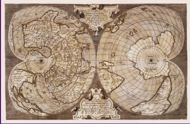

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From Exile to Cosmopolitics

Creolizing the Spiritual After Trauma

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Resumen

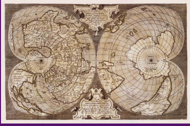
Este artículo intenta aclarar los aportes que el tropo del exilio realiza a las lecturas críticas de la globalización desde el punto de vista decolonial. Con este fin, leo la noción de criollización teorizada por el pensador martiniqueño Edouard Glissant. Si la modernidad secular como un proyecto colonial desplazó no sólo la tierra, la cultura y el idioma, sino también lo espiritual, la desvinculación de la modernidad colonial secular requiere repensar y redefinir los marcos básicos con los que nombramos lo espiritual. La filosofía de la criollización y lo espiritual arraigado en su poética del exilio, sostengo, significan una ruptura dentro de lo secular, lo moderno y lo colonial.

Palabras claves: Criollización, Edouard Glissant, Espiritualidad pos-secular, Exilio.

Resumo

Este artigo tenta esclarecer as contribuições que o tropo do exílio traz para leituras críticas da globalização do ponto de vista descolonial. Foi com este objetivo que li a noção de crioulização como teorizada pelo pensador martinicano Edouard Glissant. Se a modernidade secular, como um projeto colonial deslocou não só a terra, a cultura e a língua, mas também o espiritual, desvincular-se da modernidade colonial-secular requer repensar e redefinir os quadros básicos com os quais nomeamos o espiritual. Afirmo que, a filosofia da crioulização e o espiritual arraigado em sua poética do exílio significam uma ruptura dentro do secular, o moderno e o colonial.

Palavras-chave: Crioulização, Edouard Glissant, Postsecular espiritualidade, Exílio.



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Abstract

This article attempts to clarify the contributions that the trope of exile makes for critical readings of globalization from the decolonial standpoint. With this end, I read the notion of creolization as theorized by Martinican thinker Edouard Glissant. If secular modernity as a colonial project displaced not only land, culture, and language but also the spiritual, delinking from colonial-secular modernity requires rethinking and redefining the basic frames with which we name the spiritual. The philosophy of creolization and the spiritual ingrained in its poetics of exile, I contend, signify a rupture within the secular, the modern, and the colonial.

Key Words: Creolization, Edouard Glissant, Postsecular spirituality, Exile.

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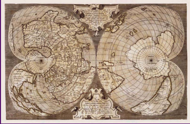

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> I see exile as a terrible loss, the pain of being distanced from everything that gives you meaning.
>
> Ariel Dorfman (Boyen and Lertora, 1989)

Introduction

Exile indicates the state of living with unending loss. It signifies the state of living with constant splits, dualities, and absurdities. For exile evokes the act of straddling two —or multiple— different worlds, of negotiating between here and there, between the possible and impossible, between remembering and forgetting. However, exile also signals possibility. Despite the pain of loss, it opens the door for the transformation or rebirth of the self. It is in this sense that Edward Said (2002: 184) views exile as useful for cultivating a vigilant self-consciousness generated by the critical distance. At the figurative level, Said remarks, exile can be used as a «metaphorical condition» especially for the intellectual whose responsibility is to maintain a critical attitude from a distance. In this sense, exile represents «restlessness, movement, constantly being unsettled, and unsettling others. You cannot go back to some earlier and perhaps more stable condition of being at home» (Said, 1994: 39).

Nevertheless, searching for the redemptive quality of exile entails the risk of romanticizing the reality of exile. After all, the historical reality of Latin America and the Caribbean has been in a sense shaped by exile: the violent displacement of culture, language, and religion accompanied by «ethnocide, slavery, indentured labor, racism, colonialism, and more recently, neocolonialism» (Carew, 1978: 460). Said too warns us against the danger of romanticizing exile by reminding us of the global political reality of forced displacement and mass exile: «you must therefore map territories of experience beyond those mapped by the literature of exile itself. You

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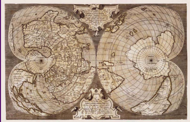

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must first set aside Joyce and Nabokov and think instead of the uncountable masses for whom UN agencies have been created» (Said, 2002: 174).

