

Chapter 1

Theorizing the Insurgent

Otherless Subjectivity, Radical Coldness, and the East-West Matrix

He erases his face	he discovers his face
Rapture advances	A temptation wears you in her first dawn
Time advances	Where do you chronicle life and how?

—Adonis, “Singular in a Plural Form”

An overarching view of the Middle East in the twentieth century and beyond, if even just selecting certain illuminating pockets of ideas and movements, provides one with an unexpected prototype for returning to the debate over the postcolonial or the third world. With that said, one wonders whether the myriad strategies of the postmodern and the postcolonial could be combined to forge an incredible category of some kind, a conceptual corrugation amid standing notions of the revolutionary, the radical, and the subversive that leads beyond the political (as we know it). We might call this endangering subjectivity the next insurgent.¹

Whereas the traditional revolutionary is very much the product of modernity itself, another version of insurgent action that we are perhaps already witnessing in the contemporary Middle East would mark the slipping away of an age that (for the postcolonial world) never even cemented itself in the first place. Since this work will in part endeavor to discern the intricacies of insurgent, poetic, mystical, and sectarian ideas and their ensuing philosophical-aesthetic implications for the life span of modernity, we can begin by exploring the varying dimensions of an insurgent mode of consciousness as it operates within multiple terrains of the human and inhuman experience of the Middle East, charting its trajectory in the exodus from arenas of political resistance to a broader form of aesthetic imagination and then even beyond the realm of the artwork and into a more radicalized form of subjective anarchy. Furthermore,

the argument toward which the narrative thus far has oriented itself is quite simply that the experience of a certain third world existence, again defined here not as a geographical fixity but as an ulterior ontological possibility, has opened the floodgates for a subject position that not only observes and endures the segmentation of the world around it but deliberately wills itself toward a perpetually insurrectional mode of becoming. It is a reversal of Hegel in that it posits that the true is anything but the whole, though some have suggested that the dialectic is more open-ended than we may think (we will see otherwise). Putting this debate aside, the prognosis here is that the insurgent holds part of the key to resistance in modernity, leading one to ponder what might happen were insurgent divisiveness to become the overriding trend of an antiePOCH. With such a paradox in mind, the underlying goal of this section marks an attempt to articulate the possibility of an insurgent profile that is not beholden to ideology, modernity, or the political itself.

The intent is always to formulate a conception of revolutionary agency independent of any call to an ordered world, one that subverts the machinations of power without the drive to supplant them by an alternative system. This prospect has been entertained before, of course, but here and now it appears with a theoretical modulation: namely that it reconfigures revolutionary action away from all visions of collectivity by recasting it into the parameters of an exclusively subjective phenomenon. An insurgent politics, by this definition, is therefore commensurable with a politics of the self, but a reconstituted self that partakes of an ethos somewhere beyond dialectics, beyond the absolutism of all truths, and beyond the most basic need to camouflage the obscurity of the world behind narratives of explanation. Consequently, the project of an insurgent consciousness derails all claims to a discourse of the real while once again making salient a space to revive the idea of subjectivity subsequent to the creative paralysis engendered in the wake of a poststructuralist death of the subject. It reinstates the will by investing subjectivity with an existential intimation free from many of the totalitarian trappings of the past, stripped of the desire to subordinate the continuum of time and space to any one monolithic vision; rather, it leaves things to thrash, to grow reckless, to supplant the meaninglessness of certain boundaries with the free reign of an experiential charge and imperishable restlessness. The insurgent thereby clears the path for a reimagining of political struggle precisely by waging its measures outside of the political unconscious. For it is in this way that subjectivity can pose a different insolence to centers of power, the endowment of an instinctive challenge through which a

lone self might forego even the structural anchors of transgression and become something more of a rotational avatar.

And so, this chapter devotes itself to a theoretical exposition of the relationship between a becoming-insurgent and the exhaustive disintegration of belief-structures in modernity. To do so, it engages with a vast diversity of philosophical articulations so as to render more acute commentaries on the potential dissolution of essence, temporality, intentionality, causality, hierarchy, identity, objectivity, truth, and the paradigmatic issue of Being. In their place, we will speak of chaotic departure, outsider mood, otherless individuation, radical coldness, eternal war, unresponsive reversal, killer's freedom, and affective overreaction. Moreover, several lines and excerpts from the contemporary Syrian poet Adonis (Ali Ahmad Said) will be interspersed throughout the chapter, left hanging as crucial signposts that introduce each conceptual nuance. These will be our first visionary indications of a Middle Eastern postmodernity.

Eastern Insurgency as Chaotic Departure

I work your secret trade = I witness the unknowns of my state
 I pant like someone trying to make home of his exile
 I scatter—am diffused—my surfaces spread and I own none
 of them
 My insides reduced, no place in them for me to live²

The full importance of chaos will be evaluated later in this book as the main pedal of the Middle Eastern poetic imagination, and yet it also shows some vital traces in the insurgent mind-set under scrutiny here. In some respects, this rendition of the insurgent shares a vague precedent in Nietzsche's work, whose attention to chaos is unequaled in continental thought, though Heidegger later perpetrates a philosophical injustice against his predecessor's view in a somewhat reductionist and watered-down reading that robs it of a more incendiary projection. Briefly, Heidegger defines the chaotic through Nietzsche as "the world as a whole, the inexhaustible, urgent, and unmastered abundance of self-creation and self-destruction."³ Nevertheless, the totalitarian stimulus underlying Heidegger's own designation of knowing makes him unwilling to accept this as the source of any ontological liberation; and so, in a hermeneutic slight, he begins to impose a more hegemonic will to mastery on Nietzsche's intentional slanting and tangents, particularly in his recasting of art as

that which “ventures and wins chaos, the concealed, self-overflowing, unmastered superabundance of life.”⁴ Though he maintains the language of a venture, the rhetoric of eventual conquest also runs rampant in this meditation, for the Heideggerian lens can only perceive this chaotic event as some ill-peddled vitiating of Being (it outstretches and manhandles): “Every living being, and especially man, is surrounded, oppressed, and penetrated by chaos, the unmastered, overpowering element that tears everything away in its stream . . . [that] pulls and sucks the living itself into its own stream, there to exhaust its surge and flow. Life would then be sheer dissolution and annihilation.”⁵ The real problem, then, is that Heidegger still wants desperately to live, whereas the insurgent (especially in the Middle Eastern anticontext) has no such preservation reflex. Whereas Adonis invokes the scattering of himself across surfaces (as a kind of unknowing), Heidegger domesticates the chaotic emergence to serve a mode of authentic knowledge that “is not like a bridge that somehow subsequently connects two existent banks of a stream, but is itself a stream that in its flow first creates the banks and turns them toward each other in a more original way than a bridge ever could.”⁶ In this slithering metaphor, however, Heidegger has obviously undone both Adonis’s call to self-diffusion and the great Nietzschean tension that must never be reconciled by ascribing supremacy to the Apollinian, subjugating the Dionysian impulse beneath a representational and hyper-rational retreat from the void. Thus, the insurgent (as named here) is an attempt not to recuperate or restore what Heidegger has already stolen but rather to reimagine what Nietzsche had achieved as a point of chaotic departure on the colonial side of modernity. By far this example has come closest to the daring, self-disciplining realm of the Eastern revolutionary ethos, for it is in this station alone that subjectivity can deter the more grotesque manifestation of the will to power while simultaneously avoiding a hopeless concession to world-historical forces.⁷ Rather, something more complicated is at stake, a positionality whereby one holds no desire to tame the aforementioned stream of existence in all its confusion, rage, and resurgence, but at the same time forestalls any drowning within it. The balance here is admittedly a delicate one, a timeless push-and-pull always skirting that fine line between the poles of surrender and domination, but it can be negotiated if one maneuvers well enough, arriving at a province where the self-willed experience of the edge alone is allowed to guide forward.

