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**Fredric Jameson and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *Periodizing* the Black Internal Colony**

Jeremy Matthew Glick  
*Hunter College, CUNY*

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**Volume 24 Issue 1 (March 2022) Article 13**

**Jeremy Matthew Glick,**

**"Fredric Jameson and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *Periodizing the Black Internal Colony*,"**

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Contents of **CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture 24.1 (2022)**

Special Issue: ***Periodizing the Present: The 2020s, The Longue Durée, and Contemporary Culture.***

**Ed. Treasa De Loughry and Brittany Murray**

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**Abstract:**

In "Fredric Jameson and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *Periodizing the Black Internal Colony*," Jeremy Matthew Glick reads these authors' coupling of Black radical struggle with wars of decolonization as engaging against a twenty-first century war on revolutionary memory. This essay examines Jameson's brief "Maoist Digression" in "Periodizing the Sixties" and discussion of Cuban Revolutionary Foco-theory as "neither in [...] nor of it" and Spivak's planetary turn's link to Black internal colonialism analysis as a way to talk about the intersections of revolutionary politics and literary form. It concludes with a brief meditation on Amiri Baraka on the centrality of space for Charles Olson and Sun Ra and Toni Morrison's theorization of "Village Values" in her talk on the short-fiction of Toni Cade Bambara.

## Jeremy Matthew GLICK

### Fredric Jameson and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's *Periodizing the Black Internal Colony*

The Economists and terrorists merely bow to different poles of spontaneity: the Economists bow to the spontaneity of the "pure" working-class movement, while the terrorists bow to the spontaneity of the passionate indignation of intellectuals, who lack the ability or opportunity to link up the revolutionary struggle with the working-class movement, to form an integral whole.

-V.I. Lenin

Black America is an oppressed nation, a semicolony of the United States, and the black revolt is emerging as a form of national liberation struggle. But whether this struggle can be characterized primarily as a rebellion for reforms or a revolution aimed at altering basic social forms, even so basic a question as this cannot be given an unequivocal answer. Rebellion and revolution are interrelated but they are not identical, and no amount of militant posturing can alter this reality.

-Robert L. Allen

Now that the Bolshevick experiment has imploded, and China is doing "sustainable Communism," we cannot afford to forget that the incalculable dreams of the vestiges of Second International Communism (rather than the overt history of its demise in national competition), placed within the calculus of the Welfare State, were quietly eroded by the forces of what is politely called "liberalization" in the third world and by privatization in the first.

-Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak

### Periodization and *Nachträglichkeit* When the Lights Go Out

The following essay takes up the problem of periodization by engaging theories of Black internal colonialism and linkages between the Black liberation movement and wars of decolonization. Through an extended analysis focusing mainly on Fredric Jameson's essay "Periodizing the 60's," I explore how periodization (as the retroactive sorting of texts, movements, and intellectual and artistic ideas in time and space) is an exemplary procedure of dialectical entanglement. One constitutes a periodization schema only to almost instantly register that which such a schema excludes. Experiments thinking internal colonization are dialectical exercises par excellence—Du Bois's double-consciousness in its neither/nor logic becomes neither metropole nor periphery, neither North America nor somewhere else. I conclude by extending such a logic, signaling a commentary by Toni Morrison's on Toni Cade Bambara's fiction's "village values".

Periodization (the retroactive sorting and comprehension of history) as abstraction-procedure happens afterwards: always delayed, always deferred, always taking place at night after some shit goes down; always retroactively thought and most importantly retroactively *narrated*. Historical motion is contingent until it unfolds, whereas it gets abstracted and periodized as necessary. Kwame Ture (formerly Stokely Carmichael) and Edward W. Said's revered Afrocentric disrupter of pure origins—Sigmund Freud<sup>1</sup>—theorizes *Nachträglichkeit* ("Afterwardsness") in his incomplete paper "A Project for a Scientific Psychology" as "memory [...] repressed which has only become a trauma after the event"(Laplanche, 41). For Laplanche and Pontalis, "only the occurrence of the second scene can endow the first one with pathogenic force: [...] a memory is repressed which has only become a trauma [only] by deferred action"(Laplanche, Pontalis, 113).

The following essay insists on a protocol in which provisional theorizing of the twenty-first century necessitates wrestling with the twentieth. My point of focus is how Jameson and Spivak engage theories of Black internal colony and how failure to engage such theories is symptomatic of our twenty-first century malaise. Along with Hortense J. Spillers, these three radical intellectuals are arguably the most usefully attuned to the political consequence of literary form.

