THE CRITICISM OF CULTURE AND THE CULTURE OF CRITICISM
AT THE INTERSECTION OF POSTCOLONIALISM AND GLOBALIZATION THEORY

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Why have culture in general and literature in particular emerged as key terms in critical theory today? Are we witnessing a dissolution of these categories similar to the earlier dissolution of the category of history, or are we witnessing an entirely novel consolidation of these categories? Has materialism essentially changed the semiotic such that culture is now simply another commodity available for consumption on the world market, or has the semiotic radically subsumed the social such that cultural representation has become one with material reality itself? Has the relationship between the cultural and the economic altered in ways yet untheorized? Finally, what exactly does the culturalist turn in critical theory mean for the practice of postcolonial cultural/literary studies? And precisely what does it portend for the ongoing politics of decolonization? I shall attempt to engage these questions by focusing on two dominant theoretical discourses that regulate contemporary knowledge production in the humanities and social sciences: postcolonialism and globalization. While the “culturalist turn” in contemporary criticism has infected many disciplines, these two theoretical fields have been most influential in asserting the primacy or the constitutive role of the cultural in history, economics, and politics. Yet there has so far been relatively little explicit or systematic scrutiny of the links between postcolonialism and globalization theory.

The links are at once considerable and complicated. Despite differences in disciplinary origin (globalization theory in the social sciences, particularly sociology, and postcolonial theory in the humanities, particularly literary criticism), both discourses emerge at the intersection of imperialism, capitalism, and modernity. Both are concerned with the effects of unequal power relations between different geopolitical locations on the globe: postcolonial theory focuses primarily on a (Eurocentric) colonial past and studies how subaltern practices and productions in the non-Western peripheries respond to Western domination, while globalization theory concentrates mainly on

1. These questions have been variously articulated in recent years by Ahmad, Eagleton, Gikandi, Brennan, Cheah, and Lloyd and Lowe.
2. Ahmad’s In Theory was among the first to link postcolonialism to global changes. More recently, an entire special issue of the South Atlantic Quarterly (edited by Susie O’Brien and Imre Szeman) has been devoted to “Anglophone Literatures and Global Culture.” Of particular relevance in this issue is Simon Gikandi’s essay on “Globalization and the Claims of Postcoloniality.”
an (Americocentric) post/neocolonial present and examines how contemporary Western practices and productions affect the rest of the world. Furthermore, both theoretical paradigms have sought to question the universality attributed to Western modernity in metropolitan developmental theory by drawing attention to premodern, nonmodern, or alternatively modern formations in the margins. This attempt to dislocate Western modernity (from the theoretical center) has typically taken the form of dismantling those categories deemed to be central to the narrative of Western modernity—categories such as “nation,” “nation-state,” “culture” and so on. Consequently, both postcolonial and globalization studies have frequently focused on various forms of economic, political, social, and cultural flows that exceed the boundaries of the nation-state and operate in a deterritorialized or transnational fashion. Through these accounts, postcolonial theory has emphasized the cultural basis of history (the cultural constructedness of history as well as the archival value of cultural productions) while globalization theory, in turn, has highlighted the cultural basis of the economic (the economic value of cultural productions as well as the cultural production of economic value).

But “besides their shared cultural grammar,” the relationship between globalization and postcolonialism “is not very clear,” notes Simon Gikandi in “Globalization and the Claims of Postcoloniality,” a provocative essay that represents one of few attempts to explicitly articulate the relationship between the two discourses [628]. It is indeed unclear whether contemporary globalization theory has been made possible by the postcolonial challenge to older Eurocentric forms of globalization premised on the centrality of the nation and narrated in terms of modernization or whether postcoloniality itself is a consequence of a globalization premised on the marginalization of the nation, especially in the domain of the cultural and the imaginary. It is unclear whether the postcolonial and the global are one and the same, whether the postcolonial precedes and provides the foundations for global or transnational cultural studies [Eng and Stratton], or whether globalization created the historical and material conditions that both enabled the production of postcolonial theory and eroded its political purchase through incorporation into the Western academy [Ahmad]. What is clear, however, as Gikandi recognizes, is that the cultural and the literary have risen to new levels of prominence in both theoretical fields.

The culturalist turn in global studies is traced, in Gikandi’s account, to postmodernist and postcolonial discourses, both of which are linked in turn to the dissolution of the nation and hence of the notion, so central to narratives of modernity, that cultures are naturally national. Behind the unprecedented valorization of the cultural in general and the literary in particular, and behind the confident proclamation of a world literature in English as the supreme embodiment of postnational global culture, Gikandi detects the antipolitical universalism of F. R. Leavis, whose vision of an English literary culture that transcended politics and political borders became, through a “forgetting” of its deeply nationalistic roots, the template for postcolonial English studies in various colonial locations. In Gikandi’s view, postcolonial intellectuals emerging from these locations embody Leavis’s ideal literary community as they homogenize their diverse third

3. Although nineteenth-century European historicism from Herder through Hegel and on to Spengler had already recognized the primacy of culture for history and identity, I believe there is a crucial difference between that and what postcolonialism tries to do: while nineteenth-century Europe self-consciously harnessed culture to history in the interests of constructing national/ethnic identity, postcolonialism strategically harnesses culture to history in the interests of deconstructing national/ethnic identity and exposing the workings of power/domination. Thus, if there are certain continuities between the two discourses, there are important disjunctures as well. For a detailed discussion, see Robert Young’s White Mythologies.
world origins through the common currency of British or American academic credentials.

Although I am broadly sympathetic to Gikandi’s concerns, the focus of my discussion is somewhat different. My aim is to put some theoretical pressure on the construction of culture/literature in the discourses of postcolonialism and globalization and to examine their disciplinary effects on postcolonial cultural/literary studies. In particular, I shall be concerned with culture as the ultimate global reality and the ultimate representation of that reality; with culture as the privileged locus of (global) heterogeneity, agency, and resistance. My focus therefore will be on the tension—and on the ideological management of the tension—between the cultural and the economic, between the semiotic and the material, between representation and reality. My argument, at the most fundamental level, may be formulated as follows: while the culturalist turn in critical theory undoubtedly opened up alternative conceptual frameworks for critiquing imperialism and Eurocentrism, the theoretical category of culture appears to have become far too overblown and overdetermined to be politically effective in the age of neoliberal globalization; indeed corporate globalization is thriving precisely by emptying out the subversive potential in culture and by incorporating various oppositional or alternative forms of cultural expression across the globe. It may therefore be necessary to radically refashion and rethink the concept of culture, or, at the very least, to repoliticize the term in ways that enable us to go beyond an easy cultural politics toward a more revolutionary politics of culture.