The argument in this piece is that the Middle Eastern insurgent can become that very tightrope walker (not all of them, never the every-

one, but a select few), for a realization of the chaotic has increasingly pervaded the experiential stratosphere of what has long been called the third world (and now waits to be harnessed toward something unprecedented). Accordingly, Nietzsche's remarkable contribution has never been so relevant than when Zarathustra uttered the words that "one must still have chaos in oneself to be able to give birth to a dancing star."⁸ For this chaotic temperament is not the end but the non-essentializing skill of a revolutionary imagination now made integral to the operation of certain segments of the Eastern front. The first world has perhaps abandoned this possibility, for whatever reasons of contentment. The third world now has no choice but to embrace it as a conduit of its great discontent. Chaos is all that the history of modernity, a ghastly history of order, has left it.

There have been further allusions to a principle of chaotic departure, and among these Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri have come relatively close, though then falling rapidly away from the lever to an unseemly subjective turn in their celebration of "the multitude" and its rejuvenation of the "irrepressible lightness and joy of being communist" (one detects the slightly underhanded injection of Nietzschean tones into a school that would not tolerate the former, having never known lightness or joy).⁹ As their most eminent effort, *Empire*, vocalizes the necessary call for a return to the concept of immanence as the basis for an amorphous, transnational revolutionary clique that might counterbalance any tendencies toward transcendental solutions, a split-personality disorder emerges in the theorization of this counter-epochal model. On the one side, Hardt and Negri seek a demystifying antidote to Foucauldian ideas of biopolitics, governmentality, and the subordination of the body to technologies of regimentation by announcing the urgency for an "anarchic basis of philosophy."¹⁰ Thus they dispense terminologies of "nomadism, desertion, and exodus"¹¹ and rightly advocate for a modified sense of revolutionary orientation: "Whereas in the disciplinary era *sabotage* was the fundamental notion of resistance, in the era of imperial control it may be *desertion*. Whereas being-against in modernity often meant a direct and/or dialectical opposition of forces, in postmodernity being-against might well be most effective in an oblique or diagonal stance. Battles against the Empire might be won through subtraction and defection."¹² And still, despite some fantastic Deleuzian improvisations, these very seeds of a chaotic politics find themselves betrayed later by a text that cannot swallow its own medicine, still held fast within an evolutionary perception of historicity despite a momentary digression into the idea of cyclicity, still reconfirming the all-presence of totalities that never were (however

broken, extra-statist, and volatile) despite resuscitating arguments for the “alternatives within” and the need to distinguish between an imperial device that works well *in itself* but not *for itself*, and still shooting glances toward redemptive futurities that might allow humanity to “recognize a rupture of the system, a paradigm shift, an event.”¹³ As a consequence, even if empire as a conceptual category must in fact be treated differently, bringing us toward an unprecedented phenomenological territory, then Hardt and Negri’s continued investment in old idioms of resistance make their prescriptions terribly archaic vis-à-vis their lethal diagnoses.

For one thing, there is a telling analytic insistence on the novelty of empire as trans-systemic reality, playing into the cult of newness endemic not coincidentally both to Western postmodernism and consumer capitalism, though in some unsuited way Hardt and Negri are also able to derive their creeds of revolutionary insurgency from writers who preceded the supposed upsurge of empire. In the end it seems inconsistent that proposals of resistance are afforded a comprehensive trans-historicity, jumping from Spinoza to Nietzsche to Foucault to even Saint Francis of Assisi for critical inspiration, all the while in the now we are presumably inhabiting a completely fresh space of power (note that this cross-centurial immanence of thought would be perfectly fine if only they believed in an outsider subjectivity capable of ahistorical imagination). From vending modernity as absolute rupture to vending empire as absolute rupture all the while fighting against absolutist logics, by tirelessly harnessing the past to justify the inception of a present that according to the analysis rests in complete disconnect with that same past, it seems the authors have quite deliberately commandeered the vaunting bravado of Enlightenment epistemology and all its self-contradictory tricks. Having said this, the narrative shows moments of brilliant assailment of a fictive age but then cannot help lending itself a gargantuan sweep that leaves nothing save its own theoretical vertigo—that is, it conveys a desperately epic tone; it is wracked by an extremist strain between pessimistic defeatism and unbridled utopianism; and its subheadings are riddled with gestures of infinite scope offset by supposed migratory deviations. One wonders, then, whether this pendulous swing between the inflated dispositions of robust triumphalism and alarmist nightmare, too invested in the now full-blown monstrosity of empire to think beyond it (or apparently to even allow it a beyond), is not susceptible to Nietzsche’s accusation of resentment in the Christian/anarchist: “The ‘fine indignation’ itself soothes him; it is a pleasure for all wretched devils to scold: it gives a slight but intoxicating sense of power . . . There is a fine dose of revenge in every

complaint.”¹⁴ Where this becomes most blatant is in the fact that, for all their talk of plurality and sporadic affiliation, and despite a split-second revelation toward a race of “new barbarians” who would escape “the local and particular constraints of their human condition . . . to construct a new body and new life,”¹⁵ the authors do not follow this existential alloy into its proper outer reaches; rather, the text remains saturated with dialectical thinking of the most asphyxiating sort. This is why all renderings of a chaotic subject fail so poorly under their watch: for instance, their figure of the militant, who graces the final pages of the book, is at long last asked to stand in direct archetypal opposition with empire itself, thereby making it precisely non-isomorphic with Foucault’s specific intellectual; in fact, all specificities are badly engineered here, amid this lack of any craftsman-like attunement to the forging of an intricate subject-position, and therefore come stillborn into the theoretical world. A robotic army: without volition. More exactly, Hardt and Negri elide the most pressing component of a micropolitics of resistance, which for every other continental thinker of this outlook (Nietzsche, Kafka, Bataille, Foucault, Genet, Michaux, Cioran, Beckett, Artaud, Baudrillard, Serres, Deleuze, and Guattari) requires some nefarious architect in the laboratory (the overhuman, the supplicant, the deviant, the body-without-organs, the criminal, or the schizoid). Instead, Hardt and Negri convert each struggle into a hyper-attenuated collision with the obscenity of the world, such that when they go to actually visualize the attire and mannerisms of “militancy today,” they can do no better than to recycle tattered Marxist silhouettes of decades long-gone: “We are referring . . . to something more like the communist and liberatory combatants of the twentieth-century, the intellectuals who were persecuted and exiled in the course of anti-fascist struggles, the republicans of the Spanish civil war and the European resistance movements, and the freedom fighters of the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist wars.”¹⁶ This nostalgic portrait of the contemporary militant is bizarrely retrograde and misguided, and remains the sole precise reason why such trends in Western postmodern theory cannot begin to fathom an Eastern insurgent voice that says things like “I am the fever of prophethood . . . My blood is fire.”¹⁷ No hyperbole; no longing for sedative mantras (some are just like this now). This is also why Hardt and Negri, who like so many other communist philosophers today have turned toward recent events in the Middle East, going as far as to award the insurrectionary masses there with a place at the vanguard’s table, broadcasting the news that “Arabs are democracy’s new pioneers” and that “these revolts have immediately performed a kind of ideological

house-cleaning,"¹⁸ should just stay quiet, relax their ridiculous heralding, and defer to those who have listened more closely to what is happening; for the record, these movements are neither fledgling attempts at socialist democracy nor a reinvigoration of the political (they are not even together, though clamoring in the same tight space); they are, above all else, carrying out a ritual purging and abolition of the political altogether (no city will hold any longer).

