

# *The Fascist Longings in Our Midst*

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Evil is never done so thoroughly and so well as when it is done with a good conscience.

BLAISE PASCAL, *Thoughts* (279)

Fascism is not the prohibition of saying things, it is the *obligation* to say them.

ROLAND BARTHES, *Leçon* (14)

“FASCISM” IS A BANAL TERM. It is used most often not simply to refer to the historical events that took place in Hitler’s Germany and Mussolini’s Italy, but also to condemn attitudes or behaviour that we consider to be excessively autocratic or domineering.<sup>1</sup> Speaking in the mid-1970s, Michel Foucault referred to the popularized use of the term “fascism” as “a general complicity in the refusal to decipher what fascism really was.” The non-analysis of fascism, Foucault goes on, is “one of the important political facts of the past thirty years. It enables fascism to be used as a floating signifier, whose function is essentially that of denunciation” (“Power and Strategies” 139). In this essay, I attempt to study this—what amounts to a collective—“denunciation” of fascism by examining not only what is being denounced but also the major conceptual paths through which denunciation is produced. My argument is hence not exactly one that avoids the “floatingness” of “fascism” by grounding it in a particular time or space. Instead, I take fascism as a commonplace, in the many ways it is used to indicate what is deemed questionable and unacceptable. In the process, I highlight what I think is fascism’s most significant but often neglected aspect—what I will refer to as its technologized idealism. In my argument, fascism is not

simply the disguised or naturalized “ideology” that we find in Louis Althusser and Roland Barthes;<sup>2</sup> rather it is a term that indicates the production and consumption of a glossy surface image, a crude style, for purposes of social identification even among intellectuals. In lieu of a conclusion, I also comment on the affinities between fascism as a “large” historical force and the mundane events of academic life in North America in the 1990s by foregrounding the idealizing tendencies in what is called multiculturalism.

### Monstrous Visions

For those of us who do not have personal experience of the period of the Second World War in Europe and Asia, the picture that comes to mind when we think of fascism is always a photograph, a scene from a film, a documentary, or some graphic account narrated by survivors. The visual association we have with fascism is usually one of horror and destruction. Recently, for instance, I had the chance to view a video called “Magee’s Testament” (produced and distributed by the Alliance in Memory of the Victims of the Nanking Massacre, 1991) about Japan’s invasion of the city of Nanjing during December 1937 to February 1938. These newsreel pictures of rape and massacre constitute the only known filmed document of the atrocities committed by Japanese soldiers during what the Chinese call “Nanjing da tusha,” the Nanjing Massacre or the Rape of Nanjing. Shot by an American missionary, John Magee, and recently re-discovered after fifty-five years, the cans of amateur film from the 1930s have been incorporated into a 30-minute video by the Chinese American filmmaker Peter Wang. According to Magee’s account, about 300,000 Chinese were killed in a week. This number would be among the 15 to 20 million generally estimated to have been killed during Japan’s aggression against China from 1931 to 1945.<sup>3</sup>

What comes across most powerfully in “Magee’s Testament” is the aesthetics of Japanese brutality. I use the term aesthetics not in its narrow sense of principles of beauty or good taste, but in the broader, Kantian sense of principles of perception and cognition, principles that are in turn manifested in outward be-

haviour, as behavioural style. Among the Chinese survivors interviewed some forty-five years after the war, the memories of that aesthetics unfold in narratives that are juxtaposed with pictures taken in 1937 and 1938 of heart-rending wounds, amputations, disabilities, and deaths. I was struck most of all by the pictures of a still-living woman the back of whose neck had been sawed at with a bayonet. A large portion of the head, which must have at one time been dangling in mid-air without being completely chopped off, was surgically stitched back onto this woman's body. At the time the newsreel was made, it was as if the camera, simply because it captured so vividly the painful physicality of this event, was an accomplice to the original act of brutality. So was the doctor who manipulated the woman's head for the camera, and so were those watching the film.

No words would do justice to the monstrosity of such an aesthetics. But what exactly is monstrous? No doubt it is the calamitous destruction that descended upon the victims. And yet a monstrous aesthetics is also an aesthetics of *making* monstrous, of demonstrative magnification and amplification. As one writer points out, the Japanese soldiers who committed such acts of atrocity were able to do so because, like the Nazis, their loyalty to their ideology was so absolute that it freed them from all other restraints (Lestz 105). Unlike the Nazis, who were Christians mindful of the close relations between "body" and "spirit," and who regarded physical involvement with their victims' bodies as a form of spiritual contamination, the Japanese showed no such compunction. The point about their fascism was not enthusiasm in discipline but enthusiasm in unharnessed cruelty. It was thus not enough simply to extinguish the enemy's life *tout court*; they must torture and mutilate in ways that prolong and aggravate their victims' suffering and thus maximize their own pleasure. There was no sense of being contaminated by the enemy because the enemy was just raw material into which they poked their swords, or discharged their urine and semen alike.

Like all graphic records of fascist destructiveness, the images of "Magee's Testament" clarify two things about fascism. The first, which is the easier to grasp, is that fascism is a form of technology. It is not simply that fascism deploys technological

means for its purposes; facism is also a kind of demonstrative culture/writing whose magnitude—whose portent—can only be that of the technological. The Japanese soldier did not simply use technological weapons; he was a murder machine that happened to take the form of a man. The second thing about fascism, which is closely related to the first but not as readily acceptable, is that the most important sentiment involved in fascism is not a negative but a positive one: rather than hateful-ness and destructiveness, fascism is about love and idealism. Most of all it is a search for an idealized self-image through a heartfelt surrender to something higher and more beautiful. Like the Nazi officer who killed to purify his race, the Japanese soldier raped and slaughtered in total devotion to his emperor and in the name of achieving the “Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere.” Like the Nazi concentration camp official who was genuinely capable of being moved to tears by a Beethoven sonata being played by Jewish prisoners, the Japanese officer, we may surmise, was probably also genuinely capable of being moved by the delicate feelings inscribed in cultured practices such as haiku poetry, calligraphy, or the tea ceremony. In each case, what sustains the aesthetics of monstrosity is something eminently positive and decent.

### Projection I: The Violence “In Us All”

The question of the relationship between the destructive and idealizing sentiments in fascism is thus much more difficult than it first appears. Let us think, once again, of Foucault’s criticism that we have used the term “fascism” only to denounce others. On another occasion, in the Preface to Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari’s *Anti-Oedipus*, Foucault writes that the strategic adversary combatted by *Anti-Oedipus* is fascism, adding that by this he means “not only historical fascism, the fascism of Hitler and Mussolini . . . but also the fascism in us all, in our heads and in our everyday behaviour, the fascism that causes us to love power, to desire the very thing that dominates and exploits us” (xiii).

