

POWER,
POSTCOLONIALISM
AND INTERNATIONAL
RELATIONS

Reading race, gender and class

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INTRODUCTION

Power in a postcolonial world: race, gender, and class in international relations

Geeta Chowdhry and Sheila Nair

The past has been a mint
Of blood and sorrow.
That must not be
True of tomorrow.
(Langston Hughes)

We have to imagine the possibility of a more just world before
the world may become more just.

(Martin Espada)

This book comes out of our concerns with the relative neglect of questions concerning inequality and justice in the field of international relations (IR).¹ With the ascendance of a neo-liberal paradigm, one that shapes not only the field but also international and national politics and policy, we find an increasing dissimulation around questions concerning equity, poverty, and powerlessness. With the end of the cold war, global infatuation with neo-liberal economics has intensified the peripheralization of the South along economic, political, social, and cultural lines. The facile notion that we have reached the “end of ideology” obscures the workings of power in a global capitalist political economy, and disguises its cultural and ideological underpinnings. It further elides the racialized, gendered, and class processes that underwrite global hierarchies. Conventional IR with its focus on great power politics and security, read narrowly, naturalizes these hierarchies and thus reproduces the status quo. The theoretical insights generated by post-colonial studies offer a different vantage point than conventional IR from which to explore these concerns in international relations.

Despite its significance in other fields, such as literary studies, anthropology, and cultural studies, postcolonial theory has only recently made its presence felt in the field of IR. Its entry into the field, however, signifies to us an important theoretical shift in IR, albeit one that has not been accorded sufficient attention by the discipline. The significance of the postcolonial

move in IR, which draws from already existing critical literatures such as Marxism, postmodernism, and feminism, is its attention to the imbrication of race, class, and gender with power. Such an attentiveness leads to different kinds of questions in the literature and constitutes an effort to generate an alternative critique of global power hierarchies and relations.

In this volume we are not only cognizant of some of the concerns generated in the wider postcolonial literature, but we are equally, if not more consciously, engaged by the need to advance alternative postcolonial readings of international relations. We believe that the strength and complexity of this volume rests not on a single reading or interpretation, but rather on a multiplicity of interpretations, voices, and struggles evident across different chapters. However, the volume as a whole collectively grapples with some of the concerns noted above including questions pertaining to the ways in which race, gender, and class relations on a global and national scale were, and continue to be, critical to the production of power in IR.

In assuming a postcolonial approach to the study of IR we are attentive like many critical IR scholars – postmodernists, Marxists, and feminists – to the margins of the discipline and the marginalized, but we also believe that a postcolonial approach adds a distinctive voice and critique. While conventional IR obscures the racialized, gendered, and class bases of power, and in fact as suggested earlier naturalizes these divisions, critical IR problematizes these sources and workings of power. However, the latter is less able or willing, with a few exceptions, to address the intersections of race, class, and gender in the construction of power asymmetries. Further, this genre of critical IR does not adequately engage the cultural politics of the colonial past and postcolonial present, a politics that accompanies the contestations surrounding global hierarchy. Postcolonial theory adds significantly to the critical IR literature by assisting in the interrogation of such a politics and addressing the ways in which historical processes are implicated in its production.

Like much of postcolonial scholarship, we begin with the premise that imperialism constitutes a critical historical juncture in which postcolonial national identities are constructed in opposition to European ones, and come to be understood as Europe's "others"; the imperialist project thus shapes the postcolonial world and the West. In addition, the wider postcolonial literature addresses important concerns such as the impact of colonial practices on the production and representation of identities, the relationship between global capital and power, and the relevance of race, gender, and class for understanding domination and resistance. We propose in this volume to explore these issues and their significance for re-reading IR. Specifically, the contributors to this volume address the ways in which contemporary Western discourses on human rights, gender, security, trade, global capitalism, and immigration, for example, have been constructed and represented, and the significance of such constructions for international politics. The articula-

tion of power on a global scale can only be fully understood, as we suggest in this volume, by being more attentive to the imperialist juncture, the intersections of race, class, and gender relations within and across national boundaries, and the construction and subversion of those boundaries.

Situating power in international relations

The study of power in international relations has been central to the organization and production of knowledge in the discipline. Power in mainstream, particularly realist and neo-realist, IR scholarship is closely bound up with notions of the state, sovereignty, anarchy, and order. These notions are intimately linked, for realists, to the concept of power, whose workings are seen as integral to the ordering and functioning of IR. We consider the structuring of anarchy, order, and state sovereignty, and their relationship to the production of power, to be central analytic concerns in IR theory. By exploring the explanations of power found in the major schools of thought in IR including realism and neo-realism, neo-liberal institutionalism, Marxism, feminism, and postmodernism, we better situate postcolonial contributions to the study of power.

In this section we make three claims about how power is situated in international relations. First, we argue that mainstream IR is premised on an understanding of power that privileges hierarchy, “rationality,” and a predominantly Eurocentric worldview, thus mystifying the ways in which states and the international system are anchored in social relations. Second, although critical IR interrogates many of the assumptions of conventional IR, it nevertheless fails, with some exceptions, to systematically address some of the erasures of the latter such as the intersectionality of race, class, and gender in the production of power in IR. Third, while feminist IR challenges the gendered assumptions of both mainstream and critical IR, it generally neglects to address the relationship of gender to (neo)imperialism and race. We begin with an exploration of power in mainstream IR, followed by discussion of critical and feminist approaches to power.

Power and conventional IR

Power has been the foundation of international relations scholarship, particularly realist scholarship, whose treatment of power is exemplified in the classical realism of Hans Morgenthau. Morgenthau introduces his realist text, *Politics Among Nations*, with the following:

International politics, like all politics, is a struggle for power. Whatever the ultimate aims of international politics, power is always the immediate aim. Statesmen and peoples may ultimately seek freedom, security, prosperity, or power itself. They may define

their goals in terms of a religious, philosophic, economic, or social ideal. They may hope that this ideal will materialize through its own inner force, through divine intervention, or through the natural development of human affairs. But whenever they strive to realize their goal by means of international politics, they do so by striving for power.

(Morgenthau 1950: 13)

Morgenthau further argues that by power “we mean man’s control over the minds and actions of other men” (Morgenthau 1950: 13). This understanding of power may be ascribed to realists’ adherence to Hobbesian assumptions concerning the “state of nature,” and the proclivity of human beings to pursue their self-interest. In contrast, neo-realist thought highlights the anarchical state system and the way it structures international politics (Waltz 1959, 1979; Gilpin 1975, 1981; Krasner 1978). Neo-realism, or structural realism, attempts to

systematize Realism ... on the basis of a “third image” perspective. This form of realism does not rest on the presumed iniquity of the human race – original sin in one form or another – but on the nature of world politics as an anarchic realm.

(Keohane 1993: 192)

Further, for Waltz, the anarchic state system determines state behavior and international outcomes; “structures are defined by not all of the actors that flourish within them but by the major ones” (Waltz 1979: 93), and power is understood “in terms of distribution of (state) capabilities” (Waltz 1979: 192).

Both realism and neo-realism focus on anarchy and the rational, self-interested actor as key assumptions in their analyses of power relations in IR. However, as others have argued, it is hierarchy, not anarchy, and a Eurocentric understanding of rationality that is privileged and reproduced in both realist and neo-realist renderings of power in IR. Further, power through realist lenses appears disaggregated (military, economic, and political power are seldom examined relationally), instrumental, and as an end in itself. In this view power is also a property of states measured in terms of capabilities and resources, emerging from the interactions of states in an anarchic international system. The weak structuralist, universalist, rationalist, and masculinist underpinnings of realism have already been critiqued elsewhere (e.g., Wendt 1987; Tickner 1988; Walker 1989). In addition, as this volume shows, realism pays no attention to the ways in which power is constituted and produced, or the role of history, ideology, and culture in shaping state power or practices in international relations. Marshall Beier challenges realism’s originary myths, arguing that they are based on prob-

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lematic assumptions concerning traditional worldviews and lifeways of indigenous peoples in the Americas. He argues, in this volume, that to the extent that realist IR excludes such knowledges and lifeways, in deference to anarchy and the “Hobbesian impulse,” it cannot be separated from the invalidation and subjugation of indigenous peoples. Consequently, it is clear from Beier’s analysis that realist understandings of power are founded on certain erasures of history and memory that privilege a Eurocentric self. It further renders anarchy as a universal condition when it is obvious that notions of anarchy garnered from European accounts of encounters with indigenous peoples have reinforced racialized and gendered ideologies of imperialism and colonization.

Given the problematic assumptions regarding power and anarchy, we argue that it is necessary to situate IR in reference to its historical, political, economic, and social context. As Rosenberg suggests the (international relations) “discipline *begins* by rejecting any working conception of the social world as a totality” (1994: 94). The domestic/international or the internal/external dichotomies evident in realist thought reify the state and the international system and make invisible the social world invoked by Rosenberg.² The hegemonic sway of realist thought within the discipline, which rejects the necessity or possibility for taking the social constitution of states as a starting point for analysis, is in his view seriously flawed. However, this neglect is not only a problem in realist thought, as it has also shaped and influenced neo-liberal formulations of state power. For example, despite his neo-liberal institutionalist credentials, Robert Keohane invokes the realist view in *After Hegemony*. Keohane writes that the case for international institutions, which help realize “common interests in world politics,” is made not by

smuggling in cosmopolitan preferences under the rubric of “world welfare” or “global interests,” but by relying on realist assumptions that states are egoistic, rational actors operating on the basis of their own conceptions of self-interest. Institutions are necessary, even on these restrictive premises, in order to achieve *state* purposes.