So then, why the ongoing misapprehension of such Eastern insurgency? The fatal problematic for such authors is that class, not thought or poetics or affect, is still the touchstone of action. Notice that there is no existential springboard whatsoever in the communist appropriation of chaos (no will to power, no self-initiated becoming, no violent passage, somatic infuriation, or aesthetic lunacy of someone behind the wheel). And they admit as much in their ultramaterialist misreading of the ontological imperative: "When we say that political theory must deal with ontology, we mean first of all that politics cannot be constructed from the outside."¹⁹ And yet, though demonizing the absolutely vital concept of the outside, they do in fact construct their politics of resistance from the outside: that is, from outside any unit of individual expression; note that there is not a single quote from the mouth of one of their would-be soldiers; there is not one extracted utterance or reflection derived from the living mind, throat, or teeth of a potential combatant; stated indelicately, there is no tangible voice to their warfare. This is the recurring failure of leftist materialism itself: that it avoids like the plague the most rigorous and meticulous piece of materiality (singular experience). For what relevant tools, if any, does their philosophical legion have to grapple with Adonis when he writes:

My era tells me bluntly:
 You do not belong.
 I answer bluntly:
 I do not belong,
 I try to understand you.
 Now I am a shadow
 Lost in the forest
 Of a skull.²⁰

For the sake of incontrovertible clarity, this verse was written in 1982 during the sieges of the civil war in Beirut, for which there is perhaps no more superbly political setting than this, amid a hail of perpetual gunfire and miniature bombs, and yet somehow Adonis finds within himself

the tiny crevice that leads beyond the empire (there is only room to smuggle one at a time). And still, such virulent concentrations of chaotic thought, however translucent in their words and aims, have had no apparent bearing on Western postmodern philosophy (because it still wants the political, and the many that comes with it). What we get, then, are more throwaway logics of collectivity: through the diverse yet bloodless entity of the multitude, which is somehow driven by a humanism after the death of man, Hardt and Negri in mammoth stride turn the dialectic of revolutionary subjectivity versus localized structural domination into the even more colossal dialectic of the global revolutionary mass versus the age of empire. This leaves us standing not far from the typical Enlightenment penchant for massacring individuality in the name of saving some lifeless abstraction of the race or species. The Eastern insurgent, on the other hand, not only shuns the temptation of thinking of struggle as necessarily dialectical but also denies any potentiality of revolutionary intersubjectivity whatsoever (we are so alone in this).

Eastern Insurgency as Outsider Mood

See now: you ended but the comedy did not
 You have died like all the others
 Like time sobbing in the lungs of our forefathers²¹

I would like to establish a theory whereby first and third world could be understood as their own exclusive moodscapes, untrustworthy epistemic climates through which certain patterns of smoothness, coarseness, anger, and revelation are deployed, such that belonging to one prism over the other would be regarded primarily as an aerial matter—that is, of what inhalation-exhalation ritual does one partake, and what are the particular qualities of this oxygen? For the business of first and third entails nothing less than to become immersed within a kind of temperature, ambience, weather, and mesosphere of the mind/body. These moodscapes, like landscapes or dreamscapes, are exceptionally productive in nature—they give rise to insurmountable visions, ideas, and militant negotiations of desire. And they are unequal and irrelational vantages, for their respective singularities draw them toward the crystallization of incommensurable tastes. What separates these spaces then, above all else, is an experiential rift, a severe disparity in atmospheric-existential conditions that in turn allows for alternative gradients of emergent thought and affect. Hence

the question that is rarely asked today would be as follows: How do the tangible lived parameters of third world subjectivity empower a distinct force-field of imagination?

As a consequence, and before offering any answer, one point must be stressed here: that an insurgent consciousness is highly abstract but not hypothetical. This is not an attempt to establish some pure domain of subjectivity whereby the mind could retreat from the maladies of the everyday, neither does it succumb to a roundabout effort to resurrect the old Cartesian *cogito* (though this time concealed behind a tinted complexion). The intent is instead to argue that the circumstances of lived reality in the decolonized zones, at both their material and epistemic registers, have converged to create a gulf in identity-formation, which, if seized upon could give rise to an impenetrable form of revolutionary action: disconcerting, prismatic, something akin to cryptogenic stroke (no etiology). In this alternate model, individuated consciousness is no longer divorced from social praxis but rather the latter serves as the mere idiopathic extension of a radical interiority (such is the fluidity, rattle, and hyper-synchronous syndrome of the mood). The epileptic versus the hypostatic: and so it is that the Middle Eastern subject stands poised to access the most remote and complex channels of philosophical speculation without having to sacrifice any of its engagement on the ground (from which it steals its very groundedness).

First and foremost in presuming such an argument is to clarify the specific mode of third world subjectivity that is being engaged, since to subsume the entirety of the postcolonial world under a unitary consciousness would be to perpetuate an essentialist narrative that resembles the very tropes of modernity itself. Hence the Eastern mood of interest here is that of the “vertical and horizontal outsider,” which is derived in part from a renovation of Hamid Dabashi’s theory of vertical and horizontal colonization.²² More exactly, the third world subject, epistemically marginalized by Enlightenment discourse and materially exploited under a global division of labor, is already by no choice of its own the horizontal other (using the spatial metaphor as a signifier of international power relations). For certain, it is this horizontal otherness that has bolstered both the phenomena of colonialism and decolonization, and which has most recently compelled the willingness of the third world to encounter the violence of modernity face-to-face. On the other hand, we see the almost immediate regression of these horizontally focused movements back into a modernist authoritarian project precisely due to their inability to privilege vertical otherness as the basis for a sustained revolutionary

expenditure. By vertical other, the definition here is quite simply those internally marginalized elements of the society: specifically, this should include the rural and urban masses whose ceaseless class impoverishment reflect that they are only the beneficiaries of modernity's wrath, the alienated intellectual or rebel who is constantly left vulnerable to the violence of an autocratic state apparatus, and those social groups (based on gender, ethnicity, religion, etc.) whose rights are not represented sufficiently and are susceptible to cultural-legal persecution without protection by the political sphere. For certain, this second phase of mobilization has just started occurring in the postcolonial world, for past anticolonial revolutions have in most instances proved internally hegemonic, claiming to represent the concerns of the masses while themselves prone to deep power-striations. In the case of anticolonial nationalism, these movements were invariably led by some prefixed elite who, often as members of the aristocracy or bourgeois comprador class educated abroad, had acquired their leadership position by playing the native informant or indigenous middleman to the colonial enterprise. With regard to Islamic fundamentalism, the support for the clerical establishment was derived from a traditional middle class with direct ties to the merchants stationed in the bazaar. Finally, in some of the more extreme cases, postcolonial societies were thrust under the control of a military or paramilitary state whose functionaries again were derived from a background with old ties to the now-evacuated colonial equipment. What is imperative to note, then, is that none of these initial postcolonial federations originated from their societies' most alienated quarters since they were rarely articulated from within the cellar must of some vertical otherness (all of these partnerships had some prior leverage).

The revolutionary programs described above were from their very congealment damned to prolong a form of internal oppression, not only because most of the leadership was already part of a historically oppressive social formation but even more importantly because their parting (from a kind of tormented intuition) left them with no existential frame of reference from which to formulate an ideational emancipation from modernity. And so, while often horizontally inorganic to the project of modernity, and thus allowing them to mount a serious challenge to the latter through decolonization, their vertical inorganicity with respect to the experiential air of otherness compelled the newly arising leadership to mimic modernity's own failures. The same structures of tyranny fell back into place despite the expulsion of the first colonizer, evinced by the reemergence of political repression, economic inequality, cultural dis-