This paper is in three parts. To begin I mobilize a couple of allies: Malcolm X and G.W.F. Hegel on problems of prediction, periodization, and narrative retroactivity. Here are the passages:

And a white man can't fight a guerilla warfare. Guerilla action takes heart, takes nerve, and he doesn't have that. He's brave when he's got tanks. He's brave when he's got planes. He's brave when he's got bombs. He's brave when he's got a whole lot of company along with him. But you take that little man from Africa and Asia;

<sup>1</sup> Said, Edward W., *Freud and the Non-European*, Verso, April, 1, 2003. Preceding Said's fascinating intervention, in a talk in the 1990s Ture elaborates his anti-Zionist political stance. Delineating it from (and forcefully opposing) antisemitism, he begins his lecture with a detailed analytic praise-song of Freud's *Moses and Monotheism* along similar lines of Said's later work. See also Johnson, Barbara, *Moses & Multiculturalism*, U California Press, 2010.

turn him loose in the woods with a blade. A blade. That's all he needs. All he needs is a blade. And when the sun comes down—goes down and it's dark, it's even-Stephen. (Malcolm X, 1964)

The owl of Minerva takes its flight only when the shades of night are gathering. (Hegel, xx)

Malcolm X's "even-Stephen" formulation from his "The Ballot or the Bullet" speech equates nightfall with the leveling of the odds. Take a second to think together the problem of contingency and closure (periodization by other means) juxtaposing Malcolm's *nightfall* and Hegel's *dusk*—an aesthetic category displaying all its ambiguous hues. Dusk as a liminal space, neither dark nor light, denotes an aesthetic labor—the *gathering* of "shades of night." Malcolm X's proviso, in its martial note, houses a repudiation of technological-determinism (the idea that advances in technological innovation herald victories and guarantee outcomes). *Telos* is an abstraction, a narrative strategy, an analytical protocol—not an *actuality*. Malcolm's speech rehearses a dialectical paradox—it rejects *a priori* predictions declaring victors and vanquished based on a calculus of comparative might within a formulation that predicts the inevitable victory for the Global South and aligned Afro-American Nation. Such is in contrast with unimaginative readings of Hegel that insist that the realization of the absolute is one of positive synthesis (to repeat—closure). For Malcolm, such victories necessitate a socialist prioritization of abundant need over the atomized, privatized deprivation of profit.

Michael E. Sawyer in the recent *Black Minded: The Political Philosophy of Malcolm X* sketches out how "The Ballot or the Bullet" maps geographical space and enacts what Sawyer theorizes as an "ordering logic" that relays the tactical (the ballot or the bullet) to the international division of labor as global space. For Malcolm X, the vote as tactic conjures a historical block that is the Global South—"those poor nations [who] can get together with their voting power and make a move"(Sawyer, 94-95). Tactical contingency, to zig or to zag on journeys towards the unknown with clear objectives and yet-to-be-seen outcomes. James A. Snead's foundational essay "Repetition as a figure of black culture" grabs hold of and wrestles from Hegel (really from Hegel's students, as Timothy Brennan convincingly demonstrates<sup>2</sup>) the disavowal of African historicity: "In this main portion of Africa there can really be no history. There is a succession of accidents and surprises." Snead mobilizes such "accidents and surprises" in his theory of Black expressive culture repetition that in its non-accrual challenges the logic of capital accumulation (Snead, 67). To read Minerva's owl's dusk-flight as a complication of *telos* is only partially correct. It is the owl's flight as a figure of thinking, retroactive thinking as the logic of periodization; it had to be that way only after something has already happened. Philosophy for Hegel as an apparatus is employed in the service of quenching "the desire to teach the world what it ought to be" (Hegel, xx) marked by lateness. "As the thought of the world, philosophy does not appear until reality has competed the formative process, and made itself ready" (Hegel, xxi). Jameson troubles an understanding of the Hegelian dialectic unfolding teleologically as the epitome of reason, becoming *logos*, and culminating in a stale state-form. His theorization of Alain Badiou's "Maoist Hegel" is characterized by an "infinite scissiparity" in which "the central dialectical movement is identified as the One dividing into Two," as opposed to interpretations privileging "the return of consciousness into itself." (Jameson, *Hegel Variations*, 22)<sup>3</sup>

Periodization is an intellectual problem that embraces entanglement. Periodizing the twenty-first century demands a look back. Such is the focus of this essay—a discussion of two engaged literary critics who, without trepidation or "anxiety of influence," couple Black liberation struggles with decolonization wars in the Global South. In the case of Jameson, pride of place is given to thinking together Black Radical struggles with Cuban Revolution foco theory and the Third World (Mao Tse Tung's periodization scheme, rather than the diminutive sorting of countries via the presumptive logic of development studies). For Spivak, it is all about questions of scale—the terrestrial and territorial. Spivak's turn to the "planetary" is an occasion to think and is prefigured by Black internal colonialism.

Timothy Brennan's dazzling biography on *A Life of Edward Said* includes a photograph of Fredric Jameson, Eqbal Ahmad, Yasser Arafat (pre-Oslo Accords), David Dellinger, Don Luce, and Ramsey Clark on a "fact-finding tour in Lebanon." The photo marks a point that is often forgotten. It stages a network, signaling one node, one photo-visual wave in its minimum amplitude that can be turned up—mapped as one signpost reflecting Jameson's lifelong career of engaged alignment and thinking alongside Chinese, Nicaraguan, Palestinian, Russian, and Cuban intellectuals and revolutionaries. Jameson's

<sup>2</sup> Brennan, Timothy, *Borrowed Light: Vico, Hegel, and the Colonies*, Stanford University Press, 2014.