By moving from events in the world outside back to the fascism “in us all,” Foucault suggests an ancient piece of philosophical advice: “Know thyself.” At the same time, by calling attention to

the fascism "in us" as opposed to that outside us, Foucault articulates a specific conceptual mechanism used in many accounts of fascism, the mechanism of *projection* as defined by Freud. The function of projection is described by Freud as a *defence*: when we sense something dangerous and threatening in ourselves, we expel and objectify it outward, so as to preserve our own stability. The best social example of Freud's understanding of projection is anti-Semitism. The "Jew" is the name and the picture of all those things we cannot admit about ourselves; it is thus a symptom of our fears and anxieties.<sup>4</sup> Even though it is not always consciously stated as such, Freudian projection is crucial to some of the most sophisticated accounts of fascism.<sup>5</sup> However, what emerges interestingly from Foucault's brief comments on fascism is that *if the fascist discrimination against the "Jew" is a projection in Freud's sense, then our denunciatory use of the term "fascism," insofar as it remains a "floating signifier," is also such a projection.* "Fascism" has become for us the empty term, the lack, onto which we project all the unpleasant realities from which we want to distance ourselves. This is why fascism is associated alternately with colonialism, authoritarianism, mysticism, populism, socialism, banality, and so forth.<sup>6</sup> Ortega y Gasset summarizes fascism's emptiness perceptively when he writes that it is "simultaneously one thing and the contrary, A and not-A" (qtd. in Laclau, 81-82). The extreme logical conclusion to this is that those who most violently denounce fascism—who characterize others as fascists—may be themselves exhibiting symptoms of fascism.

But what is it that we "cannot" admit about "ourselves"? Like many of his other concepts, Freud's definition of projection hinges on an act of negation: projection is the outward manifestation of a basic denial or refusal (of knowledge) in the individual organism. Once we focus on the indispensable negativity involved in projection, we notice that the premise for this projection is something like "human nature," which is treated as the source of the problems at hand. A critique of fascism by way of Freudian projection would hence always emphasize fascism as an expression of *our own* repression—our oppression of ourselves—and most critics of fascism, it follows, see fascism first of all as an inner or internalized violence from which we need to be

“liberated.” The belief in repression and liberation as such has the effect of turning even the perpetrators of fascism—those who rape, mutilate, and slaughter—into victims who are ultimately pardonable. For instance, in his classic study, *The Mass Psychology of Fascism*, Wilhelm Reich argues that fascism, like many forms of organized religion and mysticism, is the mass expression of orgiastic impotence or repressed sexual energies. Citing Hitler as his type case, Reich locates the social origin of fascism in the authoritarian patriarchal family, in which feelings of fear and rebellion toward the father are combined with those of reverence and submission (37-40). While Reich’s interpretation made up in a significant way for the neglect of sexuality that characterized most Marxist and economic approaches to fascism of his day, it nevertheless reads like a vulgarized use of Freud’s notion of repression: fascism becomes the compensatory “sublimation” (in distorted form) of the energy that had nowhere else to go. Not surprisingly, therefore, the solution offered by Reich is finally that of “love” and “work”—the proper sublimation of sexual energies that should, he writes, govern our lives.

Similarly, in *Anti-Oedipus*, Deleuze and Guattari explain the repressive violence characteristic of Western society by way of Nietzsche’s notion of *ressentiment*. For them, *ressentiment*, which is active life force turned inward, has a name—Oedipus. Freudian psychoanalysis, insofar as it helps perpetuate the ideological baggage of a metaphysics of interiority, is for Deleuze and Guattari the place to begin criticism of the everyday fascism of Western society.<sup>7</sup>

The “internalized violence” model is so persuasive that it captures even a Marxist political philosopher like Ernesto Laclau. In *Politics and Ideology in Marxist Theory*, Laclau’s project is that of finding ways to articulate the popular forces that motivated fascism in Europe. While Laclau does not fail to see the problems in Reich’s interpretation (84-86), his own criticism of Nicos Poulantzas’s well-known study of fascism is precisely that Poulantzas reduced every contradiction to a class contradiction and failed to take into account the processes of subjectivization involved. Using Althusser’s notion of “interpellation,” Laclau thus reformulates fascism as a kind of populism that interpellated

masses as “a people” in ways that went beyond their class distinctions. It does not seem problematic to Laclau that Althusser’s notion of interpellation is still, arguably, dependent upon an outside (ideology) versus an inside (the individual), and that the moment the individual responds to the hailing “Hey, you!” is also the moment when the force of ideology is “internalized.”

Despite the differences among these critics of fascism—Deleuze and Guattari mock and deterritorialize Freudian psychoanalysis while Reich, Althusser, and Laclau continue to adapt it to their own purposes—they all implicitly agree that fascism’s effectiveness has to do with its being a violence—a *negative* force—that has been “internalized,” a violence that is somehow “in us” by nature or by culture. This leaves us with the question of how exactly fascism is “internalized.” What does it mean for fascism to be “in us”? Do we violate ourselves the way the Nazis and the Japanese violated the Jews, the Gypsies, and the Asians? How does the lack “in us” (in Freud’s terms, fear and denial) turn into a concrete thing “outside” us? How does the nameless “in us” acquire the external name “Jew”? Conversely, how does that monstrous picture “out there” signify/become what is “in us”? How are we to understand that proclamation by Göring which epitomizes this basic problem of fascist projection—“I have no conscience. My conscience is Adolf Hitler”? (qtd. in Mitscherlich, 288).

In other words, when we move from acts of brutality to “internalized violence,” or when we move from the lack that is supposedly “in us” to external atrocities, some change, presupposed and yet unexplained, has taken place. This change, which is the unarticulated part of all of these theories of internalized violence, is metaphorical, imaginary, and, as I will argue, technological. It indicates that which happens but which we cannot actually see or hear—and which we must therefore explain in terms *other* than itself. The filmic image, because it is obvious and palpable, offers a convenient way of staging these “other” terms.