**Culture in Postcolonial Theory**

It may be useful to grasp the place of culture in postcolonial theory in terms of the tension—at times productive, at times debilitating—between poststructuralist discourse theory and postmodernist epistemology on the one hand and Marxist or materialist modes of analysis on the other. While postcolonial theory largely operates within the historical legacy of Marxist critique, on which it continues to draw, it has simultaneously translated and transformed classical, orthodox, European Marxism either by felicitously combining or by strategically displacing a critique of objective material conditions with detailed analyses of their subjective effects. The subjective and the interior, now shown to be more subversive than the material and more resistant than the external, were thus firmly drawn into the political. At the same time, the range of political constituency was extended beyond traditional class categories (proletariat, peasantry) to include women, low castes, and other indigenous minority groups (subalterns), and psychological, semiotic, and ideological analyses were selectively assimilated within the broad parameters of a Marxist critique. As a result, postcolonial theory played a pioneering role in the growing culturalism of contemporary political, social, and historical analysis. What follows is a brief sketch of the role of culture in the scholarship of Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha—arguably the three most influential theorists of postcolonialism.

Said’s *Orientalism* drew, somewhat paradoxically and equivocally, on both Foucauldian discourse theory and Marxist cultural materialist thinking (Gramsci, Raymond Williams) to establish a certain significance and autonomy for the domain of discourse and culture. In doing so, however, Said risked representing the realm of discourse as autonomous of historical contexts and detached from material realities. This dilemma causes Said to oscillate between deconstructing Western discourses or cultural representations of the Orient and insisting on the economic and political realities underpinning colonialism, suggesting that although culture plays an important role, in the end
it is a struggle for land and territory then and surplus profit now. Even in *Culture and Imperialism*, Said equivocates, faulting those who do not pay sufficient attention to the discursive/textualist constructions of the colonial archive and objecting to the failure of Marx and Raymond Williams to attend to issues of imperialism.

Furthermore, while Said emphasizes the necessity for a global view of present cultural relations, he clearly rejects the systemic, structural, or totalizing models of globalization to which Marxists like Aijaz Ahmad lay claim. What Said proposes instead are traveling theory and contrapuntal meaning premised on the process of heterogenization, relativization, indigenization, or hybridization that destabilizes hegemonic metropolitan theory as it travels away from its origins to non-Western locations. Western products, ideological or material, can and have indeed be effectively subverted and successfully used as tools of resistance; yet to the extent that such gestures remain caught up, in a reactive mode, with the hegemonic metropolitan product, they seem unable to formulate their own independent teleologies. What Said finally offers in the face of global conflicts is the value of a common culture stewarded by migrants. It is clear that Said’s new postcolonial humanism, notwithstanding its Arnoldian overtones, is not to be confused with its historical Western counterpart; yet it is not clear how the appeal to a quasi-humanistic cultural sphere of shared texts can negotiate real and material conflicts of interest and produce a genuinely radical common culture that does not become complicitous with the status quo.

Spivak’s scholarship too deploys both Marxism and discourse theory, although the tension between the two is often quite productive in her work. One of her best-known essays, “Can the Subaltern Speak?,” attempts to bring the two methodologies together, seeing the processes of subject constitution and material exploitation as complementary components of the vast “two-headed engine of European imperialism,” which respectively require discourse theory and materialist forms of Marxist analysis to unpack them [76]. She also contrives to bring about a convergence between these two forms of analysis and deconstruction by stressing parallels between their respective critiques. Nonetheless Spivak is caught between the logic of discourse theory, which insists that the real is constructed and not just mediated by sign systems [“A Literary Representation” 242], and the logic of materialism, which insists that the real (the world economy built on the international division of labor, for instance) has an existence independent of its mediations and can be understood only through a fairly orthodox Marxist economic theory (she is generally hostile toward culturalist Marxism). Western antihumanists such as Foucault are consequently reproved for their ignorance of the real history of colonialism and the objective determinations of the current global order—the material “base” which is responsible “in the last instance” for shaping subject constitution through “superstructural” sign systems. Foucault (like Deleuze) is also faulted for privileging micrological structures of resistance, determined by local conflicts and operating through voluntaristic associations, at the expense of macrological and “objective” determinations like class interest, global capitalism, and nation-state alliances [“Can the Subaltern Speak?” 92–93]. Critiquing Lyotard’s vision of a postmodernist “global village,” Spivak pointedly asks, “in what interests, to regulate what sort of relationships, is the globe invoked?” [“Cultural Talks in the Hot Peace” 329]. Her answer—“Globality is invoked in the interest of the financialization of the globe, or globalization”—rests squarely on a consideration of the economic and material realities (the role of the World Bank, NGOs, and so forth) determining the lives of subaltern subjects [330]. Spivak therefore forcefully declares all talk of globality or postnationalism as a “representa-

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tion—both as *Darstellung* or theater and as *Vertretung* or delegation as functionary—of the financialization of the globe” [“Cultural Talks in the Hot Peace” 330].

But while Spivak pays meticulous attention to the material realities and structures of the international division of labor in many instances, she appears to discount material forces in the etiology of social development in some other contexts. These are frequently presented in her work as being instigated at a discursive level, while resistance is implicitly seen as provoking changes in the function of the sign system [“Subaltern Studies” 197]. Spivak herself disclaims the criticism that she is trying to reduce hard reality to nothing but signs and argues quite correctly that deconstruction of the symbolic order can in fact support the politics of a grand narrative such as third-world liberation [“Strategy, Identity, Writing” 47]. The real question, though, is not whether a deconstruction of the symbolic order is necessary (for it undoubtedly is) but whether it is sufficient. Spivak’s solution, offered in a characteristically deconstructive formulation, is that we keep “the economic visible under erasure” [Critique of Postcolonial Reason 315]. But what exactly does keeping “the economic visible under erasure” mean in actual practice? Instead of disturbing the economic into visibility (as Spivak herself so scrupulously strives to do), can erasure become simply that, a banal invisibility that pushes the material and the economic ever more firmly into the realm of what Spivak eloquently terms “sanctioned ignorance”? Besides, if it is discursive entanglement that determines what we put under erasure, isn’t the category of the cultural at least as entangled as the economic? Shouldn’t culture, then, be put under erasure as well?

