

Folklore and Theories of Globalization

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Because the study of folklore has been—and continues to be—organized around relationships of cultural production to local community, nationality, diaspora, ethnicity, identity, and power differentials, theories of globalization are fundamental to both the history and the future of the discipline.

This essay will outline some of the diverse ways in which the world has been constructed, problematized, and theorized as a single place, particularly from the disciplinary perspectives of anthropology (Appadurai 1996; Hannerz 1996), sociology (Wallerstein 1974; Pieterse 1995; Robertson 1992), and cultural studies (Hall 1991a, 1991b; Friedman 1990, 1995). Together, this range of disciplinary perspectives helps address the interdisciplinary nature of folklore's organizing concerns, listed above, while also providing some general background to the contemporary theoretical dialogues about globalization.

In addition, I will summarize the debates around two of the theoretical questions most relevant to considerations of folklore and globalization: (1) Does globalization lead to increased cultural homogenization? and (2) How does the local factor into theories of the global? I focus specifically on these two questions because they address folklorists' concerns with the local production of culture and the ways in which shifting notions of community, nationality, and locality impact those productions. Lastly, I will propose ways in which folklorists can elaborate on and further contribute to globalization discourse by drawing on the discipline's theoretical positions and methodological practices.

Theorizing the Global

Globalization is not a new phenomenon, though much of the rhetoric—both popular and academic—would seem to suggest that it grows out of the late-twentieth century technologies, lifestyles, and capitalism. Religious movements—particularly Christianity and Islam—provide some of the earliest examples of globalization (Beckford and Luckmann 1989; Robertson 1989; Ahmed and Donnan 1994; Halliday 1994). Colonialism and imperialism also

provide similar examples of early global interconnectedness, and in many cases colonialism and religious evangelism collaborated in their attempts at cultural conversion (Sen 1989). Both religious studies and post-colonial studies offer an important historical depth to contemporary understandings of globalization and transculturation; however, they have been excluded from this consideration of globalization due to space limitations.

Theories of the global range far and wide, both disciplinarily and conceptually, and this section is intended as an overview to some of the most salient and frequently cited meditations on globalization.

Immanuel Wallerstein: The Modern World-System and the World-Economy

Immanuel Wallerstein's *The Modern World System* (1974) is one of the earliest attempts to theorize globalization. As suggested by the title to his four-volume tome, Wallerstein perceives the world in terms of a social system with distinct "boundaries, structures, member groups, rules of legitimation, and coherence" (1974:347). The modern world-system can be divided into four major stages of development—the origins of the system as a European world-system (1450–1640), the consolidation of the system (1640–1815), the "conversion of the world-economy into a global enterprise" (1815–1917), and then the present stage (1974:10–11).

In addition to the four stages of development, Wallerstein identifies two types of world-systems: world empires, which are marked by a single political system, and world-economies, which do not share a single political system. The modern world-system is, of course, a world-economy. For Wallerstein, the modern world-economy is peculiar because of its stability and longevity, traits that he attributes to the political and economic interrelationship of capitalism. Consequently, Wallerstein's world-economy also entails a global division of labor, organized both by function and by geography. While this division of labor results partly from ecological considerations, Wallerstein is quick to point out that "for the most part, it [uneven distribution of economic tasks] is a function of the social organization of work, one which magnifies and legitimizes the ability of some groups within the system to exploit the labor of others" (1974:349). In introducing the power differentials which characterize the modern world-economy, he also draws the distinction between "core states" and "peripheral areas" (349–50).

In more recent works on the modern world-economy, Wallerstein engages questions of "culture" (1991a, 1991b). For Wallerstein, the "cultural framework" within which the modern world-economy operates is a "geoculture" which remains largely "hidden from view and therefore more

difficult to assess" (1991b:11). Moreover, Wallerstein contends that the recent (since 1968) intellectual emphasis on "culture" as opposed to "politics" or the "economy" as the focus of globalization discourse has to do with the political implications of the various approaches. He believes that culture, and the agency it grants people, allows for a certain activist optimism about changing the world, an optimism which he feels does not exist in the realm of politics and economics (12).

