

TOWARDS GLOBAL DIALOGISM: TRANSCENDING 'CULTURAL IMPERIALISM' AND ITS CRITICS

Huimin Jin*

Abstract: Cultural studies have developed from a domestic stage into the present international platform, and a new theoretical framework is accordingly demanded. In other words, international cultural studies should have its own theoretical platform corresponding to its internationality. Based mainly upon the dispute around 'cultural imperialism,' this article categorizes cultural studies into two modes: 'modernity' cultural studies and 'post-modernity' cultural studies. It analyzes their advantages and disadvantages respectively, suggesting the third mode of 'globality' cultural studies transcends the previous two: the tenet of which is a philosophy of global dialogism that sublates (aufheben) both modernity and postmodernity at one time.

I. Globalization as a New Philosophy

The term *globalization* is commonly used to characterize a variety of social and cultural phenomena such as: the heightened speed, volume, and facility of interactions among people across borders and irrespective of distance or geographical barriers; the intensifying interconnectedness and interdependence of local, regional, and national economies, and ecologies; the growth of international relations and expansion of transnational politics; the emergence of world culture in music, cinema, television, and other forms of popular culture; the expansion of networks both licit and illicit (e.g., criminal, terrorist) that exist independent of state or polity; and the rise of individuals identifying themselves as citizens, not of any specific nation, but as citizens of the world. This is what McLuhan (1962)

*Dr. HUIMIN JIN, Qujiang Chair Professor of Cultural Theory & Aesthetics at Shaanxi Normal University, Xi-an, and Chair Professor of Literary Theory at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Beijing, China. Email: jhmyxm@126.com.

referred to as, *the global village*. *Globalization*, however, has another meaning which has increasingly come to be recognized as a second, higher (or *meta*) level of meaning: referring not simply to the object of study commonly associated with the term, but also, and more importantly, to a perspective to be employed: an approach to studying the types of contemporary social and cultural phenomena outlined above. Put another way, the process of globalization has quite naturally given rise to a philosophy of globalization: *Globalization* can therefore be understood as a new philosophical category, one that transcends the binary opposition of modernity and postmodernity. Globalization encompasses modernity as well as postmodernity, and to be precise, globalization includes the two of them simultaneously, not as individual entities, but as part of a dialectical system involving a complex, dynamic relationship between opposing forces, resulting in a new synthesis. This is a vital change, if not a revolution, in the *spatialisation* (Shields, 1991) of cultures and hence of importance to anyone concerned with the concepts of space and culture. Philosophy, as *Weltanschauung*, is always part of the world image, and a philosophy of globalization, geographically related, can then be considered part of the spatialisation of globalization, and may well be considered central to that spatialisation. In this exploration of the topic, I present a Chinese perspective and assessment of the canonical understandings of this development over the last two decades.

This epochal proposition, which should have been developed by philosophers, is nevertheless, now alluded to us by sociologists. In the concluding chapter of *The Consequences of Modernity*, Anthony Giddens summarizes “One of the fundamental consequences of modernity ... is globalisation. This is more than a diffusion of Western institutions across the world, in which other cultures are crushed. Globalisation - which is a process of uneven development that fragments as it coordinates - introduces new forms of world interdependence, in which, once again, there are no ‘others’ ... Is modernity peculiarly Western from the standpoint of its globalising tendencies? No. It cannot be, since we are speaking here of emergent forms of world interdependence and planetary consciousness.” (Giddens, 1990: 175) Giddens does not deny the modernity aspect of globalization, that is, the imperial project spread to the whole world by Western institutions. He tends more, however, to see the failure of this grand project in its process of implementation and the interdependence between nations/states resulted from this failure - different from Giddens. We call this the

‘postmodernity’ dimension of globalization, and this is in a way what he states elsewhere that globalization will result in a “runaway world” (Giddens, 2002: xxxi).

As regards globalization as ‘postmodernity’, John Tomlinson’s radically playful stance is likely to appall any scholar if he or she is seriously minded. In his groundbreaking monograph *Cultural Imperialism* (first published in 1991), Tomlinson seems to have an abundance of confidence to exterminate, once and for all, the view of globalization as ‘modernity’:

Globalisation may be distinguished from imperialism in that it is a far less coherent or culturally directed process. For all that it is ambiguous between economic and political senses; the idea of imperialism contains, at least, the notion of a purposeful project: the *intended* spread of a social system from one centre of power across the globe. The idea of ‘globalisation’ suggests interconnection and interdependency of all global areas which happens in a far less purposeful way. It happens as the result of economic and cultural practices which do not, of themselves, aim at global integration, but which nonetheless produce it. More importantly, the effects of globalisation are to weaken the cultural coherence of *all* individual nation-states, including the economically powerful ones - ‘the imperialist powers’ of a previous era. (Tomlinson, 2001: 175)

Tomlinson, however, cannot prove to us, even minimally, that globalization, regardless of its consequences, is simply a spontaneous process without any motivator. This would not be the case, unless globalization has nothing to do with human beings as agents. Obviously, Tomlinson’s mistake is to disregard the *intentions* to globalize with the *consequences* of globalization. He seems to be ignorant of the fact that ‘intention’ is subjective while ‘consequence’ is objective. Since globalization is driven by human beings with *intentions*, the ‘modernity’ aspect of it cannot be denied. Giddens’ term “runaway world,” if compared with Tomlinson’s radicalism, would be far better to describe globalization, because it not only verifies that someone is trying to control (*intentionally*) but at the same time sees that he or she fails to control the world (*consequently*).

Borrowing a Japanese term, *dochakuka*, Roland Robertson calls globalization “*glocalization*,” a condensed form of global localization (Robertson, 1992: 173-174), by which he means that globalization is a process of interaction

between the global and the local. “Its central *dynamic* involves the twofold process of the particularization of the universal and the universalization of the particular.” (Ibid: 177-178) Robertson’s approach to globalization, as we know it, is mainly from the perspectives of religion, ideology or in general, culture, and as such is more philosophically pertinent. In the context of globalization, we cannot speak only of the local, nor can we replace the local with the global, the dialectic of which indicates a philosophical question of universality and particularity appearing in any specific instance.

