

## **Review Essay**

# **Globalisms: Imaginary and Real**

**William Marling**

“We are not a multi-national, we are a multi-local.”

—Coca Cola

One can't read far in the mushrooming literature on globalism without encountering this quotation, sometimes four or five times in one anthology. It is usually taken as a transparent statement of what, in more vulgar times, would have been called “hegemonic intent.” But that phrase, and the ideas informing it, have been overtaken by a newer wave of theory, one that permits us to ask whether or not this slogan actually has a practice. Coca-Cola's 1999 misadventures in France, where the government blocked its purchase of Orangina and bottling contamination reduced its market share, certainly indicate some local limits. Because Coca-Cola and McDonald's now receive half their income overseas, we could even ask if they are American companies any longer.

One doesn't find that kind of analysis in too many of the books cited below. They are all concerned with globalism, but most remain focused on theoretical treatments. One hungers for the specifics that writing on American history, political economy, and literature usually offer, until—as if seen on a passing dessert cart—one glimpses the work of area studies scholars.

*Globalism*, the term used in this essay, is used to indicate the broader cultural context of *globalization*, which are the changes in economic, marketing, and commercial practices that began after World War II, typified by transnational flows of capital. It may be helpful to think about modernization, especially after World War I, and its relation to Modernism in art and literature. We can see now

that there were many modernisms, all prompted by or reacting to modernization, but only loosely related to each other. Our post-modern vantage on modernism(s) may be suggestive: globalism may appear more homogeneous than it actually is. It may also be a category whose descriptive power is waning: modernization and globalization continue, but there is already a post-globalism on the cultural horizon.

Although sociologists, economists, historians, and anthropologists had developed a considerable literature on globalization before the popularity of post-colonial theory, the work of Edward Said and Homi Bhabha probably brought the topic to the attention of most Americanists. Said's *Orientalism* (1978) is the best-known of the early post-colonial studies, showing how the West created a version of the Orient that was at once exotic and reified, the source of fantasy and the object of commodification. His other major work on this topic was *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), in which he continued the grand narrative treatment, but he extended his analysis, which was rooted in readings of Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad, Giuseppe Verdi, Jane Austen, Albert Camus, and William Butler Yeats, to a sweeping master-narrative that included contemporary politics:

Much of the rhetoric of the "New World Order" promulgated by the American government since the end of the Cold War—with its redolent self-congratulation, its unconcealed triumphalism, its grave proclamations of responsibility—might have been scripted by Conrad's Holroyd: we are number one, we are bound to lead, we stand for freedom and order, and so on. No American has been immune from this structure of feeling. . . . (xvii)

Said's subsequent analysis of "imperialism" takes cultural practices, often novels, as evidence of economic and political intention, not to mention government policy and practice. The problem with failing to consider political economy is that no links are shown between the two realms. Said, however, rightfully stands first among scholars associated with the discourse of globalization. Much other noteworthy scholarship, too much to mention here, followed his line of investigation.

The next significant development is less well known. The content of Reinhold Wagnleitner's *Coca-Colonization and the Cold War*, published in Austria in 1991 and in the United States in 1994, is more accurately described by its sub-title: "The Cultural Mission of the United States in Austria after the Second World War." Even as he employed a totalizing narrative of "colonization," drawing heavily on Frank Ninkovich's *The Diplomacy of Ideas* (1981) and Emily S. Rosenberg's *Spreading the American Dream* (1982), Wagnleitner compiled an astonishing array of data from both sides of the Atlantic, using the Freedom of Information Act and other tools. Wagnleitner supplied what Said had lacked. He emphasized the economic context (though it turns out that no Coke

was for sale during the ten-year [1945-1955] U.S. occupation of Austria) and showed the United States attempting to remake Austrian culture—running radio stations, newspapers and presses, as well as re-education programs for teachers.<sup>1</sup> This is still the best-researched book in the field, but the data runs in somewhat contradictory directions. Marshall Plan officials, Wagnleitner wrote, attempted to make Austrians into model consumers of “official” American culture, when what Austrians wanted was the unofficial culture—jazz, rock, sexy novels, and tape recorders. U. S. officials refused, but Austrians persisted, so that finally one has a sense of reading, not about “coca-colonization,” but about the roots of post-war Austrian consumerism. Here, in fact, was the first hint of something only now being developed: the insight that national markets are persistently local.