Roland Robertson: A Global Systems Approach

Roland Robertson insists that a "systematic comprehension of the structuration of the world order" (1992:55) must inform any theory of globalization and any discussion of globality, and he posits three overlapping models for doing so. His first model is for what he terms "the global field" which consists of four major aspects: national societies, individuals, relationships between national societies, and mankind (25). Through this model for the global field, or what he later refers to as the global-human condition, Robertson addresses what he perceives to be the problem of increasing global complexity and the simultaneous need for each of these four fields to remain relatively autonomous despite the fact that each is also constrained by the other three (26–28). His second model of globalization is the sequential phase model, a five-stage diachronic overview of globalization as a deeply historical process leading up to the current "high degree of global density and complexity" (58). The five phases begin in Europe in the early 15th century and end in the present global situation.

Robertson's first two models, the global field or global-human condition model and the sequential phase model, overlap in his discussion and conceptualization of globality as an increased consciousness of the world as a whole. He describes the interaction of the two models by drawing four possible orientations toward world order, what he calls *Global Gemeinschaft 1*, *Global Gemeinschaft 2*, *Global Gesellschaft 1*, and *Global Gesellschaft 2*. Each possible orientation also has two versions, a "symmetrical" version which leans toward equality and an "asymmetrical" version leaning towards inequality (1992:78–79).

Robertson's third model of globalization is much less schematic. In this model, he attempts to join universalism and particularity. One way in which Robertson has described this interplay of the universal and the particular is in his discussion of *glocalization*, a term and an idea which derives from the Japanese word *dochakuku*, meaning "living in one's own land" (1995:28). In the traditional Japanese agricultural sense, *dochakuku* is the principle of adapting one's farming techniques to the local conditions; more recently, the term has been given a business context in which it equates

loosely with the idea of micromarketing (i.e., developing local market strategies for transnational products). Robertson contends that any model of globalization must consider the fact that the local is a fundamental part of the global, both in imagination and in practice (1995).

Ulf Hannerz: Globalization as Creolization and Cultural Flows

The emphasis on the local in theories of the global is the basis of Ulf Hannerz's model for the global ecumene. Hannerz centers his theory on the increased (and increasing) interconnectedness of various localities, and this notion of interconnectedness is fundamental to his definition of globalization. Yet, Hannerz is careful to avoid the hyperbole of globalization discourse that presents dramatic pictures of the "before" and "after" type. His depiction of global interconnectedness is historically informed, and he shatters the image of the world as a cultural mosaic with sharp distinctions and clear edges (1996:18). Discarding the image of the world as a mosaic is only the beginning of Hannerz's reflexivity. His own investigation into the global distribution of meanings and meaningful forms reminds us that "the world is now so complicated that any social units we work with in cultural studies must be more or less arbitrary, artifacts of particular analytical objectives" (23).

Hannerz's emphasis on global interconnectedness leads to creolization as the dominant metaphor for his model of the global ecumene. For Hannerz, much of the appeal of creolization as an organizing metaphor stems from the perception that creolization points to cultural mixture, "creativity and richness of expression" without the baggage of cultural "purity, homogeneity, and boundedness" and without the implications of "devian[ce]" (1996:66). At the core of his concept of creole culture, Hannerz sees "a combination of diversity, interconnectedness, and innovation, in the context of global center-periphery relationships" (67). Yet, as Barbara Abou-el-Haj (1991) points out, the term "creolization" still carries with it racist and colonialist associations, implicit in the linguistic idea of a "standard" and "superstratum," which Hannerz does not address in his earlier presentations (e.g. Hannerz 1991) of the creolist model to which Abou-el-Haj is responding. In Hannerz's later, more elaborated work, he does caution against taking an overly celebratory attitude toward creolist culture though he still endorses the creolization metaphor as a useful one for conceptualizing globalization (1996:67) and suggests that cultures might be situated along a continuum of creolization. Such a continuum of creolized cultures is differentially marked by political and economic valuations, though not necessarily in any direct correlation with the disparate ends of the spectrum.

