One World Periphery Reads the Other

One World Periphery Reads the Other: Knowing the "Oriental" in the Americas and the Iberian Peninsula

Edited by

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To Juan Callejo

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INTRODUCTION

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In her study of the genealogical affinities between theory and cultural studies carried out in the first chapter of her *Ethics after Idealism*, literary and cultural critic Rey Chow presents the critique of Orientalism as one of the four main forms of analysis to have developed in cultural studies in the United States in recent years. As she posits, the controversial and seminal study *Orientalism* (1978) by the U.S.-based Palestinian literary and cultural critic Edward W. Said (1935-2003) does not offer viable alternatives:

> Because the issue of otherness is delineated by Said on the premise of a racial dyad—namely, the white West as opposed to the non-whine non West—his logic seems to foreclose the possibility of the non-white non-West every having its own "culture." Said's work begs the question as to how otherness […] could become a genuine oppositional force and a useable value. (2)

Chow proposes to carry out alternative studies of the racism and sexism that appear—in a latent or overt form—in the stereotypical assumptions, misperceptions, and representations of cultural "others" present in cultural artifacts: "We need to explore alternative ways of thinking about cross-cultural exchange that exceed the pointed, polemical framework of 'antiorientalism'—the lesson from Said's work—by continually problematizing the presumption of stable identities and also by continuously asking what else there is to learn beyond destabilized identities themselves" (75).

This second interdisciplinary volume on (the critique of) orientalism and the Asian and Arab diasporas in the Americas and the Hispanic World, a follow-up to the first one, *Alternative Orientalisms in Latin America and Beyond* (2007) addresses Chow's question as well as several others: Can we speak about orientalist discourse when the exoticist gaze comes from formerly colonized countries? Can a text be considered orientalist if it exoticizes the other without an obvious idealization of self? Can we talk about orientalism when dealing with non-eastern cultures and

peoples? How can strategic self-orientalization be used for economic or political profit? Is the “Orient” still helping Europe and the Western Hemisphere to define themselves? From Latin America to the Philippines and from the Iberian Peninsula to the United States, these studies cover a wide range of geographical areas, topics, approaches, disciplines and genres, including literature, philosophy, music, film, painting, mass media, and advertising. As could be expected, several essays in this volume take Said’s *Orientalism* as a point of departure to examine the imaging of the Near and Far East in the Western world. Other essays, including mine, deal directly with cultural production by or about people of Asian or Arab descent in the Americas and the Hispanic world. Most of them, however, share a common interest in issues of assimilation, racism, migration, transnationalism, citizenship, exile, identity, transculturation, and hybridity (including musical hybridity, as we see in Kevin Fellezs’s and Marco Valesi’s essays). And non-Asian social groups can also be “orientalized,” as Carlos Bazua and Michael Barba argue in their essays on the representation of the ethnic Other in magazines, television programs, and films.

While it is true that in some cases, as Julia A. Kushigian posits, the orientalist discourse in the Hispanic literary tradition has been very different from the one described by Said (she cites the cases Jorge Luis Borges, Octavio Paz and Severo Sarduy, and José I. Suárez, in this book, adds Lusophone authors José Maria Eça de Queirós and Fernando Pessoa), it is also true that the other type of orientalism—hegemonic, dehumanizing, prejudicial and racist—has also had a long tradition in these regions. Several of the essays included in *One World Periphery Reads the Other* attest to this other use of orientalism in Latin America and the Iberian Peninsula.[1] This volume also addresses other types of orientalism as well as related approaches. A key concept, for instance, is self-orientalization, in its diverse filmic, literary, and musical expressions (as we can read in Valesi’s essay on the western exoticism of the Chinese musical group Twelve Girls Band). Along these lines, in both Valesi’s and Héctor Hoyos’s essays, we will see how Occidentalism—that is, the reverse phenomenon of the “Orient”’s othering, demonizing and inventing the Occident—also informs and redefines cultural exchanges and interpretations.

[1] For additional cases, see, for example, the first volume, *Alternative Orientalisms in Latin America and Beyond*, my monograph *Imaging the Chinese in Cuban Literature and Culture*, or my forthcoming articles “Latin America and the Caribbean in a Sinophone Studies Reader?,” “Los japoneses en la obra de Mario Vargas Llosa,” and “*Refugiados* y *Asalto al Paraíso* de Marcos Aguinis: apropiaciones y reapropiaciones del discurso palestino.”

Other studies, such as Fellezs's, examine creolization, a process by which local cultures and ethnic minorities, even if they are in a subordinate position, can creatively assign different meanings and uses to commodities and cultural artifacts they import as a result of global interconnections. They can create "creolized," hybrid products and identities by selecting and fusing heterogenous elements from the adopted and the receiving cultures. Another related concept re-visited in this book is "glocalization," which argues that "universal," globalized goods, ideas, norms, and practices can be interpreted or appropriated by local cultures in highly different ways, which may result in new, hybrid forms and cultures.

