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## **Race, Nationalism, and Transnationalism**

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### **Summary and Keywords**

Race is important within U.S. society and globally. However, race also plays a significant role in communication, and research on its influence cuts across every conceivable area of the field, ranging from rhetoric to organizational communication to film studies to health communication. Race is discussed so much within communication that this article, although expansive, cannot refer to all the important work that has been done. Research on race and communication considers a broad range of racial, multiracial, and ethnic groups. Scholarship also ranges from more applied research to purely theoretical work.

Critical and cultural studies work has significantly affected the way scholars think about communication and race. Specifically, concepts developed and explored have provided new lenses through which to understand communication and race. *Nationalism*, for example is significant. A nation is a collectively shared and discursively constructed identity. In thinking about nations as imagined communities cultural ties (such as language, ethnicity, and shared memories) are part of that identity. For racially marginalized groups, a nation may be a political organization at the same time as it is a collectively identified political group based on racial ethnic ties, ancestry, or simply politics. The concept of *transnationalism*, on the other hand, relates to cross or “trans” national relations, ties, and processes, processes that globalization has accelerated and strengthened, such as the movement of capital, media, and people which in turn has shaped local happenings and vice versa. When coupled with nationalism and transnationalism, race plays a mediating role, helping to govern and regulate people, relationships, and sometimes the very reason for relationships existing.

Keywords: race, nationalism, transnationalism, cultural studies, postcolonial, feminist studies

## Introduction

Tracing how race has been conceptualized across space and time moves us away from thinking about it as biological differences that help to explain cultural ones. By understanding race in and across nations, as well as historically, we begin to see it as socially constructed—hence as something humans have created. Thus, race is, in this way, uniquely related to communication, as it is discursively produced. Attempts to connect things like intelligence or criminality to phenotype are now understood across the sciences, social sciences, the humanities, and the arts as spurious, illogical, and antithetical to social life and humanity. Historically, however, there have been attempts in both the academy and popular culture to conflate physical markers of difference with cultural differences, hence using culture as a shorthand for race. This has resulted in reinforcement of racialized beliefs, attitudes, and hierarchies. Such hierarchies commonly position people of color in subordinated positions and white people in superior, superordinate ones. Although biological races do not actually exist, the material consequences of categorizing people according to physical characteristics and then attaching meaning to those classifications are the foundations of racism. Scholars like Omi and Winant (1986) have challenged previous racial theories that emphasized biological and phenotypical difference. Their concept of “racial formations” helps to highlight not only the social constructed-ness of race, but also the way that ideas about race shift over time and space and hence the way race and racism are changeable.

There are a number of scholars who offer meta-theories, or organizing paradigms, for thinking about race and nation, and, although many are not communication scholars, their research has been instrumental in the field of communication and the study of race. Moreover, because so much contemporary racial theory has explored issues of representation, major theorists without communication degrees are working within the realm in which communication scholars work. Stuart Hall, a key figure within cultural studies and an important scholar of race, borrows from semiotics, British cultural studies, race studies, Caribbean studies, and research on colonialism to demonstrate how physical characteristics can be used to produce signifiers of race. In his view ideologies help imbue racial signifiers with meanings, and the presence of multiple ideologies at play in both the production and reception of representations renders them polysemic, indicating that multiple meanings are possible. Thus, while racism can be understood to be an ideological configuration (Hall, 1980), we are constantly engaged in the struggle over “representation,” and can use our knowledge of “signifying processes” to adopt different, sometimes resistant and challenging, strategies for interpreting the meanings of signifiers (Hall, 1996, 1997). Another key figure also associated with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University in Britain, Paul Gilroy,

examines the African diaspora and ultimately, among other key findings, rejects the notion that class struggles trump racial struggles. He, like Hall, argues that historicizing the presence of Africans in and outside of Britain reveals the way race and class have always overlapped and that British nationalism is just a new iteration of racism. He notes:

“Accepting that skin ‘colour,’ however meaningless we know it to be, has a strictly limited material basis in biology, opens up the possibility of engaging with theories of signification which can highlight the elasticity and emptiness of ‘racial’ signifiers as well as the ideological work which has to be done in order to turn them into signifiers of ‘race’ as an open political category, for it is struggle that determines which definitions of ‘race’ will prevail and the conditions under which they will endure or wither away.” (1987, pp. 38–39).

