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Cosmo-Theory

**W**hat cosmopolitanism popularly evokes—among other things, the thirst for another knowledge, unprejudiced striving, world travel, supple open-mindedness, broad international norms of civic equality, a politics of treaty and understanding rather than conquest—can hardly be devalued, especially today. As various urban “suss” laws are upheld by the higher courts, and as an entire people abroad is bombarded by U.S. planes for the collective sin of belonging to a race of “serial ethnic cleansers,” one is tempted to stick to the basic decency of cosmopolitanism (à la Martha Nussbaum) rather than try to be too subtle.<sup>1</sup>

On the other hand, cosmopolitanism has prompted some of these very symptoms. It is a fundamentally ambivalent phenomenon. An ethical argument for cosmopolitanism or for its nominal opposite (patriotism) cannot be based on a formal adherence to a list of positive qualities. One’s judgment of cosmopolitanism’s value or desirability, in other words, is affected by whose cosmopolitanism or patriotism one is talking about—whose definitions of prejudice, knowledge, or open-mindedness one is referring

to. Cosmopolitanism is *local* while denying its local character. This denial is an intrinsic feature of cosmopolitanism and inherent to its appeal.

Our confusion over these preliminary observations derives from a fact about cosmopolitanism that seems, at first, to be quite extraneous to it. In general, the term has been disorienting within cultural theory because of the theorist's unwillingness to analyze the marketplace in a sustained or careful way. My apparently unjustified leap into new territory might be defended by recalling the opening question of the chapter "The Fair, the Pig, and Authorship" from Peter Stallybrass and Allon White's widely read book, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression*. They ask, "How does one 'think' a marketplace?" Their provisional answer, which I take to be the *type* of point I make in this essay, is that "the commonplace is what is most radically unthinkable":

At once a bounded enclosure and site of open commerce, it is both the imagined centre of an urban community and its structural interconnection with the network of goods. . . . A marketplace is the epitome of local identity (often indeed it is what defined a place as more significant than surrounding communities) and the unsettling of that identity by the trade and traffic of goods from elsewhere. . . . In the marketplace pure and simple categories of thought find themselves perplexed and one-sided.<sup>2</sup>

Their image of opening up the center's one-sided logic to the clashing values of the outer boroughs is reminiscent of the hybridity so widely extolled in theories of cosmopolitanism. But they take us into more troubling territory with their image of a local reality translated into global terms by way of market flow—a reality, as the authors describe it, that transforms hybridity itself into a coercive lesson imposed on outlying populations. Pursuing this logic, which is uniquely accessible in a cultural analysis that attempts to "think a marketplace," Stallybrass and White find themselves questioning Mikhail Bakhtin's famous observations on the carnivalesque. They observe that "the fair, far from being the privileged site of popular symbolic opposition to hierarchies, was in fact a kind of educative spectacle, a relay for the diffusion of the cosmopolitan values of the 'centre' (particularly the capital and the new urban centres of production) throughout the provinces and the lower orders."<sup>3</sup>

If they treat the concept only in passing and superficially, nevertheless

the authors are right about cosmopolitanism functioning as a relay for the center's values, sublimating differences on grounds of understanding by way of a motive to export ideological products made to the measure of the world of saleable things. But I would add a point they leave only implicit: namely, that cosmopolitanism makes sense only in the context of a specific national-cultural mood. As Stallybrass and White imply, centers tend to be where the concept has historically found its greatest acclaim. But what they do not quite express is the process by which one — benevolently, of course — expands his or her sensitivities toward the world while exporting a self-confident locality for consumption *as* the world. The problem exposed here consists of the ways in which an ideo-economic substructure is elaborately developed for the export of “idea-products” in a necessarily self-concealing act, where what is promoted has value only insofar as it proclaims that it promotes its opposite. This is a subject for theory that has too rarely been taken up, since it points toward the threatening topic of the economic function of intellectuals.

Cosmopolitanism's colloquial connotations are so overwhelmingly positive and liberal that one rarely remarks on the multipurpose ambiguity of those values it relays. Our understanding of Stallybrass and White's meaning of the term *value*, for example, is humanist and ethical while dissimulating value as it is understood in the marketplace. If economic value generally rules the flow of commodities, rates of exchange, and the price of goods, nevertheless the ethical or aesthetic sense of this slippery term in cultural anthropology or literary criticism draws on an economic foundation. The passage from Stallybrass and White, although undeveloped, is extraordinarily helpful in permitting us to fold these two senses into one another. On one hand, an attempt to imagine the relations between emergent financial interests and scholarly models is widely lacking in scholarship itself; on the other, research in the humanities finesses (without of course ignoring) the interconnections among languages, symbols, and objects in a social context defined by corporate incentives and a landscape of increasing monopoly over information and the means of information. The institutional role or function of the theorists themselves comes in for the least attention of all.

To tackle this complex of issues is far too daunting for a single essay, although a brief overview of a single decisive concept may be useful for illustrating a kind of inquiry that is seldom taken up in cultural studies: one that links intellectual producers to their own products in a localized matrix of

intellectual work. I would like to focus on only one aspect of this matrix—the one that concerns the *flow* of the intellectual commodity known as cosmopolitanism.<sup>4</sup> These ideological products tend to be radically divided into disciplinary spheres of influence, or into academic versus extra-academic dichotomies that belie their actual movements. Thus, when I cite the terms *intellectual* or *intellectual communities* in this essay, I am referring not only to university professors but to media analysts, corporate advisors, and managerial specialists, all operating within a vast division of labor that is, of course, not overseen by any command center, but that nevertheless parcels out duties in a pattern that none of its actors can diagram, or even fully appreciate.

At times I focus especially on cultural theorists—that is, university intellectuals in the humanities—but only where specifically noted. For in the locality known as the United States, the role of the cultural theorist in the division of labor has been important in developing the concept of cosmopolitanism, whose ethical aura is largely an export from the humanities into other, more technical or policy-oriented formations, including branches of the social sciences and (outside the university) of government and business. In this map of interlocking arguments surrounding cosmopolitanism, my more speculative diagnoses demand a certain methodological risk. Given the constraints of space, I cannot treat all of my subjects adequately, and do not pretend to. I do, however, assume that there is something to be gained in a general approach so long as the readings themselves are not distorting. Certain facts are visible only by tracing movement across several disciplines and intellectual territories of a reasonably structured whole. I begin by suggesting a framework for the discussion of intellectual flow in the U.S. market, and then move on to cosmopolitanism's preliminary definitions and the methodological approaches possible when studying it. I conclude with a thesis on the nation as a "manageable community."

### Intellectual Flow and the Market

There are at least four or five different intellectual sectors in which the invocation of the global is taking place—a concept closely related to that of cosmopolitanism. For our purposes, globalization bears on cosmopolitanism as structure to idea. It is that purportedly new material reality to which the new ethos—cosmopolitanism—responds. The latter is, then, an ethical

stance that its proponents argue grows inexorably out of exciting and revolutionary new material conditions: the mode of proper social conduct appropriate to a heretofore unseen age. In order to make sense of the force of cosmopolitanism as an ideal, one has to look at these sectors' various modes of expression, their variant proximities to power, and the lines of contact that exist or do not exist among these communities of intellectual belonging. I am not talking about "influence" here, since the process of borrowing and exchange is either unconscious or deliberately repressed.

Behind disagreements over cosmopolitanism's desirability, then, lie poorly analyzed mechanisms of flow. Intellectual communities borrow from one another without acknowledgment, pattern themselves on terms and leads taken from others that are then transformed in uncontrollable ways once they arrive in different sectors for self-styled reuse. The way that cultural studies professors, 1970s dependency theorists, state department academics, pop-political commentators, and UN delegates working for NGOs (nongovernmental organizations) all invoke the global is quite asymmetrical and quite powerfully productive of a conceptual meshing that conceals the important flows among them. The consequences of these flows are profound for those of us who think of ourselves as being involved in a theoretical enterprise that is cultural—one that deals with images, arts, everyday practices, and forms of entertainment. The sharing of key motifs, key sociological assumptions, and key rhetorical tags among different levels of the intelligentsia takes place in a largely unacknowledged process of mutual echoing and shadowing.

