global film apparatuses that interfere with the "autonomy" of the filmmakers in materializing their artistic and political visions. And I do not rule out the possibility that critical work can still be done within such an environment.

Native Informant-cum-Cultural Translator for the World Cinema

Those who study the works of China's Fifth-Generation directors have observed that Zhang Yimou's *Red Sorghum* (1987), which bridged the gap between cinematic art and popular taste, both marked and accelerated the end of the filmmakers' artistic experiment and cultural critique movement (Yau 100). In hindsight, many considered the early 1980s a significant period in Chinese filmmaking. During this period the so-called "innovative films" that were distinctively different from "ossified socialist realism" were being made by the first graduates of the Beijing Film Academy since the end of the Cultural Revolution (96). The political and cultural climate of the early 1980s was relative liberal following Deng Xiaoping's economic reforms, which began to prioritize

economic returns (profits) over the ideologies of the State/Party. Chen Kaige's *Yellow Earth* (1984) was able to gain legitimacy by invoking "the compelling tropes of Chinese civilization in the Shaanbei plateau, the Yellow River, and the peasants" (97). However, the film, some critics note, seems to deconstruct the myth about the success of the Communist Party in improving the lives of the peasants, as implied by the failure of the young Communist soldier, Gu Qing, to timely save the peasant girl, Cuiqiao, who drowns in the Yellow River while attempting to escape from her arranged marriage to an older man. Zhang Yimou's *Red Sorghum* used the second half of the film, the anti-Japanese resistance of the peasants, to legitimate the first part of the film that focuses on the libidinal energy of the male protagonist.

As transnational capital began to finance Zhang's films beginning in the early 1990s, some questioned the deployment of the mise-en-scene in his films as markers of Chinese ethnographic films. *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991) received the most of the criticism from both cultural conservatives and postcolonial critics, both at home and abroad. For example, Tonglin Lu recently argues that "The Zhang Yimou Model," perfected in *Raise the Red Lantern* and imitated by other Chinese directors to break into the global market, has three major trademarks. It usually deploys a sexually attractive and oppressed young woman, fabricates elaborate Chinese rituals and invokes Chinese anti-colonial writer Lu Xun's famous metaphor of China as an "iron house" to allegorize the imprisonment of its people (166-67). The proliferation of the Zhang Yimou model, I think, only underscores the logic of global capitalism in commodifying an original critical work to make profit, a process the filmmaker has no control over.

Zhang Yimou established his auteur status at the international film festivals with his first three films, *Red Sorghum* (1987), *Judou* (1990), and *Raise the Red Lantern* (1991), inserting China into the world cinema. But even before the “red films,” so called because of the dominant color in them—red wine (*Red Sorghum*), red strips of clothes (*Judou*) and red lanterns (*Raise the Red Lanterns*)—film critics had noticed his cinematography for *One and Eight* (1984) and *Yellow Earth* (1984). Along with other members of the Fifth-Generation, a term designating the 1982 class of Beijing Film Academy, which reopened in 1978 after being closed during the Cultural Revolution (1966-76), Zhang helped introduce New Wave Chinese cinema to the world audience (Rayns 104-13). In these three films, Zhang represents and critiques a pre-Revolutionary patriarchal China that oppressed women through the practice of arranged marriages and other oppressive feudal traditions. In his capacity as a filmmaker, Zhang thus functions as a native informant and cultural translator, representing the oppression of women in pre-Revolutionary China through his cinematic art. Zhang’s representation of feudal China was praxis in response to a cultural and historical introspection movement in the early 1980s among Chinese intellectuals after the wake of the Cultural Revolution. As Dai Jinhua, China’s film scholar, writes in *Cinema and Desire*, the Fifth Generation are “the initiators and participants of the movement for reflecting on culture and History” (30). This cultural and historical introspection, which in some ways continued the project of the May Fourth movement of 1919 that was aimed at modernizing China and its culture and language and was disrupted by the Chinese-Japanese War, had two prongs. As Dai writes,

On the one hand, it conducts a ‘root-searching movement’ in order to revive national culture, national tradition, and national spirit. On the other hand, it issues a

call for enlightenment, a call to critique and negate national culture and tradition, to excavate ‘the ills of national character,’ and to portray the silent spirit of the citizenry. (ibid.)

The Fifth Generation thus initiated a new phase in contemporary Chinese cinema in which the “self-reflexive gaze of the nation” is the distinctive style of their filmmaking (Lu, “Historical Introduction” 8). Moreover, this self-reflexive Chinese ethnographic cinema proceeded at the same time through a detour: a search for the non-Han Others in order to reaffirm the Han center. Yingjin Zhang notes that in minority films such as Zhang Nuanxin’s *Sacrificed Youth* (1985), in which the Han heroine discovers her repressed sexuality after living among a native, Dai, people, the ethnic Other is needed for a critique of the Self (168-69).