<sup>3</sup>See also Badiou, Alain, "One Divides into Two" from *The Century*, Trans. by Alberto Toscano, Cambridge: Polity, 2007, 58-67.

international interlocutors exceed these sites and is a matter of historical record. He consistently (throughout the 1970s, 80s, and 90s) maintained relationships with revolutionary networks in the Global South and used his position to support insurgent causes. Alberto Toscano recently reminded me of how Jameson's essay on magical realism in his *Signatures of the Visible* and *The Geopolitical Aesthetic: Cinema and Space in the World System* resonates with the aspirations to create the new that were animating the Cuban Revolution. Recall Jameson's powerful introduction to Roberto Fernández Retamar's 1989 *Caliban and Other Essays*. His recent *Allegory & Ideology*—its readings of Dante, Goethe, Edmund Spenser and Gustave Mahler, revisiting the debate in 1986 and 1987 issues of *Social Text* with the late great Aijaz Ahmad on "Third World Literature as National Allegory" all are in service of interrogating and thinking past the coeval devastations of imperialism and late-stage capitalism. Conflating political critique with calling out, erroneously at that, the lack of diversity of such chapter topics is a rearguard action that vacates the imperative to build upon Jameson's anti-capitalist and anti-imperialist force.<sup>4</sup> Stated more forcefully, repurposing a formula by George Jackson: such modes of critique constitute the flawed logic of lamenting "'white left-wing causes' to protect their bosses' 'white right-wing cause'" (Jackson, 4). On a related note, it hinders the advancement of anti-capitalist projects to attack Spivak—arguably one of academia's most important twenty-first century Marxist feminists. Theoretical essays, heuristic employments, abstraction-methods, dexterity performing deconstruction procedures shouldn't be confused with concrete tactics and strategies, political programs with maximum and minimum, and demands to be actualized within our current coordinates.<sup>5</sup> Those who conflate the former with the latter usually have next to no actual experience collectively formulating, let alone organizing around, the latter. Concretely theorizing what political prisoner Russell Maroon Shoatz so brilliant names "Black Fighting Formations" is still an imperative labor (Shoatz, 79-100). Spivak's macro-stakes of the planetary are brought forth via an emphasis on a set within a set—Afro-America as internal colonialism as (rather than opposed to) class-based analysis. I conclude with a short meditation on Toni Morrison's remarks on Toni Cade Bambara's short fiction to probe such stakes. Jameson and Spivak's work consistently and clearly links Black radical struggle with wars of decolonization. Thinking linkages helps to name our *Now-time*. This essay poses the question: What theoretical scaffolding is required to link US-based Black radical struggle with revolutionary wars of decolonization? How do such grounded returns assist in symptomatically gesturing towards what our current century all so often forgets?<sup>6</sup>

### **Neither "nostalgic commemoration" nor "abject confession of failure"<sup>7</sup>: Jameson's "Periodizing the 60s"**

Jameson's *Periodization*'s vast "unified theory of the sixties" (Jameson 207) is informed by a twin consensus in which "History is necessity" and "opportunities and failures were inextricably intertwined, marked by the objective constraints and openings of a determinate historical situation" (179). It presents "brief sketches" of the 60s organized on four "levels": 1. "History of Philosophy"; 2. "Revolutionary Political Theory and Practice"; 3. "Cultural Production"; and 4. "Economic Cycles" (179).

<sup>4</sup> This resonates with how, instead of facing head on critically, soberly, and most importantly dialectically the violence of twentieth-century Marxist revolutionary sequences, conflating death tolls in the name of Communism and fascism (a hallmark of twenty-first century liberalism and the logic of monumentalization) is a first step to normalizing fascism.

<sup>5</sup> A brilliant example of such a revolutionary critique was recommended to me by Samir Amin in 2018 in Dakar, Senegal just prior to his passing: Harnecker, Marta, *Rebuilding the Left*, Translated by Janet Duckworth, Zed Books, 2007.

