

Theologico-Political Militancy in Ignacio de Loyola's *Ejercicios espirituales*

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In his discussion of Maruyama Masao's *Thought and Behaviour in Modern Japanese Politics* (1969), Naoki Sakai presents an alternative that would account for the modern difference, or the difference of modernity. In Sakai's rendering, Maruyama opposes a premodern "missionary-style universalism" to the modern and largely European notion of nationalism that organized the later prevalent interstate system on a juridical basis of political equality:

Nationalism, the guiding principle for the modern nation-state, and its essential moment, the concept of "sovereignty," are based on the premise that sovereign nation-states coexist on the same plane as equals, even if they might on occasion endorse the state's unconditional adventurism: by no means are they compatible with the centrism of the civilized center versus the savage periphery, which would never admit the true center of the world but for itself. (Maruyama, quoted by Sakai 69).

The premodern position would be the position of "theological universalism, according to which the world is constituted as emanating from a single center (...). Such a theological universalism has been upheld by missionaries and colonizers, and has served to reinforce the faith in the universality of Western civilization and to justify and empower colonialism (and postcolonialism) ever since 'the Conquest of America.' It is a universalism of self-indulgence that lacks a sense of the primordial split between 'the self' and 'the other'" (Sakai 69). What I find interesting here is the notion that a certain theological universalism, in spite of its apparent obsolescence after an alternative ideology developed, could still organize, and precisely all the way through modernity, the colonial and even postcolonial regimes. To all appearances, some states' occasional unconstrained adventurism would fall back on the theological-universalist regime to

launch their expansionist projects into “the savage periphery.” As a consequence, the modern schema (“nation-states coexist on the same plane as equals”) was still compatible with “colonialist universality” (Sakai 69).

This is important for Sakai to the extent that it enables him to present his notion of “cofiguration.” We must interpret cofiguration as a remnant—a sort of internalized residue of theological universalism on the side of the non-West as well as on the side of the West. Cofiguration is only possible on the basis of the end of the ostensible dominance of theological universalism. Given the juridical basis for a system of equality between nation-states, cofiguration arises as the ideological mechanism by means of which my nation-state depends on yours to the same extent that yours depends on mine: the consolidation of the interstate system in Europe, and its effects elsewhere, depend on a parallel system of transferential identity. In the case of Japan, Sakai shows how Japanese identity necessitated and upheld the alternative constitution of a Western identity, just as Western identity could only be posited in a relational sense *vis-à-vis* other parts of the world. And the consequence is:

The schema of the coexistence among nation-states serves to conceal the complicity of the West and Japan in the transferential formation of respective identities; because of this complicity, the obsession with the West warrants self-referentiality for the Japanese. An uncritical endorsement of such a schema prevents us from detecting the hidden alliance of the narcissisms of the West and of Japan. It conceals the working of the regimes in which a paranoiac impulse to identify with the West, and another with Japan, are simultaneously reproduced and mutually reinforced by one another. (Sakai 71).

Colonialist universality survives, therefore, in the narcissistic-paranoiac regimes of cultural identity, which are therefore unrecognized surviving avatars of Western political theology. A logical conclusion of this argument would state that Western political theology is therefore not only premodern but also archi-modern, as it has managed to survive its presumptive obsolescence and remains radically active today through the very system of cultural identity functional to present-day globalization. This

essay seeks to delve into the genealogical foundations of the theological-universalist regime of the first modernity through a particular look at some aspects of Jesuit thought.

