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Once More About Globalization: An Introduction

The editors of this volume, professors Peng-hsiang Chen (Department of English, Shi Hsin University, Taipei) and Jenn-shan Lin (Department of East Asian Studies, University of Alberta, Canada), kindly asked me to write an introduction for this publication. On behalf of their schools of higher learning, they had organized, with exemplary efficiency, an International Conference on Subjectivity/Cultural Identity in an Age of Globalization. It took place at Shi Hsin University, Taipei, Taiwan, on May 26-27, 2001, with the active participation of a group of scholars from Taiwan and Canada, but also from other places in Asia and Europe. The present publication is the result of a selection, re-ordering, and revision of some of the featured papers from the Conference. The editors and I are grateful to Canadian and Taiwanese sponsors of the scholarly gathering, which included—among others—the two universities, The National Science Council (Taiwan), the Bureau of Journalism, the Bureau of International Cultural and Educational Relations, Ministry of Education, R.O.C., and General Relations and Communications, Canadian Trade Office in Taipei, as well as help from Taiwan Normal University Alumni and Guest House and Tsinghua University Guest House. We are all particularly indebted to the authors who prepared their papers on time, so that they were distributed prior or during the Conference, which greatly facilitated comments by respondents and free discussion, and who later kindly accepted to re-write and up-date their contributions.¹

1 I should like to acknowledge my use, in the text that follows, of the abstracts provided by some of the authors. I am always abbreviating and freely adapting them on the basis of the full, revised texts; therefore, my thumbnail sketches are my responsibility, although they frequently, in part, rely on the authors' own words.

The re-ordering of the sequence of papers for this publication ensured that general and primary questions about cultural identity in the age of globalization are treated before the specific aspects and cases that concern the topic. A sub-group of three papers discusses the Taiwanese film maker Ang Lee in the varied perspectives of cultural globali2ation and places him within an international framework. Most of the texts focus on phenomena belonging to and relevant for contemporary Chinese culture and its Pacific rim diaspora, but one inspects Afro-Caribbean women's fiction, and the final paper, in a kind of coda, returns to the basic notions of any study of identity and discusses the special problems posed by drama and theatre.

Designated as the keynote speaker, I attempted in "'The Mind-Forg'd Manacles': Literary Encounters with Culture, Identity, and Subjectivity in an Age of Globali2ation" to present briefly the main, general features of globalization, especially in the field of culture and subjectivity/ identity, as established by some of the more influential Anglophone, Francophone, and German studies of, and polemics about, this process. I moved then to examples of literary anticipations and echoes of such developments: Jules Verne's *Paris au XXe siècle* (a science fiction novel from the mid-nineteenth century but only published in 1994), Thomas Pynchon's *Gravity's Rainbow* (1973), Salman Rushdie's *The Satanic Verses* (1988), and Jose Saramago's *Ensaio sobre a cegueira: romance* (1995, tr. into English in 1997 as *blindness*). Finally, I referred to Canadian, Latin American, and African narrative fictions and plays concerned with questions of acculturation, creolization, hybridization, and nomadism. The text that follows here is, with a few minute revisions, the same as that prepared for the Conference, but it includes passages which constraints of time prevented me from presenting orally. In the body of this Introduction, I will take the opportunity, later on, to add a few second thoughts about the topic.

Chung-hsiung Lai in "Re-writing the Subject: The Thrownness of Being in the Multicultural Condition" asks the philosophical question about the present subject: starting from Heidegger's existential "thrownness of being," his concept of *Dasein* ("being-there") and facticity ("being-within-the-world"), Lai uses Gadamer's idea of "historically effected consciousness," Derrida's concept of "arche-writing" and that of Freud's "writing pad," to explore the thrownness of Being in the multicultural context, this new context that changes it into an otherness-oriented thrownness of Being that the author calls "hauntological thrownness." He divides the subject into a pre-existing, impersonal, universal and transcendental subject and an ontico-ontological

one, which is now being written so as to liberate it from the ideological prisons of identity and making it available to a more open, dialogical, dynamic and ethico-political intersubjectivity.

Kwok-kan Tarn in "The Self as Cultural-Linguistic Hybrid in the Age of Globalization" deals first with Chinese and Western theories about the formation of the self, especially those based on social constructivism and psychoanalysis. Both models assume stable boundaries exemplified by the nation-state and cultural tradition. After considering the prevalent theories of self and globalization, including those of the Indian anthropologist Appadurai, the author concentrates on the question of the mediating function of language in cultural formation and specifically the cultural negotiation between the local and the global. The second part of the paper offers examples from contemporary Hong Kong writings as case studies that illustrate the role language plays in the globalized formation of the self.

