

## ARTICLE

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# Colonised's Madness, Colonisers' Modernity and International Law: Mythological Materialism in the East-West *Telos*

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*This monograph takes on "modern art" as the location of modernity. This subject, in my view, holds potential for a productive multi-logue and not just a dialogue, between three binary socio-cultural categories: child and adult, normal and mad, and colonisers and colonised. Modern art raises very interesting questions, and as an area that is often ignored in the analysis of law and science, it forms a powerful field for exploring both, as well as their intersections. Exploring the psychology of colonisation/ domination is an important objective of this monograph. In order to get at it, the monograph imbibes Appadurai, Foucault, and Nandy as offering complementary stances on modernity and subsequent globalisation of intra-European relations after the industrial revolution. In doing so the author relates aspects of semiotic theory by looking at theories of myth. This monograph concludes by applying their relevance to the strategy of signification deployed by international law and relations.*

### Keywords

Ancient, Art, Beauty, Childhood, Colonisation, Racism, Mythological Materialism, Phenomenology, Modernity, Semiotics, International Law

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## I. Introduction

“Der Zeit ihre Kunst, der Kunst ihre Freiheit”

Ludwig Hevesi, Vienna Secession of 1897

This German maxim translates as: to our era its art, to art its freedom. There is nothing new about the discourse on art, myth and modernity. But it is exciting nonetheless. Such has been the pervasiveness of modernity that new facets emerge every time an author takes on modernity. Today a discourse of modernity must not remain an exclusive preserve of anthropologists and sociologists; it should now engage as many international lawyers as possible. A series of thinkers first from the West and then from the East have spoken about modernity and capitalism. Michel Foucault,<sup>1</sup> Arjun Appadurai,<sup>2</sup> and Ashis Nandy,<sup>3</sup> among many others, are some of the names that I personally find stimulating and revealing. They have spoken about modernity and colonisation, and its effects in shaping our consciousness about how modernity has altered societal relations producing conflicts within and outside colonised societies - the contents of postcolonial studies. In more layman's term, modernity evokes hesitation, often timorous, as human conscience around the world has shown a fetish for its past.

Appadurai's decisive discourse on modernity reveals modernity's ability to create five kinds of pasts. These are history, tradition, evolution, antiquity and civilisation.<sup>4</sup> “India,” Ashis Nandy analyses, “has many pasts; depending upon the needs of each age, the nation brings a particular past into its consciousness.”<sup>5</sup> I am of the view that such choices of pasts are guided by two aspects of human psychology. They are:

1. A particular culture's obsession for particular mythology as the 'real' history, and

<sup>1</sup> It would be unfair to cite a single work of Foucault for the purposes of this monograph. All his works, i.e. *Madness and Civilization*, *The Birth of the Clinic*, *The Order of Things*, *Discipline and Punish*, and three volumes of *The History of Sexuality* can all be read chronologically to get at his deductions. They have thus been cited as and when needed throughout the monograph. Between “The Archeology of Knowledge” and “Discipline and Punish” Foucault did change – a reading of Nietzsche's “Genealogy of Morals” shifted his model of history – from a layered view to directionless branches. This turned out to be boon for new studies that followed, and it is also true about this current monograph.

<sup>2</sup> ARJUN APPADURAI, *MODERNITY AT LARGE: CULTURAL DIMENSIONS OF GLOBALIZATION* (1996).

<sup>3</sup> Ashis Nandy, *The Intimate Enemy: Loss of Recovery of Self Under Colonialism*, in *EXILED AT HOME V* (ASHIS NANDY ED., 2002).

<sup>4</sup> Steney Shami, *Prehistories of Globalisation: Circassian Identity in motion*, *GLOBALISATION*, 220-21 (ARJUN APPADURAI ED., 2001).

<sup>5</sup> Nandy, *supra* note 3, at 47-48.