

Review: Thinking at the Enlightenment's Limit

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## Review Essays

## THINKING AT THE ENLIGHTENMENT'S LIMIT

### *HATING EMPIRE PROPERLY: THE TWO INDIES AND THE LIMITS OF ENLIGHTENMENT ANTICOLONIALISM*

BY SUNIL M. AGNANI

Fordham University Press, 2013

Siraj Ahmed

**S**unil Agnani's *Hating Empire Properly: The Two Indies and the Limits of Enlightenment Anticolonialism* (winner of the 2014 Henry Levin Prize) is a rich contribution to a nascent but ever-expanding field we could call colonial Enlightenment studies. This field has, variously, implicated seventeenth- and eighteenth-century Enlightenment principles even more profoundly than previously acknowledged in the modern imperial project; studied, conversely, the Enlightenment's own largely overlooked critique of this project; and articulated, even more subtly, the necessary dependence of anticolonial revolution on Enlightenment reason.<sup>1</sup> To a greater extent than any of its precursors, *Hating Empire Properly* operates on each of these levels at once. In the process, it helps us understand why the Enlightenment may haunt postcolonial thought indefinitely. Pushing Agnani's work and the larger debate in a direction they have not yet explicitly taken, I would argue that the reason lies in the extreme difficulty of critiquing the simultaneously revolutionary and oppressive legacy of critique.

According to a like-minded work on which Agnani draws, David Scott's *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (2004), Enlightenment is the *inescapable* condition of every anticolonialism—and by extension of postcolonial scholarship.<sup>2</sup> Building on C. L. R. James's perspective in *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (1938 [1963]), Scott has argued that Enlightenment principles alone gave colonial subjects the capacity to

comprehend their own historical formation, to intervene in the intricate systems that controlled their lives, and consciously to construct different futures. But if the Enlightenment constitutes the very conditions of possibility for anticolonial revolutions, it also ensures their failure. It inspires anticolonial revolutionaries with a commitment, above all else, to the values of freedom, justice, and equality. At the same time, it prevents them from taking other values as seriously and hence from accommodating plurality within either the revolution or the postcolonial state. Though their colonial education gives revolutionary leaders a comprehensive grasp of the colonial system and the farsighted capacity to envision a different future, it renders them unable, furthermore, to anticipate what is obvious to the less educated: the fatal consequences of a single-minded devotion to Enlightenment knowledge and institutions. The violent sacrifice of other value systems and the destruction, ultimately, of the revolutionary dream itself are, according to Scott's narrative, the tragic "costs" of anticolonialism's paradoxical—but necessary—dependence on the Enlightenment. The tragedy of colonial enlightenment is, in Scott's view, "the fundamental story of our time" (175).

*Conscripts of Modernity* thus reorients postcolonial studies vis-à-vis the Enlightenment. Rather than diametrically opposed forces, Enlightenment reason and anticolonial revolution are, in Scott's account, so intimately intertwined that they can never be separated. Postcolonial studies is in no position, therefore, to reject the Enlightenment. *Conscripts of Modernity* consequently reiterates Foucault's refusal of the "blackmail" that inevitably accompanies the very use of the term "Enlightenment": the implicit demand that one either remain within the parameters of Enlightenment reason or, alternatively, disown it altogether (179).<sup>3</sup> If postcolonial scholars instead studied how colonial Enlightenment simultaneously enabled *and* disabled anticolonial movements, we might acquire, Scott suggests, a historical vision more relevant to our own time, when the dreams of revolution have all but died. For Scott, the act of reflecting on anticolonialism's Enlightenment genealogy is, in other words, the precondition of a postcolonial scholarship that could finally accept and think through the manifest failure of postcolonial emancipation.

We should note, though, that if Scott has opened a new—perhaps infinitely ramifying—path into the Enlightenment, its global

dissemination, and its tragic persistence, he does not himself take it, falling back as he does on old clichés about Enlightenment reason (on one hand, the necessary foundation of self-reflexive consciousness and hence revolution; on the other, an intrinsically univocal and hence absolutist form of thought). Agnani's study is, to my knowledge, the first monograph to extend the path that *Conscripts of Modernity* began. Though *Hating Empire Properly* studies the Enlightenment proper (in particular, Denis Diderot and Edmund Burke), not twentieth-century anticolonial movements, the premise that reflecting on the former should inform reconsiderations of the latter is implicit in book's subtitle and made explicit throughout. *Hating Empire Properly* draws on *Conscripts of Modernity* in a variety of other ways: not only in its sense of the Enlightenment's intrinsically double-edged nature and its consequent opposition to the blackmail of 'Enlightenment' but also in its mediation of the Enlightenment through the work of Adorno and Horkheimer, Foucault, and C. L. R. James; its concluding invocation of Toussaint Louverture; the form of its epilogue; and even, one might imagine, the erudite style of its exposition. But if Scott chastised a generation of postcolonial scholars who, he claimed, had been "seduced" by the blackmail of "Enlightenment," Agnani departs instead from recent studies in intellectual history and political theory that, in opposition to such blackmail, have recovered the Enlightenment's own anti-colonial tradition (180).<sup>4</sup>

The subtitle "The Limits of Enlightenment Anticolonialism" emphasizes *Hating Empire Properly's* critique of the Enlightenment and consequently differentiates this book from those earlier studies, including Sankar Muthu's *Enlightenment against Empire*, Jennifer Pitts's *A Turn to Empire*, and Jonathan Israel's *Enlightenment Contested*.<sup>5</sup> Each of these works explores, in painstaking detail, how figures ranging from Diderot, Smith, and Burke to Kant, Herder, and Bentham explicitly critiqued eighteenth-century European colonialism—a fact that intellectual historians and political theorists working on these figures had previously failed to emphasize because they had prioritized European over colonial contexts. We might better understand the Enlightenment's political vision if we reversed the priority: when eighteenth-century British and French writers critiqued metropolitan culture, they generally understood it to be part of a vast imperial system. This understanding is an aspect of the Enlightenment that

intellectual history, political theory, and literary studies have too long trivialized but which the aforementioned scholarship has made it impossible to overlook. Yet the sense of surprise that greeted these studies indexes nothing so much as the extent to which the humanities have stereotyped the Enlightenment and consequently marginalized its own critical sensibility. It should have been no surprise that Enlightenment writers had critiqued empire and colonialism since the evidence was literally staring every eighteenth-century scholar in the face.