Of these three major theorists of postcolonialism, Homi Bhabha has perhaps been the most emphatic in conceiving the domain of the semiotic as the prime site of postcolonial resistance. Bhabha’s emphasis on the semiotic must be understood as an attempt to undo the traditionally subordinate relation of discourse to material forms of political action; if he can be accused of textualizing politics, he must also be credited for consistently politicizing textuality and cultural practice. Following certain strands of feminism and drawing on psychoanalytic concepts, Bhabha stresses the links between the psychic or personal domain and the political rather than assuming conventionally that the political sphere is constituted in and confined to the public domain. In this respect, Bhabha’s work is interestingly anticipated by Ashis Nandy, possibly the first postcolonial theorist who explicitly drew on psychoanalysis to argue that colonialism was first and foremost a domination of the mind or consciousness and as such could be resisted more effectively through psychological and cultural warfare than through conventional militarism [Young, Postcolonialism 339–43]. For Nandy as for Bhabha, resistance is not necessarily an oppositional act of political intention. History therefore takes a backseat to ontology and psychology.

Since Bhabha believes “it is the realm of representation and the process of signification that constitute the space of the political,” he generally refigures the political, economic, and material in terms of discursive transactions [“The Postcolonial and the Postmodern” 190]. This pattern is especially notable in “The Postcolonial and the Postmodern,” especially in the way Bhabha uses Mikhail Bakhtin. Bhabha’s theorizations of the contingent conditions of agency and subjectivity clearly draw on Bakhtinian notions of heteroglossia and hybridity. He specifically credits Bakhtin with revealing the complex, multiplanar structure of the speech genre that exists in a kind of kinetic

5. Despite such intriguing similarities between their approaches, however, Nandy and Bhabha occupy vastly different political positions: “Nandy in many respects remains quite close to Gandhi in the guise of the champion of indigeneity. Bhabha’s politics are, it must be stressed, diametrically opposed to anything that might remotely be called Gandhian, being much more obviously located in relation to Nehru’s cosmopolitan anti-colonial socialism” [Young, Postcolonialism 348].
tension in between two forces of contingency. Indeed, for Bhabha, Bakhtin’s ability to see the spatial boundaries of the object of utterance as contiguous in the assimilation of the other’s speech helpfully highlights the moment of indeterminacy or contingency in the act of addressivity that gives rise within the chain of speech communion to unmediated responsive reactions and dialogic reverberations [188].6 But at the same time, Bhabha strongly criticizes Bakhtin for being too tied to the empirical or material:

Although Bakhtin acknowledges this double movement in the chain of the utterance, there is a sense in which he disavows its effectivity at the point of the enunciation of discursive agency. He displaces this conceptual problem that concerns the performativity of the speech-act—its enunciative modalities of time and space—to an empiricist acknowledgment of the “area of human activity and everyday life to which the given utterance is related.” It is not that the social context does not localize the utterance; it is simply that the process of specification and individuation still needs to be elaborated within Bakhtin’s theory, as the modality through which the speech genre comes to recognize the specific as a signifying limit, a discursive boundary. [188]

This passage points to an important difference between Bakhtin and Bhabha: for Bakhtin language and culture are never wholly transparent because of the range of active collaborators they involve, whereas for Bhabha, language and culture are not transparent because they are inherently enigmatic and irretrievably slippery phenomena. Thus, Bhabha’s “intransitive” resistance is an effect of the vicissitudes to which all language is intrinsically liable, especially through the processes of “repetition” and “translation.” Such a position articulates more with poststructuralist discourse theory (Foucault’s concept of “material repeatability,” Derrida’s notions of “iterability” and “differance,” and Lacan’s theorization of subject constitution) than with the Marxist/materialist linguistic theory of Bakhtin.

Many scholars see the culturalist tendency in postcolonial theory as entirely justified, given the nineteenth-century European emphasis on the primacy of culture and the historically critical role played by culture in various anticolonial revolutions in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. They also believe it is a necessary corrective to the comparative economism of earlier postcolonial thought operating under the constraints of Marxism. Thus, for instance, Ali Mazrui argues that cultural politics has always been central to the practice of liberation, and radical activists still have much to learn from its demonstrated political effectivity in developing broad-based mass movements. Robert Young, who finds Marxism complicit with Western humanism, believes that postcolonial critique incorporates the legacy of the syncretic traditions of various non-Western Marxisms that developed in the course of anticolonial struggles, and subsequently in the development of further forms of emancipation of gender, ethnicity, and class that are necessary for liberation from bourgeois nationalism [Postcolonialism 10]. Others, especially those on the left, see culturalism as a move away from more direct kinds of political engagement. Benita Parry, Aijaz Ahmad, and others have, of course, severely criticized postcolonial theory for an “exorbitation of discourse” as the site of opposition and an inflation of the critic’s role at the expense of armed resistance or conventional forms of political organization. Ahmad sees postcolonial culturalism as a typical symptom of contemporary capitalist culture rather than an analysis that provides a critical perspective on its underlying dynamics. From this perspective, postcolonialism at best describes

6. Here Bhabha is drawing on Bakhtin’s Speech, Genres, and Other Late Essays, especially 90–95.
the effects of contemporary social and economic conditions, but does little either to unearth their causes or to change their basis. Robert Young has attempted to defend postcolonialism in general and Bhabha in particular against these charges by arguing that a focus on the discursive construction of colonialism does not seek to replace or exclude other forms of analysis, whether they be historical, geographical, economic, military, or political. Bart Moore-Gilbert finds this defense unconvincing: “The point is, however, that while of all these other contexts are, albeit marginally and fitfully, present in Bhabha’s account, the material contexts and negotiations of (neo-)colonial power are consistently presented in terms of, or overridden by, an abstract economy of textual transactions” [139]. Postcolonial theory has undeniably operated with a disruptive force, contesting the legacies of imperialism and critiquing the illogic of Eurocentrism. It has also sought to revise and rescript classical Marxism by emphasizing the constitutive role of the cultural, the subjective, the private, and the interior in politics and history. While this has worked quite effectively for analyzing the colonial situation, it is not always as effective when applied to the postcolonial situation, where the identity and role of power and resistance are far less clear. Should resistance be affirmed simply because it makes hegemony forever incomplete, or should resistance become a strategic move in a struggle to overthrow power? To what extent does the celebration of resistance to hegemonic practices through analyses of literary forms of psychological subversion, consumerist acts of transgression, and the like constitute compelling evidence that new means of formation of counterhegemonic alliances are actually being developed? These questions become even more pressing in postcolonial discourses of globalization.

