

Securing the American Ethnoscape

Official Surveys and Literary Interventions

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These times are unfriendly toward Worlds alternative to this one.

—Thomas Pynchon¹

*Every map presses down onto a physical terrain that it, in part,
orders and, in part, effaces.*

—Philip Fisher²

Introduction: The “Fact-Minded” Thomas Jefferson

When Judith Shklar, the late and much revered Harvard political theorist, delivered her presidential address at the American Political Science Association’s annual meeting in 1990, she said that she felt her responsibilities “particularly deeply.” One aspect of that depth derived from her position as the first female president of the association. The other was associated with her vocation as a political theorist. Entitling her address “Redeeming American Political Theory,” Shklar insisted that American political theory, “far from being demeaning and scientifically superfluous” ought to be integrated into a political science that is, in its best incarnation, “fact-minded.”³

The redemption of American political theory, for Shklar, was therefore a matter of overcoming its marginal status by challenging the widely held presumption that it has, from the colonial period forward, lacked scientific rigor. To make her case, Shklar treated what she called “three political sciences in America,” articulated during America’s revolutionary and founding periods. These belong to Jefferson, Madison and Hamilton, whose approaches were “speculative and physiological,” “institutional and historical,” and “empirical and behavioral” respec-

tively.⁴ Once she casts the “founding fathers” as political scientists, the bulk of her address treats instances of their fact-mindedness and scientific rigor.

However, Shklar’s desire to integrate the inaugural period of American political theory into a scientific political science does not exhaust her historical focus. Unlike most of her predecessors, for whom the American political tradition constituted an unambiguously proud legacy, Shklar noted that among the “political phenomena” that distinguished the development of American political theory was—“most deeply”—“the prevalence of chattel slavery.” As a result, she asserted, “this country has embarked upon two experiments simultaneously: one in democracy, the other in tyranny.”⁵ Given the dominant tendency of APSA presidential addresses to celebrate “the American political tradition,” this was a stunning departure. But Shklar offered an immediate palliative. She went on to suggest that the stain of chattel slavery had been effectively removed, thanks in part to the social sciences within which “the democratization of values” is implicit. However tyrannical the institution of slavery was, a “democratic political science was eventually to be expected.” And that political science, given to us “in embryonic form”⁶ by Jefferson, Madison and Hamilton, helped to sanitize a besmirched American democratic tradition.

Yet despite her faith in the democratic proclivities of the entire trajectory of American political science, which originates in the “thought-world”⁷ of the framers of the nation-state’s founding documents, Shklar recognized a flawed perspective in (for example) Jefferson’s “anthropology” with which he was able to legitimate the unjust treatment of “Indians” and “slaves.” But we should not blame social science, only the choice of inquiries. Jefferson’s mistake was his attempt to “assimilate social science to natural history.”⁸ She does admit, however, that ultimately, despite its important role in the democratization of values, America’s early versions of political science had their limits. Even with their exemplary ethos, the founding thinkers “could not imagine a multiracial citizenry.”⁹ Remarkably, Shklar was undaunted by this failure of imagination. Since things have worked out well—she implied that America achieved a democratic, multiracial political order, thanks in part to the scientific orientation of American political theory—she could comfortably restrict the theorizing to a trajectory running from white “founders” to modern social science. The period of chattel slavery that Shklar lamented (however “deep”) is merely one of the “political phenomena” that provoked, in a seemingly positive way, an American political theory that is strictly the provenance of Euro-Americans. Shklar felt, for example, that she could safely treat Jefferson as “a revered founder of a nation dedicated to the universal principles of human rights and individual liberties,” and ignore the Jefferson whom many have seen as “an example of that ‘white mythology’ which conceals an oppressive racial imperialism in a language of universal philanthropy...”¹⁰

Shklar’s claims for the social science probity of all three thinkers are worthy of analysis. However, given my focus here on the early rationalization and reconfigu-

ration of the American landscape, and the levels of political eligibility assigned to different ethnic groups during that process, I am confining my reactions to Shklar's claims to Jefferson, who was most responsible for the expansion and reshaping of continental space. Most significantly, I want to contest Shklar's restrictive attention, her exclusive concern with what she regards as an ultimately benign and progressive Euro-American thought-world. This requires a treatment of Jefferson et al's slaves and infantilized Indians (among others inhabiting the Americas) not as mere "phenomena" but as loci of enunciation, as situated voices contributing to "American political theory." Such a move invites a very different kind of redemption. The task of recovery becomes not the integration of (a narrow range of) Euro-American thinking into "fact-minded," empiricist political science, but a recasting of American political theory to include the diversity of thought-worlds that have, since the seventeenth century, collided and have alternatively ignored and nourished each other. Native-, African-, and, more recently Latino-Americans (among others) have participated, with Euro-Americans in a process of negotiating what "America" has been and is about. Heeding a cartography of alternative thought-worlds, with special attention to those articulated across a "colonial divide" imposed by the European conquest of the Americas, I redeem neglected portions of American political thought. Instead of appreciating Jefferson's implementation of a proto social science, my emphasis is on recovering modes of thought to which his "science," along with those who continue to pursue a scientific social science, has been inattentive.¹¹

Much of my analysis is concerned with such a recovery. However to prepare the conceptual ground for such a task, I want to note another remarkable blind spot in Shklar's rendering of "American" political theory. In addition to her restrictive approach to the worlds of thought is her neglect of genre-effects. Theory, for Shklar, is a matter of the relationship of the thinker's empirical propositions to their subject matter. For example, rather than merely lamenting Jefferson's failure to recognize the intellectual capabilities of African and Native Americans while defending his social science (his sure grasp of facticity), one can read Jefferson's incorporation of natural history into his inquiries as extra scientific. His drive to create a particular American future turned him as much into a polemical historian as a scientist. As has been noted, his work on founding a unique democratic present and future required an energetic reconstruction of the past.¹² For example, because he was bent on attributing democratic proclivities to Anglo Saxons and, accordingly, to ascribing Euro-American political institutions to an Anglo-dominated ethnohistory, he picked a quarrel with David Hume's *History of England*. The "fact-minded" Jefferson was troubled by Hume's facts, which challenge the view that England's representative democracy derived from an "ancient constitution" developed in the Anglo-Saxon period that pre-dated the Norman conquest.¹³

The past that Jefferson sought to establish was based on ethnohistorical mythology rather than scientific inquiry. If we pay attention to his mythic stories

rather than the “data collection” that they encourage, we must recognize a Jeffersonian thought-world that consisted less in a scientific approach to facticity than in a commitment to narratives, images, spatio-temporal models and biopolitical conceits, all of which constituted his facts. As another president of an academic association put it in *her* presidential address: “We and the cultural milieus in which we think determine historical significance.”¹⁴ Seeking a different kind of redemption for America’s historical thought-worlds, historian Joyce Appleby urges the recovery of “the historic diversity in our past,”¹⁵ which instead of turning attention to the scientific perspicacity of America’s revolutionary leaders, requires “giving voice... to those men and women who have been muffled by the celebration of American exceptionalism,”¹⁶ and “lift[ing] from obscurity those who have been left behind, excluded, disinherited from the American heritage.”¹⁷

Thanks especially to recent scholarship, there are abundant examples of the unmuffling of voices that reflect the darker side of the plantation economy that Jefferson enjoyed and the imperial expansion that he sponsored. To heed those voices, one needs to accord more individual recognition to the bodies from which they come. Or, to articulate the issue within a cinematic idiom, one needs to displace the master shot with the close-up. Looking outward from his Virginia plantation, Jefferson wrote a comprehensive description of his state’s land- and ethnoscape. After treating the contours and elements of the landscape—rivers, vegetation, minerals, contours and climate—he lists the animals and humans, treating Europeans, Indians, and Africans as distinct species. When he gets to a description of the slaves, whose importation he calls a “great political and moral evil,” he first addresses their “natural” intellectual and civilizational inadequacies as a collective type and then simply enumerates them.¹⁸ In this text, Jefferson’s “facts” are articulated primarily within the genre of natural history, the soon-to-be-displaced episteme of the eighteenth century, whose method (its meta-facticity), consisted, as Michel Foucault noted, of “nothing more than the nomination of the visible, an arrangement of elements into a grid.”¹⁹

Yet Jefferson’s famous *Notes on the State of Virginia* are not only descriptive. In addition to what Myra Jehlen refers to as his “almost aggressive objectivity,” one can discern in Jefferson a turn from “fact gathering to political pleading,” a case being made for building a nation by heeding the summons of nature.²⁰ In one telling instance, while describing a landscape seen from his Monticello plantation, Jefferson “constructs a visible scene” not as a dedicated empiricist but “as an icon of historical change,” as a symbolic narrative of the movement from chaos to pacified order.²¹ After he remarks on the “disruption” that nature creates, he has nature promise a pacified locus of possession, asserting that what nature “presents to your eye” is a “smooth” vista “at an infinite distance in the plain country inviting you, as it were from the riot and tumult roaring around, to pass through the breach and participate in the calm below.”²²

Shklar is correct, Jefferson was indeed fact-minded, however not in Shklar's (empiricist) sense that his conclusions were warranted on the basis of objective observations. Rather, he was fact-minded in the sense that he wanted nothing left unclassified. Impatient with enigma, he mobilized the dominant modes of European thinking, especially natural history, to displace contingency with necessity. The American future he sought—ultimately a continent dominated by Euro-American yeoman farmers—was something that the world had been preparing to invite. According to Jefferson's romantic historical narrative, by the eighteenth century nature was beckoning the Euro-Americans: “[W]e have an immensity of land courting the industry of the husbandmen.”²³

How else can one read the landscape? To cast the issue of seeing and knowing within a different frame and, at the same time, to welcome different observations, we can turn again to a cinematic idiom and contrast film director, Alfred Hitchcock's approach to the seen and the known. Like Jefferson, Hitchcock presents landscapes and peopescapes. But here the similarity ends. While Jefferson remains a remote observer, offering a wide-angle view, Hitchcock's camera typically only begins by enacting a survey of a seemingly natural scene. Eventually, as the filming proceeds, it becomes evident that there is a perverse element in the landscape (for example in *North by Northwest*, a biplane crop duster fogging the ground in an area where—a bystander tells Roger Thornhill/Cary Grant—there are no crops to dust). As one commentator astutely puts it, “[t]he film's movement invariably proceeds from landscape to stain, from overall shot to close-up, and this movement invariably prepares the spectator for the event.”²⁴ Through his close-ups, Hitchcock draws the audiences attention to the perversions sequestered within the seemingly benign and conventional scenes (Thus, in *North by Northwest* the crop duster changes from a small speck to a threatening presence as it fills the scene in a close-up while attacking Thornhill).

