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# Negotiating Materiality in Postcolonial Studies

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In recent years, one of the most contentious debates within the field of postcolonial studies has been between Marxists and poststructuralists. Among other things, this debate has been articulated as a struggle between practice and theory, activism and intellectualism, historicism and hermeticism, economism and aestheticism, nationalism and transnationalism, and modernity and postmodernity. What seems to have emerged is an assessment of the *qualitative* difference between these two types of criticism: Marxist and materialist, on the one hand; poststructuralist and discursivist, on the other.

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## Qualitative Oppositions

In her Introduction to *Marxism, Modernity, and Postcolonial Studies*, Crystal Bartolovich explains that postcolonial studies has been more closely associated with poststructuralism than it has been with Marxism. Marxist critics have either disavowed the field or have been disavowed by it (1, 3). As Bartolovich points out, Marxist critics generally have viewed postcolonial studies as a whole to be “complicit with imperialism in its contemporary guise as globalization, oriented exclusively to metropolitan academic adventurism, and, in its approach to texts, irredeemably dematerializing and unhistorical” (1). In contrast, poststructuralist postcolonial critics tend to see Marxism as “indelibly Eurocentric, complicit with the dominative master-narratives of modernity...and, in its approach to texts, vulgarly reductionistic and totalizing” (Bartolovich 1). This polarization of the types of postcolonial criticism ignores the possibility that both might be materialist, though in *quantitatively* different ways. The essays in *Marxism, Modernity, and Postcolonial Studies* do much to disrupt this oppositional tendency by demonstrating how Marxist insights and imperatives inform the aims of postcolonial studies as a field, whether or not such insights are acknowledged by the field, and how, at the same time, some of the advances of postcolonial studies reinforce Marxist objectives, whether or not such advances are recognized by Marxist critics (10-11). The collection convincingly argues that a reevaluation of Marxism in the field will counter the current dematerializing and discursive tendency in today’s post-colonial studies (16).

The balanced view presented by Bartolovich and Neil Lazarus’s collection suggests that it is both possible and necessary to negotiate materiality in postcolonial studies. For Gilles Deleuze, negotiation begins by setting out a problem—that is, by articulating it in terms that may not accord with the dominant purview (*Negotiations* 126-27). Setting out a problem involves “a new way of talking,” “being open about things,” and “[m]aking visible things that would otherwise remain hidden” (127). A negotiation of materiality in postcolonial studies might begin by reformulating those differences codified as qualitative in quantitative terms instead. Allowing for the possibility of quantitative differences of materiality, or *degrees of materiality*, in postcolonial studies, rather than reinforcing the familiar qualitative oppositions, can reshape perceptions on both sides of the disciplinary divide.

This essay attempts to explain how both Marxist and poststructuralist postcolonial criticisms perform and embody different degrees of materiality, ranging from the instrumental to the “virtual,” in Deleuze’s specific sense of the latter term.<sup>1</sup> The general tendency within the field is to interpret and classify particular rhetorics in such antagonistic terms that the possibility of

certain theoretical conjunctions and collaborations are made to seem out of the question. This need not be the case. Advancing a more complex notion of materiality than is currently prevalent might open up important channels of communication and negotiation between critics toward the construction of a more flexible, less circumscribed field of postcolonial studies.

## Ahmad vs. Said

Now over ten years old, the well-known debate in the early 1990s between Aijaz Ahmad and Edward Said continues to reveal the stakes of this qualitative opposition within postcolonial studies most tellingly. At the same time, it can help demonstrate the presence of degrees of materiality in the field. In his important book *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*, one of Ahmad's aims is to read the emergence and rise of poststructuralism in the Western academy within the coordinates of a political and economic history that is often ignored (37). During what he calls the "second phase of decolonization"-roughly from 1958 to 1975-it was "cultural nationalism" that occupied the place of privilege as radical theory in the Anglo-American academy. As struggles for liberation went on in Indochina and Southern Africa, most of the newly independent states in Asia and Africa were being consolidated by the national-bourgeoisie. Meanwhile in Western cities, a growing awareness of colonialism and imperialism converged with the anti-war movement, the civil rights movement, the women's movement, and the "New Left" (61-62). According to Ahmad, nationalism, or what he calls "Third-Worldist cultural nationalism," was the theoretical and ideological form these liberationist tendencies took within the Anglo-American academy (35). What this emphasis on nationalism elided both within the Anglo-American context and in the newly independent Asian and African states was the issue of class and the role of socialism in any struggle against imperialism. This elision prepared the conditions for the poststructuralist theoretical apparatus that was to fill in the space left by nationalism after the West's disillusionment with it in the 1980s.