If “imperialism” and “colonization” were the first stages of theorizing about globalism, John Tomlinson’s *Cultural Imperialism* (1991) was arguably the end of this stage. Tomlinson pointed out that the discourse of “imperialism” pioneered by Said’s earlier work was binary, and that

Underlying this is the broader discourse of cultural imperialism as *the spread of the culture of modernity itself*. This is a global movement towards, among other things, an everyday life governed by the habitual routine of commodity capitalism. One reason for calling this discourse a broader one is that the ‘imaginary’ discourse of cultural identity only arises *within* the context of modernity. (90)

Tomlinson uses “modernity” here in the sense that I use “modernization,” to reflect economic and political processes.

Our culture in the modern world is never purely ‘local produce’, but always contains the traces of previous cultural borrowings or influence, which have been part of this ‘totalising’ and have become, as it were, ‘naturalised.’

.....

More significantly [these] invented traditions can be seen as a phenomenon of modernity. (90-91)

These are sentences to reflect upon. By distinguishing between processes of culture creation and processes of modernity, Tomlinson complicated the discussion of globalism in ways still not appreciated. Then he attacked the notion “that people in capitalist culture lack the autonomy to make proper judgements about their needs.”

To try to suggest that agents are mistaken about either their experienced needs for a range of consumer goods like televisions, microwave ovens, cars, hi-fi sets and fashionable clothes,

or about the 'life goals' that these needs represent, is a short route to paternalist social philosophy. (128)

Tomlinson arrived at this position, interestingly, working more-or-less within Marxist thought, by synthesizing critiques of the Frankfurt School, of Herbert Marcuse, Jean Baudrillard, and Henri LeFebvre, with work by Douglas Kellner and Claus Offe. This is the most interesting theoretical treatment of globalism.

Theory about globalism had changed, so that Donald Pease seemed, in his introduction to *Cultures of United States Imperialism* (1993, co-edited with Amy Kaplan), to equivocate about his title:

The emergent discourse of "global-localism" proposes the most challenging critique directed against the pre-constituted categories anchored in the discourse of anti-imperialism. It argues against the colonizer's power to construct the "other" out of figures within an ethnocentric unconscious. Because of its capacity to violate national boundaries, imperialism, according to this critique, should be understood instead as a phase in the process of globalization that, in disrupting the coherence of the geopolitical entities called nation-states, thereby enabled their openness to interconnection with all other nation-states

.....

This discourse thereafter insists that colonialism, nationalism, and imperialism be understood as interlinked phases in a decentered yet encompassing system. (26)

If you read closely (perhaps twice), this is an accurate summary of attacks on the "imperialist" position. Pease's reply was that "Globalism-localism loses sight of the economic and cultural exploitation at work in the process" (27); he preferred to subsume the former to a critique of imperialism: "Taken together the two discourses configure an interpretative crossroads whereby each supplies key figures missing from the other" (26). But there is little crossing in his volume; the essays, including the most interesting (Slotkin, Warren, and Brannen, for example) are written from the older vantage. The notable exception is Walter Benn Michaels' "Anti-Imperial Americanism," reminding us that a quite conservative discourse at home between 1890 and 1920 was against foreign expansion as "unconstitutional."

