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Under Western Eyes: The Media in the Gulf War

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Middle Easterners get much of their information through their senses of smell and touch, which require a close approach; Americans rely primarily on visual information, backing up in order to see an intelligent picture.

—*San Francisco Chronicle*, January 13, 1991

Now dark with shadows, now beaming forth an excess of light as it waits to be disposed in new landscapes. In hollow, in lack or excess, man would perceive and receive nothing except from his own eye.

—Luce Irigaray, *Marine Lover*, 1991

THE CRISIS IN the Gulf once again demonstrated the strong association between *Western* interests and *world* peace. The U.S. invasion of Panama received the same legal response and official condemnation from the United Nations as did Iraq's occupation of Kuwait. However, the former action incurred remarkably little public criticism. Perhaps this is why very few people are actually familiar with the U.N. resolutions in the case of Panama. On December 23, 1989, just eight months before the official U.N. condemnation of Iraq, which was passionately supported by the U.S., the same U.S. government vetoed a U.N. Security Council resolution condemning the invasion of Panama. Six days later, on December 29, the U.N. General Assembly issued another resolution demanding the withdrawal of the "U.S. armed invasion forces from Panama" and calling the invasion a "flagrant violation of international law and of the independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity of states."¹ However, in the domain of what is called the inter-

national public sphere, nobody has accused the United States of “nefarious aggression,” “monstrosity,” or “blood thirstiness,”² those signifiers of an imperial, primitive, despotic, and therefore by definition illegitimate and irrational desire to eat up small and defenseless countries. On the contrary, the media and the respectable public seemed to unanimously agree that the United States is the only power capable of enforcing international law against such aggression. The war’s legitimacy was a case of severe amnesia.

My aim in this essay is to examine some of the significations, discourses, and images in the media during the war in 1991: the “legitimation process,” as it is called in the sociological literature. By the notion of legitimacy, I understand something more (and something different) than a relationship of consent between the ruler and the ruled. Although what I am going to say necessarily addresses the question of popular consent to a certain extent, by “legitimation” I understand the way that a position is constructed as legitimate by the subject who takes such a position, hence the very process of the *production* of the subject itself. What I hope to do is bring a set of uneven and separate historical, political, and economic fragments together so that we will be able to see the Gulf War in a different way. First, I want to refer to orientalism as a condition of the discourse of war. Second, I will refer to the economic and historical roots of crisis in the Middle East and the new situation imposed by the global conjuncture. Third, I will talk about the figure of woman in the war. I will then examine the figure of Saddam Hussein, and finally I will attempt to show that Saddam Hussein’s “face” can be seen as the constitutive metaphor of the war.

Orientalism

The association between Western interests and world peace demonstrated that the “world” is not just a place where we happen to be, or a just place, but it is a world that is already *worlded* by power, already coded into the grand narrative of the West. The worlding of the East, and the Middle East in particular, was studied by Edward Said in his monumental work *Orientalism*.³ By criticizing a narrow reading of orientalism as simply consisting of orientalist books, Said’s argument referred to a larger *text*, a *relational web* in which the necessarily forgotten discourse of orientalism was placed. He called attention to all those institutions (not only universities and research institutes but also colonial institutions, media, the economy) to which orientalism essentially contributed, and to texts (geography, history, sociology, literature) that it made possible by writing itself on their margins. In Said’s definition, orientalism is not simply a name for an academic field or a system of ideas but a historically specific *discursive move* that makes “an epistemological and ontological distinction between the West and East.”⁴ Orientalism is thus the production of the text or inscription of places and directions, a “worlding” in Gayatri Spivak’s words.⁵

Orientalism is hegemonic not simply because it is a dominant idea consented to by people but because it is a *signifying force* that is multiplied and reproduced in different texts and contexts to such a degree that it is not even recognizable as a separate entity; it is *elaborated* in the Gramscian sense and diffused in the culture at large. Elaboration means that the marking of the Orient as Other occurs on multiple levels (academic, political, epistemological, literary, cultural, popular, moral) and that its continuity is not simply a totalization but a continuity that is possible only through discontinuity and dissimulation. Orientalism does not bring different discursive spheres and modes together, it dissimulates itself, changes and transforms itself through them. It thus disappears into the culture at large, and its name is forgotten there. This is why, whatever methodological differences there are between Said and Foucault, Said's work appears as truly archaeological in Foucault's sense, for it discovers an "Orientalist layer" in the history of *production* of the Western subject, or "man," the subject of humanism. If several different places are homogenized under the sign of the Orient, such a homogenization does not inscribe the Orient only; this inscription *centers* the West as the privileged or dominant pole of an epistemological and ontological opposition. This is exactly how orientalist discourse is related to the Western *hegemonic investment* and the colonial/imperial *apparatus of power* that embodies it. The West constitutes itself as universal and sovereign subject by marking the different as Other and by thus *dissimulating* its forceful appropriation of peoples, lands, and resources. Such a dissimulation is the symbolic violence of orientalism as knowledge or truth of the Orient.

The first quotation with which I opened this article is a banal, everyday, media version of the epistemological and ontological distinction between the West and East, or *the centering of the Western self* (the one who backs up in order to have an "intelligible picture," a "horizon"). What is important is the speed with which such stereotypes came to surface during the war. The reason we have to go back to Said's analysis in the face of such a blatant instance of racism is precisely to see that it is not as banal as it may seem. Such a banality will always be denied and fixed by the epistemological and ontological measures of the *larger* imperial and humanist project of coding and decoding cultures and knowing, understanding, and liberating others. This is the true meaning of Gramsci's notion of *elaboration*. To give another banal example, although we now criticize a discourse called orientalism in an emergent discipline or field called "cultural studies," we tend to forget that those whom we criticize (media, politicians, writers, other academics like ourselves, etc.) do not even, or no longer, use the word "Orient."⁶ This is because the "world" is already coded into the grand narrative of the West. This is the *factual result* of orientalism that the United Nations *empirically demonstrated* in practice by legally sanctioning a violator to act as the law enforcer against another violator. If so, however, our task is *not simply* to show how the media images of the Middle East during the Gulf War were continuous with orientalist and colonial stereotypes but also to show how this continuity itself is always discontinu-

ous, how orientalism's continuity depends on the forgetting of a fundamental act of division and violation that repeats itself in this very forgetting.

Crisis

The energy question is never seen as an issue in international trade but rather as a question of *national security* in the United States and Europe. In this context, Simon Bromley defines oil as a "strategic commodity."⁷ James O'Connor explains in detail how essential oil is for the contemporary capitalist economy. It is important for the production of capital, value and surplus value, and the circulation of capital in general. In his words, there is "no capitalism without oil."⁸ How did oil come into this important place that it occupies in capitalist world economy today? I would like to stress here the historical connection between decolonization and oil.

Although oil was discovered in the United States during the early nineteenth century and the demand took off in the early twentieth century, it gained its real politico-economic significance in the postwar world. Using Deleuze and Guattari's terminology, we might say that the new postwar hegemonic project led by the United States corresponded to a new phase of *deterritorialization* in the development of capitalism.⁹ Decolonization was expected to lead to a system of independent nation-states held together by the abstract unity of the world market. Removal of the European political zones would displace the politically sanctioned, closed economic circuits and would open these regions to penetration by internationally mobile productive capital. Of course, an essential element of the project was the transnationalization of U.S. capital. The breakup of old "territorial" political units and the reproduction on an enlarged scale of the economic space of oligopolistic competition would lead to an expansion of the scope of the world market.¹⁰ The program of classical, "territorial" imperialism depended on a modern overcoding of (Foucaultian) disciplines according to principles of ancient imperial regime—those "nearchaisms" of modern Europe from Bonaparte to the United Kingdom. In the new hegemonic project led by the United States, however, the exercise of national self-determination was necessary in order to enter into the abstract design of a global market order.¹¹ The regulation of the world market would be achieved through the international hegemony of the dollar, trade liberalization, and U.S. control over international oil. This last point, the necessity to control oil, already demonstrates that this new abstraction or deterritorialization would not be achieved without some significant degree of reterritorialization (another series of nearchaisms). Indeed, the political and ideological aspects of the new model were the military unity of the capitalist world (NATO) vis-à-vis the Eastern bloc and a strong anti-Communist discourse. To be sure, decolonization was not created by the new hegemonic project. On the contrary, there would be no decolonization without the resistance struggles of the peoples of the colonized countries and the national liberation movements that they established. The defeat of the fascist-imperialist project was another impor-

tant factor. But it is important to stress that the process of decolonization did not occur outside the new hegemonic project that aimed to capture and articulate it.

