

CHAPTER ONE

Theorizing Race, Postcoloniality, and Globalization

In late August 2005, hurricane Katrina, a category-four storm, hit the predominantly African American city of New Orleans, flooding the homes of the city's residents, killing hundreds, and destroying water and power supplies. In the aftermath of the storm, with no emergency relief in sight, poor people wandered the streets in search of food, and over twenty thousand sought refuge in the New Orleans Superdome. Within days of Katrina's landfall, the hurricane had foregrounded the systemic racism at the heart of the country. Eerily recalling post-Reconstruction representations of dangerous and degenerate African Americans threatening the social order—popularly commemorated in works like D. W. Griffiths' *Birth of a Nation*—media reports inundated television and newspapers with coverage of African American looters engaged in a wild orgy of stealing, shooting, and raping. Rapper Kanye West's comments at a benefit concert four days after the tragedy, captured what was glaringly evident to most Americans: "You see a black family, it says, 'They're looting.' You see a white family, it says, 'They're looking for food.'"¹ Nevertheless, unverified (and later discredited) stories about the rampant violence and disorder at the Superdome continued to be churned for days; predictably, gun sales in the nearby whiter city of Baton Rouge skyrocketed, as citizens strove to "protect" themselves from an influx of undesirable African Americans from New Orleans.

An event like Katrina questions the rhetoric of globalization theories with their emphasis on hybridity, fluidity, migration, postnationalism, and transnationalism and seems to demand, instead, the engaged particularity of critical race studies. But if globalization theories, most of which see the local and race as atavisms, fail to provide an analytic for reading Katrina, this does not mean that Katrina's racial politics are limited to the

workings of the nation-state alone. Simultaneous with representations of African American degradation were scores of references to Katrina as similar to the third world; fighting in Iraq and battling in Katrina seemed eerily alike as Katrina was declared a “war zone”;² most ominously, Louisiana Governor Kathleen Blanco pegged New Orleans as enemy territory, a city needing colonial occupation, when she said, “These troops are fresh back from Iraq, well trained, experienced, battle-tested and under my orders to restore order in the streets.”³ In Blanco’s vision, citizens in need became irascible law-and-order problems, just like unruly denizens of a colony. Such hostile representations of New Orleans demonstrate not postnationalism because the nation-state was (and is) alive and well, if only as a disciplinary force rather than for public good; neither do they illustrate simply transnational linkages of corporate power. Rather, they attest to a violent synergy of imperialism and racism as New Orleans, the colony within, is literally subdued by armies controlling the reaches of empire in occupied Iraq, a suggestion decisively made by Spike Lee when he posed before a ravaged New Orleans house tagged “Baghdad” during the shooting of *When the Levees Broke* (2006).⁴ The symbiosis of structural racism and imperialism in the responses to Katrina point, in part, to the object of this book: practically, to link the project of race with that of anti-imperial resistance and, theoretically, to suggest tactical ways in which postcolonial theory and critical race studies can come together.

The chapters in this book demonstrate how race is both the site of particular, located oppression and of postcolonial resistance; understanding race demands specific historical knowledge at the same time as opposition to systemic racism produces powerful forms of local, translocal, and transnational resistance. The theoretical premise underlying the analysis of race is that of particularism, a position in philosophy that contends that almost every moral reason is capable of being reversed by changes in context.⁵ Thus, the larger concepts at play in thinking race—oppression, resistance, Othering, color, rights—need to be constantly rethought, redefined, indeed reformulated, through different contexts. This does not mean that analysis becomes simply descriptive, but rather that, in order precisely to be theoretical, analysis must incorporate a reflection of its own immediate conditions, the singular forces that shape it in a particular context.⁶ I therefore use the terms “local” and “locatedness” in two ways: first, as synonyms for context in relation to race because systemic racism is necessarily tied to the juridical apparatuses of the nation-state that legislate *de jure* and affect *de facto* racism for particular raced groups; racial categories do not travel similarly across or even within nations, and might, as in the case of Hawai’ians and Puerto Ricans, also be affected by the specificities of place;

second, to emphasize that raced resistances, tied to particular national or even regional communities, can often be the sites of progressive and radical resistances within the nation and to alliances beyond. My approach thus differs sharply from those like Paul Gilroy who, despite acknowledging some racial hierarchies, see racial politics as inherently limiting;⁷ it is in solidarity with arguments like those of Nikhil Pal Singh who see a liberatory potential in black nationalism.⁸ I argue that globalization, in its economic, political, and cultural manifestations, is a *different continuation* of an established, raced U.S. imperialism; this raced, imperial culture requires micrological analysis as well as a larger analytics of center and periphery. The book begins with a critique of globalism-inspired forms of analyses as inadequate in dealing with U.S. narratives of race and gender; it then moves to a reading of narratives of globalization as narratives of imperialism; finally it analyzes possibilities for what I call Post-Colonial citizenship, a form of activist citizenship, which, as I will explain later, is grounded in antiracist and local activism in the United States and is vitally connected to transnational anti-imperial struggles. The trajectory of the book is thus from negative hermeneutics to affirmative exegesis, deconstructive critique to constructive possibilities, theory to practice. The book also demonstrates the urgent need for local knowledge dealing with how subalterns (in this case racial minorities) are historically, nationally, and regionally constructed in order to resist the power relations established by the nation-state as well as neocolonial and imperial systems that intersect with the nation-state.