The significance of such a diagnosis lies in its facilitating an understanding of the shape of the intellectual market, and the role of humanities intellectuals in broader networks employed by the state and business to provide a set of complementary products. Intellectuals, in other words, reach similar conclusions about the death of the nation separately but not independently. The famous gulf between the media and academic intellectuals captured so well in France by Régis Debray more than a decade ago loses much of its rigidity in developed postmodernism, where the university is slowly transformed into an arena where the company pays directly for intellectual services rendered, and where the radical wing of theory finds new language in which to celebrate corporatism, although without explicitly wanting to, or thinking that it does.<sup>5</sup>

What is more, the relatively powerless cultural critic longs for the audi-

ences enjoyed by higher levels of the state and media. The policy analysts, for their part, are eager to acquire fresh thinking and an informed intellectual severity that is found in theoretical humanities circles more commonly than in their own bureaucratic enclaves. Although the academic intellectual is, in effect, the object of an out-contracting system, the cultural critic fails to theorize (or even speak openly about) this particular “crossing of borders” between the theorist and the seminar teacher, the literary critic and the feature journalist, the feature journalist and the policy analyst or think-tank strategist, or artist, or politician. Each of these sectors performs distinct, if overlapping, functions in the reproduction of the state and market, and can be divided internally on the basis of its proximity to power, and the type and size of the constituencies it serves. The translation of terms and the covering of tracks are important to the ideas’ use-value.

In this array, humanities intellectuals have an economic function where intellectual flow might be seen as an elaborate system of playing the economic and the cultural off of one another, so that the prejudices of local differences can at times be given the solidity of economic determinations and, at others, the spiritual vitality of culture can humanize the bottom line. This of course all unfolds without deliberate plan, in the amnesiac complexities of system. The ranks of the intellectuals are not altogether fluid, but they are malleable enough for individual actors to be in doubt as to their proper place. Clearly, one can perform a function without necessarily knowing what it is, for instance. The high ethical claims of an unencumbered “value” are sustainable only in an elaborate system of distancing and dissimulation where the exercise of policy is kept separate from theory per se. Humanist ethics commands a higher price if its use-value is deliberately blurred.

The demur of cultural criticism in addressing these divisions, however, has also in part to do with a bad faith that many will consider tasteless to mention. It is not out of the question, for instance, that the cultural theorist actually *wants* to be confused with his or her other—that cultural theory wants to appear part of a public sphere that it is really only gesturing toward even as it denies this sphere is a corporate sphere. There are also local political considerations that prevent the cultural critics in an atmosphere of obligatory progressivism (almost everyone in the humanities, it appears, is, in their own minds at least, on the left) from drawing lines of contact between themselves and more official representatives of public order. What is perhaps strangest in this scenario is the assumption by the cultural theo-

rist that his or her own national-cultural limitations are readily apparent or easily distinguishable. In spite of the sophistications of theory, which have trained us all to interrogate common sense, the critic often acts as though Americanism could not insinuate itself into cosmopolitanism without quickly being noticed. The alarms of normativity would automatically start ringing: as though the enormity of slavery or of the now somewhat ludicrous racism of Thomas Carlyle or Teddy Roosevelt were as absurd in their own times as they look to us now, back across the decades. The critic is so accustomed to seeing him- or herself in the process of mental, physical, or spiritual travel (self-projecting into “difference”) that it seems hardly possible she or he could give comfort to a myth of nationhood, even an American one as grotesque as that of Ben Wattenberg or Fernando Valladao who see the United States as a “universal nation,” an immigrant refuge and a polyglot, panchromatic, unity-in-diversity whose international appeal has nothing to do with its control of resources, only its moral and aesthetic superiority.<sup>6</sup> In cultural studies, the discourse of cosmopolitanism is never so crude as to make that argument, although it often ends up in the same place.

Implicit in my argument thus far is that culturalism performs an appreciable although elusive economic function that is especially noticeable in the debate surrounding cosmopolitanism. Economic questions, however, are really not studied in any sense meaningful to cultural life or to historical reflection in economics departments. At the same time, given its counter-intuitive concepts and mathematical armature, economics tends to resist interest outside economics departments. The economy, therefore—the subject that mostly fills the chambers of government, that occupies a quarter of every daily newspaper, and about a quarter of all news programming—is an absent signifier in cultural study unless, of course, it has been semanticized and dissipated into a libidinal or affective sense. It is a vast unexplored territory, and clearly a missing element of the complex cultural puzzle of modernity. The great earlier cultural theories of the economy have exerted surprisingly little influence, even when written by those whose work is avidly studied in other respects.<sup>7</sup>

### Locating Cosmopolitanism

Cosmopolitanism, in short, works by way of a self-denial that is intrinsic to its economic utility. Only such a paradox could explain the reluctance within

cultural theory to explore our own resources in order to materialize a concept that in truth is too much with us.

The recent groundwork of the concept of cosmopolitanism in academic circles was provided by cultural approaches to globalization that appeared in social science/humanities crossover journals of the early 1990s—especially, *Theory, Culture, and Society* and *Public Culture*—although the discourse of cosmopolitanism had already been launched by my own and others' work in the 1980s, and was from the start critical of the largely celebratory aims of the globalization rhetoric upon which a later, reactive discourse of cosmopolitanism was founded. So it is striking that attempts to trace the concept of cosmopolitanism historically are not found in either of these journals. As it concerns cosmopolitanism, at least, good textual analyses of the major figures in the fields addressed by these journals—which conjoin the cultural and the sociological—are strangely absent. In perhaps the most famous of these kinds of sources, Georg Simmel, in "The Metropolis and Mental Life" (1903), offered his later readers a relevant point-of-departure. He observed the city/country antagonisms at work in the origins of capitalist modernity now replayed in a globalization that is often wrongly cast as recent and novel. There he emphasized the economic and colonial form of cosmopolitanism as an ethos:

It is rather in transcending [the] visible expanse that any given city becomes the seat of cosmopolitanism. The horizon of the city expands in a manner comparable to the way in which wealth develops; a certain amount of property increases in a quasi-automatic way in ever more rapid progression. As soon as a certain limit has been passed, the economic, personal and intellectual relations of the citizenry, the sphere of intellectual predominance of the city over its hinterland, grow as in geometrical progression.<sup>8</sup>

In Simmel's considered opinion, cosmopolitanism conformed to a kind of law of colonial expansion whereby urban centers (metropolitan regions) justified their encroaching power over geopolitically dispersed, and therefore vulnerable, territories. The process in his view assumed the coloring of an implacable, beneficent logic. It is difficult not to see parallels between his prescience and the way in which cosmopolitanism is invoked today in a spirit of outreach and amelioration that is disarming, not least because the word captures the image intellectuals have of themselves by hinting at

the proper way in fact to be an intellectual—namely, projecting outside the self in an effort to understand alien values, while unconsciously translating them into terms of local usage that belie their local origins. When invoked, the term has the added merit of appearing to its users to be an antidote to discrimination, which it replaces with a consummate reason.

Antonio Gramsci—to take another obvious predecessor, and one who enjoys a central position in cultural theory today—explored cosmopolitanism in great detail, and with a critical eye. Nonetheless, his conclusions on this matter play no role whatsoever in current debates over cosmopolitanism, a situation that implies how narrow our framing of the discussion has been. He distinguished the concept from internationalism while considering it an idealist detour associated with specific national formations. In one of his examples, he argues that it found expression in the abstract quest for the “universal language” of Esperanto in the early decades of the century.

As I am presenting it here, Gramsci’s approach to cosmopolitanism may seem provocative, but it is very well documented. His views were neither fleeting nor ambiguous. More than a decade ago, in an essay that traced his use of the concept over his complete works, I argued that Gramsci held an attitude toward cosmopolitanism that, given contemporary understandings, was surprisingly hostile.<sup>9</sup> His attitude, moreover, was consonant with that of the left intellectuals of his generation.<sup>10</sup> This line of argument has since been convincingly taken up by Aijaz Ahmad in the context of discussing an emergent Hindu nationalism in India.<sup>11</sup> At any rate, despite many current readings of Gramsci (which hardly prepare one for this conclusion), the *Prison Notebooks* tirelessly record his views on the lifelessness and conservatism of Italian intellectuals. He traces their shortcomings to domestic traditions that derived, ultimately, from the role intellectuals played in Renaissance Italy, the center (in his words) of “imperial and medieval cosmopolitanism.” While understanding the more familiar barriers to national harmony that come from racial and ethnic differences, Gramsci also explored the rather different process of intellectual stasis and indirection that came from a history of relative *centrality*:

It is necessary to go back to the times of the Roman Empire when Italy, through the territory of Rome, became the melting pot of the cultured classes from throughout the Empire. Its ruling personnel became ever more imperial and ever less Latin: they became cosmopolitan. . . . From the 1500s on . . . Italian Catholicism was experienced as a surrogate

for the spirit of nationalism and statehood, and not only that, but as a worldwide hegemonic function, that is, an imperialistic spirit.<sup>12</sup>

The resonance of these comments for diasporic intellectuals now working in the United States is remarkable—and remarkably untheorized. One cannot lightly draw analogies, obviously, between Gramsci's Italy and the contemporary United States. But surely there is room for comment on the work of a vitally placed cultural theorist when he references the international dimension of intellectual work in such a way that cosmopolitanism appears so double-edged. Gramsci wrote the above words after serving as the Italian Communist Party's delegate to the Third International's Fourth World Congress. He was deeply involved in strategies of international solidarity and in internationalism as an ideology.<sup>13</sup> For that very reason he reminds us that left intellectuals of his generation thought internationalism and cosmopolitanism incompatible,<sup>14</sup> since internationalism acknowledges that differences of culture and polity cannot be juridically erased before the conditions exist for doing so equitably, and because internationalism insists on the principle of *national* sovereignty. There is no other way under a global nation-state system for respect to be expressed. This sort of point puzzles critics today, and the very existence of so fundamental a confusion implies that an important range of inquiries has been lost. That range might be located in the variety of complicated questions suggested by the term *market* insofar as the term is understood as a diagnostic category for understanding the material functions and interests of intellectuals working at the crossroads of policy, social studies, and cultural studies.

