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Disjuncture and Difference in the

Global Cultural Economy

It takes only the merest acquaintance with the facts of the modern world to note that it is now an interactive system in a sense that is strikingly new. Historians and sociologists, especially those concerned with translocal processes (Hodgson 1974) and the world systems associated with capitalism (Abu-Lughod 1989, Braudel 1981–84, Curtin 1984, Wallerstein 1974, Wolf 1982), have long been aware that the world has been a congeries of large-scale interactions for many centuries. Yet today's world involves interactions of a new order and intensity. Cultural transactions between social groups in the past have generally been restricted, sometimes by the facts of geography and ecology, and at other times by active resistance to interactions with the Other (as in China for much of its history and in Japan before the Meiji Restoration). Where there have been sustained cultural transactions across large parts of the globe, they have usually involved the long-distance journey of commodities (and of the merchants most concerned with them) and of travelers and explorers of every type (Helm 1988, Schuler 1963). The two main forces for sustained cultural interaction before this century have been warfare (and the large-scale political systems sometimes generated by it) and religions of conversion, which have sometimes, as in the case of Islam, taken warfare as one of the legitimate instruments of their expansion. That, between travelers and
merchants, pilgrims and conquistadors, the world has seen much long-distance (and long-term) cultural traffic. This much seems self-evident.

But few deny that given the problems of time, distance, and limited technologies for the command of resources across vast spaces, cultural dealings between socially and spatially separated groups have, until the past few centuries, been bridged at great cost and sustained over time only with great effort. The forces of cultural gravity seemed always to pull away from the formation of large-scale ecumenes, whether religious, commercial, or political, toward smaller-scale accretions of intimacy and interest.

Sometime in the past few centuries, the nature of this gravitational field seems to have changed. Partly because of the spirit of the expansion of Western maritime interests after 1500, and partly because of the relatively autonomous developments of large and aggressive social formations in the Americas (such as the Aztecs and the Incas), in East Asia (such as the Mongols and their descendants, the Mughals and Ottomans), in island Southeast Asia (such as the Buginese), and in the kingdoms of precolonial Africa (such as Dahomey), an overlapping set of ecumenes began to emerge, in which congeries of money, commerce, conquest, and migration began to create durable cross-societal bonds. This process was accelerated by the technology transfers and innovations of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries (e.g., Bayly 1989), which created complex colonial orders centered on European capitals and spread throughout the non-European world. This intricate and overlapping set of Eurocultural worlds (best Spanish and Portuguese, later principally English, French, and Dutch) set the basis for a permanent traffic in ideas of peoplehood and scholarship, which created the imagined communities (Anderson 1983) of recent nationalisms throughout the world.

With what Benedict Anderson has called “print capitalism,” a new power was unleashed in the world, the power of mass literacy and its attendant large-scale production of projects of ethnic affinities that were remarkably free of the need for face-to-face communication or even of direct communication between persons and groups. The act of reading things together set the stage for movements based on a paradox—the paradox of constructed primordialism. There is, of course, a great deal else that is involved in the story of colonialism and its dialectically generated nationalism (Chatterjee 1986), but the issue of constructed ethnicities is surely a crucial strand in this tale.

But the revolution of print capitalism and the cultural affinities and dialogues unleashed by it were only modest precursors to the world we live in now. For in the past century, there has been a technological explosion, largely in the domain of transportation and information, that makes the interrelations of a print-dominated world seem as hard-won and as easily eroded as the print revolution made earlier forms of cultural traffic appear. For with the advent of the steamship, the railroad, the airplane, the camera, the computer, and the telephone, we have entered into an altogether new condition of nearness, even with those most distant from us. Marshall McLuhan, among others, sought to theorize about this world as a “global village,” but theories such as McLuhan’s appear to have underestimated the communalizing implications of the new media order (McLuhan and Powers 1969). We are now aware that with media, each time we are tempted to speak of the global village, we must be reminded that media create communities with “no sense of place” (Meyrowitz 1985). The world we live in now seems rhizomic (Deleuze and Guattari 1987), even schizophrenic, calling for theories of rootlessness, alienation, and psychological distance between individuals and groups on the one hand, and fantasies (or nightmares) of electronic propinquity on the other. Here, we are close to the central problematic of cultural processes in today’s world.

Thus, the curiousity that recently drove Pico Iyer to Asia (1988) is in some ways the product of a confusion between some inevitable McLuhanization of the world and the much subtler play of indigenous trajectories of desire and fear with global flows of people and things. Indeed, system is emerging, it is filled with tribes and resistances, sometimes campings outaged as passivity and a bottomless appetite in the Asian world for things Western. Iyer’s own account of the uncanny Philippine affinity for American popular music is rich testimony to the globality of the hyperreal, for somehow Philippine renditions of American popular songs are both more widespread in the Philippines, and more disturbingly faithful to their originals, than they are in the United States today. An entire nation seems to have learned to mimic Kenny Rogers and the Lennon sisters, like a vast Asian Motown chorus. But Americanization is certainly a pallid term to apply to such a situation, for not only are there more Filipinos singing perfect renditions of some American songs (often from the American past) than there are Americans doing so, there is also, of course, the fact that the rest of their lives is not in complete synchrony with the referential world that first gave birth to those songs.

In a rather globalizing twist on what Fredric Jameson has recently...
called "nostalgia for the present" (1989), these Filipinos look back to a world they have never lost. This is one of the central ironies of the politics of global cultural flows, especially in the arena of entertainment and leisure. It also has to do with the hegemonies of Eurochronology. American nostalgia feeds on Filipino desire represented as a hypercompetent reproduction. Here, we have nostalgia without memory. The paradox, of course, lies in its explanations, and they are historical, unpacked, they lay bare the story of the Americanization and political rape of the Filipinos, one result of which has been the creation of a nation of make-believe Americans, who tolerated for so long a leading lady who played the piano while the slums of Manila expanded and decayed. Perhaps the most radical postmodernists would argue that this is hardly surprising because in the peculiar chronicles of late capitalism, pastiche and nostalgia are central modes of image production and reception. Americans themselves are hardly in the present anymore as they stumble into the mega-technologies of the twenty-first century galloping in the film-nor scenarios of sixties' chills, fifties' diners, forties' clothing, thirties' houses, twenties' dances, and so on ad infinitum.

As far as the United States is concerned, one might suggest that the issue is no longer one of nostalgia but a social imaginaire built largely around ruins. Jameson was bold to link the politics of nostalgia to the postmodern commodity sensibility, and surely he was right (1983). The drug war in Colombia recapitulates the tropical sweet of Vietnam, with Ollie North and his succession of mascots—Jimmy Stewart concealing John Wayne concealing Spaso Agnew and all of them transmogrifying into Sylvester Stallone, who wins in Afghanistan—thus simultaneously fulfilling the secret American envy of Soviet imperialism and the ruin (this time with a happy ending) of the Vietnam War. The Rolling Stones, approaching their fifties, gyrate before eighteen-year-olds who do not appear to need the machinery of nostalgia to be sold on their parents' bence. Paul McCartney is selling the Beatles to a new audience by hitching his obligatory nostalgia to their desire for the new that smacks of the old. Draget is back in nineteen's drag, and so is Adam-12, not to speak of Batman and Mission Impossible, all dressed up technologically but remarkably faithful to the atmospherics of their originals.

The past is now not a land to return to in a simple politics of memory. It has become a synchronic warehouse of cultural scenarios, a kind of temporal central casting, to which recourse can be taken as appropriate, depending on the movie to be made, the scene to be enacted, the nostalgia to be rescued. All this is par for the course, if you follow Jean Baudrillard or Jean-François Lyotard into a world of signs wholly unmoored from their social signifiers (all the world a Disneyland). But I would like to suggest that the apparent increasing substitutability of whole periods and postures for another, in the cultural styles of advanced capitalism, is tied to larger global forces, which have done much to show Americans that the past is usually another country. If your present is their future (as in much modernization theory and in many self-satisfied tourist fantasies) and if their future is your past (as in the case of the Filipino virtuosos of American popular music), then your own past can be made to appear as simply a normalized modality of your present. Thus, although some anthropologists may continue to regulate their Others to temporal spaces that they do not themselves occupy (Fabian 1983), postindustrial cultural productions have entered a postontological phase.

The crucial point, however, is that the United States is no longer the purveyor of a world system of images but in only one node of a complex transnational construction of imaginary landscapes. The world we live in today is characterized by a new role for the imagination in social life. To grasp this new role, we need to bring together the old idea of images, especially mechanically produced images (in the Frankfurt School sense), the idea of the imagined community (in Anderson's sense), and the French idea of the imaginary (imaginaire) as a constructed landscape of collective aspirations, which is not more and not less real than the collective representations of Émile Durkheim, now mediated through the complex prism of modern media.