Culture in Globalization Theory

Globalization, as a philosophy, has been propelled to prominence not only by fast-changing global realities but also by its purported theoretical reach. “The triumphalism of globality,” Radhakrishnan believes, “has to do with the fact that it seems to emanate from reality itself even as it speaks persuasively for that reality” [315]. The most seductive allure of globalization theory, for many social analysts, is undoubtedly its seeming potential to account for a diverse array of changes around the globe. But for all its attention to diversity, hybridity, and multiplicity, globalization is a brazenly positivistic (rather than deconstructive or hermeneutical) narrative with utopian desires and universalistic ambitions that seeks to reconcile the local and the global by simultaneously focusing on both the heterogeneous and the homogeneous, the particular and the universal. Thus Roland Robertson, one of the most powerful theorists of globalization, formulated the dynamic of globalization as “the twofold process of the particularization of the universal and the universalization of the particular” [177–78]. The terms of globalization theory — universal and particular, global and local, homogeneity and heterogeneity — derive from a decidedly postcolonial grammar of hybridity and difference, especially the Homi Bhabha brand. As Simon Gikandi observes, “what makes current theories of globalization different from earlier ones, let’s say those associated with modernization in the 1950s and 1960s, is their strategic deployment of postcolonial theory” [628].

In addition to the terminology of hybridity, difference, and cosmopolitanism, globalization theory has borrowed from postcolonialism an understanding of the cultural/literary as a privileged, constitutive sphere in which the politics of power/knowledge,
resistance, change, and agency are actively enacted rather than passively encoded or reflected. John Tomlinson thus asserts that “Globalization lies at the heart of modern culture; cultural practices lie at the heart of globalization” [1]. Drawing on postcolonial conceptions of culture and postmodernist epistemologies of fragmentation and multiplicity, globalization theorists argue that, as a social and conceptual category, culture is now fully deterritorialized and severed from the nation-state and, as such, constitutes a common global property over which no particular nation or group can claim exclusive rights [Featherstone 2]. They typically present mass-mediated forms of culture such as music, television, film, advertisements, fast foods, and even novels—cultural forms that are circulated, adopted, revised, or read in multiple locations—as evidence and examples of globalization. While this focus on mass-mediated forms of symbolic exchanges represents the intersection of globalization theory with the field of cultural studies in general [Jay 37], the use of literary texts, especially novels written or translated into English and designated as “postcolonial,” attest to a specifically postcolonial influence on globalization theory [Gikandi 632].

Taking the notion of cultural autonomy to its logical extreme, Fredric Jameson, one of the foremost theorists of globalization, has claimed that the semi-autonomy (Herbert Marcuse) and therefore, necessarily, the relative autonomy (Louis Althusser) of the cultural has “been destroyed by the logic of late capitalism” so that “everything in our social life . . . can be said to have become ‘cultural’ in some original and as yet untheorized sense” [“Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism” 48]. Has the social disappeared so completely into the cultural that reality and representation have finally become one in globalization? And has this process been as uniform or even in the peripheries as in the center? Spivak raises precisely such questions when she contends that “it is perhaps because there is a semi- or relative autonomy to the discursivity of cultural explanations that it can recode the abstract in general; and the transnational dominant can write ‘everything in our social life,’ and theirs, as ‘cultural’” [Critique of Postcolonial Reason 315]. Spivak’s deconstruction of the homogenizing Eurocentrism in Jameson’s theorization of postmodern globality reflects postcolonialism’s suspicion of any positivistic, totalizing, teleological epistemology.

The drift of the social sciences from a politico-economic orientation toward a more culturalist position can be measured by the challenges posed to Wallersteinian world-system theory, which is premised on a traditional Marxist insistence on the economic base and on capitalism, by cultural globalists like Roland Robertson and the theory’s own subsequent gradual turn toward culture, although Robertson contends the category remained unproductively anchored to Marxist conceptions of ideology [66–67; Gunn 20]. In a related argument, Vincent Tucker has argued that the earlier failures of dependency theory were partly due to its excessive attention to economic and political forms of domination and its failure to address adequately “the cultural dimension of domination.” This was a crucial omission as “cultural analysis is central to any understanding of power and to any strategy of resistance or dependency reversal” [12]. He suggests that the social sciences should learn from the more critical and culturalist positions of postcolonial theory, whose multiple logics offer alternatives to the Enlightenment rationality on which the concept of development is based. Even Jameson, who distinguishes his definition of globalization from Robertson’s by emphasizing the tension and antagonism between the universal and the particular, nevertheless makes it clear that these relationships are “necessarily symbolic ones, which express themselves in a range of

8. For recent critiques of postcolonial conceptions of hybridity, difference, and cosmopolitanism, see Brennan; Cheah and Robbins; Krishnaswamy, “Globalization and Its Postcolonial (Dis)contents.”
collective Imaginaries,” although he hastens to add that “this does not of course mean that they are somehow merely cultural, let alone unreal; for such symbolic transmission requires the preexistence of economic and communicational channels and preestablished circuits” [Cultures of Globalization xii].

The shift from an economic to a cultural bias in globalization theory, Giles Gunn believes, “entails a recognition of the reciprocal relations between the economic and the cultural spheres, a recognition that cultures are exchanged along with commodities” [36]. But recognition of such reciprocity rarely seems more than skin deep, as culture soon becomes privileged in ways that, at best, barely manage to do what Spivak wants, “keep the economic visible under erasure.” Arguments are too quickly refigured in cultural terms as a quarrel between those who see globalization as yielding the pleasures of cultural hybridity for the swarming multitudes and those who see globalization as a form of cultural imperialism over the wretched of the earth. In this way both sides often end up making exaggerated claims that, ironically, appear indistinguishable from the crass triumphalism of the (American) Right (Fukuyama, Huntington, Friedman, et al.).