In his three early ethnographic films, Zhang Yimou forcefully deals with the oppression of Chinese (peasant) women especially through the custom of arranged marriage, often arranged on the basis of monetary consideration. In the films, the women from families of poverty or dwindling fortunes are traded like an object by men relative rich in the patriarchal system. His critique of the feudal system is further reinforced by a representation of the male characters with a physical illness (*Red Sorghum*), with a penchant for abusing his wife (*Judou*) and with an excessive sexual appetite that calls for the company of one wife and four more concubines (*Raise the Red Lantern*). Although Zhang said that it was only coincidental that all three films used women characters to critique Chinese feudal culture, he allowed that in his attempt to “express the Chinese people’s oppression and confinement, which has been going on for thousands of years, women express this more clearly on their bodies because they bear a heavier burden than men” (Yang, “Of Gender” 38).

Zhang Yimou's earlier films thus can be viewed as ethnographic films. Zhang's representation of feudal China also turns the representational model in Western ethnography upside down in that the native asserts her agency to write her own autobiography and critique her oppressive cultural practices. Yet Zhang's success at the international film festivals was met with caustic criticisms at home. His Chinese critics alleged that his films were made to satisfy the gaze of Western audiences. More important, the critics say, his Chinese aesthetics is a form of Orientalism that renders his women characters objects of gaze for Western viewers, and thus he is in complicit in reproducing hierarchical relations between the West and China. Zhang himself had denied these charges, saying he was puzzled by them and that even if he had wanted to cater to the tastes of foreigners, there were too many of them to satisfy their tastes (Li, "Paving Chinese" 82-83). But the initial banning of his films by the Chinese authorities for showing the "inappropriate" sites/sights of China, the funding of his films by foreign capital including Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan and France and their distributions overseas only seemed to give some validity to the charges.

In an essay entitled "Raised Eyebrows for *Raise the Red Lantern*," Dai Qing, one of China's well-known investigative journalists, faulted Zhang for not representing a more "authentic" China. Among her list of inauthenticity in the film include the ritual of raising the red lanterns at the residence of the favored concubine of the night and the accompanying ritual of foot massage. Zhang Yimou said in an interview that the ritual of raising the red lanterns, which is not included in the novel by Su Tong from which the film is based, was his invention to create visual effect and his intervention to "give a concrete form to [the women's] oppression" (Yang, "Of Gender" 40). Nevertheless, in

Dai Qing's view, the film with those elaborate rituals was shot for the "casual pleasures of foreigners" to "satisfy their oriental fetishisms" (336). The first part of Dai Qing's critique, however, is problematic because it, as Rey Chow points out, derives from a certain assumption about translation: that Zhang has made a poor translation of China, a translation that fails to give truth or authenticity to "China" (*Primitive Passions* 184). Chow's critique thus underscores the pitfalls in essentializing China as the "original," and following Walter Benjamin she calls for an understanding of translation as "a process of putting together" that also rethinks the original itself as the product of putting together (185). Chow also proposes to rethink Chinese ethnographic filmmaking as a process of translation, a process of putting together that does not privilege the original text.

In "Postcolonialism and Chinese Cinema of the Nineties," collected in her *Cinema and Desire*, Dai Jinhua also took Zhang Yimou to task, arguing that the red lanterns "internalize the Western gaze" (58). But her critique takes into account the social and economic conditions of the nineties in reform-era China. As China continued its economic reform policies, it also encouraged its state-owned film studios to seek foreign investment. To secure foreign investment for their film projects, Chinese filmmakers saw winning awards at international film festivals as a gateway to have their films made and seen by wider audiences. One significant consequence results from this change in the funding: the Chinese filmmakers became alert to the aesthetic preferences of the film-festival judges and were induced to represent "an Orient that was palatable and intelligible for Western viewers" (50). Dai Jinhua thus argues that using his earned position in the Western film world as "a sign of the oriental/Chinese cultural subject" (52), Zhang has turned Chinese history and culture into "a dead butterfly: colorful and

delicate but pinned down under the Western gaze” (59). Like Dai Qing, Dai Jinhua’s critique assumes that the Western gaze can only be male-gendered and heterosexual, exposing compulsory heterosexism in a culture that is at large unwilling to acknowledge non-heterosexual practices. But Dai Jinhua’s critique also problematizes the expectation that the native informant as cultural translator acts as a holder of truth for the West.

Another Chinese cultural critic, Zhang Yiwu, also argued that the political allegories that Western film critics saw in the works of Zhang Yimou and other Fifth-Generation directors in the 1990s were not genuine investigations into Chinese history or contemporary Chinese society (Larson 183-84). The commodification of their films in the early 1990s, Zhang Yiwu contended, had cast a cloud over the Fifth Generation’s commitment to the cultural retrospection movement of the early 1980s and had rendered the political allegories in their films suspicious. Critics both in China and the West had interpreted the theme of feudal oppression in both *Judou* and *Raise the Red Lantern*, both initially banned in China but shown in the West, as a national allegory for the Chinese government’s crackdown of democracy movement on Tiananmen Square on June 4th, 1989. In contrast, Zhang Yiwu noted that the films’ national allegories were pseudo and they resulted from a response to the demands of foreign capital to produce images of desire and to pander to “the exoticism and eroticism that the Capitalist West would like to assign to a commodified East” (Larson 184). The Chinese cultural critic also wrote that to set themselves apart from the Fifth Generation, the directors of the Sixth Generation in the spirit of postmodernism have set out to produce anti-allegorical films, resisting any attempt to allegorize China. (The works of the Sixth-Generation directors often deal with

contemporary Chinese urban life, and are often under-funded, banned by the Chinese authorities and circulated in the black market.)