The image, the imagined, the imaginary—these are all terms that direct us to something critical and new in global cultural processes: the imagination as a social practice. No longer mere fantasy (optum for the masses whose real work is elsewhere), no longer simple escape (from a world defined principally by more concrete purposes and structures), no longer more contemplation (irrelevant for new forms of desire and subjectivity), the imagination has become an organized field of social practices, a form of work (in the sense of both labor and culturally organized practice), and a form of negotiation between sites of agency (individual) and globally defined fields of possibility. This unleashing of the imagination links the play of pastiche (in some settings) to the terror and coercion of states and their competitors. The imagination is now central to all forms of agency, itself a social fact, and is the key component of the new global order. But to make this claim meaningful, we must address some other issues.
Homogenization and Heterogenization

The central problem of today's global interactions is the tension between cultural homogenization and cultural heterogenization. A vast array of empirical facts could be brought to bear on the side of the homogenization argument, and much of it has come from the left end of the spectrum of media studies (Hammelkirk 1983, Mattelart 1983, Schiller 1976), and some from other perspectives (Gins 1985, lyer 1988). Most often, the homogenization argument subsists in either an argument about Americanization or an argument about commoditization, and very often the two arguments are closely linked. What these arguments fail to consider is that, at least as rapidly as forces from various metropolises are brought into new societies they tend to become indigenized in one or another way. This is true of music and housing styles as much as it is true of science and technology, tourism, spectacles and constitutions. The dynamics of such indigenization have just begun to be explored systematically (Barber 1987, Feld 1988, Hannes 1987, 1989, by 1988, Nicolai 1989, Yoshimura 1989), and much more needs to be done. But it is worth noticing that for the people of Iran, Java, Indonesia or Japan, and may be more widespread in Americanism, as Japan may be for Korea, Indochina or Sri Lanka, Vietnamization for the Cambodians, and Russianization for the people of Soviet Armenia and the Baltic republics. Such a list of alternative fears to Americanization could be greatly expanded, but it is not a shapeless inventory, for a smaller scale of talk, there is always a fear of cultural absorption by polities of larger scale, especially those that are nearby. One man's imagined community is another man's political prison.

This scalar dynamics, which has widespread manifestations, is also tied to the relationships between nations and states, to which I shall return later. For the moment, let me note that the simplification of these many forces (and fears) of homogenization can also be exploited by nation-states in relation to their own minorities, by posing global commoditization (or capitalism, or some other such external enemy) as more real than the threat of its own hegemonic strategies.

The new global cultural economy has to be seen as a complex, overlapping, discontinuous order that cannot any longer be understood in terms of existing center-periphery models (even those that might account for multiple centers and peripheries). Nor is it susceptible to simple models of push and pull (in terms of migration theory), or of surplus and deficits (as in traditional models of balance of trade), or of consumers and producers (as in most neo-Marxist theories of development). Even the most complex and flexible theories of global development that have come out of the Marxist tradition (Amin 1980, Mandel 1978, Wallerstein 1974, Wolf 1982) are inadequately quirky and have failed to come to terms with what Scott Lash and John Levy have called 'disorganized capitalism' (1987). The complexity of the current global economy has no to do with certain fundamental discontinuities between economy, culture, and politics that we have only begun to theorize.
of human motion, as more persons and groups deal with the realities of hav- 
ing to move or the fantasies of wanting to move. What is more, both these 
realities and fantasies now function on larger scales, as men and women 
from villages in India think not just of moving to Poona or Madras but of 
moving to Dubai and Houston, and refugees from Sri Lanka find themselves 
in South India as well as in Switzerland, just as the Hmong are driven to 
London as well as to Philadelphia. And as international capital shifts its 
needs, as production and technology generate different needs, as nation-
states shift their policies on refugee populations, these moving groups can 
never afford to let their imaginations rest too long, even if they wish to. 

By technology, I mean the global configuration, also ever fluid, of technol-
ogy and the fact that technology, both high and low, both mechanical and 
informational, now moves at high speeds across various kinds of previously 
impervious boundaries. Many countries now are the roots of multinational 
enterprises: a huge steel complex in Libya may involve interests from India, 
China, Russia, and Japan, providing different components of new techno-
logical configurations. The odd distribution of technologies, and thus the 
peculiarities of these technoscapes, are increasingly driven not by any obvi-
obious economies of scale, of political control, or of market rationality but by 
increasingly complex relationships among money flows, political possibili-
ties, and the availability of both on- and highly skilled labor. So, while India 
exports wipers and chauffeurs to Dubai and Sharjah, it also exports soft-
ware engineers to the United States—indebted briefly to Tata-Burroughs or 
the World Bank, then laundered through the State Department to becom-
em wealthy residents aliens, who are in turn objects of seductive messages 
to invest their money and know-how in federal and state projects in India. 
The global economy can still be described in terms of traditional indi-

cators (as the World Bank continues to do) and studied in terms of tradi-
tional comparisons (as in Project Link at the University of Pennsylvania), 
but the complicated technoscapes (and the shifting ethnoscapes) that un-
derlie these indicators and comparisons are further out of the reach of the 
queen of social sciences than ever before. How is one to make a meaning-
ful comparison of wages in Japan and the United States or of real-estate 
costs in New York and Tokyo, without taking sophisticated account of the 
very complex fiscal and investment flows that link the two economies 
through a global grid of currency speculation and capital transfer? 
Thus it is useful to speak as well of technoscapes, as the disposition of 
global capital is now a more mysterious, rapid, and difficult landscape to 
follow than ever before, as currency markets, national stock exchanges, 
and commodity speculations move megamoneies through national turn-
stiles at blinding speed, with vast, absolute implications for small dif-
ferences in percentage points and time units. But the critical point is that the 
global relationship among ethnoscapes, technoscapes, and finanescapes is 
deeply disjunctive and profoundly unpredictable because each of these 
landscapes is subject to its own constraints and incentives (some political, 
some informational, and some technoevironmental), at the same time as 
each acts as a constraint and a parameter for movements in the others. 
Thus, even an elementary model of global political economy must take 
into account the deep disjunctive relationships among human move-
ment, technological flow, and financial transfers. 

Further refiguring these disjunctures (which hardly form a simple, me-
chanical global infrastructure in any case) are: what I call mediascapes and 
ideascapes, which are closely related landscapes of images. Mediascapes refer 
both to the distribution of the electronic capabilities to produce and dis-
seminate information (newspapers, magazines, television stations, and 
film-production studios), which are now available to a growing number of 
private and public interests throughout the world, and to the images of the 
world created by these media. These images involve many complicated in-

ductions, depending on their mode (documentary or entertainment), their 
software (electronic or preelectronic), their audiences (local, national, or 
transnational), and the interests of those who own and control them. 

What is most important about these mediascapes is that they provide (es-
pecially in their television, film, and cassette forms) large and complex 
repertoires of images, narratives, and ethnoscapes to viewers throughout 
the world, in which the world of commodities and the world of news and 
politics are profoundly mixed. What this means is that many audiences 
around the world experience the media themselves as a complicated and 
interconnected repertoire of print, celluloid, electronic screens, and bill-
boards. The lines between the realistic and the fictional landscapes they 
see are blurred, so that the further away these audiences are from the direct 

e xperiences of metropolitan life, the more likely they are to construct 
imagined worlds that are chimerical, aesthetic, even fantastic objects, par-
ticularly if assessed by the criteria of some other perspective, some other 
imagined world. 

Mediascapes, whether produced by private or state interests, tend to be 
image-centered, narrative-based accounts of things of interest and what 
they offer to those who experience and transform them is a series of ele-
ments (such as characters, plots, and textual forms) out of which stories 
can be formed in imagined lives, their own or those of others living in 
other places. These scripts can and do get disaggregated into complex 


rhetoric encoded in a political document. The very relationship of reading to hearing and seeing may vary in important ways that determine the morphology of these different ideoscapes as they shape themselves in different national and transnational contexts. This globally variable synaesthesia has hardly even been noted, but it demands urgent analysis. This democracy has clearly become a master term, with powerful echoes from Haiti and Poland to the former Soviet Union and China, but it is at the center of a variety of ideoscapes, composed of diverse pragmatic configurations of rough translations of other central terms from the vocabulary of the Enlightenment. This creates ever new terminological kaleidoscopes, as states (and the groups that seek to capture them) seek to pacify populations whose own ethnoceneses are in motion and whose mediascapes may create severe problems for the ideoscapes with which they are presented. The fluidity of ideoscapes is complicated in particular by the growing fluidity (both voluntary and involuntary) of intellectuals who continuously inject new meaning streams into the discourse of democracy in different parts of the world.