One could easily add to these kinds of sources, although this is not the place to do so for want of space.<sup>15</sup> Given the background I have so far elicited, my position may be seen as hostile to cosmopolitanism, although I do not want to be misunderstood. Even though the debate surrounding the term tends to pit cosmopolitanism against patriotism, I hope it is clear that I am not arguing on behalf of an American nativism. In the current religious and imperial resurgence in the United States (as well as in the religious revivals in other parts of the world), it takes a hard heart not to be on the side of opposing prejudice or supporting open-mindedness and alterity—all evoked, *in general*, by the term. In that sense, one should be cosmopolitan when it comes to education, tastes in art, and political solidarities if considered (paradoxically) within national frameworks. The problem being sketched

out here does not conform to those senses of the term, but rather lies in that intellectual formation Gramsci called “imperial cosmopolitanism.”

Let us now be more specific. How has cosmopolitanism actually been studied? It has more than a single lineage. The concept has been approached, for example, in a broadly premodern sense, playing off its etymological origins in Greek cosmology (*cosmos* + *polis*) as it evolved into the Catholic universalism of Dante prior to the project of modern nationalism (the approach, for example, of Stephen Toulmin, Julia Kristeva, and Martha Nussbaum, among others).<sup>16</sup> It can be understood in a different, although not incompatible, way as well by focusing on the post-Kantian era of European exploration and nation building. This approach leads to a different set of questions, for it witnesses a period in which “world government” strategies begin clearly to overlap with the ethical position of “world culture” as implied by the original Greek usage and its later adaptation by the European Church. Indeed, the raiding of the cultural concept by the governmental was one of Kant’s preoccupations as can be seen by the warnings found in his “Idea of a Universal History from a Cosmopolitan Standpoint,” published in 1784. This particular approach—both a period one and one interested in the political undertones of a cultural concept—can be found in the work of Jürgen Habermas, Bonnie Honig, Walter Mignolo, and myself.<sup>17</sup> And, cosmopolitanism, finally, can be understood as referring to the national specificity of the United States in which a New World pluralism adapted from nineteenth-century Latin American liberation movements joins a fledgling U.S. imperial project. Here is born, in the creation of an “elect,” an American exceptionalism that understands the United States as the globally sought after, the desire of all. This approach is in need of elaboration, and the present essay sees itself as contributing to it, although hints of this argument can be found in Enrique Dussel, Roberto Fernandez Retamar, and Arif Dirlik.<sup>18</sup> The need above all would be to clarify how a national-political myth of multicultural inclusion (“pluralism”) dovetails, under specific conditions, with a purportedly supranational ethos of global cooperation (cosmopolitanism). I consider the ethical core of the two concepts to be identical.

To speak of cosmopolitanism’s locality is to suggest its exportability (or importability). This last approach above suggests that intellectual export be seen as a heuristic model for understanding how the concept of cosmopolitanism functions in U.S. intellectual circles. For certainly it is paradoxical that *pluralism*, for example—a term with a familial relationship to cos-

mopolitanism—was an idea first borrowed from the creole nationalisms of Latin America, and then monopolized and exported as an American (i.e., U.S.) “new way.” The concept of pluralism, which is so strongly identified with the American self-image, was originally imported into the United States from Latin America. Thus, in the national specificity of the United States, the meaning of cosmopolitanism is marked by an earlier fundamental shift in its usage after the Enlightenment, occurring for reasons both richly historical and regional. A New World pluralism theorized by early Caribbean travelers like Jean-Baptiste du Tertre and Pere Labat, and forged into a political ethic by Domingo Faustino Sarmiento, José Martí, and others against the background of the nineteenth-century liberation movements (and arising again in the twentieth century in *la raza cósmica* of José Vasconcelos and *lo real maravilloso* of Alejo Carpentier) was taken on—honorably at first—by North American pragmatist philosophers. In the hands of William James and John Dewey it was given a distinguished career before being officially institutionalized while gradually purified of its foreign origins—in that sense, quite out of step with the inclusive intentions of the pragmatists who promoted the concept to stave off hysterical anti-immigration sentiments at the turn of the century.

The cosmopolitanism spoken of today has, therefore, appeared before, appeared here, and in the very terms now employed. It is remarkable how little has been done to resurrect such moments. Where does one hear, for example, of the “Cosmopolitan Clubs” of 1912, which were accustomed to making appeals to “ideals of world brotherhood” while holding multicultural dancehalls on American campuses (“Would you let your daughter dance with a Chinese or Hindu?” one pamphlet provocatively asks)? Their events are reported in great detail in the *Documents of the American Association for International Conciliation*, whose contributors included William Howard Taft in a little essay titled “The Dawn of World Peace” (1911) and Norman Angell’s more academic (and contemporary sounding) essay, “The Mirage of the Map: An Interrogation” (1911).<sup>19</sup> Leaving the early century, one might skip ahead to the immediate post–World War II era to find other precursors. A similar set of organizations arose in left-Hollywood of the late 1940s, where personalities like Clifton Fadiman and Oscar Hammerstein III held fundraisers for the influential pamphlet series, the *World Government News*, performing skits to show the “myth of national sovereignty” and doing so on behalf of a strong United Nations. Both of these examples

have counterparts today; the movement never really dies. Walter Cronkite's World Federalist Association, still active now on behalf of good things like "sustainable development" and mutual understanding, also advocates (with an ominous ring of arrogated stewardship) a "strong international court of justice."

Again, this fundamentally Kantian illusion was particularly strong at the turn of the last century as witnessed by the words of the famed British Radical G. Lowes Dickinson in 1908:

I see the time approaching when the nations of the world, laying aside their political animosities, will be knitted together in the peaceful rivalry of trade; when those barriers of nationality which belong to the infancy of the race will melt and dissolve in the sunshine of science and art; when the roar of the cannon will yield to the softer murmur of the loom, and the apron of the artisan, the blouse of the peasant will be more honourable than the scarlet of the soldier; when the cosmopolitan armies of trade will replace the militia of death; when that which God has joined together will no longer be sundered by the ignorance, the folly, the wickedness of man; when the labour and the invention of one will become the heritage of all; and the peoples of the earth meet no longer on the field of battle, but by their chosen delegates, as in the vision of our greatest poet, in the "Parliament of Man, the Federation of the World."<sup>20</sup>

And the cultural invention of pluralism in the Americas that flourished in the same era specifically provided both the imperatives and the imagery to allow intellectuals a space within which to dwell when espousing an imperial cosmopolitanism from within a general progressivism. From peripheral Portugal, still in possession of the oldest of European colonial empires, but now a disregarded and marginal member of the Western comity of nations, came another version of cosmopolitanism—a dream of modernity to compensate for its actual backwardness. The novelist Fernando Pessoa, setting out a manifesto for the journal *Orpheu* in 1915, wrote,

What does *Orpheu* want? To create a cosmopolitan art in time and space. Ours is a time in which countries, more materially than ever, and for the first time intellectually, all exist within each other; in which Asia, America, Africa and Oceania are Europe and exist within Europe. Any European dock is sufficient . . . to have the entire earth summa-

rised. And if I call this *European* rather than American, for example, it is because Europe rather than America is the *source and origin* of this type of civilization which serves as *norm* and *orientation* to the entire world. For this reason real modern art has to be totally denationalized; it has to accumulate within it all parts of the world. Only in this manner can you be typically modern.<sup>21</sup>

The locality of cosmopolitanism—here Portugal in decay—prepares us for the paradox that a political utopia like Pessoa's is constructed as aesthetic taste. The spilling over of the cultural into the political is endemic to cosmopolitanism's functionality and, in mildly different forms, reappears in the era of American hybridity's penchant for the aesthetic of the "fragment" and the conviction that rhizomatic images are, paradoxically, a "home" position, democratically familiar.