Behind those passionate debates by indigenous Chinese critics over Zhang Yimou's work and that of other Fifth-Generation directors, Sheldon Lu points out, nevertheless was a turf battle over who had the authorities in evaluating Chinese cultural products ("National Cinema" 128). As the judges at the international film festivals have the authority to evaluate the films competing for prestigious prizes, the Chinese cultural critics, who had performed the task of translating and introducing outstanding artistic works from China to the West, felt that they were being left out in the process. That may explain some of the reasons for their vehement attack on Zhang and his colleagues. But some critics are genuinely concerned about the commodification of Chinese culture and films as a new form of Western cultural imperialism. The debates' main focus on the question who constitutes the core audience of the Fifth-Generation films, I think, somehow fails to adequately address the general conditions of filmmaking in reform-era China. For Zhang Yimou and many other Chinese filmmakers, the conditions of work rely on foreign capital following the privatization of the state-controlled film industry in the late 1980s. Further, the argument that Zhang Yimou's films were made to satisfy the voyeuristic gaze of the West does not take into account that production in the age of capitalist globalization is not to meet the needs of local consumers but that of global ones. As a matter of fact, the funding of Zhang Yimou's films by multinational corporations is a form of outsourcing by the globalized film industry. Industrywide, China still offers a relatively cheap labor force to be tapped by transnational capital seeking both talents and profits. Zhang could make do with US\$1 million for a low budget film, a fraction of a

typical Hollywood budget (Lu, *Confronting Modernity* 171). These are the conditions of filmmaking in China as it further moves toward the market economy. Initially, Zhang and his Fifth-Generation colleagues may find that working for transnational capital, rather than for the state, allowed them to bypass the censorship imposed by China's Film Bureau, which can ban their films domestically, but not their overseas distribution, not to mention better financial rewards. But embracing transnational capital also has its own sets of constraints, which I explore in my reading of Zhang's *Not One Less* in the second part of the chapter.

In the United States, the Chinese debate over Zhang Yimou's voyeuristic Orientalism also invited discussions among scholars working in film studies and Chinese cultural studies. Among them, E. Ann Kaplan has called for a cross-cultural analysis that posits the possibility of knowing about the Other while acknowledging the limits of this approach (135-53). Chris Berry proposes to rethink Chinese cinema and national agency through Judith Butler's notion of performativity (172). Esther C. M. Yau and Rey Chow also joined the debate in the 1990s but drew different conclusion. Chow emerged as the major voice defending Zhang Yimou's exhibitionist Orientalism. Yingjin Zhang, however, regards Chow's defense as ultimately "participat[ing] in a new kind of Orientalism" (111).

In her essay, "International Fantasy and the 'New Chinese Cinema,'" Esther C.M. Yau argues that the phenomenon of "Chinese cinema of the 1980s" was the combined result of three "projections cast onto the screens of international film festivals" (95). Those projections, she notes, involved three image-making processes: the reexamining of China's political and cultural histories by the Fifth-Generation filmmakers, the

diplomatic exhibition of cinematic talents by the Chinese state implementing its open-door policies and the search by the Western film critics for a new varieties of art cinema (ibid.). She believes that the international recognition of the Fifth-Generation male directors as auteurs since the mid-1980s had ramifications for filmmaking in China. One of them was the “internalization of Western interests” in China’s festival film entries, financed and selected by the State for film festival competition (98). In festival entries of the late 1980s, Yau notes, “the gaze of the Western film critic/viewer is inscribed through the choice of subject matter, style, and visual imagery” (ibid.). The production of Chinese films with strategically placed mise-en-scene to signify a “China,” however, only accounts for part of their appeals to Western film critics and viewers. Yau argues that since the Fifth-Generation directors studied various foreign cinemas while at the Beijing Film Academy, in their films influenced by Western filmic language and techniques Western film critics found a “novel, ‘exotic’ version of a canonized form” (95). Thus the favorable reception of the Fifth Generation at the international film festivals was a result of what Yau calls “an occidentalist project” meeting with “an orientalist reception” (96). Shuqin Cui recently describes the match between the production side of exhibitionist Orientalism and the perception side of it as “cooperative Orientalism” in her analysis of transnational film spectatorship (xxi; 111). Since 1990, Zhang Yimou and Chen Kaige, in Yau’s view, have proven to be able to supply “oriental fantasies” to the West through a “conscious and more sophisticated inscription of the Western gaze” (105). Yau’s critique echoes some of native Chinese critics’ assessment of Zhang Yimou’s work in the early 1990s, but it does not consider the films’ critique of oppressive patriarchal order.