This extended terminological discussion of the five terms I have coined sets the basis for a tentative formulation about the conditions under which current global flows occur: they occur in and through the growing disjunctures among ethnoceneses, technoeceneses, financescapes, mediascapes, and ideoscapes. This formulation, the core of my model of global cultural flow, needs some explanation. First, people, machinery, money, images, and ideas now follow increasingly nonisomorphic paths, of course, at all periods in human history, there have been some disjunctures in the flows of these things, but the sheer speed, scale, and volume of each of these flows are now so great that the disjunctures have become essential to the politics of global culture. The Japanese are notoriously hostile to ideas and are stereotyped as inclined to export (all and import (some) goods, but they are also notoriously closed to immigrants, like the Swiss, the Swedes, and the Saudis. Yet the Swiss and the Saudis accept populations of guest workers, thus creating labor disportus of Turks, Italians, and other circum-Mediterranean groups. Some such guest-worker groups maintain continuous contact with their home nations, like the Turks, but others, like high-level South Asian migrants, tend to desire lives in their new homes, raising anew the problem of reproduction in a deterritorialized context.

Deteriorization, in general, is one of the central forces of the modern world because it brings laboring populations into the lower class sectors and spaces of relatively wealthy societies, while sometimes creating exaggerated and intensified senses of criticism or attachment to politics.
the home state. Deterritorialization, whether of Hindus, Sikhs, Palestinians, or Ukrainians, is now at the core of a variety of global fundamentalisms, including Islamic and Hindu fundamentalism. In the Hindu case, for example, it is clear that the overseas movement of Indians has been exploited by a variety of interests both within and outside India to create a complicated network of finances and religious identifications, by which the problem of cultural reproduction for Hindus abroad has become tied to the politics of Hindu fundamentalist at home.

At the same time, deterritorialization creates new markets for film companies, art impresarios, and travel agencies, which thrive on the need of the deterritorialized population for contact with its homeland. Naturally, these invented homelands, which constitute the mediascapes of deterritorialized groups, can often become sufficiently insatiable and self-sided that they provide the material for new ideologies in which ethnic conflicts can begin to erupt. The creation of Khalistan, an invented homeland of the deterritorialized Sikh population of England, Canada, and the United States, is one example of the bloody potential in such mediascapes as they interact with the internal colonialisms of the nation-state (e.g., Hechter 1975). The West Bank, Nambia, and Enterra are other theatres for the enactment of the bloody negotiation between existing nation-states and various deterritorialized groupings.

It is in the fertile ground of deterritorialization, in which money, commodities, and persons are involved in ceaselessly chasing each other around the world, that the mediascapes and ideologies of the modern world find their fractured and fragmented counterpart. For the ideas and images produced by mass media are often only partial guides to the goods and experiences that deterritorialized populations transfer to one another. In Mira Nair's brilliant film India Cabaret, we see the multiple loops of this fractured deterritorialization as young women, barely competent in Bombay's metropolitan glitz, come to seek their fortunes as cabaret dancers and prostitutes in Bombay, entertaining men in clubs with dance formats derived wholly from the prurient dance sequences of Hindi films. These scenes in turn cater to ideas about Western and foreign women and their loosesomes, while they provide tawdry career alleys for these women. Some of these women come from Kerala, where cabaret clubs and the pornographic film industry have blossomed, partly in response to the pures and tastes of Keralites returned from the Middle East, where their diaspora lives away from women distant their very sense of what the relations between men and women might be. These violations of displacement could certainly be replaced in a more detailed analysis of the relations between the Japanese and German sex tours to Thailand and the tragedies of the sex trade in Bangkok, and in other similar loops that tie together fantasies about the Other, the conveniences and seductions of travel, the economics of global trade, and the brutal mobility fantasies that dominate gender politics in many parts of Asia and the world at large.

While far more could be said about the cultural politics of decenter- territorialization and the larger sociology of displacement that it expresses, it is appropriate to this juncture to bring in the role of the nation-state in the disjunctive global economy of culture today. The relationship between states and nations is everywhere an embattled one. It is possible to say that in many societies the nation and the state have become one another's paranoiac projection. That is, while nations (or more properly groups with ideas about nationhood) seek to capture or co-opt states and state power, states simultaneously seek to capture and monopolize ideas about nationhood (Bardes 1986, Chatterjee 1986, Nandy 1989a). In general, separatist transnational movements, including those that have included terror in their methods, exemplify nations in search of states. Sikhs, Tamil Sri Lankans, Basques, Moros, Quebecers—each of these represents imagined communities that seek to create states of their own or carve pieces out of existing states. States, on the other hand, are everywhere seeking to monopolize the moral resources of community, either by flatly claiming perfect coevality between nation and state, or by systematically instrumentalizing and redefining all the groups within them in a variety of heritage politics that seems remarkably uniform throughout the world (Handler 1988; Herzfeld 1982, McQueen 1988).

Here, national and international mediascapes are exploited by nation-states to pactically separate or even the potential fissiparousness of all ideas of difference. Typically, contemporary nation-states do this by exercising a monopoly over difference, by creating various kinds of interna- tional spectacles to domesticate difference, and by seducing small groups with the fantasy of self-display on some sort of global or cosmopolitan stage. One important new feature of global cultural politics, tied to the disjunctive relationships among the various mediascapes discussed earlier, is that state and nation are at each other's throats, and the hypen that links them is now less an icon of conjunctural than an index of disjunction. This disjunctive relationship between nation and state has two levels: at the level of any given nation-state, it means that there is a battle of the imagi- nation, with state and nation seeking to cannibalize one another. Here is the seedbed of brutal separations—majoritarianism that seem to have ap- peared from nowhere and microidentities that have become political pro-
Disharmony and Difference

Jinada. As an exiled artist, I find that within the nation-state, at another level, this disharmonious relationship is deeply entangled with the global disharmonies discussed throughout this chapter. Ideas of emasculation appear to be steadily increasing in scale and regularly crossing existing state boundaries, sometimes, as with the Kurds, because previous identities stretched across vast national spaces or, as with the Tamils in Sri Lanka, the dormant threats of a transnational diaspora have been activated to ignite the politics of a nation-state. In discussing the cultural politics that have subverted the hyphen that links the nation to the state, it is especially important not to forget the mooring of such politics in the irregularities that now characterize disorganized capital (Kothari 1998; Lash and Urry 1987). Because labor, finance, and technology are now so widely separated, the volatilities that underlie movements for nationhood (as large as transnational Islam on the one hand, or as small as the movement of the Gurkhas for a separate state in Northeast India) grind against the vulnerabilities that characterize the relationships between states. States find themselves pressed to stay open by the forces of media, technology, and travel that have fostered consumerism throughout the world and have increased the craving, even in the non-Western world, for new commodities and spectacles. On the other hand, these very cravings can become captives in new ethnocons, mediascapes, and, eventually, ideoscapes, such as democracy in China, that the state cannot tolerate as threats to its own control over ideas of nationhood and peoplehood. States throughout the world are under siege, especially where contexts over the ideoscapes of democracy are fierce and fundamental, and where there are radical disjuncures between ideoscapes and technoscapes (as in the case of very small countries that lack contemporary technologies of production and information), or between ideoscapes and finanscapes (as in countries such as Mexico or Brazil, where international lending influences national policies to a very large degree), or between ideoscapes and ethnocons (as in India, where diasporic, local, and translocal illusions are suicidally at battle), or between ideoscapes and mediapscapes (as in many countries in the Middle East and Asia) where the lifestyles represent on both national and international TV and cinema completely overwhelm and undermine the rhetoric of national politics. In the Indian case, the myth of the law-breaking hero has emerged to mediate this naked struggle between the parties and realities of Indian politics, which has grown increasingly brutalized and corrupt (Vachani 1989).

The transnational movement of the martial arts, particularly through Asia, as mediated by the Hollywood and Hong Kong film industries (Zanelli 1995) is a rich illustration of the ways in which long-standing mar-

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tial arts traditions, reformulated to meet the fantasies of contemporary (sometimes lumpen) youth populations, create new cultures of masculinity and violence, which are in turn the fuel for increased violence in national and international politics. Such violence is in turn the spur to an increasingly rapid and amoral arms trade that penetrates the entire world. The worldwide spread of the AK-47 and the Uzi, in films, in corporate and state security, in terror, and in police and military activity, is a reminder that apparently simple technical uniforms often conceal an increasingly complex set of loops, linking images of violence to aspirations for community in some imagined world. Returning then to the ethnocons with which I began, the central paradox of ethnic politics in today's world is that primordia (whether of language or skin color or neighborhood or kinship) have become egalitarianized. That is, sentiments, whose greatest force is in their ability to ignite intimacy into a political state and turn locality into a staging ground for identity, have become spread over vast and irregular spaces as groups move yet still linked to one another through sophisticated media capabilities. This is not to deny that such primordia are often the product of invented traditions (Hobsbawm and Ranger 1983) or retrospective affilia-
tions, but to emphasize that because of the disjunctive and unstable interplay of commerce, media, national politics, and consumer fantasies, ethnicity, once a gene contained in the battle of some sort of locality (however large), has now become a global force, forever slipping in and through the cracks between states and borders.