The theoretical impetus of the book—to bring postcolonial theory and critical race studies together—might well appear contradictory, particularly because postcolonial theory in its universalist and globalist guises simply absorbs the specific functioning of racism into a narrative of diaspora and migration. Yet there is no reason for these two forms of oppositional knowledge to be so positioned. Indeed, as the work of subaltern studies scholars reminds us, postcolonial analyses at the local level, for instance, the insight that modernity in Bengal did not, unlike Europe, result in the repudiation of parental authority, can challenge or provincialize the putative universality of (European) modernity.⁹ And critical race studies itself, as evidenced by Howard Winant's *The World Is a Ghetto*, might be witnessing a global turn. Moreover, the disproportionate military recruiting of racial minorities in the service of imperialism, in Iraq and elsewhere, attests to the continuing unholy alliance of imperialism abroad and racism at home.

There is also a political urgency motivating this book. As I will discuss later, much theory in the last fifteen years, ominously paralleling the dictates of neoliberal global capitalism, has reflected the concerns of Western metropolises. In the spirit of contesting knowledge production as an accessory

of Western capitalist hegemony, I suggest that the certainties of globalization theories need to be rigorously critiqued. Particularly since the end of the cold war, globalization, initiated by European and largely U.S. interests, has been taken as an explanatory model for postulating a world culture, and has replaced models of systemic inequality such as first world and third, North and South. Even critics of such global models insist on the obsolescence of national and local perspectives. Not only is such a postulation “Americo-centric” because it ignores the violent conflicts over nationhood worldwide that have marked the last decade, as well as the gross disparities between North and South, but it is also dangerous in its disavowal of racial hierarchies within the nation. In order to argue for the centrality of racism and imperialism, and the importance of resistance to these, I use what I call “resistance postcolonialism,” as well as critical race studies, in reading narratives of U.S. culture. Most importantly, I also demonstrate how located, raced resistances simultaneously invoke and generate transnational forms of opposition and thus create possibilities for an anti-imperial, “Post-Colonial citizenship” in the belly of the beast, as it were.

I use the term “Post-Colonial citizenship” because its very contradictions open up spaces for activism in ways that purely national conceptions of citizenship or postcolonial solidarities do not. Citizenship has been the cornerstone of liberal democracies, which putatively turn subjects into citizens, empowering them through equality to be sources of political authority rather than simply the objects of political power.¹⁰ Although Marx rightly critiqued liberal democracy for protecting capitalist relations of exploitation through citizenship by which people become “imaginary member[s] of an imaginary sovereignty,” and although citizenship can be viewed as an invidious membership category designed to demarcate insiders from outsiders, the ideas of citizenship I am invoking are meant neither to bolster capitalism nor to designate aliens.¹¹ Rather, through citizenship I intend to invoke both the rhetoric of rights and of activism. Liberal political theory follows a rights-based model (liberal democracy as the universal promise of civil, political and social rights) of contract derived from Hobbes and Locke, continuing in the works of T. H. Marshall and John Rawls.¹² The civic republican model of citizenship as political activity, emphasizing participation and obligation, has been the object of scholars like David Scobey who have called for a revitalization of citizenship.¹³ Because race has historically fractured the practice of citizenship in the United States, turning minorities into second-class citizens, I believe it is crucial to hold on to the idea of rights-based citizenship in order to articulate what Iris Young calls “special rights” (differentiated citizenship) necessary to undermine oppression and disadvantage.¹⁴ The civic republican model is useful for racially

oppressed groups but with a difference because the conditions that create a lack of civic participation for them cannot demand universal but rather differentiated obligation.

Although citizenship has historically been based on the nation-state, citizenship theory in recent years has dealt with various forms of citizenship beyond the nation. Different kinds of rights are given to people residing within a territory of which they are not citizens;¹⁵ the EU stands as a repudiation of the link between citizen and nation; debates about transnationalism bring forth the question of universal rights apart from the nation-state;¹⁶ humanism begs the question of cosmopolitan citizenship;¹⁷ and migrations create notions such as diasporic citizenship.¹⁸ The concept of Post-Colonial citizenship participates in the move beyond the nation, but not to the denial of it, and it suggests a specific kind of citizenship beyond the nation. Instead of a cosmopolitan citizenship based on a universal idea of the human as adumbrated by Nussbaum, it shares with Andrew Dobson an emphasis on asymmetries of effects and therefore obligations which he characterizes as definitive of “post-cosmopolitan” citizenship.¹⁹ Post-Colonial citizenship names the asymmetries and uneven structures engendered by imperialism and seeks to articulate alternatives to empire.

In order to retain a politicized sense of differentiated citizenship that can address the intersection of national racial and imperial structures by participating in anti-imperial solidarities seen beyond the nation, I propose the idea of Post-Colonial citizenship. This citizenship speaks to the imaginative possibilities of an activist racial politics at once grounded in the nation and looking beyond it, but a nation the very idea of which is reconfigured through antiracist and anti-imperialist struggles.²⁰ My use of capitalization for both “post” and “colonial” indicates the fact that the post for many subaltern groups can only be imagined because colonialism is a living reality for indigenous populations and that the internal colonialism of minorities in the United States is alive and well. On the other hand, I retain the use of the term “postcolonial” because of its radical potential and emancipatory possibilities as a theoretical and political position. As Robert Young argues, postcolonialism “combines the epistemological cultural innovations of the postcolonial moment with a political critique of the conditions of postcoloniality.”²¹ “It attacks the status quo of hegemonic economic imperialism and the history of colonialism and imperialism, but also signals an activist engagement with positive political positions and new forms of political identity.”²² Postcolonial citizenship thus names the affective solidarities forged between racial minorities in the United States and people who have overthrown political, if not economic and cultural, domination; it also challenges the definitional boundaries of liberal citizenship.

In this chapter, I offer a critique of globalization theories and demonstrate the centrality of imperialism to U.S. culture, and the usefulness, therefore, of a certain kind of postcolonial theory that I call “resistance postcolonialism”; I then suggest how a dialectic between the particularism of critical race studies and the terms of postcolonial theory—decolonization, Orientalism,²³ chronopolitics,²⁴ for instance—can be productive in understanding minority experiences in the United States. Finally, I briefly consider the intersection between theories of globalization and the transnational turn in American studies.