Comparably with Robertson’s *glocalization*, Mimi Sheller and John Urry see that “All the world seems to be on the move” (Sheller and Urry, 2006: 207; also see Urry, 2000) and then propose a “Mobilities Paradigm” for the traditionally ‘static’ social sciences they identify. This paradigm, as they present it, is “aimed at going beyond the imagery of ‘terrains’ as spatially fixed geographical containers for social processes, and calling into question scalar logics such as local/global as descriptors of regional extent.” (Ibid: 209) However, it is not “simply a claim that nation-state sovereignty has been replaced by a single system of mobile power, of ‘empire’: a ‘smooth world’, deterritorialized and decentred, without a centre of power, with no fixed boundaries or barriers” ((Ibid: 209) as imagined by Hardt and Negri (2000). The philosophical implication of this paradigm of sociology is to break a sedentarism loosely derived from the *philosopher* Heidegger, who locates dwelling (*wohnen*) place “as the fundamental basis of human identity and experience and as the basic units of social research human identity.” (Sheller and Urry, 2006: 208-209) Simply put, the subject, or more broadly, the modernity, which is based upon ‘place.’ is coming to its demise. In a global context of, say, ‘mobilities,’ or the ‘liquid modernity’ (Bauman, 2000), or, in a *glocalization* “on the move” as said previously, a sociologist can no longer speak only of the local, nor can s/he replace the local with the global, the dialectic of which indicates a philosophical question of universality and particularity reified in any specific instance.

To be brief, globalization in the vision of the current sociological studies which have already outlined for us a complete philosophical map of the complicated relationship between modernity and postmodernity. Modernity is the philosophy of subjectivity since Descartes; while postmodernity is the concept of *intersubjectivity* raised by Husserl after his realization of the drawback of egoism in his philosophy of subjectivity. It is also the concept of *communicative rationality* later developed by Habermas. Whether adopting the term

‘postmodernity’ or not, any theory critical towards the philosophy of a modern subject can be viewed, in a way, as a consciousness of ‘postmodernity,’ which attempts to transcend modernity. Postmodernity used to be mistaken as a form of nihilism by Giddens, and Habermas, among many others; but in its reality, it is nothing but a radical Husserianism. Derrida, for example, reminds us how all those items we term as consciousness, language and culture, are structures in the framework of reason that has obscured the truth we are seeking and hence they are to be “suspended” for “phenomenological reduction”. Postmodernity, therefore, is a renewed form of epistemology and a redirected way of reflectivity that sweep up the fog of modernity. If postmodernity appears to be a total abandonment of reason and its corresponding truth because of its harsh critique of the latter, globalization as a new philosophy, then, would maintain subjectivity, rationality, universality and the ultimate of modernity, but at the same time explore their limitations by taking into consideration such issues as Other, body, particularity, singularity and process. Alternatively, to put it differently, globalization does not simply identify itself with modernity, nor does it with postmodernity; rather, it stands on the endless opposition or antagonism between them, on an *articulation* that is forever unsettled. Lack of either dimension, it will not be called ‘globalization’, and we will not be able to correctly understand globalization, a new object to us, and all the phenomena that have happened in the era of globalization.

II. ‘Globality’ Cultural Studies in the Era of Globalization

The British history of cultural studies, if dated back to 1958, when Williams published his *Culture and Society*, has passed through half a century. Cultural studies in the beginning was a British domestic enterprise, devoted to targeting its domestic cultural and political problems, such as mass media, popular culture, youth sub-culture, and consumer society, etc., within which Marxism, ideology, hegemony, resistance and articulation were its key words, or, one might say, the soul of cultural studies. Approximately since the 1990’s, the topics of cultural studies have been rapidly internationalized. Stuart Hall began to talk about identity, hybridity, new ethnicity, Britishness, and globalization, though he also mentioned them from time to time in his earlier years. An inspection of the conceptual history of David Morley’s media studies will show that in the 1980’s the terms he was most interested in are “nationwide” (audience), “family”

(television), and “domestic” (viewing context). While since 1990’s, then, he has changed his topics into such ones like “global media, electronic landscapes, and cultural boundaries,” “home territories” and “cosmopolitics” that are particular to or brought to the foreground by globalization. More strikingly, in recent years, such buzzwords like “global culture,” “global citizen,” and “global public space” have painted the *globality* of cultural studies with a blaze of colors and signified for it a rampant spring.

The publication of *The International Journal of Cultural Studies* (since 1998), and the global flourishing of the university courses and departments in the name of ‘cultural studies’ across the world, some of which are, especially, under the advertising banner of “international cultural studies,” have all included cultural studies into the context of globalization *institutionally*.

A sharp voice has been raised by a group of authors in their collaborative book *Globalizing Cultural Studies* (McCarthy *et al.*, 2007) with a strong motive to put an end to “that traditional British, sub-cultural models of cultural studies,” “both methodological and interpretive.” They are jubilant to see these models “have been exhausted, rendered archaic by the monumental, shifting of global conditions and multiple diasporic figurations that exist in the contemporary moment” (Denzin, 2007: XII) and are now moving steadily to the fore.

All signs, to mention above just a few, indicate that cultural studies have *consciously* entered a global stage. However, this does not necessarily mean that cultural studies have already acquired a clear and proper ‘consciousness of globality.’ No one will deny that future cultural studies will definitely be global, which, however, is at the same time a requirement at a deeper level. Cultural studies in the global age, advancing with time, must have ‘globalization’ or ‘globality’ as a philosophical concept to be its new theory, new mind and new horizon. If it did not evolve it would remain a ‘modernity’ cultural study or a ‘postmodernity’ cultural study, rather than the “global cultural studies” or the “globality” cultural studies which will synthesise and then transcend both modernity and postmodernity philosophically.