Considering today's increasing global interdependence and consciousness, Michel Foucault's theories about the connection between discourse and power and Said's practical exploration of cultural hegemony and the way in which knowledge is produced—in spite of its many contradictions—continue to be relevant, as new intellectual developments, particularly in post-colonial studies, have drawn from their original ideas. This volume examines both the traditional and the new ways in which writers, intellectuals, philosophers (see Pilar Valero-Costa's essay), painters (see María A. Castro's study), filmmakers (see Barba's and Moisés Park's studies), musicians (see Fellezs's and Valesi's essays), and even advertising agencies (see Malgorzata Skorek's essay) continue to relate to the Near and the Far East and their inhabitants, with which they may or may not have had direct contact, depending on each case. As we will see, in most texts references to these regions, as well as to local Chinatowns or other "ethnoburbs" (urban ethnic enclaves) do not reflect direct experience or knowledge, but have been mediated by *idées reçues* from previous readings. At times, texts and films that, in a cursory reading, seem to continue the Orientalist tradition of manipulative appropriation, exoticization, essentialism and reductionism, simply respond to a self-conscious and parodical play on superficial decodifications of clichés. In a closer reading, one can realize that these authors make clear, from the onset of the narrative, that this lighthearted defamiliarization, with all its essentialized caricatures and stereotypes about the "typically oriental" (the "fictive orientalism" in the title of Paula Park's essay), have little or nothing to do with the real-life "Orient." Rather than claiming to be to the product of Sinologist research, these representational practices approach the East from a ludic standpoint that disregards verisimilitude. In fact, they often echo a situated knowledge of "South-South" dynamics between formerly colonized peoples.

On the other hand, several essays study the authors', filmakers', and musicians' admiration and even emulation of Asian cultures: for example,

Juan Ryusuke Ishikawa analyzes José Juan Tablada's use of *haikai*; Moisés Park studies the Chilean film's *Kiltro*'s imitation of Hong Kong martial arts films; and Fellezs's explores Fred Ho's formation of an "Afro-Asian new American multicultural music." In all these cultural borrowings, as well as in others, instead of romanticizing, fetishizing or exoticizing Asian cultural production (although it would not be too far-fetched to argue that they may be commodifying it), they simply incorporate, from a position of respect and sometimes even veneration, their impressive cultural achievements to their own local traditions. In my view, it would be absurd, for example, to argue that Tablada's imitation of the Japanese *haikai* is a "hegemonic act of oppression"; on the contrary, it responds to a sincere will to understand (rather than control and manipulate) the "Oriental" Other or to a desire for "humanistic enlargement of horizons" (Said xix).

Other cultural artifacts under discussion also reflect an awareness of the effects of globalization. The transnational export and import of culture is, of course, affected by economic and political developments. Fear of cultural imperialism or a global monoculture (not only the so-called McDonaldization of the world but, increasingly, also of its Sinicization through global markets), be it justified or not,[2] drives expressions of social and racial anxiety at both local and global scales. The drive for cultural survival in the face of the rapid extinction of minority languages (and, in some cases, of cultures as well) informs the feelings of cultural shock, as well as of attraction and rejection for the Other. At times, this negotiation of cultural difference is eerily reminiscent of political scientist Samuel P. Huntington's arguments in his much-criticized theory of the Clash of Civilizations; that is, that after the fall of communism, "civilizations" have replaced nations and ideologies as the driving force in today's volatile global politics, and that cultural and religious identities will inevitably be the source of armed conflict in the future. Yet, as we see in Chapter 5, "Erasing the Arab Heritage in Spain," similar fears as well as the strategy of misrepresenting, excluding, or even erasing the Other's presence and historical legacy are certainly not new. On a more positive note, Chapter 6, "Adopting the Other's Culture in Spanish Cultural Production," shows how cultural flows coming from both sides can also be well received by both "Orientals" and Westerners, establishing a fruitful dialogue among (and hopefully, one day, an alliance of) civilizations.

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[2] Contrary to common belief, Joana Breidenbach's and Ina Zukrigl's ethnographic work claims that, rather than homogenizing world cultures, globalization has had a diversifying effect.

While Said focused on the perceptions and stereotypes of the Near East "Oriental" in England, France and the United States, most of these essays study the decentering interplay between "peripheral" areas of the Third World, "semiperipheral" areas (Spain and Portugal since the second part of the seventeenth century), and marginalized social groups of the globe (Chicanos, African Americans, and Filipino Americans). We will see, for example, how China and the Far East in general are imagined and represented in Latin America and the Caribbean, or how ethnic minorities in the United States, such as Chicanos and African Americans, incorporate Filipino characters in their novels or creolize their music with Chinese influences. As the title of this book suggests, sometimes these "peripheral" areas and social groups talk back to the metropolitan centers of the former empires or look for their mediation, while others they avoid the interference of the First World or of hegemonic social groups altogether in order to address other "peripheral" peoples directly, thus creating rich "South-South" cross-cultural flows and exchanges. The main difference between the imperialistic orientalism studied by Said and this other type of global cultural interaction is that while, in their engagement with the "Orient," they may be reproducing certain imperialistic fantasies and mental structures, typically there is not an ethnocentric process of self-idealization or an attempt to demonstrate cultural, ontological, or racial superiority in "South-South" intellectual and cultural exchanges. This way to de-center or to "provincialize" Europe—pace Dipesh Chakrabarty—disrupts the traditional center-periphery dichotomy, bringing about multiple and interchangeable centers and peripheries, whose cultures interact with one another without the mediation of the European and North American metropolitan centers. As Chakrabarty puts it, "European thought is at once both indispensable and inadequate in helping us to think through the experiences of political modernity in non-Western nations, and provincializing Europe becomes the task of exploring how this thought—which is now everybody's heritage and which affects us all—may be renewed from and for the margins" (16).

