

2. W. J. T. Mitchell, "Interdisciplinarity and Visual Culture," *Art Bulletin* 77 (1995): 540.
3. Strong's relationship with Frances Yates is described in *The Roy Strong Diaries* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1997), pp. 296, 304-8.
4. These essays are collected in Harry Berger, Jr., *Second World and Green World: Studies in Renaissance Fiction-Making*, ed. John Patrick Lynch (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988).
5. Stephen Orgel, "Teaching the Postmodern Renaissance," in *Professions of Desire: Lesbian and Gay Studies in Literature*, ed. George E. Haggerty and Bonnie Zimmerman (New York: MLA, 1995), pp. 60-71.
6. Stephen Greenblatt, review of Roy Strong, *The Cult of Elizabeth* (London: Thames and Hudson, 1977), *Renaissance Quarterly* 31 (1978): 643.
7. W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays in Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), chap. 1.
8. Barbara Maria Stafford, *Good Looking: Essays on the Virtue of Images* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1996), pp. 3-17.
9. *Ibid.*, pp. 8-10.
10. Stanley Fish, *Professional Correctness: Literary Studies and Political Change* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995), p. 138.

I. IMAGINARY CONQUESTS

European Material Technologies and the Colonial Mirror Stage

STEVEN MULLANEY

Coming upon a group of Tswana natives in early-nineteenth-century South Africa, William Burchell did what European explorers and colonists had done at such moments since the earliest days of European expansion. He presented them with a series of gifts, including in this instance a relatively unadorned looking glass. From Burchell's point of view, the Tswana reaction was as simple as the glass in which they viewed themselves—but also revealing. The natives, he recounted,

laughed, and stared with vacant surprize and wonder, to see their own faces; but expressed not the least curiosity about it; nor do I believe it excited in their minds one single idea; and I may not, perhaps, be doing them an injustice by asserting that, whether capable of reflection or not, these individuals never exerted it.¹

The natives' "surprize and wonder" are hardly surprising, in and of themselves. After all, what the Tswana encounter in Burchell's glass is not merely their own visage, reflected back to them more clearly than they have seen before in pond or pool or clay washbasin, but a portable token of a technology entirely alien to them. In this context, "surprize and wonder" are entirely appropriate emotional responses, and they are entirely appropriate social responses as well, the customary reaction, whether the gift in question is extraordinary or mundane, of a host who presumes to be receiving a gift-bearing stranger or guest—as soon-to-be-colonized peoples typically misrecognized their situation.

More noteworthy, at least from our perspective, is the casual quality of Burchell's own reflections on self-reflection—his almost matter-of-fact elision of specular and speculative phenomena, optical and contemplative operations, the physics of light and the metaphysics of thought. Yet as Jean and John Comaroff have detailed, this aspect of the scene was also a commonplace.² Early explorers and missionaries in South Africa handed out mirrors as ubiquitously as their sixteenth-century counterparts in the New World distributed glass beads; Burchell's commentary is simply more explicit than others in its "extension of the mirror-image to the notion of reflective thought."³ A product of the Enlightenment, Burchell "wipes his glosses" (as a bespectacled Joyce once aptly punned) with what he knows. As W. J. T. Mitchell has demonstrated, optical metaphors and the technologies from which they derived were central to post-Enlightenment political philosophy,⁴ and they were central as well, as the Comaroffs

have shown, to the religious thought that informed the Nonconformist missionaries who would soon follow Burchell, like him distributing mirrors to the Tswana and, like him, conflating sight and insight, reflection and self-reflection, vision and Christian spiritual illumination. From a European perspective, what lies at the heart of such encounters is, if not darkness, then a vacancy (as in "vacant surprize and wonder"), an absence of illumination or insight or proper self-reflection. Held up for reflection but unable or unwilling to reflect upon themselves, the not-yet-enlightened Tswana need to be taught to see in the mirror a self *in abstracto*:⁵ a self liberated (or alienated) from what Nonconformist missionaries regarded as the "socialistic" webs of tribal life; a self divided from and turned back upon itself, capable of introspection and hence self-discipline. "The 'native,' though he might not have known it," write the Comaroffs, "had come face to face with the Christian subject."⁶

It should be clear by now that Burchell's looking glass is not merely a material object, an amalgam-coated oval of silicon with peculiar optical qualities; it is also an ideological device of some significance, a tool that focuses Burchell's reflections on the post-Enlightenment European mind and provides that mind with an emblematic justification for colonization and conversion, a glimmering vacancy that others will soon be impelled to fill. Missionaries, like empires and nature, abhor a vacuum, but missionaries and empires usually have to do a considerable amount of ideological labor to construct the vacuums or vacancies that they can then—naturally—fill in or occupy. What we encounter when we read Burchell's meditations on the Tswana is precisely this kind of ideological labor in action; to recast his Enlightenment metaphors in their proper, or properly demystified, mold, we might call this moment an act of colonial speculation, an invested reflection upon and ideological rationalization of an emerging colonial project. The labor or work thus performed depends little on the accuracy of Burchell's observations, for ethnographic knowledge is not the primary object here (although what passes for such will be another useful tool in the rationalization of empire);⁷ even if Burchell's interpretation of the Tswana could be viewed as largely or entirely his own projection onto the scene (and so it can be), what it accomplishes would be the same. Although prompted by a particular encounter on the plains of South Africa, his speculation takes place in what I would call the colonial imaginary, understood as that part of the larger political unconscious in which specifically colonial rationales are worked out, as ideology.⁸ And yet, we should not dematerialize the moment entirely. To reverse my earlier formulation, Burchell's mirror is not *merely* an ideological device; it is *also* a material object, and the acts of colonial speculation I will be considering here are likewise rooted in the material. Deploying material artifacts as tokens and near-fetishes of Western culture, colonial speculation seems to be a way of thinking *through* things in order to think through or work out a colonial rationale, and as such it has a considerable history. In the *longue durée* of Western colonial expansion, it is difficult to find a narrative that is not punctuated by similar mo-

ments, which means that Burchell's gift is the colonial equivalent of a rhetorical *topos* or commonplace. A European explorer-cum-colonist—a Columbus, a Cortés, a John Smith—ventures upon a hitherto unknown people and the country they inhabit; a token of European culture is either presented as a gift or displayed or demonstrated (firearms are favored here) or offered in trade, and the natives' awe or wonder or other signs of their credulity and naïveté—including in some instances the absence of "appropriate" awe or wonder—are duly recorded.

So common are such moments, in fact, that it is easy to regard them as unremarkable, to neglect to wonder why they are so frequently produced and reproduced. Although I will be concerned with the early modern period, I have begun thus far afield because Burchell's mirror scene (and the Comaroffs' astute analysis of it, which I have both redacted and expanded upon above) has helped me to think about what is being accomplished by such moments—to think beyond "naïve" native wonder and to wonder instead about the role it plays in the colonial imaginary, even when staged with less luminous objects in the pre-Enlightenment New World. It is the colonial investment in such moments—often inaugural moments of first encounter—that will concern me here, whether they are focused on gifts or items of trade, relatively ordinary and mundane objects (at least from a European perspective) or more complexly wrought and culturally resonant ones.

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Whether bestowed as gifts, traded in exchange for other commodities, or otherwise deployed, the material objects that came into play in European encounters with New World peoples ranged from what the English called "trifles," such as "looking Glasses, Bells, Beads, Bracelets, Chains, or Collars of Bugle, Crystal, Amber, Jet, or Glass,"⁹ to more powerful tokens of European technology and Christian culture, such as firearms, navigational instruments, crucifixes large and small, and the Bible itself. The range is not only material but also national: Spanish, English, French, and Portuguese narrators record, often in great detail and delight, the naïve wonder (or other evidence of cultural naïveté) to be induced in New World peoples simply by exposure to artifacts of European manufacture.