Scholarship critiquing the idea of the powerful (West) suppressing the weak (East) through discourses that deny histories and cultures of subjugated groups is an important area influencing communication research on race, nationalism, and transnationalism. Molefi Asante (2005), known as the principle theorist of “Afrocentricity”—or the idea that Eurocentrism has shaped knowledge and history, and that centering Africa produces a different episteme, including ethical, moral, artistic, and political ones—suggests that power holders stifle oppositional discourses so that social hierarchies continue to exist. This denial of discourse has facilitated the differential racialization of groups of people of color, resulting in people of color not experiencing racism in a singular fashion. European (or white) domination and Eurocentrism have become so naturalized, centralized, and universalized that now the world is divided into binaries of us versus them, of ours and theirs binaries. By drawing on multicultural media, Shohat and Stam (1994) analyze, theorize, and contextualize colonial and postcolonial discourses. In doing so, they extend the work of Edward Said (1978) who critiqued Eurocentric discourses and representations of the (Middle) East or, more accurately, the Other in his work on orientalism. The Other, according to Said, is a malleable category that can become everything the West is not—such as dangerous, inferior, effeminate, exotic, weak, passive, etc.—essentially any stand-in for less powerful and subordinate status in relation to the powerful and superior racial center. Through discussions of the continuous liminal negotiations of difference (according to race, gender, class), Bhabha (1994) locates challenges to Eurocentric epistemologies as happening in the spaces between history, theory, and culture. Spivak (1987) also critiques Eurocentric epistemologies by deconstructing language in order to glean how truths are produced about women, people of color, and other marginalized groups. Famously, she proposed the adoption of “strategic essentialist” tactics, something quite similar to Ono and Sloop’s concept of a “commitment to *telos*” (1992), in order to dismantle the detrimental structures that allow oppression to propagate. As a critique against relying on binary oppositions (“or”) when analyzing race, Hall (1993)

argues for the increased usage of coupling (“and”) identities. To explain the pitfalls of binary thinking, Ono (1998) challenges the idea that categorical thinking about race is logical, and thus necessary, and suggests that mixed-race people (and race in general) should not be understood or defined as essentially combinations of fixed, essential racial identities. Through the combination of Said’s concept of orientalism with a concept of transculturation, Aparicio and Chávez-Silverman (1997) offer the concept of tropicalization as a dynamic term that accounts for mutual influences that dominant and subordinate cultures have on one another. The contributors reinterpret the tropics as a cultural site of their own, with the purpose of transforming American culture in the process.

### Critical Approaches to Race

Critical Race Theory has provided a pivotal way to understand communication and race. Foundational scholars like Crenshaw (1991, 1995) build on social constructionist theories of race and elucidate critical race studies’ departure from and relation to critical legal studies. Crenshaw makes this move to introduce intersectionality as a necessary element of any study on race by noting how it is impossible to separate analyses of race from analyses of gender, class, sexuality, and other identity markers, as they are all mutually constitutive. Similarly, Hill Collins’s (2000) foundational work on intersectionality draws attention to interlocking systems of oppression (such as those of race, gender, class, and sexuality). Additionally, Delgado and Stefancic’s (2001) work is seminal to the strand of race studies that researches how race has been constituted through laws and policies. Their book traces Critical Race Theory (CRT) from its beginnings as an outgrowth of critical legal studies and radical feminism to its more inclusive current definition of historical and contemporary racial theories, culminating in the creation of CRT to help redress social inequalities. Mukherjee (2006) extends this critical legal analysis and connects it to discursive analyses favored by cultural and media studies theorists by looking at the gradual shifts to the racial order in the United States wrought by events like the racial reforms of the 1960s to backlash policies against Affirmative Action and other race-based programs in the nineties.