Some of these essays, therefore, challenge the inevitable "centrality" of Europe, proposing new transmodern, intercultural paradigms. As Enrique Dussel explains, "The Eurocentric view reflects on the problem of the crisis of modernity solely with the European-North American moments (or now even Japanese), but it minimizes the periphery. To break through this 'reductive fallacy' is not easy" (17-18). The Eurocentric paradigm claims that the phenomenon of modernity is exclusively European; it developed, according to them, in the Middle Ages and then expanded to the rest of the world. Against this model, Dussel presents a planetary- or world-system

from which Europe, having been itself the periphery for centuries (the centers being in Bagdag, China, India and other civilizations), became the center at one point thanks to the incorporation of the American territories as their periphery. He proposes, therefore, a transmodern liberation that emerges from the periphery to transcend a Western modernity that he considers simply as a "rational management of the [Western] world-system" (19). Dussel argues for recouping what is redeemable in modernity, a "'civilizing' system that has come to an end" (19), and halting "the practices of domination and exclusion in the world-system. It is a project of liberation of a periphery negated from the very beginning of modernity" (19). A good part of this book echoes this proposed encouragement of transmodern, inter-(semi)peripheral, and South-South cultural dialogues, which claim their own place beyond the traditional Western modernity that had excluded previously them.

The first section of the book focuses on this discourse of Orientalism as seen in Mexican cultural production as well as on description of the Maya in the U.S. mass media. In his first essay, Alán José proposes a guide to read *Farabeuf o la crónica de un instante* (1965), a short novel by the Mexican author Salvador Elizondo (1932-2006), which should provide the reader with the necessary clues to grasp its secret meanings, including the pleasures and horrors of hypnotic submission and a Chinese game with ivory balls, as well as the aesthetics of dismemberment and corporal deformation. This novel also offers, according to José, unrecognizable images of ourselves in forbidden fantasies, exotic monsters, the aesthetics of torture, and the magic of divination. Elizondo's literary project, explains José, was to experiment with the creation of meaning by using non-logical inference and non-sequential narratives. With this goal in mind, he followed Eisenstein technique of montage, the structure of Chinese pictogrammatic signifying, and the fortune-telling rules of the *I Ching*, the Chinese book of mutations.

In turn, Ishikawa's study illustrates how Mexican poet José Juan Tablada (1871-1945) molds the Japanese poetic subgenre of the *haikai* in order to create a new conception of the poem and to perceive his surrounding environment in a different way, always marked by *Modernismo*. Yet, Ishikawa explains, in his modification and adaptation of the *haikai* to a Western literary framework and to a different natural world, he never forgets the fundamentals and the minimalism of this centenary style. The study traces the gradual changes that Tablada adds to the *haikai* in three different collections of poems.

In the third essay, Roberto Cantú proposes a different reading of *Blanco*, one of the most experimental poems by Octavio Paz. He deploys

multiple sources and various methods (close reading, Structuralism, cultural studies) to locate the key this poem's hermetic cultural codes. Generally associated with the poet's residence in India while serving as Mexico's ambassador in Delhi (1962-1968), *Blanco* has been read as the result of the poet's studies of Tantrism, Buddhism, and other religious and cultural aspects of India's ancient civilization. Cantú considers this poem to be more complex and inclusive of other civilizations, thus best understood in the context of Paz's own reflections on twentieth century avant-gardes, such as Cubism and Surrealism, art movements which Paz unified under one name: Simultaneism. Searching for the meaning of Simultaneism and modernity as found in Paz's writings, Cantú applies his findings to a reading of *Blanco*, finding in art history and Mesoamerican civilization the other elements that make *Blanco* intelligible as a poem next to India's ancient past. No less important, he raises a question often neglected by critics: the historical conditions in the 1960s that remain implicit in the writing of this poem.

Closing the firs chapter, Bazua argues that the Orientalization of the Maya people has been a constant activity of western intellectuals and mass media. This Orientalization, a way of studying and representing those who were colonized, has imposed a hierarchy of representation and ownership of geographical territory. More specifically, Bazúa analyzes the *National Geographic*'s misrepresentation and Orientalization of the Maya: they have chose to romanticize and highlight the Maya's ancient and mysterious glories, while disregarding the most urgent human rights violations committed against these diverse populations. As the critic points out, the *National Geographic* refuses to acknowledge how millions of Maya people are considered either second-class citizens in their own nations (Mexico and Guatemala) or leveled as illegal aliens in the United States.