For religious consciousness in general, every act of tolerance and respect for alien ideas is fissured by an awareness of unconditional, transcendent truth. Relativism does not belong to religion, or belongs to it in a subordinate, derivative manner. For religious consciousness, relativism finds its limit in the need for service and fidelity to an unquestionable truth that may require further scrutiny but that, in itself, accepts no probabilities. The believer knows that neither he nor she, but God is the origin of truth and that truth is univocal. The novelty of Jesuit practice was to admit innumerable mediations regarding the ethico-political determination of truth, as reflected in the notion of *composición de lugar*, which translates as “situational consciousness.” The place, the situation, is the instance of the decision. And every situation that calls for a practical decision is the region for the embodiment of a truth that remains unique even though it may be subject to different or even innumerable manifestations. This is what the old joke about the Jesuit and the Muslim conveys. The Jesuit says: “We both worship the same God— you in your way, and I in His” (Eagleton 2005: 19).¹ The tolerant or mundane Jesuit may be inclined to accept that the other, whether Muslim or Protestant, idolatrous or non-confessional, does everything in his or her power to be faithful to some idea of transcendent truth or even just adequate behavior, but that is never enough: the unfortunate condition of pre-Catholicity is unredeemable. However, while never enough, it is quite often good enough for practical purposes, which means: better than so many alternatives. This is the condition of political or secular practice for a Jesuit among non-Catholics. The Jesuit is a political being to an extent that members of older Catholic orders could not aspire to be. If other Catholic orders, especially in the early modern period, were fundamentalist, the Jesuit is anything but a fundamentalist, but he still comes from a fundamentalist core (Fig. 1).

¹ Eagleton attributes the sentence to a Catholic in general, but I think it is better applied to the Jesuit in particular.



Fig. 1. Margarita de Parma

Take the situation that evolved in the first decades of the seventeenth century in Paraguay, narrated by Del Techo in *Historia provinciae paraquariae* (1673). Following Philip Caraman's account, one of the main problems not only for the proper administration but for the very establishment of the South American reductions was the endemic polygamy, both simultaneous and serial, that was a characteristic of the *modus vivendi* of the Guaraní tribal chiefs. Naturally the Jesuit-organized reductions could not permit polygamy. The efforts of the Jesuit Fathers to determine in every case who had been such and such a cacique's first wife in order to proceed to a proper sacramental recognition of that union, which excluded the legality of every other conjugal union, were frequently in vain, when they did not run into impossible conflicts (for instance, when the "first wife" of a given cacique had been previously married to some other living member of the tribe). A proper adjudication was however necessary, as the entire structure of life in the Reductions was based upon the cacique's authority. Provided a cacique understood and accepted that only one legal wife was possible, if the cacique did not like the Jesuits' decision in terms of who was to be the one, he would not bring his people from the jungle, which meant, he would not put his people under Jesuit supervision. Caraman says: "A harsh decision based on European law, not on the realities of Guaraní tribal life, would have made substantial progress impossible" (Caraman 1975: 41-2). Confronted with many versions of this problem, Cardinal de Lugo decided to raise a petition to Pope Urban VIII asking for permission so that the Provincial Father could dissolve every pre-baptism marriage of the Guaraní caciques, "leaving them free to marry again for the first time" (Caraman 1975: 42). Urban VIII, himself formed by the Jesuits, and notorious for his quick temper, became annoyed with the consultation, arguing that the decision for dispensation had to be made in every case

by the local Fathers. The Pope in effect refused to answer, on the grounds that only the local Fathers could determine whether there was a probable opinion to be given on the convenience of declaring the marriage null and void. The Pope's refusal to decide was still a papal act, a papal decision, and from then on the Jesuits had effective permission to act, not necessarily as they wished, but as the translational situation, in a context of an endemic conflict of languages and ideological practices, dictated. Situational consciousness is no doubt one of the most powerful tools for practical or political action in Catholic modernity, and it does embody to a certain significant extent the notion of heterolingual address that Sakai offers as his own solution to the problem of unrecognized colonialist universality, about which more below. The question remains as to whether Jesuit situational consciousness is in fact modern enough. Everything rests on the principle of sovereign decision, as we will see.²