Taking the debate over ‘cultural imperialism’ as an example, we are to expound hereafter what is the ‘modernity’ cultural studies and the ‘postmodernity’ cultural studies respectively, and to investigate wherein their particular problems rest. Lastly, with the philosophically-renewed concept of ‘globality,’ which we would foreground as *global dialogism*, we will re-observe the phenomenon of cultural flows referred by the dispute of ‘cultural imperialism’,

which doesn't just start from today, nay, we may even say, from the remote time of Plato or Confucius. Culture has never stopped its flowing. Culture is always clashing, dividing, merging, and looking for new heterogeneities to assume. No national culture today is born independent, and even nation itself is not of one single origin. Globalization has brought this continuing problematic story before us with new urgency.

III. 'Postmodernity' Cultural Studies Do Not Acknowledge 'Cultural Imperialism'

Let us now first examine the 'postmodernity' cultural studies, its representations and problems. Tomlinson's *Cultural Imperialism* would be considered a model instance if we can categorize it into 'postmodernity' cultural studies. It is systemic, profound and logical, inflicting great casualties upon its adversaries. Since then, it seems, 'cultural imperialism' has collapsed and never returned to the fore of cultural theory. The 'cultural imperialism' thesis refers to such an argument that a culture, Western culture of course, or American culture, has completely conquered and reorganized another culture – the weaker culture, to be sure, especially the Third World culture, into a certain unitary 'imperial' culture. To fight against this, Tomlinson has resorted to many kinds of weapons, among which, the most powerful one is the interactive theory between text and reader that comes from philosophical hermeneutics or reception aesthetics.

Tomlinson does not hide himself from the phenomenon of how American culture represented by Disney cartoons, Hollywood movies, McDonald fast food and the Levi jeans have conquered other cultures via export. No one denies this; yet Tomlinson turns away and raises this question: "But the key question is, does this presence represent cultural imperialism?" For him, "Clearly the sheer presence *alone* does not", because "A text does not become culturally significant until it is read. Until it is read, it has the same status as imported blank paper: a material and economic significance, but not a directly cultural significance. At this level of analysis, then, reading the imperialism text becomes the crucial issue in judging cultural imperialism." (Tomlinson, 2001: 42) From the reception theory as understood by Tomlinson, the so called 'cultural imperialist' texts signify nothing at all before they are read; even if they signify, their significance is not the original one after they have been read. The cultural significance of a text is, therefore, a later creation by the reader.

Tomlinson chooses the effect study of the TV serial *Dallas* carried out by Tamar Liebes and Elihu Katz to support his denial of “cultural imperialism”. According to Liebes and Katz, “The name of *Dallas* in the 1980s became a metaphor for the conquest of the world by an American television serial. *Dallas* signifies an international congregation of viewers (one of the largest in history), gathered once weekly to follow the saga of the Ewing dynasty - its interpersonal relations and business affairs.” (Liebes and Katz, 1993: 5) Such effect of *Dallas* is usually viewed as a unique event of cultural imperialism, a delivering and reception of the ‘cultural meaning’ of American imperialism. In view of the theorists of ‘cultural imperialism,’ such is its trajectory: “hegemony is prepackaged in Los Angeles, shipped out to the global village, and unwrapped in innocent minds.” (Ibid: xi) Liebes and Katz aim to interrogate the argument of ‘cultural imperialism’ with their investigations of audiences’ actual responses. To Tomlinson’s great delight, their empirical studies show that: “Audiences are more active and critical, their responses more complex and reflective, and their cultural values more resistant to manipulation and ‘invasion’ than many critical media theorists have assumed.” (Tomlinson, 2001: 49-50) Indeed, the effect research of Liebes and Katz proves that “Decoding is an interaction between the culture of the viewers and the culture of the producer.” (Liebes and Katz, 1993: x) This therefore subverts the hypothesis, as quoted above, of ‘cultural imperialism’ regarding the meaning of the texts made by the theorists of ‘cultural imperialism,’ that is, viewing it as a linear process of transportation.

Yet Tomlinson has forgotten, or he may not realize, that the philosophical hermeneutics or the reception aesthetics belong to Husserl’s phenomenology; they are *postmodern*, but not simply ‘postmodern.’ Meaning is a consequence of the *interaction* between the text and the reader, not just coming from the side of reader. Those who have ever read Gadamer, Hans Robert Jaus or Wolfgang Iser know they would not make such a misunderstanding of ‘no sense.’ Even within the ‘postmodern’ theories, Derrida’s deconstruction, for example, there is no such assertion that ‘anything goes’ with the meaning of text; only the “Tomlinsonian Postmodern” is an exception.

We will let it pass if this is but one example. What is worse, however, is that such an argument which denies ‘cultural imperialism’ through a hermeneutic reading has almost become a dominant view in the field of media research by way of Tomlinson’s seemingly persuasive and forceful argumentation. There appears thus a vision that the discourse of ‘cultural imperialism’ is beheaded: its bleeding

head hung high on the city wall, against the chilly wind, openly declaring the inviolable justice and rule of 'postmodernity' cultural studies.

We are greatly astonished to see that in recent years, in Germany, where there is a long tradition of phenomenology, there are such scholars that follow the extremeness and shallowness of Tomlinson to strengthen and push forward the postmodern understanding of global culture. Ulrich Beck, Professor of Sociology at the University of Munich, in one of his newly published article (Beck, 2003: 16-29)¹, states that "the concept of *Americanization* is based on a national understanding of globalization' which he criticizes as a form of 'methodological nationalism.'" As an alternative program, he suggests globalization must be understood as "cosmopolitanization" that is "capable of reflecting a newly transnational world." According to his etymological study, *cosmopolitan*, the core of *cosmopolitanization* is formed from two roots: *cosmos* and *polis*. The former meaning 'nature' and the latter 'city/state'. The combined word 'cosmopolitan' shows that every human being is rooted by birth in two worlds: one is nature, and the other is the limited, like city, boundary, ethnicity and religion. The principle of globalization as 'cosmopolitanization' is not "either/or", but "this-as-well-as-that". "Cosmopolitanism generates a logic of non-exclusive oppositions," as such: "nature is associated with society, the object is a part of subjectivity, otherness of the other is included in one's own self-identity and self-definition, and the logic of exclusive oppositions is rejected" and replaced by the "inclusive oppositions." Therefore, all oppositions are included in a larger framework, which is "nature", or "cosmos", or "universe", or "oneness", or "absolute."