In this atmosphere, it is commonplace for even progressive journalists to assume that "common-sense international law" should "transcend outdated sovereign rights."<sup>22</sup> One generally does not even feel the need to defend this proposition today. The repeated assumption is that ordinary people have the same access to education, funding, and travel that intellectuals and businesspeople do, and that they can exploit the same global networks of communication in a variety of foreign languages. Such mistaken assumptions are the product of the cosmopolitanism of cultural politicians who actually do live transnationally, and whose humanist/ethical outlook enlivens and, in some ways, softens their policy suggestions in the public sphere. Among the issues forgotten here are those key advantages nations provide the global subalterns they wish to free from the tyranny of the national state—advantages that are particularly condemned by the humanists who are hostile to the myths of national belonging. And yet, any progressive vision today depends on such myths. For, outside cosmopolis, they represent the only basis for organizing opposition to the corporate carnivalesque (to echo Stallybrass and White again).

The positive connotations of cosmopolitanism in colloquial usage are so irrepressible that we continually see the critic "discovering" an ethical stance that balefully, and without his or her wanting it to, homologizes itself with corporate interests, echoing official American language, repeating forgotten earlier movements, and demanding no payment from public sentiment. The stance is often consonant with power, and ruffles no feathers. National sovereignty is said to have been transcended, the nation-state relegated to an

obsolete form, and the present political situation is seen as one in which newly deracinated populations, NGOs, and web users are outwitting a new world order in the name of a boldly new, only partially defined, transnational sphere.<sup>23</sup>

It is primarily the *cultural* discourse of cosmopolitanism—a friendly discourse—that prevents intellectuals from contesting this fallacious account of materialities, blinded as they are by the euphoria of a good will that is conveniently good business for them and theirs. For what we are really seeing is not a popular transnationalism but the substantively altered competition among national states—the movement from smaller polities to *mega-states* (with China being the last remaining credible adversary to the United States). If the world were globalized in the way it is discussed in much of cultural theory, we would not be seeing such hard negotiations among the member states of the European Union nor the defections from it; we would not have the trade showdowns that periodically arise between the United States and Japan, the United States and Mexico, or between Venezuela and Brazil; and we would not have the national disparities existing in wage levels, ecological legislation, or the rights of judicial redress—disparities that arose historically as a result of the different ethnic compositions of the workforce as well as distinct national-political traditions. Corporations depend on these disparities, and they are enforced only by the policing operations of national governments. Equally, however, such disparities can be smuggled in through the back door even as their effectiveness is ushered out the front.

To put this more bluntly, nations continue to exist because the major players have a vested interest in their continuing. Working people need nations in order to have someone to complain to; corporations need nations in order to ensure a lack of fair competition and the absence of an equality of law, so that a dynamic flux can be maintained within a setting of monopoly. What ensures the continuity of an albeit altered nation-state system is the desirability of *choices* for capital mobility, so that capital can move when it finds too many regulations in one locale and more amenable legislation elsewhere. This sort of flux allows bidding and outbidding among the clients of monopoly, and stands in as an imposter for the “free market” by simulating it. It is not that no novelty exists in the subsequent demographic creations of this system—that there is no reality to what cosmopolitanism calls new “world subjects,” new diasporic communities, unrooted and resourceful.<sup>24</sup> But if one means by globalization the creation of new “world subjects”

who are not bound by the laws and territorial limitations of locality—or, indeed, are necessarily happy in their uprootedness—one is indulging in a fiction, and is either missing the point or obscuring it by looking at symptoms whose significance is always exaggerated.

The complaint with cosmopolitan discourse is not only that it falls prey to cultural fascination with new diasporic communities at the expense of questioning the market; nor that the culture of diasporic subjects is usually given a positive inflection in cultural theory without remarking on its coercive nature—that people often do not want to be diasporic. It is also that the discourse of cosmopolitanism is exceedingly narrow in what fascinates it, failing to link the market with imagination, and then failing to link that nexus itself to the non-Western world, which any cosmopolitanism should properly foreground. In cosmo-theory, the *non-Western* is, of course, always center stage. The new cosmopolitan subject, as the discourse has it, is for the first time plebeian, nonwhite, working-class, and globally dispersed. While characterizing their lives, the literature of cosmopolitanism is inevitably drawn to a discussion of “modernity,” for the global entrance into hybrid self-consciousness by formerly subjugated peoples is what has traditionally been meant by coming to modernity.

And yet, if modernity brings together the ideas of the great transformation of New World discovery with the management/technological breakthroughs prompted by Spanish gold, new markets, and dynamic interstate rivalries, it is striking to realize that many of the key analysts of modernity (Max Weber, Emile Durkheim—or more recently, Alain Touraine, Anthony Giddens, and Stuart Hall) have given relatively scant space to the Conquest, to colonialism, or to the imperialism that followed both. What Simmel (and after him, Guy Debord) called the “psychogeography” of modernity—the effects on “mental life” of the “money economy” expressed in the move from material goods to information, the plurality of heterogeneous claims to knowledge, the difficulty of grasping the social totality, extreme autonomization resulting from the radical division of labor, reification, the replacement of “use” by “exchange,” the rise of complex bureaucracies mediating all contacts on a colossal scale, time/space distancing, and so on—all of these familiar ideas point to the colonial encounter, and are fully understandable only in terms of it.<sup>25</sup> And yet, from conservative globalists like Samuel Huntington to liberal sociologists like Anthony Giddens, one repeatedly finds claims of proof for the “declining grip of the West over the

rest of the world," as though a process of centralization and a process of de-centering were fundamentally indistinguishable (the same confusion of an age in which the lonely anarchist internet hacker and the corporate takeover artist are products of one and the same process).<sup>26</sup>

Here, too, many current theories of cosmopolitanism arrive to dress contradiction in the garments of dialectical completion. When Giddens explores *reflexivity* (a term that also dominates the globalization writing of dissident financier, George Soros), he correctly argues that reflexivity is radically extended as modernity develops.<sup>27</sup> However, he doesn't question the logic of reflexivity in this purported "declining grip of the West." Drawing on the circular impasses of theory where anarchist nomadism and transatlantic aestheticism are at home with corporate monopoly and radical consumerism, his position helps finalize the West's grip, even to the point of eliminating it as a problem of critique. The telos of the imperial project is reached when the third-world subject is able to deconstruct the epistemic violence of colonialism only by way of Continental theory. What cosmopolitanism unconsciously strives for is a stasis in which the unique expression of the non-Western is Western reflexively and automatically<sup>28</sup>—the local self exported *as* the world. Only in this spirit could one float the truly astounding notion that the West was "losing its grip" on the third world.

The imperial liberalism lying behind well-intentioned, good-spirited writing by cultural theorists is not, for all that, a simple matter of complicity. Such a charge would fall flat, since complicity is, as it were, second nature to those trained in the ethics of theory. The "will to truth," the discursive regime as an arena in which party politics has been displaced by the micro-levels of personal interaction, all direct us to the now overfamiliar post-structuralist processes of avoiding complicity with Enlightenment power by remaining vigilant against repressive claims of universality. In this theoretical climate—and it is one largely shared throughout cultural theory, even in the social sciences—one avoids complicity by decentering oneself. Such decentering has logically moved the theorist to a form of "biopolitics" and specifically to a politics of the body, which among other things is the ultimate expression of a domain of enclosure that cannot be guilty of trespass on another's. It was the *body*, in fact, that was cast methodically, and with explicit intention, by prewar theorists like Georges Bataille as a substitute for both party politics and dialectical negation.<sup>29</sup> The only way to escape complicity as such was to oppose all opposition, disagreement, or overcoming.<sup>30</sup>

The ultimate riposte to power, in other words, was to make oneself powerless—to let power have its way, provided one was innocent of using it (a dialectical negation of the Nietzschean positions that inspired the original project). Fleeing universals indirectly meant giving the universalizing Western state a free hand, continuing to speak under its protections and privileges as though one were absolved from its actions by inaction.