As a model of global interconnectedness, Hannerz's continuum of creolized cultures seems to imply a certain amount of cultural fixity as cultures are set along the continuum. However, a second aspect of Hannerz's theorization of the global ecumene suggests that global interconnectedness is not static but has to do with cultural flows. Along these lines, he identifies four organizational frames within which social meanings are produced and circulated. The four frames—form of life, state, market, and movement—should not be seen in isolation of each other but rather understood as overlapping and intersecting. Hannerz suggests that through these four frames we can account for cultural processes and the circulation of social meaning.

Jan Nederveen Pieterse: Globalization as a Process of Hybridization

Jan Nederveen Pieterse brings together the diachronic aspect of Robertson's sequential phase model and Hannerz's emphasis on creolized cultures in his theory of globalization as hybridity (1995). For Pieterse, like Robertson, "globalization is the conceptualization of a *phase* following an existing condition of *globality* and part of an ongoing process of the formation of world-wide social relations" (1995:48). Yet Pieterse moves beyond the notion of globalization as a continuation of world history to posit a theory of hybridity which does more than simply celebrate hybrid forms; rather, Pieterse insists that any consideration of hybridity also consider questions of "hegemony and neo-colonial power relations" (55). And, much as Hannerz does, Pieterse proposes a continuum of hybridities with an assimilationist hybridity at one end and a destabilizing hybridity at the other (57).

Pieterse also reiterates the fact that any theory of hybridity must necessarily encompass its relationship to power and hegemony, particularly the ways in which they are inscribed and reproduced within hybrid forms (1995:57). For Pieterse, hybridization is the "making of global culture as a global *mélange*" (60).

Arjun Appadurai: Global Flows and Moving -Scapes

Arjun Appadurai premises his theory of the global on the idea of rupture as inspired by the joint processes of media and migration and their relationship to "the work of the imagination" (1996). He seizes on mass mediation, particularly the electronic, as fundamental to this theory of rupture because of the way it motivates the work of the imagination on individual levels. Appadurai's sense of the imagination derives from Benedict Anderson's use in *Imagined Communities* (1991[1983]); that is, print media (in Anderson's case) and mass media (in Appadurai's case) allow individuals to construct imagined selves in imagined worlds inhabited by others in similar situations. Appadurai is careful

to note that his emphasis on the significance of electronic media is not simply “a monocausal fetishization of the electronic” (1996:3). Rather, it is the linking of mediation and migration that is significant. Together, mediation and migration render the traditional production of subjectivities unstable by creating a number of new diasporic public spheres, thus ultimately undermining the power of the nation-state to determine social changes (4).

In prioritizing the transnational and postnational over the national, Appadurai frees himself from homogenization theories which tend to position the United States as the primary cultural and ideological exporter in a single world system. For Appadurai, the United States becomes only “one node of a complex transnational construction of imaginary landscapes” (1990, 1996:31). This idea of transnational imaginary landscapes provides the framework for Appadurai’s theory of globalization in which he sees various ruptures and disjunctures occurring in the process of global cultural flows.

Five landscapes—ethnoscapes, ideoscapes, mediascapes, technoscapes, and financescapes—constitute the basis of Appadurai’s “imagined worlds,” multiple worlds which involve people, machinery, money, images, and ideas. Through these five *-scapes*, Appadurai attempts to map contemporary global flows in all of their disjuncture. As a vision of global conditions, it provides a somewhat chaotic, moving, rapid, crosscutting model of modernity. Thus, while people, technology, money, and images have always moved about the globe, they have never done so with the speed and scale which now characterize their movement along “nonisomorphic paths” (1990, 1996:37). Consequently, the resulting disjunctures among these five *-scapes* “have become central to the politics of global culture” (37).