Ahmad conjoins the ascendancy of poststructuralism in the Euro-American academy with, on the one hand, the global triumph of capitalism and the retreat of socialism and, on the other, the containment of revolutionary movements and the consolidation of the national-bourgeois state in the postcolonial world (42, 67). His problem with both "Third-Worldist cultural nationalism" and poststructuralism is that they "offer false knowledges of real facts" (35). If cultural nationalism ignores the fundamental issue of class and de-emphasizes the role that Marxism played in numerous liberationist struggles, poststructuralism turns class into yet another discursive construct in need of

de-essentializing and Marxism into yet another totalizing narrative in need of demythifying (35). In Ahmad's estimation, what poststructuralism makes impossible is any chance of knowing the world as a whole, of acting in the world from a stable subject position, or of changing or revolutionizing the world on a global scale (35, 69-70). Poststructuralism, thus interpreted, becomes ahistorical, quietist, hermetic, discursivist; in a word, idealist.

Ahmad uses Said to demonstrate both his take on poststructuralism and his interpretation of how "Third-World cultural nationalism" and poststructuralism are ideologically aligned. The shortcomings Ahmad locates in Said's work mirror precisely the shortcomings Marxist critics identify with poststructuralists generally. Ahmad accuses Said of being too "eclectic" and "self-divided" in his procedures, just as poststructuralists are often considered to be insufficiently comprehensive procedurally (179, 186). Ahmad considers Said's methodology to be split between an Auerbachian humanism and a Foucauldian discursivism, resulting in an inconsistent historical periodization (163-68). According to Ahmad, by following Auerbach's transhistorical model of European literary continuity in his own theorization of Orientalism, Said fails to critique adequately the universalizing procedures of this European tradition, as a true Foucauldian would (166-67). Yet, by following Foucault's emphasis on discourse, Said, like all poststructuralists, fails to take into account the realm of political economy and "other social materialities of a non-discursive kind" (182). The consequence of this incompatible intersection of humanism and discursivism in Said is, according to Ahmad, an ahistorical methodology (166).

Apart from being methodologically inconsistent, ahistorical, and discursivist, Ahmad also finds Said's theory of Orientalism, like poststructuralism generally, to be apolitical for the predictable reason that it emphasizes textuality and discourse over political economy, while it de-emphasizes the possibility of anything more than localized resistances to a non-centralized power (208). Linked to this textualist tendency is the poststructuralist focus on language over experience. Along with other "reactionary anti-humanists" like Derrida, Said is accused of questioning the "facticity of facts," of rejecting the possibility of making true statements, and of doubting the feasibility of accurate representation (192-94).

On Ahmad's reading, this Nietzschean form of "irrationalism," which he associates too easily with nineteenth-century Romanticism, remains, for all its debunking of metaphysics, myths of origin, and transcendental essences, firmly entrenched in the tradition of idealism (194). It is, one would presume, the idealist aspect of such criticism that blinds its practitioners to the link between it and the "unprecedented imperialist consolidations" of our time

(194-95). For Ahmad, the rise of poststructuralism in the Anglo-American academy cannot be separated from “the unprecedented imperialist consolidations of the present decade” and capitalism’s “global triumph” (194-95, 42). Poststructuralist anti-humanism becomes, whether advertently or not, an ideological legitimation for the unimpeded expansion of global capitalism. Said-whose supposed dismissal of Marxism on Orientalist grounds can be read in terms of both an earlier “Third-Worldist cultural nationalism” and a later poststructuralism-becomes for Ahmad emblematic of all non-Marxist postcolonial critics situated in the Anglo-American academy today. Marxist criticism has been and continues to be the antidote to what Ahmad interprets as the dematerializing aspect of the most influential studies of colonialism and imperialism in the Western academy.