The second chapter explores prose, poetry, and testimonials produced by Peruvian authors of Chinese or Japanese descent. First, Debra Lee-DiStefano's essay focuses on a short story collection by Sino-Peruvian author Siu Kam Wen (1951-) entitled *El tramo final*. In her view, this book, which has the *barrio chino* as the unifying connector, is a great example of how Latin American writers of Asian descent are offering their distinct visions of the societies in which they live. Against the background of a city of Lima that is described from the perspective of Chinese Peruvians from different generations, the stories explore different identitarian issues and interpersonal relationships not only among members of Lima's Chinatown but also between Chinese or Sino-Peruvian characters and the rest of society. More specifically, Lee-DiStefano

analyzes the nature/nurture debate in the story "La conversión de Uei Kong." The main character, Tío Keng, is plagued by his own prejudice against the *kuei* (or non-Chinese) and their phenotype. Lee-DiStefano unravels the various levels of identity issues in this short-story and how it also portrays the complexities of Latin American identity.

Moving from the Chinese community in Peru to the Japanese one, Rebecca Riger Tsurumi studies images of the Japanese in the works of two Peruvian Nisei poets: José Watanabe and Doris Moromisato. According to Tsurumi, their poetry reflects their own unique experiences as first generation Peruvians struggling with the complexities of identity and assimilation. She explores the commonality of their expression and the divergence of their poetic voices, reflecting differences in gender, age and sexual orientation in *Elogio del Refrenamiento*, *La piedra alada*, *Chambala era un camino*, *Diario de la mujer es ponja*, and several essays.

Still in the realm of the Japanese Peruvian community, in my essay I analyze Seiichi Higashide (1909-1997)'s remarkable testimonial *Adiós to Tears: The Memoirs of a Japanese-Peruvian Internee in U.S. Concentration Camps* (2000) (*Namida no Adiósu*, 1981), which adds a new page to the history of the Japanese diaspora, and to the sad episode of the deportation of Latin American residents and citizens to U.S. concentration camps with the purpose of using them as pawns for the exchange of prisoners of war with the Japanese Empire during World War II. At the same time, this text reveals additional nuances to the historical notion of citizenship in Peru and the rest of Latin America. It is also crucial to understand how an outside influence (in this case American anti-Japanese agitators) successfully overturned Peruvian officials' widespread support for the Axis powers, and turned mainstream population against their Japanese neighbors, including those naturalized Peruvian or born in Peru. Cultural prejudice together with economic competition and wartime anxiety had become the perfect culture medium for the birth of anti-Japanese hysteria. As we will see, even though the cosmopolitanism of "flexible citizenship" can be socially and economically rewarding in times of peace, Higashide's testimony shows its structural limits, dangers, and personal costs during wartime, regardless of how much hard-earned cultural capital and social prestige have been accumulated as a strategy of flexible positioning.

After dealing with orientalism in Mexico and Peru, the third chapter includes two essays that still deal with Latin American literature, but concentrating on fictive and parodical orientalisms: one on the novel *De donde son los cantantes*, by Cuban author Severo Sarduy, and the other focusing on novels by the Colombian Santiago Gamboa, and by the Argentines César Aira and Ariel Magnus, Hoyos presents a comparative

study of three contemporary novels by these three Latin American authors that reflect the changing ways in which Latin Americans conceive of China in a time of globalization. By examining how ideology shapes narrative structures in these works, Hoyos analyzes visions of Sino-Latin American relations that express anxiety about the implications of global transformation through the use of exoticism and comedy. As Hoyos states, "Chinese products may have become ubiquitous in Latin American markets–or have "flooded" them, as a frequent metaphor goes–but China remains by and large an invisible, underrepresented culture in Latin America. Fictionalizations of Sino-Latin American relations have something of dealing with repressed dreams, perhaps nightmares."

Switching to the Caribbean basin, Paula Park analyzes Severo Sarduy (1937-1993)'s constantly playful imprecision when dealing with real Oriental referents in *De donde son los cantantes* (1967). In his quest for the Orient, argues Park, the West is absorbed. In the novel, a blond Spanish military man becomes obsessed with Flor de Loto, an idealized transvestite Chinese opera singer. After "her" show, he waits outside her changing room but he can never see her because, without her make-up, she walks out as an unattractive male Chinese man. In spite of his failures, the General still wants to "conquer" and possess her, so he sends her a sinister gift (a bracelet with miniature blades) to at least see her dead body. Nevertheless, before his plan is executed, the chapter ends. The author shapes a textual stage in which an imprecise notion of void manages to expand and escape infinitely, unreadable and unperceivable as it is.

Moving on from Hispanophone to Lusophone Orientalisms, the two studies in the fourth chapter look at the Arab heritage in the works by Brazilian Raduan Nassar and at a different type of orientalism in the works of Portuguese authors Eça de Queirós and Fernando Pessoa. First, José I. Suárez argues that, although Edward Said was perhaps accurate in his observations regarding Orientalism in French and English literature, he missed the mark when he included Portugal among colonial powers whose literature reflects this bias. He examines two novels by José Maria Eça de Queiroz, *The Mandarin* (1880) and *The Relic* (1887), as well as two poems by Álvaro de Campos, Fernando Pessoa's heteronym: "Opium Eater" and "Ode (an excerpt)." According to Suárez, these Portuguese writers were unprejudiced against the East, even though they included in their works the themes of colonialism and modernity in the Orient, and topics such as Eastern religions, the Holy Land, opium, and mandarins. They developed these themes, he argues, in a sympathetic light, one that today would be categorized as culturally diverse.