Perhaps the most swashbuckling endorsement of culturalism in globalization theory can be found in the work of Malcolm Waters, who rejects the economism of Anthony Giddens but shares his belief in the decline of Western dominance. Waters writes:

> material exchanges localize, political exchanges internationalize; and symbolic exchanges globalize. It follows that the globalization of human society is contingent on the extent to which cultural relations are effective relative to economic and political arrangements. We can expect the economy and the polity to be globalized to the extent that they are culturalized, that is to the extent that the exchanges that take place within them are accomplished symbolically. We would also expect that the degree of globalization is greater in the cultural arena than either of the other two. [9–10; emphasis in original]

Even if, or perhaps because, we are persuaded by Waters’s rather cavalier generalizations about the localizing and globalizing properties of various social spheres, we may need to attend as much to the differential effects of material and political exchanges as to symbolic ones. We may also want to ask ourselves what interests global cultural flows serve and what sorts of relationships they regulate, since the regulation of these relationships is the primary role of culture.

The focus on the cultural frequently pushes globalization theory toward an optimistic position that merges into a postmodern celebration of difference and differentiation. Beyond the celebration of cultural difference is a celebration of the emergence of a whole immense range of groups—races, genders, ethnicities—into the speech of the public sphere, a sense of the falling away of those structures that had condemned whole segments of population to silence and subalternity. The Mexican theorist Néstor García Canclini has powerfully expressed such a celebratory view of culture as hybridization, where globalization encourages the proliferation of new forms of cultural production. García Canclini’s work gives ample ammunition to utopian visions of an immense global urban intercultural festival with neither a center nor a dominant cultural mode. In comparison, Stuart Hall’s definition of globalization as “a hegemonizing process, in the proper Gramscian sense,” seems more muted. But in the final analysis, he too emphasizes globalization’s tendencies to heterogenize rather than to homogenize. Although “structured in dominance,” globalization, Hall believes, “cannot control or saturate ev-

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9. Unlike Jameson, who sees the postmodern as the dominant in which residual and emergent forms make their way.
everything within its orbit. Indeed, it produces as one of its unintended effects subaltern formations and emergent tendencies which it cannot control but must try to ‘hegemonize’ or harness to its wider purposes. It is a system for con-forming difference, rather than a convenient synonym for the obliteration of difference” [215]. As such, globalization unleashes a “subaltern proliferation of difference” which (like Derrida’s differance) operates best in “what Homi Bhabha calls the borderline time of minorities” [216]. In this model, Hall, echoing García Canclini, believes that the “classic Enlightenment binary between Traditionalism and Modernity is displaced by a disseminated set of ‘vernacular modernities’” that enable non-Western societies to “enter modernity,” acquire the fruits of its technologies, and yet do so to some extent on their terms” [215–16].

The notion of “vernacular modernities” lies at the heart of Arjun Appadurai’s theorizations of globalization, which he conceives mainly as a deterritorialization of cultural production linked to the weakening of the nation-state. Drawing on James Clifford’s notion of “traveling cultures,” and building on Clifford’s contrast between literal and virtual travel, Appadurai approaches globalization as a dual function of increased migration and the rise of new electronic media. He argues that “electronic mediation and mass migration mark the world of the present not as technically new forces but as ones that seem to impel the work of the imagination. . . . This mobile and unforeseeable relationship between mass mediated and migratory audiences defines the core of the link between globalization and the modern. . . . [T]he work of the imagination, viewed in this context, is neither purely emancipatory nor entirely disciplined but is a space of contestation in which individuals and groups seek to annex the global into their own practices of the modern” [4]. For Appadurai, globalization’s profound potential to weaken the nation-state’s basis in primordial myths of ethnicity that articulate and naturalize boundaries of difference is positive, even empowering, because it enables “culturalism,” or the instrumental construction of transnational group identities [15]. This view is similar to Homi Bhabha’s belief that globalization of social spaces creates “unsatisfaction” that nevertheless enables “a global or transnational imaginary and its ‘cosmopolitan subjectivities’” [204]. Like Bhabha, Appadurai too rejects the idea that globalization is synonymous with homogenization or Westernization, since “different societies appropriate the materials of modernity differently” [17]. Arguing that “T-shirts, billboards, and graffiti as well as rap music, street dancing, and slum housing all show that images of the media are quickly moved into local repertoires of irony, anger, humor, and resistance,” Appadurai contends that “there is growing evidence that the consumption of the mass media throughout the world often provokes resistance, irony, selectivity, and in general, agency” [7].

Such a celebratory view of consumption as active and agential represents a critical break with those who view consumption in more passive and gloomy terms as the global spread of a hegemonic Western (American) consumer capitalist monoculture (especially Marxist media critics like Herbert Schiller). John Tomlinson argues that neo-Marxist arguments about Western cultural imperialism often take the simple presence of multinational (American) goods as evidence of imperialism, without taking into account the ways in which consumers consume these goods. Such a view, Tomlinson contends, “ignores the hermeneutic appropriation which is an essential part of the circulation of symbolic forms” [171]. For theorists like Tomlinson, Appadurai, and Bhabha, culture simply does not transfer in this unilinear way because movement between cultural/geographical areas always involves interpretation, translation, mutation, and adaptation—processes designated by terms such as “indigenization” and “vernacularization”—as the receiving culture brings its own cultural resources to bear, in dialectical fashion, upon cultural imports.
Supporting the view that globalization cannot be reduced to Americanization, Paul Jay argues that “A Big Mac in Venice or Tokyo is pretty much a Big Mac, but American soul music of the 1960s assimilated and transformed by musicians in Soweto or the Caribbean and then sent back to the United States, where it in turn influences the productions of new musical idioms, participates in a much more complicated and less hierarchical process [39–40]. Let us, for the moment, put aside Jay’s problematic assumption (possibly derived from Waters) that material goods are somehow less susceptible to recoding and rescripting than cultural products (I do not believe, for instance, that Raybans in California are “pretty much Raybans” in Chennai in terms of the international division of labor, cost-income ratio, or sociosemiotic significance; and if they are, this surely attests to the ubiquitousness of American-style consumer capitalism). Let us instead attend to the question of whether the influence of Western cultural forms on Third World practices can be construed to be somehow equal and similar to the influence of hybrid ethnic cultural productions on Western practices. Jay would have us believe that the simple fact of musical exchange makes Africa or the Caribbean an equal player with the United States. He seems to assume that American music has the same value and currency in the Caribbean as Caribbean music in the United States without reckoning the corporate players and market forces that determine the production, promotion, and consumption of music. Shifting from the musical to the literary, let us consider the role played by the postcolonial English book (say a Salman Rushdie or an Arundhati Roy novel) in the West—the “assimilated and transformed” cultural product par excellence now being “sent back” to the West. First of all, can we valorize Indian writing in English in terms of “vernacularization” without also considering the complex and conflicted relationship between English and other Indian languages or without taking into account the politics of literacy? Furthermore, if Indian writing in English is “subversive vernacularization,” is Western reading of Indian writing in English also “strategic hybridization”? And are we to celebrate both as equally egalitarian [Krishnaswamy, “The Condition of Indian Writing in English”]? 