(1984: 245)

In the neo-liberal view the state is no less predisposed toward power accumulation but it finds it in its own self-interest to create cooperative arrangements and international institutions or regimes that systematize and make more predictable inter-state relations in various “issue areas” (Keohane and Nye 1989). In an economically interdependent world of multiple actors, including non-state actors, states remain central to the analysis of power. Although cooperation among states is itself a desired goal for neo-liberals, cooperation in the long run secures power, wealth, and stability in international relations. Thus both neo-liberals and neo-realists subscribe to the view that

power and wealth are “linked in international relations through the activities of independent actors, the most important of which are states, not subordinated to a worldwide governmental hierarchy” (Keohane 1984: 18).

These understandings of power relations render invisible or inconsequential the racialized, gendered, and class nature of power in IR. We argue, therefore, that state power and sovereignty are not only embedded in the structures, cultures, and social relations of local and nationally organized communities, but are also always grounded and mediated on a transnational scale. It is only once we begin to problematize the understanding of power evident in realist and neo-liberal approaches that we may come to better grasp how key relations of power are elided in these models. In heeding the “sociological imagination” in IR, which Rosenberg invokes,³ we would need an alternative research agenda, one that attends to the socially, culturally, and politically constituted forms of power on a national and global scale. In recent years, confronted by the radical implications of new forms of political and social organizations, which potentially challenge state power, IR theorists have begun moving beyond analysis of the “spatial container” called the state.⁴ The emergence of new social, religious, cultural, and nationalist movements on a transnational scale suggests that a conventional understanding of power, anarchy and order, security, and sovereignty is limiting. A growing literature on global civil societies, transnational movements and networks, and international organization attempts to resolve these ambiguities only to raise other questions about the construction and negotiation of boundaries in international relations (Sikkink 1993; Thiele 1993). Yet, this literature not only leaves unanswered, but also fails to pose, important questions about the production and mediation of power in IR. The emergence of critical IR scholarship in the form of Marxist, feminist, and postmodern scholarship has meant a closer interrogation of the power *problematique* in IR, but these critical schools of thought have done so in quite different ways and with different implications. We explore below some of the major contributions of this literature to rethinking power in order to show how and why postcolonial IR theory might differ from these other more established critical perspectives in the discipline.

Power in critical IR

Postmodern and Marxist IR

In Marxist theories of international relations, power is a characteristic feature of the workings of a capitalist world economy and is both a cause and consequence of the unequal relations between rich and poor, developed and underdeveloped, or metropolitan center and periphery. Where realists view these asymmetries as an inevitable outcome of states’ political survival under anarchy, Marxists look upon these asymmetries as historically produced and

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indicative of capitalism's expansionist tendencies and inherent contradictions. Classical Marxists view imperialism as a necessary condition for capitalist development but they do not problematize the cultural representations that sustain the unequal relations of power between the colonizer and the colonized. Indeed, Marx's writings on India reflect orientalist assumptions and imagery as indicated in the following passage:

we must not forget that these idyllic village communities, inoffensive though they may appear, had always been the solid foundation of Oriental despotism, that they restrained the human mind within the smallest possible compass, making it the unresisting tool of superstition, enslaving it beneath traditional rules, depriving it of all grandeur and historical energies ... We must not forget that this undignified, stagnatory, and vegetative life, that this passive sort of existence ... rendered murder itself a religious rite in Hindostan.

(Marx 1978: 658)

Neo-Marxists, in contrast to classical Marxists, view the development and expansion of European capitalism as dependent on the "underdevelopment" and "peripheralization" of the Third World and the structuring of a capitalist world economy (e.g. Baran 1957; Frank 1967; Amin 1974; Wallerstein 1976).⁵ This scholarship addresses how and why the present global distribution of wealth has mostly served to perpetuate already existing differences between and among different sectors and regions of the global economy. Power is thus seen to be rooted in unequal ownership and exchange relations, uneven development, and the extension of domination and control over the many by a privileged few. However, neo-Marxists, with some exceptions like Wallerstein (1991), generally do not address the cultural underpinnings of imperialist and neo-imperialist relations.

Gramscian scholars address some of the limitations of the dependency and world-systems literatures by examining ideological and cultural hegemony and the ways in which it sustains the economic and political ordering of IR. The consensual and ideological dimension of power is central to the Gramscians' critique of IR; ideological hegemony combines with direct domination to better secure the power of the capitalist bloc. Significantly, Gramscian IR's emphasis on the structural power of capital challenges the realist treatment of the "autonomy" of the political and its related arguments concerning the role of power politics (Cox 1983, 1995; Gill 1993; Rupert 1995). For neo-Gramscians like Cox and Gill a capitalist world order has been brought about by the conjunction of certain social forces, states and ideas, and structures unequal power relations in the world economy. In addition, Gill has argued that neo-liberal formulations view economic forces "as beyond or above politics and [they] form the basic structures of an interdependent world" (Gill 1997: 211). Furthermore, neo-liberalism's version of

globalization invokes a notion of what the political economist Susan Strange called “business civilization,” which far from being free of political and ideological reasoning is actually anchored in a particular history and discourse, and ultimately is used to “justify and legitimate forms of class domination” on a global scale (Gill 1997: 211).

While Gramscian approaches enable us to consider how and why power is embedded in social relations and provide a far more useful notion of hegemony as consensually produced domination, they are less able to address questions concerning race and gender and how these are imbricated with class and power. For example, Agathangelou in this volume critiques Gramscian IR for its inability to address the sexualized and racialized dimensions of globalization. Using the flow of sex and domestic workers within peripheral economies as a case in point, Agathangelou demonstrates why it is important to foreground a postcolonial feminist critique for a better understanding of these relations.

From a different critical angle postmodern IR “denaturalizes” the concepts of anarchy, sovereignty, order, and power.⁶ Challenging the epistemological foundations of mainstream IR, postmodern scholars explore the production of knowledge in IR by deploying an “intertextual strategy” to understand “how one theory comes to stand above and silence other theories,” “the intimate relationship between textual practices and politics,” the construction of modernity in IR and how modernity in turn structures IR, and the links between the “antihistorist practice of logocentrism [and] the political question of sovereignty” (Der Derian 1989: 6; Shapiro 1989: 13; Ashley 1989: 264). Postmodern IR is not only situated in opposition to mainstream realist and neo-liberal thought but also distinguishes itself from other forms of critical theorizing such as Marxism. The shift from “Marx to Nietzsche” (George 1989), strongly influenced by the poststructuralism and postmodernism of Foucault, Derrida and Lyotard, has enabled postmodern IR to chart a different research agenda, one that deconstructs taken-for-granted knowledge in the field. Postmodernism’s premise that all “discourses are thus essentially contestable” and its “respect for ambiguity” (Krishna 1993: 387) open the way for challenges to metanarratives in IR. Thus, postmodern arguments about the nature of power in IR, attentive to the “micropolitics of power,” have decentered the subject of realist IR, the state, and refuted key realist claims about sovereignty and anarchy among other concepts. This move enables postmodern IR to argue that power is dispersed and cannot be clearly located, and that all forms of essentialist critique are suspect. However, we agree with Krishna that “even works embarking from professedly critical postmodern and poststructural perspectives often replicate the Eurocentric ecumene of ‘world’ politics.” These perspectives “seem to contain little recognition that a totalizing critique of all forms of essentialism and identity politics might play out very differently for people situated outside putative mainstreams” (Krishna 1999: xxix).

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Hence, power is never clearly locatable in the disembodied spaces of this postmodern realm; it is both everywhere and nowhere in such a representation of international relations, and may lead to further disempowerment of the already marginalized in IR. The implications of this position for understanding race, gender, and class are addressed elsewhere in this volume.

Power and feminist IR

Feminist approaches have taken to task IR scholarship for rendering gender and women invisible. Although there are important distinctions among the various feminisms, we address what may be broadly termed “post-positivist” feminist contributions to the debate on power, focusing specifically on the arguments advanced by IR feminists (e.g., Elshtain 1987; Enloe 1990; Peterson 1992a; Peterson and Runyan 1993; Sylvester 1994). One of the key contributions of feminist thought has been to draw attention to the necessity for a “deconstruction of gender-biased knowledge claims” and the “reconstruction of gender-sensitive theory” (Peterson 1992a: 6). Spike Peterson has pointed out that this has allowed feminist IR to unsettle the gendered foundations of mainstream thought and to introduce gender into the analysis of key constructs in IR such as the state and sovereignty. Feminist IR also shows how and to what effect mainstream and also non-feminist critical IR theory has ignored gender hierarchy. While this problem is more explicitly associated with the masculinist assumptions of realist and neo-liberal IR, it is also something that eludes those theorizing from a Marxist or Gramscian perspective. Feminists point out that theories of structural violence pay little attention to “male violence against women” and gendered power and domination (Peterson 1992a: 15). Postmodern feminist Christine Sylvester points to the marginalization of feminist voices in the third debate, between the positivists and the post-positivists, where feminists are represented “without giving one among us voice(s), interpretation(s), writing(s), word(s), brush and canvas” (1994: 150). In the feminist view, it is imperative that IR theory give women voice, and take seriously the feminist critique of the gendered sources of security, war, militarism, peacekeeping, pact making, and the organization of labor, among other concerns.

