

The Foreclosure of the Asiatic Mode of  
Production and Its Implications:  
Gayatri Spivak's Critique of Marxian Evolutionary  
Models in *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*

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[Abstract]

In postcolonial discussions, the evolutionary theory has been one of the most controversial issues, as its application to human society has been used as a justification for imperialism/colonialism. In this essay, I address this issue, drawing upon the Marx section of Gayatri Spivak's *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, in which she critiques Marx's foreclosure of his own concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production [AMP].

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Rather than focusing on the native informant's perspective and related topics, I pay particular attention to Spivak's new emphasis on the foreclosure of the AMP in this section and her issues with Marx's acceptance of evolutionary models, based on the assumption that Spivak considers Marx's foreclosure an expression of his "desire to theorize the other," which is based on the idea of unilinear "evolutionary storyline." I also analyze how Spivak "resurrects" the AMP "in order to understand globality" (CPR 72), without problematizing the supposition about "stages" of development as long as such development doesn't rely on the idea of unilinearity, and with the aim of indicating how Marx's AMP has given insights to contemporary philosophers such as Deleuze and Guattari, who connect the AMP to the contemporary globalized world. All in all, I seek to make my point that Spivak marks herself as one of the remarkable postcolonial theorists to incorporate Derridean "new politics of reading" in her new reading of Marxian evolutionary models, thus enriching postcolonial theories.

## 1. Marx's Foreclosure of the Asiatic Mode of Production

In postcolonial discussions, the evolutionary theory has been one of the most controversial issues. In many cases, "social Darwinism," that is, its application to the development of human societies, has been denigrated for assuming that societies have made "progress," passing through successive historical stages along a continuum. Social Darwinism has been used as a conventional Western way to justify racism by providing a theoretical rationalization for imperialism and colonialism.<sup>1)</sup> As Armin Geertz re-

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1) It is not my major concern in this essay to separate between Darwin himself and social Darwinism. I will just point out that the distance between the two is not as

cently argued, "It was evolutionism, especially social Darwinism, that served as the ideological *raison d'être* of free enterprise capitalism, colonial policy, and scientific racism" (46).

It is in this context that I would like to look at the Marx section of Gayatri Spivak's *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* [CPR hereafter] (1999). In this section, she makes an intriguing critique of Marx's alleged acceptance of evolutionary models, and I will be paying special attention to Marx's concept of Asiatic mode of production [AMP hereafter], as I believe Spivak's discussions on Marxian evolutionary models center on this concept.<sup>2)</sup> I say "intriguing" not only because Spivak, like many others, criticizes Marx's Eurocentric assumptions regarding the concept, but also because, unlike them, she

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great as some think. Throughout his life, according to Stephen Jay Gould, Darwin's "basic belief in a hierarchy of cultural advance, with white Europeans on top and natives of different colors on the bottom, did not change" (416). See also Armin Geertz, who differentiates "progressionists" and "evolutionists," while criticizing the former and defending Darwin by saying that it wasn't until 1930s when Darwin's real influence was exercised, but who also writes, "Charles Darwin was not able to check the tide of progressionist theory, and in fact he was in the service, not all that unwittingly, I might add. Even though [Darwin] criticized progressionism privately, his *Origin of Species* was interpreted as supporting it" (47). Loren Eiseley writes more generally on the nineteenth-century England with respect to this issue: "The hopeful aspects of the idea of progress as they were entertained by the thinkers of Revolutionary France are denied fruition. Instead, a linear biology, so far as human kind at least is concerned, reigns in imperial England. Natives are incapable of achieving high culture. Humorously, in a dozen forms of the philosophers of the Victorian Era repeat the story, 'The Mongol and the Negro are but human saurians who reached long ago ... their full development, and are now moral fossils'" (264).

- 2) According to Wittfogel, "Marx's concept of Asiatic society was built largely on the views of such classical economists as Richard Jones and John Stuart Mill, who in their turn had developed generalized ideas held by Adam Smith and James Mill" (372).

goes a step further: after puncturing the idea of unilinearity behind Marx's acceptance of these evolutionary models, Spivak explores its implications by bringing in the insights of, say, Deleuze and Guattari, who modify Marx's classifications without ceding to his evolutionary thoughts. What matters most here is that Spivak doesn't necessarily denigrate the actual idea of "stages of development." Rather, she thinks that these stages are admissible as long as they are not considered to be historically closed (CPR 109-110). Consequently, Spivak makes it possible for us to understand our globalized contemporary world better, also making her discussions of Marxian evolutionary models dynamic enough to enrich our discussions of the issue.

CPR is a path-breaking work not least because of its extensiveness: it covers philosophy, literature, history, and culture. According to Ian Baucom, one of its reviewers, it is "an enormous book" (418), and "The titles of its four main chapters alone indicate the audaciousness of its scope" (418). To examine Spivak's views on Marxian evolutionary models, I choose the Marx section from CPR's first "Philosophy" chapter, which discusses "the last Three Wise Men of the Continental (European) tradition" (CPR 111), that is, Kant, Hegel, and Marx.<sup>3)</sup>

More particularly, the reason for my choice is that we witness certain distinctive features related to the evolution issue in this section. Firstly, although Spivak's interest is concerned with the theory of Value for almost

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3) Spivak's interest in Marx began very early in her academic career. Before CPR, she wrote "Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value" (1985), "Speculations on Reading Marx: After Reading Derrida" (1987), "Limits and Openings of Marx in Derrida" (1993), "Ghostwriting" (1995), "Supplementing Marxism" (1995), and after CPR, she wrote "From Haverstock Hill to U.S. Classroom, What's Left of Theory" (2000) and "Imperative to Re-imagine the Past" (2012).

the entire previous decade, in CPR, Spivak touches on the theory but places emphasis on the AMP, which is also supported by the fact that the AMP part is almost three times longer than that on Value. It should be noted, first of all, that the AMP is a concept which contains within itself evolutionary implications, and, as long as the AMP reveals Marx as a believer in the historically evolutionary storyline, we realize that Marx was not an exceptional Westerner; he often attributed stasis or lack of dynamism to Asia and Asian peoples, as when he states in his mature work: “the unchangeability of Asiatic societies, which is in such striking contrast with the constant dissolution and refounding of Asiatic states” (*Capital* 1 479). We find a similar sentiment in his preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy* (1859), when Marx introduces it as one of the pre-capitalistic modes of production: “In broad outline, Asiatic, ancient, feudal, and modern bourgeois modes of production may be designated as epochs making progress in the economic development of society” (21). This is the only time when the AMP makes its “official” appearance during his lifetime. Although it appears also in *Grundrisse*, contemporaneously written but posthumously published much later, where Marx gives a brief explanation of the AMP. There, Marx “distinguish[es] essentially three pre-capitalist forms, the oriental or Asiatic, the ancient or classical (Greek and Roman), and the feudal form, derived, in specific conditions, from a ‘Germanic’ path out of primitive communalism.... Perhaps the most likely reading is that the ‘Asiatic’ form stands more or less by itself as the least dynamic route out of the primitive state, while the ancient alternative is more dynamic” (Wood 80). Since differentiating the AMP from other modes of production economically or philosophically is not my major concern in this essay, it would suffice to note that what

distinguishes the AMP from other modes of production depends on who owns the land. The existence of private property determines whether or not a mode of production can “evolve” into capitalistic mode of production: according to Marx, whereas other Western pre-capitalist modes of production have developed private property to a certain degree before they evolve into a capitalistic society, the despots of “Asia” possess the entire land in AMP, thus disqualifying itself as a candidate to proceed into capitalism. As we well know, however, Marx contradicts himself here: on the one hand, as Karl Wittfogel writes, “In *Das Kapital*, Volume 3, [Marx] explained that under the Asiatic system there existed ‘no private landownership, but both private and communal possession and usage of the soil’” (376-77); on the other, “As early as the 1850’s Marx was aware of the fact that the Chinese ‘Crown’ permitted most of the peasants to ‘hold their lands, which are of a very limited extent, in full property’” (375).