From Portugal, the second essay of the fourth chapter turns to Brazilian literature. Lizbeth Souza-Fuertes studies the orientalist component in the works of Raduan Nassar, heir of a rich Arab cultural tradition that he incorporated into his novel, *Lavoura Arcaica* (*To the Left of the Father*, 1975). This Middle Eastern legacy is clearly reflected in the lyricism that permeates the narration, the insertion of descriptions that originate in *The Arabian Nights*, the power of reminiscence, and the predominant role that religion, the erotic, and sensuality play in the novel. Incorporating traditional values and customs within modern times, argues Souza-Fuertes, it contributes to define the complex world of interrelationships between characters, the family, religious and cultural conflicts, and the difficulties that emerge.

Arab heritage is again studied in the fifth chapter, albeit this time it is its erasure from Spanish history that is addressed. Thus, Camila Pastor explores the possibility of imagining the Spanish language as a vehicle for the *Thousand and one Nights* as a living narrative tradition, a genre with both textual and oral variants. She argues that the invention of the *Nights* as a single artifact is an eighteenth-century Western European phenomenon later imported back into the Arab East. French Orientalist Antoine Galland's translation and subsequent ones can be read as the realignment and inscription of the tradition within the crucial modern binaries of religious/secular, East/West, and textual/oral. Following Slyomovics's conceptualization of the oral performance of stories from the *Nights*, Pastor maintains that the Iberian history of the *Nights* can be re-scripted once we recognize them, rather than as a single text that needs to be reconstructed and authenticated, as an oral-textual discursive tradition, a genre of verbal art. She proposes the reconstruction of the historic elasticity of the various boundaries according to which the Nights have been codified and of the various discursive universes they have traversed in their thousand years of textual circulation.

Along the same lines, Nicolás Alemán reminds us about how after the expulsions of Moors and Jews from Spain in the sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth centuries, official national histories tried to erase their cultural heritage. However, argues Alemán, two passages from *Don Quixote* echo the fact the Church and the monarchy acted against the people's will in their religious and political decisions. The first scene takes place in chapter 54 of the second part of *Don Quixote*, when Sancho Panza encounters his Moorish neighbor and friend Ricote. The second passage deals with "The Story of the Captive" in chapters 38 through 42 of the first part of the novel, which reflects the author's own experience as a captive in Algiers. The captive in the novel is a new Christian and son of

converted Jews, who is married, or about to marry, a Muslim woman, also about to become a new converted Christian. By mixing the three ethnicities (Christian, Jewish, Moorish) in the character of the captive, the author is questioning the authenticity of the "Pure blood" decree. Implicit is also the criticism to the myth that Spain was founded by only one social and religious group.

And closing this exclusion of the Arab/Muslim past in Spain, María Castro demonstrates how Francisco Pradilla's historical paintings *La rendición de Granada* (1882) and *El suspiro del moro* (1892) present a dualistic and compelling image that celebrates the triumph of Christian self-affirmation, power, and control over Muslim defeat, sadness, and loss. She argues that this Orientalist approach glorifies the will to dominate non-Christian peoples and emphasizes the spatial and psychological separation between Islam and the Christian West, thus signaling Pradilla's lack of understanding, knowledge, and respect for the non-Christian "Other." The deliberate expression of failure and displacement of the Muslim group depicted in the paintings attests to an Orientalist vision that victimizes "other peoples" as a way to gain power and superiority for the triumphant group. *La Rendición de Granada* and *El Suspiro del Moro*, claims Castro-Sethness, represent an artistic model characterized by denial of coexistence, compassion, and understanding.

Still in the sphere of Spanish cultural production, but now going from exclusion to inclusion and dialogue, in Chapter 6 we have two essays that consider Sufi influences in the philosophy of María Zambrano and the topic of transculturation in *Don Quixote.* Both reflect the adoption of the Other's culture or voluntary acculturation. Valero-Acosta analyzes María Zambrano's *Los bienaventurados* (1990) y *Los sueños y el tiempo* (1998) from the perspective of the symbology of Light and the way, among others, using the teachings of the Sufi mystic Ibn Arab and a spiral movement that goes, beyond philosophical thought, from the outside to the inside. The result, argues Valero-Acosta, is a crossing of lights in which Oriental consciousness enlightens the roots of Western thinking. Zambrano, explains the critic, proposes rescuing what she calls a "poetic reason" or "philosophy of light," which will help Western reason (blinded since Descartes's times) recover the right path. As to Juan de Castro's essay, it looks at an example of acculturation in "The Captive's Tale," one of the interpolated tales in Miguel de Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. Narrating the conversion to Catholicism and escape to Spain of Zoraida, a young Moorish woman, this fragment from *Don Quixote* would seem to illustrate José María Arguedas's version of acculturation. However, on closer examination, it is possible to read Cervantes's text as problematizing

acculturation understood exclusively as cultural substitution, as well as contemporary notions of hybridity as necessarily subversive.