Undoubtedly there is (and has always been) considerable cultural exchange between the West and the rest; but it does not make for a great big dialogical carnival. The desire of every culture or civilization to complete itself in/through the Other is clearly not played out on an even field, as Radhakrishnan points out:

... in a world structured hierarchically between East and West, developing and developed nations, is the longing of the West for completion from the East somehow considered not as drastic as the longing of the East for completion by the West? Let us say, [to use] fairly stereotypical characterizations just to make a point, the West is looking to the East for spiritual enhancement and enrichment and the East is looking to the West for technological advancement. Which of these two needs for completion would be considered more dire? In a world-historical situation where materialism and technology are valorized more than spirituality and matters “interior,” it is inevitable that oriental dependency would position itself in a weaker position within the global structure. [329]

Clearly, not all postcolonial critics believe globalization empowers the multitudes by creating a decentered world overflowing with insurgent energies. In fact, Radhakrishnan cogently argues that globalization, instead of being opposed to nationalism or leading to the dissolution of the nation-state as so many believe, actually “takes the form of the dismantling of subaltern nationalisms by developed nationalisms” [316]. In a similar vein, the entry for globalization in Key Concepts in Post-colonial Studies [Ashcroft et
al.] firmly asserts that “the key to the link between classical imperialism and contemporary globalization in the twentieth century has been the role of the US,” which is responsible for initiating “those features of social life and social relations that today may be considered to characterize the global: mass production, mass communication and mass consumption” [112–13]. Postcolonial critics have also faulted Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s vision of globalization, which, in a Foucauldian vein, places sovereign power in multiple locations and multiple registers—for minimizing the role of the US and the West in empire [Balakrishnan]. Such responses are characterized by critics as overly simplistic [O’Brien and Szeman 608]. We are told it is just plain naive to think that “hegemony is prepackaged in Los Angeles, shipped out to the global village, and unwrapped in innocent minds [Liebes and Katz xi]. Yet, given the effects of such material forces as the financialization of the globe and the international division of labor, is it not just as naive to believe that “mimicry,” “hybridization,” “indigenization,” and “vernacularization” are always already emancipatory? Affirmations of agency and resistance that fail to take into account the particular material contexts in which specific translations take place, the unequal power relations between particular transacting parties, the class and gender differences that mark global flows of labor, goods, and ideas can only be, at best, laudable leaps of faith.10

In particular, the celebration of consumption as subversive seems extremely problematic, because it basically reduces agency to a reactive mode of manipulating what is after all a fait accompli. Although vastly better than paralyzing cynicism or abject apathy, can subversive or manipulative consumption (like the practices of everyday life or the weapons of the weak) do more than dent the dominant structure? “Can the master’s house be dismantled with the master’s tools?”11 Stuart Hall concedes that

\[ \text{strategies of differance are not able to inaugurate totally different forms of life (they do not work with the notion of a totalizing dialectical “overcoming”). They cannot conserve older, traditional ways of life intact. . . . However, differance does prevent any system from stabilizing itself as fully sutured totality. It arises in the gaps and aporias which constitute potential sites of resistance, intervention and translation. Within these interstices lies the possibility of a disseminated set of vernacular modernities. Culturally, these cannot frontally stem the tide of westernizing techno-modernity. However, they continue to inflect, deflect and “translate” its imperatives from below.} \]

If the Third World can undermine Eurocentrism just by deploying European tools in unintended and unpredictable ways, why should it bother to produce its own weapons (material, symbolic, or epistemological)? After all, if we concede that what non-Western societies want is a modernization outside of colonialism but within the logic of the Enlightenment (Gikandi), isn’t globalization giving them what they want by allowing them to “enter and exit modernity” (Canclini) “to some extent on their own terms” (Hall)? A minimalist politics for a maximalist age?

10. Appadurai, for instance, rarely pays adequate attention to class and gender in globalization [see Krishnaswamy, “The Claims of Globalization Theory: Some Contexts and Contestations” for a detailed critique of Appadurai in general and on Indian cricket in particular]. For other feminist critiques of male-dominated globalization theory as being too abstract, too global, and too universalizing rather than concrete, local, and particularizing, see Kaplan; Jaggar; also Abu-Lughod, Abou-El-Haj, and Wolff in King; these feminists have been faulted for fetishizing the local as a gendered space in need of protection from global penetration [Jay 42].

11. See Chomsky’s response to this question (“Talking ‘Anarchy’”); see also Radhakrishnan.
Can such a politics really liberate us from the remorseless realities of the present world? The rapid assimilation of hitherto autonomous national subsistence (in food, for example, where biotechnology and biopiracy, in the form of patenting life forms, is increasing the stranglehold of Western capital over the Third World) and the forced integration of countries all over the globe into a new international division of labor from which “delinking,” to use Samir Amin’s term, is henceforth impossible present a far more baleful prospect than the joyous vision of heterogeneity and difference. No one has written about this with greater political commitment and polemical vigor than Noam Chomsky. Showing how the First World reserved for itself the right to protectionism even as it “rammed free market doctrine down their [the third world’s] throats,” Chomsky argues that it is forced integration that actually creates the divide between the First and Third Worlds (“Free Trade and the Free Market” 361). Considering the role of the WTO, the IMF, and the World Bank, the three main supranational institutions that regulate world trade, Colin Hines too concludes that globalization forcibly integrates the weaker national economies of the South into a global economy through systematic reduction of protective barriers to the flow of goods and money by international trade rules that operate to maximize profits for transnational corporations and benefit the strong national economies of the North [4–5]. The remorseless restructuring of the world in the interests of capital cannot but seem out of step with a carnivalesque conception of global culture.