Needless to say, exile cannot be conflated with the word diaspora. While every experience of exile can be seen as diasporic, not all diasporic experiences are exilic. For exile entails a forced displacement and the impossibility of returning home. But despite these differences, there are profound commonalities that these two similar, yet different experiences share. Both experiences are marked by the pain of dislocation and the experience of marginalization in the new land. And as it has been commonly held by many critics, once the diasporic subject is dislocated from her homeland, there is no longer a full «return.» This is because the moment of return opens a fracture, for she realizes that nothing looks the same at the moment she encounters the imagined space with which she has longed to be reunited. Home becomes an impossible signifier, an irretrievable loss one needs to accept.

However, as I have mentioned briefly, exile is also the central ground of historical experience from which the modern/colonial Latin America is born. Particularly, when reflecting from the Caribbean, exile marks the very genesis of the modern colonial experience. For the local indigenous people, the inauguration of this new order meant the displacement from both the old world and the land. But perhaps more important is the fact that the new colonial order —and the modern history of the Archipelago— was instituted upon the mass displacement of people from their homelands across the Atlantic Ocean. This is why Jan Carew (1978) writes, «The Caribbean writer today is a creature balanced between limbo and nothingness, exile abroad and homelessness» (p. 453). In other words, exile occupies a central place in the endeavors of rediscovering and redefining the collective identity in the Caribbean. This is why the trope

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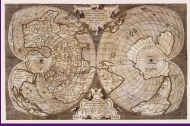

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of exile presents a powerful standpoint for a critical engagement of coloniality in the Caribbean.

Nevertheless, the vague nature of exile often renders its ethics and politics ambiguous. As I have argued elsewhere, it is questionable whether the recent scholarship's fascination with exile has been successfully translated into a substantial discourse that fosters the transformation of the self and the community. More often than not, the trope of exile tends to evoke a privatized, self-absorbed form of consciousness and withdrawal towards the inner self (An, forthcoming 2015). Perhaps what mediates the tension between the withdrawal and the engagement is the often understated sense of spirituality inscribed in the experience of the diasporic subject.

Therefore, in this article, I attempt to clarify the concrete contributions that the trope of exile makes for the critical reading of globalization from the decolonial standpoint. With this end, I read the notion of creolization as theorized by the Martinican thinker Edouard Glissant (1989, 1997a, 1997b). Glissant's philosophy of creolization is an influential cultural and philosophical theory that has evolved around the metaphor of exile. Many writings on exile tend to regard the search for home as a sort of spiritual experience. While these writings are secular in nature and orientation, they struggle to find expression of the depth engraved in the experience of displacement which exceeds the secular/religious binary. This is perhaps why Said (2002), too, remarks that exile has a «touch of solitude and spirituality» (p. 181).

The experience of the creolized Caribbean disavows the modern/colonial binary of the secular and the religious. Glissant's influential philosophy of creolization and decolonial poetics has rarely—if ever—been linked to the spiritual since his «secular» theory of creolization does not signal at any hint of religion and spirituality. Beyond this

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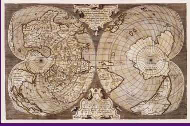

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binary, my aim in this article is to suggest a postsecular, a postcolonial redefinition of the spiritual by reading Glissant's philosophy of creolization as a spiritual process.

Along with contemporary critics of Western secularism —both as the political formation and the theoretical field—or academic discourse—, decolonial thinkers have insistently challenged the notion of secular modernity. The narrative of liberal secularization —as the sign of progress and the triumph of the enlightenment reason— installed secular modernity, which became the tool of domination and appropriation of the colonial world. From this view, decolonial thinkers argue that secular modernity was in essence a colonial agenda infused with Christian ideals.

If secular modernity as a colonial project was inaugurated with the displacement of not only land, culture, and language but also spirituality, delinking from colonial-secular modernity requires rethinking and redefining the basic frames with which we name the spiritual. The philosophy of creolization and the understated register of the spiritual ingrained in its poetics of exile, I contend, signify a rupture within the secular, the modern, and the colonial.