Two of the essays in the seventh chapter deal with Filipinos in the United States and the Philippines and the third one, with the portrayal of Asian Americans in U.S. magazine advertisements. In the first one, Stephanie Fetta analyzes the politics of a Chicano novelist writing the Filipino into the Chicano cultural imaginary in Alfredo Véa's *The Silver Cloud Café*. Common labor conditions provide a framework that legitimates Véa's presentation of the Filipino, but a shared sense of humanity is wrought through mutual subjugation to his notion of racialized brownness. In assuming this conceptual cultural authority, Véa articulates Filipinoness by employing thematic and literary strategies of the body, cultural ritual, and language. These strategies succeed in voicing subaltern knowledge, while at other times they seem complicit with marginalizing discourses. This politic of discernment and commonality, argues Fetta, makes an incursion into the discourse of multiculturalism but from the perspective of anOther, a Chicano writer, writing anOther, a Filipino. *The Silver Cloud Café* corrects the historical frame by remembering the Filipino presence and struggle alongside the bracero, but demonstrates a complex engagement with multiculturalism that both broadens the space of receptivity and contracts the complexity of Filipinoness into melancholic exoticism.

Going back in time, Roberto Fuertes explores the cultural configuration of the Philippines during the first century of Spanish colonization, which was based on the political structures and cultural experiences that Spaniards had already had in Latin America. As Fuertes explains, although the Philippines were of great strategic importance to the Spanish Crown—both Charles III and Phillip II made them their base of expansion towards the East—, the reality is that the cultural center of gravity continued to rotate around Latin America. Since there was no direct control of the viceroys, almost all cultural institutions were left in the hands of the religious orders, which created a unique system, different from the one in Latin America. This project would soon obtain full autonomy, beginning with the predominant role of the Catholic Church, not only in the structural and cultural design, but also in the colonization *per se* of a territory defined by its geographical uniqueness, racial complexity, variety of previous cultural influences before the Spanish conquest: indigenous religious practices mixed with Islam and a commercial relationship with neighboring countries, especially Siam, the Moluccas, the Malaysian peninsula, Borneo, Java, and Sumatra had already been well-established.

Blai Guarné studies the Orientalist imaginary in the representation of Japan. Its implications, he explains, run deep in the stereotypical characterization of Japan as well as in the modern recognition of the very idea of the West. Guarné's essay considers that image through the genealogical analysis of the oxymoronic narrative as a discursive formation involved in the imaginary construction of Japan, in and out of its frontiers. He considers the historical conformation of this narrative, considering especially its prefigurement in the early Jesuit chronicle and its modern resignification in the *Nihonjinron* or *Nihonbunkaron* ("discourse on the Japanese and on Japanese culture") thought, as a representational practice that turns Japan into a dialogic Other of the West.

Within the field of advertising, Malgorzata Skorek investigates whether the "model minority" stereotype of Asian Americans is reflected in U.S. magazine advertisements and discusses the potential consequences of its presence for both the Asian minority itself and the broader public. Her analysis of 620 advertisements from five different American magazines published between 2006 and 2007 shows that certain aspects of the "model minority" stereotype were indeed present in advertising. Asian Americans were over-represented in magazines focusing on business, science and technology, and personal and office electronics. Asian models were most often found in decorative roles although every fifth ad featured an Asian model in a working role (twice as often as models of other races). Moreover, Skorek found that the majority of Asian models were gazing away from the camera and that they do not have a user function in the ads but are rather shown in a symbolic association with the product.

There are several harmful effects associated with this reinforcement of the "model minority" stereotype. Following the expectancy theory, for example, several individuals may experience heavy pressure to excel at math and sciences, and failure to fulfill this expectation may lead to lower self-esteem or increased anxiety. At the same time, it may lead the broader public to accept the stereotype as a reality and exert even more pressure on the Asian minority.

The last two chapters concentrate on music and film. Chapter 7 includes two essays, one dealing with Fred Ho's articulation of a "popular avant-guard" and the other one with the self-orientalization of the Twelve Girls Band, and the last chapter explores orientalism in *Star Trek Deep Space Nine* and second-hand in the Chilean martial arts film *Kiltro*. Fellezs's essay focuses on composer Fred Ho's articulation of a "popular avant-garde" as a critical aesthetic stance. Ho's work engages a wide variety of musical traditions–jazz, rhythm-and-blues, funk, Chinese opera, samurai film soundtracks–creating a rich mélange he describes as "Afro

Asian new American multicultural music." Understanding his own work as operating within a tradition he terms the "popular avant-garde," Ho argues that his use of popular culture elements is both aesthetic strategy and political advocacy. Binding his sense of a popular avant-garde to his iteration of an Afro Asian new American multicultural music, explains Fellezs, Ho's creative works demonstrate the inherent power of subaltern cultural production despite its marginalization, occlusion, and/or defamation by dominant cultural hierarchies by voicing truth to power.