Accordingly, to offer an alternative to Jefferson's large-framed gaze on his surroundings and, ultimately, westward toward America's Euro-dominated future, we can view close-ups of those belonging to alternative thought-worlds. One such close-up that suggests itself is available within the slave narrative genre. For example, observing life from the same plantation space from which Jefferson's observations were generated, Harriet Jacobs, writing in the mid nineteenth century, addresses herself to the stain or perversity of slavery in Virginia's landscape, describing it as one who has experienced it rather than as one who, like Jefferson, enjoyed its benefits while lamenting its inconsistency with abstract moral and political principles. Living part of her life as a slave with a coerced sexual as well as occupational history, Jacobs wrote to enter a public sphere in which she has had no recognized existence. In so doing, she disrupted the story of American democracy that Jefferson and his “fellow” founders were at pains to establish. Lauren Berlant describes the most pertinent effect of Jacobs's narrative:

She opens up a space in which the national politics of corporeal identity becomes displayed on the monarchical body, and thus interferes with the fantasy norms of democratic abstraction.²⁵

In contrast with Jefferson's slide from the enumeration of details to disguised polemic (within a single voiced narration) Jacobs offers a contentious, dialogic approach to facticity. Seeking to undermine the white perspective on the events of slavery, she juxtaposes different voices—for example providing white slaveholder articulations and then following their versions with different ones, supplied in the narrator's voice.²⁶ And sensitive to the perils of writing primarily for white female readers in the North, whom she understands to have easily-offended sexual sensibilities, Jacobs text is a mixed genre; it combines "the generic conventions of the slave narrative to those of the sentimental novel."²⁷

There are also notable commentaries by Native and African Americans on Jefferson's most famous document, The Declaration of Independence. For example, noting the gap between the Declaration's ideals and application, the eighteenth century Pequot writer, William Apess addresses himself to the contrast between a Native American patriot, King Philip, whose promises were reliable, with the duplicity of the Euro-American founders.²⁸ And, in his autobiography, Apess appropriates Jefferson et al's terms, for example, "the tree of liberty," as he urges white Americans to apply their principles equally to Indians. Similarly, the African American writer David Walker penned an *Appeal..* Not only to "*the Colored Citizens of the World*" but also "*and very Especially to Those of the United States of America.*"²⁹ Published privately in Boston and often confiscated and suppressed during its dissemination, Walker's appeal refers to the "disparity between the condition of people of African descent in the United States and the 'inalienable rights and republican principles laid out in the Declaration of Independence.'"³⁰

African American (as well as Native American) contributions to American political theory have since flourished. For example, at the end of the twentieth century the work of a critical geographer, Clyde Woods presents a challenge to both the democratic conceits assumed in Jefferson's image of a less racist American future and Shklar's narrative of the democratizing tendencies of the social sciences. Focusing on the legacy of the plantation, Woods argues that while it may no longer be the only economic unit in the southern region, it retains not only a "monopoly over agricultural manufacturing, banking, land, and water" but also remains a dominant "world view."³¹ Over the last century and a half "plantation bloc explanation" has persisted, aided and abetted by the social sciences. Noting the collusive role of American social science with "the planters' mythical ethno-regional system of explanation,"³² Woods shows how influential social science texts allowed the "plantation" as a system of explanation to migrate into a general frame of public policy discourse. The plantation's social science epistemological fellow-travelers reside in a history of research running from the mid nineteenth century

(e.g. George Fitzhugh's *Sociology of the South or the Future of Free Society*) through the twentieth century, for example "modernization theory," which supported the "false belief that industrial growth would eliminate racial inequality."³³ In any case, the social science story within which Shklar locates Jefferson contains serious elisions and ultimately looms less large in the history of Euro-American domination than a cartographic story, to which I now turn.

Jefferson the Surveyor

While Jefferson's role in the contentious history of America's democratic founding is usually treated through a focus on The Declaration of Independence and the American Constitution, arguably his role in creating a Euro-American empire is most manifest in his 1784 and 1785 drafts of The Land Ordinance (implemented by the Congress in 1785), which established a rectangular system for surveying the American continent. The act stated that, under the aegis of a "Geographer of the United States," a surveyor from each of the states, appointed by the Congress, "shall proceed to divide said territory into townships of six miles square, by lines running due South, and others crossing these at right angles..."³⁴

Effectively, after imposing a European thought-world on Virginia's land- and ethnoscape, and acting with the presumption that nature was summoning a Euro-American future, Jefferson laid the foundation for imposing the Euro-oriented spatial system and practices of valuing westward. His Ordinance turned "nature" into property. Just as he had rendered the continent's ethnoscape into a nominal grid (for "natural history" is primarily the "arrangement of elements into a grid")³⁵ he turned the American landscape into a geographic grid, rendering it as an abstract commodity. The Land Ordinance of 1785, which created a checker board whose square mile parcels were assembled as the building blocks for townships after the system that had been established in New England, has been historically far reaching. As Irene de Sousa Santos correctly puts it: "[b]y creating it, Thomas Jefferson drew the grid that would map the U.S. territory practically as we know it today."³⁶ And as John Brinckerhoff Jackson notes, "with the notable exceptions of Detroit, Baton Rouge, and Indianapolis, the cities built in the United States until the late nineteenth century all conformed to the grid system; all were Jeffersonian."³⁷

In his time, the Ordinance was Jefferson's solution to what he regarded as a troubling diversity. Extending a geographically (and agriculturally oriented) homogeneous nation-state westward, the act served to negate "diversities of geography and population" and impose a unity in the form of a rigid, geometric abstraction, "a homogeneous cellular medium of life."³⁸ Finitely situated in a particular world of encounter between alternative spatial practices and modes of valuing, Jefferson sought to dissimulate that finitude into an abstract universality rather than negotiating a co-presence among alternative life worlds. As an extension of enlightenment

geography, a “geometric rationalization of space,” Jefferson’s Ordinance instigated a surveying process that began at the Ohio River and on a line between Virginia and Pennsylvania. Once extended, the surveying process eventually imposed a global model on local domains, consummating the encounter in which, as Enrique Dussel puts it, “Indigenous America felt the impact of the first globalization...”³⁹ As a result, “the multiple local spaces of the Indian became simply insignificant.”⁴⁰ By the 1930’s the Oglala-Sioux, Black Elk described the consequence in his dictated biography as a radical diminution of the shared biosphere of Native American nations:

Once we were happy in our own country...But the Wasichus [Euro-Americans] came, and they have made little islands for us and the other little islands for the four-leggeds, and always these islands are becoming smaller, for around them surges the gnawing flood of the Wasichu; and it is dirty with lies and greed.⁴¹

Black Elk’s efforts at resisting the white encroachment in the West in the late nineteenth century were preceded in the early part of that century at the Mississippi by the Sauk warrior, Black Hawk, whose armed and textual resistance were both notable (in the Black Hawk War and in his biography respectively).⁴² Opposing his fellow Sauk leader, Keochuk’s, passive acceptance of a treaty that pushed his nation west of the Mississippi, Black Hawk was outraged at the idea of abandoning the lands where his ancestors were buried:

When I called to mind the scenes of my youth and those of later days, when I reflected that the theater of which these were acted, had been so long the home of my fathers, who now slept on the hills around it, I could not bring my mind to consent to leave this country to the whites for any earthly consideration.⁴³

Rather than a grid of exploitable pieces of property, Black Hawk, saw the landscape as embodied tribal history. Seeking to preserve that legacy, he resolutely crossed to the east of the river with his warriors to reclaim his territory. His text, dictated to a mixed blood interpreter after his defeat by the militias formed by Illinois Governor Reynolds, offers an extended discourse on dual nationhood. He casts himself as the personification of the Sauk nation, and seeing America as two nations, he wonders why they were not able to meet on equal footing:

What I wanted to say to these people...not to settle on our lands, nor trouble our fences, that there was plenty of land in the country for them to settle.⁴⁴

And he wonders why the whites (especially the Americans, for the British had been more true to their promises) could not be relied upon to negotiate an equitable co-existence:

I was puzzled to find out how the white people reasoned, and began to doubt whether they had any standard of right and wrong.⁴⁵

Black Hawk's literary resistance to the Euro-American ethnic rationalization of continental space sits near the beginning of a continuing struggle by Native American writers, many of whom articulate alternative culture geographies. They, along with other hyphenated Americans, African-, Latino-, and Caribbean- (among others) reflect a diverse and fractionated social order from which counter memories emerge to challenge the conventional story of America's freely inaugurated democratic covenant, celebrated by those who restrict "American political theory" to Euro-American founders and subsequent Euro-American political theorists. Before considering some examples of diverse contemporary writers who contribute versions of American political thought by providing counter memories that issue from diverse historical trajectories, I turn to Thomas Pynchon's parodic treatment of the surveying process (and cultural effacement) that Jefferson helped inaugurate, because it provides an apt critique of Jefferson's enlightenment rationality—his resolute epistemophilia—as well as his diversity-effacing abstractions. Moreover, as a many-voiced genre that exposes the consequences of Jefferson et al's imperial ambitions and brings into dialogue many voices that the foundational Euro American monologue ignores, it provides a threshold for accessing alternative thought-worlds.