In any case, though, *Hating Empire Properly* not only redresses the scholarly neglect of Enlightenment anticolonialism but—in contrast to Muthu’s, Pitts’s, and Israel’s studies—also explores its “shortcomings” (190). As Agnani demonstrates, Enlightenment anticolonialism ended up legitimizing imperialism in novel—and historically seminal—ways. Agnani intends in this way to recover Enlightenment critique’s complexity: its possibilities but, more important, its limits as well. His aim, in short, is to critique the practice of Enlightenment critique—or, as both the subtitle and the epilogue’s title imply, to think at its limit.<sup>6</sup> But whereas Scott locates the limit of the Enlightenment in its ultimately violent rejection of other value-systems, Agnani depends on a different postcolonial axiom. He identifies the limit with the Enlightenment’s “contradictions” (or “inconsistencies”), his frequently used shorthand for the fact that even when Enlightenment universalism produces an apparently anticolonial position, it remains incompletely universal, extending the right to freedom to non-European populations, particularly those already enslaved or colonized, only with great difficulty.<sup>7</sup> In advancing this argument, *Hating Empire Properly* joins a long list of distinguished studies in political theory and intellectual history—including the work of Partha Chatterjee, Uday Mehta, and Dipesh Chakrabarty—premised on the claim that Enlightenment universalism reaches its limit in the colonies.<sup>8</sup>

Hence, though Agnani focuses on Diderot’s and Burke’s critiques of European colonialism, his subject is, ultimately, the contradictions embedded within these critiques. Diderot’s anticolonialism ultimately devolves into a call for what Agnani terms “consensual colonialism,” motivated by Diderot’s “initial hatred” of “dominance and conquest” (181). In Diderot’s vision of an alternative colonialism, such violence disappears. In this future (following Agnani’s subtly wry analysis, we could call it *Swiss*) colonialism, Diderot imagines Enlightenment

principles of freedom and progress colonizing non-Europeans not by violence but rather by modeling an irresistible form of life and hence by “noncoercive persuasion”: “If I had to create a free nation, what would I do? I would plant a colony of free men in its midst, . . . such, for example, as the Swiss, whose privileges I would preserve strictly, and I would leave the remainder to time and the example.”<sup>9</sup> In Agnani’s perceptive account, Diderot’s dream of a consensual colonialism foreshadows nineteenth-century liberal imperialism.

Like Diderot (and perhaps with his own sense of historical irony), Burke also attempted to bring into being an empire “based on justice,” as the editor of Burke’s India speeches noted decades ago.<sup>10</sup> Hence, in Burke, Agnani also sees—surprisingly but correctly—a premonition of the liberalism to come. In contrast to Diderot, though, Burke was completely comfortable with the sovereign violence empire demands—he insisted merely, in Agnani’s words, on a “moral use of law and force” (131, my emphasis). And he was much more uncomfortable than Diderot had been with the idea of native uprising, at least those that occurred in the “two Indies.” For him, the Haitian Revolution was illegitimate, rebellions against the East India Company invisible, unmentionable, or, perhaps, just irrelevant. In sum, then, Agnani’s study distinguishes itself from the others by emphasizing Enlightenment anticolonialism’s fatal contradiction: its failure to accept that native revolutions alone realize the Enlightenment aspiration for universal emancipation.

Only if one acknowledges Enlightenment anticolonialism’s contradictions can one learn, Agnani argues, to “hate empire properly”—his refashioning of Adorno’s maxim that “one must have tradition in oneself, to hate it properly.”<sup>11</sup> I will return later to Adorno’s cryptic aphorism, which I read somewhat differently from Agnani. For now, we need to keep in mind only that Adorno’s type of “hate” presupposes, more than intimacy, a virtual identity with the object of one’s hate. This hate emerges, in other words, from the same disturbing recognition that necessitates critique (in fact, Adorno’s “hate” is, as we shall see, a euphemism for “critique”).

Implicit in Agnani’s invocation of Adorno’s aphorism, then, is the premise that Enlightenment anticolonialism still partly constitutes our own understanding of empire and its legitimate alternatives. But unlike Diderot and Burke in Agnani’s account, scholars today accept the

political legitimacy of anticolonial revolution (though they may refuse to place certain insurgencies in this category) regardless of whether it is undertaken by Europeans or not. In this regard, we are all *post-colonial* now. In what sense, then, does the Enlightenment still define our own limit? Here, my view departs not only from Agnani's but also from the rich tradition of postcolonial scholarship on which he draws. The Enlightenment limit that still circumscribes anticolonial thought (and postcolonial studies) today is not the refusal to extend its supposedly universal rights to the colonies or an unwillingness to accommodate epistemic and ethical plurality: we have little difficulty stepping beyond such limits now. To make the Enlightenment relevant to the moment in which we now live, as Scott insists we must, we will need to conceive the Enlightenment's limit differently. The one that circumscribes our thought even now—much more deeply embedded within the development of colonial and postcolonial modernity than the limits previously mentioned—lies in the very practice of critique. Though this argument, elaborated in the pages that follow, departs from Agnani's, it would not be possible without his groundbreaking genealogy of anticolonial critique.

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As a recent collection of essays on the subject argues, the term “critique” names one tendency of modern thought: reason's own attempt, without appeal to any authority outside itself, to call its reigning form into question.<sup>12</sup> According to the received account, Enlightenment revolutions against feudal theocracies unleashed critique from the subordinate role it had played throughout the history of Western philosophy. Foucault described critique, consequently, as “the handbook of reason that has grown up in Enlightenment” and the Enlightenment as “the age of critique.”<sup>13</sup> No longer subject to the dictates of any transcendent power, reason would henceforth be entrusted sole responsibility for revealing the illegitimacy of every such power. In other words, the Enlightenment not only rationalized primitive accumulation, slavery, colonialism, and so forth, but also, in diametric opposition, created the conditions of possibility for the critique of such expropriative processes.

European philosophy brought the Enlightenment to a close by turning critique *against* the Enlightenment. According to Hegel, for



example, the Enlightenment's emancipatory project failed because it remained trapped within a dualist ontology.<sup>14</sup> In fact, from Spinoza to Derrida, the trajectory of modern philosophy follows the career of critique, each new generation revealing the previous to have reimprisoned reason within its own metaphysical commitments. But if the Enlightenment defined the terms of critique from the outset, the long effort to disentangle modern thought from its Enlightenment roots by means of critique may have been misguided from the start. Every attempt to critique the Enlightenment is itself a paradigmatically Enlightenment endeavor. Every such attempt entangles itself, ironically, only more deeply in the Enlightenment's own epistemology.