Moving on now from the United States to China, Marco Valesi's study offers an historical overview of the hybridization process between Western and Chinese musical traditions and elaborates on the relation between trans-modern and commercial music, focusing on *12 Girls Band* and analyzing a questionnaire about this musical group. Recruited from China's major music conservatories and trained to play traditional Chinese instruments, the band—backed up by Western artists—mixes Chinese and Western music, traditional and contemporary sensations, and ethnic and pop features. Thanks to a process of self-orientalization, they have become one of the most successful international Chinese popular music groups. Valesi emphasizes the concept of commercial appropriation and distribution of a cultural identity through a process of selection, invention, and utilization of traditions. He also explores what it means today to juxtapose Asian and Western notions of popularity, sexiness, and world music. Tied up with these notions are issues of national and cultural identity. Drawing on Said's, Bhabha's and Canclini's perceptions of Orientalism and colonialism, he demonstrates that *12 Girls Band* incorporates images of otherness, foreign aesthetic, commercial and musical standards, simultaneously feeding Western interest for the exotic and pan-Asian request of global acceptation. He shows how vulgar processes of music commercialization the provoke a decline of traditional music because of its relegation from central ritual and social functions to an entertainment for a global public or a touristic celebration of the past.

Closing the book, we have the studies on Orientalism in film by Barba and Moisés Park. Barba's essay argues that while the mission of *Star Trek* was to portray a future in which a peaceful Earth has done away with problems of racism, *Star Trek* often perpetuated the Western idea of the creation of the Other, specifically in its treatment of alien races. In 1993, Star Trek introduced *Deep Space Nine*, thematically the most ambitious of the *Star Trek* series, which broke ground for the series by challenging accepted notions of equality within the constructed *Star Trek* Universe. The series presented a complex view of the Other, which simultaneously

reinforced traditional Western ideals and orientalized alien cultures, while challenging and resisting the accepted construct of the Other.

Moisés Park closes the volume with his analisis of *Kiltro,* the pioneering Chilean martial arts film featuring Palestinian and Korean characters. The paper recognizes and evaluates several seemingly Orientalist aspects such as the exoticism of the scenography, the casting of actors with physical Asian features, the sexuality of women and the portrayal of violent characters of Arab and Korean heritage. The Orientalist aspects of the film are not political in the sense that it does not perpetuate stereotypes that demean Eastern cultures, as Edward Said points out in his book *Orientalism*. In fact, the purpose of representing the Orient is characterized by its frequent references to other martial arts films, Hollywood action films, Japanese pop culture and *kitsch* cult films. Although this film fails to break any stereotypes and does not portray a realistic view of the Arab and Korean community in Chile, the purpose of the making this film are exclusively commercial and burlesque. This film is second-hand Orientalism since the film represents an already represented Orient, rather than distorting a direct view of the Orient. The imaged Orient in *Kiltro*, therefore, is merely an imitation and/or a parody of other imagined representations and self-representations of the Orient by other films. Several questions still remain concerning the justification of Orientalist representations for the sake of entertainment, in the form of martial arts comedy. While this kind of misrepresentation could have an anti-Orientalist effect to those spectators who understand the manifest exaggeration, the parody and the mocking homage, the ignorance of these references could result in a perpetuation of Orientalist schemes, unintentionally demeaning the representation of Arabs and Koreans in Chile.

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CHAPTER ONE

MEXICAN ORIENTALISMS

WHY YOU CANNOT READ *FARABEUF*: ELIZONDO AND ORIENTALISM

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Farabeuf or the Chronic of an Instant (1965) is an important text that ensured Salvador Elizondo's place in the pantheon of Spanish-language literature.[1] Because of textual complexities and unsettling imagery, this work defies easy interpretation. Aside from shocking bourgeois sensibility–*épater les bourgeois*–Salvador Elizondo's project was to experiment with the making of meaning out of non-logical inference and non-sequential narratives. It is impossible to read, because it has to be played, and it is impossible to be played because the game it proposes has but one outcome in which the audience is an accomplice to a disturbing crime and in which *you*–whom the narrative voice addresses–die and fall into oblivion while struggling to discern signs from meaningless scribbles.

Romero argues, from a postcolonial perspective, that Elizondo is one of the major orientalists in the Hispanic tradition, together with Jorge Luis Borges, Octavio Paz and Severo Sarduy, the figures on which Julia Kushigian focuses her book *Orientalism in the Hispanic Tradition* (1991). Romero essentially agrees with Kushigian's argument that, in contrast with Anglo-French Orientalism, Hispanic Orientalism "Reflects not so much a political posture toward the Orient rendered in innumerable oppositional structures but is, rather, a more thoughtful approach that values a dialogue of discourses, reflecting an antithetical denial of, and openness to the Other." (10). For Romero, *Farabeuf* is a reaction against the idea of nationalism sought by the Mexican School of Arts. In his view, Elizondo establishes a dialogue between the spectacle of pre-Columbian sacrifices to Huitzilopochtli and Chinese death by dismemberment, the *Leng t'ché*. "Clearly," he says "America first appeared to the European imagination as Asian." He then proceeds to quote from Richard

[1] I would like to thank Ignacio López-Calvo for his careful reading and edition, which made this a better essay.