Ahmad is not alone in his assessment. Numerous scholars in the field—Arif Dirlik, Neil Lazarus, Benita Parry, and E. San Juan, Jr., to name a few—read the poststructuralist bent of postcolonial studies as signaling a worryingly dematerializing turn. For Bartolovich and the contributors to *Marxism, Modernity, and Postcolonial Studies*, to rectify this partial bent requires “the tools of political economy” (15)—that is to say, a critique of capitalism in conjunction with any critique of colonialism, neocolonialism, and modernity (6, 10). I would add that introducing into the field of postcolonial studies a less contradictory sense of “materiality” and “immateriality” (and the string of associations linked to each of these terms respectively) might allow for a less rigidly opposed understanding of debates such as the one between Ahmad and Said.<sup>2</sup>

### A Virtual Materiality

Deleuze’s conception of materiality is Spinozist in orientation. Spinoza’s monistic philosophy posits a single, infinite, immanent (self-caused), unified, material substance, which simultaneously expresses and is the expression of everything both ontological and epistemological (Deleuze, *Expressionism* 13-14). Substance, though unified, consists of and expresses itself through an infinity of qualitatively distinct “attributes” (13). Though the attributes are infinite, according to Spinoza, humans are capable of conceiving or recognizing only two: the attribute of thought and the attribute of extension (59, 142).<sup>3</sup> Attributes are the manifestations of substance (16). They are *qualitatively* distinct because substance is constituted by unlimited qualities (334). Yet substance’s infinite attributes (expressions of these infinite qualities) correspond to each other because they are all expressions of the same, unified substance (334). What unifies and composes substance is its very diversity, its distinctions (182).<sup>4</sup> The diverse and distinct attributes, in turn, manifest

themselves in what Spinoza terms the “modes” (16). Modes express the attributes of substance, just as attributes express substance itself. From Spinoza’s perspective, “mind” is a modal expression of the attribute of thought, and “body” is a modal expression of the attribute of extension (118-19). However, the Cartesian qualitative and hierarchical opposition between mind (essence) and body (existence) does not persist in Spinoza’s philosophy of immanence (167). As Deleuze explains, “By his strict parallelism Spinoza refuses any analogy, any eminence, any kind of superiority of one series over another, and any ideal action that presupposes a preeminence: there is no more any superiority of soul over body, than of the attribute of Thought over that of Extension” (109). Mind and body, though both expressions of qualitatively distinct attributes, are not themselves qualitatively opposed or hierarchically ordered, since both express the same unified, univocal, material substance. As Christopher Norris succinctly puts it, “[T]hey function as twin predicates attaching to a single subject” (59).

As expressions of the infinite qualities of substance, attributes are qualitatively distinct from each other. A mode, however, Deleuze explains, “is, in its essence, always a certain degree, a certain quantity, of a quality” (*Expressionism* 183). This Spinozist formulation suggests that differences or changes in degree or quantity parallel or correspond to differences in kind or quality—in other words, modal changes (differences in degree) may express new attributes (differences in kind). Claire Colebrook explains this counter-intuitive correspondence between quantity and quality as follows:

For Deleuze, difference in quantity is not the simple increment of identical units. A true increase in quantity changes what something is, so we need to see quantity temporally, as a becoming more or less that is truly an event of change. Unlike a spatial object where more or less still leaves the thing as the same—a bigger or smaller red object is still a red object—a change in quantity of affect changes the quality. More or less light changes the redness of a colour; more or less sensation determines whether there is pleasure or pain. (60-61)<sup>5</sup>

This example implies that while attributes (as the different qualities of substance) and modes (as the different quantities or degrees of a quality or attribute) are distinct, they nonetheless correspond or function in “a system of mutual implications” (Deleuze, *Expressionism* 184). This flexible conception of materiality makes it difficult to obliterate or overlook important differences in quality (between types of action or criticism, say). At the same time, however, because it also figures these distinctions as quantitatively different degrees of the same substance (or matter), hierarchizing or ordering such differences becomes inadequate.