Within the framework of this new hegemonic model, oil played a crucial role. It became a “strategic commodity” with the Truman Doctrine–Marshall Plan, which embodied the project.¹² Middle Eastern oil was controlled by U.S. transnational capital in the form of major oil companies (called “majors” in the literature of political economy). As the Cold War made intercapitalist unity vis-à-vis communism necessary, there was also the urgent need to reconstruct postwar Europe. Western Europe and Japan became strategically and economically dependent on the United States. Low-cost oil supplied to Europe and Japan by the “majors” was central to the postwar capitalist boom. The restructuring of industry in Europe and Japan required a massive influx of oil.

The rise of a radical Arab nationalism and the foundation of the state of Israel complicated the U.S. hegemonic project, but they did not change its basic outlines. The U.S. managed to fight against Arab radical nationalism on the one hand and control Middle Eastern oil on the other. In this, the so-called twin-pillar policy played a key role. Instead of a direct military presence, close alliances with two Muslim countries, Saudi Arabia in the peninsula and Iran in the Gulf (in addition to the other two allies, Israel and Turkey), helped the United States to exercise considerable power and control in the region. Iran and Saudi Arabia thus became dependent on U.S. military power.¹³ With the withdrawal of Britain from the emirates, these newly independent small countries too would become dependent on the United States.

This postwar hegemonic system in the region continued without major interruption until the 1973–1974 oil crisis. The oil crisis came as a reaction by producer states against the unilateral reduction of “posted,” or tax-reference, prices of crude oil by metropolitan countries.¹⁴ The resolution of the crisis meant a reunification of the world market and a consolidation of the nation-state system. But it also meant some loss of control for the United States. As Edward Said shows, this new politico-economic situation imposed its own cultural rule in the form of bringing the *image* of Islam into the American media, whereas before “one saw and heard of Arabs and Iranians, Pakistanis and Turks, rarely of Muslims.”¹⁵ The political culture of the Western world experienced an intensified return of the orientalist themes of old territorial imperialism, and once more, Islam became one of those major Oriental figures by which the Westerners, especially Americans, defined themselves: The new enemy Other was seen as inversely equal and opposite to “us”; order was opposed to chaos, civilization to backwardness, dynamism and democracy to despotism and stagnation. The Islamic revolution in Iran and a radical religious-political discourse that emerged out of the double crisis of Arab nationalism and socialism made this opposition even more rigid. The postcrisis conjuncture was thus characterized by an entirely new structuration of the relations between the United States and the Middle East. The Gulf states gained a fur-

ther political significance, for the U.S. hegemonic role “came to depend on the connections established to the Gulf producers and especially to Saudi Arabia.”¹⁶ Any threat to the integrity of Gulf states is regarded as a direct challenge to the United States. In the present conjuncture created by the collapse of Stalinist regimes in Eastern Europe, the United States managed to use this hegemonic connection to its (at least provisional) advantage. The urgent need to reaffirm its own leadership position was now maintained by a unilateral control of oil supply, which was guaranteed with the victory.¹⁷

After a detailed discussion of two different theories of war—the economic theory, which emphasizes the importance of the control of Gulf oil and oil revenues,¹⁸ and the political theory, which stresses the exigencies of the Middle East and the imperatives of the national security state—O’Connor reaches the following conclusion: “Oil and U.S. power, the nature of the economy and U.S. foreign policy, are at stake, as is the leading role of the military industrial complex. Oil can now be seen as the means to economic and imperialistic ends. Politics, the Pentagon and military-industrial complex, and the banking system are in their own ways means to the end of oil. Threaten oil and you threaten the national security state and U.S. ‘credibility.’ Threaten the Pentagon and the military-industrial complex and you threaten oil. Economics and politics thus collapse into an *almost impenetrable black hole*” (emphasis added).¹⁹

In what follows I will read this “almost impenetrable black hole” as a metaphor for the crisis of the Western subject whose *subject* position is constructed by practices such as orientalism. I am referring to the sovereign and supreme white male seen on TV every day during the Gulf crisis, always firm, always in control: President Bush, Mr. Baker, Dan Rather. (I should nevertheless specify that I am not referring to the male subject only. As my following argument makes clear, there are subject positions available for both male and female Western subjects in the discourse of the war.) The system of subject formation that I will discuss here can be described as one that *produces* “black holes.” The Gulf crisis itself can be considered as a metaphor of this system of subject formation: The Gulf is the trouble spot in metropolitan society’s everyday life that Edward Said mentions. I will now examine a set of images and representations and then make an overall evaluation in which I want to show the media’s strategic function.

Difference: Woman

In this section, I want to focus on the representation of Arab woman in the war. I approach this representation within a problematic of sexual difference, which is, as a problematic of difference, always in articulation with other codes and systems of difference (economic, political, cultural, ethnic, etc.).

Abouali Farmanfarmaian develops a comprehensive analysis of the U.S. national fantasy in the Gulf War.²⁰ Farmanfarmaian’s account of the articulation of

sexual, racial, and cultural difference is an important contribution to the more mainstream social scientific accounts of the *crisis* of the national security state, for it offers a historical and analytic explanation of what the national security state might look like on the level of the *unconscious* inscription of its subject position. I will take his analysis as a starting point for my own. According to Farmanfarmaian, by means of the fantasy machine that was built around the stories of rape, looting, infanticide, and torture of Kuwaitis by Iraqis and by means of the metaphor of the “rape of Kuwait” and the definition of the Middle East as a “culture of rape,” and so on, the white male soldier tries to escape his castration. But the paradoxical result of his sexualization of the world is indeed castration.²¹ For Farmanfarmaian, this fantasy machine is rooted in the mythical narrative of the “black rapist vs. white woman.” In other words, the war was fought for the white woman against the black rapist. Farmanfarmaian stresses the fluidity of the military and racist consciousness for whom Saddam Hussein and Rodney King are the same.²² Although I agree with his analysis in its general lines, I have two important reservations that might change the character of his psychoanalytic account.

The first one has to do with the equivalence of Saddam Hussein and Rodney King. Such an equivalence is clearly readable in the discourse of the police officers Farmanfarmaian quotes. In order to prevent an overinvestment in the very economy of sameness that we criticize, it seems important to me to note that the Arab, the African American, and the African are the same from the perspective of the castrating and castrated white male colonizer. The acknowledgment of the fictional nature of this sameness is not necessarily a fall into a theory of false consciousness but is an awareness of the multiple articulations of otherness and difference and of the complexity of the economy of sameness. In war against a Third World dictatorship, Rodney King can well be an alibi.²³