In contrast to Yau and Zhang Yimou's other critics, Rey Chow sees Zhang Yimou's mode of Orientalism as a tactic and demonstration to critique China's feudal practices. In *Primitive Passions*, Chow comes to Zhang's defense, arguing that some of his critics have misconstrued Zhang's excessive mode of exhibitionism as simply conforming to a voyeuristic Western Orientalism. Chow notes that it is essential to acknowledge that vision bears not only the origins of gender inequalities, as Laura Mulvey suggested in "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," but also the origins of ethnographic inequalities in postcolonial world (180). She goes on to argue that "the state of being looked at" is the "*active manner*" in which the non-Western cultures represent and thus ethnographize themselves, even though it is also being built into the way non-Western cultures are being viewed by the West (*italics original*). There is no doubt that the subjective origins of the Eurocentric ethnography are what makes it an instrument of Western cultural hegemony. But Chow argues that it is necessary to turn our attention to "*the subjective origins of ethnography as it is practiced by those who were previously ethnographized and who have, in the postcolonial age, taken up the active task of ethnographizing their own cultures*" (*italics original*). Arguing for an alternative theory of ethnography that takes visibility into account and thus gives agency to the formerly ethnographized, Chow notes that it is "being-looked-at-ness," rather than the act of looking, which constitutes "the primary event in cross-cultural representation." She thus underscores the paradox of self-representation through the medium of film.

Under Zhang's hand, Chow argues, "the remnants of orientalism" are being turned into "elements of a new ethnography," an ethnography that "accepts the historical fact of orientalism and performs a critique (i.e., evaluation) of it by staging and parodying

orientalism's politics of visibility" (*Primitive Passions* 171). She bolsters her defense of Zhang with a critical scene from *Judou*, in which the title character makes a conscious decision to turn her bruised body around to face her voyeur, her abusive husband's nephew. The act by Judou, Chow argues, is a defiant and courageous one in that Judou confronts the nephew with the marks of an oppressive and abusive feudal order (167). This return of the male gaze also changes the relationship between the voyeur and the fetishized woman: it denies the pleasure to the nephew, leaves him with a disturbed psyche and makes him sympathetic to Judou's abuse. For Chow, Zhang's Orientalism, or what she calls "the Oriental's orientalism," with "its self-subalternizing, self-exoticizing visual gestures" thus is "first and foremost a demonstration—the display of a tactic" (171). The self-conscious display of Orientalism as a form of subversion and critique can also be seen in *Raise the Red Lantern*. At the end of the film, Songlian, the movie's heroine, stages and parodies the ritual of lantern-lighting after master Chen orders her lanterns covered in black clothes as a punishment for faking a pregnancy to maintain the "privilege" of having the lanterns raised in front of her chamber and the accompanying foot massage. In doing so, Songlian not only challenges master Chen's patriarchal authority but also asserts her agency. The staging of the lantern-ritual, putting Orientalism on display, thus is her way of subverting a perverse patriarchal practice, however temporary it is. Thus, I would argue that the staging of exhibitionist Orientalism in these two films is not simply to feed the Orientalist fantasies of the West as some of Zhang's critics charge, but to critique China's feudal system that oppresses not only women but also men without wealth and power.

Examining the New German Cinema of the 1970s, Thomas Elsaesser concludes that the German films, seen as “a privileged medium of self-representation,” were “the consequence of a vast transcription process” (207; 322). He further notes that collectively the New German cinemas have attempted to “gather, record and report the images, sounds and stories ... which make up the memory of a generation, a nation and a culture, and to translate them” from perishable memories to cinema, the most permanent medium (322-23). In this way, the German films were able to preserve diverse cultural products such as literature, popular culture, architecture, fashion, memorabilia and the like in their enlistment of them (323). Elsaesser’s understanding of film as a form of cultural translation, Rey Chow notes, is useful in developing a reformulation of ethnography as visuality and translation that is suited for the aspirations of non-Western cultures to represent and record their cultures and histories (*Primitive Passions* 182). Building on Elsaesser’s insights, Chow further suggests that two important types of translation are at work in national cinemas. For her, ethnographic films not only inscribe and thus translate a generation, a nation and a culture onto the medium of film, they also open up the possibilities to transform traditions and intervene in the process of transporting the “raw material” to film.

Chow’s reformulation of visual ethnography as inscription and translation on the one hand and as transformation and permutation on the other, however, highlights the challenges faced by non-Western filmmakers as both native informants and cultural translators in a working environment that dictates their cultural products as a global commodity competing for visibility, that is, competing to be looked at, if not to be appreciated. Can they meet the challenges to produce innovative works especially when

transnational capital funds and thus controls the major decision-making over their production ? The answer to this question will be explored through the examination of Zhang Yimou's *Not One Less* and his other recent works, produced not just for Chinese audience both at home and abroad but for international viewers as well.

