The Beastly Feast?

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Globalization in 25 Words or Less

What is globalization? And, in asking that, how do we begin to frame the frames that frame that question? As many have argued, by proceeding with the question as such, we frequently import several of the explanations that the query has supposedly yet to uncover: discourses, totalizations, smooth spaces, micropolitics, capital, transnationalisms, flows of capital, imperialisms old and new, wars on terror, displacements, &c. Likewise, many others have observed the impossibility of maneuvering ourselves outside of those circulating constructions that we find ourselves reproducing in our global imaginaries. This problematic framing of the question of globalization, as we understand it, is not remedied simply by attempts to get outside of these frameworks, but also by compounding the number and scope of definitions so that threads of accord and discord may emerge.

Definitions of globalization—submitted by undergraduate students from around the world—appear throughout disC/osure 13: Pangaea. These come as responses to requests we made to faculty members in geography programs in- and outside the U.S. to challenge their students to define globalization. We asked that students provide their own definition (in 25 words or less) based upon whatever logical, empirical, or affective groundings they felt best suited the topic. Our hope was not to find entirely fresh perspectives, but rather to gather together a collection of responses that reveal the in-roads and out-roads of globalization discourses. While some responses queried the very concept of “definition” by, for example, responding with a poem rather than a rigid description, we were surprised to discover how closely several definitions resonated with each other, in spite of the great distances separating their authors. However, our task is not to re-codify these responses as a new zone or margin of representation, but rather to offer them as they were submitted: a collection of documents on globalization in the year 2004. Take them as you will.

Rather than gathering these definitions up into a single, centered bloc, we have dispersed these texts throughout this issue of disC/osure.

—Keith Woodward and Danny Mayer

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your face
a double face
a Devil’s face!
one face
turned towards your own society
deplores any injustice.

Like a flood light
it beams out
turning your other face
looking outwards
your morality changes
your ethics change.

scrutinising
one-way
like a torch
never back
the other way!

backed by science
backed by the military
backed by anthropology
backed by sociology
denial of humanity
no morning
only righteousness

a sickening feeling in the pit of people’s stomachs!

(Dear) Complicated Beast,
can we beam it the other way
de Beer

have the discussions in a reciprocal way
talk as people to people?

*Founded on empirical data - verbatim quotations, with minor modification, from transcribed interview with Prof Catherine Odora Hoppers, 28 November 2001.*

Saikat Majumdar

**Globalization, or the Vanishing Present of Postcolonialism? (and the Figuration of the Comprador-Intellectual)**

**Of Cousins and Cannibals**

Looking back, few theorizations of the relationship between postcolonial studies and the discourses of globalization stand out in my mind as strikingly as that articulated by a professor at Princeton, who, on the very first day of a graduate seminar on the subject, announced: “To the new entrants to the area of postcolonial theory, it is now time to say—‘Hello, it’s over! Welcome to the discourses of globalization.’”

Carrying the legacy of urban, middle-class, educated Calcutta, speaking and writing in English, pursuing a doctorate in British modernist literature, I could have hardly considered myself a new entrant in the field of postcolonial studies at that point in time. Few members of the class could have, I suppose. Coming from corners of the globe as diverse and PoCo-friendly (or hostile, depending on the mood, time and place) as the Anglophone and Francophone Caribbean islands, China, Morocco, Turkey, England, Canada and South-Africa, not to mention Americans from all over the country, everyone in the class seemed to have been engaged with one sort of (post)colonial legacy or another. And no mere ‘native informant’ essentialism either—they all were engaged in reckonings, epistemic and personal, of not only such legacies, but of a more abstracted theorization of the encounters with empire in a larger, global space. Not ‘Empire,’ I