Hence, if we want, for whatever reason, to differentiate ourselves from the Enlightenment, we might need first of all to reflect on the limits of critique itself. Indeed, if critique is "the attitude of modernity," such reflection would force us to confront the fundamental premises of the *episteme* we inhabit (Foucault 1984, 38). It is no coincidence that the twentieth-century philosophers most responsible for transmitting the tradition of critique—Horkheimer, Adorno, and Foucault—repeatedly returned to the Enlightenment in order to reconsider its critical practices.<sup>15</sup> *Hating Empire Properly* is a variation on their theme, as its citations to their work attest (though it narrows the focus from Enlightenment critique in general to the critique of colonialism in particular). But the effort to reflect on the limits of critique—like the endeavor to separate ourselves from the Enlightenment by means of critique—places one in an impossible position. Critique is itself the method designed to reflect on the limits of a given discursive practice. From what vantage point, then, and using what method could we hope to discern critique's own limits? How could one even hope to critique the practice of critique itself? I would suggest that the long history of Enlightenment anticolonialism, evident not only in Diderot and Burke but even in Adorno and Foucault, throws the contemporary limits of critique into stark relief.

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Alluding to Foucault's essays on the subject, Agnani observes that his "book holds true to the spirit of Kantian critique" (xvi). But Foucault took pains to emphasize that Kant's critical project cut in two contradictory directions. When Agnani refers to "Kantian critique," he in

fact means its antithesis, Kant's concept of critical reason. Maintaining the opposition between them is not only the very point of Foucault's essays but also essential to any understanding of how the Enlightenment still circumscribes our thought today via the practice of critique. Hence, this section returns to Foucault's essays, which Agnani adduces at the outset of his book and to which he returns at its end, in order to grasp a distinction that is often overlooked.

As these essays observe, Kant conceived "Enlightenment," on one hand, as the collective struggle for "autonomy" understood in the literal sense of freedom from "heteronomy" (or subjection to a law whose authority lies outside the self). As Kant defined it, therefore, "Enlightenment" entails the effort to emancipate reason from every external guide: as Kant employs the word, *räsonieren* refers to "a use of reason in which reason has no other end but itself" (Foucault 1984, 36). One relies on this critical use of reason because one wants "not to be governed" in the manner of a child, a slave, or, the colonized; one wants, in other words, "to get out of one's minority" (Foucault 1997, 67). Foucault considered this use of critical reason—elaborated in Kant's brief article "An Answer to the Question: What Is Enlightenment?"—the Enlightenment's most valuable tendency. At the essence of Enlightenment critical reason, pace Scott, is precisely an openness to ethical and epistemic plurality. In its rejection of ecclesiastical rule, it gave rise, Foucault argued, to modern philology, jurisprudence, and epistemology (45–46).

But Kantian critique, on the other hand, had a diametrically opposed aim: to discover reason's necessary limits, whether in the sphere of theoretical knowledge or that of practical life (Foucault 1984, 38, 45, and 46).<sup>16</sup> In Foucault's view, this concept of critique—whose prototype lies in Kant's three *Critiques*—prefigured critical reason's fate after the Enlightenment. Whereas Kant's ephemeral essay in the *Berlinische Monatsschrift* identified the radical essence of critical reason, his three major works prefigured its subsequent appropriation by the nineteenth century's "vast technical and scientific system" (55). Financial institutions, state apparatuses, the international state system, and even civil organizations each used positivist science—which was always "carefully critical of each of its results" but never of its authority as such—to "rationalize the economy and society" (1997, 50). Critical reason produced a "furor of power" that, Foucault observed, has

been “impossible to evade [because] it is reasonably justified” (54, 51). He called critique’s nineteenth-century trajectory, which redefined the very point of critical reason, “the Kantian channel” (68). In short, it was Kantian critique, rather than the broad Enlightenment desire not to be governed, that gained historical traction.

Foucault repeatedly returned to the distinction between these two opposed senses of critique in the final years of his life.<sup>17</sup> In Foucault’s dialectic of Enlightenment, critique gives birth, via Kant, to something “totally different from it” (1997, 54). Whereas critical reason originally questioned institutional authority in order to foster autonomy in its strict sense, it eventually came merely to question institutional procedures in order to devise more effective ones. This is one of Foucault’s essential points: the historical outcome of the Enlightenment desire for autonomy—and the historical consequence of Kantian critique—was not the reduction but instead, ironically, the intensification of power relations. As the use of critical reason was appropriated by schools, industry, and states, “the growth of autonomy” turned into the “growth of individuals”—or, in other words, of “productive forces” possessing the “capabilities” necessary for technically advanced societies (47, 51). Critique not only emerged alongside the social institutions and scholarly disciplines that have organized modern life but has also been contaminated by them: it became, in essence, the practice by which they defined and legitimized their norms. In itself, it hardly presupposes an oppositional stance.

We cannot, therefore, simply embrace critique unequivocally in the manner, for example, of Judith Butler’s essays on Foucault and Kant, which align Kant’s *Critiques* with academic freedom *against* state intervention.<sup>18</sup> We need to foreground the ambivalence, not the virtue, of critique. Foucault claimed that the question of Enlightenment (i.e., the ceaseless effort to resist heteronomy) had been “deported” into critique (i.e., the institutional establishment of limits on thought and action). He insisted that, to respond critically to critique’s own institutionalization, we would need to travel this route “in the opposite direction,” moving from the institutional appropriation of critical reason to its original impulse, the desire not to be governed (1997, 67). In the age of biopower, critique must turn against its own institutionalization (hence Foucault’s genealogies of psychiatry, medicine, criminology, and sexuality). If we studied the *critical* history of our own subject

formation, we could decide for ourselves which aspects of our subjectivities do and do not serve our desire for autonomy: “The point, in brief, is to transform the critique conducted in the form of a necessary limitation into a practical critique that takes the form of a possible transgression” (45). Critique always prepares the way for “something other than itself”: “a future or a truth that it will not know”; “what philosophy, science, politics, ethics, law, literature, etc., positively constitute” (42). But Foucauldian critique leads, ideally, not to new institutional norms but, on the contrary, to a singular form of life. Ceaselessly critiquing the institutionalized practice of critique, it aspires to the “permanent creation of ourselves in our autonomy” (44).