But there is a more fundamental reason why fascism can be explained by way of film. Not that film “expresses” the images of fascism effectively. Rather, like film, fascism as an ideology has “its foundation in projection.” I take this phrase from Alice

Yaeger Kaplan's illuminating study of French fascism, *Reproductions of Banality*. Basing her notion of fascism not on the profound but on the banal and obvious (46), Kaplan calls for a different kind of attention to be paid to fascism—not a convoluted search in the depths of our selves for the *ressentiment* imposed by religion or family, but attention to fascism as projection, surface phenomenon, everyday practice, which does away with the distinction between the “inside” and the “outside”: “The fascist ideal is being swallowed by the subject at the same time as it is being projected onto the leader. Projection and introjection are not always even that distinguishable” (6).<sup>8</sup> The indistinguishability of introjection from projection means that there is a mutual implication between fascism and technology, including the technology that is psychoanalysis. When authors like Freud used terms such as “projection” and “screen memory,” Kaplan writes, they were already speaking to the mediatized make-up of our experience (5).

What is “internalized”—if the language of internalization still makes sense—is thus not so much the atrocious ideology of cruelty as its monstrous, propagandist form:

The crowd comes to know itself as film. Subjects knowing themselves as film—that is, internalizing the aesthetic criteria offered in film—have a radically different experience, than if they knew themselves through film. In the film experience the spectators do not merely control a model that remains exterior to their untouched subjectivity; rather, their subjectivity is altered and enlarged by the film. . . . (155)

What is “internalized” in the age of film is the very *projectional* mechanism of projection. If individuals are, to use Althusser's term, “interpellated,” they are interpellated not simply as watchers of film but also as film itself. They “know” themselves not only as the subject, the audience, but as the object, the spectacle, the movie. In his study of the cinema of Fassbinder, Thomas Elsaesser makes a similar argument about German fascism, namely, that German fascism was based on the state of being-looked-at, which cinema's proclivity toward visual relations conveniently exemplifies. Elsaesser holds that the Fassbinder trademark of exhibitionism—the persistent foregrounding of being-looked-at



and its significance for the formation of social identity—should be understood in this light:

What, Fassbinder seems to ask, was fascism for the German middle and working-class which supported Hitler? We know what it was for Jews, for those actively persecuted by the regime, for the exiles. But for the apolitical Germans who stayed behind? Might not the pleasure of fascism, its fascination have been less the sadism and brutality of SS officers than the pleasure of being seen, of placing oneself in view of the all-seeing eye of the State? Fascism in its Imaginary encouraged a moral exhibitionism, as it encouraged denunciation and mutual surveillance. Hitler appealed to the *Volk* but always by picturing the German nation, standing there, observed by “the eye of the world.” The massive specularization of public and private life. . . might it not have helped to institutionalize the structure of “to be is to be perceived” that Fassbinder’s cinema problematizes? (545)<sup>9</sup>

In Elsaesser’s phrase “to be is to be perceived,” we see that projection, instead of being preceded by “being,” is itself the basis from which “being” arises. What this means is a reversal of Freud’s model of projection. While Freud begins with the “being” that is the individual organism—the inner something that, sensing something unpleasant, projects it outward—Elsaesser’s reading of Fassbinder enables us to begin instead with the projection that is obviously “out there”—the projection that is “being perceived,” the projection that is film. While the Freudian model describes projection as being based upon an original lack, as an externalized concretization or objectification of that lack, we can now ask instead: how does the projection that is film “become” us? How does visual technology inhabit the human shape?

In order to answer these questions, we need to recall the more conventional meaning of projection as an act of thrusting or throwing forward, an act that causes an image to appear on a surface. Despite the suggestive association of fascism with film, what remains unarticulated in Kaplan’s (and to some extent Elsaesser’s) account is the difference between this *obvious* sense of projection and Freud’s definition. While the common conceptual path taken by most critics of fascism is projection in Freud’s sense—that is, projection as a subject’s refusal to recognize something in order to defend itself—film, as external image, operates with the more obvious sense of projection—as objects already out there, objects that may not necessarily be a compen-

sation or substitution for an original (subjective) lack or inability. Once the premise of projection is changed from "inside" to "surface"

in this manner, it becomes possible to think of projection as a *positing* rather than a negating function. It would also, I propose, be possible to rethink fascism away from the projection-as-compensated-lack model provided by Freud.

### Projection II: Angels of Light

By turning to film and to the formal mutuality between film and fascism, I am not saying that film offers a means of illustrating the principles of fascism. What I am saying is that fascism cannot be understood without a certain understanding of the primacy of the image, *which is best exemplified by the relations of receptivity involved in film*. My point can be stated in a different way: film, because it is obviously imagistic, stands as a good way of analyzing the abstract problem of projection, which is also the problem of that imaginary and metaphoric change between external and internal violence that remains unexplained in the writers I mentioned earlier.<sup>10</sup>

It is hence not an accident that critics of fascism frequently turn to film for their discussions. Consider, for instance, Susan Sontag's classic "Fascinating Fascism," from which the title of the present essay is taken.<sup>11</sup> In her essay, Sontag repudiates the judgement that the work of filmmaker and photographer Leni Riefenstahl, who received generous support from the German government for her productions during the Nazi period, is nevertheless in some significant manner "apolitical." By refusing to separate artistic technique from ideology, Sontag persuasively shows how the creation of beauty in Riefenstahl's films is intimately linked to fascist ideals. Toward the end of the essay, Sontag writes:

it is generally thought that National Socialism stands only for brutishness and terror. But this is not true. National Socialism—or, more broadly, fascism—also stands for an ideal, and one that is also persistent today, under other banners: the ideal of life as art, the cult of beauty, the fetishism of courage, the dissolution of alienation in ecstatic feelings of community; the repudiation of the intellect; the family of man (under the parenthood of leaders). (43)

Insofar as she identifies the *positive* messages of fascism as an inalienable part of its functioning, I am in total agreement with Sontag. Her charge that the most widely appreciated qualities of Riefenstahl's work—its beauty, its technical refinement—are precisely what speak most effectively to “the fascist longings in our midst” is so perceptive that it is unsettling.<sup>12</sup> Yet peculiarly, in an essay that so clearly insists on the inseparability of art and ideology, Sontag nonetheless makes a distinction between art and ideology *as soon as she tries to contrast fascist art with communist art*:

The tastes for the monumental and for mass obeisance to the hero are common to both fascist and communist art. . . . But fascist art has characteristics which show it to be, in part, a special variant of totalitarian art. The official art of countries like the Soviet Union and China is based on a utopian morality. Fascist art displays a utopian aesthetics—that of physical perfection. . . . In contrast to the asexual chasteness of official communist art, Nazi art is both prurient and idealizing. . . . The fascist ideal is to transform sexual energy into a “spiritual” force, for the benefit of the community. (40-41)

If Sontag's judgement about fascist art does away with the distinction between propaganda and aesthetics, her reading of the difference between communist and fascist art reintroduces it. We can only speculate that, as a Jewish intellectual writing in the United States of the 1970s, Sontag was absolutely clear-eyed about the fascism of the earlier decades, but like all left-leaning Eurocentric intellectuals of that period, she retained a sense of illusion about communism. Hence even though she writes that fascist art shares with totalitarian art the same tastes for the monumental and for mass obeisance to the hero, she seems to imply, ultimately, that because fascism beautifies and thus hides its totalitarian motives in aesthetically impeccable images, it is the more pernicious and dangerous of the two. Once ideology and art are distinguished as content and facade in this way, however, “aesthetics” returns to the more narrow and conventional sense of the beautiful alone.