Transnational Chinese Cinemas and Native Informant

When Marx and Engels assessed the effects of capitalist globalization in the 19th century, they noted one positive literary phenomenon: from the production of “the numerous national and local literatures, there arises a world literature” (Tucker, *Marx-Engels Reader* 477). And its salutary effect is that “national one-sidedness and narrow-mindedness” would become more and more impossible to maintain. During their time, the national and local literatures that make up the world literature still remained nation-bound. But the globalization of capital and culture has loosened the national boundaries, not just in literature but in films as well. That is, national cinema is increasingly becoming transnational cinema. Sheldon Lu has argued that increasingly it is impossible to talk about Chinese cinema in the singular and as purely national cinema because of the effects of globalization and the split of China into three major geopolitical entities—the Mainland, Hong Kong and Taiwan. A new concept of “transnational Chinese cinemas,” Lu suggests, is more able to articulate the realities of globalized production, marketing and consumption of Chinese-language films in the age of transnational capitalism. Despite the political and ideological differences between China, Hong Kong and Taiwan, the co-operation between their film industries has been a constant feature since the early 1990s. Chen Kaige's *Farewell My Concubine* (1993) was financed by Taiwanese capital via Hong Kong. Zhang Yimou's *Raise the Red Lantern* was partially financed by the Taiwanese filmmaker, Hou Hsiao-Hsien, who served as its executive producer. Zhang's

recent martial arts films, *Hero* (2002) and *The House of Flying Daggers* (2004), which was shot in Ukraine, enlisted the help of Hong Kong martial arts specialist, Chen Hsiao-tung, and Japanese costume designer Emi Wada. The lead actors for both martial arts films are from China, Hong Kong and Taiwan.

The intensified privatization of China's film industry has major ramifications for Zhang Yimou's recent works. That is, his films are more than ever subjected to the gaze of Chinese censors and of transnational capital. On the one hand, the Chinese authorities still hold the right to ban his films domestically; on the other, the foreign investors have control over film production and overseas distribution. Under such working conditions, many Zhang's critics have noted that the sharp cultural critique in his early films have been much muted and that ideologically and politically he is less willing to antagonize the Chinese censors and endanger the investors' profit. These days, Zhang seems to be more concerned about the government censorship than about the control the investors has over his artistic creations. As he told a Chinese news outlet, *World Journal*, in a 1999 interview, "when I receive a film script, the first thing I think about is not whether there will be an investor for the film, but how I can make the kind of film that I want with the approval of the authorities" (qtd. in Lu, "Chinese Film Culture" 120). The withdrawal of his film, *Not One Less*, from the 1999 Cannes Film Festival accentuates the effect of the Chinese censorship on his artistic creation. According to newspaper reports, the Cannes film festival committee had thought that the film was a vehicle for government propaganda, despite its artistic merits. In response to the criticism, Zhang withdrew *Not One Less* and his another film, *The Road Home*, from the film festival and issued a statement criticizing the Western film critics for reducing films from China to two

categories: they are either government propaganda or anti-establishment. And under this logic, it implies that films approved by the Chinese government must be bad and films it bans must be good and worth seeing (Lu, "Chinese Film Culture" 126).

The controversy over the interpretation of *Not One Less* involves the positive representation of the Chinese bureaucrats by the film, which tells the story of a teenage substitute teacher from a poor village who goes to the city alone to find a student of hers. Wei Minzhi, a 13-year-old from a nearby village who just finished her primary education, agrees to take over a class of 28 students ranging from the first to the fourth grade in Shuiquan Village, Hebei, northern China, for a month from Teacher Gao. Gao, who needs to take care of his ailing mother living in another village, promises to pay Wei 50 *yuan* and another 10 *yuan* as a bonus if she manages to keep all the students while he is away, hence the title of the film. After finding Zhang Huike, a third grader, is missing from class one day and that he has gone to the city to work to help pay off family debts, Wei decides to look for him in the city. Her journey to the city and the search effort finally land her at the gate of a TV station. After three days' relentless effort to try to find the head of the TV station, Wei finally meets with him. The TV executive, after learning of her situation, arranges for her to appear on a TV show to enlist the public's help to find her student and to inform them of the state of education in rural China. Not only does her TV appearance result in the finding of the boy, who has been wandering in the city and begging for food, but also the outpouring of donations including stationary for the students and money for the school to repair its 40-year-old dilapidated classroom from the urbanites. Through Wei Minzhi's unwavering determination to find Zhang Huike, the film implicitly deals with the consequences of accumulation by dispossession, especially

the displacement of rural population who benefits the least from China's embrace of capitalism. That is, the film subtly raises the problem of rural poverty in China and that of migration of rural population to the cities in search of jobs as China moves further toward capitalism and cuts back on social services. But this critical message is, somehow, undermined by the film's positive portrayal of the TV station head, who seeks to meet with Wei after learning that she had been trying to see him for three days, and who chastises the female receptionist for not informing him of Wei's situation earlier, as well as its happy ending. They also suggest that Zhang the director may have bowed to the pressure of censorship, or may have imposed self-censorship on himself, if not ending up producing an outright government propaganda.

But Zhang Xiaoling disagrees with that assessment. He argues that the film's manifest text may give the appearance that the filmmaker is appeasing the government by a positive portrayal of the TV executive, but its latent text suggests otherwise. As Zhang the critic points out, in performing the song, "Our Motherland is a Garden," Wei Minzhi stumbles and improvises the lyrics that give a new political and subversive meaning to the song (135-36). When asked to perform the song during her first meeting with Teacher Gao, Wei deviates from the official version, singing instead:

Our motherland is a garden/Lark in the garden singing endlessly/Singing about our motherland/Singing about Chairman Mao/the Communist Party who/Reveals the blue sky by driving away the clouds and/Guides us to be our own masters. (135)

Gao immediately corrects her, telling her that the lyrics should be "Our motherland is a garden/Flowers in the garden are so bright." But what Gao does not tell Wei (and the audience), Zhang Xiaoling notes, is the whole version of the song:

Our motherland is a garden/Flowers in the garden are so bright/Warm sunshine shines upon us/Smiles appear on our faces. (ibid.)