In *Política del cielo* Antonio Rivera, who places himself in the mainstream of political tradition, thinks that Jesuit modernity is only partial, if not in fact, a contradiction in terms. For Rivera Absolutism or Calvinist Republicanism would emerge as the only properly modern options, and the Jesuit doctrine of indirect political censorship was only a half-way attempt to grant the Company a certain degree of autonomy. The doctrine of indirect political censorship basically means that the Jesuits were opposed to the finality of political authority on the grounds of their allegiance to another sphere of social action (Rivera 1999: 94). Obedience to the Pope was overriding. For Rivera, consistent with traditional considerations, the role that the Jesuits accorded to ecclesiastical power, and specifically to the Pope, constitutes an “insurmountable burden” in the path towards modernity (Rivera 1999: 94). The Pope, as the head of the Church, is the only real instance of worldly sovereignty. Any other political power can or should only admit its own heteronomy vis-à-vis the Pope. To the extent that the source of the Pope's authority is ecclesiastical and not political, there can be no properly political sovereignty. Sovereignty, that is, real sovereignty, for the

² Of course the other great Jesuit joke about sovereign decision as always already sanctioned by papal authority is the following, which I owe to Karmele Troyas: “The Dominicans and the Jesuits were disputing about whether it was possible to smoke while praying, so they decided to ask the Vatican. The Dominicans asked: ‘His Holiness, can we smoke as we pray?’ His Holiness immediately said: ‘No, idiots! To pray is too serious a thing, and it does not allow for mundane activities at the same time.’ But the Jesuits asked: ‘His Holiness, may we pray as we smoke?’ And the Pope answered: ‘Of course! Any moment is good to pray.’”

Jesuits, is always already transpolitical. Now, if modernity, as tradition has it, and as Sakai confirms in his reading of Maruyama Masao, depends on the radical presumption of the autonomy of the political (which is a precondition for the juridical organization of the European interstate system), and if the Jesuits were never able to establish the latter doctrinally, then the Jesuits can be many things, but they can never be properly modern. Is this really so? What if the Jesuits kept the secret of the archi-modern political theology that remains active today, even if in a fallen version, in the narcissistic-paranoiac regime of cultural identity and therefore cultural translation?

Earlier in his book, Rivera had seemed to hesitate in his argument against the modernity of the Jesuits when he stated that “the ultimate goal [of Jesuit theory about temporal or civil power, and especially that of Mariana and Suárez] was . . . to legitimize the interference of moral or religious authority in the public sphere. This heteronomous political discourse of the Company could also be taken to be a sign of modernity, since the *letterati*, the Masons, the Enlightenment critics, in spite of their deep differences with Jesuitism, would follow in their struggle against the absolute power of the monarchs a very similar indirect strategy” (Rivera 1999: 65-6). Indeed. Rivera refers to the fact that, for Enlightenment thought in general, the public sphere must be morally regulated. We need go no further than Immanuel Kant’s *Perpetual Peace*, where Kant succinctly establishes the difference between the “moral politician” and the “political moralist.” The former is “someone who conceives of the principles of political expediency in such a way that they can co-exist with morality” and the latter “one who fashions his morality to suit his own advantage as a statesman” (Kant 2004: 118). For Kant, the moralists and the moralizers are those who “resort to despicable tricks, for they are only out to exploit the people (and if possible the whole world) by influencing the current ruling power in such a way as to ensure their own private advantage” (Kant 2004: 119). The moral politician, like the ethical individual, relates to politics in a non-opportunistic way, in fact, in a way that might force them to postpone their own advantage given not just ethical duty, but the simple legality of the situation where they find themselves: “there can be no half measures here; it is no use devising hybrid solutions such as a pragmatically conditioned right halfway between right and utility. For all politics must bend the knee before right, although politics may hope in

return to arrive, however slowly, at a stage of lasting brilliance” (Kant 2004: 125). The lasting brilliance of politics depends, of course, on its conformity to right: “A true system of politics cannot therefore take a single step without first paying tribute to morality. And although politics in itself is a difficult art, no art is required to combine it with morality. For as soon as the two come into conflict, morality can cut through the knot which politics cannot untie” (Kant 2004: 125).