By describing fascism as fascinating “aesthetics” in the narrow sense, Sontag, in spite of her own insights, rejoins the tendency of most discussions of fascism, in which attention is almost always focused, negatively, on the “deceptiveness” of fascist authorities:

these fascists, it is thought, paint beautiful (that is, delusive) pictures about their ugly (that is, real) behaviour. Such pictures, in other words, have the status of deliberate *lies*. Fascist atrocities thus become the “real” that sets the records straight, that exposes the “deceit” and “error” of fascist rhetoric.

But it is precisely in this kind of interpretive cross-over from rhetoric to deed, from “lies” to “truth,” from “beautiful pictures” to “ugly reality” that critics have downplayed the most vital point about fascism—its significance as image and surface, its projectional idealism. The “false-true” dichotomization leads us to believe that good intentions cannot result in cruel behaviour, and conversely, that the fact of cruelty can only be the result of hidden evil motives “dressed up” as beautiful pictures. We see how the substitutive or compensatory logic of Freud’s notion of projection is fully at work here: the fascists, according to this logic, project what they (secretly) deny about themselves “outside”; we the critics thus have to negate their negation and rewind their projection from that false “outside” back into their hidden “inside.” According to this logic, not only are intentions and behaviour transparently linked; they are also linked through opposition and negation: hence, the “good” image is an index to “bad” motives. But what if the declared ideals were not lies (projection in Freud’s sense) but projections (projection in the common sense of throwing forward)? How then do we understand the relation between noble intentions and atrocious deeds?

Without the illusion about communism—that its propaganda, unlike the beautiful facade of fascism, has after all some real connection to a “utopian morality”—Sontag would in fact have come close to saying that the aesthetics of fascism (aesthetics in the broad sense of cognition and perception) resides precisely in images—not so much images-as-the-beautiful but images-as-the-positivistic-and-self-evident. The “beautiful” images are not images that “hide” (the content of horror); rather they are the cognitive form of the technological age, the surface or superficial phenomena that present themselves as evidence of themselves instead of some other, “inner” meaning. What is fascist about fascism’s idealized images is not only that they are positive, but

also that they pose and posit, and are positivistic. This positivity is the “projection” that the followers of fascism “internalize.”

What Sontag correctly identifies as the “idealizing” tendencies of fascism can thus be explained by the projectional nature of film. To present something in “idealized” terms is literally to enlarge and embolden it—in short, to blow it up as a picture. While it takes its materials from everyday life, this picture, by its very positivity, also becomes mythic. It holds a promise and turns the everyday into the primitive and archetypal. In the process of consuming it, we become infantilized. As Kaplan writes, “the machinery of the media gave birth to a new kind of ideological vulnerability. It was mother bound” (23). In what amounts to the same argument, Kaplan also writes: “When fascism took power, it took charge of the imaginary” (34).<sup>13</sup>

André Bazin provides an astute analysis of these relations between film and idealism, relations that are based on projection, in an essay called “The Stalin Myth in Soviet Cinema.” Unlike Sontag, who still attributes to communist art a utopianism that would set it off from fascist art, Bazin calls attention precisely to the idealizing—that is, fascistic—logic in the Soviet films about Stalin. Writing around 1950, Bazin was amazed by the fact that these mythically positive images of Stalin—as a hyper-Napoleonic military genius, as an omniscient and infallible leader, but also as a friendly, avuncular helper to the common people—were made while the man was still alive. Bazin’s point is that only the dead are larger than life: “If Stalin, even while living, could be the main character of a film, it is because he is no longer ‘human,’ engaging in the transcendence which characterizes living gods and dead heroes” (36). The glorifying films have the effect of mummifying and monumentalizing Stalin, so that it is the Stalin-image which becomes the ultimate authority, which even Stalin himself had to follow in order to “be” (40).

According to Bazin, thus, the idealizing power of cinema is not only positivistic but also *retroactive*, calling for a submission to that which has always, in the process of being idealized, already become past or dead. The Stalin myth in Soviet cinema commands an absolute surrender—an identification that is possible only with the cessation of history. Bazin illustrates the retroactive

logic of fascist idealization with another, non-filmic example, the Stalinist trials. For Bazin, the major accomplishment of the trials is their success in remaking, that is, falsifying, history with the pre-emptiveness of retroaction:

According to the Soviet “Stalinist” communist perspective, no one can “become” a traitor. That would imply that he wasn’t always a traitor, that there was a biographical beginning to this treason, and that, conversely, a person who became a menace to the Party would have been considered useful to the Party before becoming evil. The Party could not simply bust Radek to the lowest rank, or condemn him to death. It was necessary to proceed with a retroactive purge of History, proving that the accused was, since birth, a willful traitor whose every act was satanically camouflaged sabotage. Of course, this operation is highly improbable and far too serious to be used in every case. That is why the public *mea culpa* can be substituted concerning minor figures whose historical action is indirect—such as artists, philosophers, or scientists. These solemn hyperbolic *mea culpas* can seem psychologically improbable or intellectually superfluous to us if we fail to recognize their value as exorcism. As confession is indispensable to divine absolution, so solemn retraction is indispensable to the reconquering of historical virginity. (37)

By inserting this discussion of the logic of totalitarian interrogation in an essay about cinematic representation, Bazin enables us to see retroaction as the crucial common ground for both the Stalinist trials and the filmic construction of Stalin. Moreover, he enables us to see that retroaction works hand in hand with positivism: like the interrogative erasure of the history of communist “traitors”—an erasure (of counter-evidence) that, in effect, becomes the self-validating “evidence” of their guilt—the very (retroactive) idealization of Stalin’s goodness in the form of (positivistic) images are part of a manipulation of history that *uses images as their own alibi* by making them appear self-evident. The effect is mass sacrifice—the sacrifice of the masses’ own knowledge of history in submission to the mythic image.