For fear of being mistaken as "re-garmented universalism," Beck adds the term "rooted" before "cosmopolitanism", in order to emphasise this "universe's acceptance of difference, opposition, individuality and locality." Because of his emphasis on "universe," on the universe' controlling the versatile, the plural, and the various, Beck does not allow us to imagine globalization as an inter-relationship between nations. Previously nations have been seen as independent units, for example, the concept of "interconnectedness" by the

¹Hereafter all quotations from Ulrich Beck, unless otherwise noted, are from this article which can be read as a manifesto of his theory of "cosmopolitanism", though there is a largely extended discussion of it in his *The Cosmopolitan Vision* (Beck, 2006) that should not be neglected.

British sociologist David Held, not to mention the word “international” that we have long been used to: they must be discarded altogether.

Yet what is difficult for Beck is, first, such a ‘universe’ is but an ‘imaginative community,’ even if it does exist, it must be constructed by the imagination of ‘rooted’ individuals. It will not do unless it is local, historical, national and ideological, thus that is difficult for it to be pure and objective, enjoying the identification of the whole body of the individuals.

This means, secondly, in its ultimate sense, the individual cannot be forsaken simply because any consciousness, for instance, the consciousness of ‘universe’, must first be lodged physically; consciousness is the consciousness of the individual, without whom, who is to imagine the ‘universe’? Even when in the future, the world may achieve the *Great Sameness*, a utopia created by Laozi, an ancient Chinese sage, the individuality and uniqueness of the individual will not disappear in such a world of sameness.

Via the ‘cosmopolitanism’ re-interpreted with new loadings, Beck denies *Americanization* based on the unitary thinking of nation, which would also be a refusal to ‘cultural imperialism,’ an invention of, for him, same way of thinking. Thirdly, however, as ‘cosmopolitanism’ still assumes the existence of the contradiction and opposition between nations and locals, if they are not equal and well-matched in strength, there must be one side which is more advantageous over the other side or other sides, be it Gramsci’s soft “hegemony” or Lenin’s violent “dictatorship,” there then abides the existence of ‘cultural/imperialism.’ This is not at all false. *Americanization* or ‘cultural imperialism’ is based on the premise of a national understanding of globalization. This premise, nevertheless, cannot be erased unless the national contradictions and conflicts arising from global communication are ignored, unless the individual, as well as human being, is eliminated, then can we return the ‘universe’ that is primal, chaotic and without distinction between the heaven and the earth. In the era of globalization, the abiding efficiency of ‘cultural imperialism’ lies in its assumption of the irremovability of nation and local in global communication. Furthermore, it assumes the eternal existence of the individual. The “transnationality” of “the second modernization” cannot end the “nationality” of “the first modernization”, at least at present, as well as in the foreseeable future. ‘Modernity’ will pass through ‘postmodernity’ and enter “globality”; it will surely reorient itself in its adaptation to the postmodern condition.

It must be noted that although Beck’s “cosmopolitanism” is, allegedly, still

to accept opposition, difference, nationality and individual, yet because he includes them into the category of a *cosmos*, a 'universe' making all these the so-called inclusive oppositions, such opposite elements have lost their original meanings and are no longer themselves. As observed by scholars (see Tabak 2015: 407-408), Beck's *methodological cosmopolitanism* does not recognize, as an end of history, the nation-state and modernity, which will finally give way to the cosmopolitan. The many types of *cosmopolitanism*, Beck's included, believe there is "one world" (*cosmos*). For them, differences between nations are only differences between the different views of different cultures within the same universe. While a nationalist speaks from "somewhere", a cosmopolitan speaks from "nowhere" in particular. With Beck, another expression for *cosmopolitanism* is "transnationality." Same as with that in the 'cosmos,' although in the logic of 'transnationality' there still exists nationality. Yet because there is no longer the "one-to-one-correspondence" between these nations, they have to instead talk to the 'universe,' which means the former *talk-to-each-other* is now elevated to a simultaneous talk to the 'universe.' They surpass their nationalities and dialogue with the 'universe,' accepting its norms and restrictions. They talk to each other, no problem, but all the each-others are to transcend themselves, so that they, all the "each-others," would be *universalised*. The "trans-nationalization" is then nothing but a *de-nationalization*, the 'cosmopolitanization' a *de-politicization*, consigning, with the introduction of something *transcendent*, the nation and the polis to oblivion. According to Beck, even "as soon as the euro was introduced," or even "To the extent that Europe exists, there is no longer any such thing as Germany, or France, or Italy, or Britain, and so on." (Beck, 2005: xi) "The premise for cosmopolitanism here..." Beck contends, "is that the national is ceasing to be the national." To logically go a bit further, for Beck, since "nation" or "state" has disappeared, where can *Americanization* be, and where can 'cultural imperialism' exist? In the era of globalization, there is no such an agent like America to carry out *Americanization*, and no 'nation' to implement 'cultural imperialism!'