Wang Ning, author of studies on post-modernity in China, scrutinizes "Identity Seeking and Constructing Chinese Critical Discourse in the Age of Globalization" and presents first a glimpse at current globalization studies, and then elaborates on the impact of strong cultures on weaker ones, which follows economic globalization. Scholars of literary and cultural studies in the Orient and Third World, worried by the obscuring of their national and cultural identity, are now seeking a new identity. In spite of the long and splendid tradition of Chinese culture and literature, many of today's men of letters and literary scholars, following in this their 19th and 20th century predecessors, would rather appear influenced by Western theory and culture than by their own tradition. To the author, globalization has broken through the boundaries between countries, nations and even cultures, so that the "seeking of an Asian identity" has become a myth. Nevertheless, globalization has also brought about possibilities for Third World scholars to reconstruct their cultural identity and critical discourse. Critiquing the current debate on the "absence of Chinese critical discourse" the author proposes a positive strategy for globalizing Oriental and Chinese culture and critical discourse.

Eva K. Neumaier in "The Fleeting Windhorse: Tibetan Cultural Identity and the Challenge of Modernity" reaches back to Tibetan historiographic texts of the 13th-15th centuries to examine first the dynamics of Tibetan cultural identity during pre-modern times. After the breakdown of the imperial dynasty of Tibet in 842 and the ensuing political chaos, a cultural identity received preference that endowed a mytho-religious world-view rather than one grounded in historical events. She shows then how, because of this

predisposition of Tibetan culture, the opportunities presented through the advent of modernity since the 1950s receive mainly a mythic response; this retreat into mythic symbolism may temporarily shelter Tibetans from the harsh realities of history, but it also deepens the rift between them and their surroundings. The post-1950s cultural identity has to address the fact that a growing number of Tibetans are exposed to Chinese culture and education. Autobiographical statements of contemporary Tibetans and other sources show that while the socio-political situation in TAR and ethnic Tibet encourages an identity formulation that straddles the boundaries of being Tibetan and Chinese, the Tibetan exile communities embark on a discourse of cultural purity that often harbors fundamentalist rhetoric. Modern Tibetan identity formation faces the predicament of the conflicting discourses on cultural purity *versus* the concept of culture as an amalgam.

In his paper "Does the East Asian - European Interliterary Communication in the Late Qing - Late Meiji Periods Offer a Model for a Globalized Literature?" Raoul David Findeisen reminds us of the renewed scholarly interest in Goethe's concept of *Weltliteratur*, which precedes greatly the present economic globalization, and investigates a previous fruitful period of inter-literary contact, the early 20th century when Japan was an important transit port for literary goods. Mainly with China in view, the author assesses this period under the following perspectives: possible models for a quantifying assessment of globalization, qualifying conclusions that consider cultural distance, contrasting samples of data both for the early 20th and the late 20th centuries, the role of patterns of cultural identity and its construction during contrasted periods, finally the subjectivity as literary technique and as Hegelian criteria of development. Based on a wealth of data, the author argues that under all of the suggested perspectives the period selected, regardless of its inclination to translate second hand, has remarkable traits even if compared to the present age that is labeled as one of globalization.

Eva Yin-I Chen, in "Shame and Narcissistic Self in Yu Da-fu's *Sinking*" uses the framework of Heinz Kohut's self psychology to study the preoccupation with a confessional and thinly disguised authorial subjectivity in this famous collection of stories. She posits that a narcissistic self, aggravated by an intense sense of both racial and sexual shame, brought along by early narcissistic injury, informs the major theme of *Sinking*. The protagonist's masochistic obsession with melancholy and the sick body denotes a bid both to win recognition from others and to protect the self from future additional injuries. Shame is experienced here at the racial level (being

a Chinese in a superior Japan) and the sexual level (inadequate masculinity and failure to live up to the ideal of an abstinent scholar). The final suicide could be seen as a narcissistic protest of self-object neglect, as well as a sign of the breakup of the self at the unsuccessful resolution of the equally overpowering yearning for fusion/dependence (with the mother and mother-land) and boundary/ independence.