Apart from their internal contradictions, such escapes are a ruse, for they conceal a homology among intellectual sectors that is visible only in institutional settings. In fact, this invocation of “complicity” in theory is one of several ways in which theory’s concepts outwit protest, stealing its energies and replacing it with anarchist values that can in practice only arise in public spaces that are neoliberal. The cultural theorist weirdly misrecognizes him- or herself in the crazy mirror of government policy, as recent U.S. scandals show, even as they archive stark examples of intellectual flow: the Christian Right uses sexual harassment strategies in order to impeach the “abortion President”; Deleuzo-Foucauldian attacks on governmentality reverberate against a chorus of Republican calls to get the “government off our backs”; the ecstatic attention to the “subject” coincides with reduced access to citizenship in Europe and North America; a politics of identity intersects with perfect congruency the demands of fashion’s niche marketing; and, above all, the obsolescence of sovereignty achieves its “radical” eloquence at about the moment NATO discovers rogue ethnics in the Balkans insisting on a horrific, recidivist principle like that of the nation-state. The positions on either side of these paradoxical binarisms are not equivalent since *formalisms* never are. They are, however, related, and they strengthen one another in the public sphere—not as a result of conspiracy, and in the name of different gods. But above all, naively, as though intellectuals did not work for anyone, or had no home.

The discourse of cosmopolitanism develops within fields of academic subspecialization against the background of broader and more popular discourses. The relationship of theory to official policy-making or to the media is almost never systematically worked out. If cultural theory has usually been vigilant about calling its own bluff when it came to methodology—providing methodological self-criticisms as integral parts of its argument—cosmo-theory has nevertheless been squeamish about analyzing the place of the researchers themselves in frameworks of mutual interest. What is the economic function of the culturalist intellectual? Where do we place the an-

thropologists, sociologists, literary critics, and cultural studies professors in the vectors of the U.S. economy? What relationship do we have to the state?

### Cosmo-Theory

Above all, my choice of the term *cosmo-theory* is to suggest an unacknowledged consensus—one that constitutes a constellation of related premises and values. However unacceptable it might be merely to group together critics of different trainings, styles, and concrete beliefs in pursuit of a collective point, it is equally unacceptable to avoid synthesizing a visible trend in public discourse, or to avoid an attempt at characterizing it as such. Proposing to offer such a characterization clarifies issues that would not be clarified otherwise, and it goes some way toward offering an expressive and alienated truth. At any rate, that would be my defense for using a term that many will at first consider narrow or conflating, but that is marking a collection of tendencies that are *familiar*. I indicate in my footnotes some of the representative work in which the following features can be found so as not to leave matters anonymous, or to create the impression that I imagined or invented them.

What I am calling cosmo-theory begins usually by citing a very long tradition of writing and thinking on extranational impurities, where the point is made that human populations exist in no discrete cultural, ethnic, or political realm. This unassailable observation, however, tends to be accompanied by more questionable corollaries. Striking in its general contours is the following: First, the coupling of an overdeveloped sensitivity to significant cases of mixed forms of cultural life—usually related in vivid, anecdotal form—with a relatively weak understanding of processes of power, labor management, territorial control, or governance, as though its usefulness to arguments about forms of government depended on it being shielded from unseemly power. A strong descriptive armature tends to be coupled with a weak sociological imperative. It is a discourse of “processes,” “movements,” unfoldings rather than designs, projects, or campaigns. Life is described as what happens to people.<sup>31</sup> It is not as though there were no role for agency in such theories, which on the contrary rely on excited exaggerations of activity, creativity, and plebeian initiative. But agency is almost never seen in moments of civic participation. It is primarily about subject formation. Agency, in fact, tends to be seen as a gradual process of coming to accept a fait accom-

pli, and learning to mobilize it. Modernity is *at large*—a phrase that interestingly implies pervasiveness as well as culpability (as though modernity were a perpetrator who had not yet been caught).

Second, cosmo-theory depends on exaggerating the degree to which people in the outlying districts of what one critic calls the “global ecumene” have actually broken with the past.<sup>32</sup> In cosmo-theory, modernity is generally considered to be ubiquitous—its penetration complete, and largely welcome. Here one is struck by the relative absence of any substantive proof for this penetration of metropolitan style, pace, or value, which is almost always overstated. Even now, the villages of rural India or of Latin America—with or without television—are hardly *in* modernity in any sense meaningful to cosmopolitans. Quite apart from what the cosmo-theorists are arguing, the world is largely outside modernity, although being in and out, in this sense, is naturally always a matter of degree. The point, however, is that a projection into a desired future is often mistaken in these analyses for a documentable present.

Cosmo-theory also tends to decouple individual subjects from groups of perceived material interest in which a special emphasis is placed on the imagination.<sup>33</sup> The media are in this way treated as a resource for the construction of imagined selves, which tend not to be discussed in terms of the polities they inhabit.<sup>34</sup> Whereas several astute theorists such as Dipesh Chakrabarty and Partha Chatterjee have given us reason to lament modernity, and have rightly reminded us of its melancholy march, there is a tendency in discussions of cosmopolitanism to portray it, willy-nilly, as a benefit to which the world subject aspires.<sup>35</sup> In fact, part of the procedural difficulty, even obtuseness of the ethic of cosmo-theory is that it transmogrifies the critical impulses of non-Western thinking by assimilating it into an alien logic. The disjunct options enjoyed by individuals in local settings, for instance, are not seen in terms of their uneven forms of development. It is not so much that the individual is emphasized to the exclusion of groups, for there is space in this thinking for group sentiments, but these groups are rarely political constituencies. In an effort to leave behind oversimplified notions of media coercion or cultural imperialism, it is as if no media coercion existed at all.<sup>36</sup>

Stylistically, there is preference for a rhetoric of ambiguity and for the nonteleological. This latter telos is stated as such. It constitutes an epistemological conviction that amounts to an aesthetic preference borrowed

from the Spinozist (and later Nietzschean) genealogies of poststructuralism, primarily in Deleuze.<sup>37</sup> Obviously there are myriad, often contradictory intellectual sources mingling in the serious scholarly writing of even the few globalization theorists I highlight in this article. *Flow* implies a largely atmospheric pressure that under conditions whose basic features have been variably present throughout the century produces discursive hegemonies to which, in this case, we give the names Bataille or Deleuze. What they developed with clarity, others found instinctively, and still others took wholesale from their books.

One implication of all this, at any rate, is that cosmopolitanism effectively undermines ideals of citizenship. As the Enlightenment individual gives way to the subject, agency is captioned as creativity while ceasing to stand for production or intervention. The term's ambiguity is one of its principal attractions, meaning at once the author of an action, the subaltern of a king, and an element of speech (the nominal operative of a disembodied verb). Since theory considers *individuality* a term that connotes a suspiciously pregiven and stable coherence, subjectivity offers a way of talking about individuals abstracted from the speaking, thinking person (just as genealogy offers a way to talk about history abstracted from historical proof). It is a way of preserving modernity's focus on individuals without positing individuality in its confident, modernist sense. From the modernist standpoint, the individual is agential: it is author, creator, seer, often of a private world. From the postmodern, the individual's role in a rationalized society, although juridically free, is also incompatible with true agency. Thus only the subject is truly an agent, for it is so much an actor that it makes itself arbitrarily, and remakes itself constantly in the face of prescribed social roles and pseudo-universal values.<sup>38</sup>

If the move from individual to subject involves an abstraction and an intentional floating of meanings—one is tempted to call it an ethereality—it is accompanied by a necessary counterpart and counterweight at the conceptual level. And this, as I said earlier in this essay, is “the body.” From modernity to postmodernity, there has been a transformation of the thinking, active will into the body.<sup>39</sup> The individual of old has now been bifurcated, so that what used to be identifiable within a single entity now requires two. In this thinking, the body and the subject together make the individual, although the discourse deals with the latter like a volatile chemical mixture, treating neither together at the risk of social explosion. If postmodernity

separates the whole into fields of autonomization in regard to the person, then by extension the *citizen* (or the person in his or her juridical, national, or political form) is the result of tying together what had before been separate. The foreign/domestic dichotomy is replaced—in theory—by the hybrid subject, instinctively returning to the American self-image of pluralism as though part of a great money-laundering operation in which Continental Theory played the role of a shady bank. Although attacked, citizenship is never actually endangered under postmodernism. It is simply turned into a fungible category based on a very un fungible national/political reality that denies its own existence: the American.

In a number of ways, then, debates over cosmopolitanism have failed to examine histories central to the term's formation. These debates, moreover, have often been dependent on an eminently literary or philological practice that has often been associated with *genealogy*. This very popular term derived from Nietzsche is a crucial anchoring device for the poststructuralist ethics that informs the current discussion of globalization and value in a variety of disciplines, not just in the humanities. It would be saying too much to say it was intrinsic to the field, but it does inform much of the theoretical reappropriation of cosmopolitical discourse as it flows back into the humanities from policy circles, government, and the social sciences—a philosophy now repoliticized with case studies of actual states, peoples, and periods. Since in a way I am involved in a cartography of American intellectuals, something might be said about the relationship of cartography to genealogy itself. Both are a translation of time into space; both change the unfolding of history into a fixed synchronic schema. What, then, is genealogy?