THE PITFALLS OF GLOBALIZATION AS EPISTEMOLOGY

Ever since the mid-1980s, and increasingly since the collapse of the communist bloc in 1990, globalization has been accepted as an explanatory mode for understanding not simply economic, but also political and cultural realities. The broad strokes of the argument are that although transnational trade and capitalist structures have long linked the world together, the increased mobility of the means of production, the emphasis on information technology, as well as the growth of multinational corporations, have brought about a new era in which nation-states no longer control economies and are therefore weak as political agents. (These arguments are made with an almost religious sense of inevitability that belies the new nationalisms of the twenty-first century and its heightened levels of nationalist violence.)²⁵ Furthermore, the qualitative changes in the speed of communications through computer and cable technologies and the rapid movement of images across the globe have created fundamentally new conditions for a democratic, global culture; cultures are neither isolated nor imposed on one another. Most theorists of globalization accept that globalization is a historical turning point that has displaced outdated models of center and periphery, of domination and subjection—in other words, the key terms of anticolonial and antiracist thinking that still remain central to questions of social justice.

While launching the journal *Public Culture* in 1988, for instance, the editors explicitly positioned themselves as critics of outmoded forms of analysis such as neocolonialism or third worldism. Global cultural flows, they argued, “raise the theoretical problem of conceptualizing modernity as a multi-directional, open-ended process, in which the Euro-American experience is significant, but neither singular nor always the exemplary center.”²⁶ These ideas were further developed by Arjun Appadurai in his well-cited 1990 essay, “Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy,” in which he postulated a decentered global cultural economy,

operating through complex disjunctures between economy, culture, and politics; the major features of this economy are deterritorialization and massive immigration to Western metropolises.²⁷ Media, migration, the pleasures of cosmopolitanism and a modernity at large constitute features of this new globalized world, one that, in contrast to the vertebrate structure of the nation-state, is cellular.²⁸

A less sanguine, though in some ways similar view of the globalized world was offered by Manuel Castells in his three volumes, *The Information Age*, published between 1996 and 2000. Although Castells characterizes the contemporary world as an “Athenian democracy” in which the affluent elite have access to tools of information while most of the world, like the masses in Greece, are switched off,²⁹ he, like Appadurai, continues to characterize the information world as decentered. Taking a Foucault-like approach to authority, he argues that power in the information age is “no longer concentrated in institutions (the state), organizations (capitalist firms), or symbolic controllers (corporate media, churches). It is diffused in global networks of wealth, power, information, and images, which circulate and transmute in a system of variable geometry and dematerialized geography. . . . The sites of this power are people’s minds.”³⁰

This emphasis on the decentered, globalized world was continued in Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s highly influential and controversial book, *Empire* (2000), and later in *Multitude* (2004), which focuses on global and expansive networks of resistance. Hardt and Negri argue that we live in a postmodern age of “empire,” which, although it converges around and derives its energy around the United States, is not localizable.³¹ As opposed to the age of imperialism, which was modernist and functioned through ideas of center and margin, inside and outside, empire has no outside.³² Like Appadurai and Castells, the authors of *Empire* focus on the migrations from South to North as the loci for change and characterize empire as preeminently about information.³³ Although Hardt and Negri state that their relationship to empire is analogous to that of Marx to capitalism—that is, a system that must be overthrown, but one that through its very structure breeds change and resistance³⁴—they also emphasize the noncoercive, fluid nature of empire; empire, they argue, is participatory and called into being.³⁵

More recently, Anthony Appiah, focusing on the cultural aspects of globalization, posits “cosmopolitanism” as an enlightened perspective on the contemporary world. Working through problematic and simplistic binaries of authenticity/purity versus the reality of cultural contamination, Appiah declares the idea of cultural imperialism as the outdated province of cultural preservationists. “No army, no threat of sanctions, no political saber rattling,” he argues, “imposes Hollywood on the French.”³⁶

A universality of values, rather than different conceptions of good, guides even the most contentious of issues, including abortion.³⁷ One need hardly point out that such liberal conceptions of universalism suppress socioeconomic oppressions even more than notions of hybrid or radical cosmopolitanisms.³⁸

Of course, the works of these four scholars by no means exhaust cultural analyses of globalization. I use them simply to illustrate some common features of, and problems attendant on, the wholesale acceptance of globalization theories. First, some of the premises of globalization theories are clearly Eurocentric. The prominence given to technologies of information, the cyberculture of virtuality, and the fast movement of hyperreal images assumes a networked or at least techno-linked world in which virtuality predominates. However, the laboring and nonlaboring lives of the majority of the world do not, in fact, revolve around virtuality. Despite the supposed ubiquity of television for instance, its impact in a country like India is severely limited where only 44 percent of rural families, and 56 percent nationwide, have access to electricity.³⁹ Indeed, given the extreme disparities in technologies of cultural mobility, it seems irresponsible to eliminate vocabularies of unevenness.

Second, along with stressing the mobility of culture, proponents of globalization also map the world through the mobility of populations, particularly the movement of people from South to North. Whether conceptualized as Hardt and Negri's multitude against empire, Appadurai's mass migration of workers, or Anthony Appiah's cosmopolitanism as perspective based on the ability to travel,⁴⁰ transiency is central to all these formulations. Of course one cannot deny the movement of labor from South to North, particularly since the major decolonizations of the 1950s and 1960s. However, to focus solely on migrancy to the North as perspective is not only to privilege it as vantage point but also to marginalize the majority of the world's labor that is not migrant. Interestingly, in the most recent comprehensive analysis of the world's workers done by the World Bank, *World Development Report 1995, Workers in an Integrating World*, only 2 percent of people in low and middle income countries like Mexico do not live in the country of their origin. Between two to three million migrants leave developing countries each year, only half of whom go to industrial countries. As the report adds, "Migration among industrial countries has actually declined since 1970 from 2.5 migrants per thousand inhabitants to about 1 per thousand in 1990."⁴¹ The very acceptance of migrancy as a central perspective thus illustrates Harvey's contention about the triumph of the ideology of globalizing neoliberalism.