Kai-chong Cheung in "Ethical Assimilation in Pearl S. Buck's *Peony*. An Early Example of Identity and Globalization" discusses the case of Jewish-Chinese cultural assimilation in *Peony* (1948). Based on the true history of Jewish immigrants in K'aifeng in the mid-nineteenth century, the novel portrays the gradual assimilation of a Jewish family, which has lived in China for four generations, into Chinese society and the mutually beneficial results of this process. The acknowledged purpose of Pearl S. Buck is to promote racial tolerance and equality; for her, when foreigners come to China, they are treated with an open-mind and easygoing attitude. The Chinese consider Jews to be clever, energetic and witty, and often use them to manage their business; almost as often a Chinese will give a second or third daughter to a Jew for his wife, and the subsequent generations become more Chinese than Jewish. The decisive role of the eponymous servant girl, highly unusual according to traditional Chinese culture, is part of Buck's validation of women's functions in the family and society.

Terry Siu-han Yip's "Geographical Space and Cultural Identity: Self in the Age of Globalization" analyses how selected Chinese works of the XXth century link the representation of geographical space or localities and the exploration and manifestations of self and identity. The focus of the analysis are short stories by Tie Ning and Xi Xi, as well as a play by Gao Xingjian.

Marian Galik in his paper "Gao Xingjian's Novel *Ungshan (Soul Mountain)*: A Long Journey in Search for a Woman?" presents the novel that won the Nobel-prize in 2000 as not only a milestone of Chinese but probably also of world literature. In his ostensive "erotic-comparative" *chercher lafemme*, Gao is searching for the cultural roots of his country in the multicultural society of China and Galik highlights the author's endeavor to consider carefully some of the values of the less known indigenous traditions from the realms of shamanism, popular Taoism and Buddhism, folklore, and the customs of the national minorities. The gallery of Chinese women portrayed in the novel reminds the veteran of European Sinology of the *Honglougong*, but in a modern and postmodern shape.

Terence C. Russell's "The Freedom of Identity/The Freedom of Non-Identity: Zhu Tianxin and Gao Xingjian on Language and Culture" inquires into the problem of language as a vehicle for specifically cultural meaning in contrast to its role in the expression of meaning that transcends conventionally conceived cultural boundaries. The author compares and contrasts the life and work of the Nobel-prize winning Chinese writer and the Taiwanese writer, their experiences of external and internal exile, and their respective treatments of language, identity and culture. Both writers, following different paths, have arrived at an understanding of themselves as individuals standing apart from society and from the cultural environments in which they reside, but still belonging to the language they use in order to create. Gao Xingjian's many writings about language and its use show significant differences with Zhu Tianxin's practice, although both share the loss of faith in ideology and conventional accounts of cultural tradition.

Shu-ning Sciban's "From Diaspora to Homeward Bound: The Development of Ping Lu's Writing" investigates the "winding road" Ping Lu has taken in her creative career and her response, and that of other Chinese women writers, to the global feminist movement, and the effect of their reaction on the development of Chinese women's literature. After chronologically tracing the relation of Ping Lu's feminist thinking to her writing, the paper focuses on the evolution of her feminist texts. Based on this description, which emphasizes Ping Lu's *Implementing Ideals*, the author gauges the significance of Ping Lu's writing for the advancement of women in contemporary Taiwan.

Yuchi Tang's "The Historical Home in Luo Fu's 'The Non-Political Totem—Visiting Dr. Sun Yat-sen's Former Residence'" offers a close reading of Lou Fu's long poem in which nostalgia is the space for preserving and re-figuring the changing site of homeland, both in memory and in reality, and highlighting the complex contemporary Taiwanese/Chinese identity. Published in 1989, two years after the civilian contacts between Taiwan and Mainland China resumed, the poem captures a returning native's confrontation with his homeland, with contradictory discourses of Taiwanese/Chinese identity, and, finally, with himself. A careful reading of the "totem," a symbol used to stand for the simplified Chinese character of Sun Yat-sen's family name in the poem, permits to observe the impact of contemporary Chinese history on the de/formation of nostalgia. The resultant historical consciousness of Taiwan as a region/nation against a background of collective departure and arrival is followed to locate the self in

displacement from/within the space of nostalgia—country, home, and language, the dwelling place of a writing poet. The poem leaves open whether the future promises a home for the displaced, but the poet himself in 1997, eight years after the publication of "The Non-Political Totem," immigrated to Canada and carries now a Chinese identity that is "seethed with mixed feelings."