Much of the work necessary for understanding race and communication is theoretical in nature and now often falls under what has become a general category of critical race approaches. Culture, as a concept, is central to a thorough understanding of communication and race. Scholars outside the field of communication have produced some of the key texts in this area. Among them are Cornel West (1994), who details how the history of America is rooted in both race and racism, which will never be eradicated if we continue to ignore just how much “race matters.” Similarly, Gates and Appiah (1992) address how race in literature appears as a dangerous trope that naturalizes nonwhite

bodies as inferior and subordinate. A necessary and timely analysis of 1980s and early 1990s commercial television culture led Gray (1995) to view television as both a site of, and a resource for, black cultural politics. On television, he argues, blackness is simultaneously constructed, reproduced, and challenged. hooks (1992) criticizes media's role in creating and disseminating racist and sexist narratives that promulgate essentialist notions of "authentic" black culture and experience whereas any narrative that differs from dominant ideas about blackness is consequently deemed inauthentic. Using the work of hooks and other race and media scholars, Molina-Guzman (2010) builds on the idea of symbolic colonization to examine the conditions under which Latin@s become safe, consumable, desirable, or threatening in news and entertainment; she develops this argument through analysis of media depictions and audience responses to the signifiers of Latinidad using a series of case studies ranging from the Elián González custody case to gossip coverage of Jennifer Lopez, to the ABC television series *Ugly Betty*. Arguing for the need to historicize Asian Americans in media and film, Ono and Pham (2009) discuss the ways Asian Americans have resisted and subverted early representations by producing their own media and images. Also studying Asian Americans, Hamamoto (1994) provides ideological critiques and interpretations of the relationship between Asian American representations on television and the dominant social order. He expands on his earlier work by showing how interconnected representations of racialized groups mirror large-scale shifts within larger society (Hamamoto & Liu, 2000). In order to expose the way Native American history and culture are discussed and contested by and through media discourses, Buescher and Ono examine both the film *Pocahontas* (1996) as well as the release of a myriad of products relating to the film (Ono & Buescher, 2001).

Although textual analysis is the central methodology used in many of the studies discussed thus far, discourse analyses have also been conducted. For example, Van Dijk's *Communicating Racism* and *Elite Discourse and Racism* (1987, 1993) exemplify a micro-level analysis of the ways white people think and talk about people of color and how those ideas are reproduced in society. Van Dijk examines how discourses of elites enact and legitimate racism by controlling the means of communication and manufacturing consensus and public opinion. He also provides a survey of self-presentation strategies undertaken by elites to reconcile norms and values while retaining biased attitudes. By tracing the rhetoric surrounding Proposition 187 in California, which constructed undocumented immigrants as disease-carriers, economic burdens, fecund breeders, and criminals, Ono and Sloop (2002) ultimately conclude this strategy was used in order to shore up public support for the legislation. In a similar vein, Santa Ana (2002) analyzes how everyday metaphors about Latinos appear within public discourse and articulate and reproduce power relations. Santa Ana's study of such metaphors in the *Los Angeles*

*Times*, for example, identifies representations of Latinos as animals and as various forms of water (as in the notion of waves of immigrants coming to “America”).

More centrally within rhetorical studies, and following Michel Foucault, Sloop and Ono (1997) examine what they call “out-law” discourse, discourse that does not align with dominant logics and ways of understanding the world. They identify resonant out-law discourses as a way of altering the standard normative logics governing society. Similarly, Bowers (1996) critiques the lack of internal rhetorical strategies among oppressed groups and offers a number of steps those groups can take to reverse the rhetorical condition created by structural dominance. Among the suggestions Bowers offers are: highlighting multiple voices within groups; questioning rhetorical agendas of dominant institutions; allowing for differences of opinion while emphasizing commonalities; and using media as an agency for reflexive dialogue. In their edited collection, Lacy and Ono (2011) unmask racial hegemonies through critiques of domination and liberation. Through a number of popular media examples, the contributors all reveal how power and privilege create and re-create racialized hierarchies. Although Flores and Moon (2002) note race is contradictorily ideological and yet impacts us materially, they question whether new ways of thinking about race are possible. They suggest solidarity and mobility across the intersections of identity in order to rupture essentialisms, forge allegiances, and promote social justice.

### Intersectional Perspectives on Race

Outside of communication studies, and within women of color feminism and critical race approaches, the works of many scholars have been influential, particularly in the way they emphasize multiple dimensions of identity as simultaneously relevant to discussions of feminism. Such figures are not only much cited within communication, they are also central to the humanities and social sciences in general. Moraga and Anzaldua (1983), for instance, become a crucial part of a group of scholars who introduce feminism that takes racial, sexual, class, national, and ability differences as foundational to feminism; sees power operating in multifarious ways and centers power in analyses; maintains a strong interest in crossing a theory-praxis divide and appreciating tensions between them; sees identity as political and worthy of public and academic discussion; and views political change as political and discursive, while maintaining a pragmatic edge. In this context, they argue for analyzing the intersection of identities, and they challenge the predominant focus in feminism on white women. Continuing the focus on intersectionality, Calafell (2013) brings performance studies, autoethnography, race and ethnic studies, and cultural studies together to explore Latin@ identity. Ono (1997) uses voice as a metaphor for recognizing multiple dimensions of identity and its relationship to