A “true system of politics,” that is, the truth of the political, depends on its conformity to extrapolitical right. Enlightenment philosophers do not place ecclesiastical power in the position of arbiter of morality in the public sphere. For that role, rightly or wrongly, they choose reason, that is, practical reason, and the mandates of ethical law. Or at least Kant does. If the Enlightenment limits the autonomy of the political by making it subservient, in any “true system,” to universal ethical law, then the Enlightenment doctrinally establishes the heteronomy of the political—there is a limit or a condition to the political, and only the interiorization of such a limit reaches the truth of politics. If, for the Jesuits, religious reason is the only possibility of true political heteronomy, in other words, if the truth of the Jesuit political is given in its accordance to papal authority, that is, to Catholic truth, then has the historiography of modernity been too quick to exclude from its presuppositions this internal limit to the autonomy of the political? Or is the Enlightenment anti-modern to the extent that it recognizes, as the Jesuits did, that the political is never in the last instance properly autonomous, or autonomous in truth? I suppose everything depends on whether one believes that the Pope is a true interpreter of moral law in practical-political terms. Or, beyond that, perhaps everything depends on the status we might still be willing to give to the very notion of a universal moral law. What if there is no such thing as a moral law as the very condition of political freedom? We have a choice then: either we choose a Pope (or, beyond the Pope, an event whose consequences institute the need for a normative administration) that can interpret truth for us, or we do without it. Both options have consequences.

Jesuit thought fundamentally developed in a climate of religious war and crusade that would have already significantly marked the life of the Company’s

founder, Ignacio de Loyola. Ignacio's commitment to the political in the cause of the expansion of his own faith was beyond question. He took great interest from early in life in military campaigns related to the defense or propagation of Catholic faith. Ignacio's letters from 1552 to the Viceroy of Sicily Juan de Vega about the need to organize a strong fleet for the defense of Naples, of the Spanish and Italian shoreline, and for the recapture of the Greek islands from the Turks were taken seriously by military authorities in the preparation of the campaigns that would result in the battle of Lepanto, as Caraman says. From 1546 on Ignacio developed an intense correspondence with King John III of Portugal about the need to bring the schism with the Church of Ethiopia to an end. In the last year of his life, Ignacio volunteered for the Ethiopian mission, although his frailty and ill health would end up making it impossible for him to go. But, Caraman says, "the instructions Ignatius drew for Ethiopia form a charter of missionary method which was adapted with striking success by a later generation of Jesuits in China, Japan, Paraguay, and India, and remains today one of the most enlightened missionary documents of any age" (Caraman 1990: 179).

If time, for Fathers Ricci, Francis Xavier, Anchieta, and so many others in the first fifty years in the life of the Society of Jesus, was consumed in essentially political labors, of course the goal of those political labors was the establishment of total religious domination, hence world colonialism. We could call that mixture of political autonomy and heteronomy in the Jesuit conception relational autonomy. Situational consciousness emerges as the true key to evaluate Jesuit relational autonomy at both the doctrinal and the practical level. For instance, the very detailed instructions Ignacio sent the Patriarch of Ethiopia, Nunes Barretto, include, abysmally, the instruction not to follow instructions. Ignacio "made it clear that the Patriarch was not to consider himself bound by anything [Ignacio] had written but was to be free to deal with every situation as he judged best" (Caraman 1990: 180). One could say that this extraordinary chiasmus, i.e., "I order you not to feel bound by my orders," is in fact the rift in the fabric of the Jesuit conception of a properly religious politics, and it opens the catastrophe of political moralism. Or one can alternatively consider it the very essence of the relational autonomy of the political, that is, the only way in which any abstract law, whether the categorical imperative or papal mandates, can be accommodated in

practical terms to the demands of the situation, not for the sake of moralist advantage, but rather for the sake of a better and more faithful fulfillment of the truth. Whatever the case, relational autonomy constitutes, in my opinion, the core of Jesuit modernity, and perhaps, in different forms, of every other modernity, including our own archimodernity. One wonders what Machiavelli would have thought of it, provided, of course, that it was not Machiavelli's dominant thought.