Exile and the Making of Latin America

The history of the Americas is indelibly marked with stories of displacement since the beginning of the colonial encounter. The arrival and the settlement of the European colonizers signified, in many cases, the immediate displacement of the indigenous population from their land. The imposition of the Euro-Christian value and its socio-economic order —including the religious one— meant the displacement of language, culture, labor, and spirituality. And that was not all: even sexuality was displaced under the control of the Christian sexual value. As the Argentinian

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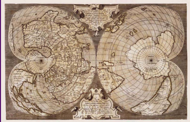

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queer theologian Marcella Althaus-Reid (2003: 9) pointed out, part of the Christian agenda in the colonial Americas was the displacement of sexuality and the installation of the Christian heterosexual norm. During the sixteenth century, she adds, sexual disobedience to the Christian norm was punishable at the courts held by the Jesuit missions (Wiesner-Hanks, 2000: 153; cited in Althaus-Reid, 2003: 9). In short, the colonial encounter and the following institution of the colonial order meant the unending state of being exiled at home for the native population.

But exile implies more than a distant history in Latin America and the Caribbean. The trope of exile has long been an integral element of the social imagination for many of those who have lived through the recent history of the continent which is marked with memories of horrifying state violence. The mass series of foreign —U.S.— intervention produced repetitive cycles of violence, usually with the fall of the leftist government followed by the installation of the military regime whose main means of governance consisted of the politics of violent repression. The infamous years of Pinochet's dictatorship and the «dirty war» of Argentina, well known for the thirty thousand *desaparecidos*, and the political turmoil of Uruguay instigated by the tension between the military and the Tupamaro movement in the seventies are only a few examples of the uncountable incidents of brutality breaching the history of the continent.[1] This atrocious history produced as a result the numerous communities of exile, mostly around the different Latin American nations, Europe, and the U.S. Exile, in this sense, represents the enforced condition of being for many people in Latin America and the Caribbean.

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[1] As it is well known, the reality of Central America during this period of history was the same as the rest of the continent. In fact, the magnitude of violence in countries such as El Salvador, Nicaragua, Honduras, and Guatemala was greater than in the «southern cone.»

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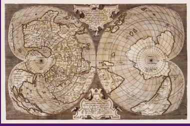

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However, as I have briefly discussed already, exile also signifies possibility despite its association with the dismal political realities of particular communities. The question then is, what kind of possibility do we see emerge from the historical context conditioned by the experience of displacement? What kind of possibilities does the metaphor of displacement offer in a context where exile represents the constant state of being for so many people?

It is far from difficult to observe that critical diaspora consciousness usually emerges as a criticism of the conditions of the colonial legacy and the process of globalization. Many such voices, I also argue, take a spiritual character. By spiritual, I am not referring to writings infused with overtly religious tones. Rather, my interest lies in reading the spiritual in the «secular» texts. For in the colonial context, spirituality is inevitably connected to tactics of survival and resistance. The spiritual, in other words, signifies the political. However, my intention is far from unveiling the hidden spiritual meaning behind the secular text or translating the secular text into a spiritual language. Rather, by exploring Glissant's philosophy of creolization, I seek to rethink and redefine the spiritual beyond the secularist and colonial binary.

From Displacement to Multiplicity

The contemporary discourse of creolization is built primarily on the pioneering theoretical foundation laid out by Patrick Chamoiseau, Jean Bernabe, and Raphel Confiant's collaborative work on *creolite*. The emerging discourse of *creolite*, however, is significantly inspired by the early generation of (post)*negritude* thinkers, particularly, the Martinican philosopher and poet Edouard Glissant. Glissant's poetics of creolization emerges out of the long

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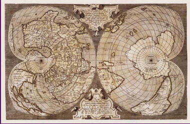

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genealogy of the twentieth century Afro-Caribbean intellectuals who strove to define the diasporic African identity in the (post)colonial Antilles. In response to *negritude*'s essentialist identitarian politics, Glissant proposes a notion of being based on becoming, multiplicity, and relation.

Like many of the *negritude* thinkers who came before him, Glissant's decolonial vision emerges out of the colonial impasse of the Antilles. He draws on the figure of the middle passage as he grapples with the history and the collective identity breached with violent rupture. The middle passage is the historical signifier that represents the open wound and the unending state of displacement conditioning the everyday life of the Afro-Caribbean diaspora. However, Glissant's writings do not evoke an unending mourning of the loss of an original past. Neither is his agenda to delink radically from the past. Rather, Glissant reinvents a new ontological vision out of the painful historical loss.