Third, because globalization theories have stressed the decentered flow of capital and cultural goods, as well as migrancy, they have tended

to dismiss any local movements as reactionary. Thus, Castells sees forms of resistance identities created through local communities as defensive and retrenched. Localists, he argues, affirm the transcendent values of god, nation, family, and community. "Thus, against the informationalization of culture, bodies are informationalized. That is, individuals bear their gods in their heart. They do not reason, they believe."⁴² Castells distinguishes these local forms of resistance from proactive social movements like feminism and environmentalism. Hardt and Negri similarly see local resistances as entirely reactive, given to romanticization and primordialism and ineffective because they obfuscate the real potentialities for liberation within empire that comes only from the global multitude.⁴³ However, the rejection of the local, both as a site of resistance and of knowledge, can only be made if one accepts the logic of globalization as inevitability. As David Harvey soberly writes, "The more the left adopted this discourse as a description of the state of the world (even if it was a state to be criticized and rebelled against), the more it circumscribed its own political possibilities. That so many of us took the concept on board so uncritically in the 1980s and 1990s, allowing it to displace the far more politically charged concepts of imperialism and neocolonialism should give us pause."⁴⁴

But if we accept instead neocolonialism and imperialism as the realities of the moment, reactive strategies and local resistances and ontologies are not suspect. Anti-imperial and anticolonial resistances are necessarily reactive because they originate in opposition to an order that they wish to subvert. But the mode of these resistances is not determined by the logic of colonialism and imperialism because the resistances attempt to create different epistemologies and are geared to a different logic.⁴⁵ Local and familial traditions, as John Blassingame has shown in his research on slave communities in the United States, often become a locus of resistance to a colonial order like slavery.⁴⁶ More recently, as Nikhil Pal Singh suggests, the riots of the 1960s made the geopolitics of black power local and created a valorization of the ghetto as a site of resistance.⁴⁷

On the other hand, it is imperative that concepts like local knowledge not be universalized as liberatory alternatives. Indeed, multinational corporations have long recognized the importance of connecting with small cultural units to market their products. Like the call for localization made by John Farrell, president of Coca-Cola's China division in Hong Kong, to the use of "glocal" as a marketing strategy in *Global Vision: Building New Models for the Corporation of the Future* (1994), local knowledge and local interactions are unquestionably seen as good business sense.⁴⁸ Capitalist globalization thus needs the local in order to proliferate, but it needs a specific kind of local, one that connects immediately with the global market but minimizes the significance of its cultural, social,

and ethical linkages with the subnational, regional, or national. It is imperative, therefore, that the questions “Whose local knowledge?” and “To what ends?” continue to be asked.

Finally, much of globalization theory does not view racial difference as significant in the construction of contemporary subjectivity. Because the marking of Others is supposedly a regime of colonial modernity surpassed in the present, racial antagonisms and conflicts operate within what Hardt and Negri call fluid and amorphous masses instead of being fixed.⁴⁹ Taking the example of contemporary cultural forms such as rap and the renewed cult of Malcolm X among African American youth, Castells argues that ethnicity as community matters less than broader terms of identification, such as religion and class. As Castells puts it, “Race matters, but it hardly constructs meaning any longer.”⁵⁰

IMPERIALISM, NEOCOLONIALISM, AND POSTCOLONIAL THEORY

I have analyzed some of the problems of globalization theories because they have been clearly influential in thinking about culture since the 1980s and have ironically also affected some versions of postcolonial theory, a theory that came into being to provide an analytics of colonial difference. In this section I will mark the problematic conjuncture of globalization theory and language-based, poststructuralist versions of postcolonial theory and make a case for “resistance postcolonialism” as central to the study of U.S. culture. Through their cognizance of imperialism and colonial difference, world systems theories, I will argue, provide a better model for understanding contemporary U.S. culture than globalization theories or general calls for transnationalism and postnationalism.

Imperialism exists. Colonial difference matters. In 1920, Lenin formulated his treatise on the inevitable historical connection between monopoly capitalism and imperialism. Lenin prophetically wrote, “Capitalism has grown into a world system of colonial oppression and of the financial strangulation of the overwhelming majority of the people of the world by a handful of “advanced” countries.”⁵¹ The Comintern, urged by Lenin, transformed the 1848 slogan of Marx and Engels, “Workers of all countries unite!” into “Workers and oppressed peoples of all countries unite!” thereby including anticolonialism in the Third International.⁵² This imperialist, colonialist aspect of capitalism, ignored by most Western Marxists and their latter-day left theorists of globalization, has been the centerpiece of third worldists or world systems theorists who, since the 1970s,

have challenged the developmentalism of traditional Marxism⁵³ and have postulated the workings of capitalism through a single world system, the capitalist world economy. Immanuel Wallerstein suggests that because within this economy all states cannot develop simultaneously, the system works “by virtue of having unequal core and peripheral regions.”⁵⁴ Unequal exchange between core and periphery is intrinsic to the system.⁵⁵ Samir Amin, another principal theoretician of world systems, explains the relations between center and periphery as being those of transfers of value from periphery to center; growth in the periphery, based on integration into the world market, Amin argues, is a development of underdevelopment.⁵⁶ As Amin recently explained, “imperialism has always been a component—and not as Lenin argued a stage—of capitalist development. Instead, it is the character of each stage of imperialism that has changed. The trend has been towards greater polarisation. . . . At the end of the day, however, what is essential is that there continues to be a growing gap between the centers and the peripheries.”⁵⁷ Unlike the past in which imperialisms were in conflict with each other, contemporary imperialism is operating through a Japan-Europe-U.S. triad with the United States as hegemon, intervening powerfully in the societies of the periphery.⁵⁸