This notion of relational autonomy sends us back to the problem raised by Antonio Rivera: is the autonomy of the political an essential, or even the essential mark of modernity? Fredric Jameson has noted of contemporary critical discourse on the political that it ends up devolving "into ethical, theological, and civic republican motifs (...) For the Left, the present conceivability of any strategic orientation to state power has arguably imparted an abstract character to its various affirmations of 'the political' as an agenda in its own right." If we are to engage today "the problematic status of the semantics of decision, commitment, and denunciation," and address "the question of what constitutes the specifically political dimension . . . and whether this can be distinguished from mere partisan ideology" (Jameson), we must come to terms, I believe, with Jesuit relational autonomy. This is, incidentally, the question that Naoki Sakai's *Translation and Subjectivity* leaves with me.

Could any possible primacy of politics over history (including economic history) be considered absolute or relative? If relative, then politics would still be subordinate to history in the last instance. If absolute, then politics would be the norm of action. But an absolutely primary politics would have to rely on the total immanence of its own conditions, and would in fact be normless. A politics without a norm that it, a politics that would itself be the normative standard, without recourse to alterity or to a heterogeneous grounding, can only be a politics of force. As such, it would have become ontology (as in the Nietzschean case).

The alternative to an ontology of force (which would in itself create a paradox: would politics then reach full autonomy to the very extent that politics becomes ontology, and thus something other than itself?) is to think that a norm for politics can

be found outside history, outside all force, including of course the ideological dissimulation of force. That norm, which for religious consciousness is self-evident and appears as transcendent truth, could take the form of a normative affect, such as what Alain Badiou has called the “communist invariant” or what Jacques Derrida calls the undeconstructible claim of the call for justice. It removes the claim of autonomy for the political. If every politics depends for its very grounding on a normative affect other than force, including the force of history, then perhaps it would be necessary to conclude that every possible understanding of the political as a primary motivator for human action would have to come under Kant’s political moralism, would have to be automatically partisan. Partisan affect is not exclusively an affect of force, although force is secondarily or derivatively that which a partisan affect must try to obtain. The only possible non-partisan understanding of the political may be the understanding that politics is always already partisan. But, if politics always depends upon a prior partisan affect, then politics, whether classically understood or understood from the perspective of modernity, is not autonomous, because it must follow determinations not of its own making. Relational autonomy is only another way of saying relational heteronomy.

Where does Ignacio de Loyola find the foundations of his partisanship as a soldier of Christ, and of the Pope? In a general sense, the answer is obvious: in his Catholic faith, understood as faith in the universally redemptive character of the figure of Christ as embodied in the Church. Derivatively, of course, also in the civil powers willing to exercise their force of domination in order to promote the missionary character of the Church. At its limit, tendentially, the universalization of the Church would break through the oppressive hierarchical character of the so-called perfect community, because it would accomplish the non-fissured unity of the universal political body as mystical body of Christ: the communion of the saints. The doctrine of the communion of the saints is, in my opinion, the only possible referent for modern democratic theory, particularly if we understand democracy, following María Zambrano’s 1958 formulation, as the move towards the abandonment of the sacrificial structuration of history (Zambrano 1988: 42).

Ignacio de Loyola's *Ejercicios espirituales* (Fig. 2) gives us some clues to understand this march towards the mystical body of a perfect universal community. It is a march based on theologico-political militancy, or partisanship. Nothing clearer than the section of the *Ejercicios* known as “meditation on the two banners.” Its basic tropology is founded on the analogy in political theology that Loyola gives us in the “Second Week” of the *Ejercicios* entitled “The Calling of the Temporal King Helps Us Contemplate the Life of the Eternal King” (Loyola 1997: 245). Part of the *composición de lugar*, or of the coming to situational consciousness of this “exercise” is “to put in front of me a human king, chosen by God Our Lord, whom all the princes and all Christian men revere and obey.” Taking its point of departure in this temporal analogy of the spiritual reality of the sovereign presence of God in the world, the exercise says it is necessary “to look at how this king speaks to all of his subjects, saying: My will is to conquer all the land of the unfaithful; therefore, whoever would want to come with me must be satisfied to eat as I do, and to drink and dress as I do, etc.; in the same way he must work with me during the day and watch during the night, etc.; so that he can have his part in my victory as he has had it in my labors” (Loyola 1997: 246).

