



# One World Periphery Reads the Other: Knowing the "Oriental" in the Americas and the Iberian Peninsula

*Ignacio Lopez-Calvo*

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While Said focused on the perceptions and stereotypes of the Near East 'Oriental' in England, France and the United States, most of these essays study the decentering interplay between 'peripheral' areas of the Third World, 'semiperipheral' areas (Spain and Portugal since the second part of the seventeenth century), and marginalized social groups of the globe (Chicanos, African Americans, and Filipino Americans). They explore, for example, how China and the Far East in general are imagined and represented in Latin America and the Caribbean, or how ethnic minorities in the United States, such as Chicanos and African Americans, incorporate Filipino characters in their novels or creolize their music with Chinese influences. As the title of this book suggests, sometimes these 'peripheral' areas and social groups talk back to the metropolitan centers of the former empires or look for their mediation, while others they avoid the interference of the First World or of hegemonic social groups altogether in order to address other 'peripheral' people directly, thus creating rich 'South-South' cross-cultural flows and exchanges. The main difference between the imperialistic orientalism studied by Said and this other type of global cultural interaction is that while, in their engagement with the 'Orient', they may be reproducing certain imperialistic fantasies and mental structures, typically there is not an ethnocentric process of self-idealization or an attempt to demonstrate cultural, ontological, or racial superiority in 'South-South' intellectual and cultural exchanges. This way to de-center or to 'provincialize' Europe - pace Dipesh Chakrabarty - disrupts the traditional center-periphery dichotomy, bringing about multiple and interchangeable centers and peripheries, whose cultures interact with one another without the mediation of the European and North American metropolitan centers.

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