But the relationship between the cultural and economic levels of this new set of global disjuncures is not a simple one-way street in which the terms of global cultural politics are set wholly by, or confined wholly within, the vicissitudes of international flows of technology, labor, and finance, demanding only a modest modification of existing neo-Marxist models of uneven development and state formation. There is a deeper change, itself driven by the disjuncures among all the landscapes I have discussed and constituted by their continuously fluid and uncertain inter-

play, that concerns the relationship between production and consumption, Marx's famous (and often missed) view of the fetishism of the commodity and suggest that this fetishism has been replaced in the world at large (now seeing the world as one large, interactive system, composed of many complex subsystems) by two mutually supportive descendants, the first of which I call productive

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Disharmony and Difference

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Thus the central feature of global culture today is the politics of the mutual effect of sameness and difference to consolidate one another and thereby proclaim their successful hijacking of the twin Enlightenment ideas of the triumphantly universal and the resiliently particular. This mutual cannibalism shows its ugly face in riots, refugee flows, state-brighter side is in the expansion of many individual and collective processes of hope and tech inventions of all kinds, and these are being, in the susceptibility even of South Africa its own working classes, and in the growth of a wide range of progressive, transnational alliances. Examples of both sorts could be multiplied. The

The Work of Reproduction in an Age of Mechanical Art

I have inverted the key terms of the title of Walter Benjamin's famous essay (1969) to return this rather high-flying discussion to a more manageable level. There is a classic human problem that will not disappear however much global cultural processes might change their dynamics, and this is (and traditionally referred to in terms of the transmission of culture). In e.

The globalization of culture is not the same as its homogenization, but globalization involves the use of a variety of instruments of homogenization (armaments, advertising techniques, language hegemonies, and clothing styles) that are absorbed into local political and cultural economies, only to be reappropriated as heterogeneous dialogues of national sovereignty, free enter-
prise, and fundamentalism in which the state plays an increasingly defi-
cate role, too much openness to global flows, and the nation-state is threat-
ened by revolt, as in the China syndrome, too late, and the state exits the
international stage, as Burma, Albania, and North Korea in various ways
have done. In general, the state has become the arbiter of this operation of
difference (in the form of goods, signs, slogans, and styles). But this reapprop-
riation or export of the design and commodities of difference continuously exacerbates the internal politics of majoritarianism and homogenization, which is most frequently played out in debates over heritage.

Thus the central feature of global culture today is the politics of the mutual effect of sameness and difference to consolidate one another and thereby proclaim their successful hijacking of the twin Enlightenment ideas of the triumphantly universal and the resiliently particular. This mutual cannibalism shows its ugly face in riots, refugee flows, state-brightener side is in the expansion of many individual and collective processes of hope and tech inventions of all kinds, and these are being, in the susceptibility even of South Africa its own working classes, and in the growth of a wide range of progressive, transnational alliances. Examples of both sorts could be multiplied. The
new settings are maneuvered into existing repertoires of knowledge and practice. Often, global labor diasporas involve immense strains on marriages in general and on women in particular, as marriages become the meeting points of historical patterns of socialization and new ideas of proper behavior. Generations easily divide, as ideas about property, propriety, and collective obligation waver under the siege of distance and time. Most important, the work of cultural reproduction in new settings is profoundly complicated by the politics of representing a family as normal (particularly for the young) to neighbors and peers in the new locale. All this, of course, is new to the cultural study of immigration.

What is new is that this is a world in which both points of departure and points of arrival are in cultural flux, and thus the search for steady points of reference, as critical life choices are made, can be very difficult. It is in this atmosphere that the invention of tradition (and of ethnicity, kinship, and other identity markers) becomes slippery, as the search for certainties is regularly frustrated by the fluidities of transnational communication. As group pasts become increasingly parts of movies, exhibits, and collections, both in national and transnational spectacles, culture becomes less what Pierre Bourdieu would have called a habitus (a tacit realm of reproducible practices and dispositions) and more an arena for conscious choice, justification, and representation, the latter often to multiply and spatially dislocated audiences.

The task of cultural reproduction, even in its most intimate arenas, such as husband-wife and parent-child relations, becomes both politicized and exposed to the traumas of determinization as family members pool and negotiate their mutual understandings and aspirations in some fractured spatial arrangements. At larger levels, such as community, neighborship, and even the nation, the global economy feeds off the fuel of more explicitly violent politics of identity, just as these larger politics sometimes penetrate and ignite domestic politics. When, for example, two offspring in a household split with their father on a key matter of political identifi- cation in a transnational setting, preexisting localized norms carry little force. Thus a son who has joined the Hezbollah group in Lebanon may no longer get along with parents or siblings who are affiliated with Amal or some other branch of Shi’s ethnic political identity in Lebanon. Women in particular bear the brunt of this sort of friction, for they become pawns in the interplay politics of the household and are often subject to the abuse and violence of men who are themselves torn between the relation between heritage and opportunity in shifting spatial and political formations.

The pains of cultural reproduction in a disjointed global world are, of course, not eased by the effects of mechanical art (or mass media), for these media afford powerful resources for countermodes of identity that youth can project against parental wishes or desires. At larger levels of organization, there can be many forms of cultural politics within displaced populations (whether of refugees or of voluntary immigrants), all of which are not only isolated in important ways by the mediated discourses and images they offer. A central link between the fragilities of cultural reproduction and the role of the mass media in today’s world is the politics of gender and violence. As fantasies of female violence dominate the B-grade films industries that blot the world, they both reflect and refine the gendered violence at home and in the streets, as young men (in particular) are swayed by the macho politics of self-assertion in contexts where they are often denied real agency, and women are forced to enter the labor force in new ways on the one hand, and to continue the maintenance of familial heritage on the other. Thus the honor of women becomes not just an armature of stable (if inhuman) systems of cultural reproduction but a new arena for the formation of sexual identity and family politics, as men and women face new pressures at work and new fantasies of leisure.

Because both work and leisure have lost none of their gendered qualities in this new global order but have acquired ever wilder fetishized representations, the honor of women becomes increasingly a surrogate for the identity of embattled communities of males, while their women in reality have to negotiate increasingly harsh conditions of work at home and in the nondomestic workplace. In short, determinized communities and displaced populations, however much they may enjoy the fruits of new kinds of earning and new dispositions of capital and technology, have to play out the desires and fantasies of these new ethnocentrics, while striving to reproduce the family-as-micronation of culture. As the shapes of cultures grow less bounded and tacit, more fluid and politicized, the work of cultural reproduction becomes a daily hazard. Far more could, and should, be said about the work of reproduction in an age of mechanical art, the preceding discussion is meant to indicate the contours of the problems that a global, globally informed theory of cultural reproduction will have to face.
great traditional questions of causality, contingency, and prediction in the human sciences, but in a world of disjunctive global flows, is perhaps important to start asking them in a way that relies on images of flow and uncertainty, hence chaos, rather than on older images of order, stability, and systematizability. Otherwise, we will have gone far toward a theory of global cultural systems but thrown out process in the bargain. And that would make these notes part of a journey toward the kind of illusion of order that we can no longer afford to impose on a world that is so transparently volatile.

Whatever the directions in which we can rush these macrometaphors (fractal, polythetic classifications, and chaos), we need to ask one other old-fashioned question out of the Marxist paradigm: is there some pre-given order to the relative determining force of these global flows? Because I have postulated the dynamics of global cultural systems as driven by the relationships among flows of persons, technologies, finance, information, and ideology, can we speak of some structural-causal order linking these flows by analogy to the role of the economic order in one version of the Marxist paradigm? Can we speak of some of these flows as being, for a prior structural or historical reasons, always prior to and formative of other flows? My own hypothesis, which can only be tentative at this point, is that the relationship of these various flows to one another as they contort into particular events and social forms will be radically context-dependent. Thus, while labor flows and their loops with financial flows between Kerala and the Middle East may account for the shape of media flows and ideologies in Kerala, the reverse may be true of Silicon Valley in California, where intense specialization in a single technological sector (computers) and particular flows of capital may well profoundly determine the shape that ethnoscapes, ideoscapes, and mediascapes may take.