An Encounter of Thomases: Pynchon's *Mason & Dixon*

Jefferson's cartographic rationalization of the American continent can be framed within a grammatical metaphor that shapes much of Pynchon's novel, which is written not only about the late eighteenth century but also in its idioms. Effectively, Jefferson's cartographic initiatives turned the subjunctive into the declarative. Whatever possibilities for alternative articulations of America might have existed, most were effaced as Jefferson's grid made "American geography into a single semiotic system."⁴⁶ As Pynchon's novelistic version of the two historical characters, Charles Mason (1728-1786) and Jeremiah Dixon (1733-1779), pursue their surveying task westward, "subjunctive hopes" lose their hold on imaginations. Each hope can abide only until:

...the next Territory to the West be seen and recorded, measur'd and tied in, back into the network of Points already known, that slowly triangulates its Way into the Continent, changing all from subjunctive to declarative, reducing Possibilities to Simplicities that serve the ends of Governments...⁴⁷

While Jefferson's lifelong efforts were aimed at turning contingency into necessity, Pynchon's novel does the reverse. Throughout the narrative, the contingency of

America's emerging Euro-American dominated institutions continually asserts itself. In the novel's opening section on "Latitudes and Departures" the imperial process is signaled as Mason and Dixon are carried from England to the African Cape, following the Atlantic's imperial trade routes. Once they are in "America," the juxtaposition between Jefferson's commitment to a predestined American ethnogenesis and the novel's deconstruction of it are displayed in stark relief, when Jefferson himself makes a brief appearance. While in Virginia, sitting in Raleigh's Tavern (a place described as "congenial to the unmediated newness of History a-transpiring"), Dixon, a *bon vivant* and reveler (in contrast with the austere Presbyterian, Mason), raises his ale-can and offers a toast: "To the pursuit of Happiness." An unnamed Jefferson overhears the toast:

"Hey, Sir,—that is excellent!" exclaims a tall red-headed youth at the next table.
"Ain't it oh so true...You don't mind if I use the Phrase sometime?"

After borrowing a pencil and a scrap of paper to record the historically sacralized phrase (which Pynchon's anecdotal treatment turns into the result of a chance encounter), the "Landlord," recognizing that the drinker is a surveyor, either Mason or Dixon, says: "Tom takes a *Relative* interest in West lines ...his father having help'd run the one that forms our own southern border."⁴⁸

The word "relative" here serves as more than a pun; it makes evident that Jefferson's westward interest is part of his patrimony. In addition to its implied reference to his father, Peter Jefferson's background as a surveyor and mapmaker, it also implies that the westward expansion of Euro-America is of a piece with the imperial transfer from Europe to the Americas. Sensitive to the confrontation that the imperial surveying process entailed, the novel contrasts Euro- and Native American cultural geographies, mapping aspects of the ground plan that Mason and Dixon's survey effectively overcodes. Initially hired to establish the boundary between Pennsylvania and Maryland, Mason and Dixon discover that "Previous lines run through the supposedly boundless forest."⁴⁹ And subsequently, when the two surveyors are "join'd by a Delegation of Indians....most of them Mohawk fighters," they reach "a certain Warrior Path," which they are given to understand is as far west as they should proceed.⁵⁰

They are told that this is not a mere Indian trail, not just an "important road," but rather "one of the major High-ways of all inland America." It is in effect a cultural boundary, and the chapter goes on to treat the incommensurate cultural geographies that pertain to various European and indigenous personae—Jesuits, Encyclopedists, members of the Royal Society on the one hand, and Native American nations on the other. Were the Europeans to cross the Warrior Path (which is not clearly visible and has a "sub-audible Hum of... Traffic"), they are informed, the result would be "not only the metaphysickal Encounter of Ancient Savagery with Modern Science," but also the imposition of a different "civic Entity."⁵¹ Rather than merely helping to consummate the invention of a predestined

nation-state, they are involved, as Mason puts it, in “tresspass, each day ever more deeply.”⁵²

To follow the exploits of Mason and Dixon, then, is not simply to read of the exploits of scientific adventurers. *Mason & Dixon* is a (novelistic) historico-philosophical treatise. As their surveying proceeds, the reader must become less convinced that Mason and Dixon are merely advancing science. And as far as their role in “history” is concerned, a soliloquy by the novel’s main narrator, the Reverend Wick Cherrycoke, gives voice to Pynchon’s notion of the multiplicity that is history against attempts to appropriate it to particular interests. “History is hir’d, or coerc’d only in interests that must prove base,”⁵³ the Reverend states. Rather than leaving history to “anyone in power,”⁵⁴ it must be put in the hands of those with the wit, not to impose a unitary facticity but to recognize multiplicity:

Facts are but the Play-things of Lawyers,—Tops and Hoops, forever a-spin...Alas the Historian may indulge no such idle Rotating. History is not Chronology for that is left to lawyers,—nor is it Remembrance, for Remembrance belongs to the People [the historian, he adds must have the “wit”]—that there may ever continue more than one life-line back into a Past we risk, each day losing our forebears in forever,—not a Chain of single links, for one broken link could lose us All,—rather, a great disorderly Tangle of Lines, long and short, weak and strong, vanishing into the Mnemonick Deep, with only their Destination in common.⁵⁵

Throughout the novel Mason and Dixon serve as the thought vehicles of that multiplicity; they function, in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s terms, as “conceptual personae,” performing in Pynchon’s text the role that Socrates performs in Plato’s; they are vehicles to enact the author’s conceptual apparatus.⁵⁶ The contrast is dramatic: While Jefferson’s politics are disguised in his objectivist-style descriptive language, Pynchon’s *Mason & Dixon*, a dialogic rather than monologic text, has characters who serve as the carriers of Pynchon’s explicitly politicized historical analysis. At one point, Mason affirms his role as conceptual persona explicitly when he notes that he and his fellow astronomical observers are not mired in mere details but are “philosophical Frigates.”⁵⁷ And once he and Dixon take up their surveying task, and have taken their philosophical commitments, as well as their technical apparatuses, on the road, Mason refers to his team as part of the European “Mobility;” i.e. they are not simply sitting in a status and are not mere measurers; they are involved in “Acts that in Whitehall would merit hanging” but are not criminalized on the Euro-dominated American scene. It is a political rather than merely scientific mapping, as is implied when Dixon apprehends “something invisible going on,” and Mason says that it is “American politics.”⁵⁸

Pynchon’s novel makes evident that Mason and Dixon’s enterprise is not minor; the surveyors are involved in a world-historical project. As they assist in imposing the European thought-world, they liken themselves to another historically significant actor in an earlier globalizing, ecumenical caper, Mark Antony, —one

who would “lose the world for Cleopatra....not Dick his Day’s Wages, at the Tavern.”⁵⁹ And one of Dixon’s interlocutors attests to the global scale of the surveying enterprise. Referring first to an earlier, religious ecumene, when the globe was coded spiritually (allowing for much more enigma), he offers a brief genealogy of the forces coding the planet, noting that where once “Forms of land, the flow of water, the occurrence of what us’d to be call’d Miracles” obtained, the present “Age sees a corruption of the ancient Magick,” dominated by “Projectors, Brokers of Capital, Insurancers, Pedlars, Enterprisers and Quacks.”⁶⁰

Articulating the politics of the survey, the novel makes clear that “[t]he surveyor.... replicates not just the ‘environment’ in some abstract sense but equally the territorial imperatives of a particular political system.”⁶¹ And it emphasizes the violence associated with the Euro-American ethnogenesis that Mason and Dixon’s surveying aids and abets. The surveyors “mark the Earth with geometric Scars,”⁶² and, at one point, a squire refers to their task as a “Geometry of slaughter.”⁶³ Moreover, before the novel is finished, the surveyors learn that they are in a world where slavery is the rule. Masked by the discourse of enlightenment science are practices of oppression, which Dixon especially (Mason remains relatively naive to the end) comes to acknowledge, as he notes how unfriendly the world they are enacting is to alternative ones,⁶⁴ and, more specifically, that the American complaint about their treatment by the British pales in comparison with “how both of you treat the African Slaves, and the Indians Native here...”⁶⁵ Ultimately, Dixon’s gradually evolving awareness constitutes the novel as a challenge to the liberal democratizing narrative of America’s continental expansion. Looking at the surveying process, rather than the declaration of Independence as the foundational nation building enactment, reveals a project which Dixon describes as the drawing of “a Line between their Slave-Keepers, and their Wage-Payers...”⁶⁶ The Reverend Cherrycoke is explicit about this darker side of the American experiment, noting that “the word *Liberty*, so unreflectively sacred to us today, was taken in those Times [the period of the survey] to encompass even the darkest of Men’s rights.”⁶⁷ In contrast with Jefferson’s optimistic attachment to enlightenment rationality, Pynchon’s novel reveals the dark side of the Euro-American enactment of the enlightenment through its surveying vehicles, and, through the words of the Reverend Cherrycoke, makes a case for radical doubt.