Secondly, the Marx section of CPR distinguishes itself from the Kant and Hegel sections, as well as the other chapters of CPR because it doesn’t fit well into the general “aim” of CPR, which is the “foreclosure” of the native informant’s perspective.<sup>4)</sup> The term is borrowed from Lacan,

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4) As the concept flows through the entire text of CPR, playing such a central role, it deserves a long quotation:

I borrow the term “foreclosure” (*forclusion*) from Lacanian psychoanalysis. I read psychoanalysis as a technique for reading the pre-emergence (Raymond Williams’s term) of narrative as ethical instantiation. Let me sketch this technique briefly by way of the entry for “Foreclosure” in a still useful general lexicon of the passage between Freud and Lacan, *The Language of Psycho-Analysis*....

As *Language* points out,

and defined by Spivak as “the interested denial of something” (Harasym 127). As Spivak herself says, her “aim” in CPR “was tracking the figure of the Native Informant,” whose perspective is foreclosed through various practices, “such as philosophy, literature, history, and culture” (ix). The “native informant,” being an anthropological term, refers to indigenous peoples who are supposed to provide information to anthropologists from the West.<sup>5)</sup> That is why Spivak “[finds] that the tracking showed up a colonial subject detaching itself from the Native Informant” (6).<sup>6)</sup>

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[t]he sense brought to the fore by Lacan,... [is to be found] for instance, in [what] Freud writes ... [about] “a much more energetic and successful kind of defence. Here, the ego rejects [*verwirft*] the incompatible idea *together with the affect* and behaves as if the idea had never occurred to the ego at all.” ... The work from which Lacan has most readily derived support for his ... idea of foreclosure is the case-history of the “Wolf-Man. (CPR 4; Spivak’s emphasis)

- 5) According to Pramod Nayar, author of *The Postcolonial Studies Dictionary*, “the Native Informant is at once essential and invisible, providing the ‘essential’ voice of native culture yet who disappears into the text of the white ethnographers” (112). However, Spivak’s stance here is quite different from those of other postcolonial theorists, especially Edward Said, in that Spivak takes issue with elite native migrants who, as she contends, have taken over the positions of the natives. In the same light, the title of the book is also symbolic in that, unlike Said again, Spivak aims inward as well, as when she makes a critique of postcolonial reason. Although Peter Childs worries about mystification of the native informant (qtd. in Sara Suleri 175), Spivak says in another interview that she is interested in “how a native informant might read these master discourses” (Harasym 132). See also Robert Young: “elite metropolitan migrant claims the perspective of the native informant” (241). See also Spivak: “In fact, the general critique of the postcolonial reason is that the elite metropolitan migrant claims the perspective of the native informant” or “elite metropolitan migrant was anthropologists-as-native informant, as it were” (Bilimoria 241).
- 6) In CPR, Spivak uses “native informants” more often than “subalterns,” for which she is famous. By this Spivak seems to be implying that a certain kind of change is taking place to subalterns. In the last chapter of CPR, where she discusses issues concerning our contemporary world, Spivak introduces the concept “new immigrants.”

In contrast, I find what is mainly foreclosed in the Marx section to be the AMP, rather than the native informant's perspective; as soon as Marx introduces the AMP, he avoids it in his writings. The foreclosure of the native informant's perspective is certainly mentioned, but it cannot be said to be the main focus.<sup>7)</sup> This "neglect" may explain why Spivak looks at the AMP first, before "next consider[ing] the notion of the 'value-form' in Marx, which can be useful for expanding the field of investigation available to such a perspective" (CPR 71). Interestingly, Spivak herself admits of this "uniqueness" of the AMP as a subject. Spivak insists that she "[is] going to look at the implications of a notorious phrase that Marx probably used only once: 'The Asiatic Mode of Production'" (CPR 71); however, she also admits that "it would be rather difficult to imagine a native informant's perspective here" (CPR 71).

We have seen so far the two distinctive features of the Marx section, that is, the introduction of the AMP and its foreclosure. The third and most important feature for this essay is Spivak's introduction of a relatively new issue: the issue of Marxian evolutionary models, when she finds fault with Marx's acceptance of these models, as mentioned above.

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7) It wouldn't be an exaggeration to say that the issue of the foreclosure of the native informant's perspective has been superimposed in parentheses. In order to strengthen her interest in the contemporary world, Spivak even expresses her wish to rewrite this Marx section by drawing on the issue of gender. In fact, she does add lines here and there to that effect, especially in terms of the foreclosure of the perspectives of the native informant. For example, Spivak makes a point about this rewriting by referring to *The Communist Manifesto*, in which, she contends, Marx has predicted women's more active involvements in labor market in the globalized contemporary world (CPR 69). Of course, this part hasn't been fully developed in the present edition, and this "feminist" stance taken by Spivak, although quite understandable as she has declared CPR as a feminist book (CPR xi), is beyond the concern of this essay.



This new issue has much to do with the concept of AMP. While Spivak doesn't use the expression "evolutionism" itself, she deploys phrases which can be considered to have that implication. For example, Spivak uses phrases like "evolutionary models," the "historically evolutionary storyline," or "normative historical evolution"; and considering that four out of seven mentions of this "evolutionism" issue are found in the Marx section (101, 102, 107, and 108), we can safely guess that the Marxian evolutionary models is one of Spivak's new concerns in this section.<sup>8)</sup> There, Spivak suspects what she calls Marx's "desire to theorize the other" (CPR 79), believing that this desire is an expression of his acceptance of evolutionary models.

Despite the significance of this issue, however, these features centering on Marx's concept of AMP haven't been given sufficient attention so far in discussions of Spivak's work. In this essay, therefore, I propose to fill in this gap by examining the intriguing, although complicated, ways in which Spivak makes a critique of Marxian evolutionary models: rather than merely criticizing Marx's concept of the AMP as an example of Western misconceptions about non-Western societies, Spivak explores the possible relevance of the AMP to our contemporary globalized world. Considering that it is Spivak herself who contends, "Marx has been global in a way that Kant and Hegel have not been" (CPR 71),<sup>9)</sup> we can understand that Spivak deals with Marx and his AMP differently.

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8) As Spivak avoids using the term "evolutionism," I will use the "evolutionary models," the "historically evolutionary storyline," depending on the context.

9) This doesn't mean that the other chapters have little to do with the present. For example, in the last "Culture" chapter, Spivak even finds similarity between Kant's "sublime" and Fredric Jameson's "cognitive mapping" (CPR 325).

More specifically, instead of tracking the foreclosure of the native informant's perspective as in other sections of CPR, here she "resurrects" the AMP, "[i]n order to understand globality" (CPR 72), thus connecting her discussions of the AMP with the Value issue. Furthermore, as a way of contemporizing the AMP, she turns to Deleuze and Guattari, who provide a possibility of a new interpretation of the AMP, definitely enlightened by Marx.

## 2. Spivak's "New Politics of Reading"

The ways in which Spivak deals with these features are so peculiar that a few words about her reading strategy seem necessary; this strategy makes possible Spivak's double project, that is, not only a critique of Marx's acceptance of evolutionary models but also an understanding of globality, related to the evolutionary models. Borrowed from Derrida, this strategy is called "a new politics of reading," as Spivak states in an interview: "what is supremely useful is Derrida's articulation of the new politics of reading: that you do not excuse a text for its historical aberrations, you admit that there is something in the text which can produce these readings" (qtd. in Sakhkhane 19-20). Thus, this new politics of reading "involves an effort to enter the protocols of Marx's text in order to re-inscribe it for use" (CPR 91). In the same context, it should be noted that, when Spivak emphasizes the importance of the "protocols of the text," her primary interest lies in the "narrative" of the modes of production.