Bazin’s analysis offers us a way out of Freud’s definition of projection. Instead of operating negatively as refusal, compensated lack, and defense mechanism, projection here is the positive instrument of transparency, of good intentions shining forth in dazzling light. Stalin as the angel of light—not only in the sense that he was bringing enlightenment to the people but also

in the sense that he was himself transparent, thus allowing for an identification that dissolves the boundary between the inside and the outside—this was the magic of his image. It is therefore not by focusing on the atrocious deeds, the “evil” of fascists, but on their moments of idealism production, their good conscience, that we can understand the effectiveness of fascist aesthetics. The voice of Emperor Hirohito, heard for the first time by his people over the radio after the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, speaking solemnly of the sadness of national defeat, was one example of this aesthetics. The voice and image of Mao Zedong telling the Red Guards that “Revolution is not criminal, revolt is reasonable” in the form of massive street slogans and pamphlets was another. The sincere altruistic rhetoric we hear in US presidential campaigns, complete with the candidates’ demonstrations of their ordinariness (their love of family, for instance), is a third. In all of these cases, it is the force of light, transparency, and idealized image that works in the service of “interpellating” the masses, who receive the leaders as a mesmerizing film. To say that the leaders are “lying” to the masses would be to miss the point of our thoroughly mediatized feelings and perceptions, which accept this aesthetics without coercion, and which accept it as positive and good.<sup>14</sup>

That fascism is primarily a production of light and luminosity is an argument Paul Virilio makes, among other works, in *War and Cinema: The Logistics of Perception*. Virilio’s point over and over again is the fatal interdependence of the technologies of warfare and vision, “the conjunction between the power of the modern war machine . . . and the new technical performance of the observation machine” (71; emphases in the original). Hitler and Mussolini clearly understood the coterminous nature of perception and destruction, of cinematic vision and war. While the former commented in 1938, “The masses need illusion—but not only in theatres or cinemas,” the latter declared, “Propaganda is my best weapon” (qtd. in Virilio, 53).

These remarks show us the technical nature of fascism, not only in the sense that fascism deploys technological weapons, but also in the sense that the scale of illusion/transparency promised by fascism is possible only in the age of film, the gramophone,

and the loudspeaker. The mediatized image and voice—machines in human form rather than humans using machines—are, in Heidegger's terms, fascism's *techné*. Virilio writes:

If photography, according to its inventor Nicéphore Niepce, was simply a method of engraving with light, where bodies inscribed their traces by virtue of their own luminosity, nuclear weapons inherited both the dark room of Niepce and Daguerre and the military searchlight. (81)

To paraphrase Virilio, we might add that fascism is an engraving with light on people's "minds": fascist leaders inscribed their traces by virtue of their own luminosity; fascist propaganda inherited both the dark room of Niepce and Daguerre and the military searchlight. . . .

### The Story of O, or, the New Fascism

In the foregoing pages, I have tried to argue that fascism needs to be understood not only in its negative but more importantly in its positive aspects, and that fascism's production of idealism is a projectional production of luminosity-as-self-evidence. In an essay entitled "The Evidence of Experience," which does not at first seem to have anything to do with the topic of fascism, Joan Scott has made comparable observations about the use of "experience" in the North American academy today. In the general atmosphere of a felt need to deconstruct universalist claims about human history, Scott writes, scholars of various disciplines have increasingly turned to personal experience as a means of such deconstruction. However, she argues, by privileging experience as the critical weapon against universalisms, we are leaving open the question as to what authorizes experience itself. Scott charges that the appeal to experience "as uncontested evidence and as an originary point of explanation" for historical difference has increasingly replaced the necessary task of exploring "how difference is established, how it operates, how and in what ways it constitutes subjects who see and act in the world."<sup>15</sup>

For me, what is especially interesting is the manner in which Scott emphasizes the role of vision and visibility throughout her essay. Beginning her discussion with Samuel R. Delany's autobiographical meditation, *The Motion of Light in Water*, Scott notes



that “a metaphor of visibility as literal transparency is crucial to his project.” She concludes that for Delany, “Knowledge is gained through vision; vision is a direct apprehension of a world of transparent objects” (775). What Scott articulates here is the other side of Virilio’s argument about the coterminous nature of visual perception and destruction—that is, the coterminous nature of visual perception and knowledge: “Seeing is the origin of knowing” (776). While the technology of seeing, or seeing-as-technology, has become an inalienable part of the operation of militarism and fascist propaganda, Scott shows how it has also come to dominate our thinking about identity, so much so that visibility and luminosity are the conditions toward which accounts of difference and alternative histories derived from “personal experience” now aspire.

This kind of aspiration, Scott implies, is an aspiration toward the self-evidence of the self’s (personal) experience. *The self as evidence*: this means that the self, like the Stalin myth in Soviet cinema, is so transparent, so shone through with light, that it simply *is*, without need for further argument about its history or what Scott calls its “discursive character” (787).

By alerting us to the technology (what she calls metaphor) of visibility, which is now engraved in the attitudes toward knowledge, history, and identity, Scott’s argument provides a way of linking the “large” historical issues of fascism and totalitarianism we have been examining with the “small” sphere of North American academic life in the 1990s. In the remainder of this essay, I will elaborate this linkage further with the help of a fictional scenario. As many readers will recognize, the features of this scenario are a composite drawn from the recent general trends of “multiculturalism” in the academy. By portraying these features in a deliberately exaggerated form, my point is not to slight the significance of the work that is being done by non-Western intellectuals on the non-Western world, but rather to deconstruct our increasingly fascist intellectual environment, in which facile attitudes, pretentious credentials, and irresponsible work habits can be fostered in the name of “cultural pluralism.” The heroine in my fictional scenario is ultimately a mock heroine, the victim of a dangerous collective culture which all of us working in the West perpetrate in different ways.

We will call this imaginary heroine O. A “person of colour” from a “third world” country, O is enrolled in a graduate program in a North American university. Despite her upper-class background, O tells people that she is from poor peasant stock in order

to enhance her credibility as a “third-world” intellectual. After muddling and bluffing through her coursework, O launches a “multidisciplinary” dissertation that deals with various types of social protest by underdogs in her culture of origin. For two or three years O does virtually nothing by way of serious reading and research, though she makes her presence known regularly by speaking extemporaneously at different conferences. Much as she holds “Western capitalism” in contempt and tirelessly brandishes slogans of solidarity with downtrodden classes in the “third world,” O seems even more determined to get her share of fame, privilege, and material well-being in the “first world” by hook or by crook. But even while O has no qualms about faking her way through graduate school, and even while no one can, when asked, say what her project really is apart from repeating the vague generalities that O habitually recites, the support O receives from well-established academics across the U.S. is tremendous. Many of these supporters are white. Some of them assert that O is the most talented young intellectual from a “third world” country they have ever encountered. With their glowing recommendations, O eventually finds herself a job teaching at a US university.