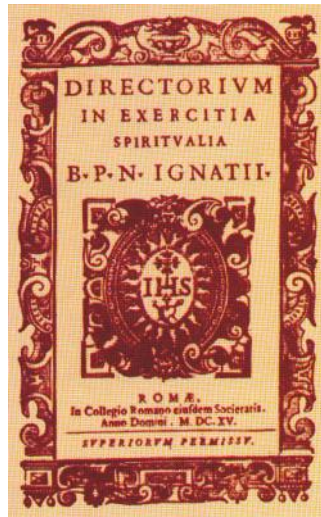


Fig. 2. Ignacio de Loyola's *Ejercicios espirituales*

Loyola presents Christian life as militancy in an enterprise of conquest whose goal is victory and whose final reward is the possession of the conquered goods. The evidence for this kind of understanding is so strong that, Loyola says, “anyone with judgment and reason will offer all of his person to the task” (Loyola 1997: 247). Thus

militancy is nothing but total militancy. The life of the Christian must be an infinite effort of militancy at the service of the eternal king and his goals.

Incidentally, this is the only way to understand the meaning of the foundational comparison or original parallelism in the *Ejercicios*, which is the notion that a spiritual exercise is the psychic transposition of bodily exercise (for the purposes of military training). In the first page of the text we read: “Because in the same way that strolling, walking, or running are bodily exercises, every way of preparing and disposing the soul to cleanse it of every disordered affection, and, after cleansing, every way of seeking and finding the divine will in the disposition of life for the health of the soul, is called a spiritual exercise” (Loyola 1997: 221). This parallel would make no sense if we thought that the justification for bodily exercise is merely the care of the self. If the spiritual implies distance, as Loyola says, from every kind of “self-love, willing, and interest,” that is, distance from every pretension of subjective autonomy, in the same way bodily exercise does not aim at taking biopolitical care of the health of the body, but rather at making the body into an adequate instrument for its heteronomous function, which is its true function, namely, to serve temporally (Loyola 1997: 264).

The “meditation on the two banners” tropologically opposes the banner of Christ, “supreme captain and our lord,” and the banner of Lucifer, “mortal enemy of our human nature,” and demands “to imagine that the leader of all the enemies settles in the great field of Babylon, as in a great chair of fire and smoke, in a horrible and fearful figure . . . [and] to consider how he calls innumerable demons and how he distributes them in such and such a city, and sends others to other cities, and thus throughout the world, not forgetting any provinces, places, states, or particular persons” (Loyola 1997: 253; 254). Against the banner of Lucifer, the banner of Christ, which opposes poverty, contempt for worldly honor, and humility to Lucifer’s riches, presumption, and arrogance. The soldier of Christ—and, from a Jesuit perspective, not just every soldier needed to be primarily a soldier of Christ, but every person ought to assume his or her Christian militancy as *total* militancy—attempts a conquest whose goal is the inner cathexis of the world towards spiritual and antiworldly values. Friends and enemies are opposed as Jerusalem is opposed to Babylon in an infinite game of deterritorialization.

Jerusalem territorializes itself seeking the thorough deterritorialization of Babylon, in the same way that Babylon territorializes itself through the deterritorialization of Jerusalem. The final result, as conquest, is the appropriation of the goods, the appropriation of the earth. Total militancy, we should make no mistake, is political militancy for the conquest and appropriation of the earth. But political moralism in the Kantian sense is opposed to the extent that the Catholic can only proceed to an appropriation of the earth from humility, contempt for worldly honors, and radical poverty. Hence it is essential that the meditation on the two banners be followed by a supplement in the story of the ten thousand ducats. The question Loyola raises and deals with is how must Jerusalem own temporal riches and at the same time, in and through the process of world conquest, elude the temptation of total accumulation, or of a secret Babylonian reterritorialization.