Zhang further explains that in Chinese official propaganda, flowers always refer to children, as in the standard phrase “flowers of our motherland.” Furthermore, the sunshine symbolizes the Communist Party that brings light and warmth to the flowers/children. But Wei Minzhi keeps forgetting the original lyrics after the first line. Her inability to memorize the official version, Zhang Xiaoling argues, suggests that Wei cannot imagine herself and other rural children to receive “sunshine and warmth” from the government. Despite Teacher Gao’s correction, Wei continues to deviate from the official lyrics and improvise them as she sees fit. Thus, in giving a singing lesson to her young students after Gao departs, Wei creates another new version that drifts further away from the party doctrine and moves closer to the children’s heart. Now she sings to them as follows:

Red Sun, white cloud/Mother washes clothes and I join in/Ailou ailou ailou/Ailou ailou ailou ai. (136)

The foregrounding of the song, Zhang Xiaoling argues, thus is the means through which Zhang Yimou encodes his veiled critique of the Chinese government that has neglected children in the countryside, as opposed to their counterparts in the urban areas, as it directs its attention and national resources to develop (post)modern cities in Beijing, Shanghai, and the like (136). He further contends that by not using the title of the novel, “A Sun in the Sky,” from which the film is adapted, the filmmaker is able to avoid arousing suspicions of political diversion from or subversion of party doctrines from the censors.

Zhang Xiaoling’s analysis of the revisions of the song offers an alternative and fresh way to read the film’s coded message. But I think that the revisions also are signs that Zhang Yimou has been depoliticized as a result of having to compromise in order to

survive in the censorship system in which the Chinese authorities have to read the script before issuing a permit for a film's production, and to meet the requirements of making profits for the film's investors. As Zhang Yimou's primary native informant, Wei Minzhi repeatedly performs acts deviating from, if not subverting, the teaching of Communist Party, but she does so without being fully conscious of their political meanings as intended by the director. Furthermore, while the film touches on the problem of rural poverty and rural migration to the city in search of jobs, it does not go far enough. The film's focus on Wei Minzhi's stubbornness and determination to find her missing student at the same time prevents another disturbing and potentially more political story from being told: the story of Sun Zhimei and many more rural children like her who are forced to drop out of school and go to the city to work to support themselves and their families. In their analysis of the film, Rey Chow, Wanning Sun and Sheldon Lu have mainly focused on Wei Minzhi and her unwavering determination to find her student. (Zhang Xiaoling's essay is the only reception that I am aware of.) So have the major newspaper reviews of the film. In doing so, they overlook the untold number of school children like Sun who are working at some corner of China's big cities while they should be getting a compulsory education of nine years mandated for all school children in China.

Sun Zhimei, about Wei Minzhi's age, is the girl with whom Zhang Huike had been traveling from their village to the city before they got separated at the city's train station. When Wei first tries to find Zhang at a run-down dormitory for young rural migrant workers, the camera lingers for a while outside the dorm, allowing the audience to see the bustling activities of the young school-aged workers in the morning before work. It is here that Wei meets Sun Zhimei for the first time and seeks her help to find Zhang Huike.

But before Sun agrees to join the search effort, she demands that she be paid 2 yuan, an equivalent of her daily wage, as a compensation for missing a day's work. She also demands that she be paid another half yuan if she is compensated at the end of the search. Sun Zhimei's demands may make her an unsympathetic figure with some viewers. But those demands, I would argue, show how poverty has toughened her to look for her self-interest to survive in a society that in practice has largely abandoned its historical commitment to reduce poverty in rural areas despite empty official rhetoric. As a marginal figure in the film, Sun is the genuine native informant, who is invoked but whose story cannot be fully told in a society that increasingly relies on the cheap labor of the rural population to produce commodities for consumers both at home and abroad. Yet the foreclosure of Sun's world of young migrant workers is felt when those words appear on the screen at the end of the film: "One million children drop out of school because of poverty in China every year. With the financial assistance from various sources, about fifteen percent of them are able to return to school." With China's insertion into global capitalism, providing a huge cheap labor force for the global production machine, the adverse effects of accumulation by dispossession are more likely to be felt by the rural population than their urban counterparts as lands in the countryside are being seized by local governments with little or no compensation to the villagers to build factories and other facilities to develop its economy. Furthermore, driven off the land, the villagers are migrating in large number each year to cities looking for jobs to survive; their children also suffer as some of them have to drop out of school to help support the family. It does not help that global competition among capital demands the use of cheap labor force wherever it can find to drive up profits. "The ethnicization of labor" as a commodity

itself, to borrow Rey Chow's new formulation in *The Protestant Ethic and The Spirit of Capitalism* (34), will only become more pronounced and the face of ethnic workers younger as the spirit of capitalism goes unchecked and unregulated by stringent labor laws to protect workers in the developing countries.