Second, it also seems that the place of the native woman remains rather limited in Farmanfarmaian’s narrative. He describes woman’s role in the early imperialist (colonial) economy: The white woman constituted the *ideal* of womanhood and the native woman was assigned the chores. However, it is not clear why one should take the early colonial narrative as the model for the recent war. Not only does Farmanfarmaian’s account seem to depend on a mythical narrative of origins, but also, the hegemonic system might be much more intricately established. The hegemonic system does not simply deny the value of the oppressed but rather assumes value in order to be able to extract it from her.²⁴ Farmanfarmaian chooses to focus on the myth of white woman-black rapist instead of focusing on what he himself describes, in the context of the sexualization of the colonized, as “the continued and consistent assault on black women by *constructing* them as promiscuous initiators of any sexual act.”²⁵ This choice is interesting especially if we think that in the same context he refers to Malek Alloula’s study of the *Algerian* postcards sent by the French soldiers.²⁶ Alloula’s study shows not only *Algerian*

woman's construction as the "promiscuous initiator of any sexual act" (the assumption of an excess sexuality necessary to extract affective value) but also, and much more important in the context of a war in the *Middle East*, the strange association between *the veil and the European male's sexual fantasies*. Alloula's work provides a more convenient model to think about the recent war's discourse, fantasy, and imagery in terms of sexuality. Indeed, Fanon had already pointed to the significance of the veil in the context of French colonization in Algeria: Conquering Algeria was identical to conquering its woman, unveiling her.²⁷ In this sense, Farmanfarmaian's account becomes really an account of an American myth *in America* rather than in the neocolonial context. If, as Farmanfarmaian suggests, Saddam Hussein was unconsciously seen as identical to a black rapist, the one who is protected or liberated was the *other woman*. Indeed, this war might offer us the possibility of questioning the complexity of the system of patriarchy—a system that constitutes woman as the site of an ambiguity and undecidability whose complex inscription always requires the *other woman*.

Such an identification in the context of the recent war might be important because, within the textual problematic of orientalism, the United States occupies a "strategic location" in Said's sense: "an author-position in a text with regard to the Oriental material he writes about."²⁸ The U.S. government and media can also be seen as authors writing the text of their own intervention. When the Muslim woman is identified as the object of a strategy,²⁹ there is the opportunity to construct a language of liberation, progressive influence, and so on. I am drawing attention to this language not simply because it is obviously politically profitable but because such political profit is even more complex than it seems. For instance, the strategic choice of Muslim woman probably gives the middle-class *Western women* a sense of being liberated and a feeling of obvious superiority compared to the women in the hands of those despotic Orientals. The Western self that orientalism constructs is man, but in the larger and complex hegemonic project, Western woman has a role to play because what is at stake in this project of subject formation is also the construction of her "self."³⁰ The Muslim woman was one of the strategic "signs" that was "worth marking" during the crisis. "Islam," too, was mediated through her. The war would not have been as legitimate as it was without her embodiment of the metaphor of oppression. This is why we cannot understand the American project with models based on the early colonial period or the context of Nazi discourse.³¹

During the period of crisis, we have heard, watched, and read numerous accounts of the situation of women in Muslim and Arab countries. Her rights and well-being were taken as the *measure* of the backwardness of Islamic or Arabic culture. And we saw almost every day the image of a veiled woman. These images were mobilized by a neoorientalist discourse, always accompanied by a fixed story line that transformed American presence into a progressive mission in a foreign and backward land of Oriental despots. The veil was a constant obsession and a

proof of the darkness and backwardness of culture. A report from *Time* magazine is a typical example:

The modernization and enrichment of Saudi life produced by the oil-price boom of the 70s and 80s may one day look like a mere twitch compared with the convulsions to come. ... Ripping the veil off their closely shrouded ties with the U.S., the Saudis offered their territory as the base for the greatest concentration of American troops since the Vietnam war. A land that forbids women *to drive, to travel unaccompanied, to wear Western garb or to expose anything more than a scant flash of eyes and cheekbones* is now host to thousands of rifle-toting, jeep-driving female G.I.s clad in fatigues.³² (Emphasis added.)

If oil is a *strategic commodity* of global capitalism, the Muslim woman, as the measure of “progress” and “democracy,” emerges as the *strategic target-subject* of the neorientalist discourse of the new world order. A political value is extracted from the representation of her (strategically useful) identity as oppressed/woman.³³ Donna Pryzbylowicz and Abdul JanMohamed referred to a moral surplus gained in the recent war that overcame the moral deficit produced by the unsuccessful Vietnam War.³⁴ To this, we may add political and even future economic surpluses. The Muslim woman stands where the political, the economic, and the cultural “values” meet: Her culturally specific embodiment is the commodity that is exchanged with other commodities. During the war, these (mostly middle-class) Saudi women were constructed as ready at any moment for “liberation,” as we see in a photo in *Time* magazine: Two veiled, dark silhouettes hold colorful Benetton shirts in their hands, already burning with desire to consume, to *have* “looks.” (Let me add that I do not mean that these woman are not oppressed by the feudal and semifeudal structures of Saudi Arabian society—a feudalism that is reinforced and reproduced by the place of Saudi Arabia in the global capitalist division of labor. Surely, we also read stories of street demonstrations by Saudi women. I simply draw attention to the fact that their struggle is captured and articulated by a specific project—hence the complexity of such struggles.)

In Figure 3.1 we find the same strategic opposition (veiled vs. liberated) in the contrast between the sunny background of a marketplace and the woman’s veiled dark silhouette; this is a scene that is inscribed as “natural” (in other words, inscribed as “uninscribed”) in photographic space.³⁵ This is the space, we should remember once again, in which one “backs up in order to see an intelligent picture.” If the quote from the *San Francisco Chronicle* that begins this chapter is a condensed, packaged, consumable *elaboration* of the grand narrative of evolution, this picture manifests its *black hole*. In the postcards Alloula studied, the relationship with the Algerian woman was romanticized, eroticized, and sexualized; she was constructed as “licentious other,” belonging to an Other space where she was imprisoned by the Oriental despot. But she was, or would be, accessible and would be appropriated once that space was liberated/colonized. In these post-

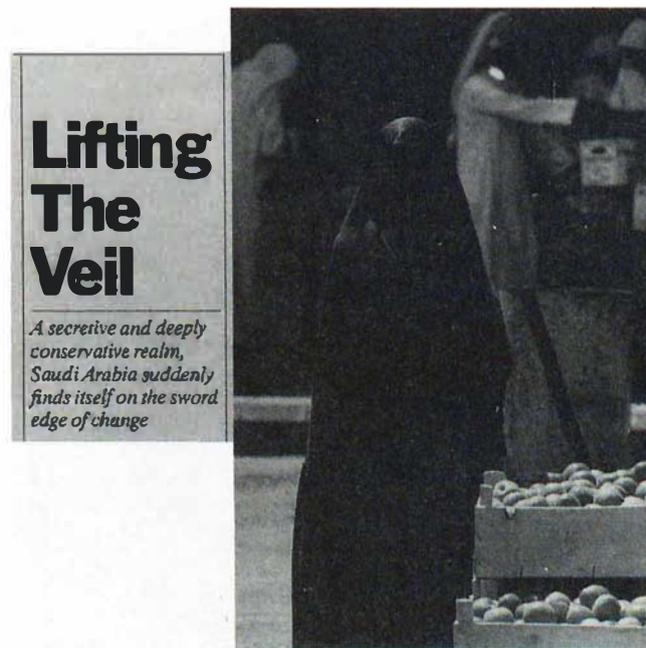


FIGURE 3.1

cards, she was unveiled, often half-naked.³⁶ During the war, however, there was a strong emphasis on the *darkness of the veil*. The veiled woman in the picture with her dark, faceless presence and her hood is an embodiment of death. How to read the desire for this picture?