The loss and trauma created by displacement are the undying specters constantly haunting Glissant's philosophy of creolization. They are inseparably and intricately woven with the womb and the genesis of the historical collective consciousness which «came together in the context of shock, contraction, painful negation, and explosive forces» (Glissant, 1989: 70). The birth of the philosophy of creolization, therefore, takes place within the very texture of the devastating history inaugurated by the brutal events of dislocation. Creole consciousness, in other words, is born out of the exilic consciousness. But the creolized consciousness, which survived the horrendous history of colonial violence, signals at the same time a new mode of being in the world. The tearing pain of displacement deprives the ground. It negates the origin and the essence of the colonized being. But for Glissant, this is precisely the

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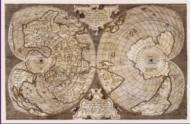

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revealing moment in which loss turns out to be the condition of possibility, for in the Antilles, the essenceless, groundless state of being opens up a different understanding of ontology —one that goes beyond the narrow conception of being as a static, individual(ized) essence. Essence yields its way to relation just as in the Caribbean poetic vision, the sea does not demarcate the limit, but the extension of land, the illimitable boundary of the creolized landscape. Glissant (1997a) writes, «The land has ceased to be essence, it becomes relation. Essence was ravaged by the action of transporters, but relation is interred in the suffering of the transported» (p. 182). The middle passage, this way, gives rise to an ontology of multiplicity and becoming.

Inspired by Gilles Deleuze's metaphor of rhizomatic multiplicity, which troubles the logic of One —sameness— represented in the arboreal —root— model, Glissant employs tropes of multiplicity such as «submarine roots» and «errantry.» Submarine roots reject the regulatory conceptual categories of traditional metaphysics such as origin, linearity, essence, and most importantly, the notion of Oneness in which the One —sameness— grounds the many. Such logic renders the multiple a mere replication of the same. In the words of Deleuze and Guattari (1987), it is the «One that becomes Two, or even directly three, four, five, etc.» (p. 21). Submarine roots suggest, instead, a free-floating state which is «not fixed in one position in some primordial spot, but extending in all directions in our world through its network of branches» (Glissant, 1989: 67).

Rootlessness symbolizes the Afro-Caribbean identity on multiple levels: not only the history of displacement and the current political reality, but also the geographic insularity of the islands. Creolization affirms displacement/rootlessness as the condition of multiplicity which displaces the totalitarian thinking underlying the colonial logic. Similarly,

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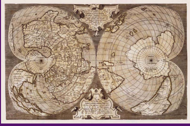

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Glissant espouses errantry as a movement that resists the dominant framing of ontology. Errantry defies the sedentariness of roots in which difference or multiplicity is grounded in a pivotal center. Errantry, Glissant (1989) tells us, «discards the universal» (p. 67). It creates multiple centers, multiple beginning points in which each singularity is its own center. Exile, after all, embodies multiple slippages and ambiguities.

Being in exile means living with contradiction, therefore it exceeds the binary of here and there, origin and end, or center and periphery. Creolization, Glissant (1989) explains, signals precisely this ontology of multiplicity and errantry, a way of being which allows «each person to be there and elsewhere, rooted and open, lost in the mountains and free beneath the sea, in harmony and in errantry» (p. 67). Perhaps no other words articulate better the central goal of Glissant's philosophy of creolization than the Haitian writer Yanick Lahens's description of the main struggle and goal of the authors writing in/about exile: «the search for a new center of gravity, for a new point of equilibrium, is certainly one of the major stakes of the moment» (Lahens, 1992: 737). The profound paradox and beauty of creolization lies in its resilient power to harness groundless into a ground, to turn dispossession into the womb impregnated with future: «from the steps of exile, he manages a solitude more populated than any empire's land» (Glissant, 1997a: 108). Might this solitude be what characterizes exile along with a «touch of spirituality» for Said? While Said did not explore this connection further, he believed there was a sense of spirituality structuring the experience of exile and the search for home.

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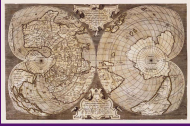

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The state of living in displacement is constituted by the dialectical tension between the withdrawal to solitude and the arduous engagement in the politics of home-making: straddling solitude and solidarity, shuttling between the self and the Other. Taking Said's insight further, might we view spirituality as the key force that bridges this tension between withdrawal —solitude— and critical engagement —solidarity —? Isn't there a significant register of the spiritual ingrained in the political act of founding a new center and a ground for being —belonging—?