While feminists have contributed much to revisioning IR theory, they seem more hesitant to confront directly the exclusion of race in IR, and its implications for the exercise of power. For example, in *Global Voices* (Rosenau 1993), which was an attempt by critical scholars including feminists to engage diverse voices in IR, the cast of characters include “Junior US or Foreign Scholar,” “Western Feminist (Westfem),” and “Her Third World Alter Ego/Identity (Tsitsi).” However, these are all represented by white male and female critical scholars. There is no effort to include Third World scholars from the academy in this conversation.⁷ Further, in this “dialogue” Christine Sylvester in her role as Westfem calls for recognizing difference,

and suggests that the authors “entertain another woman’s voice in the dialogue, one whose context is different—similar—hyphenating to mine,” i.e. a Third World feminist from Zimbabwe called Tsitsi (Sylvester in Rosenau 1993: 28). However, Sylvester claims the identity of Tsitsi as her own and proceeds to speak on behalf of the Third World (feminist) other. The contradictions of this move are apparent particularly in light of her own claims concerning the ways in which even critical IR male scholars represent feminists without “giving one among us voice(s).” The problem of representation remains unresolved in the Rosenau volume and points to the role of “the West as interlocutor” even in critical IR.

We recognize the efforts of some feminists to foreground the similarities between feminist claims and the claims of other marginalized groups (for example Mies 1986; Peterson 1992a; Pettman 1996). For example Peterson has argued that in addressing the “empirical adequacy of knowledge claims,” feminists, along with “theorists of other marginalized groups – e.g. colonized populations, racial and ethnic minorities, the underclass,” challenge elite (male) knowledge that distorts understanding of social relations (Peterson 1992a: 11). Despite these exceptions, a discernible First World feminist voice has emerged in the IR literature, one that glosses over or elides the concerns and engagements of postcolonial feminists. The practical implications of this elision were evident in the differences that emerged in encounters between First World and Third World feminists at international women’s conferences marking the United Nations Decade for Women (Desai 1999). A postcolonial approach, which foregrounds the erasures surrounding race and representation, resistance and agency, and the imbrication of race, gender, and class with imperialism and capitalism, is explored more systematically below.

Postcolonial theory and international relations

In this section we explore the relevance of postcolonial theory for power in international relations. We begin by addressing the debates around the term postcolonial, uncovering the different meanings of the term and exploring the genealogy of postcolonial discourse to better situate our volume in this literature. Drawing from this analysis we develop several critical themes that we see as central to a postcolonial understanding of power in IR. These include representation and cultural politics, resistance and agency, and the intersections of race, gender, and class.

What’s in a name?

”Postcolonial” is a contested term, one that has evoked much admiration, controversy, and skepticism in academia. Emerging from a “variety of disciplines

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and theories,” postcolonial studies has “enabled a complex interdisciplinary dialogue within the humanities” (Gandhi 1998: 3). However, its interdisciplinary origins have also confounded the development of a uniform understanding of the field (Gandhi 1998). Controversies over terminology and the meaning of postcolonial, and its political implications, have engaged both supporters and critics of postcolonial studies. As Stuart Hall points out, the questions of “When was ‘the post-colonial?’” and “What should be included and excluded from its frame?” operate in “a contested space,” and have “become the bearer of such powerful unconscious investments – a sign of desire for some, and equally for others, a signifier of danger” (Hall 1996: 242).

The first major controversy addresses the question of what the term postcolonial signifies.⁸ Some critics of postcolonial theory argue that the term postcolonial suggests the demise of colonialism, rather than its continuing presence. They argue that postcolonial is more acceptable in the Western academy because it is politically more ambiguous and less confrontational than terms like imperialism, neo-colonialism, and Third World (Shohat 1992; Aidoo 1991). According to Shohat, postcolonial

carries with it the implication that colonialism is now a matter of the past, undermining colonialisms’ economic, political, and cultural deformative-traces in the present. The “post-colonial” inadvertently glosses over the fact that global hegemony even in the post-cold war era, persists in forms other than overt colonial rule.

(Shohat 1992: 105)

Defenders of postcolonialism, however, argue that these criticisms are unfounded because they misrepresent the usage of the term and its meanings in postcolonial studies. Shome suggests that the term postcolonial

enables us to conceive of complex shifts brought about by decolonization(s). While on the one hand, it does not go so far as to claim that there is a complete rupture from some of the earlier colonial relations in this phase, on the other hand it does claim ... that there is a lot new about the complex political, economic, cultural relations and conjunctures of the contemporary times.

(Shome 1998: 206)

We agree with Shome and others that the postcolonial does not signify the end of colonialism, but rather that it accurately reflects both the continuity and persistence of colonizing practices, as well as the critical limits and possibilities it has engendered in the present historical moment. Hence the postcolonial has relevance for the study of IR because it provides insight

into the ways in which the imperial juncture is implicated in the construction of contemporary relations of power, hierarchy, and domination.

A second and related controversy focuses on the spatial, geographical, and historical markers of the postcolonial. Where and “when exactly ... does the ‘postcolonial’ begin?” (Shohat 1992: 103). If postcolonial is taken to imply colonialism and its current consequences, then are the United States, Australia, New Zealand, and South Africa postcolonial in the way that India, Ghana, and Mexico are (Alva 1995; Shohat 1992; Pratt 1992; Frankenberg and Mani 1993)? We think this question mires us in debates that are not very productive. We believe that a reflective engagement with the experience of colonization and its power to shape past and current realities at the local, national, and global level is far more useful and constructive. In this volume we are concerned with postcoloniality as it is implicated in a variety of “colonizing” practices that structure power relations globally, and resistance to those practices. Our volume thus includes analyses of immigration and security discourses in the United States, colonization of indigenous lifeways among the Lakota in North America, and the internationalization of sex and domestic workers in Greece, Cyprus, and Turkey, along with other more conventional postcolonial “sites” of inquiry such as child labor in India and human rights in Burma.

The genealogy of postcolonial discourse

Although the term postcolonial has acquired much currency since the publication of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* (1978), the work of forerunners like Albert Memmi (1965) and Frantz Fanon (1965, 1967) among others has also influenced the field.⁹ These intellectual debts notwithstanding, *Orientalism* provides a critical and foundational point of entry into the field (Moore-Gilbert 1997). Said’s celebrated and controversial critique of European imperialism illuminates how the concepts of knowledge and power relate to the imperial enterprise in the “Orient.”¹⁰ According to Said, orientalism is based on the “ontological and epistemological distinction made between the ‘Orient’ and (most of the time) ‘the Occident’” (Said 1978: 2). This promotes a “relationship of power and domination” which “puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the relative upper hand” (Said 1978: 7). Thus the idea of Western racial and cultural superiority over “oriental backwardness,” promoted through Western academic, philosophical, and other cultural expressions, is seen as central to the promotion and protection of European imperialist ventures. By focusing on the political production of knowledge, and the dialectical relationship between knowledge production about the non-Western world and Western colonial ventures, Said has demonstrated the centrality of racialized knowledge in the spread and maintenance of imperialism.

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Said's work draws on both Foucault and Gramsci, with different implications for postcolonial theory. He utilizes Michel Foucault's notion of discourse to "identify orientalism ... the enormously systematic discipline by which European culture was able to manage – and even produce – the Orient politically, sociologically, militarily, ideologically, scientifically, and imaginatively during the post-Enlightenment period" (Said 1978: 3). Said has also grounded his work in Gramsci, by drawing attention to the imbrication of colonial ideology with capital, and resistance and opposition to these structures of domination (Said 1994: 249, 267). However, unlike classical Marxism's alleged economic determinism, Gramscian Said emphasizes the dialectic of culture and imperialism. In other words, although postcolonial theory rejects the universalizing assumptions of nineteenth-century Marxian structuralism with its emphasis on rationality and linear development, it utilizes a Gramscian focus on the relationship between ideology and material domination, together with a Foucauldian analysis of power and knowledge.¹¹

The subaltern studies group has also influenced postcolonial theory, and its contributions are consistent with the Gramscian emphasis highlighted above. Edited for the most part under the leadership of Ranajit Guha, subaltern studies was written to challenge the elitist nature of Indian historiography and to provide an alternative subaltern perspective (Prakash 1992). Influenced by Gramsci, the critical gaze of subaltern studies is not intended to "unmask dominant discourses but to explore their fault-lines in order to provide different accounts, to describe histories revealed in the cracks of the colonial archeology of knowledge" (Prakash 1992: 10).¹² Thus much of postcolonial theory critiques the "projection of the west as history" (Prakash 1994: 1475), and challenges the epistemic, ideological, and political authority of Western and elite knowledge.