The first of the three papers on the Taiwanese film-maker Ang Lee, Whitney Dilley's "Fragmentary Narratives: Globalization and Cultural Identity in the Films of Ang Lee," discusses the contribution to the international globalization debate by the director of award winning films in both the Chinese and Western traditions. The imagination of the artist metamorphoses, blurs, and calls into question traditional attitudes. Images of a young male student pondering Dostoevsky and female college students working in fast food restaurants in cosmopolitan Taipei indicate that globalization cannot be resisted. And yet, through the dialectic of shifting identities an opportunity arises for Ang Lee to promote Chinese culture (or a hybridization of it?) in an enlightening way. While his work appeals to consumer culture, it also subverts the more traditional grand narrative, demonstrating that people living in the new millennium have developed a sensitivity able to deal with the contradictions of their age. Ang Lee's filmic voice indicates the paradigm of globalization in the contemporary era—that ours is no longer a world of totality and that it has become more and more fragmentary.

The second paper, Jennifer W. Jay's "*Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*: (Re)packaging China and Selling the Hybridized Culture and Identity in an Age of Globalization," examines how Ang Lee uses film and an international audience to globalize changing realities of identity and culture through windows into historical and contemporary societies. The author proposes that Lee appropriates polarities as a discourse and device to illuminate the human existence. The article focuses on *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon*, and sketches Lee's creation of a "transnational" China by rounding up diaspora talents, constructing/configuring such a transnational China (for instance in the transposition of the novel to the screenplay and changes to characters and plot), the inclusion of geography and ethnicity, the manifold elements of Chinese identity and culture, such as Confucianism, Buddhism, and Daoism, and then by globalizing this transnational China through marketing and publicity, as well as translation and subtitles. The article also highlights Lee's treatment of women, feminist sensibilities, and sexuality, and concludes with observations about the movie's winning of mainstream awards and Ang Lee's

and Tan Dun's opinion about the "marriage between translatable cultures." For the author, "this transnational China, despite being westernized and hybridized, retains its Chinese identity and culture in the eyes of the global film audience—approachable but still exotic, intriguing but accessible through subtitles."

Finally, Robin Chen-hsing Tsai's "The Gaze of the Other: On Ang Lee's *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* and Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds*," follows Franz Fanon's cultural diagnosis of and indictment against Euro-Reason to look at identity by examining the unequal relationship between Self and Other. To avoid the hierarchical Manichaean binarism, the author also uses Martin Buber's mutuality of the "I-thou" (*Ich-Du*) relationship, Mikhail Bakhtin's dialogism, and Lacan's insights on the identification process to look closely at the Self and Other, the Eye and the Gaze in two famous movies by Ang Lee and Alfred Hitchcock. The analysis of *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* draws on a comparison between the novel and the film, and the reasons for the important changes; the analysis of *The Birds* places the movie within Hitchcock's *oeuvre*, especially his tetralogy about "the maternal superego" (*Rear Window*, *The Man Who Knew Too Much*, *Psycho*, and *The Birds*). The author concludes that both Lee and Hitchcock "cast a suspicious look at [the] Odyssean imagination of narcissistic cultural identification and try to "depose," "de-situate," and "revert" the ego into self, "a self *without self*"

Pin-chia Feng's "*Ou libéré: Trauma and Memory in Edwidge Danticat's Breath, Eyes, Memory*" investigates the ways in which trauma and memory are refigured and how artistic creation and historical documentation reach a kind of equilibrium in contemporary Afro-Caribbean women's fiction. Haitian American author Edwidge Danticat's *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1994) is examined in terms of her use of oral tradition and folk religions to break the female silence. Describing experiences of a Francophone country, Danticat's lyrical writing in English captures the texture of life in Haiti, its constant political turmoil, and the pain of forced exile and immigration. Her novel addresses the need to survive personal and political traumas, such as rape, female genital mutilation, and genocide, and to articulate those experiences through oral storytelling. Danticat provides artistic ways to cope with the difficulties of representing trauma and remembrance, she contributes to the creation of a New World writing which addresses the complicated colonial and neocolonial interrelations between the United States and the Caribbean.