Like Foucault’s, Adorno’s and Horkheimer’s effort to disentangle critique’s two tendencies is precisely an attempt to reverse the power relationship to which critical reason had itself become subject. For this effort, the Enlightenment—whether we understand it economically as the rise of capitalism; culturally as the emergence of the bourgeoisie; politically as the rise of the interstate system; epistemologically as the rise of scientific method; or ethically as the refusal to be governed in an absolutist way—is “a privileged domain,” the moment when critical reason was suddenly unleashed and just as quickly instrumentalized (Foucault 1984, 42). In any case, though, before we valorize critique or align our own scholarship with it, we need to be certain about the type of critique we intend. The Enlightenment maintains its hold over us precisely—and perhaps only—because, like professionals in various fields, we still confound the struggle for autonomy with the institutional arrangement to which it gave rise. If we can pry critical reason away from this arrangement, the Enlightenment might eventually cease, *pace* Scott, to be the inescapable condition of our thought. But otherwise the practice of critique will remain co-opted from the start.

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The vicious circle of critical reason is evident in Diderot’s and Burke’s respective critiques of colonialism. In both cases, the rhetoric of autonomy collapses into a defense of heteronomy, the principle of liberty into an apology for the liberal order (i.e., private property, market exchange, free labor). The automatic movement from the first to the second suggests the limit of not just Diderot’s and Burke’s critique but the practice of critique we have inherited from the Enlightenment

as such. Though Agnani locates the Enlightenment's limit elsewhere (in its failure to extend sovereignty to the colonized and the enslaved [176]), his meticulous analyses of Diderot and Burke make this more fundamental and intractable limit visible as well.

As Agnani emphasizes, the *Histoire des Deux Indes*—the Enlightenment encyclopedia of imperialism wherein Diderot presented his anti-colonialism most forcefully—critiqued the Enlightenment principle of liberty itself in the name of a more universal model thereof. It not only condemned European empires that withheld freedom from their colonies but also praised colonial revolutionaries who took up arms in its name. In fact, drawing on the work of Michèle Duchet, Agnani notes that the *philosophes* fetishized slave revolt—or, rather, the figure of the “slave in revolt” (56). They treated the act of *marronage*—by means of which Caribbean slaves escaped the plantation and formed isolated communities—as the “negation of slavery” and thus the very embodiment of freedom. Not only does the *Histoire* understand the master-slave relationship to be dialectical, with the master's violence eventually returning to him, but sometimes encourages the slave to close the circle. Addressing colonial settlers in Africa, Diderot proclaimed, startlingly:

Barbarous Europeans! The splendor of your undertakings has not impressed me at all. Their success has not removed the garb of injustice from them at all. I have often embarked in my thoughts upon the vessels that take you to these faraway countries; but . . . witness to your infamy, I have separated myself from you. I have plunged myself among your enemies, I have taken up arms against you, I have bathed my hands in your blood. I make here a solemn profession of this.<sup>19</sup>

In Agnani's sensitive reading, Diderot's call for anticolonial violence expresses his awareness of his own “unavoidable complicity”: his anger “bears within it an acknowledgment that this proclamation is not expiation enough. [T]he spirit will only be put to rest through vengeance” (57–58). One could note here that Diderot, like Foucault, understood critique's insufficiency: it realizes its own radical aspirations only when it is joined to a fundamentally transgressive practice. More to the point, though, Diderot's call for freedom's universal dissemination, even to African slaves, revealed his seeming commitment to autonomy in the most radical sense of the term. It appears to prefigure Foucault's career-long effort to retrace the trajectory of critical reason.

But Agnani emphasizes that though the *Histoire* vehemently criticized European colonialism, its *raison d'être* was to define a "legitimate basis" for colonialism. The Abbé Raynal posed the *Histoire's* basic question in its opening pages: "Europe has everywhere founded colonies; but does it know the principles upon which one ought to found them?"<sup>20</sup> In its effort to give otherwise illegitimate empires a legitimate foundation, the *Histoire* plays its part, we should note, in the institutionalization of critical reason. As Agnani observes, Raynal's question was prompted by native "violence against settler communities" and the desire to forestall such violence (55). In other words, even as Diderot called anticolonial violence forth rhetorically, he feared native "unrest and violence" in fact (59). No less than his metropolitan readership, he could not actually countenance the prospect of slave revolutions precisely because they would have upended the very foundation of metropolitan life: "The Frenchman who dreams of nothing but vanquishing [the British] without foreseeing that the revolt of blacks in one colony could spark unrest in all of them hastens a revolution in the midst of a war."<sup>21</sup> I would emphasize, then, that though Diderot insists freedom be universal, his concern is actually to circumscribe the forms it might take, in order to preserve his vision of French political economy—hence "consensual colonialism" as his preferred alternative to slave revolt.

One could argue that Burke was even more alert to the institutionalization of critical reason than Diderot had been. In fact, it was not just Enlightenment reason but its institutionalization ("the new order of 'geometry and arithmetic'" [90]) that became the object of critique with his work. Whether the Enlightenment's "geometric rationality" took the form of utopian philosophy, the nascent social sciences, or global finance capital, it wanted to transform society rapidly and, as a consequence, intrinsically created social orders that could only be founded, in Burke's view, on colonization and conquest of one sort or another: "All the pleasing illusions, which made power gentle, and obedience liberal . . . are to be dissolved by this new conquering empire of light and reason."<sup>22</sup> After its institutional appropriation, critical reason creates a sovereign form based no longer on its subjects' history and traditions but instead on coercion and militarization. The constitution of Britain, as of France, had suddenly become "little more than a militarized entity" in Burke's view (130). More than any other

impulse, it was opposition to this sovereign form that motivated Burke's writing. Bringing together his work on East India Company rule and on the French Revolution, Agnani argues that, together, they identify this prototypically modern form of sovereignty erupting "at the very same time in both colony and metropole," Asia and Europe (98). This originally *global* modernity demanded critique because it was, Burke thought, both more alien and more invasive than any previous sovereign form. As Agnani helps us see, Burke was responding in his own way to the invention of biopolitics: "The space of politics extends into the most minute and capillary aspects of daily life," effectively turning everyone whom it governs into a "slave" (147).