power. He notes that any emphasis on a real or authentic voice “den[ies] our multiple voices,” while also ignoring that all of our voices are learned and thus equally all real (p. 119). He also draws on Minh-Ha’s (1989) work, which also calls for a reconceptualization of identity by interrogating the authenticity and universality of language. Minh-Ha, like Hall, Spivak, Gilroy, Bhabha, and others, writes from the postcolonial experience of cultural hybridization and dislocation.

Whiteness studies have emerged as a central subarea of research within the critical race paradigm. Stemming from the work of people like Roediger and Frankenberg, this area has become robust and continues to this day. Outside of communication, Frankenberg (1993, 1997) draws attention to the racialization of whiteness by noting its unmarked, invisible, and undiscussed quality. She is one of the first to frame discourses of whiteness as relational by emphasizing how whiteness is defined according to other discourses, namely gender and sexuality. Michelle Fine et al.’s (1997) edited volume addresses many aspects of whiteness, including the complex relationships of whiteness and mixed race identity. Using a number of media examples, Gabriel (1998) explores the subtle and not quite subtle discourses that continue to demarcate racial boundaries and promote whiteness. By importing attention to whiteness from various disciplines into communication studies Nakayama and Krizek (1995) exposed the dominance, complexity, and ubiquitous nature of whiteness in discursive cultural practices that shape and control people’s lives and reproduce white privilege, without their knowledge or consent. There are six strategies uncovered by the authors as part of the strategic rhetoric of whiteness that contradict each other, proving whiteness to be complex and problematic and in need of more sophisticated maps of the discursive field of whiteness. Following Nakayama’s early work, Nakayama and Judith Martin’s (1999) edited volume, *Whiteness: The Communication of Social Identity*, provides a rich and diverse collection of communication research on whiteness. The contributors take an anti-racist stance on making whiteness visible and highlighting its constructed nature and the discourses used to secure the power and privilege of white people. Similarly, Shome (1996) discusses some of the ways whiteness is articulated: rhetoric of civilization and progress, neo-colonial discourses and surveillance of the “other,” and the white savior narrative and universal identity position, which is used by whiteness to secure its position and power. Media scholars Projansky and Ono argue that, even in films purportedly about questioning race and challenging racism, “strategic” whiteness is still at work to center whiteness and deflect attention away from racial matters. Crenshaw (1997) similarly examines strategic whiteness by studying the 1993 Senate debate between North Carolina senator Jesse Helms and Illinois senator Carol Moseley Braun over the United Daughters of the Confederacy. Crenshaw highlights Helms’s conflation of patriotism with whiteness though Helms never explicitly mentions whiteness, and Moseley Braun’s reply to the rhetorical silence of whiteness as an effective means of resisting racism.

Mixed race studies, not originating within critical studies at first (Root, Zack, Thornton, Williams Leon, Nakashima, Chiyoko-King), have taken a decidedly critical turn, rooted in the interdisciplinary and transnational analysis of social, cultural, and political orders based on the dominant racial paradigms. Early work focused on the discursive practices of individuals and groups (both inside and outside of the United States) as they fashion multiracial identities and on how culture reveals the implications of those practices on racial and social formations (Williams-Leon & Nakashima, 2001). Within communication, Ono and Squires have been key figures in discussions of mixed race. Ono's (1998) work on mixed race film shows the way films about mixed race can remain caught within binary logics. He has shown how, even within a film about Asian Americans, mixed-race people can be characterized in problematic ways. Through case studies that examine the organizational practices of journalists, the history of race relations in the United States, and narratives about multiracials and by multiracials, Squires illustrates how they all come together to frame mixed-race people, their allies, opponents, and other racial groups (2007). Mixed-race studies also critique post-racial discourses for allowing discussions of race to be ignored under the guise of celebrating diversity (Squires, 2014). Rabin (2012) draws on Anderson's notion of imagined communities to demonstrate how some projects might stabilize multiracial identities and result in racialization and racial domination. Joseph (2009, 2012) also critiques the racialization of mixed-race people, and emphasizes that post-feminist or post-racial discourses "ignore that reality that race and gender still order life chances and choices" (2012, p. 168). Washington (2015) continues the criticism of post-racial discourses through her analysis of how nonwhite mixed-race bodies are hyper-racialized in a way that reveals the tensions that still exist around race, while also offering opportunities for coalition building across identities.