Eugene Chen Eoyang, the American comparatist and organizer of the 2004 Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association in

Hong Kong, returns to the general question of the Self and the Other. In "Other as Self: Identification as Recognition and Defamiliarization in Drama" he continues the exploration of the three notions developed in his earlier study of identity: quiddity—a deictic thusness of being, propinquity—a relatedness in time, place, or association; and oddity—a discreteness, particularity, originality. The article demonstrates how drama poses special problems for the study of the other as the self because in the theatre the other is palpably and concretely represented before our very eyes. We also experience secondary alienation (difference): the figure performing the role on stage is and is not the role s/he plays. These notions are pursued in the analyses of Henry Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879), Tennessee Williams's *A Glass Menagerie* (1945), and David Henry Hwang's *The Sound of a Voice* (1983). In the analyses, notions of identity also uncover perspectives on gender identification as well as generic feelings. Else than the unity of the topic, cultural identity and globalizations, the vast majority of papers in this volume exhibit two additional common traits: a considerable knowledge of contemporary Western intellectual concepts and lines of scholarly inquiry, and a direct grasp of Asian languages, especially of Chinese. This combination, still uncommon among scholars in Europe and North America but developed in Japan and in all regions of the Pacific Chinese diaspora, offers in itself a privileged vantage point and a particular perspective. After all, how many Western scholars are at home in the Chinese and Japanese languages and cultures compared to their proficiency in French, German, Spanish, Italian, or even Russian? For historical, geographic and pedagogic reasons we are in the West yet to become as globalized as our intellectual colleagues from East Asia; what we are, more often than not, attaining only in theory, they are able to practice. But with one limitation, it is true: individuals excepted, as a profession and broad group they seem to receive most Western ideas through an Anglo-American filter, using English language translations and interpretations, similar to the previous use of Japanese as intermediary (a process described by Findeisen and others).

It is also characteristic of an Asian perspective on globalized culture that particular attention, in more than one contribution, is paid to Gao Xingjian and Ang Lee. The Nobel prize winning writer of prose fiction, translator, dramatist, director, critic, and internationally exhibited painter in ink, who figures prominently in three articles, studied French and introduced Brecht, Artaud and Beckett to Mao's China. He created many stirring polemics about modernity and experimental theatre, went from a re-education camp, through controversies and internal exile into final emigration, became a citizen of

France, and is now writing both in Chinese and French. Born in Taiwan in a refugee family from Mainland China, the Oscar nominated and Oscar winning independent producer, director and screenwriter lives mostly in New York and produces movies on both sides of the Pacific that broach topics of great actuality, with an emphasis on mores, gender, and popular culture, but always with meticulous attention to period and location (including a remarkable adaptation of Jane Austin's *Sense and Sensibility*, 1995).

The still young and very productive Edwidge Danticat, seems to me to be also a natural choice for particular scrutiny in a volume like this one: born and raised by an aunt for twelve years in Haiti, she joined her parents in a predominantly Haitian-American neighborhood in Brooklyn, NYC. After studying French literature and fine arts, she published a collection of short stories and four novels (the most recent, *The Dew Breaker*, was issued by Alfred A. Knopf to considerable critical acclaim) based on her own experience and that of the Haitian diaspora. Surrounded by Creoles, French, English and Spanish in the Caribbean, Danticat spoke Creole as a child and learned French in school; after arriving in New York, she began to learn and later write in English. Whether speaking of the past or present, Haiti or the immigrant community in the States, she pursues certain main concerns: migration, sexuality, gender, and how language shapes not only the telling but the undergoing of life.

As could be expected, most essays in this volume evaluate the importance of language and Creoles, dialects and idiolects, and their uses in the present processes and effects of cultural globalization. The essential role of language-in-experiencing the world, conceptualizing and expressing it-is confirmed both by the observations of the contributors to this volume and the practice of the writers and thinkers they scrutinize. Since the time of the International Conference, which was the starting point for this collection of essays, numerous publications about the globalization and its consequences continued to appear in most languages and regions of the world. After finishing and delivering my own paper, I resumed to look at some of them. For me—rather arbitrarily, of course—three seemed to be of particular significance: *The Cultures of Globalisation*, edited by Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (1998-which I was not able to consult at the time of its publication), Joseph E. Stiglitz's *Globalisation and Its Discontents* (2002), and the Report A

Fair Globalisation, prepared for the UN International Labor Organization (2004).²