<sup>6</sup> For more on this topic see: Ture and Hamilton, Charles V., *Black Power: The Politics of Liberation*, 1967, Vintage Books, 1992 Singh, "The Black Panthers and the 'Undeveloped Country' of the Left", *The Black Panther Party [Reconsidered]*, Newton, Huey P. Lenin, Vladimir. *Revolutionary Inter-communalism and the Right of Nations to Self-Determination*, Superscript, 2004. Chapman, *Marxist-Leninist Perspectives on Black Liberation and Socialism*. Freedom Road Socialist Organization, 2021. For a brilliant discussion of Spivak's turn to Black internal colonialism, her paratactic expository style's relationship to Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* and Harryette Mullens, see Edwards, "Selvedge Salvage", *Cultural Studies*, 17(1), 2003, 27-41. Edwards's essay includes a fascinating discussion of Spivak's turn to DuBois's 1924 essay "The Negro Mind Reaches Out" from Alain Locke's collection *The New Negro*. For more on DuBois's essay see: Harris & Molesworth, *Alain L. Locke: The Biography of a Philosopher*, U of Chicago Press, 2008, 205-206

<sup>7</sup> Jameson, Fredric, "Periodizing the 60s", *The 60s Without Apology*, Edited by Sohnya Sayres, Anders Stephanson, Stanley Aronowitz, Fredric Jameson, U of Minnesota Press, 1984, 178. See also *Social Text*, 9/10, Summer, 1984. For different but comparably militant and rigorous periodizations see Katsiaficas, George, *The Imagination of the New Left: A Global Analysis of 1968*, South End Press, 1987. & Gosse, Van, *Rethinking the New Left: An Interpretive History*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

Methodologically, it relies upon an Althusserian insistence on relative autonomy of the levels—the problem of homology. Base/Superstructure's relationship is one of dynamic interdependence. Perhaps, in its best articulations, it has always been so.<sup>8</sup> Even Jameson's homological example combines the poetic with Global South insurgence, delineating his method from an "analogical parallelism in which the poetic production of Wallace Stevens is somehow 'the same' as the political practice of Che Guevara" (179). Jameson underscores his rejection of mechanical causality between the levels. Yet, there is something heroic about the ambition to put these two phenomena in relationship. Audacious combinatory ambition—the verve and allure of making connections—is shared by both Marxist and Black radical traditions. It also makes for exhilarating criticism. Here is an unabashed Hegelian commitment to the concept—the absence of which constitutes the kind of stunted historicism Jameson models against. Ever the radical Hegelian, Jameson refuses abandoning historiography because of its complexities. Rather, he echoes both Walter Benjamin and Althusser in stating that "the historian should reformulate her vocation—not any longer to produce some vivid representation of history 'as it really happened,' but rather to produce the *concept* of history" (180). The range here is awesome—*Periodization* tackles the problem of intermediaries in liberalism and revolutionary thought, the "politics of otherness" and the "death of the subject," a theorization of the figure of the "terrorist," meditations on Fanon and Sartre, Hegel and Croce on human freedom, Causality and Contradiction (Althusser and Mao), the turn towards theory away from philosophy, periodization versus punctuation, and a discussion of the economic that moves beyond Althusserian emphasis on the economic as the ultimate determining instance" in order to posit two different economic cycles as a way to think variant durées. Ernst Mandel's reliance on the "7-to-10 year alternation of boom, overproduction, recession, and economic recovery" mobilizes the theory of "Kondratiev waves"—a Soviet theory that traces economic waves as being linked up with "quantum leaps in the technology of production" (206). Analytic periodization gives way to more periodization. Chronological frame engenders further chronological frame—sets within sets within sets.

I conclude my discussion of Jameson to signal how internal colonialism relates to Cuban and Chinese revolutionary history and thought. The section entitled "Third World Beginnings" (rather than afterthoughts) starts with a feint. Countercultural sex, drugs, and rock and roll are coupled with "symbolic Maoism" (180). Such a move is not akin to more dismissive scholarship like Richard Wolin's that treats French Maoism as transplant/exotic oddity.<sup>9</sup> Jameson's essay mobilizes Mao as method—the insistence on primary versus secondary, antagonistic and non-antagonistic contradiction. (Mao, 1977) I will have more to say on the country and the city in my concluding remarks on Toni Morrison. One needs to see these three turns (Cuba, Maoist Digressions, and Afro-America as internal colony) as a dynamic set. Jameson discusses the work of Beldon Fields and links the United States and French student movements with upticks in colonial wars for liberation. "Beginnings" bring forth "Exceptions" and "Firsts":

The one significant exception to all this (linkage between student movements and wars of decolonization) is in many ways the first world political movement of all—the new black politics and the civil rights movement, which must be dated, not from the Supreme Court decision of 1954, but rather from the sit-ins in Greensboro, North Carolina, in February of 1960. Yet it must argued that this as also a movement of decolonization, and in any case the constant exchange and mutual influences between the American black movements and the various African and Caribbean ones are continuous and incalculable throughout this period (180).

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<sup>8</sup> See Engels's July 14, 1893 letter to Franz Mehring: [https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1893/letters/93\\_07\\_14.htm](https://www.marxists.org/archive/marx/works/1893/letters/93_07_14.htm) Accessed December 21, 2021.