Nietzsche presents it as a counterhistorical technique that does not posit the utility of a thing as its origin. Genealogies critically engage with the changing interpretations of the meaning of concepts and institutions in order to show their current expression in a long history of unrelated and contradictory articulations. A genealogy, as Nietzsche invents it, cannot be exhaustive, since phenomena can only partially be known by their relationships. Because inaccessible, origins themselves give way to the family lineage, which is a fluctuating sameness that may traverse time but without voluntary practice or guiding intelligence, a legacy-in-blood, recorded inexorably in language (the etymology) as a word's "parentage."

Foucault similarly saw in the genealogy an adamantly counterhistorical knowledge, a way of practicing history without being historical. His argu-

ments (derived from Nietzsche) were necessarily based on a past, on the authority of the actual, but they rhetorically emphasized contingencies rather than stabilities, complexities rather than continuities, perspectives rather than false objectivities. I am precisely *not* involved in a genealogy in these senses. I do not think history can be avoided by changing history's name. My point is rather to reinstate a contentious binarism latent in intellectual practice—a practice that may not want to dwell on its own agency or interests, but that never relinquishes it either.

I want to capture the sense of fluidity among constituencies in a setting of interested knowledge where the economic is translated into the ethical for reuse in a variety of economic spheres mediated by culture. Since this is all happening in a global confrontation of civilizations, one's response to the genealogical method—whose metaphorical associations are rather embarrassingly related to blood, family, and immutable hierarchy—should be other than it has been. Theory's job is not (as so many have been arguing) to emphasize the contingency of origins, but rather the priority of origins over understanding. Another way to re-pose the problem of origins by the light of such a priority is to ask, What is it about *American* value that prevents cultural critics from looking closely at their economic function in promoting globalization?

If theory has insistently taught us to reject origins and be suspicious of foundations—which in geopolitical terms is usually seen as being culpably related to mythical projects of nation-forming—it is because the recourse to *ur*-communities and earlier peoples is usually intended to authenticate attempts to consolidate governments in the present. We might recall that Foucault translated Nietzsche's original concept of the genealogy in the specific context of being a member of a repressed sexual minority and an anti-Hegelian in the political sense. Genealogy was his preferred methodological mode because it was antidevelopmental, antiorganic, and antihistorical in Hegel's sense of seeing individuals as part of social universals, and of societies as evolving toward a goal or end. However, recognizing that if one remains in the sumptuously static world of the synchronic, one lacks interest as well as authority, Foucault the genealogist had to find a way of appealing to history without accepting its corollaries. The germ of the original concept in Nietzsche remains at the core of this fundamentally duplicitous operation of practicing history while not practicing it. Nietzsche's intention, unlike Foucault's, was to claim rights for aristocratic privilege and *Rangordnung*—

a deeply recidivist and explicitly racist concept in the original. The genealogy, because it was about family, recalled not agency and change but the genetic inevitabilities of paternity; at the same time, it apotheosized etymology as if to say that history is fundamentally about words ruling people, the willful creation of a truth embedded in a linguistic trace. So my point, finally, is to say that if the method of genealogy conceals the very source-specific patriotism and racist filiations that it pretends to get past, cosmo-theory attempts, through its own genealogical pretensions at worldliness, to override a veiled Americanism. Cosmopolitanism is the way in which a kind of American patriotism is today being expressed.

Nevertheless, thematically cosmo-theory is generally aware of the danger of imperial apologetics. The critic states his or her opposition to “reckless American expansion” and is vocal about the dangers of an uncritical multiculturalism.<sup>40</sup> The emphasis is therefore on the American *government*, where all of its suspicion lies, expressing its deeper philosophical commitment to a wariness toward states in themselves. Caution toward the American state is, however, accompanied by a defense of internationalism as a form of American influence seen as the components of American cultural life that have become international. International arrangements are therefore divided between “state-saturated” societies and “antistatist” ones, with China usually standing in for the former while market/media capitalism is aligned with the latter. The United States in these articles is quite remarkably considered a weak-state society.<sup>41</sup> Indeed, this is the distinction that fuels both the emphasis on culture (that which exists outside the state as well as outside the intermediary realm of civil society) and the view that a capitalist popular culture is recuperable. The corporate boardroom, as one critic ludicrously puts it, is a “public space” and mass-cultural phenomena like, say, rap, demonstrate the continual creativity of capitalism as a culture.<sup>42</sup>

Along with arguing for the naturally cosmopolitan character of intellectuals as a group, the cosmo-critic argues that there is a natural alliance between the American cultural left and “Southern” or “third-world” constituencies on whose behalf the former speaks in domestic contexts, and whose presence (imaginary or actual) are marshaled for salutary means at home. Outside the United States, the cultural is said to be already political, and the cultural left learns from, while solidarizing with, those constituencies, arriving finally at the important understanding that the cultural is also political *at home*.<sup>43</sup> Vital corollaries of this “discovery” are the following: the cultural

left is inherently internationalist and obtains its political results via a process of indirection. Neither one of these contentions is true, but they fuel a substantial portion of culturalist analysis.

### Statelessness — The American State

Cosmopolitanism implies a theory of nations, although it is only in the context of the market that such a theory can be seen clearly, and judged. Flows of influence on the nation among different constituencies of intellectuals bring us back to the problem of characterizing a diverse collection of beliefs within recognizable trends. Again, these constituency-wide tendencies have the character of a separation of powers or of segmented intellectual duties within a broader, national project.

In the field of academic cultural studies, for example, the nation is, on one hand, typically considered obsolete *at the same time* that it is said to be founded on (1) a dangerous, murky, racist essentialism; (2) a statist conception of coercion; and (3) patronizing welfarism. I have argued elsewhere that this position is self-contradictory, if unashamed (in Julia Kristeva and Anthony King, for example).<sup>44</sup> In popular political commentary and among official government academics, on the other hand, the nation is (1) still resilient, and forms the political landscape of the foreseeable future; but (2) is a dangerous, murky, racist essentialism that it would be best to transcend with the universalist values of the West in the form of Pax Americana, seen as some new form of “international cooperation” or “international law” (Huntington, Kissinger, Archibugi).<sup>45</sup> The view might be further ventriloquized in this way: (3) let us have less nation and more *state*, but a modified state, not one that micromanages corporations or regulates business enterprises at the expense of growth. Let it be one not limited by national boundaries, functioning by the “rule of law” rather than the brutal power politics of invasion or imperialism (the argument, *mutatis mutandis*, once used by Walter Lippmann).

The internally illogical array of predominant views of the state are twofold, therefore, and a merging of positions between the first and second set of groups is always possible under conditions of intellectual flow, as happens often among the pop futurologist and the writers of commercial travelogues (Pico Iyer, Robert Kaplan, Thomas Friedman). Their mixture of fear-mongering cameos of “tribal” bloodletting entertains its audience while

driving home moral lessons about the barbarism of national allegiances. In this ubiquitous genre—which saturates academic writing and feature journalism equally—the author will express bemused sympathy for the fly-ridden faces of starving children while writing with metropolitan detachment, and arriving at conclusions posed as confessions: these traumas are curable only with help from the outside.<sup>46</sup>

For their part (and to consider still another intellectual sector) corporate strategists and Western politicians tend to argue that states should recognize their interests in stimulating growth by freeing the market from the state's controls (Robert Reich, Robert Rubin, Jeffrey Sachs).<sup>47</sup> Here the argument urges us to have a *stronger* state when it comes to dismantling habeas corpus, or instituting stronger prison sentences and border patrols, as well as adding a new wing of government that functions as part of the state but is not called the state, and furiously proclaims its independence from it, and that is on that basis absent of democratic controls (the fourth estate). Above all, the state under globalization *ensures that the heightened mobility of capital is not matched by the mobility of labor*. Globalization means heightened border controls.<sup>48</sup>

What one is forced to conclude is that nation-states are not only, in the overused terminology du jour, imagined communities; they are rather manageable communities. The state as coercive negotiator presides over a community that it must, by definition, be capable of managing. But that is not all. What it *is* capable of managing becomes inexorably what must be ruled. What the state *can* manage, it eventually *does* manage. It does this by virtue of a law that is militarily enforced as well as by the ideology of nation, although cultural theory has been inordinately focused only on the latter in recent decades, dwelling on the national print media or images of racial belonging or patriarchal privileges whose combinatory effects at the affective level of signs and tastes and discursive networks have provided the basis for the mass hysteria of national myth and its coercive corollaries. But these important dimensions of nation making have been overstated. They tend to lapse into an idealistic euphoria that radically underestimates the practical force of management.