The Method of Radical Doubt

There are two conceptual frames within which Pynchon’s novel contests the enlightenment conceits animating Mason and Dixon’s surveying task. One is geographic; despite their attempt to draw a definitive, unambiguous boundary line (a total rationalizing of what they confront initially as “a realm of doubt”), the task cannot be consummated because of a “Wedge,” a triangular section in Delaware that is “priz’d for its Ambiguity” and inhabited by “all whose Wish, hardly uncommon in this Era of fluid identity, is not to reside anywhere.”⁶⁸ The “Wedge”

contains unresolvable anomalies and cannot be unambiguously divided. While those on either side of Mason and Dixon's line are on a course to be located within clear, universalized collective identities, those within the "Wedge" "occupy a singular location in the emerging moral Geometry."⁶⁹ Rather than being enlisted within the new *terra cognita*, the enlightenment spatial politics organizing the rest of the surveyed domain, those residing in the Wedge occupy an "unseen World, beyond Resolution, of transactions never recorded..." and they also resist being drawn into the moral crotchets that pertain to the new spatial politics. Their world, which resists definitive surveying is "[a] small geographick Anomaly, a-bstle with Appetites high and low..."⁷⁰ And Dixon himself never capitulates to the Jeffersonian enlightenment program of turning all of America into an unambiguous grid. For example, when he encounters the American surveyor, Shelby, he is put off by Shelby's totalizing approach to the survey—to "Shelby's rabid pleasure in converting space to lines and angles"—and, more generally, to the Jeffersonian teleology of an America that "waits the surveyor."⁷¹

Supplementing "the realm of doubt," which Mason and Dixon's survey cannot wholly rationalize, is a second conceptual frame, to which the narrator, Reverend Cherrycoke, refers as "Christic doubt." One of his "undeliver'd sermons" reads in part:

Doubt is the essence of Christ. Of the twelve Apostles, most true to him was ever Thomas,—indeed, in the *Acta Thomae* they are said to be twins. The final pure Christ is pure uncertainty. He is become the central subjunctive fact of a Faith, that risks ev'rything upon one bodily Resurrection...Wouldn't something less doubttable have done? A prophetic dream, a communication with a dead person? Some few tatters of evidence to wrap[our poor naked spirits against the coldness of the World where Mortality and its Agents may bully their way, wherever they wish to go...⁷²

Through his narrator, the reverend Wicks Cherrycoke, Pynchon interweaves the value of (Christic) doubt with his novelistic treatise on the threat to the subjunctive spaces of America—the depluralizing assault—that Mason and Dixon's surveying process poses. Pynchon prizes a "fluxational reality" which is being compromised by Mason and Dixon's Jeffersonian, "protracted ceremony of ordinance."⁷³ To preserve a "subjunctive America" against the rationalization of the surveying process, Pynchon's method of radical doubt is enacted in part through the Reverend Cherrycoke's image of a re-enchanted Earth that retains the air of the mystery and doubt that one finds elaborated in Eastern religions. Cherrycoke articulates this image in a sermon-like narration throughout the novel.

But *Mason & Dixon's* critique of the way the enlightenment was visited on the Americas is political as well as epistemological. Among the critiques of colonialism it provides is its reference to the coerced labor in the Caribbean, to which the

novel refers as “the cruel sugar islands.” Heeding this figuration, it is appropriate to summon a contemporary voice that hails from one of them. Jamaica Kincaid, a naturalized American from Antigua, serves as an appropriate hinge in my analysis, not only because of the place from which she hails but also because, like Pynchon, she offers a critical perspective on Jefferson’s imperial project with explicit reference to his historical role.⁷⁴

Kincaid Contra Jefferson

A descendant of the coerced labor force in the Caribbean, where slaves with no control over the conditions or pace of the work, produced both cotton and sugar, the latter a product that by the mid seventeenth century (and for one and one half centuries thereafter) was “by far the most valuable product exported from the Americas,”⁷⁵ Kincaid became a writer after initially arriving in the U.S. as a servant (an *au pair*). She is now “torn between ways,”⁷⁶ or as she puts it, “[m]y feet are (so to speak) in two worlds.”⁷⁷ Given her heritage of coerced labor and her own experience as a bonded servant, it is not surprisingly that Kincaid sees Jefferson et al’s democratic experiment differently from those who unambivalently celebrate the creation of America’s founding documents. For example, while viewing the famous portrait in Philadelphia’s Liberty Hall of the signers of The Declaration of Independence, Kincaid ponders the occupational infrastructure of their studied ease. Evincing an imagination of those not in the picture, but whose labor has made possible the enactment of the European thought-world in America’s founding, she says:

America begins with the Declaration of Independence...but who really needs this document....There is a painting in Philadelphia of the men who signed it. These men looked relaxed; they are enjoying the activity of thinking, the luxury of it. They have time to examine this thing called their conscience and to act on it...some keep their hair in an unkempt style (Jefferson, Washington), and others keep their hair well groomed (Franklin), their clothes pressed...

She then speaks of those who have worked to prepare the men for the occasion “the people who made their beds and made their clothes nicely pressed and their hair well groomed or in a state of studied dishevelment.”⁷⁸

The “disheveled” Jefferson also appears in what is arguably Kincaid’s most politically perspicuous work. Written mostly in a personal, autobiographical style and innocently entitled *My Garden Book*, the work is a trenchant analysis of the botanical imperialism that Europeans visited on the Americas. Jefferson, she notes, “a great gardener in his time”:

owned slaves and strongly supported the idea of an expanded American territory, which meant the demise of the people who owned and lived on the land. At the

same time, he passionately advocated ideas about freedom, ideas that the descendants of the slaves and the people who were defeated and robbed could use in defense of themselves.”⁷⁹

Although Kincaid’s reflection on the contradiction that impugns Jefferson’s legacy in the tradition of American democratic thought frames the analysis in her garden book, her more significant contra-Jeffersonian story is contained in her treatment of the imposition of names that European thinkers lent to the botany of the Americas. Prior to the imperial acts of naming, or “in the beginning,” she notes, the vegetable kingdom was chaos, people everywhere called the same things by a name that made sense to them.”⁸⁰ Subsequently, however, the imperial project of naming, which purported to impose names “arrived at by an objective standard,”⁸¹ was part of the process of possession, imposing “a spiritual padlock with the key thrown irretrievably away....an erasing.”⁸²

Thus, while Jefferson saw the Linnaean system for classifying the botanical world as a boon to a universalizing knowledge project, Kincaid, noting that Linnaeus developed his views within the garden of a rich man in the Netherlands, connects the Linnaean order with the process of conquest, in which people like her, people of “the conquered class,” lost control over the meanings of both their places and bodies.⁸³ The imperially imposed mode of the garden exemplifies that loss of control:

The botanical garden reinforced for me how powerful were the people who had conquered me; they could bring to me the botany of the world they owned.⁸⁴ ⁰

Reacting to this recognition, Kincaid notes that her construction of her garden is “an exercise in memory; a way of remembering my own immediate past, a way of getting to a past that is my own.”⁸⁵ She makes evident that her gardening is a practice of counter-memory, a recoding and recovery of the world effaced by the botanical part of imperialism’s coding practices.⁸⁶

To appreciate the politics of counter-memory that Kincaid’s garden book offers, one must understand the symbolic relationship of the English garden to both Britain’s and Euro-America’s imperial expansion. Pynchon offers a brief hint of the relation when his version of Jeremiah Dixon refers to England as “that Garden of Fools,” while pointing out to Mason that the common element of the venues they have worked is the institution of slavery.⁸⁷ Historically, the special valence of the English garden, an exemplar of Euro-civilizational order, arises from a juxtaposition between England and the Other’s who experienced England’s imperial ambitions. As Stephen Daniels notes, “the very regional reach of English imperialism, into alien lands, was accompanied by a countervailing sentiment for cosy home scenery, for thatched cottages and gardens in pastoral countryside.”⁸⁸

Before the wildness of the America's constituted an invidious otherness for the English, Ireland was England's ecologically uncivilized other:

It was the Irish 'wilderness' that bounded the English garden, Irish 'barbarity; that defined English civility, Irish papistry and 'superstition; that warranted English religion; it was Irish 'lawlessness' that demonstrated the superiority of English lawn and Irish 'wandering' that defined the settled and centered nature of English society.⁸⁹

There is abundant evidence that Jefferson's model for Europeanizing the American landscape was greatly influenced by his admiration of the English garden, which, unlike the overly manicured French variety, seemed to allow the order of nature to articulate itself within the order of the garden. Instead of "formal lines of trees and paths," characteristic of the baroque era, the English garden of the neo-classical era, which manifested "a cultivated but naturalistic landscape," and often "invoked historical and archeological images,"⁹⁰ supplied Jefferson with a model for a symbolic order as well as a conceptual vehicle for turning nature into history. Reading widely in the literature about European gardens as well as observing many models in his travels, Jefferson's attachment to gardening, his micro-managing of his estate's garden, constituted a prototype for his subsequent attempt to shape the landscape of the continent as a whole. Just as he Anglicized the landscape of his own property, he sought to anglicize the America landscape.⁹¹

Picking up this historical theme, Kincaid notes that in contrast with the English who seem to be led "to obsessively order and shape their landscape, "obsessive order is lacking in Antiguan people."⁹² And, reversing the historical valence of the British imperial project, Kincaid enjoys the disorder of her garden, which she sees as part of her resistance to the historical domination of the English with "their love, their need to isolate, name, objectify, possess various parts, people, and things in the world."⁹³

Kincaid's reflections on Anglo-American botanical imperialism function to decode the process of colonial objectification both generally and specifically. At a general level, she sees the world of transplanted species in terms of their role in the creation of coerced labor—for example offering a gloss on cotton in terms of "the tormented, malevolent role it has played in my ancestral history."⁹⁴ And commenting on the breadfruit, which was sent to the West Indies by Joseph Banks (the botanist accompanying Captain Cook on his voyages) and was "meant to be a cheap food to feed slaves," she observes, "in a place like Antigua the breadfruit is not a food, it is a weapon."⁹⁵

Ultimately, Kincaid recognizes the organization of her garden as a way to reestablish part of the Antigua that was overcoded by botanical imperialism. It is both a "map of the Caribbean and the sea that surrounds it" and "an exercise of memory; a way of remembering my own immediate past, a way of getting to a past

that is my own.”⁹⁶ Kincaid’s garden is therefore a text that exposes the historical hold of the colonizing/naming process that has gripped her homeland and imposed a history within which she “and all who look like me”⁹⁷ cannot recognize themselves. In challenging and denaturalizing the world of names that the colonizing process imposed on the Americas, her garden book accords well with Pynchon’s deconstruction of the surveying process on the American continent.