What is behind such sincere support of a great impostor from what are undoubtedly intelligent and accomplished people? A mass process similar to that described in the classic story of the Emperor’s new clothes is mobilized here, as someone willing to occupy the position of the Emperor accidentally appears. Obviously, we cannot say to O’s supporters: “But can’t you see . . . ?!”—because another kind of seeing is taking place. By seeing a student of colour, no matter how pretentious and fraudulent, as self-evidently correct and deserving of support, these supporters receive an image of *themselves* that is at once enlightenedly humble (“I submit to you, since you are a victim of our imperialism”) and beautiful (“Look how decent I am by submitting to you”), and thus eminently gratifying.

Even though O may be cheating her way through the system, therefore, *she alone is not to blame for this ridiculous situation*. As I already emphasized, it is our flagrantly irresponsible environment of “cultural pluralism” that nurtures her behaviour and allows her to thrive.<sup>16</sup> In the white liberal enthusiasm for “peoples of colour” that is currently sweeping through North American academic circles, something of the fascism we witnessed in earlier decades has made its return in a new guise. The basis for this fascism is, once again, the identification with an idealized other placed in the position of unquestionable authority. Like the fascism of the 1920s and 1930s, a feeling of rebellion is definitely present; like the old fascism also, there is a massive submission to a kind of figure of “experience” that is assumed to be, to use the terms of Scott’s analysis, luminously self-evident. This time, what is “rebelled” against is, fashionably, the canon of the West or “Western imperialism,” and the figure onto whom such feelings are projected is the “person of colour,” regardless of that person’s actual personal or professional politics.<sup>17</sup>

Once fascism starts taking effect, it is useless to point out that the person being put in the position of the Emperor wearing new clothes is a fraud. Debunking O as an impostor by pointing out her fraudulence—that she is actually ignorant, lazy, and deceitful, for instance—would be to miss the point that fascism happens when people willingly suspend disbelief in fraudulence and that, in fact, it is precisely with such fraudulence that they identify. The trait-of-identification between O and her supporters is the glossy surface image of a righteous “person of colour” who, *simply by being (herself), simply by making loud proclamations against the West at all times*, brings justice to everyone who has suffered under Western imperialism. Since the identification is precisely with this truth/illusion about O—that she simply *is*, without work or effort—debunking it would reinforce rather than destroy O’s appeal.<sup>18</sup> Fascism here is the force of an “in spite of” turning into a “precisely because”: in spite of the fact that the Emperor has no clothes on, people see him as the opposite: precisely because he has no clothes on, people *themselves* provide the vision that makes up for this lack. In this vision, an impostor like O looms with irresistible charm, as an angel of light. For

those who love her with benevolence, O is a cipher, an automaton performing the predictable notions of the "third world" intellectual *they* desire.

This "story of O" is but one among many that characterize the "politically correct" atmosphere of the North American academy of the 1990s. In using the term "politically correct," what I intend is not the kind of conservative, rightwing bashing of how the academy has gone to hell with feminism, cultural pluralism, multidisciplinary, and their like, but rather the phrase's original sense of a criticism of our own moral self-righteousness gone haywire. In this original sense, "political correctness" is a machinery of surveillance that encourages certain kinds of exhibitionism. To borrow from Elsaesser's study of Fassbinder, we may say that "In the face of a bureaucratic surveillance system ever more ubiquitous," the O's of the academy, like the German middle-class citizens in Fassbinder's films, take on "an act of terrorist exhibitionism which turns the machinery of surveillance . . . into an occasion for self-display" (545).

As a "person of colour" from the "third world," as a student doing a project about lower classes in the "third world," O occupies a number of positions that are currently considered, in an *a priori* manner, as "other" and "marginalized." But are such positions alone, especially when they are self-consciously adopted and promoted simply in order to draw attention and in place of hard work, a genuine contribution to change? Does "otherness" itself automatically suffice as critical intervention? By subscribing to the "evidence of experience" as embodied by the likes of O, those who support "peoples of colour" insult the latter a second time: this time peoples of colour are not being colonized territorially and ideologically; rather they are uniformly branded as the "virtuous other" regardless of their own class, gender, race, and other differences, and are thus, to cite Edward Said, Orientalized all over again. To put all this in blunter terms, we can draw an analogy between what is happening to O and the much-criticized white fantasy about the "sexuality" of, say, black people. According to this fantasy, the black man or woman simply *is* sex, primitive rhythm, unrepressed nature, and so forth. To this wish list we may now add "the oppressed," "revolution," and "political correctness" as well.<sup>19</sup>

The machines of surveillance here are not war airplanes but the media—the networks of communication, which, in the academic world, include the classroom, conferences, publications, funding agencies, and even letters of recommendation. With the large number of students (rightly) eager for alternative histories, of academic conferences (rightly) devoted to the constructions of differences, and of publishers (rightly) seeking to publish new, unexplored materials, fascism has reasserted itself in our era. And, as even my brief discussion shows, fascism's new mode is very much complicated by postcoloniality. The question facing intellectuals in the contemporary West is how to deal with peoples who were once colonized and who are now living and working in the "first world" as "others."<sup>20</sup> In the early days of colonialism, when actual territorial conquests were made and relocation from the "mother country" to the colonies was a fact of life for those from what eventually came to be called the "first world," the questions for white people finding themselves removed from home were questions of what Nancy Armstrong and Leonard Tennenhouse call "the imaginary puritan": how to preserve whiteness while in the brown and black colonies? How to stay English in America? How to fabricate a respectable national origin against the onslaught of barbaric natives—that is, how to posture as the invaded and colonized while invading and colonizing others? All in all, these questions amount to: How *not* to "go native"?<sup>21</sup> As Armstrong and Tennenhouse argue, the English novel, which was conceptually based not so much on previous cultural developments in Europe but rather on the captivity narratives that found their way back to Europe from the "New World," bears symptoms of this white anxiety about cultural purity. In this sense, the English novel is perhaps the earliest example—to use Fredric Jameson's classic pronouncement on "third world" literature—of a "national allegory."