Even so trifling an object as a glass bead can raise questions about the work being accomplished in such transactions, the motives behind such accounts, and the narrative labor expended on them. Glass beads were everywhere in the Americas; that is to say, they operated as a kind of *lingua franca* of material cultural exchange, or rather (to give Spanish predominance its due) as a kind *lingua hispanica*. Beads produced a less hyperbolic wonder or delight than other European artifacts but were nonetheless highly prized and desired, traded for everything from food to precious metals. There are few accounts of encounters between European and New World cultures that do

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not record beads passing from one hand to the other, and equally few that do not present the transaction as an example of the utter simplicity and naïveté of a people who would trade their own wrought gold or silver (an exchange rare in actuality, but discursively much fabled)¹⁰ for such “baubles.” The double-edged nature of such accounts is also typical. Whether overwhelmed by wonder or desire, the natives are impressed. Or more accurately, a European narrator claims they were and lays great emphasis on this, recording a reaction that is at once fully expected (why else greet such cultures with artifacts known to be unknown to them, or beyond their own means of manufacture?) and just as fully mocked or derided as inappropriate. It is hard not to be troubled by such a dynamic, to find it not only double-edged (a morally neutral term for duplicity) but also two-faced, an emblem of the hypocrisy and even “bad faith” that characterized Europe’s extensive dealings with its New World others.

Moral terms such as hypocrisy and bad faith are unavoidable and quite accurate, as far as they go; they are also quite inadequate if regarded as conclusions, as stopping rather than starting points in our effort to decipher cultural (as opposed to individual) practices, especially ones as pervasive as those being considered here. An individual who contradicts a preexisting moral system which s/he professes to embrace is guilty of hypocrisy or bad faith; here we are dealing with a culture, or rather a set of cultures bound to one another by conflicting versions of Christianity, that repeatedly contradicts such a moral system and even celebrates its contradiction—or at least it does when New World trade is at issue. Such pervasive, collective behavior seems to call for further explanation. Stephen Greenblatt has suggested that European naïveté about economic realities may be partly to blame: “The concept of relative economic value—the notion that a glass bead or hawk’s bell would be a precious rarity in the New World—is alien to most Europeans; they think that the savages simply do not understand the natural worth of things and hence can be tricked into exchanging treasure for trifles, full signs for empty signs.”¹¹ Europeans of the period are indeed “taking advantage of native innocence,” as Greenblatt strongly puts it, and taking a smug, self-congratulatory pride in it that is troubling to encounter; they are guilty, he suggests, but they are guilty not so much of bad faith as of their own historically determined ignorance or innocence.

Such an ignorance would explain a great deal, but it is hard to credit when one considers the extensive prior history of intra- and extra-European trade founded on the premise that a commodity abundant in one clime will garner the greater price in another, where it is relatively scarce.¹² The concept of relative economic value is not alien to most Europeans, but this and other economic “realities” do seem to be undergoing a radical transformation in the period, especially in terms of New World trade, and glass beads are one of the catalysts of that transformation. As European trifles go, glass beads are not exactly “empty signs”; they are two-faced commodities in a material as well as a moral sense, for they were produced in the sixteenth century by two

entirely different processes, one relatively costly and the other less so, one of long-standing practice and the other of quite recent vintage—developed just in time, in fact, to play its not entirely “trifling” role in the New World.

In Spanish, glass beads were known as *cuentas* or “counters,” a usage that may derive from the beads of the rosary, used for “counting off” the decades of prayers recited to the Virgin Mary. Since *cuenta* also meant “account” or “story,” Spanish stories about beads in the New World rather nicely conflate vehicle and tenor, colonial narrative and the material objects conveyed to New World cultures by boat, to the reader by the narrative account itself.¹³ But in the first *cuenta sobre cuentas* or story about beads in the Americas, the objects thus conveyed—to them, and to us—are not as mundane as we might expect. When Columbus met the cacique of Tortuga during his first voyage, he did indeed present him with a string of beads, but they were “some *very good* [my italics] amber beads that I wore on my neck.” Seeing the cacique was pleased, Columbus followed the gift with another, even more impressive set of glass beads. “I sent for some beads of mine on which, as a token, I have a gold *excellent* on which your Highnesses are sculptured.”¹⁴ Columbus’ beads are hardly trifles; highly valued by him (they are his own personal jewelry), they are also clearly valuable in and of themselves, even by European standards; the *excellent* on the second set not only confirms this but also reveals, in the figures of the Spanish monarchs, the import of such gifts. These are gifts of state passing from one ruler to another, from the admiral of the oceans, himself the representative of the Spanish crown, to the ruler of the Arawak.

European beads of the period cannot be automatically regarded as the early modern equivalent of our own costume jewelry.¹⁵ They were often complexly wrought, multicolored and multifaceted, and worn by even the upper ranks of European society; they could also be quite costly to produce. The highest quality beads were manufactured principally in Murano, an island located off the shores of Venice, and were made by winding individual layers of colored glass around a wire core. The glass was shaped while still malleable, then cooled before the subsequent layers of glass were added and shaped; once the layers were completed, the rough bead was then cut or faceted according to the desired design, thus revealing the underlying colors, after which the bead was finally polished. Columbus’s beads had to have been painstakingly crafted in this manner, for it was only in 1490—too late for Columbus’s first voyage—that the craftsmen of Murano rediscovered an ancient Egyptian method of producing what are known as hollow-cane beads, made by drawing glass out into a long, hollow-cored cylinder that could then be cut and polished into individual beads.¹⁶ Hollow-cane beads (Figure 1) could still be highly intricate, but the time-consuming labor now went into preparing the glass that would be drawn; once drawn, a single cane resulted in a number of virtually identical beads. What this meant was that, whether a given design called for a bead that was single or multicolored, complexly faceted or plain, it could be produced *relatively* less expensively than a similar bead made by the

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1. Chevron hollow-cane beads. Venice, sixteenth century. Corning Museum of Glass.

wire-core process. Although still time-consuming, only gradually perfected and for some time a well-guarded secret, the new process (as in the "New" World) allowed for something like an early modern version of mass production: eight or ten beads might be produced in the time it previously took to produce one. These were of course the beads that would fill the holds of post-Columbian voyagers to the New World in the sixteenth century. The more costly wire-wound beads were still produced, worn, and highly valued by European elites; drawn beads were shipped in quantity abroad, serving as ballast on the outward voyage and—so it was hoped—replaced by gold or captives on the return home. Oftentimes wearing the wire-core beads and sometimes bestowing them as gifts to high personages, Europeans traded the less labor-intensive, drawn beads in bulk.

As I have already intimated, what this means is that hollow-cane beads, only recently available and for some time thereafter available only from the craftsmen of Murano, were nearly as novel to Europeans as they were to New World peoples. Fully

aware that they were not only encountering but also deploying relative values of economy and technology—the beads around the neck and the beads in the ship's hold were, taken together, a concrete embodiment of the concept of relative economic value—European traders nonetheless misrepresented or misrecognized this awareness, casting native wonder at and desire for such commodities as merely credulous, the mark of a people easily allured by bright surfaces. That their rhetoric of derision is also smug, overblown, boastful, or otherwise troubling might have something to do with the strain that such trading practices could produce in a culture that lacked, not a concept of relative value, but an economic ideology that could fully rationalize and justify profit-taking;¹⁷ such a strain, overdetermined and mystified, is one of the signs of the early stages of such a rationalization taking shape, the outlines of such an ideology first being glimpsed in the colonial imaginary. Elsewhere, in the Old World, trade was supposed to be organized around a principle of economic equity, of exchanges based on comparable value; one was not supposed to profit, especially to profit exorbitantly, at the expense of another. It was a principle often violated, of course, but it was only in the New World, around such trifles as glass beads, that its violation was not only common but also heralded and advertised with a crass delight whose strained extremity marks the anxiety still surrounding such gain, lacking as the period did a subtler ideological take on profit. And it should come as no surprise that the early signs of such an ideology in the making should appear in the New World, where Europeans encountered such a massive need for the rationalization of profit. Here was a world with no history, meaning no history in relation to us; it was there for the taking, and the taking advantage of, on a scale of colonial plunder so unprecedented that it provided the surplus capital necessary—at least according to Marx, for whom this was the crucial period of "primitive accumulation"—for the emergence of capitalism itself.¹⁸

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John Smith claims to have profited from the allure of bright surfaces in a different sense. When he was first captured and taken before Opechankanough, leader of the Pamaunkee and brother to Powhatan, Smith presented Opechankanough with a "round Ivory double compass Dyall." His captors, as we might expect by now, "marveled at the playing of the Fly and Needle, which they could see so plainly, and yet not touch . . . because of the glass that covered them." They marvel at what seems so immediate, in apparent vital motion, yet remains so alluringly inaccessible behind the glass that simultaneously withholds and reveals. Interestingly enough, Smith does not mock their wonder. If anything he shares it, for the compass is a marvel to him as well, at once a synecdoche for and a doorway into motions and realms beyond its enclosed dial, destinations inaccessible to his captors but not to those who know the

mysteries of lodestones and navigation beyond the sight of land. As part of his gift, he claims to have shared those mysteries with his captors:

But when he [Smith] demonstrated by that Globe-like Jewel, the roundnesse of the earth, and skies, the sphere of the Sunne, Moone, and Starres, and how the Sunne did chase the night round about the world continually; the greatnesse of the Land and Sea, the diversitie of Nations, varietie of complexions, and how we were to them Antipodes, and many other such like matters, they all stood as amazed with admiration.¹⁹

According to Smith, he owed his life to this speech and the admiration it provoked. An hour later, when a group of warriors had tied Smith to a tree and threatened to shoot him, Opechankanough intervened "by holding up the Compass in his hand." Weapons were laid down, Smith was untied, and later "he was after their manner kindly feasted, and well used."