Writing as Counter Memory

As is the case with Jamaica Kincaid’s novels and commentaries, much of the politics of contemporary writing reflects the counter memories of those groups that have been victimized by a history of political economy associated with the formation of the Euro-oriented model of political order, which was largely responsible for depositing the diverse bodies that inhabit the system of disparate but interconnected social fields within the modern nation state. For example, in the U.S. case, many African American, Native American and Third World, migrant writers do not, as much of Euro American theorizing implies, select from extant idioms within the hierarchy of available styles that have persisted within state-dominated social orders.⁹⁸ Rather, their writing expresses profound ambivalence about the dominant literary field within which their work is deployed, precisely because of the tendency of that field to be complicit with the state’s presumption (its primary mode of “thought”) that it governs a unitary and coherent national culture, a state-managed unitary social order.

Although there are numerous examples, here I focus on three writers with diverse and fraught relationships with the dominant American social and political American imaginaries because of their explicit ambivalences about participating in America’s main, commercially controlled literary culture—Michelle Cliff, a diasporic Jamaican, Sherman Alexie, a Native American, and Toni Morrison, an African American—all of whose writing performances enact modes of thought that challenge the conventional nation building narrative, within which every individual is an undifferentiated citizen subject, and the social order is merely an ahistorical class structure.

Michelle Cliff. Michelle Cliff’s observations on languages, expressed by one of her fictional characters, serves to characterize the agenda for writers who recognize the ideational traps lurking in the familiar systems of intelligibility created by a historical trajectory of Euro-American political thought. In her novel *Free Enterprise*, the narrator reflects on the historical role of each language’s participation in the imperial domination of her homeland; “English,” she says, “was the tongue of commerce”...“Spanish was the language of categories” (by which she means the creation of a biopolitical matrix of economically and politically ineligible, misce-

generated blood types), and Latin was the language of Christian spiritual hegemony. “Against these tongues,” she adds “African of every stripe collided.”⁹⁹

Like Jamaica Kincaid, Cliff stands with “her feet...in two worlds” and thus writes not only in an English toward which she feels ambivalent but also from disjunctive loci of enunciation.¹⁰⁰ Identifying with the diasporic part of social order, which cannot be comfortably assimilated as unitary national subjects, much of her writing focuses on transnational lives. For example, in her novel *No Telephone to Heaven*, a diasporic perspective is enacted both geopolitically and linguistically—geopolitically by the back and forth movement of her main character, Kitty Savage, between the U.S. and Jamaica (as well as back and forth from England) and linguistically in the collision of idioms, standard English and Jamaican patois, and in the anti narrative structure, a set of dissociated narrative fragments.

Cliff novelistic contribution to diversifying America’s thought-world reflects a significant historical change in the role of that genre, which in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries displaced other narrative forms in the third world. Although the novel initially was primarily a nation building genre, subsequently Cliff, like many other third world writers, diasporic and otherwise, have made the novel a site of resistance to the global, national and social imaginaries of the “first world.”¹⁰¹ Yet Cliff evinces a profound ambivalence toward writing in general because she recognizes the difficulty of extracting a thought from the outside within languages that encode a dominant Anglo-American thought-world.¹⁰² As she has noted, her primary linguistic imaginary is silence, a form of resistant aphasia, which she sees as the ultimate discursive location for one who would wholly resist the colonizing forces within language.¹⁰³ Cliff’s political inflection of silence is manifested in her *No Telephone to Heaven* when her character, Kitty Savage, is described as breaking her silence when she discovers a shop with Jamaican foods in New York.¹⁰⁴ Ultimately, although Cliff’s “attempt to bound off a space of silence via the symptom of aphasia”¹⁰⁵ is never consummated—Cliff continues to write—it reflects her suspicion that however hybrid and resistant her cacophony of voices and assemblage of narrative fragments in her novels are to the dominant idioms and historical memories of the Euro-dominant state, she can never be wholly present to herself as a resisting body in her writing. Nevertheless, her struggle with the ambiguous achievement of an intelligibility that bridges thought-worlds is exemplary. It plays a role in articulating a subjunctive America that the familiar Euro-American narratives (e.g. the melting pot story) overcode.

Sherman Alexie. Like Michelle Cliff and Jamaica Kincaid, Sherman Alexie, embodies the split consciousness of one with his feet in two different life worlds. And, he shares Cliff’s expressed ambivalence toward writing. In his short story, “Indian Country,” Alexie treats the geographic and ethnographic ambiguity of his Indianness through his character, Low Man Smith—a writer and doubtless his alter ego. Low Man describes himself in one of the story’s conversations as one who is “not

supposed to be anywhere.”¹⁰⁶ His Indianness, along with that of other Native American characters, is highly diluted; a “Spokane,” he speaks and understands no tribal languages, was born and raised in Seattle, and has visited his own reservation only six times.

The “Indian country” for which Alexie’s story provides a fragmentary mapping has resonances with Black Elk’s sentiments about how the Euro-American conquest has created an Indian country that consists of “little islands [that are] always... becoming smaller.” But Alexie adds another, more ambiguous “Indian country,” in addition to the Indian landscape he maps, which, if represented pictorially, would be a few color flecks on a map of the U. S.’s western states, he treats the discursively muffled Indian country. Alexie’s dialogic version of the precarious and obscure visibility of that country is reinforced throughout the story’s conversations, which convey a dilemma of intelligibility for Native Americans existing in two alternative thought-worlds, articulated in different idioms. For example, at one point, Low Man asks an older Indian, Raymond, if he is an elder. Shifting to a non Indian idiom, Raymond replies, “elder than some, not as elder as others.”¹⁰⁷

Reflecting Alexie’s awareness of the ways in which Native American sense-making is always already colonized by a Euro-American idiom, Low Man Smith manifests a profound ambivalence toward being immersed in the U.S.’s Euro-dominated literary field. He refers to the chain bookstores that carry his books as “colonial clipper ships,”¹⁰⁸ and in the process of moving about an urban venue in search of a non chain bookstore, he tries to divest himself of his laptop, first trying to trade it in a Seven Eleven convenience store and then handing it to a clerk in a Barnes & Noble bookstore, pretending he found it.

The discursive ambiguities and writer’s ambivalence in Alexie’s short story reflect the condition of his characters throughout his writing—novels, poetry and screenplays—in which his Indians struggle within what M. M. Bakhtin refers to as “the framework of other people’s words.”¹⁰⁹ In several places, Alexie evokes a reversal of the captivity narrative, locating the Indian instead of the white woman as victim (in his case of a Euro-American discursive hegemony). When he worked in Hollywood as a screenwriter (a writing vocation subject to studio revisions), he became blocked, he says, because he “started to hear ‘their’ voices, those Hollywood voices whenever [he] tried to write anything.”¹¹⁰ And in one of his poems, addressed to Mary Rowlandson’s captivity story, he articulates his struggle against captivity by the “[l]anguage of the enemy: *heavy lightness*, house insurance, *serious vanity*, safe-deposit box....”¹¹¹

Alexie’s response to the perils of linguistic capture is not to retreat to a version of Indian discursive authenticity. As he puts it, he resists the “corn pollen and eagle feather school of poetry.”¹¹² Recognizing that he writes from a colonized locus of enunciation, he articulates the dilemma of the contemporary Indian writer who stands partly within the dominant system of intelligibility (for example, he acknowledges such disparate influences as Stephen King’s novels and television’s

The Brady Bunch) but seeks at the same time to disrupt the power relations inherent in conventional sense making. John Newton describes the dilemma of Alexie (and Native American writers) well:

As the subjugated “other” of an invader discourse synonymous with global media saturation, the Native American subject finds himself spectacularized on a global scale...Alexie makes his stand in the struggle for subjective agency not in some autochthonous interiority but on the flat, open ground of the invader’s own image-repertoire.¹¹³

To figure his dilemma, Alexie invokes the concept of the treaty. Seeing the history of the U.S. Euro- and Native American relationships as a series of broken treaties, his love poems are often allegorical; they feature Indian-white romances that must manage the historical and ethnic rift with “tiny treaties.”¹¹⁴ And doubtless, the allegory works at another level, referring to the treaty that his participation in a white-dominated literary culture represents. Accepting the necessity of using a language that will not allow an expression of an Indianness that escapes Euro-American hegemony, Alexie’s writing nevertheless restores another dimension of subjunctive America, however buried it might be within a hybridized and over-coded landscape.