This does not mean that the causal-historical relationship among these various flows is random or meaninglessly contingent but that our current theories of cultural chaos are insufficiently developed to be even parsimonious models at this point, much less to be predictive theories, the golden illusions of one kind of social science. What I have sought to provide in this chapter is a reasonably economical technical vocabulary and a rudimentary model of disjunctive flows, from which something like a decent global analysis might emerge. Without some such analysis, it will be difficult to construct what John Hinkelk calls a "social theory of postmodernity" that is adequately global (1990, 84).
Patriotism and Its Futures

We need to think ourselves beyond the nation. This is not to suggest that thought alone will carry us beyond the nation or that the nation is largely a thought or an imagined thing. Rather, it is to suggest that the role of intellectual practices is to identify the current crisis of the nation and in identifying it to provide part of the apparatus of recognition for post-national social forms. Although the idea that we are entering a postnational world seems to have received its first airing in literary studies, it is now a recurrent (if unacknowledged) theme in studies of postcolonialism, global politics, and international welfare policy. But most writers who have asserted or implied that we need to think postnationally have not asked exactly what emergent social forms compel us to do so, or in what way.

This latter task is the principal focus of this chapter.

Postdiscursive Cultures

For those of us who grew up male in the elite sectors of the postcolonial world, nationalism was our common sense and the principal justification for our ambitions, our strategies, and our sense of moral well-being. Now, almost half a century after independence was achieved for many of the new nations, the nation form is under attack, and that, too, from many points of view. As the ideological abode of the territorial state, it is the last refuge of ethnic totalitarianism. In important critiques of the postcolony (Mbembe 1992), its discourses have been shown to be deeply implicated in the discourses of colonialism itself. It has frequently been a vehicle for the staged self-doubts of the heroes of the new nations—Sukarno, Jomo Kenyatta, Jawaharlal Nehru, Camal Abdel Nasser—who indulged in nationalism while the public spheres of their societies were beginning to burn. So, for postcolonial intellectuals such as myself, the question is, does patriotism have a future? And to what races and genders shall that future belong?

To answer this question requires not just an engagement with the problematics of the nation form, the imagined community (Anderson 1991), the production of people (Bhabha 1990), the narrative of nations (Bhabha 1990), and the colonial logics of nationalist discourse (Chaterjee 1986). It also requires a close examination of the discourses of the state and the discourses that are contained within the hyphen that links nation to state (chap. 2, Mbembe et al. 1992). What follows is an exploration of one dimension of this hyphen.

There is a disturbing tendency in the Western academy today to divorce the study of discursive forms from the study of other institutional forms, and the study of literary discourses from the mundane discourses of business practices, armies, private corporations, and nonstate social organizations. This chapter is in part a plea for a widening of the field of discourse studies. If the postcolony is in part a discursive formation, it is also true that discursivity has become too exclusively the sign and space of the colony and the postcolony in contemporary cultural studies. To widen the sense of what counts as discourse demands a corresponding widening of the sphere of the postcolony, to extend it beyond the geographical spaces of the former colonial world. In raising the issue of the postnational, I will suggest that the journey from the space of the former colony (a colorless space, a space of color) to the space of the postcolony is a journey that takes us into the brain of whiteness. It moves us, that is, in America, a postnationalism marked by its whiteness but marked too by its urgent engagements with diasporic peoples, mobile technologies, and queer nationalities.

The Trapeze of the Tribe

In spite of all the evidence to the contrary, these are hard times for patriotism. Maimed bodies and barbed wire in Eastern Europe, xenophobic violence in France, flag waving in the political rituals of the election year here
in the United States—all seem to suggest that the willingness to die for one's country is still a global fashion. But patriotism is an unstable sentiment, which thrives only at the level of the nation-state. Below that level it is easily supplanted by more intimate loyalties, above that level it gives way to empty slogans rarely backed by the will to sacrifice or kill. So, when thinking about the future of patriotism, it is necessary first to inquire into the health of the nation-state.

My doubts about patriotism (patiato-tomis) are tied up with my father's biography, in which patriotism and nationalism were already diverging terms. As a war correspondent for Reuters in Bangkok in 1940, he met an expatriate Indian nationalist, Subhak Chandra Bose, who split with Gandhi and Nehru on the issue of violence. Bose had escaped from British surveillance in India, with the active support of the Japanese, and established a government-in-exile in Southeast Asia. The army that Bose formed from Indian officers and enlisted men whom the Japanese had taken prisoner called itself the Indian National Army. This Indian Army was roundly defeated by the British Indian Army in Assam (on Indian soil, as my father never tired of noting) in 1944, and the provisional government of Azad Hind (Free India) in which my father was minister of publicity and propaganda soon crumbled with the defeat of the Axis powers.

When my father returned to India in 1945, he and his comrades were unwelcome heroes, poor cousins in the story of the nationalist struggle for Indian independence. They were patriots, but Bose's anti-British sentiment and his links with the Axis powers made him an embarrassment both to Gandhi's nonviolence and Nehru's Fabian Anglicism. To the end of their lives, my father and his comrades remained pariah patriots, rogue nationalists. My sister, brothers, and I grew up in Bombay wedged between former peruotism, Bose-style, and bourgeois nationalism, Nehru-style. Our India, with its Japanese connections and non-Western ways, carried the nameless aroma of treason, in respect to the cozy alliance of the Nehru and Mountbattens, and the bourgeois compact between Gandhian nonviolence and Nehruvian socialism. My father's distaste of the Nehru dynasty predisposed us to imagine a strange, deterritorialized India, invented in Taiwan and Singapore, Bangkok and Kuala Lumpur, quite independent of New Delhi and the Nehrus, the Congress Party and mainstream nationalism. So, there is a special appeal for me in the possibility that the marriage between nations and states was always a marriage of convenience and that patriotism needs to find new objects of desire.

One major fact that accounts for strains in the union of nation and state is that the nationalist genie, never perfectly contained in the bottle of the territorial state, is now itself diasporic. Carried in the repertoires of increasingly mobile populations of refugees, tourists, guest workers, transnational intellectuals, scientists, and illegal aliens, it is increasingly restrained by ideas of spatial boundary and territorial sovereignty. This revolution in the foundations of nationalism has crept up on us virtually unnoticed. Where soil and place were once the key to the linkage of territorial affiliation with state monopoly of the means of violence, key identities and identifications now only partially revolve around the realities and images of place. In the Sikh demand for Khalistan, in French-Canadian feelings about Quebec, in Palestinian demands for self-determination, images of a homeland are only part of the rhetoric of popular sovereignty and do not necessarily reflect a territorial bottom line. The violence and terror surrounding the breakdown of many existing nation-states are not signs of reversion to anything biological or innate, dark or primordial (Comaroff and Comaroff 1992b). What then are we to make of this renewed blood lust in the name of the nation?

Modern nationalisms involve communities of citizens in the territorially defined nation-state who share the collective experience, not of face-to-face contact or common subordination to a royal person, but of reading books, pamphlets, newspapers, maps, and other modern texts together (Faber 1969, Calhoun 1992). In and through these collective experiences of what Benedict Anderson (1991) calls 'emic capitalisms' and what others increasingly see as 'electronic capitalisms', such as television and cinema (Warner 1992, Lee 1993), citizens imagine themselves to belong to a national society. The modern nation-state in this view grows out of natural facts—such as language, blood, soil, and race—and more out of a differential cultural product, a product of the collective imagination.

This view distills itself, but not quite enough, from the dominant theories of nationalism, from those of J. G. Herder and Giuseppe Mazzini and since then from all sorts of right-wing nationalists, who see nations as products of the natural destinies of peoples, whether rooted in language, race, soil, or religion. In many of these theories of the nation as imagined, there is always a suggestion that blood, kinship, race, and soil are somehow less imagined and more natural than the imagination of collective interest or solidarity. The trope of the tribe reactivates this hidden biology largely because forceful alternatives to it have yet to be articulated. The historical conjunctures concerning reading and publicity, texts and their linguistic mediations, nations and their narratives are only now being juxtaposed to formulate the special and specific dialectics of the national imaginary and its public spheres (Lee 1993).
The leaders of the new nation that were formed in Asia and Africa after World War II—Nehru, Sukarno—would have been distressed to see the frequency with which the ideas of tribalism and nationalism are confused in recent public discourse in the West. These leaders spent a great deal of their rhetorical energies in urging their subjects to give up what they saw as primordial loyalties—to family, tribe, caste, and region—in the interests of the fragile abstractions they called "Egypt," "India," and "Indonesia." They understood that the new nations needed to subvert and annex the primary loyalties attached to more intimate collectivities. They rested their ideas of their new nations on the very edges of the paradox that modern nations were intended to be somehow open, universal, and emancipatory by virtue of their special commitment to citizenly virtue but that their nations were nonetheless, in some essential way, different from and even better than other nations. In many ways these leaders knew what we have tended to forget, namely, that nations, especially in multilingual settings, are tenous collective projects, not eternal natural facts. Yet they too helped to create a false divide between the artificiality of the nation and those facts they falsely projected as primordial—tribe, family, region.