So much is encompassed, as it were, by Smith's double dial: not only everything under the sun but also the motions of the spheres beyond it; not only the great globe itself—which this "Globe-like Jewel," like a magnetic, pocket version of Shakespeare's stage, at once represents and refers us to—but also, somehow, the racial and political diversity of its inhabitants.²⁰ Given Smith's proclivity for borrowing—not as odd for the period as is his erratic tendency to write of himself in the third person—the echoes of *The Tempest* may be more than accidental.²¹ But whatever the relation to Shakespeare, Smith's account of his salvation is drawn from the stuff that dreams are made on, since his speech had to have been largely, and quite probably entirely, indecipherable to his captors. It is unclear whether Smith's Algonquian guide and interpreter survived the battle in which Smith was captured: when first surrounded by Opechankanough's warriors, Smith was forced to use the interpreter as a shield, but the strategy was short-lived. Smith was wounded numerous times; presumably his "buckler" or shield suffered more, and more severe, hits. And even if he or another interpreter were present, the level and nature of interaction between the Algonquian and the English in 1607 were hardly sufficient to have provided the terms needed for even the humblest translation, much less one so rhetorically impressive as to save Smith's life. Other than his readers, the one person we can be sure was "amazed with admiration" at the wonders of the compass—at the navigational and rhetorical access it provided to its bearer—was John Smith.

Smith is not alone, however, in presenting us with a moment of colonial speculation that strains our own credulity. Whether our suspicion is raised by improbabilities of translation or independent historical knowledge that casts doubt on how amazed or admiring a particular culture was rendered by exposure to superior material technologies, such improbable and even impossible accounts still have a great deal to teach us. Whatever is being worked through at such moments—whatever aspects of colonial ideology are being conceived or thought out through the medium of a particular ob-

ject or artifact—native wonder is oftentimes less significant than, and indeed may only exist in, the colonial imaginary. Thomas Harriot provides another, more elaborate example. In his *Brief and True Report*, he claims that the Algonquian Indians were so impressed by the power of English firearms that they were quick to extrapolate such novel power in order to explain other unprecedented events, such as the mysterious and fatal epidemic that seemed to accompany the English but to affect only the indigenous population. Concluding that the English had the power to shoot "invisible bullets" into those who did not seek their favor and that of their god, the Algonquians "could not tell whether to think us gods or men," as Harriot reports.²² In this they reveal a naive credulity "so simple" that the English will find it easy to undermine indigenous beliefs and culture in order to establish their own colonial hegemony.

Or so Harriot claims. Hegemony proved more difficult to establish and involved massacre more than the technology-induced mind games that Harriot envisioned. "The history of subsequent English-Algonquian relations," Stephen Greenblatt notes with considerable understatement, "casts doubt on the depth, extent, and irreversibility of the supposed Indian crisis of belief."²³ In other words, however much the Algonquians were (understandably) impressed with firearms, Harriot's account of their response is largely a fiction—a potentially potent and revealing fiction, as Greenblatt has demonstrated at length, but a fiction nonetheless. What is striking to me, however, is the role played by European material technology, here and elsewhere, in the production of such partial or entire colonial fantasies. With a largely imaginary cultural logic, English religious and political superiority is conceived through the medium of its material artifacts—and conceived not so much in the minds of the Algonquians, who would lose little time in acquiring their own fully demystified guns and all-too-visible bullets, as in the minds of Englishmen like Harriot and his readers.

It may seem surprising to suggest that European cultural chauvinism requires such labor to be produced in the sixteenth century. The colonial expansion of this period was distinguished, to put it mildly, by its sometimes rabid exclusionary presumptions. Whether Catholic or Protestant, proselytizing or enslaving or genocidal in their commitment to (whichever) one true faith, early modern colonial enterprises mark the moment at which monotheism entered the stage of world empire, and it was a monotheism less tolerant of local customs and beliefs than earlier variants, such as the version of Christianity that had expanded throughout most of Europe during the Middle Ages, precisely because it was no longer one but two fratricidal monotheisms, at literal and ideological war with one another, in the Old World as well as the New. And yet these chauvinistic theologies, driven by a sense of divine mission made all the more zealous by their religious and colonial rivalries, seem to need a kind of ideological scaffold to bridge the gap between colonization and conversion, between the impetus to conquer territories and the mission to conquer or colonize minds as well.²⁴

Catholics and Protestants alike spend a great deal of time being impressed by how impressive they and their various trinkets are in the eyes of their colonial subjects-to-be, sometimes so impressive that those subjects "could not tell whether to think us gods or men." For a Christian of whatever sect, this is a decidedly odd example of indigenous credulity to take delight in, much less to foster. Idolatry is, after all, the most egregious of sins for both sides of the Counter Reformation; Catholics and Protestants simply disagree as to what constitutes it. Yet from the first landing in the New World, Catholics and Protestants find common ground in the delight they take when they think they are regarded as gods—as objects of idolatry—and in many instances we can be quite sure that the signs of such regard are fully imaginary ones. Thus Columbus, although communicating only through the crudest of gestures upon his landing at San Salvador—this is the first of all first encounters—is sure that the natives are telling him that they think he came from the heavens;²⁵ thus Cortés "discovers" that Montezuma regards him as a long absent, messianic god, thereby initiating an enduring and exfoliating myth that apparently has nothing to do with Mexica beliefs.²⁶ It is, of course, both possible and probable that some New World peoples did view such strange beings as gods; pantheistic cultures can be quite accommodating in this respect.²⁷ But monotheism and idolatry should be mutually exclusive terms; the fact that they are not quite so in the New World highlights some of the tension between colonization and conversion. To seek out or fabricate idolatrous regard directly contradicts the central tenet of Christian faith, but it is clearly an enabling contradiction for the colonial armature of Christian expansion, for that "peculiar European will to expand itself and to dominate others."²⁸ The epitome of naive wonder, indigenous idolatry serves as both the tool and the justification of that will, in both its secular and religious aspects. Embraced as a means of subjection, a form of naïveté easily manipulated by the secular will to dominate, such idolatry also makes domination and subjection imperative; it is the sign of what the monotheistic will to dominate must eventually correct in order to produce what is at once a colonial and a Christian subject. And since such idolatry is unwittingly directed not toward false gods but toward true Christians, its intended object of worship—these true, European Christians—is also its means of correction. In a curious perversion of Augustine, such idolatrous regard could be both enjoyed by colonizing powers and put to Christian use; the contradiction, as it were, resolves itself.