Thus, while globalization theorists treat notions of center and periphery as outdated models, left over from colonial periods, world systems theorists explain the very functioning of contemporary capitalism through these notions. Of course since the U.S. invasion of Iraq in 2003, U.S. imperialism has once again begun to be viewed as central to political and economic analyses. David Harvey’s *The New Imperialism* (2003), for instance, charts the United States’ course from its attempts to control world markets following the collapse of Bretton Woods institutions to the clearly militaristic designs of the Project for a New American Century, while Chalmers Johnson’s *The Sorrows of Empire* (2004) argues that U.S. militarism (with more than 725 military bases outside the country) is ending globalization.⁵⁹ Indeed the United States’ aggressive stance after 9/11 has also generated debate in unlikely places. For instance, *Public Culture*, initiated as a journal analyzing the postimperial world of cultural globalization, devoted a 2003 issue to debating contemporary U.S. imperialism, paralleling the move of *Interventions*, a prominent journal of postcolonial studies. Few can dispute the country’s imperialist stance since 2003; however, I want to argue that imperialism was alive and well in the 1980s and 1990s, but that recognizing it required a non-Eurocentric lens open to viewing imperialism and neocolonialism as central.

This is a perspective that is virtually absent from many theories of globalization. Thus, Castells’s volume, *The Power of Identity* makes no mention of colonialism, neocolonialism, or imperialism. Apparently, the

new global order buries questions of colonialism so much that even a strong indigeneity-based movement like the Zapatistas can be discussed largely as a movement of the network society without even a mention of colonial destruction or of Maya culture. Similarly, Anthony Giddens's theorizations of modernity and late modernity, which have been highly influential in thinking about globalization, simply exclude questions of colonialism and imperialism. While Giddens agrees that modernity is Western, he does not recognize the imbrication of modernity and colonialism.⁶⁰

If, however, we are cognizant of the historical significance of colonialism and imperialism and of racial politics that buttress neocolonialism, we know that whereas imagining a world without Others is commendable, not recognizing Othering is an irresponsible, though undeniably "Western" gesture. For many theorists from the South, on the other hand, Othering and colonial difference are central to Western ontology. Walter D. Mignolo, who articulates a modern/colonial world system, explains the problem of not thinking in terms of inside and outside in the following way: "What the proposition asserts is that we should eliminate dichotomies from our vocabulary. And in this principle I do believe, since colonial discourse was one of the most powerful strategies in the imaginary of the modern/colonial world system for producing dichotomies that justified the will to power. . . . It is fine for me to eliminate dichotomies, or at least to try. What is more difficult to achieve is forgetting or eliminating the historical dichotomies that colonial discourse and epistemology imposed upon the world by inventing colonial differences."⁶¹ Mignolo also suggests that arguments for eliminating inside/outside dichotomies are most often made by those who are clearly on the "inside," while many intellectuals in the third world believe in these distinctions.⁶²

One could contend that Mignolo's position homogenizes the intellectual currents of the first or the third world. However, it is not accidental that the major proponents of world systems theories—Immanuel Wallerstein and Samir Amin—were both Africanist scholars who placed imperialism at the center of their theorizations. Amin has continued to raise the problems of neocolonial globalization and uneven globalization in *The Liberal Virus* (2004).⁶³ Perhaps culture can operate relatively autonomously from the economic sphere, but that argument holds only if one dissociates "culture" from the messy business of living, from an arena of struggle, and from the politics of neocolonialism and imperialism. But as postcolonial scholars have aptly demonstrated, colonialism and its aftermath have been central to the West's understanding of itself at least since the eighteenth century. And imperialism, as perspective, has been accepted as integral to studies of American culture since the 1990s, notably

with the publication of *Cultures of United States Imperialism*, even though significant works on the history of U.S. imperialism such as R. W. Van Alstyne's *The Rising American Empire* were published in the 1960s.⁶⁴

Interestingly, the mid-1970s, identified by Harvey as the beginning of the idea of globalization, also witnessed the beginnings of postcolonial theory in the U.S. academy, marked by the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978. Postcolonial theory brought to light the effects of Western colonialism on all fields of knowledge and the continuity of these effects in conditions of neocolonialism. The field offered renewed currency to the work of revolutionary anticolonial theorists such as Frantz Fanon and Amilcar Cabral and promised to open up further avenues for the analyses of U.S. minority discourse. Henry Louis Gates's collection, "*Race*," *Writing and Difference*, a compilation of essays written for *Critical Inquiry* in 1985 and 1986, and which included established African Americanist scholars as well as postcolonial critics, attempted to forge such an opening.

By the early 1990s, however, the general movement in postcolonial theory was away from models that focused on specific material conditions and foregrounded domination and exploitation to more linguistic models that focused on negotiatory analyses of colonialism.⁶⁵ Commenting on this shift, Benita Parry critiqued the turn in postcolonial theory that "celebrates globalism for the volatility of the cultural flows it brings about" while ignoring the implication of these flows in imperialism; such a turn, resultant on a disengagement from political theory and socioeconomic structures, dependent on the indeterminacies of language alone, dispenses with the notion of conflict.⁶⁶ Edward Said similarly denounced the effects of a "globalized, post-modern consciousness" on the field: "Anticolonial liberation theory and the real history of empire, with its massacres and exploitation, have turned into a focus on the anxieties and ambivalences of the colonizer, the silent thereby colonized and displaced somehow."⁶⁷ What bothers Said and Parry, and is articulated in a slightly different manner by Aijaz Ahmad, is that the specific problems of colonization and decolonization are being subsumed under the general theoretical concerns of poststructuralism,⁶⁸ a problem compounded by the fact that the two movements share a commonality in the critique of European humanism.