Despite the focus on race and the imperial juncture in early postcolonial critiques, little attention has been paid to the question of gender. In critiquing the neglect of gender in postcolonial theory, and the lack of sustained attention to race and imperialism, particularly in mainstream and some strands of postmodern and Marxist feminist theory, postcolonial feminists make gender and race central to their analyses (Spivak 1986, 1987; Mohanty 1991a). Confronting the simplified and homogenized constructions of Third World women, Mohanty attempts two major tasks: deconstructing hegemonic Western feminist knowledge about Third World women, and reconstructing locally grounded knowledge and strategies (1991a: 51). She thus draws our attention to the "simultaneity of oppressions," and grounds "feminist politics in the histories of racism and imperialism" (Mohanty 1991a: 10). Spivak is equally critical of Western hegemonic knowledge and suggests that Western feminism, despite its critique of androcentricity, is grounded in the "imperialist vision of redemption" (Spivak 1986, 1987). For instance, according to Moore-Gilbert, Spivak sees Western feminisms, influenced by the "liberal humanist vision" and the

anti-humanism of Foucault and Gilles Deleuze as embodying a vision, similar to “imperialist narratives, promising redemption to the colonized subject” (1997: 76–7). Postcolonial feminists are thus skeptical of notions of global sisterhood that are premised on the universality of shared or similar oppressions, and seek to contextualize feminist struggles and critiques in specific historical, geographical, and cultural sites (Mohanty 1991a). By identifying its key referents, this brief genealogy of postcolonial studies assists in situating a postcolonial approach to international relations.

Central themes of the volume

Although there have been some important efforts to relate postcolonial theory to the study of world politics (e.g., Krishna 1993, 1999; Darby and Paolini 1994; Darby 1997b, 1998; Grovogui 1996; Ling 2001a), its impact on IR until recently has been minimal. Consistent with the complex genealogy of postcolonial studies, these contributions, however, draw our attention to the variety of ways in which IR is informed by postcolonial theory. Darby and Paolini (1994), for example, discuss three “overlapping but nevertheless distinct movements” in postcolonial scholarship that are useful to the study of IR. The first movement, originating in the study of Third World fiction, interrogates representational practices in the service of colonialism, where colonialism signifies “a continuing set of practices that are seen to prescribe relations between the West and the Third World beyond the independence of the former colonies” (Darby and Paolini 1994: 375). A focus on the projects of “resistance and recovery,” highlighted in the works of Memmi and Fanon among others, constitutes the second movement. The third movement in postcolonial studies, the “one world” movement according to Gandhi, engages with the “postcolonial desire for extra- or post-national solidarities and consider(s) concepts and terms such as ‘hybridity’ and ‘diaspora’ which have come to characterize mixed or globalized culture” (Gandhi 1998: 123).

While these movements are useful in mapping the broader terrain of postcolonial theory, they do not show how the intersections of race, gender, and class, and the imbrication of culture and capital, are relevant for the study of IR. Darby and Paolini also point to three key areas where IR and postcolonial studies can converse: power and representation, modernity, and emotional commitment and radicalism (Darby and Paolini 1994: 384). Once again, they neglect to say how inattention to race, gender, and class inequalities has structured conversations in these areas. While Darby and Paolini are eager to have bridge-building conversations between postcolonial theory and IR, and we think this is a good idea, it is impossible to have these conversations without explicitly acknowledging these structural inequalities. We think the task before us is not so much building bridges, but rather one of uncovering the traces of empire and history, and recovering

memory in the hierarchical construction of the discipline and its objects of inquiry. In this volume we call attention to the widely circulated material and cultural practices, legacies of the colonial encounter, that continue to shape international relations. We interrogate the exercise of power in global, national, and local spaces by foregrounding these categories and relationships.

The book is structured around the following major themes, which we see as central to a postcolonial analysis of IR. Although these themes are not addressed consistently by all of the contributors to this volume, each chapter highlights at least one of them:

- the power of representation
- the intersections of race and gender
- global capitalism, class, and postcoloniality
- recovery, resistance and agency

The power of representation

International relations might have largely ignored the question of representation were it not for some of the extra-disciplinary forays from the field evident predominantly in the work of postmodern, critical constructivist, and feminist scholars (see for example Der Derian and Shapiro 1989; Weldes *et al.* 1999; Doty 1996b; Sylvester 1994). These scholars have drawn attention to the contingent nature of discourse and the power of discursive constructions in naturalizing a whole host of “givens” in IR. For example, in a recent effort to explore “cultural processes through which insecurities of states and communities ... are produced, reproduced, and transformed,” Weldes *et al.* foreground the role of culture and representation in IR (Weldes *et al.* 1999: 2). In doing so they have challenged received notions of security, sovereignty, and identity and brought to our attention the significance of representation in understanding IR. We find this critique useful, particularly the chapters by Muppidi (1999) and Niva (1999), which address postcoloniality and insecurity. However, aside from these exceptions *Cultures of Insecurity* (Weldes *et al.* 1999) does not significantly engage the interrelated themes that concern this volume.

The arguments about representation advanced here derive from the work of postcolonial scholars like Said, Mohanty, and Spivak among others, who have emphasized the “relationship between Western representation and knowledge on the one hand, and Western material and political power on the other” (Moore-Gilbert 1997: 34), and how these are underwritten by constructions of race, class, and gender. This scholarship reveals how pseudo-scientific racist and gendered constructions of the other, which we discuss more systematically in the next section, inscribe the cultural authority and dominance of the West under colonial rule and in the postcolonial present

(e.g., Mudimbe 1988; McClintock 1995). Dichotomous representations of the West and East, self and other, which essentialize identity and difference (Moore-Gilbert 1997: 39), are critical to the maintenance of Western hegemony. Thus unveiling practices of power in IR requires at the very least an engagement with the problem of representation, and its racialized and gendered implications.

In a recent work that notes the significance of representation for power, John Beverly has suggested that some representations “have cognitive authority or can secure hegemony” and others “do not have the authority or are not hegemonic” (1999: 1). We argue that mainstream IR has cognitive authority, and a hegemonic and disciplining effect on global politics. It has not only ignored the question of representation, but has also assumed that mainstream IR’s language is universal and unproblematic, giving it the authority to speak for and about others. In a useful reminder about the practical impact of representational power, Beverly has quoted Spivak’s injunction that “representation is not only a matter of *speaking about* but also of *speaking for*. That is it concerns politics and hegemony (and the limits of politics and hegemony)” (Beverly 1999: 3). In applying some of the insights concerning representation and power generated in postcolonial scholarship to the study of international relations we hope to highlight the complex ways in which postcolonial others have been constructed, and discursively mapped and managed. We argue further that the disciplinary boundaries of conventional IR and its grand narrative, rooted in Western humanist notions of universality and rationality, have been maintained by the exclusion of certain “others.” Such an exclusion implies a particular way of speaking and writing about those others that renders them marginal, insignificant, and invisible. We thus explore several specific sites where power is enacted in and through the representation of postcolonial others, and is manifested in relations of domination and subordination, hegemony and resistance on a global scale.

The different essays in this anthology show how dominant, Western representations of internal and external others emerge in immigration and security discourses, the sexualization and racialization of female migrant labor, child labor, and human rights, globalized notions of masculinity, secularism and its evil twin “religious fundamentalism,” and presumptions about conflict and the state of nature in IR. For example, Biswas notes in this volume that the response in the West to the global Islamic resurgence is “framed by a ‘reactive epistemology’ – explaining religious nationalisms as some form of reactions to modernity – an epistemology that both presupposes and reproduces a troublesome and problematic Western secularism/Eastern fundamentalism ontology.” Such an epistemology is also grounded in broader claims to history and heir to a Western grand narrative of progress and reason. The nexus between power and knowledge that postcolonialism borrows from poststructuralist thought by way of Foucault is further revealed in the production of the binary which Biswas addresses here.

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Uncovering the sources and meaning of the “orientalist anxieties” generated among international relations scholars and analysts by the resurgence of Islam, Biswas shows how dominant understandings and representations of “modernization” and the “nation-state *form*” foster and reproduce hierarchy. Elsewhere in the volume, Chowdhry and Nair note that the construction of a liberal human rights discourse privileges particular representations and engenders certain erasures about Third World others. Human rights violations in Third World “sites” become the central focus of liberal critiques. However, these critiques ignore Western complicity in the production of these abuses. Significantly, Nair suggests that a liberal discourse constructs a particular human rights imaginary within which “Burma” as a cultural and postcolonial space of repression is continually reproduced, for example, in US policy discourses. Such a reproduction not only carries implications for addressing human rights abuses in Burma, but also presents certain analytic problems when viewed through a postcolonial lens.

In the following section we explore further the ways in which race and gender are implicated in these representations. We believe that to meaningfully engage in a debate about power in IR the intimate links between representation, power, race, and gender need to be uncovered.

Race and gender

By invoking race and gender in international relations we are not seeking to assert a fixed evidentiary status to them; rather we are suggesting that their meanings derive from their specific locations and histories, as is evident throughout this volume. Although there is little disagreement that the imperialist project was sustained through force and material exploitation, postcolonial theorists posit that the dehumanization and degradation of the racialized colonial subject, what Aime Cesaire has called “thingification,” was critical to the efficacy of colonization. The colonial discourse on race thus forced postcolonial intellectuals to retheorize the class basis of domination. For example, Frantz Fanon in *The Wretched of the Earth* argued that “in the colonies ... you are rich because you are white, you are white because you are rich. This is why Marxist analysis should always be slightly stretched every time we have to do [sic] with the colonial problem” (Fanon in Loomba 1998: 22).¹³ In this volume we hope to demonstrate that the stretching of Marxism and critical IR to better accommodate the historical interpellation of race, gender, and class is necessary for a more nuanced understanding of world politics.