As Michaels' topic suggests, an examination of nations and nation building was the next logical step. The terms had been formulated in post-colonial theory, chiefly by Benedict Anderson (*Imagined Communities*, 1983) and Homi Bhabha (*Nation and Narration*, 1990; *The Location of Culture*, 1994). Bhabha can be seen as responding to Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's important 1988 essay, "Can the

Subaltern Speak?" Spivak was doubtful that the subaltern could, but Bhabha, in "Signs Taken for Wonders," gave more credit to the colonized subject's linguistic agency. Between colonizer and colonized is a "liminal zone," he argued, where imagined cultural and national identities are produced: one of his key ideas was the creativity of mimicry. The question of "nationalism," most relevant to American studies, was then researched thoroughly in the mid-1990s, by Yael Tamir (*Liberal Nationalism* [Princeton, 1993]) David Miller (*On Nationality* [New York, 1995]), and Robert McKim and Jeff McMahan (*The Logic of Nationalism* [New York, 1997]), among others. To varying degrees defenses of nationalism or nation-forming impulses, these studies were read, however, against the backdrop of genocide in Rwanda and then in Bosnia.

Here was another turning point, exemplified in Susan Sontag's taking to task these "morosely depoliticized" intellectuals who had defended nationalism and their "widespread indifference, or lack of solidarity . . . with the victims of an appalling crime."<sup>2</sup> At least superficially, this seemed to put defenders of the local and the anti-imperial in a corner. Bruce Robbins recounts these debates in *Feeling Global: Internationalism in Distress* (1999). Sontag's appeal, he argues, was almost immediately theorized and deconstructed by the intellectuals she attacked, and she was drawn into serious debate with John Berger. In Robbins' account, post-colonialism then turned on itself. Scholars such as Spivak, Kwame Anthony Appiah, and Arif Dirlik (who had attacked the capitalist concept of a "Pacific Rim," see below) attacked post-colonial theory circa 1995 as the *arriviste* face of "elite cosmopolitanism." Robbins' account is unconcerned with economics (and very deferential to Said), but as intellectual history of this field between 1994 and 1998, it is a valuable guide. Robbins shows a crisis of confidence overtaking scholars of third-world origin who had moved from the "margin" to "centers" such as New York and London.

As this catharsis took place, University of Texas historian Richard Pells independently developed a minor theme in Wagnleitner's work—that Europeans had historically created their own versions of "American" culture and imported them selectively, often remaking the "American" in local terms. Pells' thorough, if sometimes cranky, *Not Like Us: How Europeans Have Loved, Hated and Transformed American Culture Since World War II* (New York, 1997) is an historic overview of U.S. cultural policy in Europe from 1945 to 1995. It is emphatically an "American Studies" volume. Though Pells does not reply to Wagnleitner directly (and may not have been aware of his work), he contextualizes the latter's charges about the Marshall Plan, the McCarthy Era, the Cold War, the American studies movement, and the Media and Information Ages. He points out that the Salzburg Seminars brought F. O. Matthiessen, Alfred Kazin, Randall Jarrell, Henry Nash Smith, and Margaret Mead (hardly the Imperialist All-Star team) to lecture in Austria, as well as the cream of abstract expressionism and jazz. Pells reinstates pro-American commentators such as Raymond Aron and Luigi Barzini as negotiators between the old and new worlds. American literary

theory favorite Jean Baudrillard is sent to the corner. But Pells agrees with Wagnleitner about the dominance of American media exports:

No matter how proficient the Western Europeans or the Japanese were in selling their automobiles or computers throughout the world, they could not compete with the United States when it came to the export of news, movies, videos, music and television programs. The sale of American audiovisual products to Europe alone totaled \$3.7 billion in 1992, while in the same year Europe sold just \$288 million worth of its cultural wares to the United States. (211)

Media are only one category of export, albeit an important one. As Pells notes in his last chapter, "The Europeanization of American Culture," European exports from Irish beer to Danish furniture, from Austrian skis to French wine and literary theory have tipped the U.S. balance of trade into a decade-long deficit. The United States is the world's leading exporter, but it is also the world's leading importer, in a ratio replicated by no other nation. For Pells, by 1995, all theorizing seemed post-mortem: "By the mid-1990s, the American market accounted for only 21 percent of all the Cokes sold in the world" (327). And investment was following the new markets, Pells wrote: "Between 1993 and 1995, American corporations invested \$150 billion abroad, tripling what they had spent outside the United States in the late 1980s" (327). But most French wine, most Austrian skis, and most Japanese autos were also sold outside those nations. Globalization had arrived. And, for better or worse, the United States, or Coke, or McDonald's had become its symbols.