Despite the notable absence of overt reference to spirituality, Glissant's poetics of creolization, I insist, harbors the spiritual. A posthumously published interview that he gave in his last year is illuminating for he refers to creolization as a battle. Not a military battle, but a spiritual one (Diawara, 2011: 6). In the same vein, he once referred to errantry as the postulation of a sacred: «The founding books have taught us that the sacred dimension consists always of going deeper into the mystery of the root, shaded with variations of errantry. In reality errant thinking is the postulation of an unyielding and unfading sacred» (Glissant, 1997b: 22).

The enactment of secular modernity—despite the Christian ideals hidden behind its twin agenda called coloniality— resulted in the repression of the spiritual in the public and the separation of the political from the spiritual. Deconstructing the regime of coloniality/modernity in Latin America then requires recovering the spiritual which was dispelled from the domain of the secular and the political. In this sense, the central notions of creolization such as poetics, the Other —ethics of alterity—, relation, and becoming suggest the invocation of the spiritual—if not the reinvention of theological questions—in (post)secular terms. Glissant's complex method of intertwining the political analysis of

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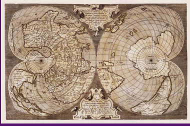

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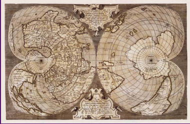
culture and history with the invocation of poetics —woven with mystical language—, offers a new way of thinking the spiritual beyond the divide between the spiritual and the political or between the secular and the religious.

Poetics of Alterity, Poetics of Relation

It is important to clarify that creolization's philosophical vision of becoming and multiplicity begs a distinction from the fervent celebration of movement advocated by postmodern philosophy and cultural theory. Despite his connection and resonance with Deleuzean thought, there is a significant dissonance—which often goes unnoticed—between Glissant's philosophy of creolization and Deleuze's notions of movement and errantry. Glissant's creolization differs from the Deleuzean vision of becoming and multiplicity which is marked with the radical affirmation of immanence—the sheer force of life. Creolization does not suggest the irruptive gesture of break, subversion, or «line of flight» as Deleuze would suggest (Deleuze, 1987: 9-10). Similarly, Glissant's errantry also begs a distinction from the postmodern glamorization of nomadic movement and displacement.[2] For Glissant's decolonial reflection on displacement and the philosophical vision generated from it begin from the painful site of historical wound. He writes, «To be unable therefore to manage to live in one's country, that is where the hurt is deepest» (Glissant, 1989: 23).

[2] Many recent works of critical theorists of gender and race demonstrate their effort to reinvent the traditionally neglected or degraded notions of movement, rootlessness, and fragmentary identity into a positive ground for the recreation of new meanings based on the philosophical principles of multiplicity, hybridity, and becoming. Among them, the work of Rosi Braidotti (2006) on nomadic subjectivity, Caren Kaplan (1996) on transnational feminist politics of location, and Kathy Ferguson (1993) on the notion of mobile subjectivity have made significant contribution to the advancement of the postmodern «politics of mobility.»



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Becoming in the (post)colonial Caribbean is not a matter of metaphysical endeavor or a glamorous poetic errantry. Rather, the act of becoming and materializing multiplicity encompasses the self-lacerating work of recreating the self and the world; it consists of the tactic of survival that registers loss as the constitutive fabric of life and resists the regulatory categorization of identity. And this is why creolization's vision of becoming and multiplicity is anchored in the notion of relation. Perhaps the key difference between the poststructuralism-inspired account of errantry and creolization's poetics/politics of errantry lies in *relation*. As I have argued elsewhere, the trope of relation, which is underdeveloped in the postmodern philosophical nomadism —Gilles Deleuze and Rosi Braidotti—, is for Glissant «the very material through which he transposes the void of loss, the painful middle of the fragmented history» (An, 2014: 300).