As noted earlier, scholarship on imperialism and colonization has contributed significantly to understanding class and the role of capital in international relations (see next section).¹⁴ However, it has very little to say about the relationship of race and gender to the imperialist project and the politics of power in postcolonial societies. There are some exceptions to this

general neglect of race in the literature. For example, the work of Doty (1996b), Hunt (1987), and DeConde (1992) has illustrated the relevance of constructions of race and ethnicity for imperialism and US foreign policy. Both Hunt and Doty explore racial hierarchies and their ideological significance for the production of US national identity. Hunt has demonstrated through a critical analysis of cartoons and writings in popular magazines and newspapers in the United States how racialized understandings of Native Americans, Latin Americans, Asians, and Africans inform US national interest, immigration policy, and security discourse. In an equally compelling contribution to the literature, Campbell (1994) has analyzed representations of Japan and the Japanese in US foreign policy, and why “the Japanese threat” enables a particular formulation of US national identity. He explores the construction of US and Japanese cultural identity and difference through the lens of postmodernism, and while racial representations inform his analysis, he curiously does not theorize the “inscribing” of a racialized “world order.” He does, however, bring gender much more explicitly into the analysis, by showing how the “performative constitution of gender and the body is analogous to the performative constitution of the state” (Campbell 1994: 149). This omission in Campbell’s analysis reflects the neglect of race in much of critical IR and its failure to engage postcolonial scholarship. Although Said’s *Orientalism* was published in 1978 and is seen as foundational to the literature on culture and representation, it surprisingly does not merit mention in Campbell’s work.

Drawing from the work of postcolonial scholars like Said (1978) and Mudimbe (1988) we bring to the fore race as a major theme in this volume, particularly as it relates to constructions of North–South hierarchies, postcolonial and national identities, and immigration and security discourses (see, for example, Persaud in this volume). In addition, the postcolonial literature on gender, including works by Spivak and Mohanty, offers important insights on how gendered and racialized representations are insinuated into international relations. We argue that the concepts privileged in mainstream IR, such as anarchy, are grounded in racialized and gendered assumptions, although IR theory invokes anarchy as a universal condition (see Beier in this volume).

One of the pivotal features of the contemporary economic, political, and cultural dominance by the West of the Third World is the construction of race, which was formalized under colonial rule. Colonial discourse was structured by the nature and form of colonial interaction with pre-colonial societies; this discourse inevitably constructed Europeans as intellectually and morally superior and its others as backward and inferior. Consider, for example, the statement of Ernest Renan, the French historian and philologist:

All those who have been in the East, or in Africa are struck by the way in which the mind of the true believer is fatally limited, by

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the species of the iron circle that surrounds his head, rendering it absolutely closed to knowledge.

(Ashcroft and Ahluwalia 1999: 58)

Other colonial discourses distinguished between the “barbarous infidels” of the East and the “savages” of Africa and the Americas, suggesting that in the former the excesses of too much civilization had led to decadence visible in the greed of insatiable appetites, despotism, and power, whereas in the latter the lack of civilization had led to a savage primitivism (Lomba 1998). Asians, Africans, and Native Americans were regarded as inferior to whites, and colonization was deemed necessary for the establishment of a modern white moral order, that is the project of *mission civilisatrice*.

Aided by the morphological classifications of race by colonial anthropologists, and the consequent construction of inferior and superior races, colonial discourse legitimized its travesties by referencing race and its accompanying characteristics. Scientific and anthropological discourses of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries posited that races were biologically constituted and that the biological characteristics of people, evident in the size of the cranium and brain, the width of their forehead, i.e. their race, determined their capacity to be civilized, criminal, intelligent, and sexual beings (Gould 1981). These discourses classified white Europeans as endowed with higher civilizational attributes than Asians, Africans, and Native Americans, and constructed whiteness as inherently superior. Scientific and anthropological racism thus calcified a global hierarchy that serviced the needs of empire, which continues to influence contemporary global politics and the policies of a hegemonic twentieth-century power like the United States. As Persaud explains in his chapter on “Situating race in international relations,” US immigration policy has been shaped by deeply embedded notions of racial, cultural, and civilizational superiority. He argues that “the control of borders” along racial lines has been critical in the production and consolidation of a US national identity that privileges whiteness.

The focus on race has been complemented by attention to gender in post-colonial feminist scholarship. It draws attention to how the racialized hierarchy of Europe and its others was often also a gender hierarchy in which Asians, Africans, and indigenous Americans were feminized in contrast to a masculinized European identity. Once again science was used to justify this comparison:

it was claimed that women’s low brain weight and deficient brain structures were analogous to those of the lower races, and their inferior intellectuality explained on this basis. Women, it was observed, shared with Negroes a narrow, child like and delicate skull, so different from the more robust and rounded heads characteristic of

males of 'superior' races ... In short, lower races represented the 'female' type of the human species, and females the 'lower race' of gender.

(Stepan quoted in Loomba 1998: 160–1)

Ironically, a hypermasculinity was also attributed to colonized men in which they were constructed as oppressors of colonized women and the mission of the colonial state was to save "these female victims." For example, Lord Cromer, key representative of the British Empire in Egypt, raged against the institution of veiling and used it as the *raison d'être* for the civilizing mission of the empire (Ahmed 1992). Interestingly, Cromer was once the head of the anti-suffragist league in Britain. The cynical appropriation of feminist themes in the service of empire meant the politicization of cultural practices such as veiling, leading to its symbolic significance in the cultural politics of revivalist Islamic movements (Ahmed 1992; Fanon 1965). The memory and specter of empire, it is clear, continues to haunt world politics.

A related problem is also the role that Western women played in the imperialist project. For instance, women philanthropists from the West often set out to liberate the Third World woman from "oppressive cultural practices" (Mayo 1927).¹⁵ Consequently, cultural symbols like the veil, seen as signs of oppression of Third World women, have become nodal points around which contemporary critiques of the "Orient," in particular Islam, have revolved. In contrast, the veil has also been used as a symbol of resistance by some Muslim women and by Islamic social movements in their reassertion of cultural identity.¹⁶ While culture has been increasingly relevant to the study of IR as demonstrated in theses about the "clash of civilizations," the "new cold war," and "fundamentalist Islam" (Huntington 1996; Juergensmeyer 1996), this scholarship treats culture as fixed and immutable, rather than as a construction grounded in power relations and emerging out of historical encounters. Mainstream IR scholars fail to contextualize culture or cultural practices and neglect their links to imperialism and contemporary regimes of modernization. These understandings in IR are premised on the separate historical evolution of West and non-West, whereas we argue that these are mutually constitutive histories with implications for contemporary cultural discourses and practices of secularism, nationalism, and identity politics (see, for example, Anand, Biswas, and Krishna in this volume).

Race and gender have also been central to the construction of nation and national identity. According to Paul Gilroy "the ideologies of Englishness and Britishness" are premised on the co-production and reproduction of race and nation in Britain. Gilroy asks: "How long is enough to become a genuine Brit?" Arguments that focus on originary myths "effectively deny that blacks can share a significant social identity with their white neighbors who in contrast to more recent arrivals inhabit ... 'rooted settlements' articulated by lived and formed identities" (1993, quoted in Lazarus 1999: 65).¹⁷

Nation and national identity have been complicated by colonial and post-colonial flows of people and culture making it impossible, as Gilroy demonstrates, to frame a civilizational discourse premised on racial exclusivity (see Krishna in this volume).

In international relations, scholars like Manzo (1996) have shown how race figures in the construction of nation, while others have drawn our attention to its gendered bases (Ranchod-Nilsson and Tetreault 2000; Peterson 1992a; Yuval-Davis 1993). This literature illuminates the racialized and gendered underpinnings of nations and nationalisms in IR, and reveals the influence of critical feminist and race theory. For example, Yuval-Davis argues that the control of female sexuality plays a critical role in maintaining the racial and national purity of the nation. Official constraints and proscriptions against racial intermixing are imposed to ensure racial purity, as demonstrated in past injunctions against intermarriage between whites and non-whites in the United States. The racialized female body therefore becomes the site of competing imperialist, nationalist, and feminist claims with different implications for power and politics in IR (see Nair and Biswas this volume). We take seriously these insights and emphasize the role that both race and gender play in constituting relations of power, domination, and resistance in world politics.

Global capitalism, class, and postcoloniality

International relations has only recently begun to address the question of representation, identity formation, and culture as evidenced by recent boundary-challenging postmodern, critical constructivist, Gramscian, and feminist work. Marxist and neo-Marxist, including Gramscian, writings in particular are concerned with issues of imperialism, colonization, and neo-colonial relations, but they rarely foreground the interconnections between the material, discursive and cultural. We not only emphasize the imperialist juncture and its formative power, but we also explicitly address the interconnections between culture, discourse, and material practices in constructing North–South relations. For example, Ling, in this volume, analyzes the gendered and cultural dimensions of Asia’s financial crisis by exploring what she calls the “triple move” of the West’s liberal international order which “reflects an openly calculated coordination of institutional interests to sustain Western capitalist hegemony in the global economy.” Agathangelou, Chowdhry, and Nair in this volume also attend to the material and cultural dimensions of global hegemony. We thus address the criticism leveled at postcolonial scholarship by critics like Arif Dirlik (1997) and Aijaz Ahmad (1992) who have accused it of a “culturalism.”