One might be wondering, more practically, how Spivak's strategic reading is conducted. Here again Spivak gives her own answer, which is "not to excuse, but to suspend accusation to examine with painstaking care if

the protocols of the text contains a moment that can produce something that will generate a new and useful reading” (CPR 98).<sup>10</sup> More specifically, if we relate Spivak’s new politics of reading to the Marx section, we realize that Spivak’s project is double-edged: “unaccusing, unexcusing” (CPR 81). On the one hand, Spivak doesn’t excuse Marx for a certain level of Eurocentrism, specifically for his acceptance of evolutionary models. Spivak finds this acceptance as a result of Marx’s “desire to theorize the other,” according to which Europe is presented as the norm. In reference to Kant, Hegel and Marx, Spivak asserts: “[The texts of Kant, Hegel, and Marx] take for granted that the ‘European’ is the human norm and offer us descriptions and/or prescriptions” (CPR 6); and Marx “bestows normativity upon the narrative of the modes of production” (CPR 6). On the other hand, however, even when Spivak sees Marx’s AMP as an example of his acceptance of “evolutionary models,”<sup>11</sup> she also maintains that the AMP for Marx is “a necessarily theoretical fiction” and “a methodological presupposition,” suggesting “the possibility of this fiction cannot be derived from some true account of things” (Harasym 136). That is why

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10) In her essay “Responsibility,” Spivak quotes Derrida: “thought salvageable, man limited” (35).

11) As Darwin’s contemporary, Marx must have read Darwin: in addition to the Darwinian phrase “struggle for existence” (806) in the first volume of *Capital*, Marx even quotes Darwin: “In his epoch-making work on the origin of species, Darwin remarks with reference to the natural organs of plants and animals: ‘As long as the same part has to perform diversified work, we can perhaps see why it should remain variable, that is, why natural selection should not have preserved or rejected each little deviation of form so carefully as when the part has to serve for some one special purpose. In the same way that a knife which has to serve for some special purpose cut all sorts of things may be of almost any shape; whilst a tool for some particular purpose must be of some particular shape’” [Charles Darwin, *The Origin of Species*, Ch. 5, “Laws of Variation”] (*Capital* 1 461).

Spivak also demonstrates how “useful” this AMP can be in our discussions on Marxian evolutionary models.<sup>12)</sup>

Spivak’s double-bladed project has something to do with the function of “a theoretical fiction,” which she introduces in her very first writing on Marx’s notion of use-value: “Here use-value, implicitly as that which sublates the commodity-form through unmediated consumption, is itself operating as a theoretical fiction, as that positive thing which is to be subtracted from the undifferentiated product before the origin of value” (“Speculations on Reading Marx” 40). Therefore, although the concept of AMP has “show[n] itself as “empirically or theoretically insufficient, or as unimportant to Marx” (CPR 79), Spivak doesn’t discard it right away. Instead, she “speculates” that Marx might have needed it as a theoretical fiction to begin to think about the way in which Hegelian teleological dialectic could be put into practice, which is also related to a historically evolutionary storyline.

More concretely, Spivak specifies a moment in Marx’s texts—Spivak calls it the “definitive passage” (“Speculations on Reading Marx” 40; 77)—in order to disclose Marx’s “self-contradictions,” thus making it possible to open up further discussions.<sup>13)</sup> This strategy is both economical and effective.<sup>14)</sup> Like Derrida, Spivak uses the AMP as a “lever,”<sup>15)</sup> a term

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12) In another context, Spivak contends that “Although Kant strove not to be Eurocentric, yet when he needed to show how to solve the antinomy that would allow us to philosophize, what he had to exclude was those casually named aboriginals” (Bilimoria 240).

13) In the same way, just as Spivak has aimed at Foucault and Deleuze’s interview to begin her famous essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” in which these philosophers can be found rather “unguarded.” For more, see Morton 109.

14) Spivak states that “it fixes on small things; margins, moments, etc. But something

she uses “to turn the text, to de-con-struct it for use,” to look for the “moment of transgression or bafflement” (CPR 99).<sup>16)</sup> However, it should also be noted that Spivak uses the lever “not as paralysis, but as enablement” (Bilimoria 238),<sup>17)</sup> thus setting off further explorations.

Therefore, when applied to our discussions on Marxian evolutionary models, this kind of reading makes it evident that Spivak's critique is not merely based on Marx's presuppositions about the modes of production. It is true that Spivak questions the idea of unilinearity behind the stages. However, Spivak approves of the stages as long as they are not founded on the “historically evolutionary storyline.” In the same context, Spivak doesn't simply denounce Lewis Morgan's and consequently Frederick Engels's classification of the stages of human development. It is at this point that Spivak, bringing in Deleuze and Guattari's insights about Marx's modes of production without importing this idea of unilinearity, acknowledges the “freshness” of their reading as follows:

The freshness of [Deleuze and Guattari's] reading is all the more surprising because they unquestioningly accept the Morgan-Engels division of the

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unifying is needed” (Harasym 136).

- 15) See Morton: “This deconstructive strategy of reading is subsequently clarified in a reference to Derrida's *Positions* (1972), in particular to the new use of ‘a name X as a lever of intervention, in order to maintain a grasp on the previous organization, which is to be transformed effectively’” (78).
- 16) “In my reading of Marx in the last decade, that lever and moment (concept-metaphors necessarily mixed) is in Value” (CPR 99). See also Spivak's “Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value” (80), to know that Spivak makes it evident that the “lever” originates from Derrida's *Positions* (71).
- 17) Spivak herself emphasizes this by saying, “He rightly locates my lever here, as the acknowledgment of complicity, not as paralysis but as enablement” (Bilimoria 238).

history of the world into Savage, Barbarian, Civil. Describing the barbarian formation, they gently rewrite Marx by ascribing to the marxian AMP a locus of change and a fluidity of rhythm that is precisely what is lacking in its received version.... (CPR 107)

Thus Spivak's thoughts on the stages of the development of human society, influenced by Deleuze and Guattari, who in turn borrow Marx's unwitting insight about the stages, are dynamic enough to expand our understanding of the issues concerning the evolutionary theory. This aspect of Spivak hasn't been appreciated fully.

At this point, I would like to look at the ways in which Spivak critiques Marx's introduction and subsequent foreclosure of the AMP as an expression of his desire to theorize the other, resting on the assumption that the desire is manifested in Marx's acceptance of evolutionary models. The final section will examine how Spivak, as a way of exploring the relevances of the concept of AMP to our understanding of the globalized contemporary world, turns to Deleuze and Guattari, who set up new models of stages without depending on the idea of unilinearity.<sup>18)</sup>

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18) Spivak has been called, along with Edward Said and Homi Bhabha, one of the "trinity" theorists, indispensable for postcolonial discussions. Highly praised for her comprehensiveness, Spivak is, as she describes herself, a "practical deconstructionist feminist Marxist" (Harasym 133). Spivak distinguishes herself as one of the great deconstructive critics who bring in Derridean insights to enrich postcolonial theories. In addition, as a careful reader of Marx, she makes compelling analyses of our contemporary society. She also garners strong support among feminists (Moore-Gilbert 112). Even Spivak's writings, which contain within themselves a number of sometimes incompatible, different critical approaches, is defended as a way "to preserve these discontinuities in that sort of sense rather than either wanting to look for an elegant coherence or producing a continuist discourse which will then result in hostility" (Harasym 15).

However, Spivak also remains one of the most controversial postcolonial theorists. She has been harshly and diversely criticized. For instance, Patrick Colm Hogan speaks for many when he criticizes both Bhabha and Spivak: "I find the writings of Bhabha and Spivak terminologically opaque, conceptually imprecise, and empirically lax" (25). More importantly, others criticize her for her indifference to the "real world," including history, politics, and economy, and, interconnected with this, question Spivak's "predilection of discourse to other socio-economic forms of practice" (Sakhkhane 141). For example, Benita Parry criticizes what she sees as Spivak's "incuriosity about the enabling socio-economic and political institutions and other forms of social praxis" (26). These negative opinions haven't changed much. For example, in a book published in 2012, Sakhkhane claims, "Spivak freezes the native into a limbo of speechless and inarticulation" (139).