Toni Morrison. Toni Morrison expresses the same ambivalence toward her participation in U.S. literary culture as Cliff and Alexie. She functions within what she calls “a singular landscape for a writer,” inasmuch as she writes “in a nation of people who *decided* that their world view would combine agendas for individual freedom *and* mechanisms for devastating oppression.”¹¹⁵ Given that the extant American literary culture articulates the legacy of this duplicitous founding, there is a paradox inherent in her participation as a novelist in the culture of literacy. Although she “participates in the public sphere constituted by print literacy,... her fiction strains to constitute itself as anti-literature and to address a type of racial community that she herself recognizes to be unavailable to the novelist”¹¹⁶ Morrison’s audience/constituency takes on its coherence as a protean transnational black culture, forged as much through structures of exclusion and episodes of displacement as through practices of solidarity. And much of the cultural imaginary, which forms the implied readership of her novels, is “preliterate.”¹¹⁷ Yet, like Cliff and Alexie, Morrison continues to write. And, most significantly, her novel *Paradise*, which addresses itself to a historical episode of racial exclusion, effectively enacts the critical posture that Pierre Bourdieu has identified as the antidote to “state thinking,” the necessity of creating a “rupture” that challenges the state’s “*symbolic violence*,” its mobilization of and control over the mental structures that make its institutions appear “*natural*.”¹¹⁸ In Morrison’s case, the tools for rupture are literary. They involve, as a commentary on her novel *Beloved* puts it,

the creation of a narrative text that radically opens the literary canon to counter-discursive strategies of re-memory, as well as grounding of the cultural politics of difference in the language of the contingent and the provisional.¹¹⁹

Morrison's enactment of a "tool for rupture" is especially evident in her *Paradise* because that novel involves, in Bourdieu's language, "the reconstruction of genesis," which brings "back into view the conflicts and confrontations of the early beginnings and therefore all the discarded possibilities."¹²⁰ Her *Paradise* recovers vestiges of a subjunctive America that are obliterated in the dominant version of Euro-America's national memory. Specifically, the "genesis" to which Morrison's novel is addressed is the ideology and story of American exceptionalism that fueled a major aspect of the Euro-American nationhood project. Initially, the religious, patriarchal leaders of the early New England settlers strove to inculcate the presumption that American was to be a new Jerusalem, "a site specifically favored by God—perhaps the very place that he had chosen to initiate the millennial Kingdom of Christ."¹²¹ Subsequently, from the early nineteenth century on, a secularized version of American exceptionalism has held sway among many American historians who have been vehicles of "the assumption that the United States, unlike European nations, has a covenant that makes Americans a chosen people who have escaped from the terror of historical change to live in timeless harmony with nature."¹²²

The idea of the covenant and the imperatives that flow from it—the need to resist change and the need to maintain the purity of the lineage that is charged with the special mission—produce the woeful consequences described at the beginning and end of Morrison's novel. The novel suggests that at best the exceptionalist narrative stifles politics and at worst it leads to violence. In addition to the closure of the political, the other consequence provides the chilling opening to the novel, whose first line is, "[t]hey kill the white girl first." Thereafter, an understanding of this opening event requires that the reader follow a complex and shifting narrative that eventually explains a deadly attack by a group of men from a covenanted, all-black community in Oklahoma on the women in a nearby convent that has served as a women's shelter.

The attackers are from Ruby, a small western all-black community in which the older members situate themselves in a self-described historical narrative that celebrates the perseverance of their ancestors in the face of rejection and their subsequent redemption through adherence to the codes of a special mission. Descended from former slaves, the town's ancestors left post-reconstruction discrimination in the late nineteenth century American South only to be denied entry into both white and black communities in Oklahoma, which, as Morrison had learned, had 26 all-black towns at the turn of the twentieth century.¹²³ The Rubyites special mission, an African American version of American exceptional-

ism, is engendered by their rejections, to which they refer in their narrative as the “disallowing.” Having walked from Mississippi to Oklahoma, attracted by an advertisement about an all-black town, they discovered that their blackness was a threat to the lighter-skinned “Negroes” who shunned them: “The sign of racial purity they had taken for granted had become a stain.”¹²⁴

Coping with the shock of a rejection (which they had expected only from whites), they founded their own all-black community of Haven in Oklahoma and subsequently moved even farther into western Oklahoma to found Ruby, which they regarded as the fulfilment of their ancestor’s intention to construct an Eden, a paradise on earth run by a group of racially pure blacks. The town chronicler, Patricia, summarizes the “8-rock’s” (descendants from the original founders) model for maintaining purity: “Unadulterated and unadulterated 8-rock blood held its magic as long as it resided in Ruby. That was their recipe. That was their deal. For immortality.”¹²⁵ But while “Ruby” (“who can find a virtuous woman? For her price is far above Rubies, Proverbs xxxxi 10) contains paradisaical signs—for example the soil seems almost miraculously fertile, so that while Haven had only barren muddy ground, Ruby has flourishing gardens—it also turns out to be a stifflingly conservative, patriarchal and even misogynist community. And rather than turning inward to confront divisive issues, when the younger Ruby generation departs from the original covenant, the patriarchs of Ruby displace their problems on a nearby community functioning with a different covenant. The assault with which the novel begins is on a shelter for women, whose inhabitants have had connections with some of the town’s men. The shelter is in a former convent (in a mansion that had once served as a “cathouse”) outside the town.

Morrison’s novel enacts Bourdieu’s suggestion about the necessity for creating a rupture by returning to the founding myths that sustain violence, actual or symbolic. While identifying a racially fractured America, she contests, at once, the Puritan reading of American exceptionalism and the African American attempt to simulate that exceptionalism and to treat it as a dogma by attempting to preserve or freeze the meanings generated in founding acts. A resistance to the freezing of meanings also characterizes Morrison’s approach to her writing. She seeks to avoid “oppressive language...[w]hether it is the obscuring state language or the faux-language of mindless media...[or] the calcified language of the academy or the commodity driven language of science...or language designed for the estrangement of minorities, hiding its racist plunder in its literary cheek...”¹²⁶

Conclusion: Redeeming Political Theory and Restoring the Subjunctive

A history of colonialist political economy haunts the writings of Michelle Cliff, Sherman Alexie, Jamaica Kincaid, and Toni Morrison. Taken together, their texts reflect diverse life worlds that have been assembled by a history of state directed, and largely coercive ‘nation building’ and its attendant forms of political economy.” Although they all write in English, “the tongue of commerce,” as one of

Cliff's characters puts it, rather than merely affirming the world that "English" (in all of its power-related manifestations) has made, they use language in a way that accords with Thomas Pynchon's novelistic restoration of contingency, his displacement of the declarative with the subjunctive. Their articulated ambivalence toward the language within which they write encourages recognition of the contention that the dominant thought-world, recycled in conventional approaches to American political theory, tends to obscure.

However, there is a remaining issue, one of how such a variegated socio-literary order can migrate into an effective notion of the political, one that effectively references the persistence of the "colonial divide" within the present and affords a loosening of the hold of necessity.¹²⁷ If we recognize the rifts that such a divide constitutes in what tend to be regarded as homogeneous and coherent national orders, an avenue of transition from the literary examples to a model of political is provided in Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's critique of the majoritarian emphasis in democratic theory. In their *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari argue that no majority has an unproblematic representational value because there is no homogeneous order from which it can be drawn as a quantitative solution. Rather, such "majorities" are a product of "state power and domination." They offer as an example, "the average adult-white-heterosexual-male-speaking in a standard language" and note that this "man...holds the majority, even if he is less numerous than mosquitos, children, women, blacks, homosexuals."¹²⁸ Such a character can constitute a majority by being a norm, or what Deleuze and Guattari call a "majoritarian 'fact'" that "constitutes a homogeneous system in which the minorities are sub groups."¹²⁹

A conventional political response, in which one posits a multicultural solution that provides for minority rights, does not address Deleuze and Guattari's critique of majoritarian democracy. The issue for them is not that "minorities" are excluded. Their point is that no majority can represent because there is no definitive unity from which it can be drawn. All such unities are imposed as norms. In the face of such norms, the political gesture that Deleuze and Guattari sponsor is not one of assigning oneself to an extant minority but of becoming minoritarian. Such a becoming is an act of de-identification, an act in which one does not add oneself to a group but rather subtracts oneself from all definitive identifications. Inasmuch as essentialized identities achieve their seeming naturalness by eliding the encounters through which the identities are imposed, to "become minoritarian," a la Deleuze and Guattari, is to escape fixed essences and thence to be open to encounters; it is to rejoin the contingencies of time and allow new relations to be established and new experiments in life to take shape.

Such a political sensibility provides an insight into how a social order with multiple, historically engendered loci of enunciation maps onto a literary one. The writers, Cliff, Alexie, and Morrison—all products of historical encounters and acts of coercion—are in effect minoritarian writers. Like Franz Kafka, Deleuze and

Guattari's exemplar of one who becomes minoritarian through writing, they stage new encounters in their writing to affect both the past and present.¹³⁰ Writing in the major language but seeking to escape its historical trajectory of domination, they write to "deterritorialize" the extant grid of biopolitical and geopolitical essences. They refigure the past, creating counter-memories that challenge the narrative of an emerging, homogenous society (a definitive declarative) and, at the same time, create the imaginative conditions of possibility, for a restoration of the subjunctive, a contingency-embracing order where new relations, based on de-identification with old imposed essences can flourish.

Finally, the critical achievements of literary texts are also realized in the modern history of political philosophy/theory. In addressing the question of where such critical interventions into dominant thought-worlds sit in a trajectory of philosophico-political thought, my emphasis is on an alternative to the kind of empiricist "fact-mindedness" that was the standard for Judith Shklar's celebration of the thought-world of the founding fathers. As I noted at the outset, Jefferson's fact-mindedness consisted not in disinterested scientific observation but in an enlistment of the natural world as a history-making ally. Using his reading of nature to turn contingency into necessity, Jefferson's version of the natural world promoted a Euro-American, continental ethnogenesis. In contrast with such an approach to facticity, where norms are evoked with reference to a "nature" that is read as an entity independent of human will and as a source of norms for organizing the past, present, and future of the life world, is Miguel Vatter's evocation of the "factual," a term he applies to a world capable of change as opposed to a world of fixed essences (for example the world figured by the classical discipline of natural history).¹³¹

To elaborate the idea of the factual, Vatter begins by contrasting the traditional, Platonic notion of facticity, which presupposes a world of essences, with the idea of *virtu'* in Machiavelli, which he construes as a form of "factual freedom." It is a freedom that derives from a "movement of transcendence of reality through which an objective or legitimate order of things can be virtualized, i.e. can have its foundation or essence withdrawn and be reduced to mere appearance, semblance or ideology."¹³² By transcendence, Vatter does not mean a position oriented to an ideal. It is a form of "realism" that is to be effected in practice; it results from "the capacity of freedom to transcend an objective state of affairs....[to change] objective reality."¹³³ Vatter's turn to Machiavelli is thus a recognition of Machiavelli's concern with historical finitude, with "the way we live" rather than with an abstract model of the good life. Beginning with an appreciation of Machiavelli's approach to "goodness," which he situates in concrete historical time, Vatter conceives the factual as oriented toward the facticity of historically specific human conditions. His Machiavellian presumption is that *virtu'* is what is good and right at a particular time.