In “Notes on Globalization as a Philosophical Issue,” Jameson has suggested that these two visions of globalization may not necessarily be “logically incompatible,” and that they actually seem “dialectically related, at least on the mode of the unresolvable antinomy” [57]. What he wishes us to do is not to “choose between the two very different views of the matter, but rather to intensify their incompatibility and opposition such that we can live this particular contradiction as our own historic form of Hegel’s “unhappy consciousness”” [64]. In this way, the privilege of theory and the prerogative of choice come together fortuitously to provide paradox as a possible locus for transnational dominant consciousness. But the relation between global and local is not so (un)easily resolved. “Americans,” writes Jameson, “always find it shocking when foreigners suggest that human rights, feminist values, and even parliamentary democracy are not necessarily to be seen as universals, but rather merely local American cultural characteristics that have been exported as practices valid for all peoples in the world. That kind of shock is good for us, I want to say” [64]. What this sincere and well intentioned exposé of American ethnocentrism (notice the locus of enunciation shifting between Americans, us, I) does in the final analysis is patent human rights, feminist values, and parliamentary democracy in the name of America. Have there been no other struggles to practice human dignity, to value women’s wisdom, to enable egalitarian living, in other ways in other times in other places, that may allow us to imagine other ways of being Enlightened?

Postcolonial Cultural/Literary Studies in the Age of Globalization

In this final section, I return to the question with which I began: what does the rise of the semiotic to new levels of prominence in the discourse of globalization mean for postcolonial cultural/literary studies, and what does it portend for the politics of decolonization? I shall address this question through two brief examples.

My first example is theoretical and has to do with the way in which the category of “the popular” has been conceived in Indian postcolonial/subaltern scholarship, which, dispersed into cultural studies and critiques of colonial discourse, has spawned a whole
range of analyses of the culture of modernity. Recent Indian critiques of modernity fall into three broad categories:

1. Those that reject the culture of Western modernity, which is seen as ruthless and alienating, in favor of multiple forms of precolonial, indigenous traditions, knowledges, and communities; the popular, defined almost exclusively in terms of the precolonial, gets privileged as the site of the always already resistant [Nandy; Chatterjee].

2. Those that question modernity by situating it historically and by relating it structurally to cultural, economic, and sociopolitical relations, including new technologies and forms of communication, as they shape identity; the potential usefulness of these interrogations are, however, limited by a recuperation (often against stated intention) of the popular primarily in terms of mass-mediated forms rather than in terms of materially grounded, politically engaged, regional, class- and caste-based forms of cultural labor [Niranjan et al.].

3. Those that negotiate modernity by repudiating the term “popular” altogether, since it is seen to have undergone a complicated set of shifts under the impact of mass media and migration: what takes the place of the popular are concepts like “public culture” and “the diasporic public sphere.” The notion of “public” is then delineated from its history of civil society in Europe and is seen as constituted by cricket, tourism, food, cinema, and the contestations between the state and the middle classes. Consumption is viewed as a modality of social life, thus separating the spheres of consumption and production; people who cannot enter this world of consumption do not figure much in this analysis [Appadurai; Breckenridge].

Through an epistemological conflation of “popular” with “premodern,” or of “popular” with “mass,” these theoretical positions not only end up simplifying the relations between dominant, residual, and emergent cultural forms; they end up erasing useful and important differences between alternative emergent and oppositional emergent forms as well. As a result, politically engaged forms of popular culture (regional, class-, gender- and caste-based forms of cultural labor), when they are not altogether unrecognized or ignored, are either sentimentalized and essentialized into folkways that are always already resistant or else recuperated almost exclusively in mass-mediated forms. Important recent documentations of regional and caste-based forms of popular culture in India demonstrate that although these practices are being marginalized by bourgeois forms of art and entertainment, popular practices are neither simply forms on which bourgeois forms are superimposed nor simply intrinsically resistant [Srinivasan; Banerjee; Rege]. Rather they can be at once emancipatory and imprisonment, containing and resisting, and relatively more or less affected by capital. The popular is appropriated by capitalist modernity and appropriates capitalist modernity, albeit unevenly, such that different forms come to be produced as popular for different sections of people at different times for different political ends. Why, then, precisely at a time when consumer capitalism is being forged and the political as well as the religious (the Hindutva nation-state) are being reformulated, is the popular becoming so completely synonymous with mass mediation that even the oppositional cultures of the marginalized can be conceived only in mass-mediated forms?

My second example is a literary representation of consumption. Plotted in minimalist fashion and narrated in a light mischievous tone, Gita Hariharan’s short story, “The Remains of the Feast” (1992), revolves around an aged Brahmin widow who is dying of cancer. Having lost her husband when young, she has lived out the prescribed life of austerity and outlived her only son to live with her bureaucrat grandson, his wife, and their medical-student daughter. At the age of 90, as she is dying of cancer, the Brahmin widow is scandalously overcome by uncontrollable appetites and forbidden desires. She gorges on cakes with eggs from a Christian shop with a Muslim cook, gets intoxi-
cated on Coca-Cola for the thrill it might be alcoholic, enjoys bhel-puri, possibly touched by untouchables, from the fly-infested bazaar, shaves her legs, tweezes her eyebrows, farts musically, and generally flouts all kinds of social injunctions including caste-gender taboos and class proprieties. In this the old woman is indulged and affirmed only by her great-granddaughter (also the fictional narrator), who, despite the disapproval of her middle-class parents, provides the old woman with all the tabooed goodies she desires, the most spectacular being the red silk bridal sari with which she finally drapes the dead body of the widow.

In a fine reading of “The Remains of the Feast” as “an intervention in a long-standing debate in Indian feminism,” Susie Tharu has sought to discern the text’s feminist politics in terms of the widow question in India. She argues persuasively that “the narrative does not present widowhood, and the paraphernalia of ritual and taboo that attends it, as gender oppression. The enemy here is not patriarchy, but a social world that fails to sustain the spirit. The victim is fleshly nature itself, not woman. The fact that both the characters happen to be female, or that they belong to separate historical times, seems incidental to the main thrust of the narrative which asserts the claim of a natural appetite for life—be it male or female—against an order which seeks to deprive or discipline it” [259]. To take the equality of male and female for granted in this manner and to assume that the universal body may be as adequately represented by the female as the male is a “feminist stance,” acknowledges Tharu. But it is a stance she nevertheless finds problematic because

it is also a stance whose impatience towards historical and actually existing Indian feminism is evident in the structure of the plot as much as in the narrative tone. Thus while the suffering and the degradation of the Hindu widow (sati, incarceration, tonsure, prohibition of remarriage, denial of sexuality) were issues that provided the nineteenth-century social reform movements with their mobilizing force and in fact shaped their feminism, in this story all that and indeed widowhood itself becomes unimportant. We encounter the familiar shaven-headed figure, but search as we will for the pain that roused protest, we will not find it since the victim-widow has been replaced by a body whose robust appetite and Rabelaisian humour is a capable substitute for feminist struggle, then and now. Its good sense is one that can resist both the follies of tradition and the enthusiasms of modernity more effectively than a hundred and fifty years of feminist fanaticism has managed to do. [260]

It is not my purpose here to give a full account of Tharu’s dense and detailed discussion of the Brahminical modernism that normatizes the citizen-subject in Hariharan’s story. Instead I will simply elaborate on one of her key insights. “I do not think it is insignificant,” Tharu observes, “that the late-capitalist, fund-bank widow consumes her way to freedom” [261; emphasis in original]. Precisely what material and ideological conditions in 1990s India secure the text’s figuration of consumption as freedom? And in the name of what is freedom or resistance being invoked in the text?