At this point, we may say that Beck is quite 'postmodern,' though he may not be in favor of such labeling. With a usual approach in postmodern *philosophy* that he puts the "subject" of modernity into a "structure," more precisely, Derrida's "structure without centre," and erases its "subjectivity," its suppression and integration of others, *sociologically* then he abolishes *Americanization* and 'cultural imperialism.' A 'structure,' as we know it, is always of *transcendence*: transcending all the individuals through *structuring* this individual with another,

another individual, which is, but, said to be the *structure*, and the former is then no longer an individual, but an integrated part of the structure, or vice versa for the latter. Nevertheless, please do not forget, the transcending one is always *another*, ever-making one journey further away! In a structure, all are against all *as individuals* or *subjects*. They structure and deconstruct each other. No individual or subject can survive a structure! By the way, it is not too late to add, among the various reasons for Tomlinson to abolish ‘cultural imperialism,’ there is also such a postmodern doing. However, it is not so *structurally* and *transcendently* as Beck does, to remove “nation”, “nation-state”, “individual” and “subject” so that there will be “no way/no one” to “Americanize” and “no way/no one” to carry out ‘cultural imperialism.’

If it is by the *transcendent refusal* to the philosophical “subject” and the sociological “nation” that Beck removes *Americanization* and ‘cultural imperialism,’ what would be puzzling is that Rainer Winter, a leading cultural theorist in the German-speaking world, removes “cultural imperialism” through the *immanent affirmation* of “subject,” “individual,” and “context.” Overall, this is the affirmation of what I would call ‘situational hermeneutics,’ which is in an opposite direction to Beck’s. Since they hold different “Roads...” how can the same destination be reached? It must be remembered that such “Roads” are not those trivial “methods.”

In his article (Winter, 2003: 206-221)² to refute the view that popular culture dominated by the USA will result in the cultural *standardisation* and *stereotypisation*, as well as the disappearance of the uniqueness of the local culture, Winter quotes broadly from many cultural resources. Especially with *Rambo* and *Dallas*, his own investigation of the spread and reception of hip hop music enthusiastically promoted by American culture industry as examples, he proves that such global media products have not led to the situations mentioned above. On the contrary, he agrees with the famous observation of Arjun Appadurai: “the consumption of the mass media throughout the world often provokes resistance, irony, selectivity, and in general, *agency*.” (Appadurai, 1996: 7)³. Winter firmly believes that to consume is to enter “the processes of de-territorialization, syncretization and hybridization,” and to accept is “to

²Hereafter all quotations from Rainer Winter, unless otherwise noted, are from this article.

³Appadurai also warns that: “This is not to suggest that consumers are *free* agents, living happily in a world of safe malls, free lunches, and quick fixes.” (Appadurai, 1996: 7).

appropriate, to express, to produce and to practice.” What interests Winter is that the consumption and reception of the so-called texts of ‘cultural imperialism’ appears to be an active counter-process, a process of subjecting all the subjections from them.

Such is the “dialectics of globalization,” or as he said in the co-authored *Introduction* to the collection mentioned above, the “cultural consequence of globalization” is “Starting from the phenomenon of *Americanization*,” and followed by the “cultural consequence of globalization” (Natan Sznaider and Rainer Winter, 2003: 3). With this, Winter and other cultural sociologists have already given comprehensive and persuasive argumentation through huge amounts of field work. I believe, however, a further examination should be done, that is, to *theoretically* lay bare - we need to get into the whys and wherefores - that: how can *cultural imperialism*, if there is such a thing at the very beginning, result in such unexpected outcomes? Where can the power that is capable of resisting ‘cultural imperialism’ come from? Winter in his article does not answer such questions. Through a careful reading, however, we seem to be able to infer: first, the consumer is a *subject* or *individual*, or an ‘individual subject,’ who has his/her own interests and intellects. Secondly, the consumer has his/her own “context” or “local,” and such “context” and “local” are not merely the outside environment for his/her actions, but have long been internalized as the consumer’s most authentic life being as an “individual subject.” Thirdly, the consumer has his/her own coding system, more importantly; his/her own daily life practice. To sum up, the consumer must be recognized as an *individual*. From this fundamental sense, Winter draws the conclusion from his ethnographic investigations that through the hip hop series of products, hip hoppers “define their own personal individual identity and hence, for *individualization* [italicised mine]. What is understood for Winter is that only by being an ‘individual,’ can the consumer *individualize* media commodities.

Regarding Beck’s removal of ‘cultural imperialism’ with ‘cosmopolitanism,’ we can say without hesitation that his model is ‘postmodernity’ cultural studies, because he has deconstructed the idea of the ‘individual subject,’ which is at the core of modern values. As for Winter and the peers he has quoted from, and Tomlinson *in part* because he sometimes stands in this “situational hermeneutics,” we cannot not generalize them together. Respectively, scholars like Winter adopt different perspectives for the consumers and producers of text messages: to look for the power to transform, to resist or to overthrow the texts of

‘cultural imperialism.’ they recognize the ‘modernity’ of the consumers. They look at the consumers as the in-self and for-self “individual” or “cultural individual”. But with the *cultural imperialists*, who are producers of ‘imperialist texts’ and should be treated as “individual subjects” as well, Winter and the critics on his side are silent. Instead, they are keen to *postmodernly* put them into “intersubjectivity” or, “trans-subjectivity.” This perhaps works with Beck who already has the similar term “transnationality” and thus de-subjectivizes them. For Winter and his supporters, as long as ‘cultural imperialism’ is treated the way the consumer is treated, it will definitely lead to the recognition of ‘modernity’ cultural studies.

IV. Where There Is ‘Modernity’ Cultural Studies, There Is ‘Cultural Imperialism’

We do not believe that scholars like Winter would have overlooked that *cultural imperialists* should also be treated as ‘individual subjects.’ Quite the opposite, they should have known it very well. Nevertheless, the problem just lies in that if they have considered this, their theory of anti-‘cultural imperialism’ would face the possibility of collapsing. However, we must not ignore a completeness of the fact for the sake of an imagined completeness of a theory. For cultural studies in the era of globalization, we cannot rashly give up its ‘modernity’ model; instead, there are enough reasons why we cannot totally negate it.