Jonathan Friedman: Globalization as Situated Practice

In his discussion of global cultural processes, Jonathan Friedman diverges from most of the other globalization theorists and global systems analysts who premise their models on a notion of culture as some sort of substance rather than process or practice. He situates the invention of “culture” in the awareness of difference, “of different ways of doing similar things” (1995:80), and then contends that difference is converted into “essence, race, text, paradigm, code, structure, without ever needing to examine the actual process by which specificity comes to be and is reproduced” (80–81). As a result, when this notion of culture as difference is applied to the global context, it “generates an essentialization of the world” (81). To combat this essentializing tendency, Friedman focuses on the ways in which culture is “practised and constituted out of practice” (82).

This emphasis on culture as practice counters what Friedman calls the “anthropological textualization of otherness” or the inability of cultural

analysts to correctly represent “the way in which the specificity of otherness is generated and maintained” (1995:82). He uses the concept of creolization as an example of how the construction of otherness is an ongoing social act bolstered by the hegemonic practice of “centrally located” professionals.

While Friedman would clearly dismiss the approaches that Pieterse and Hannerz take in their conceptualization of global cultural interconnectedness, he finds support for his practice-centered approach in Appadurai’s work and very possibly in Hannerz’s frames of cultural flows. However, despite Friedman’s general agreement with Appadurai’s theories, they differ on one substantial point—where Appadurai sees disjuncture, Friedman perceives conjuncture (1995:84). Friedman’s sense of conjuncture and systematicity seems to counter the very effect that Appadurai aspires to achieve through his discussion of the nonisomorphic movement of people, machines, money, and media images. However, despite these fundamentally different interpretations of the same phenomenon, Appadurai and Friedman both attempt to theorize global cultural processes by way of practices. For Friedman, the dominant practices of globalization are “assimilation, encompassment and integration within the context of social interaction” (87–88).

Expanding the Boundaries of Globalization Discourse

It is through the different, often opposing, dimensions of these six perspectives on globalization that a useful picture of the contemporary global condition emerges. None of the theories satisfactorily captures what I consider to be the crucial aspect of globalization—the depth of unsystematic complexity that marks global interconnectedness (though Appadurai comes close). Systems approaches like Wallerstein’s and Robertson’s provide necessary structural features, overviews of macro-processes, and historical perspectives which offer a loose framework for envisioning the world *at one level*. Thus, while these systems approaches obviously overlook the micro-processes of individual “face-to-face” (whether virtual or real) interactions and the impact that global interconnectedness (in any form) has on individuals, they do provide a useful entry into thinking about the world as a single place.

On the other end of the spectrum, theorists like Hannerz and Pieterse prioritize the micro-level aspects of globalization through their discussions of creolization and hybridization. Here, too, Robertson’s glocalization seems to do the same, though he never fully delves into specific instances of glocalization, and his theorizing remains at the abstract, macro-level. Hannerz’s analysis of concrete instances of exchange between traditional “centers” and “peripheries”

provides another level at which to think about globalization, and he offers glimpses into the immediate effects of global culture on local people. Thus, while the traditional anthropological notion of centers and peripheries may seem outdated in an increasingly interconnected world marked by global flows and virtual locales, the center-periphery coupling is still useful insofar as it foregrounds the power imbalances which remain integral aspects of globalization. Even Appadurai, whose model seems most clearly to do away with such centers and peripheries, would likely agree that there are still centers of power and capital that influence those on the peripheries of such cores. For Appadurai, centers and peripheries are not tied to geographical locales but to diffuse configurations of power which may take the form of transnational corporations or other entities which control or influence the global flows of capital, technologies, ideologies, and media images.