“Saddam”

Now I want to examine a series of images that are all Saddam Hussein faces in close-up (Figures 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5). We know the significance of Hussein’s face from the war rhetoric; it is *the face that should not be saved*. And now we understand why: As we see in these pictures, *Saddam’s face has to be veiled*. We can read these pictures as a demonstration of the structural role that sexual difference plays in the signification of cultural difference. The formula of fetishism is applicable here. Freud defined fetishism as a mechanism of “disavowal,” that is, the displaced persistence of a belief despite the contrary perception.³⁷ “We know that he is not a woman, but nevertheless ...” The tabloid story is always consumed as just a story (Ella Shohat writes): “The cover of a *National Examiner* (March 12) featured ‘Saddam Hussein’s Bizarre Sex Life: A Recent CIA Report Reveals’ with an image of *Hussein the crossdresser in a mini skirt*.”³⁸ With Saddam Hussein, we have not left

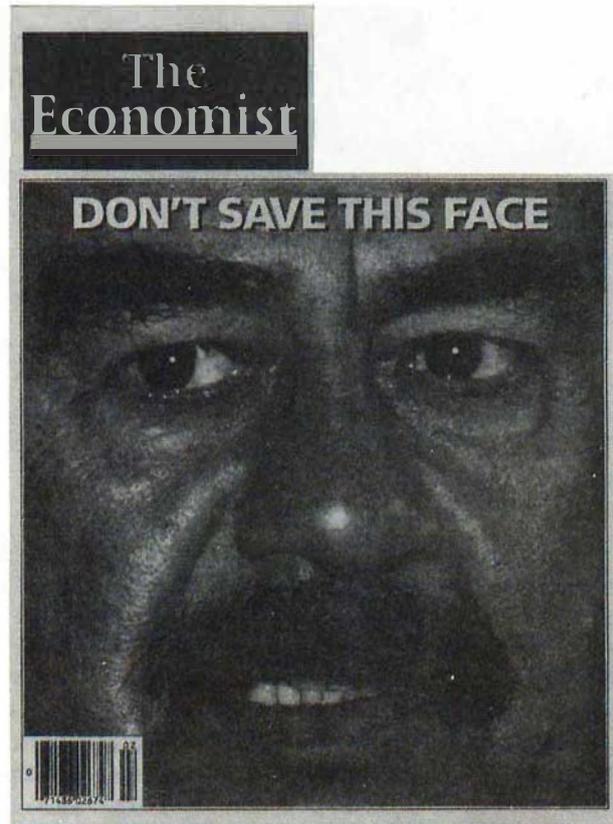


FIGURE 3.2

woman. Indeed, it would not be an exaggeration to say that *during the war, the woman was everywhere, as the veil, as the metaphor of truth, and as the truth.*³⁹

As a moment of Otherness, the moment of fetishism is also a moment of *ambiguity* and *displacement*. During the crisis, the media kept asking one question every night in the news, in every single TV program: *What is in Saddam's mind?* We are of course reminded of the question that Freud articulated: *What does woman want?* Slavoj Žižek argues that racism is determined by the Freudian and Lacanian libidinal economy. As an example he mentions the question that was asked about Jesse Jackson in the 1988 elections: *What does Jesse Jackson want?*⁴⁰ According to Žižek, this question is related to the structure of racist fantasy: The Other's actions are always suspected of being guided by a hidden motive. The point, therefore, becomes to know his hidden desires, his hidden plans, his hidden weapons. *The whole of Iraq was (is still) covered with a huge veil.* The media, the experts, and



FIGURE 3.3

the inspectors were never tired of searching for plans, plants, weapons—remember those cold faces on television, always in control and always pointing to their little black holes on photos and maps! Following Lacan, Žižek argues that it is this assumption of the Other's hidden *surplus* enjoyment that keeps racist fantasy going. Let us also remember that one fundamental argument for the war was to *stop Saddam Hussein*, not just to liberate Kuwait. Here are a few descriptions of this new villain: "Armed and audacious, Saddam Hussein takes Kuwait—and *no one knows how to stop him*"; "Iraq's dictator seems to be *capable of doing anything* to get his way"; "Ruthless Saddam Hussein seizes tiny Kuwait—and *no one is sure where his ambition will end*"; "*Just how far will Saddam Hussein's lust for power*

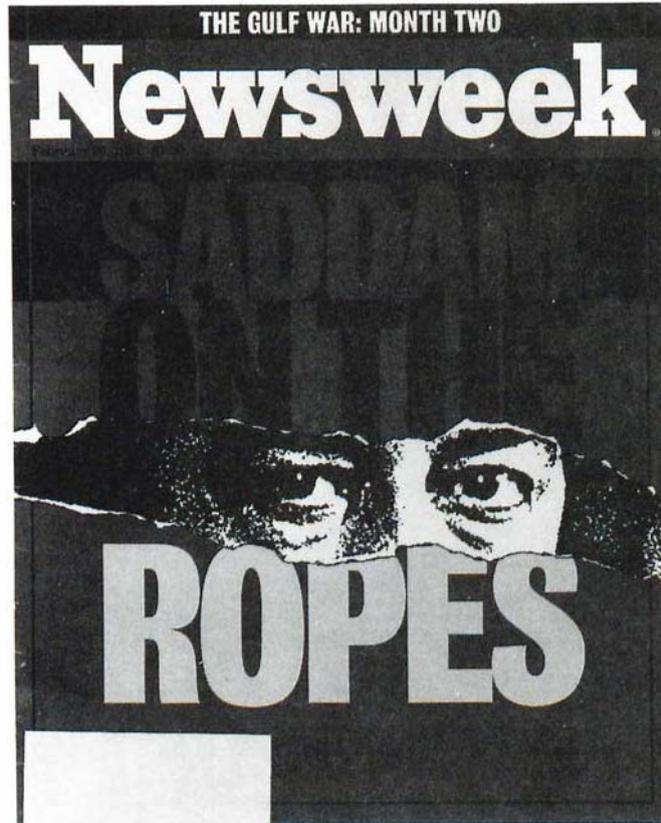


FIGURE 3.4

carry him?"; "No one can be very sure, what if any message will derail his ruthless drive to be the paramount power in the Persian Gulf?"; "Of course Saddam has more in his mind than money."⁴¹

But why the obsession with Hussein's face? His face is veiled, we see *his eyes*, he is looking at us. *Time* correspondent Dan Goodgame wrote: "On meeting him, a visitor was first struck by his eyes, crackling with alertness and at the same time cold and remorseless as snake eyes on the side of dice. They are the eyes of a killer."⁴² According to Lacan, who provides us with a psychoanalytic theory of the subject, the *fantasy space* is constituted by the split between the eye and the gaze.⁴³ The subject can see another person's eyes or his eyes in the mirror but cannot see the gaze, that is, the place from which he is looked at or the place from which he would look at himself to be able to have himself before himself. He therefore *assumes* the gaze in the field of the Other. The gaze assumed in the field of the Other is called "stain" by Lacan: "that which always escapes from the grasp of that form

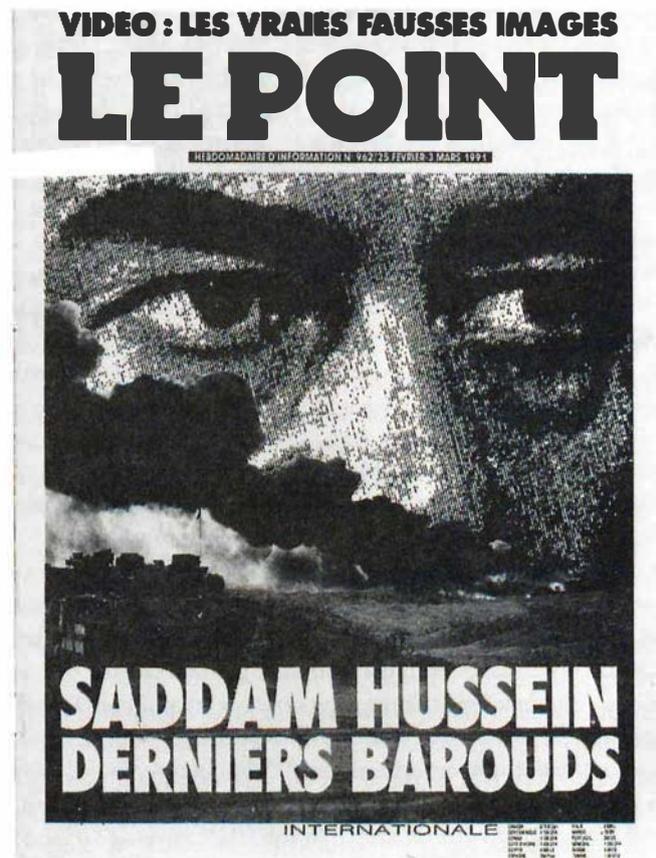


FIGURE 3.5

of vision that is satisfied with itself in imagining itself as consciousness.”⁴⁴ Saddam Hussein’s gaze is an embodiment of this no-thing, or black hole, of the luminous, enlightened Western subject, that is, the necessary possibility of a place from where he is looked at, caught in the act. The excessively dark veil, the dark, snake eyes, the face that should not be faced: In Saddam, there is more than Saddam. “Saddam” is the *objet petit a*, that is, the source of enjoyment or *jouissance* of the racist subject.⁴⁵