Deleuze relates Spinoza's formulation of quality and quantity to Henri Bergson's theory of duration and virtuality (*Bergsonism* 34-35, 38). Bergson theorizes the virtual in terms that echo Spinoza's conception of substance. For Bergson, the virtual is memory or what he terms "pure recollection" (55). Memory or the virtual, like substance, is difference or diversity itself; it is the condition of possibility for all thought and all action (93). Bergson distinguishes between memory (linked to pure recollection and the past) and matter (linked to pure perception and the present) (55). Recollection is the condition of perception, just as the past is the condition of the present. Paradoxically, it is memory, not matter, which Bergson links to being (55). Because "being" is generally confused with "being-present," the past (pure recollection, memory, the virtual) has been conceived as over and done with, non-existent, immaterial (55). But, as Deleuze emphasizes, while the past, unlike the present, "has ceased to act or to be useful....it has not ceased to be" (55). Any perception leading to action in the present involves a "leap" into the past, into pure recollection, into the virtual, into what Deleuze, following Bergson, understands as ontology (56-57). It is worth quoting at length Deleuze's explanation of the Bergsonian connection between the past and ontology since it helps to clarify how the virtual, like the actual, is real:

We place ourselves, *at once* in the past; we leap into the past as into a proper element....There is therefore a "past in general" that is not the particular past of a particular present but that is like an ontological element, a past that is eternal and for all time, the condition of the "passage" of every particular present. It is the past in general that makes possible all pasts. According to Bergson, we first put ourselves back into the past in general: He describes in this way the *leap into ontology*....It is only then, once the leap has been made, that recollection will gradually take on a psychological existence: "from the virtual it passes into the actual state...." (56-57)

Thus the virtual, though ostensibly immaterial from a habituated sense of materiality, is nonetheless indisputably real (55). While there is a qualitative difference between past and present (i.e. between memory and matter or virtual and actual), this difference-like the qualitative difference between Spinoza's attributes-is not hierarchically ordered nor is it unrelated to quantitative changes or expressions (differences in degree) (55, 42-43). The difference between virtual and actual is a difference in kind (qualitative), but the virtual and the actual are both quantitatively different expressions of the real and, in this sense, also differ in degree (73, 93).<sup>6</sup>

The virtual is material to a less actuated degree than the actual because fewer bodies, organic or nonorganic, are actively affected by it or are forced to

instrumentally engage it. Nonetheless, whether acknowledged or not, virtuality remains a vital part of every actualization; it is the condition of its possibility. As Deleuze explains, "Differentiation is always the actualization of a virtuality that persists across its actual divergent lines" (*Bergsonism* 95). However, not every virtuality will actualize. Bergson posits "a unity, a simplicity, a virtual totality," similar to Spinoza's substance, from which different or divergent lines of actualization are created (95, 97). "In short," Deleuze clarifies, "the characteristic of virtuality is to exist in such a way that it is actualized by being differentiated and is forced to differentiate itself, to create its lines of differentiation in order to be actualized" (97). These actualizations or divergences differ from each other in degree depending on the degree of virtuality to which each corresponds (100, 106, 112-13). If an actualization corresponds to a lesser degree of virtuality, then it is oriented toward the useful, active (as it is conventionally understood), materialist present. If an actualization corresponds to a greater degree of virtuality, then it is oriented toward what Brian Massumi calls "the future-past of the present"-that is, a future which may or may not come to pass and a past which may or may not have affected the dominant present (37). It bears repeating that virtualities, while perhaps less perceptible or exigent than actualities, are no less real (Deleuze, *Bergsonism* 96-97).