Appadurai's prioritization of rupture and "non-isomorphic" global flows goes the furthest in modeling the global condition. He addresses globalization on both macro- and micro- levels, though he tends toward the macro and could benefit from more specific ethnographic analysis along the lines of Hannerz's. Combining Appadurai's somewhat chaotic global *-scapes* with Friedman's use of culture as situated practice helps complicate any attempts to bring cohesion to the global picture, though Friedman attempts to do this when he disagrees with Appadurai's emphasis on disjuncture. It is precisely this resistance to systematicity, cohesion, and order that I want to stress as key to any model of contemporary global processes.

Is It a McWorld After All? Thoughts on Globalization and Cultural Homogenization

The belief that increased globalization entails cultural homogenization, most commonly in the guise of Americanization, is a popular one. It is a belief enacted by tourists who travel to far-off lands only to stay in Sheraton hotels, eat at the local McDonald's, and watch big Hollywood pictures in the evenings. It is a belief conveyed by the more adventurous who undertake pilgrimages in the Himalayas only to find roaming snack vendors selling Snicker's bars and Coca-Cola along the way. It is a belief reinforced by anthropologists returning from the field with photographs of African bushmen wearing Nike shoes and UCLA t-shirts. Yet this idea is not perpetuated by tourists and anthropologists alone. Movies, advertisements, and news reports are relentless in their depiction of such cultural interchange, perhaps the ultimate popular postmodern irony.

The gist of such tourist reports, anthropological findings, and American advertisements has been theorized in models of cultural imperialism

(Mattelart 1979; Schiller 1976) that contend that Western, and largely American, culture is exported around the world to the effect of global homogenization. As Featherstone (1995:8) describes the process, capital clears the way for culture. Along these lines, corporate logos become icons of Americana and American ideologies for everyone outside of the “center.”

But the question still remains: do these examples point to a clear process of cultural homogenization? Benjamin Barber (1995) would respond with an unequivocal “yes.” Barber’s process of “McWorld” is one of soft hegemony, an easy way to export American capitalist ideologies to the world, thereby making the world safe for the free market. He grants immense power to the forces of McWorld. In fact, he suggests that McWorld will eventually defeat what he perceives to be its twin evil—Jihad (i.e., tribalism and radical identity politics)—based on his belief that global information and global culture will eventually kill off parochialism (82). As Barber has it, the culture of McWorld will ultimately be the culture of *the* world.

While, for the most part, Stuart Hall (1991a, 1991b) also responds affirmatively to the question of globalization as cultural homogenization, his thinking on the subject is much more nuanced. Hall defines a “new form of globalization” in contrast to the earlier globalization of colonization, particularly that of the British empire, and this new globalization is distinctly American with its emphasis on “television and film, and by the image, imagery, and styles of mass advertising” (1991a:27). In this regard, Hall’s conception of the globalization process is similar to Barber’s. However, where Barber understands McWorld as a totalizing force intent on Americanizing everyone and everything in its path, Hall sees a very peculiar form of homogenization, a homogenization which does not strive for completeness but rather thrives on particularities (28). This type of homogenization seizes upon difference as an effective means of extending its power: “It does not attempt to obliterate them; it operates through them” (28–29).

For Hall, difference becomes a commodity in itself and a highly marketable one at that. This new form of globalization has made it chic “to eat fifteen different cuisines in any one week” (1991a:30), to wonder at pluralism while taking “pleasure in the transgressive Other” (31). At the same time, however, Hall stresses that such commodification and consumption of difference does not occur without resistance from more traditional and conservative forces like the Moral Majority in the United States. In this sense again his thinking is a more subtle elaboration of Barber’s McWorld versus Jihad theme. Hall’s conception of globalization is itself a contested space, but to what extent does that confrontation move beyond discourse? As Hall himself points out, “they are not coming out of different

places, they are coming out of the same place" (32). More than actual contestation, it is the impression of such conflict that extends the capitalist project. Hall contends that by presenting a world of *neutralized* difference, a world of commodified and consumable difference, capitalism is able to maintain its global dominance. As he remarks, "It is trying to constitute a world in which things are different. And that is the pleasure of it but the differences do not matter" (33).