Relational ontology presupposes the place of the Other at the heart of the self. That the other *is* the constitutive element of the self means the notion of the coherent and autonomous self yields its place to the other, for there is otherness, the trace of alterity prior to and inherent in the texture of the self. Such notion of otherness echoes tellingly the ethics of alterity articulated by the thinkers of the continental tradition —Emmanuel Levinas, Jacques Derrida, Luce Irigaray—. But the other in Glissant's creolization implies more than the deconstruction of totality or the elusive trace of the all-transcending difference. For the other in the (post)colonial Antilles points at the ties of relation from which the self emerges—and through which the self survives the horror of colonial violence. The freeing power of creolized ontology lurks in the shared experience and knowledge that survives trauma: «knowledge of the Whole, greater for having been at the abyss and freeing knowledge of Relation within the Whole» (Glissant, 1997b: 8). After

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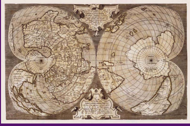

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trauma, ontology becomes a matter of partaking in the web of relation.

This is why the other signals hope and future in the abyss. Glissant describes the other as the very sign and the material of possibility and survival in the middle passage: «although you are alone in this suffering, you share in the unknown with others whom you have yet to know» (Glissant, 1997b: 6). Refusing to remain as a radical exteriority, the other partakes actively in the subject's process of becoming. But there is a dual side to the other, for the fact that it evokes the concrete, enfleshed other does not insinuate the full accessibility and comprehensibility by the self. The other signifies transcendence, exteriority, and fracture within the edifice of the totalitarian subject.

The telling resonance between Glisant's poetics of the other and the Levinasian-Derridean notion of the other is suggestive of the spiritual character harbored in the poetics of creolization. Both Levinas' and Derrida's ethics of alterity have spurred wide conversations that interrogate the theological outside the discursive framework of religion, thus giving rise to the resurgence of the theological beyond (or without) religion. For Derrida (1995), in particular, the other is the holder of the secret, absolute difference and singularity whose trace is «inaccessible, solitary, transcendent, nonmanifest, originally nonpresent to my *ego*» (p. 78). In this sense, Derrida's articulation of «tout autre est tout outre» [every other is wholly other] implies the invocation/ possibility of the theological in the other—and in every other. For there is no fundamental difference between the absolute singularity of one and the other: «It implies that God, as the wholly other, is to be found everywhere there is something of the wholly other» (Derrida, 1995: 78).

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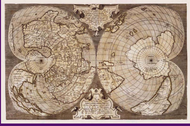

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With Derrida's invocation, the other becomes the site in which theology —the name of God— and ethics —the neighbor— converge. While it is far from my intention to propose a Derridean reading of creolization, there is an important resonance between the Derridean and Glissantian other in that the other signifies absolute singularity, difference, and exteriority—that are constitutive of the self. That the absolute other is integral to the self, hints at the postsercular possibility of re-envisioning the theological—of querying alterity within the fabric of the mundane without being subject to dogma.

The terrifying memory of violence displaces the self. Yet, the dismembering shock of trauma discloses wonder in the other. In thematizing the Platonic «wonder» within the tradition of Western philosophy, Mary-Jane Rubenstein (2010) captures this ambiguous nature of wonder when she juxtaposes shock and awe as the «double movement» of wonder. For Rubenstein, while wonder comes as a shock and devastation, it indicates, at the same time, the instance of transformation —awe—. She writes,

> If the movement by which the familiar becomes strange can be called shock (or surprise, anger, horror, or terror, depending on one's situation) then the reciprocal, nonidentical movement by which this strangeness presents itself *as all there is* is indeed awe (or astonishment, marveling, etc.—but these terms can almost all be used in both of the senses we are attempting to distinguish here). Shock reveals the inessentiality of things; awe reveals the thingliness of inessentiality. Shock bring us out of "subject-object" relations; awe brings us into being-toward. Shock demolishes autonomy; awe frees us for freedom. Shock unworks; awe makes sense. Shock punctuates; awe enchains. In shock, thinking loses everything, and in awe, everything returns, at once more or less than thinking had thought it to be (Rubenstein, 2010: 128).

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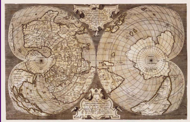

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Although Rubenstein writes from a different context, her reflection on wonder as shock and awe draws intriguing parallel with Glissant's creolization. In the poetics of creolization, the other *is* the sign of wonder—the very evocation of awe amidst the shock of colonial violence. It is with this other that the self shares, in wonder, a greater, unspeakable tie of solidarity. Might this wonder that the I finds in the other—and which reveals my shared vulnerability with others as a sign of possibility—be the source of postsecular/postcolonial spirituality? Isn't wonder the common and key source of religious experience after all?