Whatever the cultural logic that might explain the untroubled ease with which Christian colonizers embraced and encouraged native idolatry, they were a great deal less tolerant when awe, whether proper or improper in theological terms, was not forthcoming. It was the lack of "proper" regard for the material artifacts of Christian faith—a skepticism that, although naive, might be seen as a healthy resistance to idolatry—which proved the downfall of the Incan ruler Atahualpa, at least according to Spanish accounts. When Atahualpa officially received Pizarro and his men in the In-

can city of Cajamarca, he was initially receptive to what they had to say about their god. Pizarro's clerical lieutenant, Fray Vicente de Valverde, responded to Atahualpa's questions with a quite lengthy discourse on matters worldly and divine, moving with apparent ease from a digest of biblical history to the role of Charles V in completing that history; after declaring that Charles was the "monarch of all the universe," he went on to assert the absolute power of the pope, and concluded with a catechism on the mysteries of the Catholic faith. Much of Valverde's diatribe (for such it seems to have been) was lost on Atahualpa, due at least in part to the fact that the Spaniards' captive interpreter, Felipillo, had small Quechua and less Spanish; he apparently spoke a rather obscure dialect of the Incan language and was even more limited in his knowledge of Spanish and the basic tenets of the Christian faith.²⁹ But according to the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, Atahualpa nonetheless made a studied effort to respond when Valverde had finished:

Your mouthpiece [Felipillo] has told me that you have mentioned five great men I should know. The first is God three and one, or four, whom you call creator of the universe. . . . The second is he whom you say is the father of all other men, on whom they have heaped all their sins. The third you call Jesus Christ, the only one who did not lay his sins on the first man, but he was killed. The fourth you call the pope. The fifth is Charles, whom you call the most powerful and monarch of the universe and supreme above the rest, without regard for the other four. If this Charles is prince and lord of the whole world, why should he need the pope to give him a new grant and concession to make war on me and usurp these kingdoms? If he has to ask the pope's permission, is not the pope a greater lord than he, and more powerful, and prince of all the world? . . . I also desire to know of these five you have mentioned to me as gods, since you honor them so. For in this case you have more gods than we, who adore only Pachacámac as the Supreme God and the Sun as the lower god, and the Moon as the Sun's wife and sister.³⁰

Despite the fact that Felipillo, the Spaniard's "mouthpiece," has to be numbered among the linguistically challenged, not all of Atahualpa's confusion can be laid to the betrayals of translation. Indeed, his response amounts to a rather effective New World deconstruction of Old World powers, of Europe's still chronic mystifications of secular and religious authority, and his comments on the trinity, recasting Catholic mystery as mathematical quandary, would have been well-received among certain Old World factions—spoken, one might say, like a true Protestant.

During Valverde's lengthy speech, the friar held a crucifix in one hand and a book in the other; he apparently referred to the book repeatedly, citing it as the authority for much of what he had to say. According to most Spanish sources, the book was the Bible. Valverde held it up as an example of the power of the written word to speak from afar—another icon of European technology, of both phonetic writing and the printed page—and he spoke as well of the power of this particular Word to address each of us individually. Again according to Spanish accounts, Atahualpa took him at his Word. Seeking answers to his questions, he asked to consult this mysterious ob-

ject: the Inca took up the Book to see, or hear, for himself. Holding it to his ear for some time, showing signs of increasing frustration, he eventually grew incensed and threw it down on the ground. Pizarro ordered the Incan ruler seized and the rest, as they say, is history.

Pizarro had no authority to seize a foreign monarch, hold him for ransom and then, after receiving the ransom, have him strangled with a garrote; Atahualpa's act of sacrilege provides justification (albeit still questionable) by recourse to an authority higher than the Spanish monarch. According to Guáman Poma, however, the book in question was not the Bible but merely Valverde's breviary, and the woodcut of this encounter in Poma's *El primer nueva crónica y buen gobierno* shows the breviary still in Valverde's hand (Figure 2).³¹ The Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, working from Incan and Spanish sources—the event as related by oral tradition, disseminated in primarily Spanish printed accounts, and recorded on the Incan *quipu* (a complexly knotted rope that seems to have served as a nonphonetic form of writing)—notes that, in some accounts, the book in Valverde's hand was Silvestre's *Summa*, in some his breviary, and in others, the Bible itself.³² But Garcilaso also claims that Atahualpa neither held it nor cast it down: misunderstanding celebratory shouts from the Incan crowd, Valverde himself dropped both crucifix and book when he rose in panic from his seat beside the Incan ruler.³³ If Garcilaso is correct, Pizarro's justification for an act of regicide is the Peruvian equivalent of the Gulf of Tonkin resolution. Whether an entire fiction or not, it has proved a powerful tale; despite the many reasons to doubt it, this is still the story told in classrooms and reiterated by many modern historians of the conquest, perhaps because it combines so fully native naïveté with pagan sacrilege. *Se non è vero, è molto ben trovato*. In this confrontation with European phonetic writing—quite possibly untrue, but very well made—there is neither awe nor wonder, merely (or so it would seem) a naive, inadequately literate subject. Unaware that there is a sign system to be mastered before a book can communicate its secrets, Atahualpa is also unversed—he holds the book to his ear—in the difference between speech and writing (or at least he is from the European perspective, which is blind as yet to the existence of the Peruvian *quipu*). And yet, since this book is ostensibly—according to Spanish accounts—the Book, shouldn't Atahualpa's expectation be regarded as less naïve than premature? Christian delight in his naïveté is always combined with shock at his sacrilege, but such delight is an example of bad faith writ large. Atahualpa expects the book to *speak* to him; but if this is *the* Book, he is not really in error. Rather, he is displaying the fact that he suffers from a kind of spiritual aphasia, one that prevents the Book from speaking to him yet, individually and particularly, as it would do to any properly interpellated Christian subject. Atahualpa sees through a glass darkly; his experience, that of the not-yet-colonized or Christianized subject, provides for his onlookers a negative but proleptic image of what would transpire if he were capable of coming, as the Comaroffs put it, “face to face with the Christian subject.” Like the



ciudad de cajamarca en su tercer reinado -
atagualpa en su tercer reinado -

2. "Atahualpa receiving Pizarro," from Felipe Guáman Poma de Ayala, *El primer nueva crónica y buen gobierno*, ca. 1613. GKS 2232, Royal Library, Copenhagen.

Tswana, Atahualpa sees what is before him but is incapable of seeing himself in it properly; both are still on the wrong side of the looking glass, not yet having worked or passed through what I would like to think of as a colonial mirror stage.

* * *

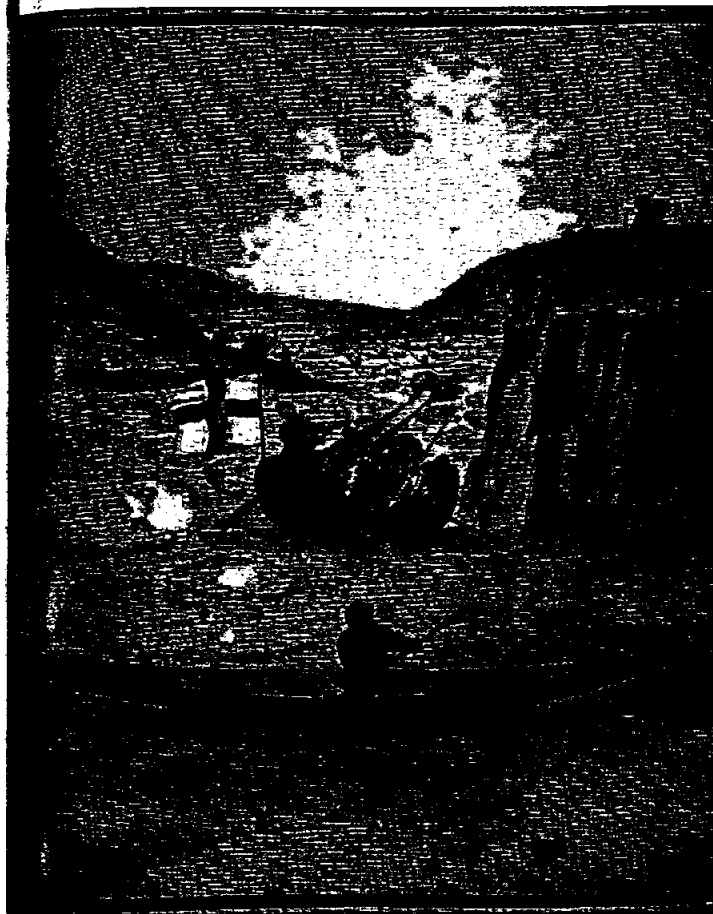
To clarify what might be meant by such a phrase—a *colonial mirror stage*—I want to turn to the example of a group of Englishmen, imagining a close to literal (yet largely fantasized) instance of just such a mirror stage. On Martin Frobisher's first voyage to Meta Incognita in 1576, he captured a Baffin Island Eskimo whom he hoped would fill the need for a native interpreter. The man had been shadowing Frobisher's ship in a kayak (similar to that depicted in Figure 3), but kept his distance until he was lured into capture by the sound of a mere trinket, a cowbell. During the scuffle of his capture and presumably due to it, the Eskimo bit his tongue out, but his captors, finding their hopes thus dashed, projected a rather full intentionality onto the act. "For very chollier and disdain," as George Best recounts, "he bit his tong in twayne within his mouth."³⁴ So much for the hope for an interpreter. During the voyage home the captive fell ill and died shortly after he was displayed to Elizabeth at court. When Frobisher set sail again the next year, he went forewarned about the potential power of native "chollier and disdain," but he also went forearmed, taking with him a portrait of last year's captive that had been painted by Lucas de Heere, who happened to be visiting Elizabeth's court when the man was all-too-briefly displayed (Figure 4).³⁵ A second Eskimo was captured in due course, but at the first signs of despondency the new captive was introduced to his predecessor. It is again George Best who narrates the ensuing engagement between the imaginary and the real:

For afterwarde, when we showed him the picture of his countryman . . . he was upon the suddayne much amazed thereat, and beholding advisedly the same with silence a good while, as though he would streyne courtesie whether [he] shoulde begin the speech (for he thought him no doubte a lively creature), at length began to question with him, as with his companion, and finding him dumme and mute, seemed to suspect him, as with one *disdaynful*, and would have with little helpe have growen into a *chollier* at the matter, until at last by feeling and handling, he founde him but a deceiving picture. And then with great noyse and cryes, ceased not wondering, thinking that we coulde make men live or die at our pleasure. (my italics throughout)³⁶

Best presents the moment as one in which the captive was impressed, as it were, into service—produced, through a complex induction of unceasing wonder, as a willing and even eager interpreter.