Featherstone (1990, 1995, 1996) questions the basic premise of Americanization upon which both Barber and Hall build their theories of global cultural homogenization. To begin with, such theories depend upon a notion of cultures behaving as substances which flow intact and "easily dissolve the differences they encounter" (1995:9). Yet beyond this distinction, Featherstone contends that the world can no longer be perceived as extending out from one central point such as the United States but rather from many global centers (9). He posits Japan and East Asia as "competing centres," though the notion of more than one center seems to introduce the need for a new metaphor.

For Featherstone, viewing the world with multiple "centres" suggests not cultural uniformity but new levels of difference (1995:13). Like Hall, he highlights the contestatory, confrontational nature of globalization; however, for Featherstone, the contestation is external rather than internal, a global field in which "differences, power struggles and cultural prestige contests are played out" (13). As such, globalization emphasizes cultural heterogeneity and difference of a massive scale: "Globalization makes us aware of the sheer volume, diversity and many-sidedness of culture. Syncretisms and hybridizations are more the rule than the exception" (14).

Featherstone also dismisses the cultural homogenization thesis as premised on ethnocentric ideas about local cultures. That is, theories of cultural and media imperialism tend to ignore local agency and often fail to consider how non-local commodities, images, and information are adapted and used in everyday situations. He critiques such theories for assuming that "local cultures are necessarily battered out of existence through the proliferation of consumer goods, advertising, and media programs stemming from the West (largely the United States)" (1996:62). The availability and popularity of *Rambo* movies in Burma and the Solomon Islands might be taken by some as evidence of cultural homogenization or Americanization, but Featherstone asks the pivotal question: "how are we to read [these accounts]?" (62).

Hannerz (1996) also emphasizes the importance of investigating local practices with respect to "global" commodities as a way of questioning the thesis that globalization entails cultural homogenization. Hannerz's own fieldwork in West Africa introduced him to "cultural entrepreneurs on the periphery" who

use their cultural competence to adapt global commodities to the local market (74). Observing this process suggests one way of answering Featherstone's question about how we should read these instances of cultural interchange.

Like Featherstone, Hannerz also tackles theories of cultural imperialism from a market perspective. Hannerz makes clear that the idea of the market making way for cultural homogenization presents only one, overgeneralized side of the picture (1996:73–74). For Hannerz, focusing on the market as the primary cause of global cultural homogenization ignores the reality of segmented markets and micromarketing. Rather, global homogenization via the market and market segmentation are twin processes of increased globalization. Hannerz contends that market niches succeed where the market frames and the form-of-life frames overlap, and such overlaps cannot lead toward increased cultural homogenization. Rather, these two frames overlap all over the world in local practices that create culturally relevant contexts for globally-produced commodities (74).

Hall, Featherstone, and Hannerz all reflect on the increasingly local nature of the global and the simultaneous global nature of the local. When people migrate, they bring with them the things that travel best—cultural traditions with sensory power like music, folktales, foodways, and festival. At the same time, it is the sensory power of these traditions which brings them to market, which incorporates them into multicultural policy work, which allows them to serve as somewhat superficial points of cultural exchange. In some senses, the local is globally homogenized in the same way that American (or western) culture is said to homogenize all other cultures: not only does one find McDonald's, Coca-Cola, and Nike around the world; one also finds Chinese food, African music, and May Day celebrations.

As the world grows more interconnected and emergent technologies allow more of us to experience more of this global interconnectedness, the global cultural homogenization thesis may seem like an attractive one. However, general impressions and observations are not enough to sustain theory. Only continued investigations of local practice with respect to global commodities, images, and information will help us answer Featherstone's pressing question of how we are to read instances of global-local cultural exchange.