Marxian theory sought a way back to center stage by following the manifold and complex thought of Frederic Jameson's *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1997). Brilliant in some of its specific arguments and examples, Jameson's book still, finally, denies the inevitability of market economies. The "invisible hand" is always "hegemonic" for Jameson. But many scholars used Jameson's insights, blended with those of post-colonial, sociological, and anthropological theorists such as Benedict Anderson, Marshall Sahlins, James Clifford, Clifford Geertz, and Arjun Appadurai, to formulate theories about resistance to globalism.

Duke University became a center for such views. Arif Dirlik, a historian there and China expert, attacked the "Pacific Rim" concept in 1993. He sometimes co-authored with Rob Wilson, a professor of "cultural poetics" in the University of Hawaii English Department. Duke University Press published *Global/Local* (1996), edited by Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake, and *Cultures of Globalization* (1998), edited by Jameson (reviewed in this issue), which are among the major efforts to put Marxism back in the debate. All attempts to think outside the box being useful, they are worth a look. In their introduction to *Global/Local*, the editors focus on concepts of space and geography, employing Henri LeFebvre

and, more strikingly, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, to make their critique. LeFebvre is an old-time French Marxist whose 1974 *The Production of Space* (translation 1991) is a touchstone among these scholars. Sub-titled "Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary," *Global/Local's* thirteen essays (plus an interview with Jameson) are divided into three areas: Globalisms, Local Conjunctions, and Global/Local Disruptions. Unfortunately, connections between geography and political economy rarely appear. The essays sparkle with formulations such as "the imperializing imaginary," "the imaginary involuntary," and "the regional imaginary." But there is nothing as specific and useful as Jameson's earlier concepts of "sedimentation" or the "ideologeme" here, or even as palpable as Deleuze/Guattari's "desiring machines" (164, 204, 284). But it is still a tantalizing project: the global seen as "unified around dynamics of capital logic moving across borders," while the local fragments "into contestory enclaves of difference, coalition, and resistance" (1). Unfortunately this is as well defined as these terms ever appear, and problems begin immediately, with the editors' dizzying assertion that we stand at the "crossroads of an altered and more fractal terrain" (1). Did they mean fractured? Fractals are patterns. The inter-play of global and local proceeds only one step: "Regions and region-states increasingly override national borders and older territorial forms and create special economic zones of uneven development and transcultural hybridity" (2). Even this is not new—it derives from Bhabha's emphasis on the liminal and from "border theory," already somewhat familiar in American studies. In these zones, there's supposedly more possibility for creative resistance. Where, for example? What's special about this hybridity?

The examples should make use of the "post-Fordist" geographers—David Harvey, Mike Davis, Edward Soja—whom the editors see pre-figured in Lefebvre's notion that "the class struggle is inscribed in space" (3). Insofar as this happens, it is strangely reminiscent of phenomenology. Space, in its economic, class, and cultural uses, turns out to be difficult to identify at all, much less objectively. More often the contributors seem to be attempting the kind of "thick description," not particularly spatial, associated with social scientists such as Clifford Geertz, James Clifford, Pierre Bourdieu, and (perhaps less well known) Michel de Certeau.<sup>3</sup>

Several of the articles are insightful, notably Mike Featherstone's essay on British localities and their working class populations and Karen Kelsky's examination of the Japanese women called "Yellow Cabs" who seek status sex with foreigners in Hawaii and Tokyo. Hamid Naficy's essay on Turkish and Iranian filmmakers' thematization of claustrophobia most nearly represents the intent to revalorize geography, and Christopher L. Connery's study of the "oceanic" trope applied to things formerly "Pacific Rim" has insightful moments. Unfortunately other essays recycle tired attacks on protectionism (Hong Kong investors in Vancouver) and several are mediations on film, both mainstream (*Robocop*, *Blade Runner*) and experimental. Jameson himself, in his interview by a South Korean Marxist scholar, is forced into awkward protestations of his

orthodoxy and such *bon mots* as “[Mississippi] is a third world part of the United States” (361).