The notion of Saddam Hussein’s demonization is therefore not sufficient because what is at stake is much more, and much more complex. Hussein’s look signifies a *reversal* of the Western imperial subject’s own control, an “always already possible” possibility of his own failure. This reversal of the utopia of the rational, scientific eye is the backward, all-seeing, omnipotent, Oriental-despotic evil eye who controls everything and from whom the Western subject extracts an

immense amount of political profit compensating his failures (recession, public approval). Saddam Hussein came to fulfill this function of the Other in the Western game of ruling the world. To be sure, *he fulfilled such a function as the real person that he is*. But given the support that was given to him in the past, he was not only a cause but also a result, a product. Or to follow Lacan, “There is cause only in something that doesn’t work.”⁴⁶ The causes, the trouble spots, the black holes, are created by a *system* whose perverse enjoyment is to substitute one trouble for another: Khaddafi, Khomeini, Noriega, Hussein. In this respect, what was important in the war was the Middle Easterner’s closeness to “us” (Hussein in close-up), to the imperial subject’s controlling eye, and to the abstract space of coding (petrodollars) and lifestyle (cars). As Said already said for the image of Islam, it is something that we hear about every day, something close yet entirely alien. As Larry King of CNN expressed it, “The power thing is awkward for me because I still feel the Brooklyn kid in me. But yeah, I realize the effect the show can have. I’m aware that I am being watched—like Bernard Shaw called in and talked to my guest, President Reagan, and we both realized that Saddam Hussein might be watching. That’s extraordinary to know. We’re watched worldwide.”⁴⁷

A number of analysts and critics have stressed the narrative organization of the war discourse. Of course what is at stake is not a simple or straightforward indoctrination (as, for instance, in Nazi propaganda) but rather, as the Frankfurt School also clearly saw, in the capitalist system of production for the market it is a matter of selling. “Saddam” sells as the new serial drama. Stuart Ewen writes: “In the ratings game, the news—out of economic necessity—must be transformed into a drama, a thriller, an entertainment.”⁴⁸ Following Ewen, Hammer and McLaren stress the relation between prior mass cultural narrative and the narrative of the war: “Especially with reference to the CNN coverage of the war, a kindred range of films and videos dealing with war at a distance (*Top Gun*, *Iron Eagle*, etc.) tacitly co-ordinated the reception of many viewers to the aerial shots of ‘precision’ hits through a superimposition of images and forms of emplotment—memories from postmodern war’s electronic and celluloid Hollywood archive—transforming the war coverage into a type of palimpsest blending the discontinuity of war with the continuity of Western narratives about it.”⁴⁹

This palimpsest can be read in Derrida’s words as “a depth without bottom, an infinite allusion, and a perfectly superficial exteriority: a stratification of surfaces each of whose relation to itself, each of whose interior, is but the implication of another similarly exposed surface.”⁵⁰ Layers of preserved inscription constantly evoke frames of perception that are rewritten by fresh inscriptions. If desire for war is mobilized in the model of the mass narrative of Hollywood (the hero Bush, the villain Saddam),⁵¹ this should cover a vast field from cowboy movies to Cold War spies to the genre of adventure, but one that is itself modeled on what we might call “colonial discourse.” It is the “white hero versus the Other (race or cul-

ture, the villain” opposition that is traversing and racially charging these different genres. As I shall argue, this narrative structure itself is enacted politically. It is in such a field that we can pose questions of the complex relations between the political and the cultural, the ways these two distinct fields *feed into* each other. It is also in this sense that we can talk about a discursive space that refers only to itself but perhaps hides such selfreferentiality precisely because what is simulated is always simulated in a different field.⁵²

Primitive Accumulation

I began this essay by referring to the contradiction embodied in the institution of the United Nations (allowing a violator according to its own decisions to enforce the law against another violator). But such a “contradiction” is perhaps a functional necessity of the world order. In other words, there is not first law, then violation, but many violations, one of which enforces itself as the law.⁵³ In our world, the law is embodied by those privileged members of the U.N. who have veto power.

Where do we find this law of the world order in the cultural domain? In his thoughts on the recent war, Fredric Jameson refers to the Latin American genre of the great dictator novels, which express a repressed admiration of sadistic tyrants such as Hitler and Stalin.⁵⁴ But perhaps we should look for this law in the most international and most popular of arts in the twentieth century: the mass narrative of Hollywood. What is the model of the mass narrative of Hollywood, of this fascinating hegemonic apparatus? Could it be what Marx called primitive accumulation? In relation to the specific character of state violence, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari argue that “it is very difficult to pinpoint this violence because it always presents itself as preaccomplished.”⁵⁵ They refer to Marx’s observation that “there is a violence *that necessarily operates through the State*, precedes the capitalist mode of production, constitutes the ‘primitive accumulation’ and makes possible the capitalist mode of production itself.”⁵⁶ This, however, means that primitive accumulation (“colonial plunder”) is not a stage that is accomplished once and for all, “before” the capitalist mode of production in an evolutionary logic. Since it is preaccomplished, primitive accumulation or state violence (the process of capturing bodies, land, and resources) never leaves us, it is forever accomplished. In the words of Deleuze and Guattari, “It is a violence that posits itself as preaccomplished, even though it is reactivated everyday. This is a place to say it, if ever there was one: *the mutilation is prior, pre-established*. However, these analyses of Marx should be enlarged upon. For the fact remains that there is a primitive accumulation that, far from deriving from the agricultural mode of production, precedes it: as a general rule, there is primitive accumulation whenever an apparatus of capture is mounted, with *that very particular kind of violence that creates or*

contributes to the creation of that which it is directed against, and thus presupposes itself."⁵⁷

Deleuze and Guattari name this particular violence, characterized by the creation of what it is directed against—"lawful violence." If the Gulf War is an instance of preaccomplished violence, Saddam Hussein's occupation of Kuwait can be considered as what Deleuze and Guattari call "crime." They define this as another form of violence: "a violence of illegality that consists in taking possession of something to which one has no 'right,' in capturing something one does not have a 'right' to capture."⁵⁸ Given the U.N. resolutions about the U.S. invasion of Panama, is the U.S. action not criminal violence as well? But there is a law that is preaccomplished, already accomplished before this crime is committed. If, as Foucault shows, the modern punishment system punishes the criminal rather than the crime, if, in other words, the criminal is Other (somebody different from us, somebody with a different psyche and constitution, on the other side of a strict line), then such a position can best be fulfilled by all the Others of grand ideological narratives such as racism, orientalism, or class narrative (the sub-proletariat).⁵⁹ What matters is *the power to construct, the power to inscribe reality, events, facts—the power to create that which you are acting against.* The preaccomplished nature of lawful violence works in the capacity to sanction violence as law, which is to inscribe what is criminal. (Butler gives a parallel example from the language of war: Colin Powell's description of the sending of missiles as "'the delivery of an ordinance' figures an act of violence as an act of law.")⁶⁰

We should ask, then, Whom is this violence directed against? Against Saddam Hussein the dictator? The aim of lawful violence is not to exercise violence itself but rather to capture people or to appropriate land and resources (primitive accumulation). Since Hussein was not captured, we perhaps need to ask who was. In the immediate aftermath of the liberation of Kuwait, the Kuwaiti police captured immigrant Palestinian workers who were suspected of collaborating with the Iraqi military during the occupation. These Palestinians appeared a couple of times on TV; there was some discussion and some worry about their possible fate, and then they disappeared. I want to argue that they were, in a strange way, the real targets, however unimportant they may seem.