If one does, by contrast, explore the managerial dimension, nations begin to appear more a matter of default than of manipulative mythology. Until recently, there was no way around them historically because no coercive or hegemonic apparatus was capable of managing the entire earth (in spite

of imperial attempts to do so by Egyptians, Macedonians, Turks, Mongols, Mughals, Romans, Britons, Germans, and more recently, North Americans). Administratively speaking, nations are discrete units for the organization of profit making, resource extraction, and the perpetuation of unequal social relations; they are also, within the framework of a world system of nations in which enormous disparities in national power exist, structures that permit local or indigenous peoples to draw a boundary between what is theirs and what is not theirs, between what is open to the outside and not open. In this latter sense, which is very seldom talked about, the nation protects the weak and is their refuge. For like cosmopolitanism, nations are *local*. They are “manageable” in two directions, since they allow the state to manage the subalterns, and the subalterns to petition the state within the context of a rhetoric of the popular—a notion of cultural family and shared identity.

It is not clear, then, how much importance should be given to the heuristic distinction between state and nation since the difference is itself superseded in much of actual practice. The transition from the tributary state to the modern nation-state in the Romantic period might be seen as the result of a management crisis created by foreign conquest and the wealth that it generated.<sup>49</sup> This was the endpoint and fruition of a three-century-long era of primitive accumulation based on slave labor, an immense extraction of foreign booty, the creation of entirely new global markets (rather than the penetration of existing markets), and the *encomienda* system.<sup>50</sup> The passage from what historians traditionally call colonialism to imperialism proper in the high nineteenth century called forth the nation in the form of a management crisis. Fences had to be set up at home in order to clarify jurisdiction over the spoils abroad. The massive cultural confrontations of global settlement and business organization dictated a reactive fear of difference, not primarily out of psychological mechanisms of “forming the self” in the irrational arena of xenophobic being, but rather on the grounds of not being the beings branded by skin or by tongue as the owned, the occupied, the laborers. In part, the nation was the result of a desire, again for reasons of jurisdiction, to codify the differences between home and territory, receiver and giver, owner and owned.

The debate over the fate of the nation today takes place as a debate over nations *as such*. With some exceptions, no fundamental distinction is entertained between those created by imperial expansion and those created, some

three centuries afterward, by the peoples resisting that expansion. To argue today that the nation is dead is then doubly vexed: on one hand, for ignoring the prognoses of policymakers who know quite well this isn't so; on the other, for borrowing uncritically from the perspective of policymakers who would like to replace many states (seen as pathetically belated, fictional, and unviable) with one or two—a truly “world state” whose character and systems of value they had a crucial role in determining. In this latter case, they would not (of course) be explicitly built *in the name of* any existing nation, only serving its interests in a mediated way. Here we return to the cosmopolitan fantasy that has existed in the medieval church and, in its modern form, in Kant's *Perpetual Peace: A Philosophical Essay* (1795). However, now it is conducted under the rubric of a realpolitik composed of rapid deployment forces, carrier jets, cruise missiles, and satellite surveillance. A national idea based on America as a “universal nation”—hegemonized through popular culture, fashion, and the Internet—can be imagined for the first time. The global management problem, many now argue, has been solved, and thus Kant's ideal is possible for the first time. The real debate—although it is never put in these terms—is this: Is the globe now manageable? If so, then it is on its way to becoming a single nation, which is the situation that most cultural theory refers to—fatally and cosmopolitically—as “transnationalism.”

What one confronts, then, is a series of misunderstandings. In high modernity, one spoke of the universal values of humanism, the dignity of labor, freedom of speech and assembly, and other universals that culminated, honorably, in 1945 with the UN's Universal Declaration of Human Rights (and it is these universals that have been mercilessly attacked by postmodern theory). But paradoxically, the universal only becomes fully possible in postmodernity, although it is a universal of a different type—the universality of the media and its coextensive reach, and the inability to escape its penetration by virtue of its very ephemerality.<sup>51</sup>

We have to be very cautious, then, of positing anything like a “diasporic public sphere,” the hopeful vision of nonwhite, non-Western exiles in metropolitan enclaves making good while making do. Many of the strategies of immigrant communities or domestic subterraneans (the ghosts of the census), or of political refugees—all busily crossing borders, of course—are precisely not about stateless subjects adopting the position that their very being alone constitutes a kind of resistance to those who resent the beings they are. They are instead about establishing the right to lead in cultural mat-

ters, the right to export a collective identity in such a way that borders are not effaced, but enhanced, protectively and by civic plan. Were intellectuals not so reluctant to explore their economic roles, they might be championing the efforts—in Southern Mexico, Colombia, Indonesia, Palestine, and elsewhere—of establishing sovereignty—this as opposed to constructing intricate theoretical edifices designed to explode the very ability to imagine it. Such a project does not clash with articulations of new forms of transnational organizing, global cultural links, or cross-border theorizing. The two responsibly imply one another.

#### Notes

I would like to thank Neil Smith for inviting me to present a version of this paper at the newly inaugurated Institute for Culture, Place, and Politics at the CUNY Grad Center.

- 1 Martha Nussbaum, et al., "Patriotism or Cosmopolitanism," *Boston Review* 19.5 (October–November 1994). For all its merits, this famous exchange constructed a false dichotomy: either cosmopolitanism or American patriotism. Any mainstream critique of cosmopolitanism from the left became in this way incoherent.
- 2 Peter Stallybrass and Allon White, *The Politics and Poetics of Transgression* (Ithaca, NY, 1986), 27.
- 3 *Ibid.*, 38.
- 4 The term may recall Arjun Appadurai's important concept of *global flow*, although I am attempting to distinguish my usage from his by focusing on strongly bordered domestic intellectual zones. See his *Modernity at Large: Cultural Dimensions of Globalization* (Minneapolis, 1996), 27–48.
- 5 Régis Debray, *Teachers, Writers, Celebrities: The Intellectuals of Modern France*, trans. David Macey (London, 1981).
- 6 Ben Wattenberg, *The First Universal Nation* (New York, 1991); Fernando Valladao, *The Twenty-First Century Will Be American* (London and New York, 1996).
- 7 Georg Simmel, *The Philosophy of Money* (Boston and London, 1978); Georges Bataille, *The Accursed Share: An Essay on General Economy*, vol. 1 (New York, 1991); Jean Baudrillard, *For a Critique of the Political Economy of the Sign* (St. Louis, 1981); Guy Debord, *Society of the Spectacle* (London, 1987); and Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Turn* (New York, 1998).
- 8 David Frisby and Mike Featherstone, ed., *Simmel on Culture* (London, 1997), 181–82.
- 9 Timothy Brennan, "Literary Criticism and the 'Southern Question,'" *Cultural Critique* 11 (Winter 1988–1989): 87–114.
- 10 See, for example, M. N. Roy, the Bengali delegate to the Third International: "The dissolution of the Communist International [CI] is not a vindication of antinationalism. As a matter of fact, Communist internationalism is not an antithesis of nationalism. The CI, from its very beginning, stood for national freedom of all peoples." M. N. Roy, *The Communist International* (Bombay, 1943).
- 11 See Aijaz Ahmad, "Fascism and National Culture: Reading Gramsci in the Days of the

- Hindutva," *Social Scientist* 21 (March–April 1993): 3–4. Without taking up the issue of *cosmopolitanism* in Gramsci directly, several other studies lend support to the thesis. See Joseph Buttigieg, "Introduction," in Antonio Gramsci, *Prison Notebooks*, vol. 1, (New York, 1992); and V. G. Kiernan, "Gramsci and the Other Continents," in *Imperialism and Its Contradictions*, edited and introduced by Harvey J. Kaye (New York, 1995), 171–90.
- 12 Antonio Gramsci, *Quaderni del carcere*, vol. 1, 371, Q 3, item 88. The volume contains several passages on the "Cosmopolitan Function of Italian Intellectuals" (my translation).
  - 13 "The 'national' relation is a result of a unique 'original' combination (in a certain sense) that must be understood and conceived in its originality and uniqueness if one wants to control and direct it. No doubt that development strives towards internationalism, but the point of departure is 'national,' and it is from this point of departure that one must start out" (*Quaderni del carcere*, vol. 3, 1729, Q 14, item 68, my translation). See also vol. 1, 284–85, Q 3, item 2.
  - 14 Michael Löwy, "Marx and Engels Cosmopolites," in *Fatherland or Mother Earth? Essays on the National Question* (London, 1998), 5–29. Löwy does note, however, that there is ambiguity in the Marxist tradition on the matter of cosmopolitanism.
  - 15 For other such sources, see Timothy Brennan, *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now* (Cambridge, MA, 1997), 125–62.
  - 16 Stephen Toulmin, *Cosmopolis: The Hidden Agenda of Modernity* (New York, 1990); Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves* (New York, 1991); Martha Nussbaum et al., "Patriotism or Cosmopolitanism."
  - 17 Jürgen Habermas, "Kant's Idea of Perpetual Peace: At Two Hundred Years' Historical Remove," in *The Inclusion of the Other: Studies in Political Theory* (Cambridge, MA, 1998), 165–202; Walter Mignolo, "Globalization, Civilization Processes, and the Relocation of Languages and Cultures," in *The Cultures of Globalization*, ed. Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (Durham and London, 1998), 32–53; Bonnie Honig, "Ruth, the Model Emigrée: Mourning and the Symbolic Politics of Immigration," *Political Theory* 25.1 (February 1997): 112–36.
  - 18 Enrique Dussel, *The Underside of Modernity* (New York, 1996); Roberto Fernandez Retamar, *Caliban and Other Essays* (Minneapolis, 1989); Arif Dirlik, *The Postcolonial Aura* (Boulder, 1997).
  - 19 *Documents of the American Association for International Conciliation* (a series of privately published pamphlets). The piece by Louis P. Lochner on the "Cosmopolitan Club Movement" observes that "during the last decade the complexion of the American student body has undergone a remarkable change. From being national and local institutions our large universities have become international temples of learning. . . . With the coming of the foreigner there has developed one of the most interesting movements known in college life—the banding together of students from all countries in international or cosmopolitan clubs, aptly termed 'miniature Hague Conferences' by Baron d'Estournelles de Constant." In his contribution the year before, Taft remarked that "the United States has a mission, besides developing the principles of the brotherhood of man into a living, palpable force, it seems to me that it is to blaze the way to universal arbitration among the nations." Later in the essay, he defends the exclusion of immigrants on the principle that international law allows that "every country may admit only those whom it chooses."