Like the Romantic and conservative traditions that grew out of his work, Burke claimed therefore that Enlightenment reason was itself the source of heteronomy—an "arbitrary" and "external force" (131)—because it bore no relationship to tradition. Hence, in Burke's peculiar but seminal concept of liberty, the preservation of history and tradition replace the use of critical reason: the historical continuity of tradition becomes identical to the political consent of the governed. This sense of liberty led Burke to his own concept of "consensual colonialism": the replacement of European merchant company sovereignty not with native autonomy but instead with a system of "noncoercive" obedience (98) founded, in diametric opposition to Diderot's Swiss model, on local customs (or, we could say, "cultural difference"). During the early years of the American Revolution, Burke wrote:

[I]n the comprehensive dominion which the divine Providence ha[s] put into our hands, [it is] our duty, in all soberness, to conform our Government to the character and circumstances of the several people who compos[e] this mighty and strangely diversified mass. I was never wild enough to conceive, that one method would serve for the whole; I could never conceive that the natives of *Hindustan* and that of *Virginia* could be ordered in the same manner, or that the *Cutchery* court and the grand jury of *Salem* could be regulated on a similar plan.<sup>23</sup>

In fact, though, Burke's supposed preference for local traditions over universal principles was largely rhetorical, a strategy he used when faced with the prospect either of corporate or popular sovereignty, but not otherwise. He called for British rule to respect Indian traditions only because he considered them historically advanced. In regard to African and Native American customs, by contrast, he

expressed no such scruples. In a similar vein, Agnani argues that the new “sciences of the state,” including demography and political economy, informed Burke’s critique of colonial modernity (101–2). And Burke, no less than Diderot, understood the necessity of the New World plantation model to metropolitan economic growth—hence, his parallel fear that the Haitian Revolution would spread. Although so apparently different from Diderot’s, Burke’s critique of colonialism—opposed to popular autonomy *and* corporate modernity—was equally a defense of the liberal order. Their work demonstrates, I would argue, that even when Enlightenment critique assumed an anticolonial stance it was unable to open itself to struggles for autonomy that existed outside this particular order.

Agnani places the resistance of non-Europeans, “those who are unrepresented” (150), outside the “conceptual limit” (110) of Burke’s anticolonialism. To emphasize its shortcomings, Agnani compares it with the creole republicanism to which Jean-Baptiste Bellay, Haitian revolutionary general and former slave, gave voice in his contemporaneous address to the French National Convention (1794). In fact, the only figures in Agnani’s narrative who transgress the limit of Enlightenment anticolonialism are Haitian revolutionaries such as Bellay and Toussaint. In Agnani’s view, they alone take Enlightenment universalism to its logical conclusion—not only critiquing but also radicalizing it—by extending it to slave populations, an argument originally put forward by James and recently elaborated by Laurent DuBois and Nick Nesbitt, among others.<sup>24</sup>

In fact, though, there is nothing intrinsic to Enlightenment reason that blocks the extension of rights to the colonized, the enslaved, or non-Europeans. Diderot’s rhetorical support for anticolonial violence, Toussaint’s and Bellay’s striking appropriations of Enlightenment principles, and the pervasive demand for black emancipation by late eighteenth-century abolitionists all clearly demonstrate this fact.<sup>25</sup> The widely held premise that the Enlightenment’s limit lays in its supposed inability to extend its rights also creates other confusions. It risks making our effort to critique the Enlightenment an antiquarian pastime since political rights were subsequently extended to each of these populations. It furthermore implies that the universal extension of these rights should define the horizon of our own political imagination. Yet the consequence, if not the conscious intention, of



universalizing these rights is to marginalize even further all competing concepts of common rights and collective life.

It is true, though, that Enlightenment critique has failed to embrace the full range of freedom struggles, particularly those that do not accept the Enlightenment's concept of rights. We need to understand this limit more precisely than we have so far. I would suggest that the institutional contexts within which critique has operated since the Enlightenment—e.g., Diderot was a professional man of letters, Burke a leading member of parliament, and so forth—militate against the embrace of such struggles. Once it has been institutionalized, critique has little choice but to protect its own institutional life. The Enlightenment's limit cannot be understood, therefore, in national, racial, or any other identitarian terms: Enlightenment assimilates all such identities with ease. The Enlightenment reaches its limit instead whenever it encounters any form of life that disavows the institutional arrangement in which critique has developed. In other words, slave revolution symbolized the future late Enlightenment critique dare not know.

\* \* \*

If one must “engage in a persistent critique of the terms of one's analysis” (183–84)—as Agnani justifiably demands—it follows that one *must* critique the practice of critique itself. One should note, in this regard, that Enlightenment critique leads inevitably, if subtly, to a colonial logic. If, according to the terms tacitly set out by the Enlightenment, the ultimate goal of critique is “autonomy,” the path to autonomy *must*, conversely, pass through a specifically European tradition of critical reason. This is one conundrum in which anticolonial revolution became trapped.

Evident as early as Diderot and Burke's anticolonialism, this conundrum recurs even in Adorno's maxim “One must have tradition in oneself, to hate it properly.” According to this maxim, only those who have completely internalized the European tradition can see both its problems *and* its possibilities clearly. Hence they alone can hate this tradition properly, rejecting every aspect of it that has become alien to them, a fixed and heteronomous law, and preserving only those aspects that are consonant with their own historical circumstances. My reading of Adorno in this regard differs slightly from Agnani's, which claims that “to ‘hate’ empire properly [means] to engage in a

form of critique that explores its inconsistencies" (181). The imperative implicit in Adorno's maxim is rather to absorb this tradition completely into oneself. Such absorption alone cultivates one's capacity for critique—in a sense that is perhaps more precise than the one Agnani has in mind: it enables one to reappropriate the tradition and hence preserve one's autonomy. In diametric opposition, those not born to the European tradition have, we could say, an underdeveloped critical faculty and hence tend to hate the tradition improperly. Because they have not internalized its full historical range and complexity, they cannot use it as they will: it remains heteronomous to them.

Adorno's maxim occurs in the *Minima Moralia* aphorism entitled "Savages are not more noble" (1944). As the title suggests, the aphorism argues against the premise that with decolonization, newly "liberated peoples" will make industrialization serve humanity (53). Adorno creates a haphazard list of the "latecomers" or "newcomers" to the European tradition that, as Agnani notes, he presumably encountered in his own academic travels: not only "diligent art-historians and musicologists of petty-bourgeois origins" and socialist "workers" interested in their "heritage" but also "African students of political economy" and "Siamese at Oxford" (52). Agnani refers to this aphorism, provocatively, as "Adorno's Bandung moment" (184). Picking up on Agnani's implication, one could argue that Adorno's response to the specter of anticolonial revolution is even more disappointing than Diderot's and Burke's. Adorno's fear arose, though, not from the unsettling possibilities such revolutions might unleash but, on the contrary, from their congenital failure to adopt a properly critical attitude toward the European tradition. Because they are not properly suffused by it, Third World colonial subjects, like Europe's own underclasses, habitually defer to "all that is established" (Adorno 2005, 52). "They accept it," according to Adorno, "at face value": "Instead of expecting miracles of pre-capitalist peoples, older nations should be on their guard against their unimaginative, indolent taste for everything proven, and for the successes of the West" (52, 53). Hence, even before decolonization truly began, Adorno had forecast its failure: nominally independent or not, non-European peoples, like Europe's own underclasses, are fated to be the victims of heteronomy. If critique is the necessary path to autonomy and its origins and development lie in European high culture, only an immersion in *this* tradition prepares one for

the struggle to become autonomous. "That snobs show more aptitude than proletarians for *avant-garde* movements in art throws light on politics too"—a self-consciously élitist, not to mention Eurocentric, argument for the importance of critique: such is, one could argue, much of Adorno's work (52).