Despite the reservations of Said and Parry, the charge brought about by critics like Arif Dirlik that postcolonial theory has flourished only because of its complicity with global capitalism, or that its practitioners are overprivileged, is an overstatement that uncannily resembles the arguments of the Right against academics today.⁶⁹ (Indeed, I would argue that despite his dismissal of the term "postcolonial," Dirlik's analyses of regional, Pacific rim

resistances to global capital are an important contribution to postcolonial studies.) In a useful intervention into debates about postcolonial theory's radicalism, Robert Young argues that postcolonial theory, which carries on the intellectual and political project of anticolonial movements, shares the anti-Western heritage of poststructuralism and combines it with the perspectives of writers from the formerly colonized countries.⁷⁰ However, despite Young's valuable recuperation of the political possibilities of postcolonial theory and his demonstration, say, of the imbrication of the anticolonial politics of Algeria and deconstruction, the privileging of a language-based poststructuralism within the work of some postcolonial theorists cannot be denied. This is the charge Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge make against Helen Tiffin, Stephen Slemon, and other theorists of settler colonialism who regard postcolonialism as "already present in European thought" and who see no difference between the domination experienced by white settlers and natives in other colonies.⁷¹ Following Mishra's and Hodge's differentiation between different kinds of postcolonialisms, I borrow the terminology of Ranajit Guha and suggest that we think of *resistance postcolonialism* and *collaborative postcolonialism*. Resistance postcolonialism takes seriously the existence of centers and peripheries and structures of colonial and imperial domination, is interested in the specific systems of oppression that these structures mete out in different locations, and attempts to forge oppositional strategies. Collaborative postcolonialism, reliant on a language-based poststructuralism that treats colonialism and imperialism as a series of exchanges, sees power dichotomies as theoretically unsophisticated, is interested in the fuzziness of boundaries, and privileges the language of colonial and imperial encounters over their material determinants.⁷² Resistance postcolonialism is exemplified in the writings of anticolonial liberation thinkers such as Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral, and N'gugi wa Thiong'o; analysts such as Edward Said, Benita Parry, and Anne McClintock; and subaltern studies scholars such as Partha Chatterjee and Dipesh Chakrabarty. Collaborative postcolonialism is represented primarily in the work of Homi Bhabha and the numerous others influenced by him (including diaspora theorists such as Iain Chambers), and in scholars such as Trinh T. Minh-ha, and Anthony Appiah.⁷³ While both types of postcolonialisms, as in Guha's paradigm, belong to the purview of the subordinated, resistance postcolonialism provides a more credible genealogy of anticolonial struggle, a relevant critique of colonial and imperial practices, and an epistemology for dealing with the highly charged question of internal colonialism in the United States. Resistance postcolonialism is "global" in its analysis of structures of domination, and in possibilities of resistance, but it conceives of the global through the lenses of imperialism and neocolonialism.

LOCAL STRUGGLES, RACE,
AND POSTCOLONIAL RESISTANCE

There was an insurrection in this city before,
and, if I remember correctly,
it was sparked by police brutality.
We had a Kerner Commission report.
It talked about what was wrong with our society.
It talked about institutionalized racism.
It talked about a lack of services,
lack of government responsive to the people.
Today,
as we stand here in 1992,
if you go back and read the report,
it seems as though we are talking about what that report cited
some twenty years ago,
still exists today. . . .

They picked my son up several times
and dropped him in another project
when he was just a little boy.
They've done it to my kid,
they'll do it to your kid.
It's the color, because we're Black
(Anna Deveare Smith, *Twilight Los Angeles, 1992*, pp. 160, 38)

Anna Deveare Smith's *Twilight Los Angeles, 1992* is a brilliant theatrical interpretation of the L.A. riots following the "not guilty" verdict about the police beating of Rodney King pronounced by the jurors of Simi Valley; it is presented as a series of interviews of a wide spectrum of people and rendered solely in the words of the interviewees themselves. The previous two excerpts from *Twilight*, the first from a speech given by Congresswoman Maxine Waters at the First African Methodist Episcopal Church in L.A., the second from Theresa Allison, founder of Mothers Reclaiming Our Children, powerfully demonstrate the significance of race and located knowledge in understanding the L.A. riots of 1992. Maxine Waters links the L.A. riots of 1992 and the Watts riots of 1965 to a genealogy of urban neglect and hopelessness. California's attempt to block the fair housing component of the Civil Rights Act by passing Proposition 14, the brutality of the Los Angeles Police Department (L.A.P.D.) toward African Americans, the poor schools in the inner city, and the despair of

the residents created a politically volatile situation where a routine police arrest in 1965 could spark a major riot. A continuity of urban neglect ignited a similar riot in 1992. But, as with the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, one can ask whether poor housing, high unemployment, and police brutality have much to do with imperialism. Are institutionalized racism at the national level and anti-affirmative action initiatives at the local level transnational concerns? Can the well-documented racism of the L.A.P.D. that Theresa Allison recounts be adequately understood through the lens of postcoloniality?