Theorizing the Local: Romance, Resistance, Practice, and Power

Theories of the local are at the core of theories of the global. As Mike Featherstone insists, locality and globality must be considered as interrelated processes: "it is not helpful to regard the global and the local as dichotomies

separated in space or time; rather, it would seem that the processes of globalization and localization are inextricably bound together" (1996:47). Robertson also emphasizes this interrelatedness in his use of the term *glocalization*. While most globalization theorists recognize the importance of the local to their work, the various ways in which the local is theorized is matched only by the diversity of approaches to globalization.

Amy Shuman's deconstruction of the concept of local culture (1993) provides an important backdrop to the following considerations of the global-local configuration of cultural flows. Shuman critiques the ways in which the category of *the local* has been used uncritically by folklorists to signal a natural, authentic, romantic response to globalizing forces and ethnocentric paradigms: "the politics of ethnocentrism, part of the larger contexts of modernism and capitalism, is built into the concepts of local culture and situated knowledge, and these foundations of our discourse are persistent constraints" (349).

By implying that local cultures are somehow authentic traditional cultures pitted against the powers of modernity, mass culture, and global economies, folklorists and cultural theorists set up false dichotomies that amount to little more than an essentialization of the local culture. Shuman suggests a thorough deconstruction of the concept of local culture as a remedy for these essentializing analytical and interpretive practices. In so doing, she lays the foundation for a critical folkloristics which dismisses the idealized and romantic notions of the local as a uniform, integrated site of cultural resistance.

Like Shuman, Arif Dirlik (1996) moves beyond traditional conceptualizations of the local in his attempt to distinguish a "critical localism" which addresses the "relationship between the emergence of a global capitalism and the emergence of a concern with the local as a site of resistance and liberation" (22). Dirlik is careful to distance himself from the naturalized category of local culture as a site of resistance that Shuman discusses; rather, he posits the local as the site for "working out 'alternative public spheres' and alternative social formations" (28). Thus, for Dirlik the local is also connected to specific social movements such as the women's and ethnic movements, the indigenous people's movement, and ecological/environmental movements (23). However, the local is not simply a site of promise but one of predicament as well: while the local can be a site of resistance to global capitalism, it can also be a site of oppression, parochialism, and genocidal conflict (22–23). Dirlik's "critical localism" positions the local as a dialectic site informed both by critical past perspectives and by the critical perspectives of modernity. In moving beyond conventional definitions of the local and toward a "critical localism," Dirlik offers an initial sense of how the local might be theorized as a site of resistance.

However, because he refrains from “burdening [the local] with a definition” so as to avoid limiting analysis (42), Dirlik’s goal of keeping the boundaries of the local porous as a means of ensuring its usefulness as a critical concept diminishes some of its potential power.

Featherstone (1995, 1996) also expands the concept of the local. He warns against the overly integrated sense of the local which derives from the sociological tradition in which the notion of locality draws a correlation between a particular bounded space and the social relationships which exist within that space (1996:47). This model of the local assumes a “stable homogeneous and integrated cultural identity that is both enduring and unique” (47); however, Featherstone relies on the nostalgic and overunified presentations of working-class English life as represented in ethnography and film to highlight the faulty assumptions inherent in this model of locality (1995, 1996:47–51). As Featherstone points out, the degree to which any local community appears integrated depends upon the perspective from which it is being viewed. For Featherstone, the ability to shift the frames of reference is central to any understanding of the global-local relationship.

Appadurai (1996) shifts the focus of the global-local discussion by redefining *locality* away from physical space to process and practice. For Appadurai, locality is a phenomenological quality expressed through “certain kinds of agency, sociality, and reproducibility” (178). As such, locality must be continually produced and maintained as “structured feeling” (181), and he suggests that rites of passage provide one such way of continually producing locality, particularly in small-scale societies (180–81). Though globalization complicates the process of producing and sustaining locality, locality is a *fundamental dimension of social life*. Locality emerges from the “practices of local subjects in specific neighborhoods” (199), and as such it would be impossible for globalizing forces to obliterate it, no matter how difficult they make its production and maintenance, and in this sense there is power in the neighborhood and in the process of locality.