Zhang Yimou's failure to engage more with Sun Zhimei's untold story thus misses an opportunity to critically examine the figure of internal migrant worker in China. Branded as "floating population," the migrant workers have become the dangerous "Others" in the minds of the relatively more well-off urban residents. Since the early 1980s when China deepened its economic liberalization and reduced migration control, millions of peasants have reportedly moved to the cities seeking for jobs and for a better life (Ma and Biao 546). This massive migration has attracted much media reporting, which however tended to portray them in a negative light, associating them with such social problems as increased crimes rates, overburdened public transport system, disorderly street scenes and ignoring family planning (547). As a newly formed underclass, the migrant workers are not only discriminated against in the city but also are excluded from obtaining social services including education for their children available to their urban counterparts (Solinger 241-75). The discrimination and exclusion they face, however, are sanctioned by the institutionalized household registration system, which restricts the movement of the peasants. Despite household registration system, each year the countryside keeps losing its able-bodied members to the cities where they compete for low-paying jobs. Sun Zhimei is the young face of this underclass, living in a crowded dorm, separated from her family, and earning a wage that will take more than a day's labor to buy a can of Chinese packaged Coca-cola, which costs 3 yuan—a piece of

consumer information Wei Minzhi and her students learn at the village grocery store. There, they spend part of the money, intended for her bus fare to the city, they earned at a local brick factory on the soft drink they have never tasted before. China's further integration into the global economy—its admission into the World Trade Organization in 2002—will create more young child workers like Sun if its policy makers are only looking at maintaining China's economic growth and prosperity (for some) while ignoring the welfare of the rural population and its children, the “flowers” of the state. This is the untold story of capitalist globalization in *Not One Less*.

While Zhang Yimou avoids digging further into Sun Zhimei's world of young rural migrant workers in favor of pursuing Wei Minzhi's more sensational story to bring her student home, he is not shy from directing the school children who play Wei's students to make a commercial for Coca-Cola, China version, in *Not One Less*. To create the semblance of documenting the lives of rural school children, Zhang has recruited village school children to play themselves in the film, including Wei Minzhi and Zhang Huike. In the scene I just mentioned, after a day's hard labor at the village brick factory, under Wei's leadership, the school children stop by a store on their way home and reward themselves with two cans of Coca-Cola with Chinese packaging promoting the soft drink as “each drink is tasty.” The scene showing the school children eagerly and excitedly sharing the cans of foreign-brand soft drink they have never tasted before also has some of them say “it tastes real good.” While product placement is often used in Hollywood commercial films, its adoption by Zhang Yimou in a film, which has taken efforts to signify it as an “ethnographic film” with scenes foregrounding the writing of Chinese scripts, underscores the degree of the penetration of transnational capital and its

consumer culture in the film. The marking of *Not One Less* as an ethnographic film starts with the copy lessons Wei Minzhi gives to her students. It is accentuated in the scene at the city's train station when Wei writes the posters searching for Zhang Huike with calligraphy, and with much patience demanded by this form of writing. And at the end of the film, the school children collectively perform the writing of Chinese scripts on the blackboard with the colorful and precious chinks donated by the urbanites. The intrusion or blending of the product placement in Zhang Yimou's ethnographic film alerts us to the compromises Zhang has made in order to make this film. It is also a telling sign that the practice of marketing consumer products to young children has spread from the United States to China, thanks to the globalization of ideas and consumer culture. Seen in this light, the school children are not simply playing themselves, but acting out a script that interpellates them as the happy consumers.

As Gang Gary Xu observes, the film's viewers may not read the scene of the innocent children happily tasting their first Coca-Cola as a commercial promotion until they bother to read the final credits listing Coca-Cola, Ford and Sony as the film's three major sponsors (333). Once the connection is being made, it is not hard to speculate why the thirsty village children have chosen among the various brands Coca-Cola as their favorite choice to quench their thirst. Moreover, the product placement incorporated by Zhang Yimou into the story line alerts us to examine closely and critically the scenes in which the logos of Sony and Ford appear in the film, and to dissect their ideological function in fostering a consumer culture based on brand recognition.

In her appearance on the TV program, *Rainbow Bridge*, to make a plea to the public to help search Zhang Huike, Wei Minzhi is asked by the TV hostess to talk about

the current education conditions in rural China. However, disoriented by the new environment she is placed in, Wei is at a loss, unable to utter words to meet the hostess's request. At this moment, she follows the gaze of the camera to the background of the live interview, and with a puzzled look on her face. The backdrop depicts a country scene in its vitality full of colors of green and gold, an imaginary landscape that is dramatically different from what Wei has witnessed first hand at the remote mountain village. The gap between the reality on the ground and the idyllic image conjured up by the TV program clearly is Zhang Yimou's veiled critique of the neglect of the countryside under China's economic reform. Yet this veiled criticism is intermingled with the promotion of Sony-brand camera. As Wei is at a loss to express herself, the TV hostess gently coaches her to just look at the camera and to say a few words to Zhang Huike as if he were present. At this moment, an exchange of gazes between Wei and the camera bearing the Sony logo takes place. Thus, subliminally, the film's viewers were force-fed a Sony commercial while they watched Wei make a direct and emotional plea to Zhang Huike to return home. At the same time, through the shot-reverse-shot technique, the spectacle of searching for Zhang Huike by Wei on live TV, broadcast throughout the city and beyond, is quietly turned into a spectacle for promoting the Sony brand. Further, under the global distribution of the film, the Sony brand is given a joy ride, traveling with the film's screening and its DVD and VCD releases, reaching a wider audience around the globe.