The replay of the precise terms of conflict from the first voyage—"chollier and disdain"—seems highly determined, to say the least; whatever took place on the shores

of Meta Incognita, Best's account of the scene is clearly a projection onto it, whether in part or in whole, an effort to resolve the alien resistance on which the first voyage foundered by making the very signs of that resistance the means by which it can be effaced.³⁷ But even if we assume that the scene as presented takes place entirely in the colonial imaginary, the ineluctable dynamic with which it unfolds is a compelling one in its social and psychological dimensions. Native intransigence is reproduced—willfully mute in life, Frobisher's first captive is no less unresponsive in pictorial effigy—but also turned back upon its source; "chollier and disdain" are artfully induced, dis-



3. After John White.
Eskimo in Canoe, 1577.
Woodcut. © The
British Museum,
London.



4. Lucas de Heere. *Eskimo*. 1577. Watercolor. Rijksuniversiteit Bibliotheek, Ghent.

placed, and turned to Elizabethan advantage. Confronted by an image of his own kind, the captive attempts to respond in kind. His initial hesitation and his subsequent efforts to communicate with his presumed fellow are both presented by Best as expressions of kinship and community, intended tokens of cultural recognition; his actions, that is to say, manifest a code of socially inscribed behavior of the kind that serves to define any given cultural community and to set it apart from all others—a social decorum Best familiarizes as “courtesie.” Such overtures are unreciprocated, of course, but this lack of reciprocation is also, and more crucially, observed by others. From the native’s perspective (as reflected, of course, in Best’s defining gaze and narration), he has been drawn out of himself and left exposed, not only spurned but also humiliated, and his manifested desire for fellowship gives way to an equally powerful sense of outrage and betrayal—a betrayal first projected onto his “disdaynful” companion and then reproduced and acted out by the new captive himself, in a cholera directed not at his captors but at an emblem of his own cultural identity. His wonder at the close thus makes a certain sense: what has indeed lived and died in this scenario is nothing less than the native’s sense of himself, of those tribal loyalties that had, up until this moment, defined and produced in him any sense of self he possessed. Far from naive, his unceasing wonder is in fact the sign of this alienation: produced at the moment when he realizes his error, it marks the distance between his former naïveté and a new perspective that comes from seeing himself, in error and humiliation, through the eyes of his captors.

Needless to say, the actual process of conversion, whether political or religious, was a great deal more complicated in European encounters with New World cultures. But something significant is nonetheless being worked through here and in other moments where so much seems to be invested in the way that New World peoples react to or interact with various totems of Old World material culture. An initial affective response may be characterized as awe or wonder, up to and including idolatry. But registering or in some cases fabricating evidence of naive credulity is not the point, or to be more precise, not the end point. Despite all their differences, Catholic and Protestant colonial powers shared an ideology that demanded the eventual colonization of minds as well as bodies and territories—demanded that New World colonial subjects be Christian subjects as well, not only true in outward adherence to religious doctrine but also willing converts, prime movers in their own ideological subjection (or salvation). What is sometimes adumbrated in the moments of colonial speculation I have been considering is a process, partly or wholly imaginary, that might accomplish such an end. When this adumbration is less occluded, as in the example of Frobisher’s Eskimo, native credulity can be seen (at least in and by the colonial imaginary) to initiate a dialectical, affective transaction between “us” (and our material artifacts, serving as affective catalysts) and them—a transaction whose dynamics seem to demand a historicized appropriation of Lacan’s mirror stage.

Lacan's mirror stage produces the infantile self.³⁸ It is a self born in division, an ego that is always already an alter ego, captivated by the image of an apparently fuller, more autonomous and whole self in the mirror: a self that is me but not me (it is so much better), at once self and other. And the infantile self—Lacan's *moi*—that is produced by this erroneous apprehension of an imaginary self/other remains thus captivated, never realizing its error—its imaginary projection of this “other” self—or the illusion on which its fully binary production is based. A colonial mirror stage as figured here produces neither a fledgling self nor even an initial version of a subject. It dismantles an already interpellated subject, then reproduces it through a process of projection and displacement. As in Lacan, the colonial mirror stage begins in error—but it is an error that must be *realized* if the colonial subject is to emerge. Hence there are two gazes involved, that of the soon-to-be-colonized subject and that of the colonial supervisor. It is the pressure of the latter gaze which produces the realization of error (this is the moment when Frobisher's Eskimo begins to see his own naïveté through the eyes of his captors) and with it a humiliation that is also a subjection, an affective and ideological humbling that puts the colonial subject in its place and accords the colonizing presence—the colonial supervisor—its imaginary but overpowering fullness. Instead of his or her own image, the colonial subject apprehends as “its” ideal Other what it of course can never be, this mystified image of the dominant, overseeing, and colonizing subject. Passing through the colonial mirror stage, the subject thus produced will also be always thus distinguished from his or her other, always aware that there is another side to the glass, a defining gaze situated there, a site which the colonial subject can apprehend but never occupy.

Such at any rate is the fantasy. Frobisher's pictorially induced mirror stage does not produce a colonial subject any more than Burchell's mirror produces a Christian one. What is produced in each, however, is an aggrandized image of the colonizing subject, an imaginary fullness possible only through the alienated and abject gaze of the colonized—and here, the line between fantasy and actuality is difficult to draw. For this aggrandized image or imaginary fullness may be born in fantasy, but its effects are felt elsewhere; once produced, it inhabits—or rather, colonizes—worlds that are all too real. According to Freud's famous dictum, the psychological ego constitutes itself by striving to occupy an imaginary terrain. *Wo Es war, soll Ich werden*: where it (id) was, there must I come about. The colonizing subject constitutes itself in its fullness by striving to occupy, to be the focal point of, an imaginary gaze: where *they* see us, there must *we* come about.

* * *

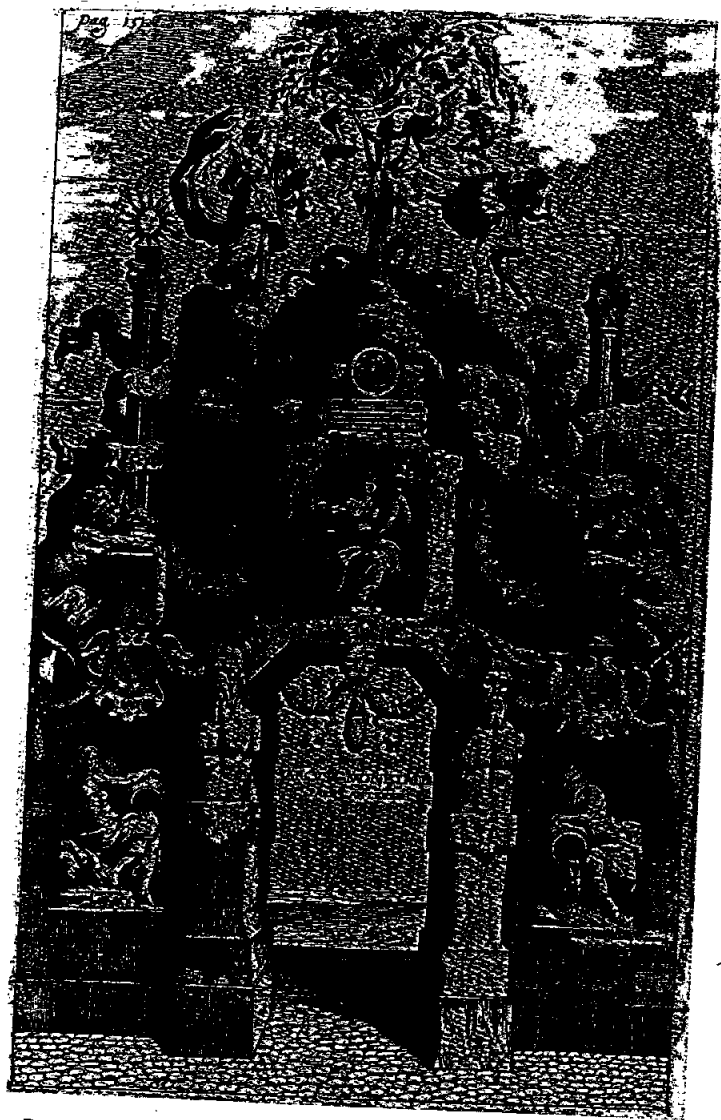
This imaginary fullness, this self-interpellation of the colonizing subject, was produced not only in the minds of European voyagers and colonizers but also in the