Both Ahmad and Dirlik in trenchant arguments against postcolonial scholarship have posited that postcolonial theorists have abandoned the classical Marxist concerns with material inequalities between the First and

Third Worlds, replacing them with Foucauldian and poststructuralist preoccupations with discursive truth regimes and representation. Dirlik has asserted that postcolonial scholars are guilty of a “culturalism” and the post-foundational and poststructuralist focus on Eurocentrism leads postcolonial scholars to deny the “foundational status” of capitalism for the spread and maintenance of European power. He writes:

The denial to capitalism of “foundational” status is also revealing of a culturalism in the postcolonial argument that has important ideological consequences. This involves the issue of Eurocentrism. Without capitalism as the foundation for European power and the motive force for its globalization, Eurocentrism would have been just another ethnocentrism (comparable to any other ethnocentrism from the Chinese and the Indian to the most trivial tribal solipsism). An exclusive focus on Eurocentrism as a cultural or ideological problem, which blurs the power relationships that dynamized it and endowed it with hegemonic persuasiveness, fails to explain why this particular ethnocentrism was able to define modern global history, and itself as the universal aspiration and end of that history, in contrast to the regionalism or localism of other ethnocentrisms.

(Dirlik 1997: 515–16)

Ahmad and Dirlik’s arguments hinge on the assumption, also supported by Shohat (1992) and McClintock (1992), that the privileged and “prominent position” of postcolonial theorists in Western academia directs their gaze away from the material anxieties and deprivations that result from the global expansion of capitalism. According to Dirlik, as the concern of postcolonial intellectuals with disrupting the “archeology of knowledge enshrined in the west” (Prakash 1992: 14) “acquires respectability and gains admission in US academic institutions,” it obscures “the condition of pessimism” that characterizes postcoloniality in the Third World (Dirlik 1997: 513).¹⁸ Thus the genealogy of postcolonial theory and the location of postcolonial theorists, for Dirlik and Ahmad, leads to the neglect of traditional Marxist concerns and a focus on poststructuralist and anti-foundationalist issues.

Although some postcolonial scholarship is guilty of the culturalism noted above, we claim that these criticisms are misplaced and indeed are based largely on a misreading of the origins and concerns of postcolonial writing. As discussed in the earlier section on genealogy, Marx and Gramsci have clearly influenced the thinking of postcolonial scholarship reflected in the work of subaltern scholars among others; the latter have critiqued the Eurocentrism of Marx and provided a postcolonial corrective. While a few postcolonial scholars argue that “Marxist discourse is really at one with

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liberal discourse within the circumambient episteme of modernity,” others like Ranajit Guha suggest that a Marxist critique of capitalism “possesses a clear externality to the bourgeois ‘universe of dominance’” (Lazarus 1999: 127, 132). Despite this difference, postcolonial scholars generally agree that the foundationalist and universalist assumptions of Marxism need to be rejected to further a genuinely non-Eurocentric history.¹⁹ Illuminating this point, Gyan Prakash argues that postcolonial theory rejects “Eurocentric Marxism” with its focus only on the narrative of class which assumes that, in India for example, the “caste system, patriarchy, ethnic oppression, Hindu–Muslim conflicts ... [are] forms assumed by the former (Prakash 1997: 496).” Postcolonial theory recognizes that while class does not subsume other forms of stratification it seriously molds the relations of power in India and often underwrites caste, ethnicity, communalism, and gender. Thus the rejection of the economic determinism of Marx in which capitalism functions independent of the cultural manifestations of power is not tantamount to dismissing capitalism (or class) as a “disposable fiction”; rather, the “historization of the Eurocentrism in nineteenth-century Marxism enables us to understand the collusion of capitalism and colonialism and to undo the effect of that collusion’s imperative to interpret Third World histories [only] in terms of capital’s logic” (Prakash 1997: 497). Dipesh Chakrabarty has also echoed Prakash’s analysis of Marxism by pointing out that

(un)like in the Paris of the poststructuralists, there was never any question in Delhi, Calcutta or Madras of a wholesale rejection of Marx’s thought. Foucault’s scathing remark ... may have its point, but it never resonated with us with anything like the energy that anti-Marxism displays in the writings of some postmodernists.

(quoted in Lazarus 1999: 123)

Commenting on the relationship between culturalism and materialism, Teresa L. Ebert has suggested that there are two “fundamentally different ways of understanding” postcoloniality. The first mode, which she argues is more prevalent, Foucauldian, and culturalist, demonstrates the links between power and regimes of knowledge, and “foregrounds the problems of representation.” The second mode, which foregrounds “the international division of labor and poses the problem of the economics of untruth in the relations of the metropolitan and periphery” does not dispense with issues of representation; rather it suggests that the politics of representation cannot be understood separate from the political economy of labor (Ebert 1995: 204–5). We are attentive to both modes throughout this volume; whereas some chapters more explicitly emphasize the role of global capital, it is implied or assumed in other chapters. This is consistent with Hall’s injunction that “certain articulations of this order are in fact either implicitly assumed or silently at work in the underpinning assumptions of almost all

the post-colonial critical work” (Hall 1996: 258). We see the modes discussed by Ebert as overlapping rather than distinct moves, as evident in many of the contributions to this volume. A good example of this overlap is the chapter by Sankaran Krishna which relates identity politics in postcolonial Guyana to the “fractured inheritance” of colonial rule, and the political economy of the plantation. Through the figure of West Indian cricketer Shivnaraine Chanderpaul, Krishna “attempts to map out the multiple and dynamic trajectories of national identity” in Guyana, and shows the imbrication of class, ethnicity, race, and gender with imperialism in the contemporary production of Afro-Guyanese and Guyanese-Indian politics.

Other chapters in this volume directly address the impact of the political economy of globalization, and more explicitly reflects Ebert’s second mode. Agathangelou, for example, discusses the “lower circuits of capital” inhabited by sex and domestic workers. She distinguishes these lower circuits, which are characterized by “tourism, reproduction, and activities such as food preparation, janitorial/custodial jobs, and the sex trade,” from the “upper circuits of capital” relations which focus on trade, financial markets, and capital flows. By being attentive to the production of these lower circuits of capital, Agathangelou exposes the serious limitations of neoliberal international political economy (IPE), and also draws our attention to the gendered “silences and invisibilities” evident in Marxist IPE. Elsewhere in this volume, Chowdhry explores the framing of global and national debates surrounding child labor in the carpet industry in India. She argues that the global discourse surrounding child labor draws from a liberal human rights critique and obfuscates the workings of global and national capital regimes. The imbrication of the discursive and the material in these works further illuminates the necessity for a postcolonial re-reading of international relations and political economy.

Resistance and agency

With the possible exception of some feminist IR it is unclear whether and how the critical IR literature approaches the question of resistance and agency.²⁰ The literature on global civil society, social movements, and transnational advocacy networks has more recently engaged questions concerning transnational mobilization on gender, the environment, and human rights, among other issues, and has made a significant contribution to the IR literature (Keck and Sikkink 1998; Lipschutz and Mayer 1996; Risse *et al.* 1999). Although this work does explore agency and is useful in theorizing transnational activism and its impact on sovereignty claims, it does not directly address our concerns about resistance, or representation, and more significantly it elides the workings of global capital. We find the postcolonial literature more helpful in addressing these concerns.

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As noted earlier, postcolonial theory has been accused of merely “deconstructing” knowledge, of failing to locate its critique and analysis in the material histories of the oppressed, and of being seduced by French “high theory” at the expense of indigenous literatures.²¹ However, as discussed in the previous section, its intellectual debt to postmodernism and poststructuralism notwithstanding, postcolonial theory is attentive to these material histories, and in fact relates these histories to the question of resistance and agency. In this section we explore various forms of resistance and agency in relation to power and IR by drawing on the insights of postcolonial scholarship. Hence, the significance of colonizing practices, counter-narratives, and struggles, and the marginalized’s “recovery of self,” that is, forms of resistance and agency, constitute the main focus of our analysis.

From the view of many postcolonial scholars uncovering oppressions, and ultimately shifting one’s gaze toward the colonizing practices of Europe and the United States, constitutes a form of resistance.²² In addition, a postcolonial critique of power in IR must also move beyond the deconstruction of knowledge. Such a move entails, according to Said, “the political necessity of taking a stand, of *strategically essentializing* a position from the perspective of those who were and are victimized and continue to suffer in various ways from an unequal, capitalist, patriarchal, and neocolonial world order” (Krishna 1993: 389). While addressing representation is critical to understanding the power–knowledge nexus in IR, the “postmodernist suspicion of subjectivity and agency” disempowers political action. This is particularly a problem for those who, as Krishna points out, are not so advantaged by their placement in late capitalism’s international hierarchy (1993: 388). We also see the postmodernist aversion to “taking a stand” as a form of disempowerment wherein the deconstruction of Western forms of power–knowledge have made alternative sources of identity and resistance difficult, if not impossible, to envision within the same discursive space. These arguments surfacing in Krishna’s critique are clearly reflective of concerns in postcolonial studies around the gnawing question of subjectivity even as the “death of the subject” is proclaimed in postmodernism. However, even as some postcolonial scholars aver that the question of subjectivity, which is part of a larger debate in postcolonial studies on commitment to “universalism, meta-narrative, social emancipation, revolution” (Lazarus 1999: 9), is best dealt with by sticking to efforts to resist such essentialisms, others like Said and Spivak have argued otherwise. According to Lazarus, Said has explained the differences between postmodernism and postcolonialism on the question of resistance and agency thus:

Yet whereas postmodernism, in one of its most programmatic statements (by Jean-François Lyotard), stresses the disappearance of the grand narratives of emancipation and enlightenment, the emphasis

behind much of the work done by the first generation of post-colonial artists and scholars is exactly the opposite: the grand narratives remain, even though their implementation and realization are at present in abeyance, deferred, or circumvented.