The promotion of multinational brands in *Not One Less* reaches a climax when Wei Minzhi and Zhang Huike, accompanied by the TV hostess and the camera men recording their journey home from the city, return in a TV station van, followed by a truck full of school supplies donated by the TV program's viewers. The van and the truck with the

blue oval Ford logo, strategically placed in the film's narrative as it approaches its happy ending, thus help cultivate a positive image of Ford as a brand bringing happiness and hope to the impoverished villagers as Coca-Cola has done to relieve the thirsty school children. The ideology of consumption is further reinforced in the interview between Zhang Huike and the TV hostess shortly before the convoy reaches the impoverished village. Asked about his impression of the city, the boy says that it is the ongoing activity of "buying this and buying that" that impresses him the most, though his most unforgettable experience in the city was that he was forced to beg for food. And asked about how he is going to thank Wei for bringing him home, he answers that he will study hard and make a lot of money and "buy a lot of stuff" including "flowers" for Teacher Wei. He also concludes that the city is much better than the village. Zhang Huike's replies, as innocent as they sound, thus converge with the ideology of consumption fostered by global capitalism. The city is more attractive to him precisely because there the act of buying and selling and the pleasure of consumption are in full view. But it also has its unpleasant sites/sights, such as the dorms shared by Sun Zhimei and other young rural migrant workers, and their work place that the film, despite its quasi-documentary approach, is not interested in showing, ostensibly to avoid offending the censors and to protect the interests of the multinational corporations that sponsor the film.

As an artist, Zhang Yimou has outgrown the so-called Zhang Yimou Model, and his image of China has also expanded to include that of contemporary China both rural and urban. Along the way, critics have noticed that the critical elements found in his earlier films have been much muted in his later works. The slide or change, Evans Chan notes, starts with *the Story of Qiuju* (1992), set in contemporary rural China (5). In the

film, the party bureaucrats are presented as the friends of the ordinary people except the village chief who kicks and injures the groin of Qiuju's husband, a serious matter in one-child policy China, and kicks off the peasant woman's quest to seek an explanation and an apology from the village head through China's bureaucratic hierarchy. In *To Live* (1995), Zhang's take on the effects of China's Civil War (1940s), the Great Leap Forward Movement (1950s) and the Cultural Revolution (1960s) on the life of a Chinese family, the desire to live a simple life, not bothered by the political turmoil of the time, is clearly expressed by the film's non-political couple (Larson 192). So are the young couple in *The Road Home* (2001) who become the talk of the village for breaking the yoke of arranged marriage and for pursuing their love-at-first-sight courtship. The film reverses the male (heterosexual) gaze through which Zhang has critiqued oppressive feudal China in his early "red films," and designates its female protagonist as the bearer of the gaze, gazing at her love interest. The movie, however, downplays the political trouble of the male protagonist who is being labeled as "rightist" in the political purge movement of the 1950s. In addition to the depoliticization of his films, commercialization has been creeping into Zhang's artistic visions, the most noticeable case being *Not One Less* as I have discussed above.

His recent turn to martial arts genre, *Hero* (2002) and *The House of Flying Daggers* (2004), further highlights his attempt to break into the mainstream from the art-film quarters, reaching wider global audiences. Moreover, the revival of the martial arts genre financed by transnational capital rode on the wave of Taiwanese-born Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* (2000), the most grossing foreign-language film in the United States. However, with *Hero*, the story about China's first emperor, Ying Zheng of

the 3rd B.C., and the attempted assassinations on his life, Zhang again puts himself at the center of a heated debate both in Asia and abroad over the film's seemingly endorsement of authoritarianism. But the film's ambiguous ending, a trademark of the early experimental Fifth-Generation, contests that reading (Chiu, "Public Secrets" 15).

Film production, as Rey Chow suggests, is an ethnographic production and a process of translating one's culture and putting it on display to be looked at, and it thus has the potential for innovating and transforming the culture. But does Chow's idealist conception still hold true when the *frame* of the ethnographic production, as in China's case, is being controlled by the film censors and the multinational corporations that provide most of the capital for China's film production in the age of transnational capitalism? The examination of Zhang Yimou's film career shows that to survive in China's film industry heavily depending on foreign investment and regulated by the Film Censor Bureau, the space for doing politically transforming work has been greatly reduced. As a native informant and cultural translator for the world's film audiences, Zhang Yimou has been tamed. The self-censored voices, even those of ordinary people, in his latter films speak not to the problems of the day but to what can be represented in the dominant symbolic order. This is not to say the spirit of the cultural critique of the early Fifth-Generation has completely died, but it will take enormous courage to revive that spirit at a historical juncture when the ultimate concern of film production is to make profits.

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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Huei-ju Wang received her bachelor's degree in English from Soochow University, Taipei, and her master's degree in English from the State University of New York at Albany. She was awarded her doctorate at the University of Florida at Gainesville.