The answer is of course relational autonomy. A poor appropriation of the world, or an appropriation of the world under the banner of poverty, of contempt for worldly honors, and of humility is only possible at the service of the greater glory of God, possessing for the service of God, so that the final victory, that is, the ultimate territorialization of the world by Jerusalem or by the Christian armies can also be an embrace of God as service to God. Radical colonialism thus hides within itself, as its most proper truth, a radical anticolonial project. If total militancy is total service, then the soldier of Christ finds his or her ultimate projection in a sort of dispossessing possession which is integration into the mystical body of God as deterritorialized, immaterial body, for its greater glory, in the name of the perfect community. Is this an anticipation of totalitarian catastrophe, or is it the epitome of a modern formulation of universal civilizational expansion by political means? It is both. It is as such impure. The notion of relational autonomy would not fool anyone. And neither would relational heteronomy.

Jesuit thought, understood as a militant project for the absolute territorialization of Jerusalem, necessarily incorporates, through situational consciousness, the subordination of its project of sanctity to its needs as priesthood, and simultaneously, the subordination of its priestly needs to the imperative of sanctity. This need for a

double subordination remains today as the true political horizon, the very condition of a moral politics, which can only ever be a moral politics in the last instance... or not. Antonio Rivera said that the modernity of Jesuit thought, as “the most modern Catholic thought,” leads “straight to the modern professional army, the bureaucrat, the worker” (Rivera 1999: 16). This is so because the Jesuit, like its secular counterparts, lives in the very fissure between priesthood and sanctity. Religious consciousness can absorb the fissure. It refers it to a regulative transcendent truth from which situational consciousness can only derive. But the fissure remains intolerable to non-religious consciousness—no less so than the very alternative between priesthood and sanctity.

Where does that leave us? Assuming that we refuse to choose between priesthood and sanctity. For Naoki Sakai, the response to the schema of configuration that organizes every possible contradiction or indeed the very founding aporia of postcolonial thought (its speculative or mimetic limit, such that postcolonial thought has never yet been anything but a specular inversion of theological universalism) must be sought in a patient critique of the regime of homolingual translation in favor of its opposite, the “heterolingual address” (Sakai 4): “Only where it is impossible to assume that one should automatically be able to say what one oneself means and an other able to incept what one wants to say—that is, only where an enunciation and its inception are, respectively, a translation and a countertranslation—can we claim to participate in a nonaggregate community where what I want to call the heterolingual address is the rule, where it is imperative to evade the homolingual address” (Sakai 7). Configuration, that is, the mimetic regime of global dominance that is premised on the surreptitious presence of theological universalism underneath the veneer of interstate or international equality, is a direct consequence of the homolingual regime of translation, or perhaps viceversa: in any case, they mutually implicate each other, on the basis of transference identity. As Sakai says, “there should be many different ways to apprehend translation in which the subjectivity of a community does not necessarily constitute itself in terms of language unity or the homogeneous sphere of ethnic or national culture” (15). The heterolingual address is Sakai’s recommendation for the formation of a democratic or non-oppressive translation regime, a nonaggregate community of belonging no longer recognizable in the exclusionary terms that have organized modernity as a game of

friends and enemies, as the contest between Jerusalem and Babylon. And it seems true that the heterolingual address is no longer part or consequence of theological universalism, insofar as it represents its radical critique.

But does the heterolingual address rid itself of relational autonomy? Can it vanquish the Jesuit presupposition of a regime of transcendental authority? From the perspective that Alain Badiou has recently named “democratic materialism” (Badiou 1-9), where no truths come to affect the free play of languages and bodies, it is still possible to raise the difficult and perhaps destructive question concerning the still mimetic quality of every critique. If the heterolingual address is configured by homolingual translation, then the heterolingual address occupies the very site of theologico-political truth. A Babelic god, the god of the nonaggregate community, is still a subordinator of political life, and, furthermore, it may not be efficient as such.

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