As far as the AMP issue is concerned, I have been generally influenced by Stephen Morton. But it should be noted that Morton doesn't deal with the Value issue fully, especially with regards to the "Total or expanded form of value," although he considers the relationship between use-value and exchange-value. Moreover, my position is slightly different from his in that although he is conscious of Spivak's double project, that is, neither excusing nor accusing, he seems to be focused on "accusing" rather than on "excusing." That is why I agree with Spivak when she makes this comment in another context: "I feel troubled that Morton sees my reading of Kant be Eurocentric, yet when he needed to show how to solve the antinomy that would allow us to philosophize, what he had to exclude was those causally named aboriginals," or "Morton reads 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' as a formulaic postcolonial text. Let me repeat that I myself thought that I was criticizing the Hindus very much more" (Bilimoria 240-42).

In addition, believing that Spivak's "discursive" approach has its own significance, I cannot fully agree with Rebecca Karl when she argues that "For Spivak, the utility of AMP as a concept thus becomes a textual utility: a way to restore a textually understood cultural/national *difference* to supposed AMP countries, primarily India. As she states: 'the Asiatic Mode of Production in this new and globalized politics of reading makes visible the fault lines within the account of history as (European) modes of production'" (70).

Sanders is unique because he tries to connect the issue of foreclosure with ethics. However, as my essay concentrates on the AMP, what is foreclosed in the major part of the Marx section, I will not refer to him much although I keep his emphasis in my mind when I deal with the Value issue. See also note 31 below.

### 3. Spivak's Critique of Marx's AMP as His Acceptance of Evolutionary Models

Marx introduced the AMP in the mid-1850s for the first time. However, Spivak begins with young Marx's definitions of human beings, that is, the Species-life and Species-being, which appear in the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts*, which was written in 1844, at the age of twenty-six but posthumously published, before she connects the definitions to the AMP issue:

Man is a species-being, not only because he practically and theoretically makes the species—both his own and those of other things—his object, but also—and this is simply another way of saying the same thing—because he looks upon himself as the present, living species, because he looks upon himself as a *universal* and therefore free being. Species-life, both for man and for animals, consists physically in the fact that man, like animals, lives from inorganic nature; and because man is more universal than animals, so too is the area of inorganic nature from which he lives more universal. (*Early Writings* 327-28)

It is in the middle of introducing the third type of “estranged labor,” that is, “workers’ alienation from their bodies and human potential” that Marx presents these concepts.<sup>19)</sup> However, it is obvious that Marx initiates

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19) For other types of estrangement, see Marx's *Early Writings*, 322-34: “Estranged labour not only (1) estranges nature from man and (2) estranges man from himself, from his own active function, from his vital activity; because of this it also estranges man from his species. It turns his species-life into a means for his individual life. (328); (3) Estranged labour therefore turns man's species-being—both nature and his intellectual species-powers—into a being alien to him and a means of his individual existence. It estranges man from his own body, from nature as it exists outside him, from his spiritual essence [*Wesen*], his human essence. (4) An immediate



the two concepts, not as two different entities but as two aspects of the human. To quote Spivak's own interpretation of these concepts: "The proper bearer of his argument has two aspects: natural and human, Species-Life and Species-Being. Both are marked by ipseity rather than alterity. The first, inaccessible to the social, is where nature is the human being's 'great body without organs'" (CPR 76-77).

Of course, Marx introduces the Species-being as a possible "universal" human who can conduct labor without being alienated in the above four senses.<sup>20</sup> But Spivak rightly points at Marx's own reservations about this kind of Species when he takes a stance about the "normative" idea of "man." Spivak writes about Marx's awareness of the problem of the distinction between Species-life and Species-being; the concept of Species-being, according to Spivak, means that Marx "perceives that, given social inequity, it is not possible for each human being to take himself as such" (CPR 78).<sup>21</sup> It should be noted, therefore, that, for Marx, the very activity

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consequence of man's estrangement from the product of his labour, his life activity, his species-being, is the estrangement of man from man" (329-30).

20) According to the translator of Erich Fromm's *Marx's Concept of Man*, "The term 'species-being' is taken from Feuerbach's *Das Wesen des Christentums* (The Essence of Christianity). Feuerbach used the notion in making a distinction between consciousness in man and in animals. Man is conscious not merely of himself as an individual but of the human species or 'human essence' (Fromm 100). Erich Fromm emphasizes the importance of this concept in Marx, when he maintains that although, "[i]n *German Ideology*, Marx and Engels no longer used the terms 'species' and 'human essence' ('Gattung' and 'menschliches Wesen') ... even a superficial study of *German Ideology* reveals that this is not true" (74-75). Fromm also argues that the same concept appears in later Marx, including the third volume of *Capital* (76). See also note 22 below for the relation of this concept to "alienation."

21) See also Morton: "Such a revelation challenges the universalism of the ethical subject of German enlightenment philosophy, and 'introduces difference within the

of the Species-being under capitalism is “estranged, alienated” because of the division of labor.<sup>22)</sup>

However, a real problem begins as soon as Marx revives these concepts after tampering with them more than a decade later in the process of explaining the AMP in *Grundrisse*. I would call the following passage “definitive,” as mentioned earlier, because Spivak takes issue with Marx’s revival of these concepts, focusing on the land:

To be the member of a community without property in land, “as in most of the *Asiatic* land forms,” is to have property “appear ... mediated for him through a cession by the total unity ... realized in the form of the despot.” The heavily philosophical language (I [Spivak] have emphasized certain words to bring this out) here accounts for how “property” appears to an individual who is still only defined in terms of Species-Life rather than Species-Being. For “property” for this individual is “the relation of the individual to the *natural* conditions of labour and of reproduction as belonging to him as the objective, nature-given body without organs of his subjectivity.” (CPR 80; Spivak’s emphasis)

We have seen above that what determines the modes of pre-capitalistic stages is private ownership of land. In the above highly complicated pas-

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self-sameness or self-identify of the normative (ethical?) subject” (76).

22) Marx wrote, “The *division of labour* is the economic expression of the *social nature of labour* within estrangement. Or rather, since *labour* is only an expression of human activity within alienation, an expression of life as alienation of life, the *division of labour* is nothing more than the *estranged, alienated* positing of human activity as a *real species-activity* or as *activity of man as a species-being*” (*Early Writings* 369).

sage, Spivak, after quoting Marx to illustrate how in the AMP the despot denies an individual land in the first part, points out in the second part that the individual here is attributed to as the Species-life, rather than the Species-being—we can see this attribution not only in the phrase, “nature-given inorganic body of his subjectivity,” but also in the emphasis Spivak puts on the word “natural.” Questioning this very attribution, Spivak continues to say, “It is almost as if Species-Life has not yet differentiated itself into Species-Being” (80). Spivak suspects that Marx, differentiating the AMP from other modes such as Western feudalism, offers “not an explanation but an attempt to fit historical presuppositions into a logical mold” (81). In regards to this, Stephen Morton properly observes: “For Spivak, Marx’s description of an Asiatic mode of production in this extract recalls the distinction between Species-Life and Species-Being in *The Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts...* (77). So we agree with Spivak when she goes on to observe that Marx needed the AMP as a theoretical fiction to justify the economic “development” made in the West, and when Spivak calls Marx’s attribution with regard to the Species-life and Species-being “asymmetrical” and “interested”:

This may be read as Marx’s narrativization of the difference at the origin. It is already asymmetrical, interested. The first is a version of the selfsame, man in nature as species-being, one foot into history. The second marks the place of the other, locked into Species-life, forever caught back in a deviation that cannot be normative. (CPR 82)

As mentioned earlier, what is crucial for Spivak is that the two concepts were never meant by the young Marx to be two different things, much

less “sequential”; contrary to what the Marx of *Grundrisse* assumed, the one is so deeply entangled with the other that it is impossible for any one of the two to be “normative,” as meant by the later Marx. That is why,