For the ‘modernity’ cultural studies, what is straightforward is that as long as we recognize the global encoders and the local decoders both as limited ‘cultural individuals,’ recognize their respective existence as *nations* (born as such, etymologically), there must exist *Americanization* or ‘cultural imperialism.’ Beck tries to disintegrate “city/state” with “nature” and to remove “nationality” with “transnationality.” However, those on the side of the ‘modernity’ cultural studies can often successfully point out the vanity of *nature*, *transnationality*, and all the other theories under the banner of *universalism*. Marxists insist that the social existence determines the social consciousness and the economic foundation the upper structure. In spite of many complicated links among them, be it G. V. Plekhanov’s “social psychology” or Williams’ “culture,” none can change the last determination of the former over the latter. Therefore, any theory or proposition that is trying to surpass a certain social existence and economic foundation is at a deeper level and a reflection of the social existence and economic foundation from which it comes. It is ideology. Classical Marxists long ago exposed the

hypocrisy of the bourgeoisie in its “liberty, equality and fraternity.” Today, in the era of globalization, the “specters of Marx” (Derrida), whether in the Third World like China and India or the First World like Britain, France, and Germany, are proving that the so-called universal culture propagandized by America or the West is nothing more than American-ness or Western-ness, or in one word, *locality*. To put it further, they are proving that there exists no ‘global value’ but ‘global interests’ and that ‘global value’ is always deployed as a chessman in the game of *global strategies*. This is no secret and no one is ignorant of or does not understand the principle of “the supremacy of the national interests,” “international” diplomacy is far from “internationalism,” it is nothing but the maximization of the nation’s interests in its negotiation with other countries. Jesus says that where your treasure is, where your heart will be; and we will say that where your treasure is, where your point of speaking will be. All circles around interests and the discourse is no exception.

At this point, we might point out that Nietzsche and the 20th century postmodern theorists who aligned themselves with Marx temporarily, have long ago destroyed the distinctions between “interpretation” and “fact,” “discourse” and “truth,” “narrative” and “history,” “signifier” and “signified,” “culture” and “nature,” etc. They find that the disconnection and contradiction between them are innate and therefore cannot be overcome. Foucault, among them, evidences historically that “discourse” is in essence “power,” the “will to power,” the “will to life,” and does not necessarily correspond with “truth.” According to the old Schopenhauer, the *Vorstellung* is but that of the *Wille* itself. Schopenhauer’s *Vorstellung* is revived by Foucault’s “discourse.” After all, it is desire that speaks; it speaks via a “discourse.”

The relationship between British cultural studies and postmodernism has always been ambiguous. In the deconstruction of high culture, the insistence on the difference and hybridity, the critical attitude towards *Occidentalism*, and the rejection of the concept of “culture industry,” etc., it seems that British cultural studies and postmodernism understand and appreciate each other. However, the difference in their starting points covered by the same aim must also be noted: the theoretical resource for post/structuralism, the core of postmodernism, is Saussure’s semiotics, especially its potential to deconstruct subjectivity, in which the signifier only points to another signifier, and the signifying activity, is but a floating chain made up of pure signifiers. Therefore the so-called *speaking subject* becomes that being spoken - spoken by the signifiers, by culture, by

tradition, etc.; it is the spokesperson - speaking for others and cannot speak itself or speak about itself. In modern philosophy, as with Kant, the 'subjectivity' of the subject comes from its determination of the object. The postmodern theorists turn this around, and the subject is now determined by the object and stops being the subject. To acknowledge or not the subjectivity forms the most fundamental watershed in philosophy between modernity and postmodernity. While for British cultural studies, it is not always so (because of its utilitarian attitude toward theory and the resulting lack of notice of the inner coherence of theory). In its research on the media audience that is pertinent to "cultural imperialism," the most important theoretical support is its insistence on the subjectivity, concretely, its treatment of the media audience as the discourse subject, and more importantly, the individual subject. David Morley, who is well known for his active audience theory, early in the 1970s pointed out that "we must not see the audience as an undifferentiated mass but as a complex structure, made up of a number of overlapping subgroups, each with its own history and cultural traditions." (Morley, 1974: 8) He demands an investigation of the audience's "position in the class structure", their "regional situation", "ethnic origin", "age" and "sex", which are the primary factors in sociology (Ibid: 8-9). This also means that he needs a more concrete concept of "audiences." Directly influenced by Hall and indirectly by Althusser, the young Morley then does not quite agree to treat the audience further as respective individuals. In his later researches on the "*Nationwide audience*" and "*family TV*," however, he actually synthesizes the sociological analysis with individual analysis. More importantly, he ontologizes the reception context of the audience, that is, the ontological existence of the audience. Hall is strongly against private readings, yet when he says "different groups and classes of people will bring different explanatory frameworks to bear," (Morley, 1973b: 12) he has already treated the audience as *social individual* or *individual collective*. In Morley's researches on the media audience, in Hall's theory of encoding/decoding, in their treatment of the audience as "subject", we may assert that British cultural studies belongs to the 'modernity' cultural studies.

If we move the audience theory of the early (1970s) British cultural studies from its domestic context into an observation of the global media, like what Winter suggests, i.e., putting cultural studies into a sociology of hybridity formations (2003), it would be definitely anti-'cultural imperialism.' Such 'appropriation' of or 'resistance' to 'cultural imperialism' is quite different from