Of these books, only the Jameson-Miyoshi collection of essays, which includes distinguished contributors from many parts of the world, considers directly the process of globalization from the point of view of the transformation of the economic into the cultural and vice versa. As advertized by the publisher, the volume studies the rise of consumer culture around the world, the production and cancellation of forms of subjectivity, and the challenges it presents to national identity, local culture, and traditional forms of everyday life. Approaching their topics from a variety of perspectives, including those of linguistics, sociology, economics, anthropology, and the law, the contributors describe the present global character of technology, communication networks, consumer culture, intellectual discourse, the arts, and mass entertainment. The articles are placed under four headings: Globalization and Philosophy; Alternative Localities; Culture and Nation; and Consumerism and Ideology. While preserving a broad perspective, some of the articles focus on particular regions and areas, such as Latin America, Africa, or China. Although, inevitably, the authors, even Miyoshi in his "In Place of a Conclusion," forego the need to provide a coherent explanation for an unfinished process, they offer valuable comments on such vital topics as "The 'World-System': Europe as 'Center' and Its 'Periphery,' beyond Eurocentrism" (Enrique Dussel), "Globalization, Civilization Processes, and the Relocation of Language and Cultures" (Walter D. Mignolo), "Notes on Globalization as a Philosophical Issue" (Fredric Jameson), and "Free Trade and Free Market: Pretense and Practice" (Noam Chomsky). While now

2 *The Cultures of Globalisation*, eds Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi. Durham: Duke U.P., 1998 (series Post-contemporary interventions); Joseph E. Stiglitz. *Globalisation and Its Discontents*. New York: W.W. Norton, 2002; *A Fair Globalisation*. International Labor Organization, published 24 February 2004, on the web-site <http://www.ilo.org> with bibliographies in English, French, and Spanish.

I should like to note also *Identity, Culture and Globalisation*. Eds. Eliezer Ben-Rafael with Yitzhak Sternberg. Leiden-Boston-Tokyo: Brill Academic Publishers, 2001 (paperback 2002). *Annals of the International Institute of Sociology*. The tide notwithstanding, this ample collection of 34 contributions is resolutely sociological in its concerns, but with valuable considerations of roads to modernization, world languages, multiculturalism and diaspora movements, postmodernity, as well as the decline of the accountability of the traditional states.

beginning to date, this publication must still be recommended to those who are interested in its subject.

The other two books adopt a rigorously economic and sociologic approach. The book by the American Nobel prize winner in economics (2001) and Columbia University professor of Economics, Business and International Affairs Joseph Stiglitz, already translated into some thirty languages and much commented upon by specialists and amateurs alike, studies the impact of the International Monetary Fund, World Bank and World Trade Organization, of foreign trade regulations, and of specific U.S.A. commercial policies on the international economic integration and developing countries. On the basis of major case studies, Stiglitz concludes that these institutions and American trade policies and practices have precipitated trade and financial liberalization of a kind that has created a playing field that is not level at all, with many drastically negative consequences for the weaker economies and the poor in rich countries.³

The UN's International Labor Organization (ILO) published on the 24th of February 2004, a long-awaited, laboriously assembled Report on the consequences of globalization, "A Fair Globalization." The Report was prepared for two years by twenty officials and experts, including Stiglitz; it was chaired by Tarja Halonen, the president of Finland, and Benjamin William Mkapa, the president of Tanzania. The Report found that the uneven benefits of globalization are creating a growing divide between rich and poor countries, as well as between the rich and poor within countries, and that the opening of borders, new trade agreements and the establishment of the World Trade Organization after the end of the Cold War failed to speed up the growth of global national product, which lagged behind the economic performance of

3 Stiglitz has also popularized his ideas in many interviews and articles, so for example in his comments about the Report by the International Labor Organization: "The Social Dimensions of Globalization: The war on terror may be important, but let's not forget about the importance of addressing the inequities of globalization, either," published by many media, consulted by me in the version printed in *Taipei Times*, Sunday, March 14, 2004, page 9.

Branko Milanovic's *Worlds Apart: Measuring International and Global Inequality* (recently published by Princeton UP in 2005) seems to quantify, in a very sophisticated way, how and why "The rich get richer, the poor get squat," according to the review by Thomas Homer-Dixon in *The Globe and Mail* (Saturday, July 30, 2005, p. D3 and D4); Homer-Dixon is director of the Trudeau Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Toronto.

the previous decades. In spite of their premise that "the potential of the global market economy for good is immense and has demonstrated great productive capacity for hundreds of millions of people," the co-chairmen conclude that "currently, globalization is a divisive subject. It verges on the dialogue of the deaf, both nationally and internationally. Yet the future of our countries, and the destiny of our globe, demands that we all rethink globalization." The Synopsis of the Report states:

The current process of globalization is generating unbalanced outcomes, both between and within countries. Wealth is being created, but too many countries and people are not sharing in its benefits. They also have little or no voice in shaping the process. Seen through the eyes of the vast majority of women and men, globalization has not met their simple and legitimate aspirations for decent jobs and a better future for their children.... Meanwhile the revolution in global communications heightens awareness of these disparities.