In [Spivak’s] estimation, both are theoretical fictions, a methodological presupposition without which the internal coherence of an argument cannot be secure.... The Asiatic Mode of Production has revealed itself to be neither historico-geographically “Asiatic” nor logically a “mode of production.” (CPR 82)

Thus Spivak discloses that the later Marx made a mistake or got confused about these concepts, but what Spivak suspects most is Marx’s mistake in seeking to “fit historical presuppositions into a logical mold” (CPR 81). Hence, Spivak’s censuring of Marx for making it possible for this theoretical fiction of AMP to lead to the subsequent logic: “The earlier notion, that the human can be seen in two ways—natural (part of nature without *human* organ-specificity—*Species-Life*) and human (self-exemplifying individual—*Species-Being*) is now being re-cast as a sequential (historical) story as well as a spacing (geography)” (CPR 81).<sup>23)</sup>

For Spivak, Marx’s problem, initiated by his “desire to theorize the other,” becomes all the more serious because the AMP is foreclosed as soon as it appears in Marx’s writings. Spivak attributes this foreclosure to Marx’s two impulses, both of which are interrelated: first, Hegel’s influence on Marx and, second, Marx’s acceptance of the evolutionary models. As for the first, Spivak writes,

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23) As for the “spacing,” Spivak refers to Johannes Fabian, who “has pointed out, for the anthropologist, ‘[d]ispersal in space [can] reflect ... directly ... sequence in Time.’” (CPR 109).

All I need to emphasize is that the “Asiatic Mode of production” as a “real” description of “actual practices” is not an issue in its ostensibly appropriate place and time. It will come to be needed as the crucial theoretical fiction to set the machinery of the emancipatory transformation of Hegelianism presenting itself as a general system.... And, when it performs that function, its very invocation is therefore its foreclosure. (CPR 88)

As the above quotation clearly shows, Spivak uncovers not only how Marx uses the AMP as a “crucial theoretical fiction” in order for teleological Hegelianism to operate “as a general system,” but also how he forecloses the AMP as soon as its “mission” is over. Of course, Marx would have done without this concept in his analysis of the development of Western modes of production. That is why he forecloses it. But this very foreclosure proves the metaphoricality of the AMP as a theoretical fiction.

Marx's second impulse is observed by Spivak when she ascribes the foreclosure to Marx's acceptance of evolutionary models. As I said earlier, mentions of this issue are rather unusually clustered in the Marx section,<sup>24)</sup> and Spivak is clear about this issue. As Morton argues, “[the AMP's] syntactic location in a progressively historical paradigm suggests that the AMP stands as a metonym for Asia's social and econom-

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24) In the “History” chapter of CPR, where Spivak gives an explanation about the case of Rani, she also expresses her reservations about the belief in “evolutionary progression” in parentheses: “... given a different structure of authority and policing in the sub-Himalayan rural areas of India in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in trying to locate the Rani we may groping in the margins of official Western history, but we are not among marginal women in their context. (This difference might not necessarily be an earlier stage in evolutionary progression: it may have a relationship with the different ethic, consideration of which would take us too far afield)” (CPR 239).

ic ‘backwardness’ within Marx’s modernist conception of history” (74).

Then, with the help of Samir Amin—who gives an alternative reading to the evolutionary models in terms of modes of production by contending that the AMP, a representative example of Eurocentrism, is not a weak version of mode of production, but rather the strong one based on the tribute—Spivak suggests that modes of production could be explained by means of the notion of difference rather than evolution: to use Spivak’s own words, “differentiated sites of similar conflicts” between two forms of value. Of course, one might attempt to defend Marx by saying that this difference can be explained by each country’s difference, rather than by evolutionary models. But, as Spivak emphasizes, Marx deals with Asia rather monolithically without paying attention, for instance, to the fact that Chinese despots, unlike those of India, allowed private ownership, which was a necessary condition for the development of capitalism. Thus, without consenting to Marx’s teleological scenario, Spivak is able to unfasten the possibility of “unmoor[ing] the linear historical line” (101), upon which his evolutionary models are founded. In other words, Spivak problematizes the very suppositions that Marx, a nineteenth-century philosopher, might have been influenced by Darwin, not to mention that Darwin himself often got perplexed between human/non-human beings, as mentioned earlier.<sup>25)</sup> What concerns Spivak most is Marx’s confusion between

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25) This attitude seemed to remain so for a while. According to Wittfogel, “A wealth of new anthropologists and archaeological data enabled scholars such as Boas to demonstrate that the 19th-century theoreticians ‘erred in assuming a single unilinear evolution’” (370). However, Wittfogel also problematizes Boas’s stance by stating that the “new insights were accompanied by a stubborn reluctance to draw upon the facts of Western and Oriental institutional history for a new multilinear pattern of development.... Boas contented himself with an impressionistic ‘day by day’

logic and history, which results in another series of mistaken pre-suppositions about the AMP and Asia:

... to posit the AMP as historically static, and therefore socially inferior was to confuse insusceptibility to the motion of a *philosophical* morphology, the dialectic, conceived in one narrative instantiation, with *historical* stasis; and draw a *social* conclusion—and, inevitably, *moral* inferiority—from it. (CPR 90)

Beginning with Marx's "confusion" between philosophy, which is grounded on the "linear historical line," and history, which attributes "stasis" to the AMP and Asia, Spivak then points at the connection, however problematic but inevitable, between the concept of the AMP and its "moral" implications. What Spivak wants to do is puncture this logic, eventually taking exception with Marx's approval of evolutionist models. Spivak certainly doesn't excuse Marx. However, what separates Spivak from other critics is that she, unlike Edward Said, who "criticize[s] Marx's 'Romantic Orientalism'" (Morton 74), tries to reveal Marx's self-contradictions. Moreover, Spivak distinguishes herself by also connecting Marx's foreclosed AMP to our understanding of contemporary Russia or China, thus heightening the globality of Marx, unlike the cases of Kant or Hegel.

Possibly one of Spivak's most significant "discoveries" in the Marx section is made when she reads Marx's "desire to theorize the other" as an example of the complete reversal of Marx's intentions, thereby subverting his own intentions. But we shall keep in our mind that the reason why

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evaluation of man's experience" (371).

Spivak points out Marx's "contradiction" is that she can draw on Marx's AMP. Remarkably enough, what Spivak tries to emphasize is Marx's inadvertence, while still mentioning that Marx commits these self-contradictions in spite of his own "cautions." In other words, Spivak doesn't see Marx as either a confirmed colonialist or a racist:

[I]t must be said that the vision of time here—an ordered series of chunks of present—is what permitted this effort to undergo a complete reversal of intention when the "different" parts of the globe wanted to enter the predictive stream (history as the inevitable consequence of past chunks of present leading to future chunks of present) of "the same." Marx's cautions to himself—"the condition that the capitalist, in order to posit himself as capital must bring ... excepting only already available, previous wage labor—belongs among the antediluvian conditions of capital, belongs to its *historic presuppositions* ... but in no way to its *contemporary* history"—can work both ways. It could have happened otherwise, but this is the only path to the modern that we have. An effort to fit historical *presuppositions* (the "first form"—mediated by the "oriental despot" has little specificity) into philosophy turns around into an attempt to make philosophical morphology give its seal of approval upon the historical status of "the present" of a Russia or China. (CPR 81)

As Morton argues, "[T]he AMP is a name that 'inhabit[s] the pre-historical or para-geographical space/time that mark[s] the outside of feudalism-capitalist circuit.' It is this exclusion of the AMP as a precapitalist mode of production from the Eurocentric mode of production narrative that constitutes the coherence and closure of Marx's evolutionary mode of history" (77). In the above, Spivak seems to try to locate, in the cases of



modern Russia and China, Marx's confusion between history and philosophy in terms of the Species-life and Species-being. Now we watch Spivak, inspired by Marx's "insight," traces a resemblance between Marx's case and those of Russia or China: the last part of the quotation—"An effort to fit historical presuppositions ... into philosophy turns around into an attempt to make philosophical morphology give its seal of approval upon the historical status of "the present" of a Russia or China"—is significant in that it reminds us of the contemporary significance of Marx's AMP. What Spivak observes in our contemporary world is that the cases of Russia or China support Marx's "prediction," despite his "vision of time" which is founded on "an ordered series of chunks of present."