Clearly, both the L.A. and the Watts riots call for an understanding of the imbrication of race and inner-city politics brought to light most dramatically in the differences between the political culture of south central L.A. and Simi Valley. It was the L.A.P.D., for instance, that had been responsible for vicious attacks against the Black Panthers in the 1970s. Thus, to see the L.A. riots as an illustration of cultural and racial hybridity (collaborative postcolonialism) or to view Rodney King's beating simply as part of the suppression of blacks worldwide through the master trope of diaspora is not enough. As Sau-ling Cynthia Wong suggests, Rodney King was not beaten because he was part of the black diaspora but rather because he was a U.S. minority, an African American.⁷⁴ Wen Ho Lee was imprisoned because he was Chinese American and therefore, like all Asian Americans, seen as a perpetual foreigner and therefore potential spy. Sami Al-Arian was imprisoned because he was a Palestinian American who had openly declared his sympathy for the Palestinian cause. Yet although one minority experience cannot be substituted for another, imperial structures of racial dominance might be at play. However, these structures might operate in various ways in different racial sites. For instance, the preponderance of Korean Americans in the grocery store business might point to the exclusions of immigration policies for Asians, while the impetus for Korean immigration to the United States might be the result of U.S. military interventions in Korea.

Interestingly, the beginnings of globalization and postcolonial theory also coincided with a virtual renaissance in race studies. The advent of Critical Race Theory (CRT) in the field of legal academe, the emphasis on the centrality of race by sociologists, and the field of whiteness studies that interrogated whiteness as the norm, all contributed to a field collectively referred to as critical race studies. Prominent scholars in the field include Derrick Bell, Patricia Williams, Michael Omi, Howard Winant, Noel Ignatiev, David Roediger, and Cornel West.⁷⁵ All these scholars focus on national space, are insistent on the centrality of race in U.S. society, and refuse to reduce race to a manifestation of other supposedly more fundamental social relationships such as class or gender. Most important, CRT

scholars valorize particularity as a challenge to the supposedly race-neutral scholarship of mainstream legal discourse. As Richard Delgado writes, “Most mainstream scholars embrace universalism over particularity, abstract principles and the ‘rule of law’ over perspectivism. . . . Critical Race Theory writers emphasize the opposite, in what has been termed the ‘call to context.’ For CRT scholars, general laws may be appropriate in some areas. . . . But political and moral discourse is not one of them. Normative discourse (as civil rights is) is highly fact sensitive—adding even one new fact can change intuition radically.”⁷⁶ It is because general laws ignore the specificity of minority experience and favor the universalism constituted by whiteness that CRT scholars insist on context. This sensitivity to context has been central to critical race studies in general.

However, this insistence on particularity is not a Lyotardian post-modern denial of grand narratives, including those of emancipation, and a celebration of micro-truths alone.⁷⁷ Indeed, critical race studies is premised on the existence of racism as a negative grand narrative. However, unlike grand narratives that sought a totality, critical race studies does not posit itself as a universal because it is based on a different ethics and logic. The object of race studies’ analysis is not a universalized idea of racism but rather race as a systemic form of oppression, legislated through the juridical apparatuses of the nation-state and normalized through social institutions such as schools. Here, race studies scholars have been joined by numerous scholars in U.S. minority studies. Lisa Lowe argues, for instance, that “Americanness” is a raced formulation based on the exclusion of Asian Americans from the body politic through specific juridical acts.⁷⁸ bell hooks’s powerful indictment of Betty Friedan’s universalization of the predicament of the bored housewife was based on the particularity of black female exploitation.⁷⁹ Recently, Houston Baker has recommended a “turning South” for American cultural studies in order to analyze the carceral network that has held the black-South body in imprisonment. Baker writes, “American ‘history’ thus reads out, in black-majority vocabularies, as enslavement, incarceration, imprisonment.”⁸⁰ What Baker finds missing in an analysis of global modernity such as Gilroy’s is the “specificity of time, place, and detail one requires to read (and, perhaps, empower) black United States modernism.”⁸¹ Here, in his critique of diasporic models of blackness, Baker has been joined by critics like Tiffany Ruby Patterson and Robin D. G. Kelley, who have critiqued the trend to homogenize all diasporic moments and erase local specificities.⁸²

It is clear, therefore, that any analytics of race in the United States must be based on an understanding of the juridical structures of the nation-state through which the system of racial hierarchy is consolidated. For minority

groups such as African Americans or Asian Americans, what I have called particularism or located thinking means thinking through the intersection of racial specificity and national (even regional) juridical apparatuses.⁸³ For other groups, locatedness might be more subnational. In the United States, located thinking has been recognized and most productively theorized in the work of Pacific Rim, Hawai'ian studies, and by Chicana/o scholars. Arguing that diasporic thinking reifies racial essentialism by focusing on origin and descent, Arif Dirlik makes a powerful case for what he calls a "place-based politics" premised not on exclusion but on refocusing attention on "building society from the bottom up" through the strengthening of community.⁸⁴ Similarly, Paul Lyons theorizes a located pedagogy for Hawai'ian studies that emphasizes the "cultural priorities, conversations, histories, and narratives of a particular place" but that becomes critical by seeing how vertical/horizontal structures engage with horizontal/contemporary movements in regional, national, and global configurations.⁸⁵ And writers such as Americo Paredes have long articulated the importance of the Southwest border as a key to understanding Chicano/a identity.