As "Savages are not more noble" attests, the politics of critique can be slippery, sliding from the effort to foster an open-ended struggle for autonomy to the reflexive belief that every such struggle must employ the forms of critical reason the Enlightenment first unleashed. This slippage is evident not only in Diderot, Burke, and Adorno but even in Foucault. He considered critique to be a specifically Western "cultural form"—a "certain way of thinking, speaking and acting" stemming from the early modern wave of "governmentalization" that swept across Europe and redefined the principles of rule in every sphere of life (1997, 42, 44, 45, and 48). Foucault nonetheless described this historically and geographically specific "attitude" as "*the art of involuntary insubordination*"—as if collective attempts to resist sovereign and institutional authority had not existed elsewhere or otherwise (47). Indeed, he not only called the "struggle for freedom" and the development of human agency ("the acquisition of capabilities") to be "permanent elements" of the West but also insisted, with the same European myopia, that they are "the root of [its] singular historical destiny" (1984, 47).

To be fair to Foucault, though, if he considered critique to be part of a specifically European history, he also found it problematic for this reason. As he observed, "the great hope of the eighteenth century" was to spread the struggle for freedom beyond the élite classes to whom it had traditionally belonged (48). But this Enlightenment project to disperse the capacity for agentic behavior across society led, according to Foucault, not to autonomy's growth, but on the contrary to normative models of mass production, regulation, and communication. In other words, in the process of disseminating critical reason, the Enlightenment made it the vessel of effectively colonial relationships: the historical destiny of "Western societies" became, in Foucault's words, "universalizing" and "dominant with respect to others" (*ibid.*). Foucault's concept of critique was a dialectical response precisely to this colonizing trajectory. In his work, critique itself attempted to "disconnect" the growth of capabilities from "the intensification of

power relations”—or, in an operation that parallels Adorno’s concept of proper hating, to make our subject formation serve the growth of autonomy once again (ibid.).

But Foucault also implied that his effort to release the Enlightenment’s grip might be destined to fail. The penultimate sentence of his major essay on Enlightenment questions whether the practice of critique itself keeps one bound to the Enlightenment: “I do not know whether it must be said today that the critical task still entails faith in Enlightenment” (50). Foucault’s uncertainty expresses the difficulty he experienced in his effort to separate the practice of critique from its Enlightenment genealogy. It articulates, in other words, the impasse (or conundrum) of the post-Enlightenment struggle for autonomy, which presupposes tutelage within a specific tradition of critical reason. But the essay’s concluding sentence—“I continue to think that this task requires work on our limits, that is, a patient labor giving form to our impatience for liberty”—nonetheless implies that critique must ultimately attempt to think every limit, even those, presumably, that it has itself inherited from the Enlightenment. This imperative partly explains Foucault’s efforts, in his final lectures, to relocate the origins of critique from early modern Europe to ancient Greece.<sup>26</sup>

Though Foucault did not himself make this point, one must conclude from his discussions of critique that the desire not to be governed cannot allow itself to be governed *even by critique*. To the extent that it does, it will remain trapped within a particular history that, though often made identical to the struggle for autonomy, is merely a moment in the history of European philosophy. When we consider critique the precondition of autonomy, we paradoxically circumscribe autonomy from the outset. Foucault rethought the aim of critique in an effort to release himself from his own subjection to its contemporaneous form. To preserve critical reason’s emancipatory power, we would need continually to do the same.

As mentioned, postcolonial scholars reflexively claim that the limit of Enlightenment universalism lies in “colonial difference,” the failure to extend the political and economic rights that characterize modern liberal societies to colonial subjects. As a critique of liberalism’s claims, this argument remains relevant: the rule of colonial difference exists wherever economic exploitation forestalls the real provision of rights. But this is not the limit that still hangs over anticolonialism today.

That limit *is* evident, I have argued, in Diderot, Burke, Adorno, and Foucault. In Diderot's and Burke's writing, Enlightenment anticolonialism reaches its limit when it encounters acts of insurrection that do not follow the Enlightenment model of revolution. For Adorno and Foucault as well, the path to autonomy presupposed a specific epistemic orientation and, by extension, a particular cultural training whose roots lie in the Enlightenment. From Diderot's ambivalence and Burke's hostility toward Caribbean slave revolts to Adorno's alienation from May '68 and Foucault's vanishing interest in Iran, critique has been averse to insurrections that do not preserve its own institutional legacy. They lie outside the limit of anticolonialism still now. Witness the commitment of postcolonial states to the institutional framework of the colonial regimes they replaced, which has made the former recapitulate many of the latter's fundamental problems. Toussaint's contradictory demands for the establishment of juridical equality across the French Empire *and* the preservation of the plantation economy in Haiti mark the beginning of this tragic history.<sup>27</sup>

But the tragedy described by James and Scott is not peculiar to anticolonial movements and postcolonial states. It is intrinsic to the modern practice of revolution, which has bound decolonization to the Enlightenment. The revolutionary spirit that has shaped world history since the eighteenth century is defined, in Hannah Arendt's account, by an unequaled desire to institutionalize freedom—"to build a new house where freedom can dwell" and hence to make freedom "a political way of life" (35, 33). In fact, the goal of revolution is—according to Arendt's compact formulation—*not liberation but freedom*. The ultimate goal is, in other words, not merely putting an end to tyranny but constituting "freedom" in the ancient Greek and Roman sense of the word: "a form of political organization, in which the citizens lived together under conditions of no-rule, without a division between rulers and ruled" (30). But in the process of *constituting freedom*, every revolution after the American War of Independence became absorbed with the first term—"constitution" in the sense of the rules and law of government and hence of its permanent institutions—at the expense of the second, whose original sense became obscure.