However, although we see how Spivak discloses Marx's self-contradictions as an inevitable result of his acquiescence to evolutionary models, this is not all of Spivak's project. Even in the above quotation, Spivak points at Marx's own "cautions to himself," although Marx wasn't aware that the cautions apply to himself since they turn out to "work both ways," thus proving the aforementioned "new politics of reading."

#### 4. The Resurrection of the AMP "in order to understand globality"

As I said earlier, Spivak differentiates herself from others by "resurrecting" the AMP foreclosed by Marx in order to understand our contemporary globality with regard to Marxian evolutionary models. One might be wondering why Spivak desires to revive this highly evolutionary

concept. Spivak would answer that the very supposition about the stages is not necessarily problematic as long as it is not grounded on the idea of unilinearity. This “indeterministic” idea can open up possibilities of understanding a complicated and complex contemporary society. In order to make her points, Spivak does two things: first of all, she contrasts her resurrection with those made by others, including Fredric Jameson; secondly, she brings in Deleuze and Guattari’s insights to “reuse” the AMP foreclosed by Marx as a way to explore the possibilities of the AMP to explain our contemporary world.

Even Spivak’s way of resurrecting of the AMP draws our attention. The following quotation, which immediately succeeds mention of Fredric Jameson’s famous essay, “Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism,” appears to be an important question Spivak raises in this section, for Spivak is conscious that Jameson also makes a kind of revival in his essay:

This is an effort at inserting non-Europe (no more graceful word will suffice) into an [sic] Eurocentric normative narrative—“our economic system ... and social and cultural resistances to its influence.” The “Asiatic Mode” is simply accepted as a taxonomic term here. China and India are conflated. Yet it cannot be denied that Jameson is himself resolutely against Atlantic-European dominance. *In order to understand globality, then, should we resurrect that tired old Asiatic mode?* Perry Anderson wrote about this mode, in 1974: “These elementary contrasts [outlined in his book], of course, in no way constitute even the beginnings of a comparison of the real modes of production whose complex combination and succession defined the actual social formations of these huge regions outside Europe. They merely ... preclude any attempt to

assimilate them as simple examples of a common 'Asiatic' mode of production. Let this last notion be given the decent burial that it deserves. (CPR 72; emphasis added)

What is crucial for my essay is the questioning sentence in the middle of the paragraph: "In order to understand globality, then, should we resurrect that tired old Asiatic mode?"<sup>26)</sup> It looks like a rhetorical question, whose answer is negative, but there is room for interpretation. In the same light, even why the "decent burial" recommended by Perry Anderson is mentioned at the end of the paragraph is not clear, either, since Anderson has already proven that the AMP cannot function as a concept because of its failure to serve as a real mode of production.<sup>27)</sup> Reading the entire Marx section thoroughly, however, we find several pages later that the answer is, rather unexpectedly, in the affirmative, because what Spivak wants to do is differentiate her resurrection of Marx's AMP from others, say, Fredric Jameson's:

This is why a mere burial of the notion of the AMP, showing it as empirically or theoretically insufficient, or as unimportant to Marx, will not take care of the problem as I have outlined it above. It is not merely a question of supplying Fredric Jameson with a reading list. The Asiatic Mode of Production, however brief its appearance, is the name and

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26) See also Morton: "Instead of merely rehearsing the postcolonial critique of the Eurocentric narrative of colonial modernity put forward by Said and others, Spivak asks whether we should 'resurrect' the AMP in order to understand 'globality'" (75).

27) For more, see Marian Sawr, who, thinking Anderson's "attempt to 'bury' the AMP concept" to be "ungracious," writes, "even if the AMP concept is empirically false, it has had a much more profound effect on Marxist scholarship than Anderson here acknowledges" (232).

imaginary fleshing out of a difference in terms that are consonant with the development of capitalism and the resistance appropriate to it as “the same.” (CPR 79)

If focusing on the earlier question first, we can see how Spivak views Marx’s short introduction of the AMP as sufficient to prove that it is a theoretical fiction that presupposes the linear development of capitalism from feudalism. Despite this, Spivak thinks, Jameson just endorses this kind of theoretical fiction, without using it as a lever. That is one of the reasons why the resurrection can be located in the very mention of Jameson. Therefore, we should take into account why Spivak takes several pages before she gives the answer, that is, why even its “decent burial,” as recommended by Anderson, is insufficient and why the resurrection is necessary. Spivak’s putting into question of Jameson’s revival is understandable, because she distances herself from any effort to revive the past or origin, whatever it is called, and, as the last sentence indicates, Spivak, unlike Jameson, doesn’t want to bring back what has been originally there, but wants to realize the difference at the very beginning:

Although I consider Fredric Jameson’s *Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* ... to be a text of great critical weight, or perhaps because I do so, I would like my program here to be distinguished from one of restoring the relics of a privileged narrative: “It is in detecting the traces of that uninterrupted narrative, in restoring to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality of this fundamental history, that the doctrine of a political unconscious finds its function and its necessity.” (CPR 267)

I don’t think that Spivak’s critique of Jameson in terms of the issue of

“origin” is abrupt or unreasonable; for the discussion on the origin often constitutes the basis of any discussions on unilinear “evolutionary storyline” (CPR 101). Spivak makes it obvious that her own resurrection, unlike that of those who are interested in “restoring to the surface of the text the repressed and buried reality of this fundamental history,” is brought about “in order to understand globality.”<sup>28)</sup> To better understand this phrase, let us go back to the cases of contemporary Russia and China earlier noted. The first question to ask is why Russia and China are referred to at all. Before answering this question, let us look at another instance in which Spivak mentions Russia and China, but this time more specifically than before, referring to Lenin (and Stalin) and Mao:

Strictly speaking, a revolution brings in a new mode of production. The relationship between the previous mode and the new one, however, must in actual fact be consonant with the feudalism-capitalism-communism/socialism series. This is one of the reasons why it was imperative to establish that Russia was already inserted into a developed capitalist economy on the eve of the Revolution.... And, in a bold move, Mao Zedong had seen the need for a prescriptive cultural revolution, in the cultural coding of the production of value, as it were, because the mode of economic production of value did not fit. In the context of the multinational Russian empire, Lenin thinks State; Stalin, Nation. In the context of monolithic hierarchical mandarin China, Mao thinks Culture. (CPR 83)

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28) In the same light, Spivak also criticizes Jameson's “utopianism” (“Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value” 92). Thus, Robert Young's correlation of Spivak and Jameson together cannot be fully justified: “[Spivak's] Marxist model, according to Young, replays the dogmatic paradigm of transcendental Marxists like Jameson who set Marxist dialectic beyond the openness of history” (Sakhkhane 146).

Looked at carefully, the above is a practical continuation of Spivak's use of Marx's concept of the AMP as a lever. In other words, what Marxist countries such as Russia and China have done is exactly a repetition of what Marx did with the AMP. Moreover, Spivak thinks that Marx provides both Russia and China with a kind of aforementioned "approval" (CPR 81). According to Spivak, both Russia and China hadn't yet reached the stage Marx proposed was necessary for socialism (or communism). For this reason, Lenin and Stalin prioritized the State and the Nation respectively by "inserting" Russia as a capitalistic country. In contrast, Mao Zedong approached culture prescriptively rather than descriptively. It is clear that the "evolutions" from feudalism to capitalism, and from capitalism to feudalism, are not necessarily "natural"; they can be quite arbitrary. Spivak draws upon the AMP, thus using this theoretical fiction as a lever in order to explain how our contemporary global society operates.