Rodriguez: "The Indian is forever implicated in the roundness of the world. America was the false India, the mistaken India, and yet veritable India, for all that–India–the clasp, the coupling mystery at the end of the quest" (7). "After all," Romero concludes, "America was but a joke that the Orient pulled on Europeans. America was their Madame Butterfly" (1998: 39).

Romero's metaphor is memorable although not completely on point. In partial support to his reading, one could recall that Salvador Elizondo first explored the possibility of being a painter. He joined the workshop of Jesús Guerrero Galván, from whose Mexican-School influence he repeatedly struggled to escape, according to his personal diary, which his wife Paulina has recently started publishing in the Mexican magazine *Letras Libres*. Although I would suggest a different name altogether for the "Hispanic representation of the East," I would essentially agree with Romero too in that Kushigan's argument for the distinction of American and European Orientalism, has significant explanatory power both inter- and intra-nationally, and in that other writers should be added to her list, José Juan Tablada being perhaps the most striking but not the only example. It is unfortunate, however, that Romero's idea of "a dialogue between Mexico and China that goes through France," appealing as it sounds, is difficult to substantiate in his thesis. In *Farabeuf*, there is clearly a dialogue involving France and China, but no mention of Huitzilopochtli or indigenous individuals, a central omission that Romero explains as Elizondo's reaction against the Mexican School of Arts, and that he goes around by quoting from Richard Rodriguez, a different writer.

Mexican sources in *Farabeuf* are very subtle. Consider for example the description of the peculiar demeanor of the first known Mexican serial killer, Gregorio Cárdenas–a.k.a. "The monster,"[2] as recounted by Alfonso Quiroz Cuarón, the doctor and criminologist in charge of him: "[Gregorio Cárdenas walked] very slowly, hesitantly, and dragging his feet in small

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[2] The murders committed by Gregorio Cárdenas (1915-1999) took place from August 15 to September 2, 1942. They were widely covered by the Mexican press, especially in the 1940s when they were committed and in the 1960s and 1970s, when the process of his reformation occurred. Cárdenas, a chemistry student, avid reader of poetry, music lover, piano player, painter, and director of a literary magazine, is a unique serial killer who, after conviction, managed to study law and medicine in order to achieve "ideal reformation" and be pardoned by a president. He would go on to publish four books, participate in a play about his murders, and inspire a dozen novels and movies. He also tried to copyright his crimes in order to receive royalties. Since Cárdenas became a media phenomenon, it is improbable that Elizondo missed this information.

steps."[3] Now consider Farabeuf's characteristic form of walking: "We had anticipated his hesitant wandering along the street of the École de Médecine" (78); "Farabeuf's footsteps on the stairs, slowly dragging his feet on the landings" (1); "the dry sound of his little orthopedic boots on the steps of the deserted stairs" (5)."[4] It is unlikely that the similarities are coincidental; yet Elizondo never mentions Cárdenas by name. The reason might be, as Romero suggests, Elizondo's reaction against the Mexican School; but also, I argue, that Cárdenas's criminal activity and pre-Columbian sacrifices simply falls outside the short and accidental meeting between a modern Western photographic camera and an obsolete Eastern punishment at the turn of the twentieth century, the chronotope of *Farabeuf*.

If Mexican sources are mediated or diluted, *Farabeuf* presents us instead with four conspicuous systems of assemblage, both aesthetic and philosophic, which are closely related to its set timeframe: James Joyce's superimposition of classical and modern mythologies; Pound's imagist proposal of Chinese pictogrammatic signifying as a medium for poetry; Eisenstein's formalist technique of montage; and the numerological grammar of divination of the Chinese *Yî King* or *Book of Changes*. Elizondo uses these different perspectives to glance over six Chinese elements: Lo Shu magic square, the ideogram *liù* (六), an ivory puzzle ball, the hexagram *kuai*, a pillow book, and a photograph of a Chinese execution by dismemberment, the *leng t'ché*.

Farabeuf and the West

Like Joyce's *Ulysses* (1918-1920), *Farabeuf* is a kaleidoscopic text with an extremely formal, schematic structure deeply rooted in classic mythology (Greek for Joyce, Chinese for Elizondo). In sharp contrast with the relatively simple sequence of events, its textuality displays a panoply of techniques (from stream of consciousness to profuse allusions and metatext from other works) in order to convey an obsessive focus on detail. An experiment in pure *écriture*–typical of the decade in which it

[3] "[Gregorio Cárdenas caminaba] con mucha lentitud, en forma titubeante y arrastrando los pies en pequeños pasos" (27). The report on Cárdenas's mental condition that lead to his transfer from a jail to a mental institution in 1943 is included in the latter's anthology and memoir.

[4] "Habíamos presentido su paso vacilante a lo largo de la rue de l'École de Médecine" (78); "Los pasos de Farabeuf subiendo la escalera, arrastrando lentamente los pies en los descansos" (1); "el sonido árido de sus anticuados botines ortopédicos sobre los peldaños de la escalera desierta" (5).