In its preoccupation with the control, classification, and surveillance of its subjects, the nation-state has often created, revitalized, or fractured ethnic identities that were previously fluid, negotiable, or nascent. Of course, the terms used to mobilize ethnic violence today may have long histories. But the realities to which they refer—Serbo-Croatian language, Basque customs, Lithuanian cuisine—were most often crystallized in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Nationalism and ethnicity thus feed each other, as nationalists construct ethnic categories that in turn give rise to construct counterethnicities, and then in times of political crisis these other demand counterstates based on newfound counternationalisms. For every nationalism that appears to be naturally destined, there is another that is a reactive byproduct. While violence in the name of Serbs and Moslems, Khmer and Latvians, Germans and Jews tempts us to think that all such identities run dark and deep, we need only turn to the recent riots in India occasioned by the report of a government commission that recommended reserving a large percentage of government jobs for certain castes defined by the census and the constitution as "backward." Rioting and carnage, and not a few killings and suicides, took place in North India over such labels as "other backward caste," which come out of the terminological distinctions of the Indian census and its specialized protocols and schedules. How astonishing it seems that anyone would die or kill for entitlements associated with being the member of an other backward caste. Yet this case is not an exception: in its macabre bureaucratic banality it shows how the technical needs of censuses and welfare legislation, combined with the cynical tactics of electoral politics, can draw groups into quasi-racial identifications and fears. The matter is not so different as it may appear for such apparently natural labels as Jew, Arab, German, and Hindu, each of which involves people who choose these labels, others who are forced into them, and yet others who through their philological scholarship shrewdly use the histories of these names or find them handy ways of sidestepping messy problems of language and history, race and belief. Of course, not all nation-state policies are hegemonic, nor are all subaltern forms of agency impotent to resist these pressures and seductions. But it does seem fair to say that there are few forms of popular consciousness and subaltern agency that are, in regard to ethnic mobilization, free of the thought forms and political fields produced by the actions and discourses of nation-states.

Thus, minorities in many parts of the world are as artificial as the majorities they are seen to threaten. Whites in the United States, Hindus in India, Englishmen in Great Britain—all are examples of how the political and administrative designation of some groups as minorities (blacks and Hispanics in the United States, Celts and Pakistanis in the United Kingdom, Muslims and Christians in India) helps to pull majorities (silent or vocal) together under labels with short lives but long histories. The new ethnicities are often no older than the nation-states that have come to resist. The Muslims of Bosnia are being reluctantly ghettoized although there is fear among both Serbs and Croats of the possibility of an Islamic state in Europe. Minorities are as often made as they are born. Recent ethnic movements often involve thousands, sometimes millions, of people who are spread across vast territories and often separated by vast distances. Whether we consider the linkage of Serbs divided by large chunks of Bosnia-Herzegovina, or Kurds dispersed across Iran, Iraq, and Turkey, or Sikhs spread through London, Vancouver, and California, as well as the Indian Punjab, the new ethnointerationalism are complex, large-scale, highly coordinated acts of mobilization, reliant on news, logistical flows, and propaganda across state borders. They can hardly be considered tribal, if by this we mean that they are spontaneous uprisings of closely bonded, spatially segregated, naturally allied groupings. In the case we find most frightening today, what could be called Serbian tribalism is hardly a simple thing given that there are at least 2.8 million Yugoslav families who have produced about 1.4 million mixed marriages between Serbs.
and Croats (Holzbaur 1992). To which tribe could these families be said to belong? In our horrified preoccupation with the shock troops of ethno-nationalism, we have lost sight of the confused sentiments of civilians, the torn loyalties of families that have members of warring groups within the same household, and the urgings of those who hold to the view that Serbs, Muslims, and Croats in Bosnia-Herzegovina have no fundamental enmity. It is harder to explain how principles of ethnic affiliation, however dubious their provenance and fragile their theory, can very rapidly mobilize large groups into violent action.

What does seem clear is that the tribal model, involving as it suggests prepackaged passions waiting to explode, flies in the face of the contingencies that spark ethnic passion. The Sikhs, until recently the bulwark of the Indian army and historically the lightning arm of Hindu India against Muslim rule, today regard themselves as threatened by Hinduism and seem willing to accept aid and succor from Pakistan. The Muslims of Bosnia-Herzegovina have been forced reluctantly to revitalize their Islamic affiliations. Far from activating long-standing tribal sentiments, Bosnian Muslims are torn between their own conception of themselves as European Muslims (a term recently used by Ejub Ganic, vice president of Bosnia) and the view that they are part of a transnational Islam, which is already actively involved in Bosnian warfare. Wealthy Bosnians who live abroad in countries such as Turkey are already buying weapons for the defense of Muslims in Bosnia. To free us from the toil of the tribe, as the primordial source of nationalisms that we find less civic than our own in the United States, we need to construct a theory of large-scale ethnic mobilization that explicitly recognizes and interprets its postnationalist properties.

Postnational Movements

Many recent and violent ethnonationalisms are not so much explosive as implosive. That is, rather than being rooted in some primordial substrate of affect deep within each of us that is brought up and out into wider sorts of social engagement and group action, the reverse is often the case. The effects of large-scale interactions between and within nation-states, often stimulated by news of distant locations, serve to cascade (Rosewar 1990) through the complexities of regional, local, and neighborhood politics until they energize local issues and impel into various forms of violence, including the most brutal ones. What were previously cool ethnic identities (Sikh and Hindu, Armenian and Azeri, Serb and Croat) thus turn hot, as localities impede under the pressure of events and processes distant in space and time from the site of the implosion. Among Bosnia's Muslims it is possible to watch the temperature of these identities change before our very eyes as they find themselves pushed away from a secular, Europeanist idea of themselves into a more fundamentalist posture. They are being pushed not only by the threats to their survival from Serbs but also by pressure from their fellow Muslims in Saudi Arabia, Egypt, and Sudan, who suggest that Bosnian Muslims are now paying the price for playing down their Islamic identity under Communist rule. Bosnian Muslim leaders have begun to explicitly state that if they do not receive help quickly from the Western powers, they might have to turn to Palestinian models of terror and extremism.

One important way to account for those cases in which cool identities turn hot and implosions from one place generate explosions in others is to remind ourselves that the nation-state is by no means the only game in town as far as translocal loyalties are concerned. The violence that surrounds identity politics around the world today reflects the anxiety attendant on the search for postterritorial principles of solidarity. The movements we now see in Serbia and Sri Lanka, Mozambique's Kangal and Namibia, Punjab and Quebec are what might be called "Indian nationalisms." Such nationalisms actually contain transnational, subnational links and, more generally, nonnational identities and aspirations. Because they are so often the product of forced as well as voluntary diaspora, of mobile intellectuals as well as manual workers, of dialogues with hosts as well as hospitable states, very few of the new nationalisms can be separated from the anguish of displacement, the nostalgia of exile, the repatriation of funds, or the brutalities of asylum seeking. Haitians in Miami, Tamils in Boston, Moroccans in France, Mozambicans in Holland are the carriers of these new transnational and postnational loyalties.

Territorial nationalism is the ab'hi of these movements and not necessarily their basic motive or final goal. In contrast, these basic motives and goals can be far darker than anything having to do with national sovereignty, as when they are driven by the motives of ethnic purification and genocide, thus, Serbian nationalism seems to operate on the fear and hatred of its ethnic Others far more than on the sense of a sacred territorial patrimony. Or they can be simply idioms and symbols around which many groups come to articulate their desire to escape the specific state regime that is seen as threatening their own survival. Palestinians are more worried about getting Israel off their backs than about the special geographical magic of the West Bank.