Beck and Tomlinson's 'postmodernity' cultural studies, which are based on the deconstruction of 'subjectivity.' Hall has never given up the "structure" of Althusser. For him, all negotiated and oppositional or resistant decoding in mass communication are under the constraint of the 'communicative structure' in one way or another. "Production and reception of the television message are, not...identical, but they are related: they are differentiated moments within the totality formed by the communicative process as a whole." (Hall, 1973a: 3) In his later investigation of "global mass culture," Hall still holds to his early idea concerning the "structure"⁴. He finds that on the one hand, "it is centered in the West and it always speaks English" and on the other, such English is no longer the "Queen's English" or "highbrow English", it becomes "an international language which is quite a different thing." English is now scattered. Furthermore, "It is a homogenizing form of cultural representation, enormously absorptive of things, as it were, but the homogenization is never absolutely complete, and it does not work for completeness." (1991a: 28) Hall also calls this structure, the "structure" of Althusser's, as Gramsci's "hegemony"; true, "hegemony" exists and tries to enclose all within itself, yet "hegemony" can never be completed (1991b: 68). Similarly, for Hall, as Winter (2003: 218) has noticed, though Hall on the one hand does not think that the global flows of sign, information and images can produce a standardized culture, and on the other, he sees a new homogenization emerging through the global process of commercialization. Obviously, not far back from the 'structure' *hegemony*. or "the new dialectics of global culture" (1991a: 19), another expression of Hall, there shines Hall's firm belief in the philosophy of modernity's 'subjectivity'. Different from Althusser, Hall puts into this borrowed 'structure' difference, contradiction, struggle and therefore the endless opening of the structure - with modernity he 'deconstructs' the postmodern-orientated *structure/deconstruction*. It is Hall's prediction that among all the new forms of globalization, there abides the antagonism between

⁴In a chapter on Stuart Hall, Angela McRobbie has the saying "structure in dominance of globalization" (McRobbie, 2005: 29), which is apparently a rewrite of "a complex structure in dominance" coming from Hall's early essay *Encoding/Decoding* (Hall, 1981:128). This shows that she has noticed Hall's application of his early theoretical framework in TV studies into his globalization studies.

control and anti-control – “That old dialectic is not at an end. Globalization does not finish it off.” (1991a: 39) The reason for this is the eternal existence of the controller and the anti-controller as “rooted” individual. Unless the ‘individual’ and ‘subject’ are uprooted, the ‘modernity’ cultural studies will stick to its theory of *resistance* and *struggle*.

Hall’s “structure” view of cultural communication sets the direction of British cultural studies, that is, the ‘modernity’ cultural studies. It also specifically sets up the agenda for Morley’s ‘active audiences.’ However, let us then lay aside Hall for a moment and talk about Morley. True, Morley’s conception “active audiences,” if translated to the global media, will become a theory against ‘cultural imperialism’. However, there remain two problems. The first is its antagonism towards ‘cultural imperialism’ is from *effect*, not from *intention*. Because, like audiences, the motivators of ‘cultural imperialism’ are local, individual and subjective, for whom, we cannot imagine an action of ‘cultural imperialism’ without the *intention* of ‘cultural imperialism.’ This not only violates the proposition that human are rational animals but also betrays the fact, be it historical or contemporary. In consequence, the theory of ‘active audiences’ must admit the capitalist *intention* of ‘culture industry’ at the domestic level, and the cultural strategy of ‘capital imperialism’ at the international level, to be a cultural strategy motivated by *interests*. In other words, ‘active audiences’ can neither replace ‘culture industry’ nor deny ‘cultural imperialism.’

Secondly, perhaps what is more theoretically fundamental, *active audiences* must put “individual” and “subject” advocated by it into the framework of ‘inter-subjectivity.’ As long as the encoders are also viewed as subjects, reception is surely to be an ‘inter-subjective’ event. As long as a subject enters ‘inter-subjectivity,’ the dialogical process with another subject, it will surely be more or less modified. Moreover, this is beyond one’s intention because the presence of another subject or just one other will objectively change the existing environment of the subject. The environment is *life-ontological*. Semiologically, the ‘inter-textuality’ provides the ‘text’ with a ‘context’ and the autonomy of the text is thus broken, that is, the text is not what it was. The same relationship exists between the encoders’ *global* texts and the decoders’ *local* texts: because of the global encoders, the local decoders will be no longer as local as it was before.

Let us now come back to Hall. More thoughtful and sophisticated than Morley, Hall includes ‘cultural imperialism’ and the antagonism towards it, as well as the dialectic movement between the global and the local once and for all

into the dynamic concept of “structure.” He foresees the future culture, exemplified by modern music, as “the aesthetics of the hybrid, the aesthetics of the crossover, the aesthetics of the diaspora, the aesthetics of creolization.” (Hall, 1991a: 38-39) Hall’s cultural studies of the global culture, in its insistence and implement of the principle of subjectivity, belongs to modernity philosophy. We are delighted to see that with the concept of ‘structure,’ Hall has elaborated modernity’s insight regarding global culture all down to its extreme. Within the framework of modernity, he has predicted the final bankruptcy of the project of cultural imperialism, which has surpassed modernity and has postmodern propensity. Yet this postmodernity is surely different from that of French post/structuralism.

For globalization in a larger space, however, Hall’s vision might be a little narrow. In the process of colonization, which is, among others, one form of modernization, Hall sees hybrid culture appearing in ex-colonies and ex-suzerain states. How about other countries and regions, especially those on different paths to modernization? This limited vision, the postcolonial vision, will bring and has already brought certain blindness to the future cultural forms; for instance, can hybridity only be treated as a finished form rather than an ever-hybridizing process? It might be so in ex-colonies, and in America, the biggest ex-colony, partly so. Yet in suzerain states it might not be so, and in countries like China and Japan, Hall’s “hybrid” may have totally different meanings. What is helpful for us, however, is that Hall has strongly indicated a globalization theory surpassing modernity and postmodernity. We are grateful to Hall!

We must go beyond the “modernity” cultural studies; Hall has already made this attempt. We must go beyond the “postmodernity” cultural studies as well, the obvious limitations of which have already been represented by Beck and Tomlinson. We need learn from both their blindness and insight and explore the possibility of a new theoretical stage.