crimination, and countless other atrocities under the guise of an authentic revolutionary mantle. Neither did their ideological prescriptions suggest any other possibility from the outset, steeped in either a toxic confiscation of modernity's own principles or marred as a dialectical reaction to modernity that was always already defined by the discourse of its adversary, able to construct nothing more elaborate than the elder colonial paradigms of civilizational thinking rechanneled into a program of cultural nativism. This is why the idea of a discursive solidarity within the anticolonial era, one that encompassed all sectors of the society while also somehow representing a singular consciousness, was never even plausible. And still further, these revolutions' profound disconnect from the social body whose cause they once claimed to champion has allowed many postcolonial states more recently to play servant to the neocolonial ambitions of capitalist globalization (such violations should come as no great surprise). What is critical to note here, however, is that their almost unequivocal faltering, their degeneration back into the strangulation-games of modernity, has unveiled itself time and again, and continues to do so at every level of the postcolonial reality. Throughout the course of this historical phase, the other has remained entrenched in otherness, and has begun to recognize a certain zero-degree of subjectivity therein. Now four times alienated under two separate yet analogous historical stages: (1) horizontally by the epistemic violence of colonialism, (2) vertically by the combination of a foreign colonial state and the indigenous comprador elite, (3) vertically again under the subsequent oppression and exploitation of the anticolonial regime, and (4) horizontally again under the continued global division of labor supported by local third world states—there are no more prospects for dehumanization outside of this quadrupled otherness. Left ravaged by all vectors of this compounding epochal configuration, the consciousness of the non-Western subject has gathered an intrinsic, perpetual distrust of its own time, space, and relation to power, which renders a portal into an alternative navigation of identity: that of the insurgent outsider. With the machineries of both horizontal power (colonialism) and vertical power (dictatorship) since thoroughly exposed, every revolutionary impulse toward engagement has concurrently been exhausted, such that the third world other now awaits the opportunity for an unstoppable confrontation with its historical age from the ahistorical vantage of its exteriority (the many moods that hover past the bridge).

Speaking on a purely structural level, there is no remaining alternative but for this self-expelled grade to conceive of itself as the basis for the next insurgency. More than this, the very intention of the radical actor

this time around must prove discrete from what we have seen before: namely, no longer to fight on behalf of remedying, reforming, or even re-creating society, but rather to fight on behalf of the continued existence of an autonomous isle (that of the unstrung). The insurgent's concern is therefore not the fortification of a utopian vision of the sociopolitical, but rather the perforation of its potentially totalizing encasement so that certain pockets and corners of solitude, extinction, and imagination remain viable and thriving. The Eastern insurgent is an outer well-digger—into undergrounds with no dream of the surface (this is also the child's nebulous tract)—and thus brings to prominence a new existential proficiency: to guard the very possibility of a more-than-this, the generous outside, for it alone will bring the end of the deathly “comedy” that the poet describes, and with it the end of the forefathers and their inherited sobbing.

Eastern Insurgency as Otherless Individuation

Light advances	It becomes night in my regions
	I am torn and assembled
Time takes the shape of skin	
	and escapes time. ²³

Anomalous individuation (to be none other than this): that is what one is after here, though not as a turn back to the archaicism of liberal-humanist individuality but as the stalwart emblem of a subjectivity that has weathered the death of the subject and lived to tell of it. Insurgent subjectivity is therefore not the reward of the victim (it is not enough to be beaten), but rather of the survivor (the self-conscious affirmation of having endured and gone beyond). Otherness is no longer an end in itself, an idea that could only reinvigorate the respective slave moralities of postcolonial theory and poststructuralist ethics, but rather serves as an experience of the dire nihilistic out of which several overcomings and becomings might then emanate: that of the incomparable, the unparalleled, the self-with-no-other (too far gone).

There should be no intimidating residual universe. The broader implications of this argument are to be found in a somewhat twisted reappropriation of the Hegelian master-slave dialectic within the discourse of the self and other in modernity, though the terms must be revised in a quasi-Nietzschean arc (with some modifications). In short, Hegel's insight into the skeleton of domination is of the utmost importance here,

since it demonstrates the basic way in which it is always the master (self) who requires recognition from an external entity (the othered slave). Consequently, the master paradoxically remains in a state of complete dependency for his own self-definition on the slave, whereas the latter can gradually ascend toward an independent consciousness by virtue of his subjection (sublating “its own being-for-self”). Despite the further complexities of this rationale, the immediate conclusion is sufficient for the purposes of this analysis: that it is the other alone who can outrun the self-other paradigm. The Enlightenment, in this same vein, always needs its other, which is then taken up in the monolithic construct of the Orient/non-West (among further casualties), all the while otherness itself (whose reality constantly resists such totalization) is never the beneficiary of this hierarchical relationship and therefore does not necessarily require it for self-definition. This dynamic points, then, to an undisclosed reservoir of thought and sensation from which to borrow momentum. Once again, if it has seemed otherwise in the cases of anticolonial nationalism and Islamic fundamentalism, such that this othered subjectivity remains trapped within the binary, then the suggestion here is that its ideological visionaries were never interested in seeking out or excavating those undisclosed particles of consciousness (the untouched spaces within) but rather flung themselves headlong into the same narratives that would make of them a caricature (the other longing to be counted as self). For sure, as many have asserted, had decolonization actually been a populist mode of resistance, then it is unclear as to how postcolonial history might have unfolded; but far more importantly, had decolonization sought out the radical potential of otherless individuation (the hermit, the mercenary, the maniac), then an even greater opportunity could have been seized.

The laceration forms a well-tethered cord to occultation. Nietzsche's interjection at this point, his intense rejection of the Hegelian exaltation of the slave, is entirely justified in consideration of his project and our own. To attempt to romanticize oppression, to revel within the inherent wretchedness of the other's dehumanized condition, is a self-delusion of the worst kind. And it is often postcolonial theory that is the most severe promoter of this unjust reading: whether constituted by the autobiographical lamentation of lost identity or even the functionalist theoretical gymnastics whereby otherness (despite the fact that it does not know this itself) is somehow always the simultaneous invention and subversion of modernity, both are horrifying manifestations of an apologetic, self-excusing defeatism. The reason for this lapse in the equation is postcolonial studies' convenient bandwagoning of the poststructuralist death of the

subject, which allows it to skip the pivotal lessons of existentialism (that someone must actually contemplate, struggle, lash, bleed, and re-create oneself for it to be worthwhile) in order to expedite a vulgarized fixation with the concept of pre-given “identity” over self-initiated “individuality.” This gloss, however, is intellectually uninteresting and thus frequently devolves into one of two hermeneutic options: one either narcissistically bemoans otherness or elevates it to a falsely contestatory reality in and of itself, both of which provide a debilitating ethics of the abused. As such, neither does anything but perpetuate a reactionary politics of passivity (existential stasis) rather than keeping pace with the more covert, inexplicable factions now creeping across such regions with a vascularity more freakish by the day. There are no clones for this; they are not compliant; they are not tenants of the real.

One can indeed scour after a fierce alternative to the ontological stalemates of the past, which is why one notices an ever-growing thrust toward privatized inhuman becomings in third world literature, philosophy, poetry, cinema, and art (the part IV, on sectarianism, will show this explicitly). An exilic postcolonial intelligentsia has unfortunately not kept up with these ricochet-developments and finds it hard to reconcile them with Western critical trends that remain painfully locked into humanist retrievals. Such brilliant existential overtures are often overlooked—again like Nietzsche’s overhuman, Foucault’s barbarian or deviant, Bataille’s headless monstrosity, or Deleuze and Guattari’s body-without-organs, not to mention their unanimous love for the animal, which are also not seen as serious contenders in the discourse of being within contemporary Western philosophy (treated more as metaphors or poetic renderings)—for the simplistic psychology of an otherness that does not carry the invaluable criterion of being self-willed. The payoff is clear enough, though: for what postcolonialism loses in content for not choosing a distinctive, self-wielding object of analysis (the unrivaled individual, the surprising one, the forceful arm), it gains in grandiose scope (it is always only the lowest common denominator that can be turned into a metaphysics).