One of the aims of the volume, the overthrow, or at least radical complication, of simple binarisms, seems to be undercut by the continual fetishization of the “transnational corporation,” to which the “local” is always opposed. No writer in the volume has done research on TNCs (the Jamesonian shorthand), or worked for one, or even acquired a passing familiarity with the ways of business. Instead the Coke slogan represents that realm. “Transnational corporations” and “transnational flows of capital” become themselves an “imaginary,” capable of supernatural action, such as making factories disappear overnight, to be reassembled in Malaysia. Any sense that a high percentage of transnational business ventures end in failure is missing (why did the first McDonald’s overseas have to be closed?). The problems of American business abroad are historic and self-evident: linguistic narrowness, a cultural myopia that has prevented close reading of foreign markets, and a blithe assumption of the evident superiority of American products. Media and fast food are prominent American exports, but many basic U.S. industries—auto, steel, appliances, furniture, beer, to name only a few—are exporting failures. For every Coca-Cola, there is a General Motors.

Foreign markets are not structured like American markets, though it is commonly assumed in writing on globalism that entering business abroad is no more difficult than doing so in the United States. But the *zaibatsu*, or endemic corruption, or state-controlled media are not simply pesky equivalents of O.S.H.A. Almost everything about selling anything abroad is different: the marketing media, the culinary tastes, the periodicity of buying, the holidays, the portion and refrigerator sizes, the measuring systems, the packaging, the guarantees, the financing, and the product’s ultimate disposal. Here we confront an ethnocentrism of theory. If such self-mirroring assumptions were made in the analysis of another *people*—creating an Other without investigating the construction of that subjectivity—the protest would be immediate. But many theoretical treatments of globalization assume that foreign markets mirror American ones. This is bad enough, but such approaches also usually treat markets as mysterious, primitive, all powerful, and inexplicable. Here a great opportunity is lost because, in my experience, it is foreign markets that are persistently and resistantly local.

If literary/cultural theory about globalism seems to be in the dark about economics, there are at least glimmers of light in nearby windows. Some are the work of enthusiasts, such as Timothy Ryback, whose *Rock Around the Bloc* (1990) was an early study of how and why Western rock’n’roll was consumed behind the Iron Curtain. More recently area studies has produced the most specific, if less theorized, work on what I here term globalism. Joseph T. Tobin’s *Remade in Japan* (1992) is the most interesting of these. Its thirteen essays detail the ways such Western artifacts as Disneyland, French restaurants and Argentine tango have been “domesticated for Japanese consumption.” Tobin’s introduction is a primer on the culturally specific ways in which “domestication” selects the appropriate Western goods and then transforms them for Japanese buyers.



Readers learn from Millie Creighton's essay how the venerable *depaato*, or department store (established before 1900 in Japan), educates shoppers about quality, and from James Stanlaw that English, though present on signs and T-shirts, has hardly taken.

The grand narrative of historian John Dower, *Embracing Defeat: Japan in the Wake of World War II* (1999), makes no pretense of addressing globalism, but its details nonetheless illuminate it. Dower's purpose is to treat the U.S. occupation of Japan, in the MacArthur Era (1945-1951). But he reports, for instance, that the 1950 translation of Norman Mailer's *The Naked and the Dead* not only made the Japanese top-ten bestseller list, but was received by readers in the context of the tradition of *zange* (sincerity, humility, repentance). At the same time, Margaret Mitchell's *Gone with the Wind* (1936) made the top-ten list two years (1949 and 1950) because readers apparently identified with the defiant Scarlet O'Hara. Theorizing this apparent contradiction is not Dower's concern, but this seems to be the kind of "resistance" that the editors of *Global/Local* had in mind.