The degrees of actualization of the virtual can be described in terms of active and reactive forces. In his study on Nietzsche, Deleuze explains that a reactive force is closely bound up with instrumental or utilitarian reality and thus does not go to the limit of its capability; furthermore, it "separates active force from what it can do" (*Nietzsche* 61). Active force, on the other hand, is flexible, affirms difference, and "goes to the limit of what it can do," whether or not what it does engages instrumental reality (61). The most reactive sensibilities (or thoughts, acts, communities, bodies, criticism, etc.) are those that are most widespread; they are the most instrumentally or actually aligned within material reality. They are, in other words, the most timely. Conversely, the most active sensibilities (or thoughts, acts, communities, bodies, criticism, etc.) are those that are less widespread; they are more virtually aligned within the real. They are, in other words, more untimely.<sup>7</sup> On this rather paradoxical understanding, material existence actuated to a greater degree is more reactive in quality, while material existence actuated to a lesser degree is more active in quality. The actual, while primarily reactive, also contains elements of the active; and the virtual, while primarily active, also contains elements of the reactive.

From a Deleuzian perspective then—a perspective deeply informed by Spinoza, Bergson, and Nietzsche—materiality is a composition of univocity and



distinctions, actuality and virtuality, active and reactive forces. I would suggest that this nuanced conceptualization of materiality is indispensable to any understanding of the various rhetorics used to construct theories of materiality within postcolonial and other literary and cultural studies. Rhetorics that address instrumental or actual urgencies are, at least to a certain extent, reactive, which is certainly not to say reactionary. Rhetorics that address or embody virtual coordinates of reality are, at least in part, active, which is not to say activist. Both kinds of rhetoric address a univocal reality. But because each type of rhetoric addresses a different degree of this reality's actuation—from the instrumentally to the virtually real—the theories and criticisms such rhetorics constitute are materialist to different degrees.

### Differences in Degree

Returning to the debate between Ahmad and Said, it now becomes possible to consider how both forms of criticism are materialist to different degrees. Ahmad critiques those aspects of Said's methodological procedures which he argues are ideologically aligned with the expansion of global capitalism. Specifically, Said's discursivist emphasis in his book *Orientalism* results, according to Ahmad, in an ahistorical, apolitical, and textualist hermeticism compatible and coincidental with the rise of neoconservatism in the Western metropolises (Ahmad 55). Because he relies on a single image of what constitutes materialist criticism, Ahmad reads the implications of Said's focus on discourse in *Orientalism* as being purely idealist, Romanticist, and quietist. However, just because Said develops rhetorics in his critique of Orientalism that are not immediately useful in some oppositional, practical register does not mean that this will always be the case. Said's eclectic combination of critical rhetorics, instead of indicating self-division, might be said to constitute the virtual conditions for future critical and even practical engagements that are not visible or urgent to us in actuated terms at this particular time. While such future engagements or untimely concerns might not seem as urgent to us right now as the issues Ahmad's own important project seeks to address, this should not lead us to conclude that *all* projects must deal with current problems *only* in the terms that Ahmad advances if they are to be understood as materialist.

Where Ahmad is at his most reactive, in Deleuze's sense, is in the relentless presentism of his engagement with oppositional critical rhetorics. This is paradoxical, of course, because Ahmad, like all serious Marxists, criticizes the presentism endemic to capitalism and imperialism. Yet his insistence upon the practical inevitability of those critical rhetorics most aligned with instrumental social organization keeps him frozen quite reactively

in the present image of what passes as oppositional and materialist in criticism and what does not. Ahmad metonymically chains together certain rhetorical terms like "discourse," "idealism," "ahistoricism," "apoliticism," "hermeticism," "immateriality," "poststructuralism," and so on. His image of what constitutes materialist criticism makes it impossible for him to see that in certain kinds of criticism, Said's for example, the necessary equivalency of such terms cannot automatically be assumed. What Ahmad fails to register is how Said's criticism is active, in Deleuze's sense. It is active not only because it is attentive to those virtual components of history, such as Orientalism, not always the most acknowledged or even the most widely felt (*Orientalism* 6-7). Said's criticism is active especially because it is less restricted by instrumental alliances between activist critique and practice and is therefore less bound methodologically, procedurally, and collectively to a current, often unitary, image of what constitutes materialist and oppositional criticism. In Said's later book, *Culture and Imperialism*, he calls his type of criticism "contrapuntal" or, borrowing from Deleuze and Félix Guattari, "nomadic" (331-32).<sup>8</sup> Contrapuntal or nomadic critique involves juxtaposing the seemingly discrepant toward a more complex and often unexpected conception of material history (xxv, 32, 51). The flexibility of this type of criticism, while not guaranteeing any specific outcome, makes it more difficult for any such outcome to be neutralized or co-opted both in the present and the future. Given the current tendency of capital process to appropriate outcomes of oppositional struggles and forms of cultural resistance, dismissing such flexibility or eclecticism in the name of materialist critique seems an imperative concerned academics cannot afford to obey.