It is in Spivak's discussion on Marx's evolutionary models and his theory of Value that we find Spivak's most positive efforts to understand globality. Although Value has been Spivak's major concern with Marx for a while, it isn't until later in the Marx section that Spivak's discussions on the AMP and Value intersect. Of greater interest is the fact that all the main issues in the Marx section rest on Marxian evolutionary models as a topic, as in the following passage:

In order to limn our native informant's perspective in this space where the money-form of value is letting in the total or expanded form surreptitiously, we must unmoor the march of the forms of value from a historically evolutionary storyline. The heterogeneous and uneven social texture of what was given the convenient nomenclature of "the

Asiatic Mode of Production” can then be seen, by Samir Amin’s grid of imperial formations, as differentiated sites of similar conflicts between the general and the total or expanded forms of value. Upon these sites a weak variety gets on the way to capitalism: the serf-to-bourgeois story that Marx gives as a normative advance in the *Communist Manifesto*. (CPR 101)

Spivak, even when she handles Marx’s concept of “Total or expanded form of value” as part of the “march of the forms of value from a historically evolutionary line,” continues to reflect on the “origin” of evolutionary models. A detailed analysis of Marx’s concept of the Total or expanded form of value is beyond the scope of this essay, but this concept plays such a central role in the latter part of the Marx section that a few words of explanation seem necessary here. According to Spivak, Marx contradicts himself with respect to this form of value: on the one hand, in the first volume of *Capital*, Marx makes it clear that the Total or expanded form of value is “defective” because of “heterogeneousness and unconnectedness” (*Capital* 1 156);<sup>29)</sup> on the other hand, Marx also contends later that the Total or expanded form of value functions well in the colonies. It is this “contradiction” with which Spivak takes issue.<sup>30)</sup> To be

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29) Marx himself wrote of the “defectiveness” of the “Total or expanded form of value”: “Firstly, the relative expression of value of the commodity is incomplete, because the series of its representations never comes to an end. The chain, of which each equation of value is a link, is liable at any moment to be lengthened by a newly created commodity, which will provide the material for a fresh expression of value. Secondly, it is a motley mosaic of disparate and unconnected expressions of value. And lastly, if, as must be the case, the relative value of each commodity is expressed in this expanded form, it follows that the relative form of value of each commodity is an endless series of expressions of value which are all different from the relative form of value of every other commodity” (*Capital* 1 156).

more specific, Spivak emphasizes the differences between industrial capital and money capital, although both are deceptively similar as both take money-form.<sup>31)</sup> Spivak, first of all, maintains that it is this difference to

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30) More particularly, Spivak examines two passages, one of which is where Spivak points at Marx's "warn[ing]" (99) that,

... an analysis based on the labor theory of value restricted to the narrative of the development of its forms of appearance in Britain will encounter its limits as a general explanatory model and yield results in the interest of Britain. It is the second section entitled "Foreign Trade" in *Capital* 3. The entire section is worth reading to appreciate Marx's demonstration of how the interested representation of foreign trade seems to annul the validity of this own analysis of political economy. (CPR 99)

But Spivak thinks that Marx goes against what he himself has warned, when Marx tries to resolve the contradiction by repeating the mistake committed by political economists:

Is the general rate of profit raised by the higher profit rate made by capital invested in foreign trade, and colonial trade in particular?... As soon as we take our leave of the money form, however, this semblance vanishes." A sentence such as the following, therefore, takes on far more than incidental significance: "In comparing the English rate of interest with the Indian, for example, we must not take the Bank of England's interest rate but rather that charged, for instance, by people lending small machines to petty producers in domestic industry." This suggestion will travel intact into the relationship between global and (post-colonial) national cultural studies. (CPR 102)

According to Spivak, therefore, who emphasizes the difference between industrial capital and money capital, this difference should be cautiously treated, but it is Marx himself that makes the mistake of making haste, especially when he deals with the colonies.

31) For the difference between commercial value and industrial value, see Mark Sanders, who points at Spivak's interest in the possibility of a "socialist ethics" with respect to this: "This network of differences – industrial/commercial capital; use



which Marx paid much attention, in order to distinguish his own analysis from those of other political economists who didn't seem to recognize it. Spivak also agrees with Marx when he said that money capital as an explanatory model can be misleading. However, Spivak points at Marx's own self-contradiction when he deals with the issue of interest rate in the colonies.<sup>32)</sup> Ultimately, Spivak criticizes Marx for resolving the conflicts and contradictions—including the aforementioned “heterogeneousness and unconnectedness” of the Total or expanded form of value—when he discusses the colonial world, both after claiming the “defectiveness” of the Total or expanded form of value and after differentiating the money capital and industrial capital, as when Marx writes about the Bank of England and the case of India.

However, Spivak, after disclosing Marx's seeming self-contradiction, remarkably demonstrate his “insight” that this kind of “defectiveness” persists in evolutionary models not only in Marx's contemporary colonial societies, but also in the our globalized world, where financial capital is dominant (CPR 101).

Now, returning to the AMP, we witness Spivak suggesting that Marx's discussions on Value need some kind of “supplementing”; for this reason, she turns to Deleuze and Guattari, who open up the possibility of subversion of evolutionary models (CPR 107). In contrast to the evolutionary models, where the AMP had to be separate from capitalism, in Deleuze and Guattari's model, this separation is not required; for

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value/exchange value; capitalism/socialism—continues to animate Spivak's pathbreaking writings on Marx. It lies at the centre of her search for an *ethical* supplement to *Capital*” (54).

32) For more, see CPR 99-100.

“history is contingent not necessary ... [and] [history] comprises a long sequence of accidents, mishaps, chance meetings and unexpected syntheses, rather than a logical progression from one kind of society to another ...” (Buchanan 92-93). Spivak, therefore, contends that Deleuze and Guattari’s view on the stages of “savages, barbarians, and civilized men” in their *Anti-Oedipus* is not based on evolutionist theory,<sup>33)</sup> and that it is these two that can “unmoor the march of the forms of value from a historically evolutionary storyline” (CPR 101).

In order to account for Spivak’s way of critiquing Marxian evolutionary models established on the AMP, while turing to Marx’s unwitting insight, I will focus on her “gulf” motif pertaining to the possibility of its “un/bridgeability.”<sup>34)</sup> In the following, Spivak notes, first of all, that the gulf is unbridgeable, but then she offers the possibility of bridging it:

The Asiatic Mode of Production, then, in new and variously globalized politics of reading, makes visible the fault lines within the account of history as (European) modes of production. It can supplement the lacuna within the dominant account in such a way that the self-identity of dominance begins to waver. Yet, in its orthodox formulation, it is precisely the name of a gulf across which above (the State) and below (the peasant community) cannot engage in the dialectic of revolution. According to this account, Europe was obliged not to supple-

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33) According to Kenneth Surin, Deleuze owes this “repudiating [the] evolutionist theory” to Pierre Clastre, an anthropologist and anarchist, who, “[a]gainst [the traditional] view, argued that the State is the condition for undertaking significant economic and political and the division of labour ... so logically and empirically the division of labour does not condition economic and political projects” (Parr 264-65).

34) In CPR, the gulf is also called “a lacuna” (97) or “a gap” (85).

ment but to supervene, in order to provide a (colonial/capitalist) state with which the dialectic of resistance might become possible. That this normalizing vision of imperialism was far too simple in its outlines has been abundantly demonstrated. What I want now to suggest is that, even if the substantive content and explanatory and predictive potential of the Asiatic Mode of Production is and has been discredited, the ruse of declaring the dangerous supplement a stasis that must be interrupted in its own interest is still with us. (CPR 96-97)

The above passage begins with a potential given by a new kind of reading, put in the global context. But the potential gets locked “in its orthodox formation,” which is the “very name of the gulf.” However, the remainder makes a more affirmative effort to contemporize Marx’s insight “in order to understand globality.” If we concentrate on the gulf motif, we realize that the gulf is not at first given any possibility of being bridged because of the limitations of the “orthodox formulation,” which cannot perform “dangerous supplementing” but only “supervening,” which, continues Spivak, has much to do with “the normalizing vision of imperialism,” the reason being that the gulf is “above (the State) and below (the peasant communism) cannot engage in the dialectic of revolution.”