Also suggestive is Jaiying Zha's *China Pop: How Soap Operas, Tabloids, and Bestsellers Are Transforming a Culture*, published in 1995 and seemingly overlooked by scholars of globalization. Although written without footnotes, indeed without references of any kind (not even a bibliography), this first-hand reportage of the culture wars in mainland China before and after Tiananmen Square, written by a bilingual mainland native, contains detailed explanations of how Chinese entrepreneurs created new soap operas, tabloids, pornography, and cuisine after Tiananmen. Zha conceives her task as *New Yorker*-style cultural reportage, but she provides great insights on Chinese market formation. *China Pop* is the kind of book that Tomlinson seemed to ask for in 1990.

Similar but more scholarly is *Consuming Russia: Popular Culture, Sex, and Society Since Gorbachev* (1999), a group of twenty richly illustrated essays edited by Adele Marie Barker. The essays explores *byt*, the "common, ordinary life [as it] might conceivably function as a site of resistance against the prevailing ideology." Note that the latter was and is an *elite*, high culture, rather than a mass market one (31-33). If Barker's theoretical debt is to LeFebvre and de Certeau, her contributors seem far less interested in the abstract, ranging over topics from post-Soviet "pet life" to pornography, to tattooing, and to the Russian Orthodox church. The authors are all Russians or Sinologists. There are few invocations of theory, and most footnotes simply offer more examples of the main points. Taken with *China Pop*, this volume offers parallels in soap operas, the popular novel, and pornography that beg for connection in theory.

*Americanization and Australia*, edited by Philip and Roger Bell, is among the most informative of the area studies approaches. Its sixteen short, clear essays cover subjects ranging from the impact of American English and sports culture to the push-pull relationship between the two nations' feminisms and films. The Bells' introduction is one of the best theoretical overviews extant, discussing "Americanization" from the perspectives of Jacques Lacan, Mikhail Bakhtin, and semiotics (Yuri Lotman). The volume is also unusual in the number of essays—

on jurisprudence, race/ethnicity, and political culture—showing the positive impact of the United States on the ethical life of another nation. Philip Bell's essay on American television also defies received opinion, showing that only thirty-eight percent of the cost of Australian programming is foreign purchase and that only four of the top twenty programs in October 1997 were of U.S. origin.

A study that sets an even balance between theory and artifact is Gerd Gemunden's *Framed Visions: Popular Culture, Americanization, and the Contemporary German and Austrian Imagination* (1998). From his introductory example of Edward Hopper's painting "The Nighthawks" as "reframed" by poet Wolf Wondratschek, then by writer Peter Handke and finally by filmmaker Wim Wenders, Gemunden shows how the narrative amplifications or reconfigurations in the process of cultural borrowing are always local. True, he deals with representations (that is, art), but Gemunden's focus on "the productivity of reception" is a skillful blending of insights from Dick Hebdige,<sup>4</sup> John Tomlinson, and Michel de Certeau (17). Subsequent chapters examine Andy Warhol's use of surface and depth as transformed by conceptual artist Rolf Dieter Brinkman, Rainer Werner Fassbinder's re-use of 1930's American gangster film, Herbert Achternbusch's assault on the genre of the American Western in *Der Komantische* (1979), and several appropriations and remakings of the American "road film." Gemunden locates himself clearly in the debate: the United States may pioneer some markets and styles, but so various are the contexts of reception and consumption that by the time U.S. products are "absorbed," much less re-narrated, the "American" component is only first among equals, if that. If political economy *per se* is not addressed here, the implications for it are clear.

The hint in these area studies volumes for American studies is striking. The United States has imported nearly as much foreign culture in the last decade as Japan, Germany, or Russia: *telenovelas* from Mexico, Japanese *anime*, not to mention autos, and French literary theory. In my American city, Cleveland, the dominant gas station chain is British-owned, the dominant grocery chain is Dutch-owned, and the dominant cinema chain is Japanese-owned. A Mexican family just bought controlling interest of the computer chain (CompUSA), and my American students are excited about a Japanese novelist, Banana Yoshimoto, whose work was translated by an Englishwoman and published by a subsidiary of the German firm Bertelsmann. I imagine they read her over French roasted coffee at that Milanese-inspired café, Starbucks. How has this happened? What does it mean? Do these products and narratives *mean* the same thing that they do in their countries of origin? How are they domesticated? Is there resistance?