First of all, the embodied individual in Hariharan’s story is markedly different from the ascetic, anticonsumerist widow figure one encounters in early twentieth-century literature produced during the Swadeshi movement and later under the influence of Gandhian nationalism. That strong and self-reliant figure was the quintessential product of a society struggling to forge an alternative to colonial ideologies and Western conceptions of the good society. At the time, the relationship between tradition and modernity was still contentious and gendered. By the mid-twentieth century, however, the Nehruvian generation had pretty much rejected Gandhi’s antimodernist dictum “indus-
trialize and perish” in favor of Visvesveraya’s dictum “industrialize or perish.” It took up the task of shaping a modernity that would select the best from tradition to maintain India’s distinct cultural genius as it moved into a modern secular scientific future. The fit between (masculinist) Brahminism and science was forged during these years as dam building and lab building (under Brahmin engineers and scientists) became metaphors for nation building and character building [Visvanathan].

In Hariharan’s story, the Brahmin family is intimately connected to Indian officialdom and the professions through three generations: the old woman’s son was an administrator, the grandson is an accountant, the great-granddaughter is a medical student. And the family itself is exemplary in its modernity [Tharu 260]. They do not indulge in any serious discrimination based on caste or gender. They do not attempt to force orthodox religious proscriptions on the widow (when the old woman is about to die they call the doctor, not the priest). There appears to have been no opposition to the young woman studying medicine. In fact, there is such a close fit between tradition and modernity, Brahminism and secularism, that a natural continuity rather than opposition is signaled within the framework of the narrative (Tharu 261). The Brahmin widow’s appetites are therefore presented as a metaphor for basic human appetites as such, not as a challenge to tradition or (patriarchal) Brahminism. Caste, class, and gender become residual as the old woman breaks their hold simply by consuming proscribed foods. Consumption, predicated on embodied nature and political moderation, repudiates both the ascetic excesses of ritual Brahminism as well as those of a puritanical, work/production-oriented spirit of national capital. Fit agent for this revolution is the modernizing Brahmin herself. The transition from Brahminism-tradition to secularism-modernity is so smooth there is little reason to presume any substantial conflict there [Tharu 261].

But why precisely at a time when an upper-caste, masculinist, Hindutva-style nationalism is negotiating its fit with global capitalism does consumption appear as an answer? Tharu’s answer is that in Hariharan’s story, we are witnessing a novel moment in the genealogy of the Indian citizen as agent and as humanist individual. It is a moment in which a citizen-subject, lured by the promise of equality held out by a global free-market liberalism, but beleaguered by the challenges to its authority that have arisen from the struggles of dalit-bahujans, feminists, socialists, and a host of others renotates those struggles in order to absorb them into its own body [Tharu 261]. It is, after all, the free market that makes the global (Coca-Cola) and the local (bhel-puri) equally available for the liberalizing politics of consumption. As the story recasts the grievances of women and dalits to present (bodily) consumption as the answer, it renders their historical struggles redundant. The feisty and irrepressible nature embodied in this story, Tharu concludes, is in fact a body meticulously fashioned in response to global consumer capitalism on the one hand and to social movements that threaten its identity and its interests on the other [261–62].

In the context of my present argument, however, the real significance of Tharu’s analysis lies in her refusal to isolate the cultural or privilege the literary and represent them as somehow always liberatory and transgressive. For otherwise it would have been simply impossible to grasp the story’s subtle renotations of agency and resistance. Even from this one instance we can see that struggles over cultural meaning cannot be related to struggles over the conditions of survival without taking into account the complex, contradictory, and contested ways in which culture is being emptied out and integrated into consumer capitalism. Can we then afford to ignore growing inequalities between rich and poor, privileged and subaltern, white and black, men and women, all in the name of “structural explanations” and “totalizing narratives”?

In his magisterial account of postcolonialism, Robert Young argues that there are many positive theoretical arguments to be made for the culturalist turn in postcolonial studies:
the culturalization of academic knowledge marks a shift towards a consideration of the subjective experiences of individuals, and socialized aspirations of groups and communities, that complements the traditional modes of analysis of the political and economic systems of which they form a part. The culturalization of knowledge and politics also involves a recognition of transnational and often gendered communities. This has enabled the beginnings of an international political dialogue between exponents of different systems and perspectives that rarely occurred in previous eras. [Postcolonialism 8]

Culturalist postcolonialism has undoubtedly enabled a deconstruction of the homogenizing Manichean opposition between the West and and its Others; however, in the name of hybridity and difference, it has also risked minimizing the material and epistemological inequalities that continue to structure today’s neoliberal global order. Culturalism has not always been content to “complement” traditional modes of analysis of the political and economic systems; rather it has sought to displace or even subsume the economic and the political with(in) the cultural by claiming a certain theoretical priority and critical prerogative for cultural analysis. If the explanatory value of a theoretical category derives from its ability to rigorously demarcate and distinguish, the indiscriminate and promiscuous invocations of culture in contemporary theoretical discourses of globalization should, I believe, prompt us to take a more critical look at the category itself. We may need to re-vision culture itself as the “intimate enemy” (to dislocate Ashis Nandy’s phrase) and re-cognize it as an integral component of the logic of Enlightenment and modernity. We may need to radically refashion the category of culture before we can reclaim its true subversive potential and produce knowledges that are truly transformative.12

WORKS CITED

12. Here, my views coincide with Szeman.


O’Brien, Susie, and Imre Szeman, eds. Special Issue on “Anglophone Literatures and Global Culture.” *South Atlantic Quarterly* 100.3 (2001).