But at this point, we need to turn back to Saddam Hussein's face. Everything that I have said so far about it presupposes the argument that this face is *made, produced.* In their approach to questions of semiotics and subjectivity, Deleuze and Guattari refer to a "desiring machine" that appears at the intersection of "significance" ("signification" in their terminology) and "subjectification." This machine produces faces, though it is itself not a face but a "white wall/black hole system." They call it the "abstract machine of faciality." "Concrete faces can not be assumed to come ready made. They are engendered by an *abstract machine of faciality* (*visag  t  *), which produces them at the same time as it gives the signifier its white wall and subjectivity its black hole. Thus the black hole/white wall system

is, to begin with, not a face, but the abstract machine that produces faces according to the changeable combinations of its cogwheels. Do not expect the abstract machine to resemble what it produces, or will produce."⁶¹

Therefore we should not assume that the Palestinians have come there ready made. *Is this not the question of language, the question of where to speak from and how?* Because "it is absurd to believe that language as such can convey a message. A language is always embedded in the faces that announce its statements and ballast them in relation to the signifiers in progress and subjects concerned. Choices are guided by faces, elements are organized around faces."⁶² Palestinians, Arabs, were *facialized*, given the face of Saddam Hussein, which was itself produced by a distribution of black holes on the white screen of the hyperreal electronic media (which connected itself to the infamous abstract machine of faciality).⁶³

According to Deleuze and Guattari, facialization does not mean simply the production of a face but also the "overcoding" of the body by the face: "an operation worthy of Doctor Moreau: horrible and magnificent. Hand, breast, stomach, penis and vagina, thigh, leg and foot, all come to be facialized. Fetishism, erotomania, etc., are inseparable from these processes of facialization."⁶⁴ We may read Hussein's feminization in the tabloid press as the facialization of the woman's body. But what triggers this machine? Deleuze and Guattari write:

the maternal power operating through the face during nursing; the passional power operating through the face of the loved one, even in caresses; the political power operating through the face of the leader (streamers, icons and photographs), even in mass actions; the power of the film operating through the face of the star and the close-up; the power of television. It is not the individuality of the face that counts but the efficacy of the ciphering it makes possible, and in what cases it makes it possible. This is an affair not of ideology but of economy and the organization of power (*pouvoir*). We are certainly not saying that the face, the power of the face (*la puissance du visage*), engenders and explains social power (*le pouvoir*). *Certain assemblages of power (pouvoir) require the production of a face, others do not.*⁶⁵

The military and cultural apparatus of imperialism is one that requires the production of a face, a face that should not be saved, not because it belongs to an individual but because it makes possible a reading. This is a face that is made of so many powers/faces: the maternal power (mother's face), the power of the film (the face of the star, the face of the villain, always in close-up), the political power (the face of the president, Stormin' Norman, Hussein's other face on the walls of Baghdad), the passional power (the tearful, proud loved ones left behind), the power of television (TV faces, Dan Rather, Ted Koppel, Larry King, or when you switch it off, the TV's other, dark face in your room), the face of the magazine, and so on. All these faces run into a white wall/black hole system, making lines, dots, circles, pipelines, holes, spaces, curves; drawing, writing, inscribing one face, the face on the surface of the palimpsest; and repressing and stratifying other

surfaces, other faces: “Saddam, the Butcher of Baghdad, with his snake eyes, the New Hitler!”⁶⁶

It was certainly a power operation, and his face was all over the United States (and Europe), circulating in society: TV showed a group of young white males who turned over and kicked an *old American car* on which they drew Saddam Hussein faces (the face of the car); there was a Saddam Hussein voodoo doll sold in chain drugstores—it had a brutal, malicious face. Again TV showed people practicing their aim with Hussein’s face as the target (somebody said it helped to release the tension). The Hussein shown on TV hardly ever spoke. He did say, “This will be the mother of all battles,” which proved that he did not even know how to speak, unlike Hitler (who spoke a lot on the radio). He was kissed and hugged by a lot of males, he looked at us and smiled with his snake eyes. Hussein as the agenda was the facialization of Palestinians and Arabs. His face represented the silence of their voices, implying a certain accent in their speech even before they spoke. In this way lawful violence creates the violence it is then used against. It inscribes the name and makes the face (It’s an Oriental! It’s an Arab! It’s a Jew! It’s a lunatic!) that dissimulates its own horrific violence: “The State can in this way say that the violence is ‘primal,’ that it is simply a natural phenomenon the responsibility for which does not lie with the state, which uses violence only against the violent, against ‘criminals’—against primitives, against nomads—in order that peace may reign.”⁶⁷

Such is the grand narrative of oil, orientalism, insofar as the Middle East is concerned. It is by these techniques that human bodies are captured, facialized, and made to do what they are *assumed* to be capable of, that is, producing *more* than what is necessary for their subsistence. The ironies surrounding the war—the violator United States as the police, the United States in a war against a regime it had supported against the fundamentalist Iranian regime, which now understandably gave support to the anti-Iraqi coalition by remaining neutral—demonstrated the West’s power to do what it wants to do. The faces and images are substitutable and absolutely necessary in this new order. (I do not say they are easily substitutable.) What is at stake now is a “neorientalism” or neocolonial discourse in which lawful violence against created Third World criminals and dictators is an essential element of the cultural and political writing of global capitalism.

Conclusion

By way of a conclusion, I want to refer to two different articles, one by Barbara Harlow, the other by Gayatri Spivak. In a discussion of the literary articulations of decolonization and partition, Harlow refers to the Palestinian novelist Ghassan Kanafani’s work. Kanafani’s first novel, *Men in the Sun* (1956), is the story of three poor Palestinian refugees who try to enter Kuwait from Iraq in order to find work in that oil-rich country. Harlow writes:

After having been bartered, bargained over and overcharged by the Iraqi brokers and traders in Palestinian labor, [they] meet Abul Khaizuran. This Palestinian, once a political leader in the community, agrees to transport the three refugees across the border in the empty water tank of the truck he drives for a Kuwaiti merchant. The fate of the three migrant workers of *Men in the Sun*, silently suffocated in their water tank while the truck driver listens to the obscene jokes of the Kuwaiti border guards, is well-known, even legend, in Palestinian litero-political history, and the question posed by Abul Khaizuran at the story's end has long resounded through that history: "Why didn't they bang the walls of the tank? Why? Why? Why?" Kanafani's story was written prior to the formation of an organized, independent, Palestinian national resistance, and the narrative critique that it elaborates across Arab borders and through its fractured plot and interrupted characterizations, addresses both a wanting Palestinian leadership and the trading in the Palestinian cause by existing Arab regimes. Those emergent Palestinian democratic aspirations to national liberation and self-determination of the early 1960s, still spurned today by regimes but become popular and exemplary throughout the Arab world and around the globe, were threatened with extinction once again, and again on the Iraq-Kuwait border, not in an empty water tank but over disputed burning oil fields.⁶⁸

The three Palestinians who could not bang the walls of that tank while crossing the border illegally were the victims of an already accomplished, lawful violence. Their stories, their faces, were made across borders, through fractured plots, interrupted characterizations, under the threat of extinction.