readers of these accounts of colonial speculation. For a glimpse of such an image being thus produced, I want to consider a final example of European speculation on the New World that is quite unusual, in part because it seems to betray an uncharacteristic ambivalence toward the emerging colonial ideology being fashioned in first-encounter narratives. In a sense, it is a critical reflection on such speculation, presenting us with both sides of the colonial looking glass.

In 1634, Prince Ferdinand (brother of Philip IV and the new Spanish governor of the Netherlands) made his ceremonial entry into Antwerp. As Ferdinand made his way through the city he passed through a series of arches especially constructed for his procession. Among them was the Arch of the Mint, financed by the city's Royal Mint and jointly designed by Peter Paul Rubens and Johann Caspar Gevaerts. Seeking a theme that would presumably compliment both the mint and the Spanish governor, the artists designed an arch in the form of Mount Potosí in Peru, long-fabled as the richest silver mine in the world and the pride of Spain's colonial empire. As processional architecture goes, an arch in the form of a mountain was an unusual conception but not entirely unprecedented; the Rubens-Gevaerts design is thought to have been influenced by one of the arches erected for Henry II's triumphal entry into Rouen in 1550 as well as the engraved title page of Theodor de Bry's *Americae pars sexta*.³⁹ What is immediately distinctive about the Arch of the Mint, however, is the striking contrast between the scenes depicted on its front and rear faces.

On the front of the arch (Figure 5), the columns of the portal merge into the rough and massive boulders of Potosí, creating an unusual impression of sculpted and unworked, craggy stone relief. On top of the mountain is a tree framed by two figures: on the right is Jason, who is about to pluck the golden fleece from the tree, and on the left is the figure of Felicitas, who both represents and guarantees a happy voyage. Lower down on the left side of the façade are figures representing the region of gold; on the right is the realm of silver, and each side is governed respectively by the sun and the moon, which rest upon the twin pillars of Hercules (the emblem of Charles V, during whose reign the Spanish conquest was begun). A profile of Philip IV appears on a medallion just under the tree at the top, and the inscription grants him the title of *locupletator orbis terrarum*, the benefactor of the world.

Despite the various symbols and emblems of the *conquistadores* (whom Gevaerts styled “the new Jasons and Argonauts”)⁴⁰ and the epic presence of Jason himself, the front of the arch conveys a sense of stately accomplishment that is neither martial nor violent, and the depiction of Jason, despite its unavoidable epic connotations, is almost pastoral in its sense of calmness and ease. Parrots perch upon the tree, and although a guardian dragon lies at its foot, the serpent is either sleeping or already vanquished; although Jason wears classical armor, his sword is sheathed and the fleece hangs from the tree like a ripe fruit waiting to be plucked. The rear of the arch, however, conveys a different mood entirely (Figure 6). Here, a scene of ardu-



5. Peter Paul Rubens. *Arch of the Mint* (front), from Johann Caspar Gevaerts, *Pompa introitus honori serenissimi principis Ferdinandi Austriaci* (Antwerp, 1635). By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.



6. Peter Paul Rubens. *Arch of the Mint* (reverse), from Johann Caspar Gevaerts, *Pompa introitus honori serenissimi principis Ferdinandi Austriaci* (Antwerp, 1635). By permission of the Folger Shakespeare Library, Washington, D.C.

ous, forced labor replaces stately allegory: on the left, two workmen wield pickaxes against the rock while on the right two laborers emerge from the mouth of a mine, nearly doubled over from the heavy loads of ore on their backs. One of these is beardless, the hair on his head a tightly curled cap, with features that are identifiably more African than Peruvian; he is clearly a slave imported from abroad, and his presence has a strong historical register. African slaves were indeed transported to work the mines as replacements for the indigenous Peruvian slaves who had preceded them—so many of whom “gave” their lives to Potosí that the local slave pool was greatly diminished long before the riches of the mine were exhausted. At the top of the mountain is again a tree, but the scene under it is a violent one, representing Hercules in the Garden of the Hesperides. The guardian dragon beneath the tree is clearly awake and alive but contorted in its death throes; its clawed foot is upraised and reaching out to strike, but it is about to receive another blow from the club that Hercules holds high above his head in a two-handed grip, his body coiled to deliver its full power in the next and presumably final swing. Opposite Hercules is the figure of Hispania, plucking golden apples from the tree and dropping them into a fold in her robes. That her action is taking place before the dragon has been killed conveys a sense of haste and stealth, of a theft in the midst of a battle whose outcome, though presumably certain, is not yet accomplished.

It is hard to view the two scenes without a sense of extreme contradiction. What is easy and decorous, almost an act of Nature rather than an exploit of Man, on the front of the arch is brutal and violent on the rear; it is almost as if we are given two incompatible views of Spanish wealth and its New World origins, the official myth and the harsh, underlying reality which that myth was created to obscure. The incongruity between the two views is heightened rather than diminished when we try to imagine the arch as Ferdinand experienced it—as a three-dimensional portal through which he passed. In the detailed depictions done by van Thulden, the front and the rear of the arch are portrayed in separate etchings, and this is how Ferdinand would have viewed the two scenes—first the front side and then (assuming he turned around after he passed through) the rear, never having both in view at once, except of course where front and rear can no longer be defined, that is, at the top of Mount Potosí, where both Jason and Hercules, Felicitas and Hispania enact their contrasting scenes under their respective trees.

Processional arches are curious constructions. They are three-dimensional figures that seek to emulate two-dimensional form; that is to say, unless they are freestanding so that one can walk around them (and the Arch of the Mint was not),⁴¹ they confine their three-dimensionality and their message to two visual planes that are impossible to view at one and the same time. Although physically united, the front and the rear of the arch are disjunct and separate in both an architectural and an experiential sense. The overarching space at the top is the one exception to this virtual two-

dimensionality, not only because it is a space that is neither here nor there, front nor back, but also and more importantly because it is here that the eye might glimpse, depending on the design, something proper to the other side. The architectural paradox is easily resolved, of course, and most designs make sure that the figures at the top can be glimpsed only from the proper side and perspective, oftentimes by incorporating a visual barrier of one sort or another. But the tree or trees that crown the Arch of the Mint can hardly be said to block the gaze. Was there one tree, or two? If only one, then the four figures clustered under it must have been visible from either side of the arch. Van Thulden's etchings seem to represent two different trees, distinct in both foliage and branches, for the two contrasting scenes. But even if there were two trees occupying separate spaces at the top, the known dimensions of the arch do not provide enough space to eliminate the shadowy glimpse of one scene behind the other, of the violence, theft, slave labor, and death that lay behind and adumbrated the wealth of these “new Jasons and Argonauts.”

Rubens and Gevaerts seem to have intentionally exacerbated rather than resolved the overarching paradox of a processional arch, as if such adumbration were a key component in their design: as if they intended the rear of the arch to intrude upon the front, subtly but significantly; as if the rear of the arch were a critical commentary, not only on the mythic pretense of the front but also on the Spanish colonial exploitation that is mystified there. Is it imaginable that the arch could be perceived as such, at least when viewed from the proper ideological as well as visual perspective? If so, the notion of “critical commentary” might not be entirely adequate to describe the way in which each side communicates with the other: almost but not fully separate, starkly contrasted yet occupying the same represented geographical space of Mount Potosí, each side shadows the other so that in retrospect—looking backward—it is more difficult to say whether the arch comments on and demystifies empire, or whether it is instead a concrete rendering of the contradictions that empire brings together in order to realize itself. Representing the enslavement and physical labor of the colonized, the arch also embodies the ideological labor of the colonizer. As a processional arch it is highly unusual, but it is also a nearly impossible ideological construct, folding as it does two incongruent versions of Spanish wealth and Mount Potosí into one architectural figure. But then again, an arch is not merely a representational figure. It is also something that one passes through, and in a sense is not complete until it is thus realized or performed—but not just anyone will do. This is an arch of early modern empire, and what completes and momentarily unites the colonial contradictions built into its design is the passage of empire, in the person of Ferdinand himself.