Two contemporary theorists, Michel Foucault and Jacques Derrida, have incorporated the Machiavellian presumption about the historical specificity of what constitutes political virtue in their attempts to forge philosophies of politics. In Foucault's case it has been through his rethinking of the enlightenment in the light of its application to historical finitude—to the “historico-critical attitude” that emerges from a focus on “who we are today” rather than on a model of timeless, universal rationality.¹³⁴ Similarly, Jacques Derrida, edified by a neo-Machiavellian model of virtue has addressed himself to what is distinctive “today” with respect to the bonds uniting political subjects. In accord with Vatter's suggestion about transcending conventional political constraints, Derrida, noting that the social order contains attachments that cannot be contained within a nation-state grammar, suggests that political action can take the form of “protest against citizenship, a protest against membership of a political configuration as such.”¹³⁵ Vatter supplies an apt version of this way of construing political action:

Political life becomes dialogical by having to determine ‘who ought to rule’ in a situation that allows the desire for no-rule to be voiced by those who are dominated in any given political order. As a consequence, after Machiavelli the question of political freedom in modernity ceases being the classical one of establishing and maintaining the best political form of rule, but instead becomes that of knowing how to change political forms in order to respond to the ever renewed, and never satisfied, demands for freedom as absence of oppression.¹³⁶

Vatter's rendering of the Machiavellian legacy offers a moral geography that comports well with the model of a divided socio-literary order I have proposed. Given the rifts in the order that reflect the persistence of a colonial divide and thus the lack of a homogeneous social order, from which diverse political positions can be brought into a unifying political discourse, Vatter's model of the good and the right offers an appropriate alternative to conventional, statist models of political freedom. His concept of political freedom has the effect of decentering “the moral point of view.”¹³⁷ In accord with a politics that would loosen the institutionalized declarative and restore a subjunctive “America,” Vatter's version of fact-mindedness (his evocation of the “factual”) points to “the capacity to remove [the] ‘conditions of necessity,’”¹³⁸ which Thomas Jefferson helped to put in place and which have since been affirmed by a conventional history of American political thought.

NOTES

1. Thomas Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997), p. 359.
2. Philip Fisher, "Democratic Social Space: Whitman, Melville, and the Promise of American transparency," *Representations* 24 (Fall, 1988), p. 100.
3. Shklar's address appeared originally in the *American Political Science Review* in March, 1991. My quotations are from the version that was subsequently reprinted in Judith N. Shklar, *Redeeming American Political Thought*, a posthumously assembled volume edited by her Harvard colleagues, Stanley Hoffman and Dennis F. Thompson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998), pp. 91-108.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 94.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 92.
6. *Ibid.*, pp. 93-94.
7. I am adopting the hyphenated term "thought-world" from Peter Brown, who points out, after noting that the architectural expression of the public culture of Christian elites in the age of Constantine manifested of a pagan-Christian hybridity. "Throughout the fifth century," he notes, Christianity and paganism worked together in such public representations as architectural detail and decoration; in the ancients' "thought-worlds, potentially exclusive explanatory systems coexisted" : Peter Brown, *Authority and the Sacred* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 69.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 95. A general indictment of the objectivity view of the social sciences is beyond the scope of this essay. I address the issue at length in my *Methods and Nations: Cultural Governance and the Indigenous Subject* (New York: Routledge, 2004).
9. *Ibid.*, p. 96.
10. This bifurcated Jeffersonian legacy is described in Malcolm Kelsall, *Jefferson and the Iconography of Romanticism* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1999), p. 43.
11. The concept of the colonial divide and its epistemic significance is elaborated in Walter D. Mignolo, *Local Histories/Global Designs* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2000).
12. See Catherine Holland, "NOTES ON THE STATE OF AMERICA: Jeffersonian Democracy and the Production of a National Past," *Political Theory* 29: 2 (Apr, 2001), pp. 190-216.
13. Thomas Jefferson to John Adams, November 25th 1816 in Lester J. Cappon ed., *The Complete Correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and Abigail and John Adams* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), p. 498.
14. Joyce Appleby, "Recovering America's Historical Diversity: Beyond Exceptionalism," *The Journal of American History* 79: 2 (September, 1992), p. 430.
15. *Ibid.*, p. 431.
16. *Ibid.*, p. 427.
17. *Ibid.*, p. 428.
18. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* William Peden ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1954), p. 87.
19. Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things* (New York: Vintage, 1970), p. 130.
20. Myra Jehlen, *American Incarnation: The Individual, the Nation, and the Continent* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1986), p. 44.
21. Kelsall, *Jefferson and the Iconography of Romanticism*, p. 88.
22. Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, p. (Query IV).
23. Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia*, p. 164.

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24. Pascal Bonitzer, "Hitchcockian Suspense," in Slavoj Žižek ed. *Everything You Always Wanted to know About Lacan...But Were Afraid to Ask Hitchcock*, (New York: Verso, 1992), p. 23.
 25. Lauren Berlant, *The Queen* p. 226.
 26. See Christine Accomando, "'THE LAWS WERE LAID DOWN TO ME ANEW': HARRIET JACOBS AND THE REFRAMING OF LEGAL FICTIONS," *African American Review*, 32: 2 (Summer, 1998), p. 136.
 27. Quotation from Bruce Burgett, *Sentimental Bodies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1998), p. 138.
 28. William Apess, "Eulogy to King Philip.."
 29. David Walker, Appeal in Four Articles; Together with a Preamble, to the Colored Citizens of the World, but in Particular, and Very Expressly to Those of the United States of America ed. Sean Wilentz (New York: Hill and Wang, 1965).
 30. The quotation is from Elizabeth McHenry's historical treatment of African American literary societies: *Forgotten Readers* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), p. 27.
 31. Clyde Woods, *Development Arrested: Race, Power, and the Blues in the Mississippi Delta* (New York: Verso, 1998), pp. 4-5.
 32. *Ibid.*, p. 50.
 33. *Ibid.*, p. 205.
 34. See *Land Ordinance of 1785* at <http://www.statelib.lib.in.us/www/ihb/resources/docldord.html>.
 35. As above, I am quoting Foucault on natural history: *The Order of Things*, p.130.
 36. Irene de Sousa Santos, "American Exceptionalism and the Naturalization of 'America,'" *Prospects: An Annual of American Cultural Studies* ed Jack Salzman 19 (1994), p. 10.
 37. John Brinckerhoff Jackson, "Jefferson, Thoreau, and After," in Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz ed. *Landscape in Sight: Looking at America* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1997), p. 178.
 38. The quotations are from Philip Fisher, "Democratic Social Space: Whitman, Melville, and the Promise of American Transparency," *Representations* 24 (Fall, 1988), p. 62.
 39. Enrique Dussel, "World-System and 'Trans' -Modernity," *Nepantla: Views from the South* 3: 2 (2002), p. 229.
 40. Quotation from William Boelhower, *Through a Glass Darkly* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), p. 51.
 41. *Black Elk Speaks* (as told to John G. Neihardt) (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1961), p. 9.
 42. See *Black Hawk: An Autobiography* (1833) Donald Jackson ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1955).
 43. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
 44. *Ibid.*, p. 71.
 45. *Ibid.*, p. 79.
 46. Quotation from Boelhower, *Through a Glass Darkly*, p 67.
 47. Thomas Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon* (New York: Henry Holt, 1997), p. 345.
 48. *Ibid.*, p. 395.
 49. *Ibid.*, p. 80.
 50. *Ibid.*, p. 646.
 51. *Ibid.*, p. 650.
 52. *Ibid.*, p. 608.
 53. *Ibid.*, p. 350.

