
Emerging in the public sphere as early as the 1970s, the jargon of globalisation has now taken on the ubiquity of a 'categorical imperative' (2). Yet, as Sarika Chandra quite rightly points out 'globalization can be made as theoretically precise and diverse in meaning as the context demands' (4). For Chandra, explanations/justification/critiques of globalisation circulate around an idiom that has come to refer 'to a radically new social, economic, and cultural reality in which all pre-existing, locally constituted practices and ideas have ceased to be viable' (1). As a result, the doctrine of globalisation has become indivisibly fused with the 'rhetoric of obsolescence' (1). By representing all present conditions of cultural and economic production as outdated, such language confers obsolescence upon all that survives. Therefore, it becomes crucial for a wide range of social practices to jettison – or appear to jettison – existing local, regional or even national models and methodologies and embrace purportedly more global paradigms' (2). With *Dislocalism*, Sarika Chandra’s stated intent is to offer a critique of globalisation, a concept which she articulates as a process of discourse, as well as a real historical phenomenon. Acknowledging the extensive theoretical-critical contribution of radical thinkers such as: Harvey, Wallerstein, Jameson and Zizek, amongst others, Chandra positions her work within this existing reappraisal of 'globalisation’s brave new world' and its accompanying 'metanarrative of free-market, high-tech driven universalisms' (2). Having enabled her analysis on the basis of common terms, Chandra then brings her own specific meaning and connotation to the globalisation concept by inventing the neologism of 'dislocalism'. Representing a 'conceptual synthesis', dislocalism acts as the shorthand which condenses what Chandra identifies as the deeply ambiguous strategies of globalisation whereby global and transnational practices are promoted whilst at the same time pre-existing local cultural and intellectual strategies are consolidated (4). In mediating her study, Chandra focuses on ‘America and Americanism’ which she deems as ‘globalisation’s unmistakeable national-ideological centre of gravity’ (4). To further advance her argument and expose globalisation’s oppositional, real world imperatives Chandra devises two different stresses for her neologism. On the one hand, to dis localise – with the stress placed on the prefix – represents the drive to ‘displace the local in order to engage with the global’ (6). On the other hand, to dis localise – with the stress placed on the noun – represents the investment that the local has in remaining localised and undissipated by the forces of globalisation. Chandra summarises the dual effects of dislocalism as ‘a move to supersede the local that is at the same time a form of stasis, a movement whose aim is also to remain in place’ (6).

Having already referenced ‘America and Americanism’ as the ‘centre of gravity’ for her study, Chandra then proceeds to illustrate her concept in four discrete, yet interrelated chapters (4). The focus of the last three chapters: current American immigrant/ethnic literary studies, contemporary American travel writing and narratives of the culinary exotic in popular media, clearly position Chandra’s work within the disciplines of cultural and literary studies. On the other hand, her first chapter ‘Management Fictions’, with its focus on American management theory from the late 1980s to the mid 2000s initially appears to be at odds with the rest of the material. Foreclosing on any objections, Chandra links the increased mobility of capital to the current repositioning of the humanities and its various disciplines. Here, she identifies that many scholars and critics in the humanities anxiously perceive that...
the literary and cultural objects of their study may in themselves be obsolete in the wake of globalisation. As well, Chandra identifies an implicit belief that the humanities can only escape obsolescence within the ‘corporatised globalising university’ if its many and varied disciplines ‘globalise’ themselves in advance (13). As many cultural and literary critics turn to address questions of ‘business, finance and corporate culture’ a simultaneous counter move is made by management and organisational theorists. Increasingly since the 1980s, management theorists have turned to ‘culture, literary fiction’ and literary/cultural theory to make sense of globalisation, leading to what Chandra perceives as an ironic and partially, blind alliance between the humanities and its corporate disciplinary ‘other’ (13). In her ‘Management Fictions’ chapter, Chandra exposes how corporate incantation of the nation through literature and culture works to narrate America and thus consolidate and promote Americanism throughout a supposedly globalised world. Strong argument and a forceful critique of Americanism positioned under section headings such as: ‘Management Narrates the Nation’, ‘The Turn to Literature and Fiction’ and ‘A Manager’s Guide to Postmodern Cultural Theory’, convincingly links the first chapter to the rest of Chandra’s study.

From this point Chandra turns her attention to recent American immigrant/ethnic literary studies in a chapter titled ‘(Im)migration and the New Nationalist Literatures. Focussing on How the Garcia Girls Lost their Accents by Julia Alvaeres and Diana Abu-Jaber’s Crescent, Chandra demonstrates literary dislocalism as a strategy used by critics to partially displace American literature within a transnational context so as to ‘solidify the nationalist category’ (81). Whilst acknowledging that not all attempts to validate literary studies in a global world can be reduced dislocalism, Chandra shows that despite the pressure to move beyond existing paradigms in ethnic/immigrant literary studies, there is an equal and ‘countervailing pressure within the field’ to find ‘a new way of consolidating the nation’ (92). In the process, Chandra dissects the implications to the conceptual categories of: multiculturalism, Arab-American literature and immigrant/ethnic identity. The final two chapters, the first of which addresses travel writing and the last which focuses on the culinary exotic represent the more familiar, accessible and acceptable face of globalism. Here, through studies of: Paul Theroux’s Hotel Honolulu, Robert Kaplan’s The Ends of the Earth and Mary Moriss’s Nothing to Declare, Chandra finds that the meaning of travel has changed to become ‘a newly privileged means of situating an American national identity’ (18). As travel writers contend with globalisation, the ‘end of travel’ rhetoric works ‘dislocally … to preserve and consolidate the genre of travel writing, and reinscribe its nonidentity with tourism’ (171). In a world where there is nowhere left to travel, travel writing provides the narrative which can still impart unreachable knowledge about culture, people and place. Chandra’s final chapter ‘The Global Palate’, concentrates on food tourism and demonstrates how its narratives play an understated but significant role in ‘reproducing a dominant American identity-formation and adapting the latter to globalised conditions’ (172). Rich in persuasive and theoretical ideas, Dislocalism’s most compelling proposal is – capital as fiction and fiction as capital – an idea which Chandra extrapolates from the Marxian critical political-economy. Returning to this idea time and time again, Chandra revisits it in her conclusion:

as increasing masses of fictional capital remain unrealized, as more and more ‘good’ money is thrown after ‘bad,’ a ‘tipping point’ will be reached

beyond which capital itself must come to function more as a ‘fiction,’ a financial *fictio juris*, than as anything with a real basis in production. If, however, for ideological reasons ‘theory’ is prevented from entertaining the thought that such ‘hyper-fictionalization’ calls into question the continued viability of global capitalism itself, … it is hard to see what alternative remains but to complete the ideological inversion and conclude that the whole business is a fiction anyway, and the sooner one realizes this, and sets about the task of selecting the fictions best-suited, to getting the job done, the better. (216)

Coming in the aftermath of the global financial crisis, Chandra’s conclusions appear all the more significant. Supported by an extensive bibliography, *Dislocalism* is engrossing and thoroughly recommended to all scholars with interests in literary studies, cultural studies, globalisation studies and American studies.

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