An anecdote by way of suggestion. The last film I saw before leaving the United States for Japan was Jim Jarmusch's *Ghost Dog* (2000). The most international of American filmmakers, Jarmusch (from Akron, Ohio) has specialized in showing us our strangeness and domesticating the foreign (*Stranger than Paradise*, 1984; *Down by Law*, 1986; *Night on Earth*, 1991). In *Ghost Dog* he appropriates the Japanese *Hagakure*, a collection of the sayings of Yamamoto Tsunetomo, a retired samurai, published in 1716 (9). In his film he gives Ghost

Dog, his title character (played by Forest Whitaker) the Samurai code and has him roam the streets of New York City, cooperating with and then fighting organized crime, a story that copies but spoofs countless Mafia films and stereotypes. Along the way, *Ghost Dog* quotes the *Hagakure* to viewers and bystanders, but only those bits compatible with the macho code of the hip-hop sound track and the inner-city youth sub-culture depicted.

The *Hagakure* read entire is another book, stressing not only the nobility of death but the importance of daily bathing, fingernail-clipping, letter-writing, and judicious homosexuality: “A younger man should test an older man for at least five years, and if he is assured of that person’s intentions, then he too should request the relationship . . . to lay down one’s life for another is the basic principle of homosexuality” (58-59). Tsunetomo-san’s thoughts, presented as a whole, would locate him so far from the African-American inner city and hip-hop soundtrack by RZA that he could never be domesticated for American consumption:

Personally I like to sleep. And I intend to appropriately confine myself more  
And more to my living quarters and pass my life away sleeping.  
(78)

Until the age of forty, it is best to gather strength. It is appropriate to have settled down by the age of fifty. (51)

Sleeping, middle-aged homosexuals are not Jarmusch’s consumers, I venture. It’s quite clear that the *Hagakure* has been drastically “edited” to be compatible with a very specific audience: young, urban, interested in hip-hop music and violent films, attracted to the martial arts and by oriental mysticism. But these “omissions” are only part of the domestication process, for *Ghost Dog* also taps an audience desire for principled action, integrity, sobriety, and self-discipline. Insofar as these are traditional American values, the import serves a restorative function, allowing a narrative re-valorization of—dare I say?—Puritan values. Add the emphasis on group vocal harmonies and book-learning, with which *Ghost Dog* sentimentally ends (neither are present in the *Hagakure*), and this “samurai” film appears less like a cultural import and more like an exemplary life. It feels as natural as the latte I sip in the lobby afterwards.

Does the foreign consumer of American products, cultural and otherwise, not feel similarly? We need to know, and the processes of “domestication” have to be studied abroad. But they can also be studied at home. Many of the questions we ask about globalism have at least partial answers in our own local. Are we looking for them there?

## Notes

1. See William Marling, "Theorizing the Export of American Culture from the Marshall Plan Experience," *Living with America, 1946-1996* (Amsterdam, 37: 53-61, 1997), or William Marling, "Coca-Colonization: Reinhold Wagnleitner, Coca-colonization and the Cold War" *American Quarterly* 48:4 (Dec. 1996) 731-39, for my critique of the strengths and weaknesses of this study, which Wagnleitner and I debated in a plenary session of the European American Studies Association, Warsaw, Poland, March 21-25, 1996. Despite my admiration for the study, it does not show that Coca-Cola attempted to colonize Austria: Coke wasn't even sold there during the occupation.

2. Susan Sontag, "A Lament for Bosnia: 'There' and 'Here,'" *The Nation* (December 25, 1995), 819.

3. Michel de Certeau, *La culture au pluriel*, TK PUB 1974; *The Practice of Everyday Life*, translated, 1984. TK PUB

4. Dick Hebdige, *Subculture: The Meaning of Style* (New York and London, 1979); *Hiding in the Light: On Images and Things* (New York and London, 1988).

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