Hall (1991b) also attributes great power to the local and to the margins. The “return of the local” may be a response to globalization, but Hall also sees in the local a “profound cultural revolution [which] has come about as a consequence of the margins coming into representation” (33). According to Hall, the success of local self-representation has transformed the very nature of art, painting, film, music, literature, politics, and social life in general, and as a result “marginality has become a powerful space” and the “discourses of the dominant regimes have been certainly threatened by this decentered cultural empowerment of the marginal and the local” (33). But then he poses the pivotal question: “Is the local just the little local exception,

just what used to called a blip in history?" (38). Hall would seem to answer his own question in the negative, and certainly his example of modern musical hybridizations and crossovers lends credence to this position (39). And yet Hall's representation of the power of the margins, the force of the local, seems a bit one-dimensional. Not everyone in the margins is coming into power, and even among those who are, there is a class component that Hall does not address here.

Thus, while the culture of the global centers has been altered by local self-representation and the cultural revolution of the margins, the extent of the local as a site of global power remains questionable.

Where Do We Go from Here? Around the World in Many Ways

Despite recent rhetorics of interdisciplinarity, too much of the discourse of globality is still too disciplinarily entrenched. Of the global theorists represented here, none have offered an extensive approach to globalization that integrates both ethnographic (and/or sociological) methodologies with the strategies of contemporary literary criticism at the foundation of cultural studies in the humanities. Such methodological couplings would expand the possibilities and present an entirely new range of options for conceptualizing the global flow of cultural practices. Folklore is, of course, well situated to undertake such an interdisciplinary approach to globalization. Long positioned in academic liminality, folkloristics has not only developed its own theories of culture, language, heritage, and difference but has also drawn on theories generated by virtually all disciplines which fall under the umbrella of social sciences and the humanities.

One way to move beyond disciplinarity is to study global processes which require a number of diverse methodologies and strategies for analysis and interpretation. An ethnography of something like Nike—at once a commodity, an icon, and a phenomenon—would truly capture the multiple, overlapping, interacting processes of globalization which Appadurai theorizes (1996). This sort of ethnography provides a coherent way of addressing and analyzing both the mechanisms and the logic of globalization. For instance, the production angle entails a consideration of economic power imbalances between the center and the periphery; workers' conditions, rights, and discourse; as well as a discussion of the gendered aspects of work wherever Nike products are produced. The various consumption patterns add yet another layer to the global ethnography of Nike and direct us to multiple locales both in global centers and in the peripheries. Here we might focus on *how* these shoes (and other sports paraphernalia) are consumed in the different

locales and *what* such consumption means. Are Nike shoes status symbols around the world? Does the fact that someone's mother spends 12 hours a day piecing them together for less than a dollar an hour influence perceptions of them? Beyond that, we might interpret Nike shoes and products as signs. Such an interpretation would also lead us to the media images and messages surrounding Nike. Here, too, we can choose from a wealth of applicable methodologies and strategies for interpretation ranging from communications theory to semiotics, from the ethnographic to the sociological. We might take similar approaches with the social phenomena and social movements that Nike inspires. To top it off, we might want to investigate the discourse, rumors, and legends about Nike. The possibilities do not stop here, and an ethnography of Nike promises to be both global and interdisciplinary, and as such it may provide a suitable model for where globalization theories must go.

In suggesting such an ethnography and such an approach to globalization, I do not intend to provide a more coherent or a more detailed picture of global processes, nor do I intend to create a new, global sort of ethnography. Rather, I want to complicate the extant models of global interconnectedness by producing an intellectual collage. Bringing interdisciplinary methodologies and theories to bear on the global situation is an act of opposition which resists the common intellectual urge to give order (whether functional, structural, psychological, linguistic, etc.) to seemingly disorderly phenomena, observations, and movements. In so doing, I hope to move beyond reductive thinking to a place where we might begin to understand and convey the multidimensionality of power and class and capital and race and identity.

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