<sup>9</sup> A more theoretically nuanced discussion of "French Maoism" is famously found in Spivak's "Can the Subaltern Speak?" from *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*, 272. Spivak interrogates the "two monolithic and anonymous subjects-in-revolution" ["A Maoist" and "the worker's struggle"] framing a discussion by Foucault and Deleuze as "a harmless rhetorical banality were it not that innocent appropriation of the proper name 'Maoism' for the eccentric phenomenon of French intellectual 'Maoism' for the eccentric phenomenon of French intellectual 'Maoism' and subsequent 'New Philosophy' symptomatically renders 'Asia' transparent". Yet, as exemplars, the most rigorous of Black Panther intellectuals and "French Maoists" of the most disciplined sort (for example Badiou and Jacques Alain-Milner in an earlier iteration of his thought) were in fact "Maoists". This does not displace revolutionary China, but rather acknowledges (after Edward W. Said) how theory and radical praxis travel. Said, Edward W. "Traveling Theory", *The World, The Text, and the Critic*, Harvard U Press, 1983, 226-247.

Recall in "Cognitive Mapping" where Jameson poses a problem of Black radical strategy and tactics as spatial—"We travel the space-ways, planet to planet."<sup>10</sup> Discussing Detroit's League of Revolutionary Black Workers, Jameson discusses how a consequence of the success of the League resonating throughout the world (Jameson signals Italy and Sweden), the planetary-scale in which the activists reverberated and traveled, is that it is more difficult it was to juggle the primacy of boots on the ground (what Jameson short-hands as "mind[ing] the store") (Jameson, "Cognitive Mapping", 352). Jameson is reading the late great Dan Georgakas and Marvin Surkin's study *Detroit I Do Mind Dying*. The book and related film (*Finally Got the News*) lives in the archive as a substitute for the actuality of the organization on the ground. This raises the problem of the relationship between reflection and action, memorialization and movement, capture, archive, and motion. It resonates with a flawed critique of Black liberation-movement actor Kwame Ture and the Black Panther Party contending that the more globalized the struggle (Ture's Pan-Africanism and the Panthers' robust global anti-imperialist network), the less responsive partisans are to grassroots organizing. Again, this is, amongst other things, a problem of space and scale. I propose that the passage excerpted above can be read as Jameson anticipating critiques of this local/international problematic and its understanding of revolutionary "failure." See the always-thoughtful analytic of Fred Moten (Moten, 216-222). "Beginnings" become "Exceptions," which become "Firsts." The juridical periodization of 1954 gives way to the grassroots periodization of 1960, which precedes the "as also" linking "American black movements and the various African and Caribbean ones." What is theorized (and by no means condemned) as a problematic for Jameson in *Detroit* is lauded as "incalculable" convergence for "Periodizing the Sixties."

Such fluid, non-dogmatic toggling between the local and the international, the juridical, the grassroots, and the combatant-partisan struggle, animates *Periodizing's* turn to Mao and Cuba as method and practice, practice and method. A concluding remark on this dyad: *Maoism-Foco* is in order. Jameson couches his "Digression on Maoism" as "awkward but unavoidable parenthetical", while simultaneously asserting Maoism as a "shadowy and central presence" for his essay (188). He marks a "current propaganda campaign" in which the project is "to Stalinize and discredit Maoism and the experience of the Chinese cultural revolution—now rewritten as yet another Gulag to the East" that, comparable to my earlier point about anti-communism as the first step to legitimate fashion, functions in actuality as "part and parcel of the larger attempt to trash the 60s generally" (188-89). At the same time, Jameson frames the Western Third Worldism as an "orientalist version of Marx's revolutionaries of 1848, who "anxiously conjure up the spirits of (the Great Revolution of 1789) to their service and borrow from their names, battle cries, and costumes" (188-89). Jameson shows how Althusser et al.'s *Reading Capital* group's concepts of "structure in dominance" and "structural causality" can be traced "in Maoism itself"—specifically, Mao's "On Contradiction" (191). One can add to that list Bertolt Brecht's 1947/48 *A Short Organum for Theatre's* self-stated debt to Mao's essay, as well as Raymond Williams's *The Country and the City's* more tacit engagement. Jameson shows how theory's concomitant classifications/classificatory epithets travel. In the context of the Sino-Soviet Split, Chinese disapprobation of Stalinist bureaucracy as "revisionist" and "bourgeois," the substitution of "proletarian" with "revolutionary" unsettles the structuralist-materialist moorings of Marxian method—what Jameson calls "evacuating the class content of these slogans." In such an analytic, the 1966-76 sequence of the Chinese revolution dips back a century to French revolutionary sequence—a rigorous theoretical immersive gloss and grasp doesn't discourage analogical logic. In the twenty-first century, temporal slippage impedes an accurate understanding of revolutionary memory. Twentieth-century Chinese communist strivings are evoked to deride twenty-first century Chinese state machinations; while simultaneously twenty-first century Chinese state machinations are evoked retroactively to foreclose anything worthwhile in twentieth-century Chinese revolutionary unfolding.