- 20 G. Lowes Dickinson, *A Modern Symposium* 26–27 (1908), quoted in Bernard Porter, *Critics of Empire: British Radical Attitudes to Colonialism in Africa 1895–1914* (London, 1968), 331.
- 21 Quoted in René Jara, “A Design for Modernity in the Margins,” in *Modernism and Its Margins: Reinscribing Cultural Modernity from Spain and Latin America*, ed. Anthony L. Geist and José B. Monleón (New York and London, 1999), 282–83.
- 22 Kai Bird, “Another Course in Kosovo,” *Nation*, June 14 1999, 5. A similar view appears in Slavoj Žižek, “Against the Double Blackmail,” *Nation*, May 24 1999, 22. Žižek counsels readers to abjure nations, urging that we back “transnational political movements and institutions” rather than national ones while drawing on unanalyzed popular associations of the national form with dictatorship and the (always criminal) “state.”
- 23 For a welcome challenge to this chorus, see Peter Marcuse’s “The Language of Globalization” in *Monthly Review* 52.3 (July/August 2000): 23–27.
- 24 One has to acknowledge some excellent work in this field—for example, Manuel Castells.
- 25 Guy Debord, *Theory of the Dérive, and Other Situationist Writings on the City*, ed. Libero Andreotti and Xavier Costa (Barcelona, 1996), 18.
- 26 Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (New York, 1997); Anthony Giddens, *The Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford, 1990).
- 27 George Soros, *The Crisis of Global Capitalism* (New York, 1998), 3–83.
- 28 In spite of her courageous and liberatory exchange with Richard Rorty, Martha Nussbaum’s points of departure are more exclusively European than necessary at this late date. Alongside his Greek philosophical originals, Rabindranath Tagore is tokenized in her essay.
- 29 A comprehensive critique of the “body” as an analytic category in social philosophy has yet to be written. The focus is developed in the affective emphases of Spinoza’s *Ethics* (so central to Deleuze) and in Nietzschean megalomania where his stress on the salutary pain and discomfort of his own body becomes the project of philosophical “seeing.” For some leads on the trend, see Pierre Bourdieu, “Belief and the Body,” in *The Logic of Practice* (Stanford, 1990), 66–79; Emily Martin, “The End of the Body,” in *American Ethnologist* 19.1 (1992): 121–40; Nancy Fraser, “Foucault’s Body Language,” in *Unruly Practices* (Minneapolis, 1989), 55–66; and Terry Eagleton, *The Illusions of Postmodernism* (Oxford, 1996), 69–92.
- 30 Georges Bataille, “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice,” *The College of Sociology* (Minneapolis, 1988), 14.
- 31 Roland Robertson, *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture* (London, 1992).
- 32 Ulf Hannerz, *Transnational Connections: Culture, People, Places* (New York and London, 1996).
- 33 Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora,” in *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London, 1990), 224.
- 34 Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*, 35. Nevertheless, explicit attention to civic and political forms of cosmopolitanism frequently arises in international relations scholarship without abandoning the cultural tropes honed in ethnography and literary criticism. Note the work, for example, of Will Kymlicka, *Multicultural Citizenship* (Oxford, 1995).
- 35 For an example of this needed questioning of modernity, see Dipesh Chakrabarty, “The

- Difference-Deferral of a Colonial Modernity: Public Debates on Domesticity in British India," in *Subaltern Studies VIII: Essays in Honor of Ranajit Guha* (Delhi, 1995), 50–88; and, Partha Chatterjee, *The Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial History* (Princeton, 1993).
- 36 Nestor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures: Strategies for Entering and Leaving Modernity* (Minneapolis, 1995), 212.
- 37 The relationship between Deleuzian theory and cosmo-theory can be seen, for example, in Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt's *Empire* (Cambridge, MA, 2000).
- 38 James Clifford, "Traveling Cultures," in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula Treichler (New York, 1992), 107.
- 39 One can see this move, for example, in the recent celebration of a Foucauldian biopolitics in recent Franco-Italian philosophy. Giorgio Agamben fits squarely in a neo-Arendtian consensus, calling for "reciprocal extraterritoriality (or better yet, aterritoriality)," and valorizes a permanent status of exodus or refuge: "The status of European would then mean the being-in-exodus of the citizen." *Homo Sacer* (Stanford, 1998), 163. On Arendt, see note 44 in this essay.
- 40 Bruce Robbins, "Some Versions of U.S. Internationalism," *Social Text* 45 (Winter 1995): 97–123.
- 41 Benjamin Lee, "Critical Internationalism," *Public Culture* 7.3 (Spring 1995): 581.
- 42 Bruce Robbins, "Sad Stories in the International Public Sphere," *Public Culture* 9.2 (Winter 1997).
- 43 Pheng Cheah, "Given Culture: Rethinking Cosmopolitical Freedom in Transnationalism," *boundary 2* 24.2 (Summer 1997); Bruce Robbins, *Feeling Global: Internationalism in Distress* (New York, 1999), 53.
- 44 Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*; Anthony King, *Urbanism, Colonialism, and the World Economy: Culture and Spatial Foundations of the World Urban System* (New York, 1990). As I argued earlier in this essay, this emphasis has its roots in the continually replayed cosmopolitanism of earlier eras. A view, by no means rare, on the "end of the nation-state" can be found, for example, in Hannah Arendt's *Imperialism* (San Diego and New York, 1951), particularly in the final chapter, "Decline of the Nation-State; End of the Right of Man," which conforms depressingly to the mood of the postwar period. Arendt's book has not surprisingly been rediscovered lately, and is frequently cited.
- 45 Samuel P. Huntington, *The Clash of Civilizations*; Henry Kissinger, *Diplomacy* (New York, 1994), 23–24.
- 46 Pico Iyer, *Tropical Classical: Essays from Several Directions* (New York, 1997); Robert D. Kaplan, *The Ends of the Earth: A Journey at the Dawn of the 21st Century* (New York, 1996); Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree* (New York, 1999).
- 47 Robert Reich, *The Work of Nations: Preparing Ourselves for 21st Century Capitalism* (New York, 1991); Jeffrey Sachs and Katharina Pistor, eds., *The Rule of Law and Economic Reform in Russia* (Boulder, 1997).
- 48 Although the single currency and open passport of the European Union would seem to contradict this statement, both have been accompanied by much stricter regulations governing the entry into Europe of peoples from Africa, Asia, and the Caribbean. A strength-

- ening of border patrols and surveillance between the United States and Mexico by the Immigration and Naturalization Service have similarly accompanied the NAFTA accords.
- 49 Samir Amin, *Delinking: Toward a Polycentric World* (London, 1990).
- 50 This view is tentatively put forward by K. M. Pannikar in *Asia and Western Dominance* (London, 1953), although not in this context. Enrique Dussel works along similar lines in his essay "Beyond Eurocentrism: The World-System and the Limits of Modernity," in Jameson and Miyoshi, eds., *The Cultures of Globalization*, 15.
- 51 Guy Debord, *Comments on the Society of the Spectacle* (New York, 1990).