The emergence of digital media (Kolko, Nakamura, & Rodman, 2000) questions the power, politics, and structural relations that frame how race matters in cyberspace, as it does "in real life." Many of the key scholars in this area provide a history of cybercultural studies and the Internet, while arguing that cyberspace is not the utopian space many hoped it to be, where identity markers present offline can be ignored online. Fernandez (2003) notes that "despite the rhetoric of equality and disembodiment that prevails in discussions of cyberspace, racism is alive in digital spaces in overt and invisible forms" (p. 41). As a way to explain this, Castells (2001) notes that inequality is invisible in cyberspace in part because the focus on the Internet and the rise of the network society has highlighted how the Internet can be a liberatory force for those with access, while digital media double as a tool for continued marginalization for those without access. Like Castells, Nakamura (2002) points out that cybertypes, or racial identity online, is defined and determined by the stereotypes of race and ethnicity with which we are already familiar offline.



## Nationalism and Transnationalism

Discourses of nationalism and nationality are frequently articulated with discourses of race. One of the most cited works on nationalism argues that despite nation being an imaginary concept, citizens live in that ideology (Anderson, 1983). Anderson notes that sport and other cultural and symbolic contexts are particularly crucial as economic and political processes for the imagining and reimagining of nations. The division between East and West (or North and South), developed and developing nations, and those at the center or periphery of power are merely metaphors for the same power and domination that creates racialized hierarchies. Some scholars have advocated for correcting the Eurocentric world-systems paradigm by pointing out that a Eurasian model should be considered the first modern world system (Abu-Lughod, 1989). However, even corrections like Abu-Lughod's leave out important African trade centers and contributions in order to push the Eurasian model. One strand in the research on nationalism and transnationalism starts from the Enlightenment and traces the modernist project culminating in the situating of postmodernity within a broader sociohistorical context. For example, Harvey (1990) relates postmodernity to late-capitalism and focuses on how our experiences with space-time have changed with increasingly more flexible capital. Relatedly, Sassen (1991) argues that it is necessary to understand how transnational flows of capital have formed the "global city." She breaks down her model into seven key components, ranging from the geographic dispersal of economic activities to the increase in specialized labor whose only purpose is increased inequality. Sassen emphasizes that the global city is a space where global capital and disadvantaged populations are embroiled in conflicts and contradictions.

The first wave of globalization scholarship that asserted culture, rather than economics, is the most important dimension of globalization forced a response. Globalization and modernity are historicized, and their unevenness and irregularities must be contextualized against time and space. Appadurai (1996) maintains media and migration are the primary constitutive forces at work, and he proposes five dimensions of cultural flows (~scapes) to explain the complexity of globalization. Comparably, Lowe (1996) locates the locus of American economic, cultural, and legal citizenship with Asian and Asian American bodies. She focuses on how Asian immigrants have been an integral part of constructing and sustaining the United States, but continue to be re-racialized as immigrants and denied benefits, and to have their rights restricted. This has resulted in newly emergent subjects. As an extension of Lowe's scholarship Ono (2005) reminds us to distinguish between people moving across borders freely and those being moved across borders as labor supply in order to address the political, economic, medical, and social concerns of Asian Americans without reifying national and colonial anti-migration logics.