What matters most for this essay is the possibility of supplementing, with which the passage ends. In order to explore the possibility of bridging the gulf, Spivak borrows from Derrida the “dangerous supplement”: “One can also think of ‘supplementing’ Marx’s text in the same context in the same sense that, ‘If a hierarchical opposition is set up between two concepts (identity/relationship, use value/exchange value), the less favored or logically posterior concept can be shown to be implicit in the other, supplying a lack in the other that was always already there’”

(“Speculations on Reading Marx” 54). So the very concept of AMP sets off a possibility of bridging the gulf by supplementing the gap.

As I said earlier, the Marx section of CPR differentiates itself from the other sections because of its unique focus on Marxian evolutionary models. Here again, even after discussing Value, Spivak comes back to this issue. In other words, what Spivak performs with Deleuze and Guattari’s help is the subversion of evolutionary models that provide the foundations for Marx’s AMP.

What is most notable, however, is that Spivak takes further steps, grounded on the belief that Deleuze and Guattari have made it possible to discuss Marx’s modes of production in a new way. Unlike Marx’s “synchronic” modes of production, Deleuze and Guattari’s models, that is, “savages, barbarians, civilized men,” are, despite their resemblance to Marx’s, “diachronic”; for the despot or state in their models is considered to be only one of the “causes,” not the only one. Thus, for Deleuze and Guattari, the despotic state, which is for Marx an equivalent for the AMP, is reinterpreted in a novel way:

This special situation of the State as a category ... has to be explained. To begin with, it should be said that the primordial despotic state is not a historical break like any other. Of all the institutions, it is perhaps the only one to appear fully armed in the brain of those who institute it... That is why Marxism didn’t quite know what to make of it: it has no place in the famous five stages: primitive communism, ancient city-states, feudalism, capitalism, and socialism. *It is not one formation among others, nor is it the transition from one formation to another.* (*Anti-Oedipus* 218-19; emphasis in original)

Thus believing that Deleuze and Guattari have initiated the possibility of bridging the gap, Spivak explains why:

Again, because Deleuze and Guattari see desiring/social production (or the other way around, at the same time) as the coding and re-coding of the everyday in collusion with the miraculating great narratives, they can see the Asiatic Mode as a place of constant connections rather than an unbridged and unbridgeable gulf. Both sides are involved there because both sides are fragmentarily and disjunctively woven of machines coupled in bits and pieces:

The despotic State ... forms a new deterritorialized full body; on the other hand it maintains the old territorialities, integrates them as parts or organs of production in the new machine.... The State is the original abstract essence that is not to be confused with a beginning.... As for the subaggregates themselves, the primitive territorial machines, they are the concrete itself ... but their segments here enter into relationships corresponding to the essence. (CPR 108)

The above quotation traces how the “gulf” can be bridged by means of Deleuze and Guattari, whose modes of the State are interconnected: looking at the earlier quotation from *Anti-Oedipus*, we realize that in Deleuze and Guattari's model, the AMP establishes a new form of body, “deterritorialized” from the primitive territorial machine, but at the same time its originality shouldn't be considered as an “origin,” because the segments of the former machine have also been contained in it.<sup>35)</sup>

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35) According to Paul Patton, the concept of deterritorialization, which “lies at the heart of Deleuze and Guattari's mature political philosophy,” is “always a complex process involving at least a deterritorialising element and a territory which is being left behind or reconstituted.... Deterritorialisation is always bound up with correlative

Therefore, I think Spivak would agree with Simon Choat, who observes, “Nonetheless, while these social machines are not to be understood in terms of a straightforward linear succession, they can be profitably used as analytical distinctions that bring into better focus capitalism’s specificity” (140). Thus, Marxian models of “stages of modes of production,” despite their evolutionary implications at their origin, are given a new significance, for Spivak to be able to imply that this wouldn’t be possible without Marx’s rich “self-contradictions.”

Although I argued earlier that Spivak’s interest in Marxian evolutionary models is newly found in the Marx section of CPR, it doesn’t mean that the interest is momentary. Rather, the interest continues, especially when she intends to account for the situations in which globalized contemporary society finds itself: Spivak writes in her essay “What’s Left of Theory,” written after the publication of CPR, “Again, the evolutionist narrative explanation and argument is that the former colonies must be modernized. The development of bank-based commercial capital in neocolonialisms showed up a fault-line in Marx’s teleology” (*An Aesthetic Education* 212). Near to the last part of the Marx section, where the value of the AMP is “confirmed,” Spivak makes a more general point that the idea of the three stages of society is not necessarily, in and of itself, problematic.<sup>36)</sup> These

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process of reterritorialisation, which does not mean returning to the original territory but rather the ways in which deterritorialised elements recombine and enter into new relations” (Parr 70).

36) See also Spivak: “I found that Marx needed to foreclose the tribal to philosophize, that Hegel had a foregone conclusion. Things were not much different in the case of the nationalist activist. Intellectuals in India, prefiguring (sometimes in reverse) the metropolitan migrants claiming to be the native informant. I touched on Marx

double-sided views on the evolutionary models are not examples of Spivak's self-contradictions but rather of the resilience of her reading strategy. The Marx section of CPR is sufficient for me to make my point that Spivak marks herself as one of the remarkable postcolonial theorists to incorporate Derridean "new politics of reading" to read Marx's concepts of AMP in a fresh way, both enriching our discussions on Marxian evolutionary models in particular, and enlarging our perspective on postcolonial theories in general.

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somewhat differently, but still suggested that he needed Asia to mark a difference and that without difference his system would not work" (Bilimoria 233).

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국문초록

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아시아적 생산양식의 폐제와 그 함의:  
『탈식민이성비판』에서 가야트리 스피박에 의한 맑스의  
진화론적 모델 비판

유 두 선\*

탈식민주의 논의에서 ‘진화론’은 상당한 논란거리인데, ‘사회적 다원주의’란 이름으로 인간사회에 적용되어 제국주의/식민주의의 정당화에 동원되었기 때문이다. 이 논문은 가야트리 스피박이 『탈식민이성비판』의 맑스 부분에서 맑스 자신에 의한 아시아적 생산양식 개념 폐제에 대해 가한 비판을 살피면서 이 문제를 짚어본다. 이 저서의 다른 부분에서 토착정보원의 관점이 폐제되는 반면, 이 부분에서 아시아적 생산양식이란 개념의 폐제가 새롭게 부각된다는 점과 함께, 이와 연관된 맑스의 진화론적 모델 수용에 각별한 관심을 기울이는 가운데, 이 논문은 스피박이 어떻게 이 진화론적 모델 수용을 문제 삼는지를 다룰 것이다. 이때의 가설은, 스피박이 이 폐제가 단선적인 진화론적 모델에 토대를 둔, 맑스의 “타자를 이론화하려는 욕망”의 표현으로 본다는 것이다. 또한 이 논문은 또한 스피박이 이 개념을 부활시켜 어떻게 전지구성을 이해하는데 활용하는지도 다루는데, 이때 스피박이 이 개념이 들뢰즈/가타리 같은 최근 철학자들에게 영감을 주어 단선적 진화론에 의존하지 않을 경우

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‘단계’를 설정하는 것을 문제 삼지 않는다는 점에 주목할 것이다. 궁극적으로 이 논문은, 스피박이 어떤 방식으로 데리다의 “새로운 정치적 독서”를 받아들여 맑스의 진화론적 모델 수용을 새롭게 읽음으로써 진화론과 연관된 탈식민주의 이론의 논의를 풍요롭게 한 주목할 만한 이론가라는 주장을 펼친다.