My second example comes from Gayatri Spivak. In her reading of Salman Rushdie's *Satanic Verses* (both the "text" and the "event"), Spivak refers to the case of Shahbano, a Muslim Indian woman who went to the Supreme Court to demand an allowance from her divorced husband, but, following a political conflict between the Muslim minority and the Indian government, denounced the Supreme Court judgment in her favor against Muslim law and went back to her community by reclaiming her religious identity.⁶⁹ In India, Shahbano became an occasion for the creation of a Muslim collective agency, which would also influence Rushdie's fate. But she was easily forgotten. Spivak finds in Shahbano the difficult case of a notion of "agency" that cannot depend on free will. She compares Shahbano's disappearance with the rise of Khomeini's "monolithic face, this construct, with the piercing eyes under the iconic turban." In conclusion, she writes: "Whenever they bring out the Ayatollah, remember the face that does not come together on the screen, remember Shahbano. She is quite discontinuous with Salman Rushdie's fate as it is being organized on many levels. ... When the very well-known face is brought out, remember the face that you have not seen, the face that has disappeared from view, remember Shahbano."⁷⁰

Certainly these are different cases. But still, in a similar way, I would like to suggest that whenever they bring out Saddam Hussein, we should remember the immigrant Palestinians in Kuwait, the Palestinians in the occupied territories, whose fate is, generally speaking, a metaphor for all subaltern Arab and Muslim peo-

pies—especially those in the Middle East, who because of oil have been the victims of a severe humiliation, oppression, and exploitation and are produced in the images of their bloodiest leaders, who are no more than the reverse images of those who produce them.

As conditions like the recent war force us to speak in the discursive mode of ideology-critique, we should also remember that what is behind or before the face is not always a true identity but often a captured body in resistance. We should turn the facialization of those bodies into a moment of questioning the production of our own “faces,” our own “selves,” a moment of questioning the complexities and complicities of our being *in* the world. We should turn our bodies into the “probe-heads” that Deleuze and Guattari demand and turn that moment of horrific violence into a moment of re-searching and re-making the connections that we have to the people who live and die *elsewhere*.

NOTES

I would like to thank Stephen Heath, Victor Burgin, James Clifford, and Meyda Yegenoglu for their useful suggestions and comments on earlier versions of this chapter.

1. Noam Chomsky, “Nefarious Aggression,” *Magazine Z* (October 1990), p. 20.
2. The people who use such words against the U.S. invasion of Panama are *normally* regarded as extremists.
3. Edward Said, *Orientalism* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1978).
4. *Ibid.*, pp. 2, 12–13.
5. Spivak explains her notion of textuality as follows: “As far as I understand it, the notion of textuality should be related to the notion of the worlding of a world on a supposedly unscripted territory. When I say this, I am thinking basically about the imperialist project which had to assume that the earth that it territorialised was in fact previously unscripted. So then a world, on a simple level of cartography inscribed what was presumed to be unscripted. Now this worlding actually is also a texting, textualising, a making into art, making into an object to be understood.” Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. S. Harasym (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), p. 1.
6. Except in the oldest institutions of colonialism such as the British School of Oriental and African Studies.
7. Simon Bromley, *American Hegemony and World Oil: The Industry, the State System and the World Economy* (London: Polity Press, 1991). See especially pp. 82–84.
8. James O’Connor, “Murder on the Orient Express: The Political Economy of the Gulf War,” *Capitalism Nature Socialism* 2, no. 7 (June 1991), pp. 1–17.
9. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, vol. 1, trans. R. Hurley, M. Seem, and H. R. Lane (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983), pp. 222–262.
10. Bromley also refers to Giovanni Arrighi, “A Crisis of Hegemony,” in *Dynamics of Global Crisis*, eds. S. Amin, G. Arrighi, A. G. Frank, and I. Wallerstein (London: Macmillan, 1982). See especially pp. 92–98.

11. Communist-led national liberation movements (Korea, Vietnam, Cambodia) complicated this project.
12. Bromley, *American Hegemony and World Oil*, p. 82.
13. See Fred Halliday, *Arabia Without Sultans* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1979), pp. 71–74.
14. Bromley, *American Hegemony and World Oil*, pp. 121–123.
15. Edward W. Said, *Covering Islam: How the Media and the Experts Determine How We See the Rest of the World* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1981), pp. 33–34.
16. Simon Bromley, "Crisis in the Gulf," *Capital and Class* 44 (Summer 1991), p. 13.
17. For further analyses, see Samir Amin, "U.S. Militarism in the New World Order," *Polygraph* 5 (1992), pp. 13–37; Immanuel Wallerstein, "The Persian Gulf War: What Gain for the United States?" *Polygraph* 5 (1992), pp. 38–45. Amin emphasizes imperialist rivalry and different U.S. hegemonic projects ("maritime" and "coalitionist"). Both authors think that the Third World is an important area of conflict in the present conjuncture.
18. O'Connor, "Murder on the Orient Express," p. 6. O'Connor stresses that petrodollars are integral to the health of U.S. finances. As he explains, the fact that oil is priced in dollars helps it maintain its position as the world's reserve currency. He adds to this general principle the conjunctural questions of capital shortage and decreasing exports in the United States, which made the petrodollar an urgent issue for U.S. finances, and, by implication, global financial stability.
19. O'Connor, "Murder on the Orient Express," p. 16.
20. Abouali Farmanfarmanian, "Sexuality in the Gulf War: Did You Measure Up?" *Genders*, no. 13 (Spring 1992), pp. 1–29. Another interesting account of national fantasy can be found in Jochen Schulte-Sasse and Linda Schulte-Sasse, "War, Otherness and Illusionary Identifications with the State," *Cultural Critique*, no. 19 (Fall 1991), pp. 67–95.
21. Farmanfarmanian, "Sexuality in the Gulf War," pp. 13–14.
22. *Ibid.*, p. 12.
23. Is it a coincidence that *Dances with Wolves* was given an Oscar in the same year?
24. I am trying to think through Gayatri Spivak's complex formulation: "Work in gendering in principle sees the socius as an affectively coded site of exchange and surplus. The simple contentless moment of value as it is gender coded has historically led to the appropriation of the sexual differential, subtracted from, but represented as, the theoretical fiction of sexual identity." "Poststructuralism, Marginality, Postcoloniality, Value," *Literary Theory Today*, ed. P. Collier and H. Geyer-Ryan (Oxford: Polity Press, 1990), p. 227. For the production of political value or "speech," see Spivak's "Reading the Satanic Verses," *Third Text* 11 (Summer 1990), pp. 52–53. Speaking of the famous case of Shahbano, Spivak writes: "In the sphere of the production of political value, the mute as articulate in the service of 'orthodoxy' (to borrow Gita Sahgal's word)—a discontinuous naming of collective agency in the name of the 'sacred' rather than the 'profane' (in the other coding called 'secular,' 'national')—is more spectacularly muted because so abundantly audible." *Ibid.*, p. 53.
25. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
26. Malek Alloula, *Colonial Harem* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).
27. Franz Fanon, "Algeria Unveiled," in *A Dying Colonialism*, trans. H. Chevalier (New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1965), pp. 35–67.
28. Said defines orientalism's strategic formation as "the relationship between texts and the way in which groups of texts, types of texts, even textual genres acquire mass, density

and referential power among themselves and thereafter in the culture at large" and strategic location as "the author's position in a text with regard to the Oriental material he writes about." *Orientalism*, p. 20.

29. For the definition of strategy, see Michel de Certeau: "I call a strategy the calculation (or manipulation) of power relationships that becomes possible as soon as a subject with will and power (a business, a city, an army, a scientific institution) can be isolated. It postulates a place that can be delimited as its own and serve as the base from which relations with an exteriority composed of targets and threats (customers or competitors, enemies, the country surrounding the city, objectives and objects of research, etc.) can be managed." *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. S. Randall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 35–36. See also Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1, trans. R. Hurley (New York: Vintage Books, 1980), pp. 100–102.

30. See Meyda Yegenoglu, "Supplementing the Orientalist Lack: European Ladies in the Harem," *Inscriptions*, no. 6.

31. See, for instance, K. Theweleit's psychological analysis of German fascist soldiers: *Male Fantasies*, vols. 1, 2 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989).

32. *Time*, September 24, 1990.