Apparently, the Spanish governor of the Netherlands did not find the Arch of the Mint especially noteworthy; Ferdinand was presumably flattered by what he took in of it (perhaps he didn't turn around to view the rear of the arch), as he would presumably expect to be in any procession ostensibly honoring his new office—and

as we might expect him or any other dignitary to be flattered when honored by a civic procession. Artists like Rubens and Gevaerts were not hired, after all, to criticize their aristocratic audiences and patrons. All of which suggests that I might be reading too much into the Arch of the Mint. Early modern entries, however, were not mere shows or rituals of celebration; they were more pointedly rituals of negotiation between potentially rival powers, between strong, partially autonomous civic authorities and the royal or noble state authorities who wished to enter their domain.⁴² And the situation of Antwerp in relation to Spain was hardly unproblematic. From the perspective of many inhabitants of the city, Ferdinand was hardly to be regarded as a beneficent patron; he was a colonial occupier and administrator, the representative of a foreign power that had for years exploited this largely Protestant city in the name of the Counter Reformation. Spanish occupation had reduced Antwerp's importance as a commercial center and thus its riches by cutting it off from the sea; by 1632, two years before the procession, conditions had deteriorated so much that Flemish resentment against the Spanish was widespread, but that resentment had been growing for some years.⁴³ What is Mount Potosí to Antwerp? At the height of its productivity in the 1590s, Potosí produced an immense amount of silver, but its riches combined with all other Spanish sources of New World gold and silver represented less than a sixth of Philip IV's extravagant expenditures. Moreover, by 1634 the surface veins of Potosí had been (like the indigenous slave labor) virtually exhausted, and the technology did not yet exist to extract deeper deposits. The vast riches of the mine never had and never would trickle down to Antwerp or its Royal mint, which may be why the "Arch of the Mint" bears not a single reference to the city or even to the Mint itself;⁴⁴ the arch is a monument to a largely past, entirely Spanish wealth and the wasting of it, through an extravagance that taxed all of Philip's colonial possessions, in the Old World as well as in the New.

Granted, the occupation of Antwerp was an intra-European and an intra-Christian instance of colonial occupation; for reasons of race, culture, and civic status, it is doubtful that any citizen of Antwerp saw himself (the gender here is a historically prescribed one) in the situation of the slave laborers, whether African or Peruvian, on the rear of the arch—at least not in any sense of full identification. While a citizen might not have found himself directly reflected there, he might have caught a refracted image of his own situation.⁴⁵ Here is a view of the glories of Spanish empire and conquest—in the Old World rather than the New—that was voiced by one such citizen in 1627:

This city [Antwerp] languishes like a consumptive body which is gradually wasting away. Every day we see the number of inhabitants decreasing, for these wretched people have no means of supporting themselves either by manufacture or trade.⁴⁶

Aside from the reference to a city, the language is very close to that found in Elizabethan accounts of the state of the Irish during the 1580s, when Lord Grey employed a policy of strategic starvation to reduce local resistance. Whatever the language evokes in the reader, it is a powerful and far from complimentary comment on the effects of colonial occupation. Is it possible that someone who viewed the Spanish occupation of Antwerp in these terms might have viewed the Arch of the Mint, some seven years later, in the terms I've suggested above? Is this the kind of perspective that might glimpse the darker colonial adumbrations of the arch, finding in it not a monumental, celebratory construction of colonial ideology but rather its partial deconstruction? Such questions cannot, of course, be definitively answered, but we do know the author of the words which have prompted my queries. The passage quoted above, depicting Antwerp as a consumptive body wasting away under a disease called Spanish colonial occupation, is drawn from a letter written to Pierre Dupuy on 28 May 1627. The letter was composed by a citizen of Antwerp, an artist of some renown who was known as Peter Paul Rubens.⁴⁷

Notes

1. William J. Burchell, *Travels in the Interior of Southern Africa* (London: Longman, 1822-24; reprint, 1967), 1: 461; quoted in Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 187.
2. See *Of Revelation*, pp. 170-97.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 187.
4. See W. J. T. Mitchell, *Iconology: Image, Text, Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1986).
5. The phrase is from Lewis Mumford's reflections on the cultural significance of mirrors in *Technics and Civilization* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1934), 129; quoted in Comaroff and Comaroff, *Of Revelation*, p. 187.
6. *Of Revelation*, p. 188.
7. For a seminal critique of the intertwined histories of anthropology and colonial administration, see Michel Leiris, "L'Ethnographie devant le colonialisme," *Les Temps modernes* 58 (1950); reprinted in *Brisées* (Paris: Mercure de France, 1966), pp. 125-45.
8. For the concept of the political unconscious, see Fredric Jameson, *The Political Unconscious: Narrative as a Socially Symbolic Act* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981). Although he does not use the phrase "colonial imaginary," Homi K. Bhabha implies something like it in his discussion of colonial discourse: "My anatomy of colonial discourse remains incomplete until I locate the stereotype, as an arrested, fetishistic mode of representation with its field of identification, . . . as the Lacanian schema of the Imaginary. The Imaginary is the transformation that takes place in the subject at the formative mirror phase, when it assumes a *désiret* image which allows it to postulate a series of equivalences, samenesses, identities, between the objects

of the surrounding world. However, this positioning is itself problematic, for the subject finds or recognizes itself through an image which is simultaneously alienating and hence potentially confrontational. This is the basis of the close relation between the two forms of identification complicit with the Imaginary—narcissism and aggressivity. It is precisely these two forms of identification that constitute the dominant strategy of colonial power" (*The Location of Culture* [London and New York: Routledge, 1994], p. 77). Like Bhabha's, my own use of "imaginary" is as much a displacement of Lacan as a borrowing from him—a displacement into history and the operations of hegemonic power. However, I would resist Bhabha's full elision of this (un)Lacanian Imaginary and "the formative mirror phase." Like the Imaginary, the mirror phase needs to be historicized, as I try to suggest later in this essay.

9. George Peckham, *A True Reporte, Of the Late Discoveries . . . of the Newfound Landes* (1583); in *The Voyages and Colonizing Enterprises of Sir Humphrey Gilbert*, ed. D. B. Quinn (London: Hakluyt Society, 1940), 84:452.

10. Examples of "trifles" being traded for precious metals or gems are relatively rare, and are typically early in the history of interaction with any given people—that is to say, before a New World culture has had the opportunity to ascertain the differences between its own relative values and those of its European visitors. In many cases, there is no trade involved but rather an exchange of gifts (this is clearly the case when Columbus receives highly wrought gold artifacts on his first voyage) which is sometimes misrepresented as an example of naive indigenous trading practices. However, the rhetoric of European amazement over such "practices" is quite pervasive and has led a number of modern commentators to imply that New World cultures regularly traded treasures for trifles.

11. Stephen Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions: The Wonder of the New World* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), p. 110.

12. Greenblatt presumably means to emphasize the disparity between New and Old World cultural "treasures": that is to say, he seems to be thinking of the quasi-"natural" status that certain precious metals and gems had achieved through centuries of fetishization on the part of Old World cultures. However, such commodities accounted for very little trade (see note 10), and the disturbing tone with which Europeans celebrated native naïveté characterizes the most mundane transactions.

13. I owe this observation to David L. Johnson and discussions that grew out of an NEH Summer Seminar in 1995, "Inventing the New World: Texts, Contexts, Approaches."

14. *The "Diario" of Christopher Columbus's First Voyage to America, 1492-1493*, ed. and trans. Oliver Dunn and James E. Kelley, Jr. (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1989), p. 243.

15. For a general overview of the history of glass beads with ample illustrations showing their variety and complexity, see Lois Sheer Dubin, *The History of Beads from 30,000 B.C. to the Present* (New York: Abrams, 1987). For a study that documents the extensive bead trade in the Old as well as the New World, see Jan Baart, "Glass Bead Sites in Amsterdam," *Historical Archaeology* 22:1 (1988): 67-75.