While there are many separatist movements in the world today—the
Basques, the Tamils, the Quebeckois, the Serbs—that seem determined to
lock nationalities and statehood together under a single ethnic rubric,
more impressive still are the many oppressed minorities who have suffered
displacement and forced diaspora without articulating a strong wish for a
nation-state of their own. Armenians in Turkey, Huts from Bu-
rundi who live in urban Tanzania, and Kashmiri Hindus in exile in Delhi
are a few examples of how displacement does not always generate the fan-
tasy of state building. Although many antistate movements revolve around
images of homeland, soil, place, and return from exile, these images reflect
the poverty of their (and our) political languages rather than the hegemony
of territorial nationalism. Put another way, no ideology has yet emerged to
capture the collective interests of many groups in translocal solidarities,
cross-border mobilizations, and postnational identities. Such interests are
many and local, but they are still entrapped in the linguistic imaginary of
the territorial state. This very imaginary is the cause of much global violence
because many movements of emancipation and identity are forced, in their struggles against existing nation-states, to em-
brace the very imaginary they seek to escape. Postnational or antistate
movements are forced by the very logic of actually existing nation-states
to become antinational or antistrate and thus to inspire the very state power
that forces them to respond in the language of postnationalism. This
vicious circle can only be escaped when a language is found to capture
complex, nonterritorial, postnational forms of allegiance.

Much has been said in recent years about the speed with which infor-
mation travels around the world, the intensity with which the news of one
city flashes on the television screens of another, of how money manipula-
tions in one stock exchange affect finance ministries a continent away.
Mac has been said, too, about the need to attack global problems, such as
AIDS, pollution, and terrorism, with concerted forms of international action.
The democracy wave and the AIDS pandemic are to some extent caused by
the same ills of interoamental and transnational human traffic.

From the perspective of the Cold War, the world may have become
unpredictable. But it has also become multilocal, to use James Rosenau's term
(1990). Adapting metaphors from chaos theory, Rosenau has shown how
the legitimacy of nation-states has steadily weakened, how international
and transnational organizations of every type have proliferated, and how
local politics and global processes affect each other in chaotic but not un-
predictable ways, often outside the interactions of nation-states.

To appreciate these complexities, we need to do more than what social

scientists like to call comparison, putting one country or culture next to
another as if they were as independent in life as in thought. We need to
take a fresh look at a variety of organizations, movements, ideologies, and
networks of which the traditional multinational corporation is only one
example. Consider such transnational philanthropic movements as Habitat
for Humanity (whose volunteers seek to build new environments with fel-
low volunteers in far-flung locations). Take the various international ter-
rriorist organizations, which mobilize men (and sometimes women), money,
equipment, training camps, and passion in a bewildering cross-hatching of
ideological and ethnic combinations. Consider international fashion,
which is not just a matter of global markets and cross-national-style canni-
balism but is increasingly a matter of systematic transnational assemblages
of production, taste transfer, pricing, and exhibition. Take the variety of
Green movements that have begun to organize themselves transnationally
around specific sorts of biopolitics. Consider the world of refugees. For
long we have taken refugee issues and organizations to be part of the flot-
ami and jersam of political life, floating between the certainties and stabili-
ties of nation-states. What we cannot see is that there is a refugee movement,
refugee bureaucracies, refugee-relief movements, refugee-oriented depart-
ments of nation-states, and refuge-oriented transnational philanthropies
all constitute one part of the Jernau framework of the emergent, post-
national order. Another excellent example, closer to home perhaps, is the
large number of organizations, movements, and networks of Christian
philanthropy, such as World Vision, that have long blurred the boundaries
between evangelical, developmental, and peacekeeping functions in many
parts of the world. Perhaps the best studied of these examples is the
Olympic movement, certainly the largest modern instance of a movement
born in the context of European concerns with world peace in the latter
part of the nineteenth century. This movement, with its special form of
dialectical play between national and transnational allegiances (MacAlon
1981, Kang, MacAlon, and DaMatta 1988) represents only the most
spectacular among a series of sites and formations on which the uncertain
future of the nation-state will turn.

In all these cases, what we are looking at are not just international slo-
tams, or interest groups, or image transfers. We are looking at the birth of
a variety of complex, postnational social formations. These formations are
now organized around principles of finance, recruitment, coordination,
communication, and reproduction that are fundamentally postnational and
not just multinational or international. The classic modern multinational
corporation is a slightly misleading example of what is most important

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about these new forms precisely because it relies crucially on the legal, fiscal, environmental, and human organization of the nation-state, while maximizing the possibilities of operating both within and across national structures, always exploiting their legitimacy. The new organizational forms are more diverse, more fluid, more ad hoc, more provisional, less coherent, less organized, and simply less implicated in the comparative advantages of the nation-state. Many of them are explicitly constituted to monitor the activities of the nation-state. Amnesty International is an excellent example. Others, largely associated with the United Nations, work to contain the excesses of nation-states, for example, by assisting refugees, monitoring peace-keeping arrangements, organizing relief in famine, and doing the uglamour work associated with oceans and tariffs, international health and labor.

Yet others, like Oxfam, are examples of global organizations that work outside the semi-official United Nations network and rely on the growth of nongovernmental organizations (NGOS) in many parts of the developing world. These NGOs, which operate in a host of areas ranging from technology and the environment to health and the arts, grew less than two hundred in 1969 to more than two thousand in the early 1970s. They often constitute major grassroots organizations for self-help that grew out of and contribute to a sense of the limited capability of national governments to deliver the basics of life in such societies as India.

Still other organizations, which we often call fundamentalist, such as the Muslim Brotherhood in the Middle East, the Unification Church, and any number of Hindu, Buddhist, and Muslim organizations, constitute full-service global movements that seek to alleviate suffering across national boundaries while mobilizing first-order loyalties across state boundaries. Some of these evangelical movements (such as the radical Hindu group known as the Azmda Majl, which has been held responsible for the assassination of Indian diplomats abroad) are aggressively opposed to specific nation-states and are frequently treated as seditionists. Others, such as the Unification Church, simply work their way around the nation-state without directly questioning its jurisdiction. Such examples, which we still tend to see as exceptional or parish organizational forms, are both instancers and incubators of a postnational global order.

The Heart of Whiteness

The term postnational, so far used without comment, has several implications that can now be more closely examined. The first is temporal and historical and suggests that we are in the process of moving to a global order in which the nation-state has become obsolete and other formations for allegiance and identity have taken their place. The second is the idea that what are emerging are strong alternative forms for the organization of global traffic in resources, images, and ideas—forms that either contest the nation-state actively or constitute peaceful alternatives for large-scale political loyalties. The third implication is the possibility that, while nations might continue to exist, the steady erosion of the capabilities of the nation-state to monopolize loyalty will encourage the spread of national forms that are largely divorced from territorial states. These are relevant senses of the term postnational, but none of them implies that the nation-state in its classical territorial form is as yet out of business. It is certainly in crisis, and part of the crisis is an increasingly violent relationship between the nation-state and its postnational Others.

The United States is a particularly salient place in which to consider these propositions because, on the face of it, it has managed to retain most successfully the image of a national order that is simultaneously civil, plural, and prosperous. It appears to nurture a vibrant and complex set of public spheres, including some that have been called "alternative," "parasitical," or "counter" publics (Relind and Freeman 1982). It has sustained a vibrant and complex set of publics, and although its forms of public violence are many and worrying, its state apparatus is not generally dependent on forms of torture, imprisonment, and violent repression. When this is added to the fact that multiculturalism in the United States seems to take predominately nonviolent forms, we appear to be faced with a great, uncontested power that dominates the new world order, that draws in immigrants in the thousands, and that seems to be a triumphant example of the classic, territorial nation-state. Any argument that the emergence of a postnational global order will have to engage its greatest apparent falsification, the contemporary United States. This last section lays the groundwork for such an engagement.

Until a few years ago, I was content to live in that special space allotted to "foreigners," especially Anglophone, educated ones like myself, with faint traces of a British accent. As a black woman at a bus stop in Chicago once said to me with approval, I was an East Indian. That was in 1972. But since that happy conversation more than two decades ago, it has become steadily less easy to see myself, armed with my Indian passport and my Anglophone ways, as somehow immune from the politics of racial identity in the United States. Not only is it that after nearly three decades of being
a resident alien in the United States, married to an Anglo-Saxon American woman, the father of a bicultural teenager, my Indian passport seems like a rather slight badge of identity. The net of racial politics is now cast wider than ever before on the streets of the urban United States.

My own complexion and its role in minority politics, as well as in street encounters with racial hazard, prompt me to reopen the links between America and the United States, between biculturalism and patriotism, between diasporic identifications and the (in)abilities provided by passports and green cards. Postnational loyalties are not irrelevant to the problem of diversity in the United States. The net of racial politics is now cast wider than ever before on the streets of the urban United States.