(Lazarus 1999: 10)

The point here is that postcolonialism opens up possibilities for resisting dominant discourses of representation and power by framing its own “counter-narratives.” Thus Grovogui, in this volume, addresses the context “in which the production of international knowledge occurs” and the locations from which postcolonial theorists challenge the hegemonic narrative. Analyzing and responding to the charges leveled by contemporary critical Western scholars and thinkers such as Hopkins and Todorov against post-colonial scholarship, Grovogui explores African postcolonial criticism embodied in the *Rassemblement Democratique Africain* (RDA) in the aftermath of World War II, and draws out its counter-narratives and implications.

Postcolonial writings vary in their approach and understanding of resistance and agency, ranging from the early works of anti-colonial thinkers such as Fanon and Memmi, the later subaltern historiography of scholars like Chakrabarty (1992), Guha (1982), and Prakash (1997), to postcolonial thinkers like Spivak (1988) and Bhabha (1995).²³ In the case of the former, resistance and agency are conceptualized as “recovery,” specifically the “recovery of self” (Fanon 1965, 1967; Memmi 1965; Nandy 1983). Such a recovery entails political struggle and liberation from colonial rule, and the search for, and realization of, cultural identity, an identity that has been systematically degraded and denied by the colonizers. However, anti-colonial and postcolonial writers have also been suspicious of nationalism’s potential hegemony and the exclusions that it engenders (Fanon 1965: 148–205; Chatterjee 1993: 13). In particular, the subaltern school, whose project is to foreground and make visible the voices, histories, locations, struggles, and movements of the marginalized, has challenged nationalism’s exclusions and addressed its complicities with capital.²⁴

The attempted recovery of the subaltern voice raises the question of whether the oppressed and marginalized can actually have a voice, or as Spivak put it, “Can the subaltern speak?” (1988). Her answer in the negative has triggered an important debate in the field, pitting those like Spivak who caution against the construction of a romanticized, authentic subaltern against others who argue that it is possible and necessary to articulate resistance and agency (Parry 1994; Chancy 1997; Loomba 1998).²⁵ We agree with Loomba, who has pointed out that this disagreement presents us with a difficult and unnecessary choice; it is far more desirable that we pay attention to the recovery of voice, and simultaneously engage questions concerning the politics of “subaltern silence” (1998: 239).

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We locate subalternity by being attentive to the modalities of power, domination, and resistance in IR, paying particular attention to the multiple ways in which racialized, gendered, and classed hierarchies reproduce these modalities. This volume offers counter-narratives, that not only address questions of representation in international relations, but also acknowledge the spaces for recovery, resistance, and agency. In exploring Lakota cosmological beliefs, Beier challenges the assumptions of realist IR, or what he refers to as the IR “orthodoxy.” Beier attempts to show why listening to native voices, without mythologizing or essentializing native identity, not only offers us a critique of conventional IR theory, but helps frame an alternative discourse that contradicts realist claims concerning survival, anarchy, and conflict as constitutive of international relations. He argues that an interrogation of the archaeological evidence yields not only an account of the aboriginal condition of the Lakota, which is quite different from those put forth by the anthropological and historiographical orthodoxies, but also an alternative conception and practice of political order that is equally at odds with that which is held to by the orthodoxy of international relations.

While recovery of voice and the framing of counter-narratives enable us to understand resistance and agency, other forms of resistance such as mimicry and hybridity are equally significant. According to Homi Bhabha, identity is destabilized through a

strategy of disavowal ... where the trace of what is disavowed is not repressed but repeated as something different – a mutation, a hybrid. It is such a partial and double force that is more than the mimetic but less than the symbolic, that disturbs the visibility of the colonial presence and makes the recognition of its authority problematic.

(Bhabha 1995: 34)²⁶

Ling extends Bhabha’s concept of mimicry by distinguishing between its “formal” and “substantive” forms in her analysis of the Asian crisis in this volume. While formal mimicry is imitative, substantive mimicry is hybrid and “articulates an internally developed ideology” that is more destabilizing to global power arrangements. Ling claims that both “types of mimicry destabilize self-other relations, but the hegemonic self’s response to them differs markedly. Formal mimicry invites amusement, tolerance, even encouragement. (After all, imitation is the highest form of flattery.) But substantive mimicry provokes a punitive, disciplinary reaction.” She argues that the West tolerated Asia’s miracle growth “so long as it remained formal mimicry” and Asian capitalism never threatened Western liberal capitalist hegemony. However, once “a distinctive Asian capitalism,” an instance of substantive mimicry, emerged in the 1980s and challenged the established Western order, punitive actions followed.

Anand, in this volume, explores how Tibetans appropriate “the hegemonic language of sovereignty, autonomy, and nationalism to make their case” for an independent state. In addition, he demonstrates that the Tibetan diaspora navigates its claims within the multiple discourses that surround Tibetan-ness, such as that of “*exotica Tibet*.” Concerned about the possibilities for transformation and resistance Agathangelou assesses the potential for workers’ struggles to bring about change in the desire economies of Cyprus, Greece, and Turkey. She suggests that such struggles ultimately confront the transnationalization of capital and its gendered effects through the building of solidarities and alliances across gender, race and class. In addition, Chowdhry and Nair address similar concerns in their chapters.

We suggest that to properly confront the metanarratives of conventional IR, the historical production of hierarchy must be not only problematized and challenged, but resisted through a strategic rewriting of IR, which we attempt to do in this volume. For us the relationship between an academic enterprise, which may be implied in the “rewriting of IR,” and a politics of resistance “out there” is dialectical – one informs the other. This relationship is also productive of certain kinds of tensions, such as the dangers of “nativism,” valorization of subalternity, and the “safety” of the academic narrative or its distance from the “practical” everyday politics of marginality and resistance. We are cognizant of these tensions, but we hope with some humility that this project will assist in addressing some of the exclusions and marginalizations of contemporary world politics.

Organization of the volume

The chapters in this volume address one or more of the main themes discussed above. While all of the authors situate themselves at the intersections of postcolonial studies and IR and are committed to an interdisciplinary effort, their thematic emphases in these chapters vary. The next three chapters in the volume foreground race even as they address its intersection with gender and class. These chapters also highlight representational strategies enabled by and enabling colonizing practices. Grovogui in Chapter 2 addresses the criticisms leveled by A.G. Hopkins and Tzvetan Todorov against postcolonial scholarship that dismisses the latter’s methods as reductionist and misguided. He argues that their arguments reflect mistaken views of the postcolonial intellectual and political traditions. Focusing on the relationship between the French left and Coulibaly, Hama, and other West African politicians during the period of decolonization in West Africa, Grovogui proposes that it was not the method, but rather the politics of decolonization that influenced the latter’s denunciation of the French postcolonial imaginary. He thus refutes Hopkins and Todorov’s accusations of “reverse ethnography” and “cultural relativism” against postcolonial scholarship. In Chapter 3, Persaud assesses the impact of race on IR

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by focusing on security and immigration. Using the United States as an example, he argues that race has operated as a powerful social force in the construction of security. Persaud analyzes “civilizational security” and “civilizational hegemony,” particularly in reference to immigration, as discourses that construct and map difference within a racialized, global politics. In Chapter 4, Beier proceeds from a concern with the near complete neglect of aboriginal peoples by scholars working in the field of IR; this neglect stems in part from conventional IR scholars’ attachment to Hobbesian notions of the state of nature. The chapter shows how these attachments make invisible the question of race and gender in IR. Evidence for this is provided by examining the histories and experiences of indigenous peoples like the Lakota. By doing an alternative historiography, one that is also attentive to the racialized and gendered (ongoing) colonization of the Lakota, the chapter shows the necessity for an alternative cosmology of IR.

The next two chapters by Ling and Agathangelou highlight gender and draw out its implications for race, class, and global capital relations. In addition, Ling more systematically addresses the politics of representation and Agathangelou questions of resistance and agency. In Chapter 5, Ling reveals how and why a racialized hypermasculinity facilitates the globalization process in reference to the Asian financial crisis. Weaving a postcolonial perspective with constructivist IR, the chapter uncovers the “triple move” by the Western liberal international order to sustain Western capitalist hegemony. This move, Ling argues, entails the (re)feminization of Asia, the (re)masculinization of Western capital, and the (re)hegemonization of domestic and international relations “mimicking cold war power politics.” In Chapter 6, Agathangelou “explores the silences accompanying female sex and domestic labor migration in discourses of IR and mainstream perspectives on globalization.” She examines the “movement of sexual labor within the peripheries” and demonstrates that race, ethnicity, and nationality are crucial elements in this desire economy. She attempts to show how IR and the international political economy would look different if desire economies and the sex trade were taken seriously as integral to globalization.