Toward the end of the twentieth century, as the aftermath of the grand imperialist eras brings about major physical migrations of populations around the globe, it is no longer a question of white people going to the colonies, but rather of formerly colonized peoples settling permanently in their former colonizers' territories. The visible presence of these formerly colo-

nized peoples in the “first world” leads to violent upheavals in “Western thought.” The overriding preoccupation among first world intellectuals has now become: how to become “other”? How to claim to be a minority—to claim to be black, Native American, Hispanic, or Asian, even if one has only 1/64th share of these “other” origins? In other words, *how to “go native”*? Instead of imagining themselves to be a Pamela or Clarissa held captive, resisting rape, and writing volumes in order to preserve the purity of their souls (and thus their “origins,” to quote again from Armstrong and Tennenhouse), first world intellectuals are now overtaken by a new kind of desire: “Make me other!” And so, with expediency, we witness the publication of essays which are studded with names of nations and territories in order to convey a profile of “cosmopolitanism”; journals which amass the most superficial materials about lesser known cultures and ethnicities in the name of being “public,” “global,” or “transnational”; and book series which (en)list “indigenous” histories and narratives in the manner of a world fair—all this, while so-called “post-colonial” criticisms of former European imperialist strategies of representing, objectifying, and exhibiting “the other” are going on.

If there is one thing that unites the early territorial colonialism and the contemporary white liberalist intellectual trends that I am describing, it is the notion of a clear demarcation between “self” and “other,” between “us” and “them”—a demarcation that is mediated through the relations between consciousness and captivity. The myth, in the days of territorial colonialism, was that (white) consciousness had to be established in resistance to captivity—even while whites were holding other peoples and lands captive—so that (white) cultural origins could be kept pure. In the postcolonial era, by contrast, the myth is that (white) consciousness must itself “surrender to” or be “held captive by” the other—that (white) consciousness is nothing without this captivity called “otherness.” In both cases, however, *what remains constant is the belief that “we” are not “them,” and that “white” is not “other.”* This belief, which can be further encapsulated as “*we are not other,*” is fascism *par excellence*.

Emerging in postcoloniality, the new “desire for our others” displays the same positive, projectional symptoms of fascism that

I discussed in the preceding pages—a rebelliousness and a monstrous aesthetics, but most of all a longing for a transparent, idealized image and an identifying submission to such an image. Like the masses' embrace of a Hitler or a Mussolini, this fascism seeks empowerment through a surrender to the other as film—as the film that overcomes me in the spell of an unmediated “experience.” The *indiscriminate* embrace of the peoples of colour as “correct” regardless of their differences and histories is ultimately the desire for a pure-otherness-in-pristine-luminosity that is as dangerous as the fascism of hateful *discrimination* from which we all suppose we are safely distanced. The genealogical affinity of these two fascisms is perhaps best exemplified by the art of a Leni Riefenstahl, who progressed from embracing Nazi racism to embracing the beautiful Nuba men of the southern Sudan.

If the controversial label “fascism” is indeed useful, as I think it is, for a radical critique of the contemporary intellectual culture in the West, it is because it helps us identify and problematize the good conscience and noble obligations of the new liberal fascism with its multiculturalist modes and its sophisticated enterprises of visibility. Some will no doubt want to disavow such ongoing fascist longings in our midst; others, hopefully, will not.<sup>22</sup>

## NOTES

- <sup>1</sup> For an informative analysis of some of the well-known and/or widely adopted interpretations of fascism in Germany, see Schulte-Sasse. For some of the more recent discussions of fascism in Europe and European writers, see the essays in Golsan. This volume also contains a useful “Selective Bibliography” of recent works in English on fascism.
- <sup>2</sup> The argument that ideology is the history that has been “naturalized” or “disguised” is a predominant way of understanding fascism; accordingly, fascism is construed as a matter of *lies*. As will become clear in the course of this essay, my argument differs from this major view of ideology in that I do not see fascism simply as lying.
- <sup>3</sup> It is well-known that even today members of the Japanese Parliament attempt to deny their country's war atrocities. “Magee's Testament” shows one such MP, Shintaro Ishihara, declaring in an interview with *Playboy* that the atrocities did not happen and then changing his mind in a subsequent interview with *Time*. In the second interview, Ishihara proclaimed that merely 20,000, rather than 300,000, Chinese were killed in the Nanjing Massacre—as if a smaller number would make the massacre of less concern. This denial is so determined that the Japanese government ensured that Emperor Akihito's visit to China in 1992 would not be used as the occasion for an apology. “There was an unfortunate period in which my country inflicted great sufferings on the people of China,” Akihito said,

speaking in Japanese. "I feel deep sorrow about this." Meanwhile, the Japanese Education Ministry exercised its constitutional right to dictate the contents of schoolbooks by censoring descriptions of the Japanese army's germ warfare experiments on prisoners and of episodes such as the Rape of Nanjing. According to a Reuters report in March 1993, Japan's Supreme Court upheld this censorship and rejected the lawsuit by Saburo Ienaga, a retired history professor, who had waged a 30-year battle against the whitewashing of wartime history ("Japanese Court OKs Censoring of Schoolbooks"). Ienaga finally won his battle in May 1994 ("Scholar Wins Ruling on Nanjing Massacre"). As Claude Lanzman writes in *Shoah: An Oral History of the Holocaust*, for the invention of genocide no one wants "copyright." Lanzman is quoted by Michael Lestz in a review essay on holocaust literature, "Lishi de mingji." For discussions of Japanese war atrocities in China published in Chinese, see for instance Xu Zhigeng and Gao Xingzu. For a recent overview of Sino-Japanese political and cultural relations since the Second World War, see Dirlik.