Far from this, we align ourselves not with the readable other but with the figures of bewilderment who have transferred the birthright of otherness into a more troubling vocation. One need only look to the excised verses of Adonis scattered throughout this chapter for a flawless sample; note that they are comprised of enigmatic words, seemingly foundationless articulations beholden to no sociopolitical determinism, for which postcolonialism can offer no solid explanation or interpretive approach. Since it restricts its gaze to the easier destiny of the always

already other, it is insufficient in tracking the more unexpected turns of such insurgent offspring. It cannot handle the exception; it does not even genuinely wish for the exception. And so, time and again, postcolonial criticism (as a purely negative recourse) shows its poverty before the creative impulses of its own.

This notwithstanding, does a revamped existential focus on the creative individual not send us back to the same ethical quandaries for which existentialism was accused from the outset? The specter of fascism always lurks behind such propositions, or so we have been told in the fairy tales of modern thought. And yet Nietzsche himself resolves this phobic tendency toward the exemption, for the overhuman is neither the universal slave nor the herd-appointed master, as neither could fulfill the now-undermined existentialist protocol of absurdity, ecstatic freedom, and responsibility. No, Nietzsche's full rebuke of the victim does not subsequently fall into an excessive attribution of agency to the executioner; instead he and the Middle Eastern thinker realize that, though one may prove the apparent victor of the dialectic, the whip-bearer is in no more control of the discourse that sustains him than is his whipped counterpart. It is a ring of subservience, for which neither side of the coin allows much fresh air. Ironically, though, there are instances when postcolonial theory itself has fallen into this very conceptual error, demonizing the Enlightenment, the West, and the colonial apparatus while not recognizing the fact that the historical winners are as unaware of their ideological implication as is the colonized other (and even less so in accordance with the Hegelian argument). They are disgusting, but not diabolical: for remember the master lacks fluidity, variability, or self-concentrated judgment, and so remains entrenched within his own golden cage. By ignoring this, as many have detected, postcolonial theory of this breed is actually elongating a colonial project, ascribing to the colonizer a superior consciousness of his being-in-the-world while depicting the colonized as a hopelessly disenfranchised figure whose political paralysis also seems to preclude self-understanding. And still, the fact remains that the colonizer is an unthinking participant in the blood-spraying procession of the modern, a functionary to that which has conscripted him but which he never truly possesses or fathoms. One can only wish for some authentic malevolence, a trace of evil that would then carry the requisite style, but instead one finds blank stares everywhere. With this bleak observation in mind, the idea of accountability itself needs to be reconfigured.

It is at this juncture that Gayatri Spivak's proposition for a dialogic of accountability, wherein she calls for individuals to imagine themselves

as both “receivers and givers . . . [imagining] anew imperatives that structure all of us, as giver and taker, female and male, planetary human beings,”²⁴ proves both highly useful and problematic. This intervention is successful in greeting modernity as a global responsibility, and thereby calling for an attempted dissolution of the master-slave dialectic. Central to the argument is also a distinction between agency and subjectivity, with the former seen as a rationally legislated and institutionally validated concept and the latter embodying a category far less accessible to co-option due to its unrepresentability. Hence, it is a return to the subject-(de)constitution of otherness alone that allows for different inflections of agency to unravel, a restoration of radical alterity over ipseity (identity) that renders one the ability to inhabit alternative discursive forms. One would hope for this, of course, but the prognosis neglects a number of factors. To begin with, the question of audience remains ambiguous: in this treatise, although it is the space of the other that must provide a window into this radical alterity, the indiscriminate prospect of a planetary subjectivity appears to necessitate universal participation. If this is so, then the argument has betrayed its own utopian inadequacy, for it is effectively calling for power to sacrifice its self-benefiting status (its superficial triumph in the dialectic) in order to embrace some disparaged meridian of radical alterity when the entirety of its existential signification is contingent on a sadistic ipseity. Thus, Spivak states in the following quote: “I am daring to take dialogics to its logical consequence . . . in the interest of a more just modernity . . . I am therefore suggesting that both the dominant and the subordinate must jointly rethink themselves as intended or interpellated by alterity, albeit articulating the task of thinking and doing from different ‘cultural’ angles. What is new here is that the dominant re-defines himself in order to learn to learn from below.”²⁵ This is merely a noble humanist suggestion on the shallow surface; and yet, once again, we lack the mapping of a formidable existential trajectory (how does one ever become this?). No elaboration whatsoever of a pathway to this groundbreaking decision; no word of its instigating spark, its routes, tactics, obstacles, or penalties.

To learn from below is to start a civil war within oneself and to entertain a true masochistic flare. But why would power ever commit to this self-beheading? There are certainly accounts of rebel-princes throughout history, a psychic formation worth exploring to its maximum depth, but these are a minor bloc not belonging to this conversation. First of all, the positionally superior do not see themselves as epistemic playthings in the way that the other admits, but instead lavish themselves with the artificial

empowerment that comes from believing themselves architects of this age. And even if the historically favored were by some transvaluative marvel to allow themselves to see through the lie that underpins their very existential status, they would more likely fall into some introspective haze of angst than actively subvert a system in which they materially gain from the continued subjugation of the other. Furthermore, those who would abandon the heights of their epistemically distributed fortune in order to wallow with the agonized are beyond suspect as well; self-reduction is its own privilege (one wonders, then, whether Spivak's call to "learn from below" does not reopen the Pandora's box of a "going-native" or of an all too convenient "slumming"). In neither circumstance is the proposition of a voluntary redefinition of the master's subjectivity plausible or even logical; at best, it never happens that they descend the ladder; at worst, it still never happens except as a self-righteous simulation—decadents and bohemians confessed this much, called themselves pretender-runaways and gutter-patrons, which then at least rescued great portions of their movements.

Peace, solidarity, human rights—these are hollowed-out slogans that have never kept their word; what is more helpful, in their stead, is an anthem of futuristic savagery. Western postmodernism, interestingly enough, has anticipated this prompt, though it has forgotten any concrete methodology for the building of an apocalyptic consciousness and so consigns its more catastrophic dreams to pure accident. Eastern postmodernism, on the other hand, is rife with plans, recipes, and stratagems for the concoction of just such a cataclysmic subjectivity. Let it be said, then: that the objective cruelty of the modern epoch and its dialectic strap can only be undone by a non-matching iteration of subjective cruelty. The third specimen (more on this later). (As a relevant side-note, one can look to three coterminous trends of contemporary world cinema: whereas first world film, whether shelved in high artistic or popular culture sectors, often remains transfixed by tales of bourgeois crisis [moral, economic, and personal breakdown], precisely because they are so fantastical, and whereas certain predatory branches of third world film are quick to offer assembly-line pseudo-empathic renderings of everyday trauma in a deformed global South [soothing the overlord's gaze of pity], precisely because they are attuned to what an ill-conceived postcoloniality has become in the primary marketplace of representation, the more compelling rogue currents of Third World film increasingly develop characters whose subjective peculiarity upsets even the balance of othered communities based in more typified racial, gendered, or class-based misery. They are bizarre even among the most stigmatized; their abnormality is incongruous with all else.)

Moving onward, the hallmark of resistance against modernity for Spivak apparently resides in the local non-Western cultural imaginary, and in fact her lionization of third world culture as an antidote or shield against Enlightenment rationality is reflected in her statement that “the Slave countersigns the Master by speaking unreason from below.”²⁶ This notwithstanding, it seems unwise to conflate these momentary interruptions of the slave’s countersignature (however poignant) with an immense reversal of the master’s consciousness, as if those most renowned for either their naked brutality or brutal complicity will now presumably deign to abandon their thrones and ingest some instructive lesson from the local reality of the other. In this semireligious schematic, otherness has become a generalized elixir or cure-all, granted a messianic healing ability that will miraculously convert the indoctrinated-unto-power to dwell among the dregs, the vagrants, and the undesirables; despite whatever long record of violence, it will conceivably all lead back to universality and equality with no incentive other than a spontaneous elevation of human nature. Massive transitions in consciousness, apparently, do not necessitate any more well-plotted trigger than this. A rickety Procrustean bed formed on a heavy dose of Christological sentiment.