33. See Spivak's formulation in note 24.

34. D. Pryzbyłowicz and A. JanMohamed, "Introduction: The Economy of Moral Capital in the Gulf War."

35. Here, by photographic space, I am very loosely referring to what Henri Lefebvre calls abstract space in his presentation of the mythical grand narrative of the visual sense (which gained hegemony over all the other senses by defeating them in the historical process). Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (Oxford and Cambridge, Mass.: Basil Blackwell, 1991), pp. 285–287. Lefebvre sees abstract space as an amalgam of three elements: geometric (Euclidian) space, optical space, and phallic space. Abstract space is susceptible to rational operations, it is luminous and is a space of images, and lastly it is a space that is produced by violence, instituted by the state apparatus and military. I also read Lefebvre's text as an exposition of the mythical grand narrative.

36. Alloula, *Colonial Harem*. Fanon's formulation of unveiling Algeria can be read in terms of the body of the woman signifying the body of the earth for the colonizer. See Fanon, *A Dying Colonialism*, pp. 35–67. See also Meyda Yegenoglu, "Veiled Fantasies," *Cultural Studies* (forthcoming). I am drawing on Yegenoglu's analysis.

37. In Freud's words, "In the situation we are considering, on the contrary, we see that the perception has persisted, and that a very energetic action has been undertaken to maintain the disavowal. It is not true that, after the child made his observation of the woman, he has preserved unaltered his belief that women have a phallus. He has retained that belief, but he has also given it up. In the conflict between the weight of the unwelcome perception and the force of his counter-wish, a compromise has been reached, as is only possible under the unconscious laws of thought in the primary processes. Yes, in his mind the woman has got a penis, in spite of everything; but this penis is no longer the same as it was before." Sigmund Freud, *Standard Edition*, vol. 21, p. 154.

38. Emphasis added. Ella Shohat, "The Media's War," *Social Text*, no. 28 (1991), p. 136.

39. Perhaps we should think of all this with the concept of "womb-envy," which Gayatri C. Spivak proposes in *In Other Worlds* (London and New York: Routledge, 1989), p. 81.

40. See Slavoj Žižek, *Sublime Object of Ideology* (London: Verso, 1989), p. 114. Once more I am in agreement with Abouali Farmanfarman insofar as such connections are concerned, but what I want to emphasize is the difference between Jesse Jackson and Rodney King, and/or Saddam Hussein, and/or the immigrant Palestinian worker in Kuwait, and so on.

41. *Time*, August 13, 1990.

42. *Ibid.*

43. See Jacques Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, ed. J. A. Miller, trans. A. Sheridan (New York and London: W. W. Norton, 1977), pp. 67–119.

44. As Jacques Lacan puts it, “That in which the consciousness may turn back upon itself—grasp itself, like Valéry’s Young Parque, as seeing oneself seeing oneself—represents mere sleight of hand. An avoidance of the function of the gaze is at work here.” *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, p. 74.

45. In a similar way, and following Slavoj Žižek’s framework, Jochen Schulte-Sasse and Linda Schulte-Sasse argue that Saddam Hussein can be seen as a negative embodiment of the American national fantasy, an embodiment whose counterpart is “the flag, the president or Stormin’ Norman.” See “War, Otherness and Illusory Identifications with the State,” pp. 91–92. I want to emphasize the *production* of such “negativity.”

46. Lacan, *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, p. 22.

47. Larry King, “Interview with Larry King,” *TV Guide*, July 25, 1992.

48. Stuart Ewen, *All Consuming Images* (New York: Basic Books, 1988), quoted in Rhonda Hammer and Peter McLaren, “The Spectacularization of Subjectivity: Media Knowledges, Global Citizenry and the New World Order,” *Polygraph* 5 (1992), pp. 49–50.

49. Hammer and McLaren, “The Spectacularization of Subjectivity,” p. 50.

50. Jacques Derrida, “Freud and the Scene of Writing,” in *Writing and Difference*, trans. A. Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), p. 224.

51. See, for instance, Shohat, “The Media’s War”; J. B. Childs, “Notes on the Gulf War, Racism, and African American Social Thought”; and Fredric Jameson, “Thoughts on the Late War.”

52. For the notion of hyperreal, see Jean Baudrillard, *Simulations* (New York: Semiotext[e], 1983). See also the interesting analysis by Mark S. Roberts: “Iraq: Inventing the Event,” *Art and Text*, no. 39 (May 1991), pp. 54–59.

53. For a similar account of law in the Hegelian and Lacanian problematics, see Slavoj Žižek, “The Limits of the Semiotic Approach to Psychoanalysis,” *Psychoanalysis and ...* ed. R. Feldstein and H. Sussman (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), especially pp. 92–99.

54. Fredric Jameson, “Thoughts on the Late War,” p. 146.

55. G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 447.

56. *Ibid.*, 447. For primitive accumulation, see Karl Marx, *Capital*, vol. 1, trans. B. Fowkes (New York: Vintage, 1977), ch. 31.

57. The last emphasis is added. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 447.

58. *Ibid.*, p. 448.

59. “The delinquent, the strange manifestation of an overall phenomenon of criminality, is to be found in quasi-natural classes, each endowed with his own characteristics and requiring a specific treatment, what Marquet-Wasselot called in 1841 the ‘ethnography of the prisons’; ‘The convicts are ... another people within the same people; with its own hab-

its, instincts, morals.” Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. A. Sheridan (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977), pp. 252–253. Foucault’s notion of “useful delinquency” has obvious implications for inner cities, drug wars, and crime in the United States. Although it cannot simply be appropriated for a critique of Western production of Third World dictators, his approach constitutes an important beginning point in this area as well, in terms of its implications for the “use- and/or exchange-value” of crime.

60. J. Butler, “Contingent Foundations,” p. 157. Butler further argues that “it figures the missile as command, an order to obey and is thus a certain act of speech which not only delivers a message, i.e., get out of Kuwait, but effectively enforces that message through the threat of death and through death itself. Of course, this is a message that can never be received, for it kills its addressee, and so it is not an ordinance at all, but the failure of all ordinances, the refusal of a communication. And for those who remain to read the message, they will not read what is sometimes quite literally written on the message” (ibid.). But if this leads to “massive and violent contestation,” in Butler’s words, then in some strange sense, they do read the message and receive the command. I have argued elsewhere that fundamentalist Islam can be seen as a Western command. See my “Under the Sign of Orientalism: The West vs. Islam,” *Cultural Critique* (Winter 1993). Jameson puts this paradox in a different way in his discussion of the imperialist notion of setting an example: “The problem is the familiar paradox of of time-travel generally, namely, that you thereby try to influence a future which is however itself profoundly modified by the very act of trying to do so, so that the putative warning is no longer valid for the new situation in which it exists as a bloody fact.” “Thoughts on the Late War,” p. 144.

61. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 168.

62. Ibid., p. 179.

63. I should stress that according to Deleuze and Guattari, the face is in fact Christ, or the ordinary white man’s face. Other races are evaluated according to their degree of deviation from the white man’s face. They argue that racism does not work by exclusion, by designating someone as Other, but “by the determination of degrees of deviance in relation to the White-Man face.” *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 178. As they themselves put it, however, the logic of facialization or Christianization requires that “there are only people who should be like us and whose only crime it is not to be” (p. 178, emphasis added). I am trying to think of this particular “crime” in the context of primitive accumulation/lawful violence, that is, as “the creation of that which it is used against” (p. 448, emphasis added).

64. Ibid., p. 170.

65. Ibid., p. 175.

66. Many critics emphasized the pronunciation of this name, the connotations it had: sodom, satan. But this is nothing compared to the production of a face!

67. Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus*, p. 448.

68. Barbara Harlow, “Drawing the Line: Cultural Politics and the Legacy of Partition,” *Polygraph*, no. 5 (1992), p. 104.

69. Gayatri C. Spivak, “Reading the Satanic Verses,” *Third Text*, No. 11 (Summer 1990), pp. 41–60. For a detailed account of this famous case, see Zakia Pathak and Rajeswari Sunder Rajan, “Shahbano,” *Signs* 14, no. 3 (Spring 1989), pp. 558–582.

70. Spivak, “Reading the Satanic Verses,” p. 60.