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really having moved very far—Croz in Bosnia, Hindus in Kashmir, Muslims in India. Yet others find themselves in patterns of repeated migration. Indians who went to East Africa in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries found themselves pushed out of Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania in the 1980s to find fresh travails and opportunities in England and the United States, and they are now considering returning to East Africa. Similarly, Chinese from Hong Kong who are buying real estate in Vancouver, Guatamalans from Mexico opening motels in New Jersey and newspaper kiosks in New York City, and Sikh cabdrivers in Chicago and Philadelphia are all examples of a new sort of world in which diasporas are the order of things and settled ways of life are increasingly hard to find. The United States, always in its self-perception a land of immigrants, finds itself awash in these global diasporas, no longer a closed space for the melting pot to work its magic, but yet another diasporic switching point. People come here to seek their fortunes, but they are no longer content to leave their homelands behind. Global democracy fever and the breakdown of the Soviet empire have meant that most groups that wish to renegotiate their links to their diasporic identities from their American vantage points are now free to do so. Thus, American Jews of Polish origin undertake Holocaust tours in Eastern Europe, Indian doctors from Michigan set up eye clinics in New Delhi, Palestinians in Detroit participate in the politics of the West Bank.

The Form of the Transnation

The formula of hyphenation (as in Italian-Americans, Asian-Americans, and African-Americans) is reaching the point of saturation, and the right-hand side of the hyphen can barely contain the amensality of the left-hand side. Even as the legitimacy of nation-states in their own territorial contexts is increasingly under threat, the idea of the nation frontiers transcends safely. From the depredations of their home states, diasporic communities become doubly loyal to their nations of origin and thus ambivalent about their loyalties to America. The politics of ethnic identity in the United States is inseparably linked to the global spread of originally local national identities. For every nation-state that has exported significant numbers of its populations to the United States as refugees, tourists, or students, there is now a decontextualized transnation, which retains a special ideological link to a putative place of origin but is otherwise thoroughly diasporic collectivity. No existing conception of America can contain this large variety of transnationalism.

In this scenario, the hyphenated (Asian-American-Japanese or Native-American-Seneca or African-American-Jamaican or Hispanic-American-Bolivian) as diasporic identities stay mobile and grow more protean. Or perhaps the sides of the hyphen will have to be reversed, and we can become a federation of diasporas. American-Indians, American-Haitians, American-Irish, American-Africans. Dual citizenships might increase if the societies from which we came remain or become more open. We might recognize that diasporic diversity actually puts loyalty to a nonterritorial transnation first, while recognizing that there is a special American way to connect to these global diasporas. America, as a cultural space, will not need to compete with a host of global identities and diasporic loyalties. It might come to be seen as a model of how to arrange one territorial locus (among others) for a cross-hatching of diasporic communities. In this regard, the American problem resembles those of other wealthy industrial democracies (such as Sweden, Germany, Holland, and France), all of which face the challenge of squaring Enlightenment universalisms and diasporic pluralism.

The question is, can a postnational politics be built around this cultural fact? Many societies now face influxes of immigrants and refugees, wanted and unwanted. Others are pushing out groups in acts of ethnic cleansing intended to produce the very people whose preexistence the nation was supposed to ratify. But America may be alone in having organized itself around a modern political ideology in which pluralism is central to the conduct of democratic life. Out of a different strand of its experience, this society has also generated a powerful fabric of itself as a land of immigrants. In today's postnational, diasporic world, America is being invited to weld these two doctrines together, to confront the need of pluralism and of immigration, to construct a society around diasporic diversity.

But such images as the mosaic, the rainbow, the quilt, and other tropes of complexity-in-diversity cannot supply the imaginative resources for this task, especially as fears of tribalism multiply. Tribes do not make quilts, although they sometimes make confections. Whether in debates over immigration, bilingual education, the academic canon, or the underclass, these liberal images have sought to contain the tension between the centripetal pull of America's and the centrifugal pull of diasporic diversity in American life. The battles over affirmative action, quotas, welfare, and abortion in America today suggest that the metaphor of the mosaic cannot contain the contradiction between group identities, which Americans will tolerate (up to a point) in cultural life, and individual identities, which are still the nonnegotiable principle behind American ideas of achievement, mobility, and justice.
What is to be done? There could be a special place for America in the new, postnational order, and one that does not rely on either isolationism or global domination as its alternative basis. The United States is eminently suited to be a sort of cultural laboratory and a free-trade zone for the generation, circulation, importation, and testing of the materials for a world organized around diasporic diversity. In a sense, this experiment is already under way. The United States is already a huge, fascinating garbage can for the rest of the world. It provides golf vacations and real estate for the Japanese, business-management ideologies and techniques for Europe and India, soap-opera ideas for Brazil and the Middle East, prime ministers for Yugoslavia, supply-side economics for Poland, Russia, and whoever else will try, Christian fundamentalism for Korea, and postmodern architecture for Hong Kong. By also providing a set of images—Rambo in Afghanistan, "We Are the World," George Bernard Shaw in Baghdad, Coke goes to Barcelona, Pope goes to Washington—that link human rights, consumer style, antisemitism, and media glitz, it might be said that the United States is partly accountable for the idiosyncrasies that attend struggles for self-determination in otherwise very different parts of the world. This is why a University of Iowa sweatshirt is not just a silly symbol in the jungles of Mozambique or on the barricades of Beirut. It captures the free-floating yearning for American style, even in the most intense confrontations of opposition to the United States. The cultural politics of queer nationality is an example of this contradictory yearning in the United States (Berlant and Freeman 1992). The rest of this yearning is provoked by authoritarian state policies, massive arms industries, the insistently hungry eye of the electronic media, and the despair of bankrupt economies.

Of course, these products and ideas are not the immaculate conceptions of some mysterious American know-how but are precisely the result of a complex environment in which ideas and intellectuals meet in a variety of special settings (such as labs, libraries, classrooms, music studios, business seminars, and political campaigns) to generate, reconstitute, and recirculate cultural forms that are fundamentally postnational and diasporic. The role of American musicians, studios, and record companies in the creation of world beat is an excellent example of this sort of down-home but offshore entrepreneurial mentality. Americans are loathe to admit the peculiarity, pragmatic, haphazard, flexible, and opportunistic ways in which these American products and reproductions circulate around the world. Americans like to think that the Chinese have simply bought the virtues of free enterprise, the Poles, the supply side, the Haitians and Filipinos, democracy, and everyone, human rights. We rarely pay attention to the complicated terms, traditions, and cultural styles into which these ideas are folded and thus transformed beyond our recognition. Thus, during the historic events of Tiananmen Square in 1989, when it seemed as if the Chinese people had become democratic overnight, there was considerable evidence that the ways in which different groups in China understood their problems were both internally varied and tied to various specificities of China's history and cultural style.

When Americans see transformations and cultural complications of their democratic vocabulary and style, if they notice them at all, they are annoyed and dismayed. In this misunderstanding of how others handle what we still see as our national recipe for success, Americans perform a further act of narcissistic distortion: we imagine that these peculiarly American inventions (democracy, capitalism, free enterprise, human rights) are automatically and inherently interconnected and that our national saga holds the key to the combination. In the mirroring of our words, we see the victim of our myths. We are believers in terminal conversion.

The American 'victory' in the Cold War need not necessarily turn puritan. The fact is that the Unites States is not necessarily a dead center of point of view, is already a vast free-trade zone, full of ideas, technologies, styles, and idioms (from McDonald's and the Harvard Business School to the Dream Team and reverse mortgages) that the rest of the world finds fascinating. This free-trade zone rests on a volatile economy; the major cities of the American heartland (Los Angeles, Miami, New York, Detroit) are now heavily militarized. But these facts are of little relevance to those who come, either briefly or for more extended stays, to this free-trade zone. Some, fleeing vastly greater urban violence, state persecution, and economic hardship, come as permanent migrants, legal or illegal. Others are short-term shoppers for clothes, entertainment, loans, armaments, or quick lessons in free-market economics or civil-society politics. The very untruth, the rank unpredictability, the sheer cultural vitality of this free-trade zone are what attract all sorts of diapasons to the United States.

For the United States, to play a major role in the cultural politics of a postnational world has very complex domestic entitlements. It may mean making room for the legitimacy of cultural rights, rights to the pursuit of cultural difference under public protections and guarantees. It may mean a painful break from a fundamentally Fordist, manufacture-centered conception of the American economy, as we learn to be global information brokers, service providers, style doctors. It may mean embracing as part of our livelihood what we have so far confined to the world of Broadway, Holly-
more deeply territorial than ever. But it is also possible to detect in many of these transnational (some ethnic, some religious, some philanthropic, some militaristic) the elements of a postnational imaginary. These elements for those who wish to hasten the demise of the nation-state, for all their contradictions, require both nurture and critique. In this way, transnational social forms may generate not only postnational yearnings but also actually existing postnational movements, organizations, and spaces. In these postnational spaces, the incapacity of the nation-state to contain diversity (as it seeks the homogeneity of its citizens, the simultaneity of its presence, the consensuality of its narrative, and the stability of its citizens) may, perhaps, be overcome.