Likewise, in the work of subaltern studies scholars, European universalisms are constantly challenged through analyses of specific locations: Ranajit Guha's classic critique of dominant historiography's representation of the rule of British capital and of Indian nationalism as hegemony rather than dominance and Dipesh Chakrabarty's provincializing of concepts of European modernity through a focus on colonial Bengal.⁸⁶ Indeed, as Etienne Balibar suggests, while raced groups express specific demands for recognition, and are particularistic, they articulate their demands in universalist fashion in order to challenge the exclusions of what is accepted as universality.⁸⁷ In other words, Balibar finds the use of a strategic universality by specific groups especially important. In a similar vein, albeit fully challenging ideas of universalism, Zillah Eisenstein suggests the concept of a polyversal humanity and argues for "theorizing the specific as the means of allowing a polyunity to emerge."⁸⁸

It is in this spirit of a polyunity of anti-imperialism that we can connect and theorize the specific agendas of racial justice to those of worldwide post-colonial liberation. Let us examine the links of the raced particular and local resistances with anti-imperial struggles from the perspective of scholarship, activism, and resistance literature. When we look at scholarship, we see that despite avowed differences, scholarly collections of postcolonial and race studies are remarkably fluid: witness Mae Henderson's "Speaking in Tongues" in Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman's popular reader, *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory* (1994), which earlier appeared in *Reading Black, Reading Feminist* (1990, edited by Henry Louis Gates); and essays by bell hooks and Wahneema Lubiano in another standard post-

colonial reader, *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives* (1997).⁸⁹ Collections commonly being used for critical race studies are similarly entangled with postcolonial theory. Theo Goldberg's anthology, *Anatomy of Racism* (1990), for instance, includes analyses of biological and cultural racism and features writings by Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Homi Bhabha. Henry Louis Gates's earlier and more literature-oriented anthology, "*Race, Writing and Difference*," included essays by prominent African Americanist scholars such as Hazel Carby, as well as ones by postcolonialists like Abdul JanMohamed and Gayatri Spivak. Yet Houston Baker's critique of the collection points to the different constituencies of postcolonial and race theorizing, especially if the postcolonial is seen as linguistic alone or what I have called collaborative postcolonialism.⁹⁰

On the other hand, critical race studies is itself taking a transnational turn. Howard Winant's *The World Is a Ghetto* (2001) argues for a Wallersteinian global approach to race in the twenty-first century by positing a "new world racial system" in sharp contrast to the old structures of explicit colonialism and state sponsored segregation."⁹¹ Evidence of this system today are the extreme disparities between the world's mainly white North and the mainly darker South.⁹² And yet Winant's "global" approach functions through a comparative nationalism in which he analyzes the contemporary sociology of race by devoting separate chapters to the United States, South Africa, and Brazil; similarly the chapter on nineteenth- and early twentieth-century racial constructions is divided into different national sections. What is significant, however, is Winant's attempt to combine a located analytics of race with a transnational perspective and to theorize the latter in postcolonial terms.⁹³

When we look at activism, we also see that progressive racial movements in the United States, as Nikhil Pal Singh recognizes in his analysis of the black power movement, have long articulated their visions in solidarity with the colonized and exploited people of color all over the world.⁹⁴ Today with the unilateralism and sheer military might of U.S. imperialism, the continual rollback of affirmative action programs, and the neoliberal moves to define the country as color-blind, it is more imperative than ever to recognize these resistances. As early as the late eighteenth century, African Americans like Prince Hall and John Marrant, for instance, claimed entry into the nation by linking their histories to those of African colonization.⁹⁵ Anticipating Fanon's category of "the wretched of the earth" and the capitalist racism of world systems theorists, W. E. B. DuBois early recognized the common degradation of people of color within and outside the United States, the sea of "human labor in China and India, the South Seas and all Africa," providing the foundation of modern industry, yet "despised and rejected by race and color."⁹⁶

Similarly, the Third World Movement, which began in San Francisco State College in 1968, comprising African Americans, Latina/os, Asian Americans and Native Americans, all of whom declared ghettos and barrios to be internal colonies of the United States, combined two seemingly contradictory political trajectories. On the one hand, this movement was testimony to the fragments that haunted the nation and offered local-political potentialities irreducible to the nation-state, while, on the other, constituents of the movement used the language of nationalism as a rhetoric of radical dissent. But the nationalisms of black nationalism, Yellow Power, and La Raza operated from different paradigms than hegemonic nationalism or the modular forms of national society posited in the modern West as theorized by Benedict Anderson.⁹⁷ The raced nation challenged Benedict Anderson's idea of nationalism as fraternal comradeship; and the students of the Third World Movement looked outward, rather than to national print/visual cultures, modeling themselves after third world liberation struggles. Even while advocating a hemispheric concept of *familia* for La Raza, leaders like Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzalez linked the cause of Latina/os with those of indigenous peoples decolonizing their brethren.⁹⁸

In like manner, the Black Panther Party, which was formed to claim social justice for African Americans, grounded its demands in a critique of U.S. imperialism and saw the subjugation of African Americans as analogous to that of the Vietnamese. The Vietnamese, in turn, provided modes of resistance. Huey Newton wrote: "The Black Panther Party for Self-Defense teaches that, in the final analysis the guns, hand grenades, bazookas, and other equipment necessary for defense must be supplied by the power structure. As exemplified by the Vietcong, these weapons must be taken from the oppressor."⁹⁹ As discussed in chapter six, Newton, in fact, changed the platform of the Black Panther Party from nationalism to what he called intercommunalism, because given U.S. imperialism's stranglehold on third world autonomy, there was a need to "ally ourselves with the oppressed communities of the world. . . . We must place our future hopes upon the philosophy of intercommunalism, a philosophy which holds that the rise of imperialism in America transformed all other nations into oppressed communities."¹⁰⁰ Indeed, Newton's solidarity with the Vietnamese drew the ire of other activists who felt embittered by Newton's offer to send African American troops for the Vietcong while their fellow African Americans were suffering in the slums of Los Angeles.¹⁰¹ Even La Raza Unida (RUP), although operating as a third party, albeit a radical one within the United States, had activists who participated in the Sandinista revolution; RUP leaders in the 1980s saw parallels between their own struggles and those of the PLO.¹⁰²