Black radical resonance happens in more indirect ways. Jameson's analytic never shuns the analogical and links Black cultural nationalism with both "lesbian separatism" and the Quebec province as "the dialectic of cultural and linguistic independence" (190). More resonance!—This Quebec note was not lost on Kwame Ture. As captured in David Austin's essential volume *Moving Against the System: The 1968 Congress of Black Writers and the Making of Global Consciousness*, Carmichael/Ture's speech "Black Power in the USA" exempts "French Canadians" from his indictment of Western powers (Austin, 214).

For Jameson, the replacement in Latin America of the foco theory with the "so-called urban guerilla movement, pioneered in Uruguay by the Tupamaros" (203) homologically relates to his paper's theory

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<sup>10</sup> This of course is a refrain from a famous song by bandleader Sun Ra.

of changes in signification—"the structural equivalent of the sign" (203). Jameson demands analysis that "provocations loosely called 'terrorism' must be the object of complex and properly dialectical analysis" (203). In contrast to Lenin's economists and "terrorists" jointly bowing to the poles of spontaneity, thought needs always to aspire to fabricate an ever elusive analytic "whole". Jameson concisely glosses foco theory<sup>11</sup> as the neither "in" nor "of" it:

The foco, or guerilla operation, is conceptualized as being neither "in" nor "of" either country or city: geographically of course, it is positioned in the countryside, yet that location is not the permanently "liberated territory" of the Yenan region, well beyond the reach of the enemy forces of Chiang Kai-shek [a source for Malcolm X's derision in his December 12, 1964 question/answer remarks speaking at the HARYOU (Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited) Act Forum<sup>12</sup>] or of the Japanese occupier. It is not indeed located in the cultivated area of the peasant fields at all, but rather in that third or non-place which is the wilderness of the Sierra Maestra, neither country nor city, but rather a whole new element in which the guerilla band moves in perpetual displacement. (202)

In summation, Jameson's theorization of foco, Black internal colonialism, the linkage of the Black Freedom Movement to wars of decolonization and to Maoist counter-histories and praxis conceptually toggle back and forth in a space that is neither "in" nor "of". Respectfully, perhaps Adolph Reed is only partially correct—there is no Trans-historical "Black Freedom Movement"<sup>13</sup>—but there are historical abstractions and aggregates that narrate historical sequences that also can be concretely parsed and analyzed. Black internal-colonialism theories of the twentieth century can discipline the historical unmooring characteristic of the twenty-first. The best lineaments of its thesis and coeval demand for self-determination—its neither "in" nor "of" it—demands a reckoning with Black freedom struggles (as class struggles differentiated by class antagonisms) as spaces of entanglement. Symptoms of twenty-first century revolutionary memory's short-circuit<sup>14</sup> not only mischaracterizes and misrecognizes revolutionary antecedents—a break in a properly dialectical historical periodization—but it equally cannot methodologically sit still with entanglement. The neither "in" nor "of" constituting the linkage of Black radical projects with wars on decolonization as one vector of the Black liberation movement at its theoretical best represents an entangled space that historically and in actuality always charts new paths.

### ***Space is the Place: Spivak's Turn to the Black Planetary***

For Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, the planetary is "a catachresis for inscribing collective responsibility as right." (Spivak, *Death*, 102) For the Saturnian Sun Ra—"Space is the Place"—this is an imperative to chart a revolutionary path that faces the fact that *This Planet is Doomed*.<sup>15</sup> Spivak's engagement with Black Radical texts and thought is ever growing and beyond the scope of this short paper<sup>16</sup>—her scholarship on the life and work of W.E.B. DuBois is spread across a growing array of interventions, culminating in a highly anticipated book on DuBois. From Spivak's "Teaching for the Times":

Since Reconstruction, the first major change in the Constitution after the Civil War, the various waves of immigrants have mingled with one of the supportive, original agents of the production of American origins: the African-American...

I have so far put aside the uprooting of the African and the redefining of the First Nation in the interest of the new and old immigrants. Also to be placed here is the itinerary of the Chicano/a/Latino/a, unevenly straddling the history of two empires, the Spanish and the U.S., one on the cusp of the transition to capitalism, the other active today...

<sup>11</sup>Debray, Régis, *Revolution in the Revolution?* Trans. by Bobye Ortiz, Grove Press, Inc., 1967.

<sup>12</sup> Malcolm X Speaks at HARYOU (Harlem Youth Opportunities Unlimited) Forum, Harlem, NY, December 12, 1964, <http://brothermalcolm.net/mxwords/whathesaid15.html>, Accessed December 21, 2021.

<sup>13</sup> "There's No Transhistorical 'Black Freedom Movement'—Adolph Reed & Touré Reed", *Jacobin*, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CRI5bnhP4bQ> Accessed December 21, 2021.

<sup>14</sup> Cusset, François, *How the World Swung to the Right: Fifty Years of Counterrevolutions*, Trans. by Noura Wedell, Semiotext(e), 2018; Fisher, Mark, *Capitalist Realism: Is There No Alternative?*, Zero Books, 2009, Tsoukalas, Konstantinos, "The Deregulation of Morals: the Ultimate Phase of Globalization", *Situations: A Journal of the Radical Imagination*, Spring 2012, IV.2, 5-36.