In fact, though, this sense of freedom—a political realm that enables each of its members to claim shared rights but prevents them from possessing sovereignty over any other—presupposes a diametrically

opposed understanding of the term “constitution” (Arendt, 168, 172). The foundation of freedom depends not on *constituted* but on *constituent* power.<sup>28</sup> It depends, in other words, not on any “theory” or “tradition”—neither on fixed laws nor permanent institutions—but on a singular “event”: the sudden act of people who recognize that together they possess the power to constitute a body politic and do so in a form designed to preserve this political power rather than surrender it to a sovereign institution. If the act of “constitution” in this sense leads to the creation of “institutions,” they would need to be of a different kind altogether. The structures that house freedom must not alienate people’s constituent power—as governments, including democratic ones, by definition always do—but on the contrary enable them to realize, hone, and aggregate this power. These structures must become “mechanisms” in which “new power is constantly generated” (151–52).

In Arendt’s narrative, the revolutionary (actually counterrevolutionary) redefinition of “constitution”—from the *act* whereby people form a body politic to the *institutions* of government—occurs under the pressure of Enlightenment reason. For example, the colonial experience of founding political bodies, which guided the American Revolution, long preceded it, dating in fact to the first Pilgrim settlements. But the “reason” that codified the revolution was the Enlightenment’s product “both in style and content” (176). Steeped in social contract theory, “neither [Thomas Jefferson] nor anybody else” could see “the simple and elementary” distinction between people forming a political body that realizes and combines their power and people consenting to a government that possesses a monopoly on power (177). Once institutionalized, critical reason, in other words, necessarily confounds constituent with constituted power. As Arendt observed,

This lack of conceptual clarity [is] the curse of Western [intellectual] history[.] The great hope of [modern] revolution has been, from the beginning, that [the rift between action and thought] might be healed; one of the reasons why this hope has not been fulfilled, why [n]ot even the New World could bring forth a new political science, lies in the enormous strength and resiliency of our tradition of thought. (ibid.)

It follows that from this account—in contrast to Adorno’s and Foucault’s—that autonomy is logically *prior* to critique, whose historical function has been less to serve the actual practice of freedom than to efface it.

If we kept in mind two points Foucault made in regard to critique (but that he did not take to their logical conclusion), we might begin to step across the Enlightenment limit to which both critical reason and revolution became subject. First point: the aim of critical reason, before its institutional appropriation, is absolute autonomy. According to its own terms, therefore, critical reason cannot fear any form of autonomy. The properly *critical* question that must be posed to any social practice concerns not whether its violence is “legitimate” but rather the extent to which it fosters autonomy or instead institutes new sources of heteronomy. Whenever one rejects a social practice for any reason other than its failure to foster autonomy, one’s position is, in other words, essentially *uncritical* within the terms of critical reason strictly defined. If such a practice threatens or even does violence to society’s institutional arrangement, it cannot be disqualified on these grounds (needless to say, Arendt would not have accepted this logic). In fact, dismantling the institutional appropriation of critical reason must be the very point of critique. Second point: critique realizes its emancipatory ambitions only when it is joined to “something other than itself,” a transgressive practice—“a truth or future”—for which it is the preparation but which it cannot know or predict beforehand.

To rethink the aim of critique now, we would need, therefore, to consider it preparation for a fundamentally different way of life, one that will have fully absorbed the fundamental opposition between collective autonomy on one hand and institutional continuity on the other—and sided with the former against the latter. If freedom corresponds to constituent, not constituted, power, then it absolutely demands social practices, relationships, and structures that do not presuppose their own permanence. Only this now barely imaginable society could counteract the massive institutionalization of daily life that has everywhere followed the ascendancy of critical reason, defined its acceptable forms, and trapped every anticolonial longing within imperceptibly colonial relationships. In diametric opposition, critique must now practice recognizing everything that acquired institutional solidity after the Enlightenment as a waking dream—something to be dissolved at will once it no longer manifests a common desire. Critique must consequently not disdain, but on the contrary defer to, such practices wherever they have occurred, not only within the history of institutions but also on their margins (e.g., in urban uprisings, autonomist

demonstrations, religious movements, or everyday acts of disobedience, retreat, and withdrawal). To the extent that it does so, critique will finally begin to surpass the Enlightenment's limit. As long as it instead locates that limit, inaccurately, in the failure to extend rights to non-European peoples, rather than in the practice of critique itself, it will remain securely within the Enlightenment's limit—even when it possesses the extraordinary sophistication of Chatterjee's, Chakrabarty's, Scott's, or Agnani's work. The radical vision of autonomy that, for better or worse, unleashed critique will remain beyond its conceptual, still less its practical, reach.

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## Notes

1. In the first category are two early studies—Eric Stokes, *The English Utilitarians and India* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1959), and Ranajit Guha, *A Rule of Property for Bengal: An Essay on the Idea of Permanent Settlement* (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1963)—along with Uday Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999). In the second category are Sankar Muthu, *Enlightenment against Empire* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Jennifer Pitts, *A Turn to Empire: The Rise of Imperial Liberalism in Britain and France* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2006); and Jonathan Israel, *Enlightenment Contested: Philosophy, Modernity, and the Emancipation of Man, 1670–1752* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), 590–603. In the third category, one could place Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1999); Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000); and, above all, David Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity: The Tragedy of Colonial Enlightenment* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004).

2. Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*, 173, 180, 184, 192, 208. The claims that follow in this paragraph are taken from the same volume, 170–71, 173, 176, 183, 192–93, 195–96, 198–99, 203, 206–7.

3. The claims that follow are from Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*, 172, 180–81, 207, 210, 220–21.



4. Scott does not acknowledge or cite Spivak's and Chakrabarty's nuanced understandings of the Enlightenment, which articulate the precise sort of approach to the Enlightenment Scott called for but which precede his own. See, for instance, Spivak, *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason*, 141–42, and Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 4–5. In this regard, see also Agnani's sensitive reading of Chakrabarty's final sentence: *Hating Empire Properly*, xxii.

5. See note 1 above.

6. The epilogue is titled "Hating Empire Properly: European Anticolonialism at Its Limit." Agnani also explicitly refers to "thinking at the limit" (189) and "European anticolonialism at its aporetic limit" (176; see also 19). The most frequently cited use of the phrase "thinking at the limit" comes from Stuart Hall's meditation on postcolonial studies, Foucault, Derrida, and the Enlightenment, "When Was 'The Post-Colonial'? Thinking at the Limit," in *The Post-Colonial Question: Common Skies, Divided Horizons*, ed. Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti (London: Routledge, 1996), 242–59. The concept of "limit" and the necessity therefore of thinking at the limit originates, in turn, from Hegel's dictum that "a thing is what it is, only in and by reason of its limit": see G.W.F. Hegel, *Science of Logic* (New York: Humanity Books, 1999), 126–27, 107; on this passage, see Adam Sitze, "At the Mercy Of," in *The Limits of Law*, ed. Austin Sarat, Lawrence Douglas, and Martha Merrill Umphrey (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 246–308, 246.