One hundred eighty-eight million people are unemployed worldwide, or 6.2% of the labor force, the gap between rich and poor nations is widening, with countries representing 14% of the world's population accounting for half of the world's trade and foreign investment, and in the developing world, women have been harmed more than men by globalization. Within some rich nations, the US, UK and Canada, for example, the gap between rich and poor has grown wider as well, with the largest gap in the US (the top 1% earning 17% of the gross income, "a level last seen in the 1920s).⁴ In the world's thirty wealthiest nations, the average of corporate taxes fell from 37.6% in 1996 to 30.8% in 2003. There are an estimated 246 million child laborers worldwide, with continued forced labor in agriculture, the military, and sex work. Bright spots in the Report concern India and China, where, in spite of severe problems created by rapid development, the number of people living in absolute poverty had diminished significantly. According to the Report, globalization's "volatility threatens both rich and poor.... Open societies are

4 Nutritional experts agree, it seems, that on any one day about 13 million children go hungry across the US ("Thousands of children go hungry in a land of immense wealth." DPA report, Washington, published i.a. in *Taipei Times*, March 5, 2004, p. 9. At the same time, the US account for about 30% of the world's production and its top five companies (Wal-Mart, General Electric, Pfizer, Microsoft, and Exxon/Mobil) have a market capitalization that exceeds US\$1-trillion, rivalling that of all the companies listed on either the Paris or Frankfurt bourses.

threatened by global terrorism, and the future of open markets is increasingly in question."

The Report recommends improved international governance, trade laws, increased development assistance, and better enforcement of international labor standards and environmental protection. The main message is clear: "The current path of globalization must change. Too few share in its benefits. Too many have no voice in its design and no influence on its course" (Paragraph 1).

Prudent and circumspect, the Report nevertheless confirms what most observers have been suspecting for years: economically and financially globalization does not have equal effects and benefits. Is the situation different in culture? Of the Report's 634 numbered paragraphs, only eight contain the word "culture." Three ask for the necessary respect of cultural diversity (41, 50, 107); one finds that culture is never static and that most communities welcome exchange and dialogue with other communities provided that "they are empowered to live according to their own aspirations" (310); and one considers that the Internet and cheaper TV and radio have increased the quality and range of information and that the better programming has helped the cultural development of linguistic and other minorities (574). The Report expresses possible concerns about the effects of change on traditional attitudes and values (68) and particularly about the global information revolution and its impact on local cultures: "There is widespread concern at the overwhelming dominance of the culture and values of the United States, and other Western countries, in the global media and entertainment industry ... [and the] constant exposure to images of Western lifestyles and role models" (222).

If we were to attempt a planetary sketch of cultural influences, it would show, I believe, that as a result of globalization the scope and rapidity of mutual influences have accelerated significantly, but that the balance sheet globally (no pun intended) shows unequal impacts. Not only technologically, economically, financially, administratively, and militarily, but also culturally and linguistically it is not a level field, neither in terms of chances nor of results. Combined, by necessity, with modernity and modernization, sometimes with postmodernity, these processes have ensured, so far, a predominance of Western culture, its values, ways of thinking and feeling, even its languages. This is most prominently the case with English, which in its British and American usages is the most frequently taught second language. Except for Dutch, all Western imperial languages: French, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian,

to some extent German, have preserved a privileged role.⁵ Chinese is increasingly becoming a world language, too, but it is largely restricted to its ethnic diaspora, children and adults for whom it is their mother tongue. Albeit international languages, written Arabic and oral and written Hebrew are more restricted in their use and in part at least focused on religious functions and rituals. Otherwise, vast areas of the world and large populations, especially the elites, are yet informed, linguistically and educationally (but also in jurisprudence and civil and military administration, not to speak of financial markets and trade) by the usages and preferences of their previous colonial masters.