Obviously this falls into a no-win situation. If postcolonialism dares contend that the non-Western local is not itself beneath the awesome shadow of modernity’s global aims, or that somehow it remains nonintegrated and therefore holds an automatic subversive capacity, then this is nothing more than another nativist cocktail. But this is rarely the case: in fact, the more sophisticated postcolonial theorists were the first to acknowledge that the local is always implicated within modernity’s tentacles, such that to speak of a purely insulated space is to be either naive, atavistic, or disingenuous; unfortunately, this does not prevent some from their continued fetishizations of the villager, the peasant, or the urban slum-dweller (marginalization is often too strictly interpreted and thereby turns formulaic). In addition, even if one were to concede that the third world local still persists semi-independent of modernity’s talons, then there is a further idealistic assumption that this itself is not a reactionary zone. Herein lies Spivak’s willingness to take modernity at face value and to see the slave as dialectically opposed to everything (or are they even relics of a quixotic premodernity?). For while modernity itself strives to hype its own monumental rupture from the past as a progressive teleological step, Spivak then endeavors to usurp this logic of polarity so as to resurrect the local as the true force of progressive politics. What this ignores, however, is the bitter fact that, even if one were to locate that shred of

unadulterated locality, it remains unpersuasive that it could provide any valid blueprint for a new or more intriguing reality. Why it is exactly that certain postcolonialists have not cultivated an allergic reaction to all forms of collectivity is a shocking oversight; why they feel an indebtedness to defending as unconditionally valuable those shuffling congregations which have been trampled, simply because they have been trampled, escapes all reason save a long-held paternalism and condescension (it is a fallacy that anything deserves to be). Instead, like Adonis and other visionaries from the postcolonial front, these critics might hearken to the one emancipatory tenet of every twentieth-century avant-garde movement: to revile one's own home, state, and tradition. There is little in-between, to speak plainly: one either takes up the experiment of otherless individuation (insurgent will) or partakes of otherness to the point of idolatry (worshipping at identitarian altars).

Again the fact remains that the local, whether construed as premodern or antimodern, whether stationed in the self-designated metropolitan centers or in the supposedly remote peripheries, is always bereft of radical ingenuity (because it operates as a sociopolitical sphere). Why, after Nietzsche or Freud, would anyone turn to society (here or there) for an answer? Is civilization not the very wellspring of every mutilation-ritual? To proclaim otherwise is to blind the critical faculty to endless anthropological and psychoanalytic chronicles that have found atrocity at the heart of every site of belonging. As such, the local should not be seen as the natural haven of radical alterity, but rather as similarly vulnerable to its own rigid forms of ipseity (what congested street is not a trinket of governmentality?). And if in fact Spivak notes this, conceding that the Western subject will not actually forsake the domination-practices that sustain its comparative advantage, that the local is actually not a revolutionary headquarters except by slight relative contrast in its juxtaposition with modernity, then all that is left for the notion of otherness, as she has defined it, to be channeled into a planetary politics is to *make* of the local a forced site of radical alterity. And this is where the more warped dimensions of the text become brazen, for it tacitly suggests a complete whitewashing of localized forms of ipseity that might, if one honestly believes in a retrieved moment of premodernity, precapital, or decolonization, be susceptible to their own hideously repressive customs. One part strategic essentialism, one part deconstructive smokescreen, but all retrograde in the final analysis. For here the author treads toward a vaguely Stalinist pursuit of reprogramming mass consciousness itself, with the postcolonial critic at the helm of its professional vanguard, coercing

the local strata into forsaking their ingrained forms of identity (which to them are often sacred) for the sake of an abstract notion of alterity that they themselves may not desire. (As a telling digression, note that Spivak herself summarily condemned Deleuze and Guattari for their excessive attention to the topic of desire, which makes perfect sense now given her own prescriptive philosophical outlook in the aforementioned piece, and hence leading one to ask: What kind of theorization, if not a dogmatic, inflexible one, would ascribe no importance to the scales of individual desire?)

Detachment genres: it seems all are just bystanders in these intellectual edifices—afraid of death, afraid of life. This notwithstanding, the very use of the word *imperative* in the title hints at an aggressive act of transformation, which would be fine in a repertoire of Adonis or Nietzsche that is tragically absent here; in this affectively drained realm, though, it looks more like an implanted mission with the critical theorist as guarantor of some prophetic directive, which itself belies a faithlessness in the prospect that this radical consciousness is already present within otherness. Instead it must be imposed (or rather interpreted). This is where the idea of the “undeconstructability of justice” and the sudden entrance onto the discursive scene of “ethics” in Spivak’s language becomes very suspicious. For only an insincere Enlightenment-drenched liberalism, or a theologically inflated leftism for that matter, would presume to talk of these terms as either sacrosanct universal or localized principles; only this kind of project would bother to protect one concept (justice) above all others, and perhaps the most fraught concept given the genocidal pulse of modernity, from whatever shades of ambiguity. Subjectivity, in these smoothed-over confines then, is only a polemical tool; there really is no individual mind, body, or existence of which to speak; just as we observed in the last section, one rarely ever even finds a quote exhumed from “below” amid the barrage of references to continental thinkers; these voices have all been forcibly removed to the detention-center of a virtual locality (spoken on behalf of). And all in the name of an undeconstructible call to planetary justice. One might recall, then, who the original philosopher of the call was and the grand downfall therein: it is common knowledge that Heidegger lent his ardent support to Nazism, Adorno turned his back on the postwar German student movement, and Foucault at different times endorsed both Zionism and the Islamic front in the Iranian Revolution of 1979. If anything, the fact that some of the most perceptive and well-intentioned critics of modernity of the last century were at times inept in comprehending which sides fueled the utopian and which harbored the

dystopian (easy solution: they are all dystopias) demonstrates the sheer unfeasibility of an “undeconstructible notion of justice.” And so it remains that amid the eerie amalgamation of utopianism, nativism, and misguided activism in this text, a clear political program is consigned to the realm of impossibility.

The sole profit of Spivak’s project, then, is that it borders on advocating a way out of a dialectical negation of modernity and that it seeks to articulate this escape from the border position of otherness. In this respect alone, it is a valiant assault against Enlightenment epistemology, but fails when it presumes (as is the fashion these days) to make individuality the culprit beneath the heels of packed generalities. More than this, it ultimately fails to discern that otherness, while maybe the best point of departure for resistance, cannot be a self-sufficient mode of becoming unto itself. One walks over the abyss; one does not stay within it. Above all else, this is because alterity can itself begin to assume the function of ipseity once perpetual antagonism molds over into a form of self-aggrandizing ideological identity. But even more pivotally, this constant self-subversion might eventually consolidate a negational subjectivity that precludes any form of existential action that is not politically oriented (and thereby contentious); in due course, paragons of belligerence become paragons of resentment. At best, an incoherent form of vacillation; at worst, an ever-heightening addiction to antithetical relationality that fulfills itself in a vendetta reflex. And once institutionalized, it will satisfy the Nietzschean prediction regarding the political realm’s “prostitution of the intellect” through equilibrium: “The robber and the man of power who promises to protect the community from robbers are at bottom beings of the same mould, but the latter attains his ends by different means than the former.”²⁷ This also goes for the target of the robbery: all are exemplars of the human, all too human. And so, if postcoloniality has merely substituted the knowing subject for the token radical alterity of the othered subject, then it is unconvincing as to how this short migration has combatted the ever-present dilemma of humanism itself. By simply resorting to the other end of the self-other pathology, one limits the exclusive potential that the other possesses to traverse this rope-construction in its entirety. An Eastern postmodernity cannot therefore come about through the constitution of a planetary subjectivity, which fearfully resembles the liberalist rhetoric of universalism and in the wrong hands could even potentially serve as an underhanded discursive alibi for globalization, but must arise from the emergence of a supra-planetary subject within the

third world that refuses to recognize the very existence of that which calls itself modernity. Unearthed. In this regard, the insurgent is an elitist; he pushes difference to its extremity (to be different from everything else, that is). Stated more flagrantly, the Eastern insurgent takes existentialist elitism beyond the threshold where even Nietzsche held back his twitching hands (“the crowd is untruth,” Kierkegaard reminds; “even so, the butchered river flows,”²⁸ Adonis responds), for he or she will corner both the supreme and the abject, the intolerant and the disdained, into the same boat, and then set fire to the vessel altogether.