As a criticism of the first wave of globalization scholarship Pieterse (1995) warns against equating globalization with both standardization and modernization. He points out that we should view globalization in terms of hybridizations—either structural or cultural—and recognize how existing practices have become recombined to form new practices. Hybridization is used as a social concept that is not limited to racial or religious mixing, but encompasses all sorts of mixture, including the interlacing of modernity with tradition to address the move toward globalization. Some, such as Canclini (1995), challenge the idea that Latin America can embrace globalization while still maintaining its cultural identity. He notes that the attempts by countries in Latin America to balance the imperatives of globalization and cultural identity have resulted in the intensification of existing inequalities. He offers ideas for how nations can participate in a transnational economic system while not participating in the destructive ideologies that accompany globalization. Like race and racism, globalization is not a monolithic entity, and examining non-hegemonic globalizations, or globalization from below, allows the focus to be on resistance to neoliberal globalization. Looking at political and economic spheres that potentially bypass our normative understanding of globalization, by analyzing things such as informal markets, blurs the borders and links together global fragmented spaces. Shome and Hegde (2002) call attention to the need for studying identity at the intersection—or connections and (dis)connections—of local and global forces, with special care paid to the political and cultural forces that constitute the transnational terrain. Through her microanalysis of the flow of global capital Ong (1999) examines the flexible citizenship of Chinese businessmen. She states that flexible citizenship is nurtured by the relationship between traditional “Asian values” and the state. Another example of such flows is Carrillo Rowe, Malhotra, and Perez’s (2013) exploration of the role of call center workers from India, and the transnational lives they lead in and through transnational economic exchange.

### Postcolonial, Decolonial, and Disruptive Perspectives on Transnationalism

The current wave in research on transnationalism, nationalism, and race calls for increased attention to gender, race, class, and sexuality in places other than the United States. Addressing the impact of colonialism, imperialism, and globalization and the connections, disruptions, tensions, and inequalities they produce is not just generative of, but necessary for, any research on globalization (Grewal & Kaplan, 2002). In one of the seminal pieces in the study of transnationalism and race, Mohanty (1998) takes Western feminists to task for the discursive colonization of Third World women. The erasure of the raced, classed, and ethnic diversity of non-Western women results in the positioning of Western women as liberated and superior, and Third World women as in need of

salvation, whether economic, educational, or spiritual. Shohat (2001) also motions toward a relational understanding of feminism in order to cut down on the tendency of academics to write about fictionally united groups such as “Middle Eastern women” or “Latin American gays.” She says that any transnationally rooted analysis of races, genders, sexualities, or nations needs to utilize interlinking maps of knowledge that will then result in a challenging or reframing of identity labels and disciplinary boundaries. This is a nod to subaltern studies scholars who also criticize intellectuals for attempting to speak for marginalized voices. Researchers have been both praised and critiqued for seeking to create a space from which the subaltern can speak, while re-inscribing a culturally imperialist, collective, essential voice for the subaltern (Spivak, 1998). This note of caution is important as both white and marginalized scholars can put forward a version of culture that is both homogenous and static. For example, Narayan (1997) finds in her analysis of the discursive practices of both Western feminists and Hindu nationalists that both co-opt colonialist framings of India; she calls for scholarship that recognizes both specificity of place and the similarities and dissimilarities of cultural groups.

Growing in visibility is the critique of postcolonial, both the term and its approaches, in studying race and transnationalism. Scholars like Perez, Wanzer-Serrano, Lugones, and Mignolo use instead the term *decolonial* to underscore the fact that we have not moved past postcolonial, nor have we removed the legacies of colonialism. As an act of resistance against colonizing discourses Perez (1999) calls for utilizing a “decolonial imaginary.” She notes that the decolonial approach allows for news of knowing, which in turn enables colonized people to see themselves as subjects. Similarly, Lugones (2010) critiques the “coloniality of gender” and offers decoloniality and coalition building as the way to free subjugated knowledges. Rejecting both the uniformity of postcoloniality and Western political thought, Mignolo (2011) uses decolonial theory to further the call for new epistemes. Most recently, Wanzer-Serrano (2015) shows how the Young Lords used various strategies to delink themselves from modernity and coloniality as an example of decolonial praxis.

There is liberatory potential in this latest wave of transnational research. Brah (1996) combines theories of borders, postcoloniality, queerness, and diasporas to create what she calls a creolized theory in order to address the intersections of power in globalized spaces. Her multi-axial performative conceptions of power are used to deconstruct how the idea of home shifts with context. An important work that calls for black liberation through decolonization, Fanon (1968) details the physical and psychological violence wrought by the colonization, and encourages Third World people to join together and forge a new path that redistributes wealth and focuses on cultural nationalism. Through her examination of all the stakeholders invested in the Indonesian rain forests, Tsing (2005) demonstrates just how interconnected we are vis-à-vis global capital. The “friction”

in her title refers to how the unevenness of those interconnections plays out. She uses spectacular accumulation to refer to the influence of global capital, cronyism, and regional culture to offer a façade of prosperity and contrasts that against transnational environmental activism, ultimately developing a national Indonesian political subject.

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