<sup>15</sup> Sun Ra, *This Planet is Doomed: The Science Fiction Poetry of Sun Ra*, Kicks Books, 2012.

<sup>16</sup> Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty, "Fanon Reading Hegel", *Readings*, Seagull Books, 2014; Spivak, "Du Bois in the World: Pan-Africanism & Decolonization", *Boundary 2* Online, December 5, 2018, <http://brothermalcolm.net/mxwords/whathesaid15.html> Accessed December 21, 2021; Spivak, "Du Bois at Large" Lectures, 2009, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sVvSWHosRFE>, Accessed December 21, 2021; Spivak, *Harlem*, Seagull Books, 2012.

For me, an outsider who came to the United States in 1961, the voice that still echoes from the Civil Rights/Black Power movement is from the Ocean Hill-Brownsville School District Struggle of 1968. I had received my Ph.D. the previous year. My experiences in India, as it attempted to decolonize its school-system, was not far behind. This is why it is not the most famous struggles that I monumentalize but rather words retained by force of memory. I am not even sure who it was that said them. It may have been the Reverend Galamaison: "This is a struggle against educational colonization." The other day I caught a voice on television, of a little African-American girl who was then a student in that school district, now a mature woman who spoke of her experience and remarked "We became third world. We became international."

In this perspective, in the area of the struggle against internal colonization, it is the African-American voice in the United States that has become postcolonial [...]. Emergence into postcoloniality from internal colonization is not measured in statistics. It is a general and often perceived change in the positioning on the socius. (Spivak, *Teaching*, 145-146)

Spivak's *Death of a Discipline* notes the "folly of imagining an undifferentiated "Africa" as a backdrop for the New World African" and asserts that "for Comparative Literature it does not exist at all" (19). Her work is committed to carefully demonstrating the way literature "contains the element of surprising the historical" (55). Spivak's reading strategies (the proviso and commitment to "Say Yes to the Text Three Times") in their deconstructive verve constitute another kind of dialectical entanglement. Perhaps the above passage's move into "postcoloniality from internal colonization," read through the labor of periodizing the transition from the twentieth to the twentieth century, can cast structural light on the difference between "selling out" to imperialism versus, simply, being imperialism.

Spivak's *Death of a Discipline* "propose[s] the planet to overwrite the globe" (72)—Sun Ra proposes traveling the space-ways. For Spivak, "the globe is on our computers. No one lives there. It allows us to think that we can aim to control it. The planet is in the species of alterity, belonging to another system; and yet we inhabit it, on loan. It is not really amenable to a neat contrast with the globe" (72). I want to propose that the Black internal colony, Spivak's wrestling with a belonging that does not belong, belongs as heuristic preparatory exercise to theorize the planetary—to travel the planet. In a joint analytical/biographical presentation on "Charles Olson and Sun Ra: Notes on Being Out,"<sup>17</sup> Amiri Baraka during the Fourth Annual Charles Olson Memorial Lecture at the Cape Ann Museum reads from Olson's *Call Me Ishmael*—"I take SPACE to be the central fact to man born in America, from Folsom cave to now. I spell it large because it come large here. Large, and without mercy." (Olson, *Ishmael*, 11) The meditation on America's largesse becomes an occasion to periodize and overlap joint-lives: Olson born in 1910 Worcester, MA and Sun Ra born in 1914, Birmingham, AL both in relation to American imperialism and the Black revolutionary challenges to its malevolence. Baraka spends a great amount of the first movement of his talk discussing questions of radicalism in poetic form (and content). Spivak's "Teaching for the Times," alongside its discussion of the Black Freedom Movement(s), presents a brief excursus on John Mohawk's characterization of Native American writing as "not stylistically competitive with the kind of sexy postmodernism that some of our best-known colleagues celebrate in the name of postcoloniality" (147). She goes on to discuss Native American fiction—(what surely for Olson in his *Bibliography on America for Ed Dorn* is framed as a matter of space) in relation to allegory as form and as a reminder of "the economic peripheralization of the originary communist, pre-capitalist ethnicities of the fourth world" (152). Olson highlights for Dorn two working premises: "Millenia" & "The Person"/ "are not the same as either time as history or as individual as single." (Olson, *Ed Dorn*, 3) Here perhaps is another iteration of Jameson's "neither in nor of": Spivak's other system, that we inhabit "on loan." Three Worlds become Four. Political Economy is narrated through and alongside a dialogue on literary periodization. Black radical entanglement stages an interpretive nimbleness all too often lost as a symptomatic marker of our counter-revolutionary now-times.