V. Conclusion: Towards Global Dialogism

Globalization is internally modernity and postmodernity, that is, it simultaneously surpasses modernity and postmodernity and is therefore possible to become a new philosophical perspective or further, theory. Robertson’s “glocalization”, Beck’s “cosmopolitanism” and Tomlinson’s critique of “cultural imperialism” are all valuable efforts to conceptualize this new era - I greatly appreciate their efforts. As a response to them, I will try to make clear my differences: first, I insist on the

modernity perspective within globalization; I agree with Hall's insistence on contradiction and struggle; second, consequently, any postmodern moment must be constrained by modernity; third, inevitably, I will not see the complete disappearance of the individual and subject in postmodernity globalization. For me, the individual and the subject will change but will not wholly give up themselves in the dialogue, in the 'inter-subjectivity' with another subject. Fourth, we therefore cannot presuppose anything like "universe" beyond ourselves as nationals or "citizens". As subject cannot be eliminated, "nation" cannot be eliminated, and "place" cannot be of "no sense" at all (Meyrowitz, 1985), "inter-nationality" and "inter-locality" (Jin, 2007: 276-280) then cannot be replaced by "cosmopolitanism" or 'glocalization' with the intention of the global as a whole. In the era of globalization, every nationality or every culture has its say - we cannot decide for them what and how to speak - which involves another more complicated philosophical issue: can we hold a dialogue without premise? A simple answer for this: as long as the individual cannot be totally symbolized (Lacan), ideologized (Althusser) and colonized (Spivak), we have to admit and confess a dialogue without premise. In contemporary theories, such an idea sounds very absurd, yet for Confucius 2500 years ago, that already was a basic principle in *inter*-personal communication. Confucius does not care about the so-called 'grand' premise. He just knows to empty himself for the other to come in. (Jin, 2008)

Let *other* be *other*, and let *myself* be *other* as well, let both of them as limited and concrete subjects, move 'inter-subjectivity' towards 'inter-otherness' and ontological 'inter-culturality.' Only by so doing, can cultural studies in the era of globalization support a 'dialogue' in its real sense: the consequence of which is for each interlocutor an *incessant* self-surpassing, self-negation and self-reconstruction. *Incessant* because the interlocutor always retains his or her *inner being* which cannot be fully expressed. The interlocutor on one side can never become the one on the other side no matter after how many rounds of dialogue have taken place.

We will conclude with *global dialogism*, in which, first, the interlocutor as an *other* is its foundation; second, the 'global' is not the premise of dialogue, it is even not the target, it is, nevertheless, a result that can be and/or cannot be anticipated, because the 'global' as such is based on the other. It is a transition from 'inter-otherness' into 'inter-subjectivity.' It is mutual exploration and negotiation of the inter-subjectivity between others, during which there is no

premise prior to the dialogic process designed by either side. Thirdly, however, as long as the *other* enters dialogue, it stops being the *absolute other* because dialogue bestows upon the *absolute other* a subjective dimension. The definition of ‘subjectivity,’ as we know, is the ability to form the object and simultaneously be trans/formed by the object. By the way, one of the key meanings of ‘inter-subjectivity’ is the admission of the mutual transformation between subjects. Back to the beginning of this article, as *global dialogism*, globalization embraces both modernity and postmodernity, and a synthesis of which then transcends both. ‘Globalization’ as such is a new philosophy. If another name is needed, then *global dialogism* will be the choice.

As to the question of whether future cultural studies will make *global dialogism* its theoretical foundation, we cannot be sure of it, since a predetermined answer is contrary to the spirit of *global dialogism*. At the moment, we can affirm that in solving those serious problems arising from ‘cultural imperialism’ in this global age, *global dialogism* can at least simultaneously avoid “universe” (*cosmopolitanism*) and “holism” (*glocalization*) dubious of supporting cultural imperialism, and total ignorance of ‘cultural imperialism’ resulting from over-emphasis on the agency of the audience. We may also expect to re-interpret, after Hall, “inter-culturality,” especially its various new possibilities in the future.

Finally, it is paramount that we maintain the distinction between *global dialogism* and the “dialogism” of Mikhail Bakhtin. For Bakhtin, “dialogism” is essentially an outgrowth of poetic or literary theory, one that concerns the relation between double or multiple *voices*, and *texts*. If you wish, it may be thought of as “a philosophy of *language*” (Clark and Holquist, 1984: 212. [my emphasis]), or, applied to “relationships between distinct cultural and ideological units,” and “conflicts between nations or religions.” (de Man, 1989: 109) In this regard, it is a toolbox for cultural analysis, functioning much like *global dialogism*, as demonstrated above. However, according to Bakhtin’s dialogism, it is only at the discursive level that dialogue may be achieved. It is then reasonable for Julia Kristeva and Tzvetan Todorov to develop Bakhtin’s dialogism into their term “intertextuality” which “belongs to discourse.” (Todorov, 1984: 61) As Todorov quoted from Bakhtin, “Dialogical relations are (*semantic*) relations between all the *utterances* within *verbal* communication” (Quoted in Todorov, 1984: 61. [My emphasis]). Although Bakhtin does not overlook the author or creator of the utterance, and therefore “the dialogical reaction endows with personhood the

utterance to which it reacts” (quoted in Todorov, 1984: 61), Todorov insists, “this does not mean, [...] that the utterance gives expression to the inimitable individuality of its author. The utterance at hand is perceived rather as the manifestation of a conception of the world, while the absent one as that of another conception; the dialogue takes place between the two.” (Todorov, 1984: 61) Bakhtin’s concept of *Exotropy*, or, “outsideness” (Morson and Emerson, 1989: 52), radical as it may be, and as much as it may lead us “from the intralinguistic to intracultural relationships,” (de Man, 1989: 109) remains dialogical and therefore discursive. In sum, the dialogue, in terms of Bakhtin’s dialogism, is *discursive*, which appears only between discourses, conceptions, or in Sausure’s terminology, signifiers. While Bakhtin’s dialogism is basically linguistic and epistemological, *global dialogism* goes beyond perception, signification, interpretation, and is based upon a life-ontology. It is a philosophical approach in which voices or texts involved in dialogue are understood as individual subjects which are constituted not only by discourses, and ideology, as Althusser would have it, but also by their material existence, and their “*reel*” as Lacan would remind us, and which can never be fully penetrated by discourses. To repeat, *global dialogism* is based on both modernity and postmodernity, both subjectivity and intersubjectivity, on their dynamic relations, and ultimately, their dialectical synthesis.

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