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54. *Ibid.*
 55. *Ibid.*, p. 349.
 56. See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What is Philosophy* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994). As Deleuze and Guattari put it, “Socrates is the principal conceptual persona of Platonism” (p. 63).
 57. Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon*, p. 283.
 58. *Ibid.*, p. 478.
 59. *Ibid.*, p. 451.
 60. *Ibid.*, p. 487.
 61. “J. B. Harley, “Maps, Knowledge, and Power,” in Denis Cosgrove and Stephen Daniels eds. *The Iconography of Landscape* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988) p 279.
 62. Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon*, p 257.
 63. *Ibid.*, p. 551.
 64. *Ibid.*, p. 359.
 65. *Ibid.*, p. 568.
 66. *Ibid.*, p. 692.
 67. *Ibid.*, p. 307.
 68. Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon*, p. 469.
 69. *Ibid.*, p. 323.
 70. *Ibid.*, p. 470.
 71. *Ibid.*, p. 586.
 72. *Ibid.*, p. 511.
 73. The quotations are from Arthur Salzman’s reading of *Mason & Dixon*: “‘Crank of Ev’ry Radius,’” in Brook Horvath and Irving Malin eds. *Pynchon and Mason & Dixon* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2000), p. 69.
 74. Antigua’s sugar production began near the end of the seventeenth century, inaugurated by the entrepreneurial Sir Christopher Coddington, who made his initial visit in 1684. “By the middle of the 18th century the island was dotted with more than 150 cane-producing windmills.” As a result of the Coddington-initiated enterprise, “[m]ost Antiguan are of African lineage, descendants of slaves brought to the island...to labor in the sugarcane fields.” Information and quotations on the web at: <http://www.geographia.com/antigua-barbuda/aghis01.htm>.
 75. David Eltis, “Introduction,” in Eltis ed. *Coerced and Free Migration: Global Perspectives* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2002), p. 40.
 76. In a recent issue of *Nepantla*, Romand Coles refers to the similar cognitive division, evident in the writings of Gloria Anzaldúa, as a “mental Nepatilism,” based on “an Aztec word meaning torn between two ways” : Romand Coles, “‘Contesting Cosmopolitan Currency: The Nepatilist Rose in the Cross(ing) of the Present,’” *Nepantla: Views from the South* 4: 1 (2003), p. 11.
 77. Jamaica Kincaid, *My Garden Book* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1999), p. 123.
 78. Jamaica Kincaid, “The Little revenge from the Periphery,” *Transition* 73 (1997), p. 70.
 79. Kincaid, *My Garden Book.*, p. 134.
 80. *Ibid.*, p. 122.
 81. *Ibid.*
 82. *Ibid.*
 83. In *Mason & Dixon*, Pynchon also treats the gap between the names Linnaeus imposes and extant vernacular understandings. See pp. 431-32 on Linnaeus’s *Gymnotus*, which is popularly known as the Electric Eel.

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84. Kincaid, *My Garden Book*, p. 120.
85. *Ibid.*, p. 8.
86. For an analysis of the counter-memory function in Kincaid's *My Garden Book* and elsewhere, see Louise Bernard, "Counter-Memory and Return: Reclamations of the (Postmodern) Self in Jamaica Kincaid's *The Autobiography of My Mother* and *My Brother*," *Modern Fiction Studies* 48: 1 (Spring, 2002), pp. 113-138. Bernard notes, "The garden for Kincaid is also tied to the power of the written word....[it is] a display of entitlement to be symptomatic of the erasure and revision that informs the grand scheme of imperialism."
87. Pynchon, *Mason & Dixon*, p. 693.
88. Stephen Daniels, *Fields of Vision: Landscape Imagery and National identity in England and the United States* (NY: Polity 1993), p. 6.
89. Michael Neill, "Broken English and Broken Irish: Nation, Language, and the Optics of Power in Shakespeare's Histories," *Shakespeare Quarterly* 45: 1 (Spr, 1994), p. 3.
90. The quotations are from David Mackay, "Banks, Bligh and Breadfruit," *New Zealand Journal of History* 8: 1 (1974), p. 61.
91. For an elaborate treatment of the European influences on Jefferson's gardening, see Frederick Doveton Nichols and Ralph E. Griswold, *Thomas Jefferson Landscape Architect* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1978).
92. Kincaid, *My Garden Book* p. 132.
93. *Ibid.*, p. 143.
94. *Ibid.*, p. 150.
95. *Ibid.*, p. 137.
96. *Ibid.*, pp. 7-8.
97. *Ibid.*, p. 153.
98. For example, Pierre Bourdieu regards speech acts as constrained by the socially governed system of intelligibility, to speak, according to Bourdieu, is to appropriate a socially recognized style or idiom. Accordingly, he treats the creativity of writers such as Flaubert as constrained by the forces at work within the genesis and structure of the social space in which creativity is possible. Bourdieu fails to heed the extent to which there is a fractionated diversity, a social space with historical rifts. To appreciate that spatio-temporal diversity we need to replace Bourdieu's model of the social field, which he renders as a hierarchical system of social "fractions," with a model of a fractal social order, a historically effected collage of diverse life worlds that have been co-cursively assembled by a history of state directed "nation building" and its attendant forms of political economy. I address this issue in my essay, "Bourdieu, the State, and Method" *Review of International Political Economy* (Spring, 2003).
99. Michelle Cliff, *Free Enterprise* (New York: Dutton, 1993), p. 7.
100. The quotation is from Kincaid, *My Garden Book*, p. 123.
101. As Mary N. Layoun puts it, the novel "quickly predominated as a privileged narrative form" in the third world, but it soon became reconfigured as a site of resistance rather than a vehicle for imposing European civilizational and cultural conceits: *Travels of a Genre: The Modern Novel and Ideology* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), p. xii.
102. For a treatment of the contribution that "thought from the outside" lends to critical thinking, see Michel Foucault, "The Thought from the Outside," in *Foucault / Blanchot* trans, Jeffrey Mehlman and Brian Massumi (New York: Zone).

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103. See Michelle Cliff, "Notes on Speechlessness," in *Sinister Wisdom* (1978) and "A Journey into Speech," *Graywolf Annual: Multicultural Literacy*, ed. Ricki Simonson and Scott Walker (St. Paul: Graywolf, 1988), p. 57.
104. Michelle Cliff, *No Telephone to Heaven* (New York: Dutton, 1987).
105. Quotation from: Marian Aguiar, "Decolonizing the Tongue: Reading Speech and Aphasia in the work of Michelle Cliff," *Literature and Psychology* 47 (1/2) (2001), p. 108.
106. Sherman Alexie, "Indian Country," *The New Yorker*, March 13, 2000, p. 82.
107. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
108. *Ibid.*, p. 78.
109. M. M. Bakhtin, *Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics* trans. Caryl Emerson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984), p. 59. The application of this Bakhtinian phrase to Alexie can also be found in Jerome Denounce, "Slow Dancing with Skeletons: Sherman Alexie's *The Lone Ranger and Tonto Fistfight in Heaven*," *Critique* 44: 1 (Fall, 2002), p. 86.
110. Sherman Alexie, "Death in Hollywood," *Literary Cavalcade* 53: 8 (May, 2001), p. 2.
111. Sherman Alexie, *First Indian on the Moon*, p. 98.
112. Sherman Alexie, "Sherman Alexie, Literary Rebel," Interview with John and Carl Belante *Bloomsbury Review* 14 (1994), p. 15.
113. John Newton, "Sherman Alexie's Autoethnography," *Contemporary Literature* 42: 2 (2001), p. 415.
114. See Alexie's poems, "Tiny Treaties" and "Seven Love Songs Which Include the Collected History of the United States of America," in *First Indian on the Moon* (New York: Hanging Loose, 1993), pp. 56-57 and 62-65 respectively.
115. Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1990), p. xiii.
116. Quotation from Madhu Dubey, "The Politics of Genre in *Beloved*," *Novel: A Forum on Fiction* 32: 2 (1999), p. 188.
117. *Ibid.*
118. Toni Morrison, *Paradise* (New York: Plume, 1999). The quotations are from Pierre Bourdieu, "Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field," in *Practical Reason: On the Theory of Action* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press), p. 40.
119. Abdellatif Khayati, "Representation, Race and the 'Language' of The Ineffable in Toni Morrison's Narrative," *African American Review* 33: 2 (Summer, 1999), p. 315.
120. Bourdieu, "Rethinking the State: Genesis and Structure of the Bureaucratic Field," p. 40.
121. Michael Kammen, *In the Past Lane: Historical Perspectives on American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 175.
122. The quotation is from David Noble, *The Eternal Adam and the New World Garden* (New York: George Braziller, 1968), p. ix. The exceptionalist ideology has been subject to numerous critiques, most notably in David Veysey's influential essay, where he dismissed the notion of an American distinctiveness and asserts that contrary to the presumption of a generalized, unique and singular American character (and mission), "we are but one fractional (and internally fractionated) unit in a polyglot world, and that social history is composed of a vast number of separate and distinct pieces, like a mosaic that seldom stops at international boundaries lines..." (Quoted in Michael Kammen, *In the Past Lane: Historical Perspective on American Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 179.

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123. Morrison discovered the basis for her story when, as she says, “I was looking at the book of photographs *Ghost Towns of Oklahoma*,” and noticed that , “it scarcely mentions any of the black ones” (in Christopher Hitchens, “Morrison’s West,” *Vanity Fair* 450, February, 1998, p. 144.
 124. Morrison, *Paradise*, p. 194.
 125. *Ibid.*, p. 217.
 126. From Toni Morrison’s Nobel lecture, December 7, 1993.
 127. For a thoroughgoing treatment of the concept of the “colonial divide,” see Walter Mignolo *Local Histories/Global Designs: Coloniality, Subaltern Knowledges, and Border Thinking* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).
 128. Deleuze and Guattari *A Thousand Plateaus* trans Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota press, 1987), p. 105 My treatment of the position benefits from and see Paola Maratti treatment of Deleuze and Guattari’s politics. See his “Against the Doxa: Politics of Immanence and Becoming Minoritarian,” in Patrica Pister ed. *Micropolitics of Media Culture: Reading the Rhizomes of Deleuze and Guattari* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2001), pp. pp 205-220.
 129. Marratti p 207.
 130. See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Kafka. Towards a Minor Literature* trans Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).
 131. See Miguel Vatter, “The Machiavellian Legacy: Origin and Outcomes of the Conflict between Politics and Morality in Modernity,” Working Paper SPS No 99/2 (Florence, European University Institute, 1999).
 132. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
 133. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
 134. Foucault’s insights here are especially influenced by Immanuel Kant’s essay on the enlightenment. See Michel Foucault, “What is Enlightenment?” in Paul Rabinow and William M. Sullivan Eds), *Interpretive Social Science: A Second Look* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1987), p. 171.
 135. Jacques Derrida, “Nietzsche and the Machine: Interview with Jacques Derrida by Richard Beardsworth,” *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 7 (1994), p. 48.
 136. Vatter, “The Machiavellian Legacy,” p. 27.
 137. *Ibid.*, p. 28.
 138. *Ibid.*, p. 49.