Perhaps this is why there is a strong register of mysticism imprinted in Glissant's notion of the other. In Glissant's poetics of creolization, the evanescent other belongs to the realm of the unspeakable. But Glissant's reliance on apopohatic language is not only symptomatic of the transcendent nature of the other. Rather, it is also indicative of the deep, inscrutable extent to which the «I» is entangled in the lives of others, known and unknown. In this sense, the other as the inexhaustible source of wonder to the «I» hints at the possible sign of the spiritual. Despite the trauma that exceeds memory or thought and despite the other who escapes my grasp, Glissant (1997b) writes, «there is still something we now share: this murmur, cloud or rain or peaceful smoke» (p. 9).

In the creolized Antilles, the spiritual is born out of the shared womb with the political. The fragile name of this creolized spirituality/politics is interwoven with the unnamable and enigmatic force of relation, the overwhelming memory of trauma, and the uncontainable presence of the other.

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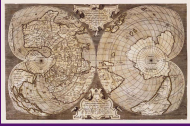

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Creolization as Cosmopolitics

The terror of colonial displacement, the traumatic groundless middle (passage) produced innumerable deaths and unfathomable suffering. But this abyss, paradoxically, is the womb which gives birth to new people: this experience «became something shared and made us, the descendants, one people among others» (Glissant, 1997b: 8). The post-exilic identity of creolized people, in this sense, is grounded in the cosmopolitan vision. Creolized spirituality, therefore, necessarily leads one to the (cosmo)political engagement with the politics of displacement.

The cosmopolitan ideal shared by creolization, however, begs a distinction from the Kantian vision of cosmopolitanism which, rooted in his Eurocentric anthropology/geography,[3] often serves as the undergirding principle of the Western liberalism and its «universal principles of justice, democracy, liberty, freedom, and goodness while in practice operating in an intensely discriminatory way against others» (Harvey, 2009: 37). As Walter Mignolo (2011: 271-277) has demonstrated, such a cosmopolitan ideal does not draw a clear line of distinction from the imperial cosmopolitan ideal of *Orbis Christianus* —Christian cosmos— which draws its trajectory of continuity via the modern colonial expansion to the contemporary cosmopolitan account called globalization. What we see in the creolized landscape of the Antilles emerge is, instead, a

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[3] I am referring to Immanuel Kant's well known racist perception of non-Europeans, as he writes in *Geographie*:

> In hot countries men mature more quickly in every respect but they do not attain the perfection of the temperate zones. Humanity achieves its greatest perfection within the White race. The yellow Indians have somewhat less talent. The Negros are much inferior and some of the peoples of the Americas are well below them (Cited in Harvey, 2009: 26).

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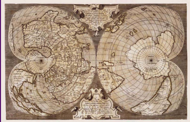

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decolonial cosmopolitanism, a cosmopolitics from below in which the spiritual and the political interweave the contour of the fragile name of the community.

The openness of the ocean and the archipelago symbolizes the cosmopolitan vision inherent in the creolized ontology. The Creole folktale describes the Caribbean landscape not as a place to be permanently inhabited. Rather, it is «a place you pass through. So the land is never possessed» (Glissant, 1989: 128). Rather than an option among many, cosmopolitics is the tactic of survival in exile. It designates the political reinvention of displacement as a means of assembling and reconstructing the fragmented identity, and to affirm the life that goes on after trauma: «Having no place, the seer founds exile… for exile did not arise yesterday: it began with the departure of the first caravel. It is not a state, but a passion» (Glissant, 1997a: 106). Creolization is about living exile passionately. It does not indicate the glorification of displacement, but an active cosmopolitical engagement and reappropriation—a passionate exploration—of its unmaterialized possibilities. It is then the mystery of relation, the greater Whole which ties the vulnerable lives of the exiled bodies to each other that invites us to rethink the spiritual as the source for becoming, relating, and building the cosmopolitical solidarity with the other. And it is perhaps this passion for creolization, the mysterious freedom in relation that «permit[s] the creativity and solidarity,» which «will make rootlessness more tolerable, make the present void more negotiable» (Glissant, 1989: 112).

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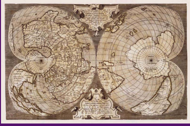

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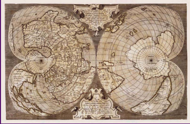

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