Yet to argue that the type of criticism Said practices in *Orientalism* or even *Culture and Imperialism* is *active* is not to say that it is *activist* to the same extent that his work as a public intellectual writing and fighting for Palestinian liberation was. It is, perhaps, the confusion and collapse of active with activist and reactive with reactionary that maintains the polarity between many Marxist and poststructuralist postcolonial critics today. Activism requires the collectivizing of affects in a way that enables a coordinated solidarity in order to fight against oppressive powers. Such a collectivizing process is by definition reactive since it entails a structuration and organization that restricts a force-whether corporeal or critical-and prevents it from going to the limit of what it can do. This restriction is necessary in the case of most activist work since its urgent goals are often most efficiently attained by following one method or procedure. It would, of course, be absurd to confuse reactive activism with reactionary politics. Reactive activism is indispensable in the struggle against a global capitalist system where the overdetermination of

collectivized affects *is*, in fact, inclining more and more toward the reactionary.<sup>9</sup>

Nevertheless, affirming the value of activist critique and work should not preclude us from also valuing active criticism that might not always seem apropos of more activist projects. Active criticism-that is to say, criticism that goes to the limit of what it can do, even if that limit does not seem amenable to immediate political urgencies-has a place along the continuum of materialist critique. Said and others, such as Gayatri Spivak or Homi Bhabha, might use certain procedures, certain rhetorics, certain tactics that have been utilized in debatably reactionary ways and that don't correspond to the way materialist criticism has been conventionally performed. However, this does not indicate that the outcomes of such procedures must be inevitably reactionary or aligned with neoconservative aims. Such critiques may not always be the most timely, but that is not the same as saying they are idealist, Romanticist, or quietist.

The materialist difference between reactive activism and active criticism is a difference in degree. Both forms of critique are invaluable in a world composed of both actual and virtual realities. The objectives of such critiques might differ, they might address or engage different times, they might travel at different speeds, but that does not make one version any more materialist than the other. One job of the intellectual, Said reminds us, is "to [present] alternatives that are too often marginalized or pushed aside as irrelevant to the main battle at hand" (*Representations* 41). Both Marxist and poststructuralist postcolonial critics draw our attention to these all too often marginalized alternatives; and in the instrumental world of capitalist globalization, both types of critics are marginalized for doing so. At least within the utopian or, rather, virtual space of postcolonial studies, such marginalizing gestures can be avoided, allowing for a variety of alternatives to be constructed. This variety will give postcolonial criticism as a whole the flexibility it needs to engage more than one degree of material reality at a time.

### Notes

- 1 - I will argue that Deleuze's notion of virtuality is indispensable to a quantitative understanding of materiality. According to Deleuze, the "virtual" should be understood as an affective or corporeal materiality that is not commonly recognized as "real" but which should not, based on this lack of recognition, be dismissed as "ideal." Virtuality-which can apply as much to types of community or modes of existence, say, as it can to cultural production-might best be conceived as a less widespread, less enforceable, less timely version of actuality, or what we commonly register as our shared instrumental world. But just because the virtual is less timely than the instrumental and, as a result, less immediately useful, it should not be assumed that the virtual is less materially existent or necessarily less valuable. See Deleuze,

*Bergsonism* (51-72, 91-113). For a fine analysis of Deleuze's Bergsonian theory of virtuality see Grosz (93-111).