- 4 "The subject attributes tendencies, desires, etc., to others that he refuses to recognize in himself: the racist, for instance, projects his own faults and unacknowledged inclinations on to the group he reviles. This type of projection . . . seems to come closest to the Freudian sense of the term" (Laplanche and Pontalis, 351. See also the entire entry under "Projection," 349-56).
- 5 For instance, in an essay on the 1932 Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution in Rome, Schnapp describes "the structural undergirding of fascist ideology" as a "taut but hollow frame over which a canvas must be stretched in order for the illusion of fullness to spring forth." Fascism "required an aesthetic *overproduction*—a surfeit of fascist signs, images, slogans, books, and buildings—to compensate for, fill in, and cover up its forever unstable ideological core" (3; emphasis in the original). As I go on to argue in this essay, the twin components of lack and compensation are crucial to Freud's concept of projection.
- 6 Memmi associates fascism with colonialism: "every colonial nation carries the seeds of fascist temptation in its bosom. . . . What is fascism, if not a regime of oppression for the benefit of a few? . . . colonialism is one variety of fascism" (62). Reich associates fascism with authoritarianism and mysticism; Laclau analyzes fascism as a kind of populism or failed socialism; Kaplan studies fascism from the point of view of the banal and the everyday.
- 7 Quoting from Nietzsche's *On the Genealogy of Morals*, Deleuze and Guattari write: "In the latency system of terror, what is no longer active, en-acted, or reacted to, 'this *instinct for freedom* forcibly made latent . . . pushed back and repressed, incarcerated within and finally able to discharge and vent itself only on itself,'—that very thing is now *ressenti* . . ." (214; emphases in the original).
- 8 By reading novels, autobiographies, and letters of the Freikorps officers, as well as illustrating his readings ironically with cartoons, posters, advertisements, and other graphic materials, Theweleit's work on fascism shares with Kaplan's a methodological focus on the obvious and everyday as the place to look for fascist aesthetics.
- 9 Elsaesser emphasizes throughout his essay the historicity of fascism and the historicity of film theory's privileged ability to explain processes of specularization.
- 10 Having said this, I should add, however, that the imagistic or projectional implications of fascism go well beyond the medium of film itself.
- 11 In the passage from which my title is taken, Sontag writes:  
Riefenstahl's current de-Nazification and vindication as indomitable priestess of the beautiful—as a film maker and now, as a photographer—do not augur well for the keenness of current abilities to detect the fascist longings in our midst. The force of her work is precisely in the continuity of its political and



aesthetic ideas. What is interesting is that this was once seen so much more clearly than it seems to be now. (43)

- 12 Sontag's argument here is comparable to that of Bataille, who describes fascist authority in terms of a "double character" in which "cruel tendencies" co-exist with "the need, characteristic of all domination, to realize and idealize order" (146).
- 13 Unlike orthodox Marxism, which reduces spiritual and artistic phenomena to economics, the fascism of the 1920s and 1930s had a great appeal to artists and intellectuals because it gave the potentially creative role of beliefs—of myth-making—a central place in social life. This was especially so in the case of Italian fascism, which was, unlike German fascism, aesthetically compatible with the avant garde tenets of modernism. For an informative argument, see Dasenbrock.
- 14 See Kaplan's very interesting discussion of the "slogan text" in chapter 3 of her book. For Kaplan, the slogan is a form of encapsulation with the performative aura of the "self-evident," luminous, transparent speech act, which appeals through the clarity of refrain rather than through thought and discourse. Both visual and aural in effect, slogans are brief strings of words that tell and make history at the same time, and "a kind of self-fulfilling prophecy" (68).
- 15 For a similar critique of the positivistic manner in which some non-white feminists turn to "lived experience" as "an alternative mode of radical subjectivity," see Suleri, "Woman Skin Deep."
- 16 This environment can in part be described in terms of what Bové calls "the facile professionalization of the U.S. academy" (xv). However, the ramifications involved go far beyond the U.S. academy.
- 17 I want to emphasize once again that my point is not to defend Western imperialism or Eurocentrism *per se*, but rather to mobilize criticism of the trends of uninformed and unanalytical claims about "cultural pluralism" that are being made in the name of anti-imperialism and anti-Eurocentrism. By implication, it is also to criticize those who are kind and lenient whenever it comes to dealing with non-Western scholars—those, in other words, who base their judgements on the sole basis of skin colour.
- 18 The situation here is comparable, though not identical, to Žižek's analysis of the popular support for Kurt Waldheim in the 1986 Austrian presidential campaign. The Austrian people, to put the matter in the form of a joke of the time, wanted to have "Waldheimer's Disease," the disease of not being able to remember that one has been a Nazi, but this is precisely what Waldheim's opponents missed. As Žižek writes:

Starting from the assumption that Waldheim was attracting voters because of his great-statesman image, leftists put the emphasis of their campaign on proving to the public that not only is Waldheim a man with a dubious past (probably involved in war crimes) but also a man who is not prepared to confront his past, a man who evades crucial questions concerning it—in short, a man whose basic feature is a refusal to "work through" the traumatic past. What they overlooked was that it was precisely this feature with which the majority of centrist voters identified. Post-war Austria is a country whose very existence is based on a refusal to "work through" its Nazi past—proving that Waldheim was evading confrontation with his past emphasized the exact trait-of-identification of the majority of voters.

The theoretical lesson to be learned from the campaign, Žižek continues, "is that the trait-of-identification can also be a certain failure, weakness, guilt of the other, so that by pointing out the failure we can unwittingly reinforce the identification" (105-06). Žižek's book is entirely relevant to the critique of idealism in fascist and totalitarian operations. See my discussion in "Ethics after Idealism."

- <sup>19</sup> Spivak refers to the current constructions of the "third world" and "marginality" in the academy as a "new orientalism" (56). See also Suleri's critique of what she calls "alteritism," which is characterized by an indiscriminate reliance on the centrality of otherness and tends to replicate the familiar category of the exotic in imperialist discourse: "alteritism enters the interpretive scene to insist on the conceptual centrality of the exotic in the colonial narratives of the prior century, contemporary critical theory names the other in order that it need not be further known" (*The Rhetoric of English India* 13).
- <sup>20</sup> For a discussion of this epochal change from the viewpoint of the "others," see Chow, "Against the Lures of Diaspora."
- <sup>21</sup> Among other things, Armstrong's and Tennenhouse's *The Imaginary Puritan* is a significant contribution to the vast project of deconstructing and thus provincializing Western European culture, in particular that of England.
- <sup>22</sup> Many people must be acknowledged for having contributed to the final shape of this essay. Nancy Armstrong, Chris Cullens, Prabhakara Jha, Kwai-cheung Lo, Austin Meredith, and Dorothea von Mücke were readers who responded with constructive comments to the first draft when it was completed in December 1992. Members of the Critical Theory Institute at the University of California, Irvine devoted a session to a subsequent version of the essay in Fall 1993, and I thank in particular Lindon Barrett, Alexander Gelley, and John Rowe for their extended remarks. I am also grateful to Iain Chambers, Chris Connery, Hal Foster, and Kathleen Woodward for their assistance at various stages. To Livia Monnet, who gave me her indefatigable enthusiasm and support, I owe a special debt of friendship.

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