The following three chapters address the politics of nation and nationalism, religion and cultural identity, and its transnational dimensions. Krishna, in Chapter 7, examines the issue of national identity in postcolonial societies by focusing on a West Indian cricketer named Shivnaraine Chanderpaul from Guyana. Through this figure, who is Guyanese-Indian, the author attempts to map the multiple and dynamic trajectories of national identity in a postcolonial setting where multiple ethnic identities come into play. Guyana’s population is about 50 per cent “East Indian” and 38 per cent African origin. Krishna asks, “How does one adjudicate between ethnic fragments that emerge as a legacy of the period of imperialism and battle over entitlements in a post-colonial national order?” This chapter marks an effort to think about the contentious issues involved in such an

adjudication. Biswas, in Chapter 8, begins by problematizing Western secular discourse and its orientalist-racialized assumptions. Focusing on the resurgence of religious nationalism in world politics, her chapter exposes the Christian cultural core of Western secularism. She examines the “Rushdie affair” in Britain to show how the presence of religious minorities in the West unsettles the claims of Western secularism. By exploring the racial and cultural core of Western secularism, Biswas also sheds new light on the resurgence of religious movements such as Hindu and Islamic nationalism, and their imbrication in the global project of modernity.

In Chapter 9, Anand seeks to engage the questions of Tibetan diasporic transnational identity, and its struggle for nationhood, and argues that such an interrogation tests the limits of current postcolonial theorizing. He delineates some of the many dynamics of Tibetan identity and explores how it is shaped by multiple narratives, bringing to the surface tensions that play performative and constitutive functions in imagining Tibet as a nation. One of the tensions addressed in the chapter is Tibet’s location as a postcolonial entity, but in relation to a hegemonic regional power, China, and a larger international order dominated by the West. He suggests that even serious works on Tibet often use contrasting images to begin with – a Shangri-la on the verge of extinction and a semi-colony whose culture has been destroyed by the Chinese (and by the process of modernization). This pessimistic scenario ignores the creative potential of Tibetans to adjust and survive in a changing world.

The last two chapters in the volume address the global human rights discourse in reference to child labor and Burma, by drawing out the racialized and gendered representations of the “other” implicit in this discourse. Further, the two chapters situate this critique in reference to the politics of global capital. Chowdhry in Chapter 10 interrogates liberal human rights discourses and the cultural relativist response to child labor, and examines the ways in which both are imbricated in the “conjuncture of global capital.” She argues that the voices of children who labor are lost in these discourses. A postcolonial retrieval of these narratives provides agency to these children, and offers a more complex understanding of the relationship between child labor, international trade, and IR. In Chapter 11, Nair explores Burma’s representation in the dominant liberal human rights discourse and attempts to uncover the erasures that accompany such a representation. Problematizing the discursive power and authority of liberal human rights scholarship and policymakers, particularly in the United States, the chapter suggests that an alternative postcolonial re-reading of the Burma human rights problematic reveals the gendered and orientalized structure of human rights discourse, and its class underpinnings.

Notes

- 1 We subsume the study of international political economy under the broad rubric of IR.

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- 2 Rosenberg's assessment and critique of the methodological and ontological three-step "levels of analysis" framework is instructive. He points out how, in adopting such a framework, IR theorists like Kenneth Waltz create an artificial separation between spheres of action while calling for them to be "integrated" into a more holistic frame of reference. And yet, "once the basic method of levels of analysis has been accepted, the problem of how to construct that frame cannot help but appear in the false terms of how to reassemble the misshapen fragments" (1994: 96).
- 3 *The Sociological Imagination* by C. Wright Mills (1959) is pertinent to Rosenberg's critique of IR.
- 4 Walker refers to the state as a "spatial container" in IR theory, an image that is incapable of supporting "a plausible analysis of historical transformation in any context" (Walker 1992: 126–7).
- 5 For a synthesis of the dependency literature see Chilcote (1974).
- 6 Despite the nuances between poststructuralism and postmodernism we use them interchangeably in reference to this scholarship in IR.
- 7 In justifying the "far from complete" nature of this cast Rosenau has claimed that "space limitations" precluded the inclusion of "Third World analysts, rigorous quantifiers, and political economists ... the most conspicuous silences" in the volume (Rosenau 1993: x).
- 8 There is also a debate over the use of the hyphenated "post-colonial" and the unhyphenated "postcolonial". For supporters of the former, it serves "as a decisive temporal marker of the decolonizing process." Others prefer the non-hyphenated, or unbroken "postcolonial" because it more accurately reflects the continuity and persistence of the consequences of colonialism (Gandhi 1998).
- 9 Said has acknowledged his debt to these writers and thinkers in *Culture and Imperialism* (1994).
- 10 The Orient analyzed by Edward Said is not what is popularly understood as the Orient, i.e. Far East Asia; rather it is the Middle East or Near East, and India.
- 11 Said's reliance on both Foucault and Gramsci, and by extension poststructuralism and Marxism, is reflected in postcolonial scholarship and may explain some of the critical tensions evident in postcolonial work.
- 12 Ranajit Guha, one of the main architects of subaltern studies, argues that the use of Gramscian analysis poses serious problems for subaltern scholars. According to Guha, the Gramscian use of ideology and hegemony privileges colonial discourse, giving very little or no agency to the subaltern, defeating the very purpose of subaltern scholarship. Others consider Gramsci central to understanding the subaltern voice. It remains doubtful whether the autonomous positions of the subaltern can ever be "discovered" since the concept of subalternity, as enunciated by Gramsci in *Prison Notebooks*, "signifies the impossibility of autonomy" (Prakash 1992: 9). This position is echoed in Spivak's "Can the subaltern speak?" (Spivak 1988).
- 13 For the extended passage see Fanon (1965: 40).
- 14 For a survey of Marxist approaches to imperialism see Brewer (1989). Also see Chilcote (1999).
- 15 For example Annette Ackroyd's passage to India more than a hundred years ago exemplifies the efforts of Western feminists to save their Eastern sisters. The construction of Indian women by Ackroyd whose "Victorian sensibilities are offended by her Indian benefactor's wife" is interesting to note:

She sat like a savage who had never heard of dignity or modesty – her back to her husband, veil pulled over her face – altogether a painful exhibition –

the conduct of a petted foolish child it seemed to me, as I watched her playing with her rings and jewels.

(quoted in Ware 1996: 152)

- 16 For a discussion of resistance, women, and veiling see Abu-Lughod (1986), Ahmed (1992), Hoodfar (1997).
- 17 Gilroy is responding to Raymond Williams's comments on "rooted settlements" of the Welsh in the formation of British national identity, in contrast to the place of recent immigrants in Britain.
- 18 However, Stuart Hall has dismissed this argument by suggesting that it resonates with the "whiff of politically correct grapeshot" and affords an "unwelcome glimpse" into the "ins and outs of American Academia" (Hall 1996: 243).
- 19 Neil Lazarus has argued that Prakash, Chakrabarty, and Chatterjee are anti-foundationalist and hence more influenced by Foucault than others like Guha of the subaltern school. According to him Gyan Prakash's suggestions for writing "post-Orientalist histories" equally implicates national, Marxist, and orientalist histories in furthering the project of a universalist modernity. While critical of the representations of India present in orientalist histories, both national and Marxist histories ironically "replicate Orientalist reason" in their "own ideologically and institutionally determined procedures and protocols" (Lazarus 1999: 122). For Prakash, nationalist historians' allegiance to the nation-state, which was based on and fostered an image of an undivided, albeit sovereign India, engendered certain erasures. In doing so it replicated the orientalism of colonial history. Marxist historiography, for Prakash, with its focus on class and capitalist history, is also foundationalist and Eurocentric. Its "vision cannot but reproduce the very hegemonic structures that it finds ideologically unjust in most cases and occludes the histories that lie outside of the themes that are privileged in history" (Prakash quoted in Lazarus 1999: 124).
- 20 James Scott's *Weapons of the Weak* (1985) has influenced the literature on peasant resistance and is relevant to our concerns about resistance and agency. The literature on global civil society, social movements, and transnational advocacy networks, which has more recently engaged questions concerning transnational mobilization on gender, the environment, and human rights, does address agency but from a different vantage point than we do in this volume.
- 21 This is reflective of Darby and Paolini's analysis of the third movement in post-colonial studies, which they suggest is pervaded by postmodernism, unlike the first move which engages "the fiction of excolonial countries" (Darby and Paolini 1994: 375).
- 22 Ania Loomba points out that critics of Edward Said have accused him of concentrating "too much on imperialist discourses and their positioning of colonial peoples" at the expense of agency. But as she further notes, other scholars see Said's project as inspiring or coinciding with "widespread attempts to 'write histories from below' or 'recover' the experiences of those who have been hitherto 'hidden from history'" (1998: 232).
- 23 Spivak has been a key contributor to, and feminist critic of, the subaltern school. See especially her arguments in "Can the subaltern speak?" (1988).
- 24 See the extensive literature on subaltern studies in volumes I–X of *Subaltern Studies*.
- 25 See Loomba's succinct discussion of this debate (1998: 231–45).
- 26 Our reading of Bhabha's contribution to understanding resistance and agency is different from Darby and Paolini's interpretation. They place him in the third movement, which they argue "is less sanguine about any prospect of recovery" (Darby and Paolini 1994: 377).