In a counterintuitive streak, the reason why these selected postcolonial arguments cannot envision resistance except through the sustained apotheosis of otherness as uncompromised alterity is because they continue to operate within a domain of critical theory that is always articulated from the space of a dormant self (without urgency to reinvent). Hence, they are unable to fathom a sublation of the self-other construct as the gateway for an emergent ontological stamp of awareness. This is an old crucible, though: for instance, despite the relentless attempts of idealism to snake out of this relationship, even Sartre finds himself forced in the end to affirm the precarious reality of the other within his *Being and Nothingness*: “[The Other] is conceived as real, and yet I cannot conceive of his real relation to me. I construct him as object, and yet he is never released by intuition. I posit him as subject, and yet it is as the object of my thoughts that I consider him.”³⁰ The result for Continental thought is that only two avenues remain: the absolute annihilation of the other or its acceptance/internalization. The first proposition, in which the other is rejected as fundamental to the constitution of subjectivity, is one that Sartre dismisses as a self-deceiving form of solipsism which “as the affirmation of my ontological solitude, is a pure metaphysical hypothesis, perfectly unjustified and gratuitous for it amounts to saying that outside of me nothing exists and so it goes beyond the limits of the field of my experience.”³⁰ The second possibility, however, includes an option for the Being-for-itself to behold the existence of the other but “not to make use of it.”³¹ Now this is something of value to be retained for our agenda, for it is through a similar notion of concurrent verification and abandonment (uncaring immanence) that we arrive at the doorstep of the insurgent once more: namely, the one who sees them but is not of them, does not accompany them, does not swear blood-oaths to them, becomes non-reciprocating, inessentially otherless, while keeping them under plain watch, and who chooses (after hard internal labor) an affective state that is unaffected by their modernity.

Eastern Insurgency as Radical Coldness

A freedom fighter traces his name in fire, and in the frozen throats
He dies /³²

A methodological suggestion: that when dealing with current postcolonial artifacts, particularly those that store an insurgent potential, one might start from the tracing of acute experiential modulations. In effect, what are the incremental shifts in tactility, movement, performativity, sensation, and thought patterns when injecting a certain concept into the surrounding air? We must picture this almost alchemically or epidemiologically: a man or woman sits kneeling in a bare nondescript room, at which point various concepts are then intermittently released through the ventilation shafts and into the room's atmosphere, one after another, in slow vaporous bombardments that compel their own transfigurations for whoever breathes them. The question of what happens for the immediate circulation/navigation of the self at the center of that room, the imprint or reverberation that a lone concept holds on this hanging form, the way it inscribes and inflects an inescapable existential spasm (like a serum), is of the highest order for our project. These are how the masks are forged.

It is at this point that a primary assertion of this section is forwarded: that while liberation from the steel confines of this epoch might only occur within the unforeseen space of a refashioned third world subjectivity, the method of combat must abandon a head-on collision with modernity and instead embrace a form of strategic indifference. The side door, the distant stare: this insurgent stance, as a force of otherlessness, must therefore practice radical coldness at every turn. In contrast, the reason why such ethical thinkers as Levinas prove so beholden to the concept of otherness is because their theoretical production is articulated from the ditch of the historical self in modernity; they are part of the Western philosophical tradition, even when flogged by it, and imagine everything from its parapets. Despite the fact that this ethical distress remains entrenched within an Enlightenment discourse that cannot conceive of a self without mediation through a formulated other (it is never even interested in this aspect of freedom), what this reveals even more disturbingly is the fact that Levinas's principal goal is to repair the totalitarian self and not to explore the otherworldly powers of the other. Much like the beggar's aspirations of certain postcolonial trends, always concerned with proving something that might fix the master, in this faulty dreamscape too the roughened self is to be redeemed by otherness, made well by otherness, made sane by otherness, and thus the other is never

entitled to just walk away and seek its own external dominion. If the other possesses the talent of infinity, then presumably its sole responsibility is to dispense that infinity to the appalling lineage of knowing subjects who have crucified it (another ingratiating). Ethics, then, cannot permit the other's leaving of the situation, its voiding of the encounter in order to enhance whatever extraordinary properties have fallen its way. But why is the other never allowed the right to isolation, solitude, hermeticism, anticomunalism, or misanthropy?

It does not matter that much anyway, since what we find in both ethics and postcolonialism, more often than not, is a fleshless simulation of otherness; once again, they are not actually speaking of someone, only self-projecting silhouettes of an idea of someone (scarecrow theory). It is frustrating to chase these sublime or stale phantoms, those that either drift into incessant negative theologies (the impossible, the unthinkable, the unknowable) or are predisposed to the most unoriginal psychological responses (the wooden subalterns). They allude to something that risks no bone marrow in the game, and it discredits such musings. The earthly dehumanized Eastern subject, on the other hand, the one with a staunch existential verifiability, the one whose trachea or fingertips might be severed by five bullets around the corner, the one who plays with mortal stakes and states of emergency on a daily basis, the one of famine, war, or occupation, is not so thoroughly beholden to this ontological differential; they do not long, as some would hope, for the recuperation of this addictive hierarchy of being in which the self always sees itself as that which it is not and wherein the other must then negationally allow the enunciation of the "I." Instead, disenfranchisement has afforded some malleability: since the self-definition of the other has always had a public-private dualism, such that to operate external to this inferiorizing paradigm would motivate the carving out of secret vicinities, except in instances of anticolonialism and cultural nativism that again lose their existential strongholds once they cease to be seditious forces and instead assume the seat of power, one can bet that otherness has at its disposal several unusual vectors of consciousness. And so it is that being written out of history is what has inadvertently yielded the very separatist possibility of an outside; in the wake of being circumscribed in degradation, one is mobilized to pick one's faraway spots (the imperceptible expanse); one stretches across these wild fields more and more, preserves them at all costs, and ridicules the frail deceptions of the empire from such hidden angles.

Rapid evacuation. The agility, velocity, and dexterity with which the insurgent drops this self-othering burden once again speaks to the fact that a certain third world subjectivity must transmit itself through the

affective matrix of radical coldness. Fatherless. Motherless. To ascertain this ice in the throat, as it threatens the epochal vise, one need only turn back to the astounding poetic voice of Adonis (one example is sufficient when the intent is to confirm an exception rather than a rule). Thus he writes: “No, not from the age of the decline: / The time of dreadful agitation is at hand, the shaking loose of minds.”³³ There is no equivocation in this utterance, no flattening and no loyalty to the reigning age or to the ease of others; dread, agitation, the loosening of brain matter itself: these are the only prime directives. As a consequence, it is not surprising that both Nietzsche and Sartre attempt to locate their own becoming-frigid within the same realm of an otherless individuation, neither do they hesitate to cast their perceptive eyes toward the Eastern corridors for guidance. In the case of Nietzsche, it is after the death of God that he asks whether the world has somehow grown colder, the meteorological reward of a vital overthrow, and from there proceeds (through his Persian anti-prophet Zarathustra) to declare himself the enemy of gravity. Lightness, as Nietzsche tells it, is therefore a synonym for the postmodern coldness toward which this project aims itself (i.e., as a form of contempt without resentment). In the aftermath of a near-insurmountable tension with existence, a frictional association now unstrapped, Nietzsche speaks of the opening of a gap between his subjectivity (cold enough to suffer from its own humanity) and the rest of his former race (unwilling to accept the pain of treason): “My mind and my longing are directed toward the few, the long, the distant; what are your many small short miseries to me? You do not yet suffer enough to suit me! For you suffer from yourselves, you have not yet suffered from man. You would lie if you claimed otherwise! You all do not suffer from what I have suffered.”³⁴ Neither is this a far cry from the writing of Hafez himself, as one of Nietzsche’s most emulated literary personages, who provides the ultimate paragon of indifference in his figure of the *rend* as iconoclast; an informal trickster, prone to drunkenness, sin, and heresy (though unbowing before such definitions), he is forever scorned but shows no sign of injury; he is without shame or conformism, only laughter, a joyful plague which the philosopher of the gay science admired. He is vivid, energetic, and guiltless; he is profound in his vertigo; his mania is beyond humiliation. Anger, disgrace, aversion, and even hatred, when taken far enough, become ejective devices that widen the chambers between incompatible ontologies—without forgiveness, friendship, or false warmth, and drawn only by the chill of a night that is its own sun: so it is that the insurgent becomes the winter of an impersonal event.