- 2 - Needless to say, nuanced negotiations of materiality in postcolonial studies already exist, though such formulations often continue to be received and codified in oppositional terms. For example, see Cheah's Derridean theorization of materiality within the context of globalization, cosmopolitanism, and nationalism in *Spectral Nationality* and in his more recent *Inhuman Conditions*. For a predictable critique of Cheah's formulation on Marxist grounds see Sahay. Without getting into any of the complexities of their work, I should also mention in passing the Deleuzian, anti-capitalist analysis of Hardt and Negri—namely, *Empire* and *Multipitude*—as an important, if controversial, renegotiation of the conception of materiality relevant to postcolonial studies. Two collections of essays that analyze and critique their theories are *Debating Empire*, edited by Balakrishnan and Aronowitz, which approaches Hardt and Negri's work from different leftist perspectives, and *Empire's New Clothes*, edited by Dean and Passavant, which utilizes various social, political, and legal perspectives to examine the viability of their theoretical analysis.
- 3 - In *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, Deleuze explains that, according to Spinoza, "We know only two attributes and yet we know there is an infinity of them. We know only two because we can only conceive as infinite those qualities that we involve in our essence: thought and extension, inasmuch as we are mind and body. But we know that there is an infinity of attributes because God has an absolutely infinite power of existing, which cannot be exhausted either by thought or by extension" (52).
- 4 - It should be noted that the diversity and plurality of attributes must not be understood in terms of quantity. From Spinoza's perspective, "The distinction of attributes is nothing but the qualitative composition of an ontologically single substance; substance is distinguished into an infinity of attributes, which are as it were its actual forms or component qualities" (Deleuze, *Expressionism* 182).
- 5 - Colebrook here mentions "affects," which, for Spinoza, have to do with the "passage [of the body] from one state to another" (Deleuze, *Practical* 49). Affects imply the "lived duration that involves the difference between two states"—that is to say, the transition or passage from one state to another (49). If modes are the "affections" of substance or its attributes, then affects have to do with the capacity of modes to affect or to be affected by other modes and, thus, to increase or decrease their own power to act (48-50). Although Deleuze's Spinozist theory of affects is not my specific focus, I mention it here since it brings up the element of duration, thus making it possible to connect Spinoza's conception of quality and quantity to Bergson's theory of the virtual and the actual, as we shall see.
- 6 - Deleuze articulates this Bergsonian paradox as follows:  
First, we bring out the difference in kind between the two lines of object and subject: between perception and recollection, matter and memory, present and past. What happens then? It certainly seems that when the recollection is actualized, its difference in kind from perception tends to be obliterated: There are no longer, there can no longer be, anything but differences in degree between recollection-images and perception-images. (*Bergsonism* 73)
- 7 - Deleuze explains that, as far as Nietzsche is concerned, "The philosopher creates concepts that are neither eternal nor historical but untimely and not of the present. The opposition in terms of which philosophy is realised is that of present and non-present, of our time and the untimely. And in the untimely there are truths that are more durable than all historical and

eternal truths put together: truths of times to come" (*Nietzsche* 107). Bergson's notion of the virtual is, I would suggest, closely aligned to this sense of the untimely.

- 8 - According to Deleuze and Guattari, the power of the nomad is the power of becoming, of the inbetween, of the indefinite (*Thousand* 380). Nomadology is an active, "deterritorializing" force which disrupts our habituated, rigid, reactive, or "territorialized" conceptions, affections, and perceptions (380, 508-10). In the realm of thought, nomadology "grappl[es] with exterior forces instead of being gathered up in an interior form, operating by relays instead of forming an image; an event-thought, a haecceity, instead of a subject-thought, a problem-thought instead of an essence-thought or theorem; a thought that appeals to a people instead of taking itself for a government ministry" (378). It is this conception of nomadism as "counter-thought" that Said's theory of counterpoint corresponds to (376). For more on nomadology see Deleuze and Guattari, *Thousand Plateaus* (351-423). See also Deleuze and Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (188) for a discussion of counterpoint in literature that shares similarities with Said's understanding of the term.
- 9 - In the domain of global capitalism, both poststructuralist and Marxist criticisms can be described as virtual and active since-*pace* Ahmad-neither obey its homogenizing logic. In the field of criticism, however, both forms are reactive when they insist upon a particular version of theory or materiality as being exclusively relevant to postcolonial studies.

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