16. For the rediscovery of the hollow-cane method, see Dubin, *History of Beads*, p. 110.

17. See Louis Dumont, *From Mandeville to Marx: The Genesis and Triumph of Economic Ideology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977).

18. For Marx on primitive accumulation, see *Capital, Volume One*, trans. B. Fowkes (New York: Vintage, 1977), pp. 873-940. For an astute study of the more "domestic" sense of primitive accumulation in the period (the wealth gained from enclosure and other more localized

economic transformations), see Richard Halpern, *The Poetics of Primitive Accumulation: English Renaissance Culture and the Genealogy of Capital* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991).

19. John Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia*, in *The Complete Works of John Smith*, ed. Philip L. Barbour (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 2:147.

20. I use the term "racial" here advisedly, well aware that its relevance to the early modern period has been the subject of significant recent debate and that modern racialism (and racism) is under the early phases of its ideological construction at this time. For a stimulating and critical overview of these and other issues, see Peter Erickson, "The Moment of Race in Renaissance Studies," *Shakespeare Studies* 26 (1998): 27-36.

21. Although captured in 1607, Smith's expanded account of the compass and his discourse on it appears only in *The Generall Historie* of 1624, a year after the publication of the first folio; Smith was also in England when *The Tempest* was performed at the Globe in 1611, having left Virginia in 1609 after being wounded by a gunpowder explosion. Thus he could have seen the play and possibly had his memory refreshed by the publication of Shakespeare's works in the First Folio, dated 1623.

22. Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe and True Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*, ed. Paul Hulton (New York: Dover, 1972), p. 29.

23. Stephen Greenblatt, *Shakespearean Negotiations: The Circulation of Social Energy in the Renaissance* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988), p. 28.

24. For a searching analysis of the colonial impetus and logic of Christianity in its pre- and post-Reformation manifestations, see Greenblatt, *Marvelous Possessions*.

25. See *The "Diario,"* p. 75.

26. Cortés attributed two speeches to Montezuma, in which the Spaniard is described as a returning, vengeful messiah, but Cortés's account is so laden with Christian terms and concepts that many modern commentators regard such passages as "apocryphal" at best. Bernardino de Sahagún later enlarged upon such suggestions to claim that Montezuma thought that Cortés was the returning white god Quetzalcoatl, the "Plumed Serpent." But as Anthony Pagden has detailed, there is "no preconquest tradition which places Quetzalcoatl in this role"; he also notes that the cult of Quetzalcoatl was of little influence in central Mexico and was centered in the vassal state of Cholula (which Cortés infamously destroyed on his march to Tenochtitlán). For Pagden's concise treatment of these matters, see *Hernán Cortés: Letters from Mexico*, trans. and ed. Anthony Pagden (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), p. 467 n. 42.

27. Given the degree to which our own world has been shaped by the expansion of European monotheism, it is difficult to apprehend just how bizarre such a parsimonious exclusivity would appear to cultures who were not only pantheistic but also entirely innocent—as New World cultures were—of even the idea of monotheism. For a pantheistic culture, an encounter with another religion is a process of theological give-and-take, based on the relative strength and other appealing attributes of a new culture's divinities. An example from North America is revealing here. After listening patiently to a Jesuit missionary's explanation of the Christian God, a member of the Micmac tribe began to respond in kind, relating aspects and examples of his own deities—to the express exasperation of his spiritual interlocutor, who branded all the Micmac had to say as pagan superstition. To the Micmac, this was a shocking example of an extreme lack of manners. "If we reply that what they say is not true," as the missionary later recounted, "they answer that they have not disputed what we have told them and that it is rude to interrupt a man when he is speaking and tell him he is lying;" quoted in James Arxell, *The*

European and the Indian: Essays in the Ethnohistory of Colonial North America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981), p. 78.

28. This quote is taken from the manuscript of John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution: Christianity, Colonialism, and Consciousness in South Africa*, vol. 2 (forthcoming), p. 48.

29. Garcilaso de la Vega, *El Inca, Royal Commentaries of the Incas and General History of Peru* trans. Harold V. Livermore (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1966), 2:682.

30. *Ibid.*, 2:686-87.

31. For Poma's account of Incan history up to and including the conquest, see Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala, *Nueva cronica y buen gobierno*, ed. John V. Murra, Rolena Adorno, and Jorge L. Urioste, 3 vols. (Madrid: Historia, 1987); the incident with the book is narrated in 2:357. For an astute interpretation of Poma's text and the extensive woodcuts that illustrate it, see Rolena Adorno, *Guaman Poma: Writing and Resistance in Colonial Peru* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986).

32. Garcilaso, *Commentaries*, 2:679.

33. *Ibid.*, 2:688.

34. George Best, *The Three Voyages of Martin Frobisher*, ed. R. Collinson (London: Hakluyt Society, 1863), p. 74.

35. The image reproduced here (Figure 4) is a watercolor by de Heere, identified as a portrait of the 1576 captive; however, there is no certainty that this is the painting that Frobisher took with him in 1577. John White accompanied Frobisher and also painted Eskimo men and women; for these portraits and reproductions of other artists' renditions of Baffin Island Eskimos, see Paul Hulton and David Beers Quinn, *The American Drawings of John White, 1577-1590, with Drawings of European and Oriental Subjects* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1964), vol. 2: pls. 62, 63, 84ab, 85b, 146a, 147a.

36. Best, *The Three Voyages*, p. 138.

37. I should stress that the following reading is intended to render the cultural and psychological logic of the scene as described by, and from the perspective of, George Best—not to record the affective process that the Eskimo in question experienced, or to suggest that such experience necessarily accords with Best's account. I had assumed that this distinction was clear in an earlier treatment of the incident, but since not all readers found it to be so, I feel the need to emphasize that here as in the previous essay I am interested in the operations of the colonial *imaginary*. For my earlier treatment of Frobisher's voyages and the theatricality of the represented conversion, see Steven Mullaney, "Brothers and Others, or the Arts of Alienation," in *Cannibals, Witches, and Divorce: Estranging the Renaissance*, ed. Marjorie Garber, Selected Papers from the English Institute, n.s. no. 11 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), pp. 67-89.

38. For Lacan's discussion of the mirror stage, see Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: A Selection*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Norton, 1977), pp. 1-7.

39. For this interpretation and an extended description of the arch, see John Rupert Martin, *The Decorations for the Pompa Introitus Ferdinandi, Corpus Rubenianum Ludwig Burchard* pt. 16 (London and New York: Phaidon, 1972), pp. 189-202. For another useful analysis of the arch which in many ways complements mine, see Elizabeth McGrath, "Rubens' Arch of the Mint," *Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute* 37 (1974): 191-217.

40. Martin, *Decorations*, p. 191.

41. Based on the known width of the Arch of the Mint (11.5 meters) and the street it occu-

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42. For a more extended consideration of early modern entries, including the famous one of Rouen in 1550, see Steven Mullaney, *The Place of the Stage: License, Play, and Power in Renaissance England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988; reprinted by University of Michigan Press, 1995), pp. 65-69.

43. Martin, *Decorations*, p. 20.

44. Elizabeth McGrath notes that most of the arches for the procession bear the Antwerp coat of arms, and that the Arch of the Mint is one of the few exceptions; she also notes a number of other anomalies that combine to make the arch "an unequivocal indication of Antwerp's position under Spanish authority" (McGrath, "Rubens' Arch," p. 215). Representing a mine whose height of productivity is past and celebrating a Spanish wealth that is also a thing of the past, given the depth of Spain's financial crisis in the 1630s, such a structure, both temporary and artificial, may have served (according to McGrath) as "an ironically appropriate symbol for the basis of the Spanish economy" (193-94). However, McGrath also feels the arch is ultimately an expression of hope on Rubens's part, an encouragement to Ferdinand to correct the errors of the past and rescue Antwerp from its colonial decline.

45. I owe these speculations to the thoughtful and incisive comments of Peter Erickson.

46. Quoted in Martin, *Decorations*, pp. 19-20.

47. Rubens' life was disrupted by Spanish occupation of the Netherlands even before his birth. His father, Jan Rubens, had to flee the country in 1568 with his wife and children to escape religious persecution for his Calvinist beliefs; Peter Paul was born in Germany, and later returned to Antwerp only after his father's death. His mother, who was a Catholic, raised Peter Paul in her own faith.