### **Conclusion—Toni Morrison on Toni Cade Bambara's *Neither Country Nor City***

Toni Morrison during the 1980 "Literature and the Urban Experience" conference at Rutgers-Newark discusses the short fiction of Toni Cade Bambara, an author she championed and whose work she edited at Random House. She theorizes Bambara's work in a space that is neither country nor city, but rather village:

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<sup>17</sup> Baraka, Amiri. *Charles Olson and Sun Ra: Notes on Being Out*, October 19, 2013 Fourth Annual Charles Olson Memorial Lecture at the Cape Ann Museum, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KucCiMrCPSw>, Accessed December 21, 2021.

Toni Cade Bambara has a rather fearless and intimate knowledge of it [New York City] and although the tone of most of her stories is celebratory, full of bravura, joyfully survivalist, the principal fear and grief of her characters is a betrayal of an adult that has abandoned not the role of providing for, but the role of ancestor, advisor, and competent protector. In virtually every one of the sixteen stories in *Guerilla, My Love* only two cannot fit that description and one of those two—"The Survivor"—describes a city girl going to the country for help, succor, and regeneration at the hands of an elderly aunt who lives up to the demands of ancestor exactly... This love of ancestors should not be confused for some simple minded cant about Black families and broken families and history-lessness and so on. [Henry] Dumas does not seek the history, he describes it. Wright does not miss the past, he simply hates it. And what beguiles me is the way in which the absence or presence of the ancestor determines the success of the protagonist. For the ancestor is not only wise, he or she values a racial connection. Racial memory over individual fulfillment. Fighting the ancestor frequently occurs but the devastation of the protagonist never occurs unless he ignores or alienates the ancestor...It is the absence of the ancestor that cannot thrive easily in the dungeon of the city. Because the true ancestor is frequently a social or secret outlaw like Ellison's Grandfather on his deathbed saying that I never told you but our life is a war, and I have been a traitor all my born days, a spy in the enemy's country...<sup>18</sup>

Morrison asserts that the "horror of industrialization has always seemed to me mostly an elite preoccupation. Laborers seem to have an affinity for machines when they are allowed to have dominion over them, rather than an hostility towards them. Perhaps because they are the ones that are familiar with them and work with them." She accounts for "the anti-urbanism amongst Black writers" and pro-urban views in the face of alienated labor conditions. Morrison sees the potentiality of urbanism as a contradictory, ambivalent response to segregation. Her analytic stages a complicated dialectic wherein the "devotion to self-assertion" links up with and articulates a communitarian value project of "social purpose, mutual regard [...] affirming a collective experience." Morrison links "personal self-assertion" with collectivity, prioritizing what she calls "village values" in contrast to "gopher prairie despair." Misrecognizing what animates such an affinity for Morrison is the cause of many a white critic's "enormous amounts of misadventure." This isn't Eliot's *Wasteland*, a work Morrison name checks. It is a new political space and set of narrative protocols specific to the materialist history and world making of Afro-American labor and narrative. The full recording of Morrison's talk offers a theory of literary periodization and historical understanding as frontal attack. For Morrison, "Village Fiction" is the space that prioritizes the figure of the ancestor. It demands a periodization and imagination of space, insisting on meeting head on the entanglements of history. The worst thing for Morrison's gloss of this set of Black literature is for the ancestor to become "merely a parent or an adult." This is the mark of betrayal, short-circuiting the homological procedure where one can think *this* alongside *that*, where figuratively and narratively the individual and collective stay in a dynamic of dialectical interdependence. The leap from the developmentalist/structural kinship roles "parent/adult" to "ancestor" is an exercise in the abstractionist labor of periodization propelled by a radical political volition.

Morrison's remarks evoke city and country as a sort of antipode ultimately traversed in favor of her prioritized space/figure/model of insurgent social organization/materialist class marker and, for the excerpt above, narrative figure—the Village. The Village is Morrison's space that constructs a grounded space for thought that is neither "in" nor "of" it. This is a lesson that an all-too-often foreclosed dialectic—characteristic of our twenty-first century—forgets at great peril, a lesson that Jameson and Spivak's scholarship consistently takes pains to recall. Mining the political and intellectual legacies of the internal colonialism thesis homologically models both a Marxian commitment to Immanence and a deconstructive reading protocol that demands a journey inside the text, a deconstructive affirmation not as endorsement but as an ethos of immersive engagement. Such engagements, such twin modeling, compels a comprehension of the twenty-first century to read the prior anew.

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<sup>18</sup> Morrison, Toni, *Literature and the Urban Experience*, Rutgers University-Newark, 1980, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=inAKAsySngQ>, Accessed December 20, 2021.

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**Author's Profile:** Jeremy Matthew Glick is an Associate Professor in the English Department of Hunter College, CUNY and is the author of *The Black Radical Tragic: Performance, Aesthetics, and the Unfinished Haitian Revolution* (NYU Press), winner of the 2017 Nicolás Guillén Outstanding Book Award' from the Caribbean Philosophical Association. He is completing a book entitled *Coriolanus Against Liberalism/ Lumumba & Pan-Africanist Loss*, and is the editor of *Situations: A Journal of the Radical Imagination*.