7. See, for example, Agnani, *Hating Empire Properly*, xv, 19, 110, 115, 155, 169, 181.

8. See, for example, Mehta, *Liberalism*; Partha Chatterjee, *Nation and Its Fragments: Colonial and Postcolonial Histories* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), and *The Black Hole of Empire: History of a Global Practice of Power* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012); and Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*. For a critique of this argument's own limits, see Onur Ulas Ince, *Empire of Liberty: Locke, Burke, Wakefield, and the Dilemmas of Colonial Capitalism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, forthcoming).

9. Denis Diderot, *Oeuvres*, 5 vols. (Paris: R. Lafont, 1994), 3:326 (quoted by Agnani, *Hating Empire Properly*, 38–39, 204). I have modified the translation slightly.

10. Edmund Burke, *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, vol. 7, *India: The Hastings Trial*, ed. P. J. Marshall (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1981), 23 (quoted by Agnani, *Hating Empire Properly*, 115).

11. Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from a Damaged Life* (London: Verso, 2005), 52; Agnani, *Hating Empire Properly*, 181, 183. Agnani builds on Lazarus's earlier invocation of Adorno's phrase: see Neil Lazarus, "Introduction: Hating Tradition Properly," in *Nationalism and Cultural Practice in the Postcolonial World* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999); Agnani, *Hating Empire Properly*, 245.

12. Karin de Boer and Ruth Sonderegger, "Introduction," in *Conceptions of Critique in Modern and Contemporary Philosophy*, ed. de Boer and Sonderegger (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 1–9, 3–4.

13. Michel Foucault, "What Is Enlightenment?" in Michel Foucault, *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Random House, 1984), 32–50, 38. Elsewhere, Foucault places critique's origins earlier, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, alongside the broad "movement of governmentalization of both society and individuals." But here also it is an enlightened response ("the art" of "not being governed like that and at that cost") to absolutism: see Michel Foucault, "What Is Critique?" in Michel Foucault, *The Politics of Truth*, ed. Sylvère Lotringer (New York: Semiotext(e), 1997), 41–81, 42, 44, 45.

14. See Karin de Boer, "Hegel's Conception of Immanent Critique: Its Sources, Extant, and Limit," in *Conceptions of Critique in Modern and Contemporary Philosophy*, ed. de Boer and Sonderegger (Basingstoke, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), 83–100; de Boer and Sonderreger, "Introduction," 4.

15. Max Horkheimer, *Eclipse of Reason* (New York: Continuum, 1985), and "Reason against Itself: Some Remarks on Enlightenment," *Theory, Culture & Society* 10 (May 1993), 79–88; Max Horkheimer and Theodor Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment: Philosophical Fragments* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), Michel Foucault, *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1982–1983* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), 1–40; "Kant on Enlightenment and Revolution," *Economy and Society* 15, no. 1 (1986): 88–96.

16. For the argument that Foucault's distinction here is imprecise, see Colin McQuillan, "Beyond the Limits of Reason: Kant, Critique, and Enlightenment" in *Conceptions of Critique*, ed. de Boer and Sonderegger, 66–82.

17. Besides the various texts by Foucault on this subject cited above, see also James Miller, *The Passion of Michel Foucault* (New York: Anchor, 1993), 332: "[What Is Enlightenment?]' was published, at [Foucault's] behest, as a central document in the standard English-language anthology of his [posthumously published] work, *The Foucault Reader*."

18. Judith Butler, "Critique, Dissent, Disciplinarity," *Critical Inquiry* 35, no. 4 (Summer 2009): 773–95, 780, 783. See also Judith Butler, "What Is Critique? An Essay on Foucault's Virtue," in *The Political*, ed. David Ingram (Oxford: Blackwell, 2002), 212–28, and "What Is Critique? An Essay on Foucault's Virtue," *The Judith Butler Reader*, ed. Sara Salih (Malden: Blackwell, 2004), 302–22.

19. Guillaume Thomas Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes*, 10 vols. (Geneva: Jean-Léonard Pellet, 1782), bk. 1, 175 (quoted in Agnani, *Hating Empire Properly*, 53 and 211). I have modified the translation slightly.

20. Raynal, *Histoire*, bk. 1, 2 (quoted by Agnani, *Hating Empire Properly*, 38).

21. Raynal, *Histoire*, bk. 14, 287–88 (quoted in Agnani, *Hating Empire Properly*, 59, 214).

22. Edmund Burke, *The Writing and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, 9 vols. (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 8:127 (quoted by Agnani, *Hating Empire Properly*, 92). On the different forms of Enlightenment reason that Burke criticized, see Agnani, *Hating Empire Properly*, 74, 95, 97, 123, 125.

23. Burke, *Writing and Speeches*, 3:316–17, “Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, on the Affairs of America, April 3, 1777” (quoted by Agnani, *Hating Empire Properly*, 162).

24. For a critique of this argument, see David Scott, “The Theory of Haiti: *The Black Jacobins* and the Poetics of Universal History,” *Small Axe* 45 (November 2014): 35–51, 39f. See also Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), and Nick Nesbitt, *Universal Emancipation: The Haitian Revolution and the Radical Enlightenment* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008).

25. See, in particular, Toussaint L’Ouverture, *The Haitian Revolution* (New York: Verso, 2008).

26. See Foucault, *Fearless Speech* (Los Angeles: Semiotext(e), 2001), 170–71: “[In ‘the problematization of truth which characterizes both the end of Presocratic philosophy and the beginning of the kind of philosophy which is still ours today’] we have the roots of what we could call the ‘critical’ tradition in the West. And here you will recognize one of my targets in this seminar, namely, to construct a genealogy of the critical attitude in Western philosophy.” See also Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1983–1984* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), and *The Government of Self and Others: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1982–1983* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011).

27. C. L. R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1989), 242; Scott, *Conscripts of Modernity*, 202–3, 205.

28. Though many philosophers, including Antonio Negri and Giorgio Agamben, have elaborated this distinction in recent decades, it belongs originally to the French Revolutionary theorist the Abbé Sieyès: see Emmanuel Joseph Sieyès, *Political Writings* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2003), 136.

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