A domain in which I have some limited first hand experience of this kind is that of the UNESCO, its bodies, and professional international scholarly organizations in the humanities, including even, at least in the past, the International Comparative Literature Association/ Association Internationale de Littérature Comparée—notwithstanding its systematic, enlightened efforts to go beyond its European origin and historic European-American dominance. A case in point is also the use of British and American educational tools not just to teach and learn English (dictionaries, thesauruses, grammars, textbooks, anthologies), but also to inform the world about the rest of the world. This characterizes especially the book trade in the so called Third World and in East Asia. Exemplary are the Norton anthologies of World Literature: in many ways meritorious and prepared by excellent experts, they are, of course, in English (with American spelling for texts originally written according to the British or Commonwealth usages) and they reflect Western, usually American, perspectives, selection principles and value judgements. The same phenomenon, although weakened by the global preponderance of the English language, manifests itself in the learning tools used in the Francophone, Hispanic, and Lusophone countries, as well as those in many regions previously belonging to the Russified Soviet Union. Outside of the humanities, in which there are vestiges of plurilingualism, English is now entrenched as the standard intermediary language of international exchanges

5 German had a negligible influence on its pre-World War I African and Pacific empire. In spite of fluctuations caused by the First and especially Second World War, it is much used in Scandinavia, Central and East Europe, and is effectively promoted as a world language by Germany and, to a lesser extent, Austria and Switzerland. (I am thinking, for example, of such German institutions as the DAAD, Goethe-Institute, and Humboldt-Foundation, previously also the DDR Herder Institute.)

of information of all kind. Moreover, there is a clear vertical ranking of academic institutions, with certain Western schools and degrees occupying the top. Western scholars or scholars working in the West dominate in the Nobel prizes in the sciences. The standard calendar (with its AD and BC division), as well as the time zones (with the privileged position of Greenwich), temperature scales, and measures of weight and distance, whatever their initial origin, have been gradually introduced since the 18th century as a Western innovation and part of modernity. Of course, popular culture has proved to be equally, or even more susceptible, to Western products in music, dance, cinema, television, and the internet.

Such influences of the modernized Judeo-Graeco-Roman Western culture are not monolithic—after all there are varieties of the West, as there are many cultures in the other parts of the world. Also, it is not exclusive and unidirectional: Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, and Confucianism have their converts in traditionally Christian societies; martial arts movies, *manga* comics, and Japanese animated films are popular in North America and elsewhere. Europeans and North Americans, Australians and New Zealanders are consuming imported jewelry, fashions, and decorative furniture. There is increased awareness of the classics of Chinese military strategy and respect for traditional medicine, especially the Chinese one, as well as for eastern techniques of meditation and physical fitness. Previously shunted "mongrel" nations of many regions and multicultural societies, like that of Switzerland and Canada, are increasingly valued and at times proposed as models for the future. Decentralization, autonomy, local specificity, and ethnic diversity are quite fashionable, albeit more in discourse than in practice.

Nevertheless, when we gauge the impact on people's everyday life, the thinking, feeling, and behavior of both the elites and the masses, clearly one type of influence is more substantial and wide-spread than the other.¹ Culturally, globalization has usually meant Westernization, and frequently Americanization. But in all fairness, it should be noted that for many people,

especially the younger ones, the spread of American culture is not experienced as an invasion, but an anti-authoritarian liberation.⁷

Here I am attempting only a descriptive diagnosis and not asking the basic question whether this is fair and good, nor whether some other balance would be more desirable. Personally deeply convinced that diversify is an advantage and that the death of a language means the disappearance of a culture and a way of experiencing life, similarly to the loss of an animal or plant species, I always argued in Comparative Literature—that this discipline should adopt world perspectives and study literature in its varied linguistic, cultural, and historical contexts. For all that, such fundamental value judgements are a separate issue, which would ask for more information, space and wisdom than I have now. What I am able to claim is that a collection of essays, like that offered in this volume, by its very position in space and adopted perspective, represents a valuable and original contribution to the discussion about *Cultural Identity in the Age of Globalisation*.

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6 Wherever I have lived or travelled in "non-Western" countries, luxury hotels and restaurants advertise Western, often French, cuisine; in a surprising number of instances they have Caucasian or at least Western trained managers. In North America the predominant impression of Chinese cooking is that it can be found in cheap or reasonably priced eateries. For economic reasons, but also because of the inherent prestige, imitations and pirated goods produced in countries with cheap labour copy Western brands and products, not the other way round. The lucrative cosmetics industry' is dominated by European and U.S. products and their publicity.

7 Doubters of the U.S. rhetoric about democracy and human rights point out that the political core of the American revolution in the 18th century was a highly restricted notion of freedom: the right of property holders to dispose of their wealth, including their slave holdings, as they saw fit. For these misbelievers, the global war against terrorism and for democracy is a useful tool for the imperial aspirations of the last super power.