Perhaps this variable has gone unnoticed, but one should definitely try to remember which existential attribute Sartre upheld as the most beautifully foreboding in his self-elegiac reading of Fanon in the preface to *The Wretched of the Earth*: “When Fanon says of Europe that she is rushing to her doom, far from sounding the alarm he is merely setting out a diagnosis . . . As to curing her, no; he has other things to think about; he does not give a damn whether she lives or dies. Because of this, his book is scandalous. And if you murmur, jokingly embarrassed, ‘He has it in for us!’ the true nature of the scandal escapes you; for Fanon has nothing in for you at all; his work—red-hot for some—in what concerns you is as cold as ice; he speaks of you often, never to you.”³⁵ Radical coldness, itself the symptom of some fugitive passion, again appears as the calling card of a going-under/going-over exclusive to the civilizational villain; no longer heated by imperial fires, the shivering ones alone can dodge the life sentence of self-othering. Neither does this make them less hazardous; if anything, it enhances the scope and acumen of violence; it fangs them, this glacial bearing, all the while leaving them unenveloped. It is at once the touchstone of a rare immunity and a weapon. For what Sartre has done here in this lyrical excerpt, making of Fanon what he could never really attain but in the process establishing an existential diagram for the later third world to follow, is to invert the metaphor of absolute power. To be precise, the most disturbing and yet comprehensive expression of authority, used in legends and films to evoke the anxiety of the audience, is the figuration of the ruler who with a wave of his hand orders the death of a subject for whom he has no further use. In these scenarios, power does not bother to make eye contact with the condemned, though it has robbed the latter of his life in but a moment’s whim. Dismissive. Frivolous. A rushed gesture, and then the blade. He is not worthy of the ruler’s attention, even amid terminal throes or on the stake. If there are words spoken from above, then they serve the most idle sanctioning of assassination—“kill him”—itself an articulation of pure simplicity, brevity, and severity. The shortening of language to mirror the contraction of being; yes, this stands among the most horrifying manifestations of formalized coldness, and yet common for many centuries: not just the license to kill, but the mechanistic invocation of the license.

One pauses, then: for is the will to radical coldness advocated in the pages of Adonis, Nietzsche, Sartre, and Fanon not cut from the same cloth? Does it not bring the havoc of a similar destination? If unmoved murder turned out to be the prevalent custom of the West in modernity, then the Eastern insurgent should conceivably avoid replication of this

inevitability of historical spectrality, discounting the phantasmatic return of the repressed and its perpetual haunting of the present. Thus, Derrida makes a compelling observation in *Specters of Marx* when he writes that

the living appropriation of the spirit, the assimilation of a new language is already an inheritance. And the appropriation of another language here figures the revolution. This revolutionary inheritance supposes, to be sure, that one ends up forgetting the specter, that of the primitive or mother tongue. In order to forget not what one inherits but the pre-inheritance on the basis of which one inherits. This forgetting is only a forgetting. For what one must forget will have been indispensable. One must pass through the pre-inheritance, even if it is to parody it, in order to appropriate the life of a new language or make the revolution.³⁷

Without question, Derrida is entirely justified in his accusation that this Marxist revolutionary consciousness seeks a mock eclipse—to suffocate/unmouth the ghosts of history—and by extension that any political movement that strives to avoid a conversation with the ghost is damned to leave itself with unresolved affairs. Herein lies the significance of his concluding remarks in the same text: “Could one address oneself in general if already some ghost did not come back? If he loves justice at least, the ‘scholar’ of the future, the ‘intellectual’ of tomorrow should learn it and from the ghost. He should learn to live by learning not how to make conversation with the ghost but how to talk with him, with her, how to let them speak or how to give them back speech, even if it is in oneself, in the other, in the other in oneself: they are always there, specters, even if they do not exist, even if they are no longer, even if they are not yet.”³⁸ This call to speaking-with is fine enough, perhaps, but Derrida has ultimately left one possibility unexplored: For why can this speech-act not be a curse or threat? It may prove correct that every movement into an emergent time, including the temporal-existential traversals espoused by this piece, demands dialogue with the specters of the past, but this does not necessarily imply entrapment by those ghostly entities; neither must every dialogue be congenial (what of the rant, the taunt, the insult, the battle cry?). More precisely, when Adonis writes that “I sing the language of the spearhead. I shout that time is punctured, that its walls have crumbled in my bowels. I vomited: I have no History, no present / I am Solar insomnia, the Abyss, Sin, and Action,”³⁹ to whom does he direct his propensity to sing, shout,

and vomit if not the ghost of history who he repeatedly mocks and rebukes? Who is the addressee of his unfathomable scream if not the spectral (pre) inheritance which he now squanders and forfeits to the wind? Is Derrida so totalitarian or deterministic in his own mystical-temporal philosophy that he refuses the living subject the right to consciously refuse the (mis) fortune of past? Either way, despite the fictive allegiances of deconstruction, the Eastern insurgent subjectivity sculpted by Adonis and others provides a more thick-skinned approach to the backlashes, visitations, and intrusions of the temporal order (they slur the ages).

Eternity, once again. A reorientation toward this single conceptual plane alone might reach beyond the dilemma of haunting, for the deconstructive qualification of Marxism is only viable within a theoretical framework that perceives time as a line-turning-circle (this is also a psychoanalytic temporality). With that said, Middle Eastern thought can range far before any of these philosophical schools to its own medieval mysticism in order to seek a preternatural concept of time as pure circle (or spiral). And this is a crucial difference: for the authority of the ghost in deconstruction is predicated on a hierarchy of reverence and accumulated temporal power based on a stratification of past, present, and future (which is then of course violated)—that is, the ghost has the power to cyclically reappear because it comes from the past, because it *is* past, and this ancient endowment is precisely what allows it to fling itself into the present/future. The most antiquated, the longest buried, therefore has the greatest chance to escape its antiquity. This notwithstanding, what is one to do then with Mahmoud Darwish, a man who literally treads on the millennia-old graves, shrines, and ashes of the supposed Palestinian holy land, when he casually spits on the debris of such past narratives and writes that: “Drums will beat loudly and other barbarians will come. Barbarians will fill the cities’ emptiness, slightly higher than the sea, mightier than the sword in a time of madness. So why should we be concerned? What do our children have to do with the children of this impudence?”⁴⁰ Nothing to do with them, he says, even though they have been there before and each time maimed his family. Now if we permit this extra-species affront, one that shares no conservative or reverential etiquette toward the earlier ones, then it is no overstatement to say that a lone Middle Eastern poet can bring down the temporal-ontological pillars of both deconstruction and psychoanalysis (and what remains of their scaffolding after that, without trauma or the uncanny?). For one is activated by Darwish’s neutral renouncement of the returning barbarians to wonder which principle in particular allows him the space