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Abstract

Globalization is a centuries old phenomenon. In pinpointing its contemporary meaning, however, globalization can be thought of as inseparable from the intricate and varied prisms of a neoliberal plurality—the “neoliberalisms” of the world. For, even in a world dominated by economic volatility, both neoliberalism and globalization have been shown to transcend ethnic borders, lines of communication and languages by bringing commerce and culture closer together. Global cinema, argued in this essay, is a way to comprehend this transcendence of the national. It is perceived as a positive concept that diminishes the neoliberal “scale” of marketing campaigns, namely world literature and world cinema, implicating all things in its cultural web of non-Western production. While previous linguistic-political rephrasing of “the world” to “the global” have been tied to the pathbreaking research conducted by literary scholar Shu-mei Shih (2004), sociologist Saskia Sassen (2002) and film scholar Dudley Andrew (2011)—my usage of the global is also novel in two ways. First, it tames national cinema’s depictions of its own home-grown social mores by showing its outwardness globally, yet simultaneously implies a regional scaling of pressing national issues such as poverty, labor woes, armed conflict, health concerns, etc.; and second, global cinema acknowledges not a world of difference beyond the West, but a world that is globally integrated by market forces and interethnic convergences that exists between the Global South and Global North axial divide.

Keywords

globalization, neoliberalism, the global, outwardness, global literature, global cinema, contesting world cinema, global cinema as an issue-based category
Globalizing Discourses: Literature and Film in the Age of Google

Historically “modern globalization” can be seen as the deterritorialization of the world through new means of communication (the telegraph and international newspapers) and technological innovation (steel foundries, the locomotive, cruise liners and advances in medicine). According to Jan Nederveen Pieterse, “The timeline of the conventional western history curriculum [of globalization] is the premodern (pre-1500), early modern (1500-1850), modern (1850-1945) and contemporary eras” (2012, p. 6). Like Nederveen Pieterse, I advocate both a Western and non-Western theorization of globalization’s timeline and its historical development. As such, we can trace modern globalization’s diffusion of cross-cultural interactions and exchanges to the nineteenth century. Extending outward to include the Asiatic and West Africa, modern globalization came in the wake of the European colonial scramble for extra-territorial acquisitions and its global intensification right before the Revolutions of 1848. Marx and Engels envisioned such globality, whereby industrialization had spread like wildfire on the backs of slavery, conscription and commodity production, noting that (1848; 2004 pp. 23-25)

The need of a constantly expanding market for its products chases the bourgeoisie over the entire surface of the globe. It must nestle everywhere, settle everywhere, establish connections everywhere. The bourgeoisie has, through its exploitation of the world market, given a cosmopolitan character to production and consumption in every country. . . . It has drawn from under the feet of industry the national ground
on which it stood. All old-established national industries have been destroyed or are daily being destroyed. They are dislodged by new industries, whose introduction becomes a life and death question for all civilized nations, by industries that no longer work up indigenous raw material, but raw material drawn from the remotest zones; industries whose products are consumed, not only at home, but in every quarter of the globe.

By the end of the nineteenth century, remote zones of the world became knowable by way of archaeology, travelogues, Pre-Raphaelite paintings, ethnographic photography and Crystal Palace exhibitions. Such empire building is also clearly attributed to literature’s transferal of the processes of globalization. “Retracing the chain of empire, link by link” in the British context, David Trotter convincingly extracts E. M. Forster’s engagement with global Britain in the early twentieth century. Citing several lines in Forester’s “Notes on the English Character” (1920), we find a challenge to racial conditions and the global expansion of sovereign rule abroad for England. Forster’s exploration of territorial expansion and the compression of time and space, claims the following (Trotter, 2013, p. 21):

The nations must be understood one another, and quickly, and with the interposition of their governments, for the shrinkage of the globe is throwing them into one another’s arms.

Later, with empire guilt pervading Britain and the Third World experiencing the start of decolonization in the mid-twentieth century, global interconnectivity took on new meaning. Thus leading to what Michael Denning calls “an unholy alliance of neocolonial state and multinational corporations, a place that upholds the right to consume” (Denning, 2004, p. 21).

In pinpointing the contemporary phase of globalization, however, it can be thought of as inseparable from the intricate and varied prisms of a neoliberal plurality—the neoliberalisms of the world. For, even in a world dominated by both neoliberalism and globalization, each has been shown to transcend ethnic borders, lines of communication and languages by thus bringing commerce and culture closer together; and yet the form that globalization takes on is one of compressing mechanism to neoliberal production sites for business and telecommunications. This mechanism is “driven by a logic of accumulation that
depends on progressively increasing scale of production” writes Malcolm Waters (2001, p.13)—and the expansion and cultural legitimation of capitalist institutions like the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). According to this reasoning many see these two institutions as banal financial intermediaries; yet the WTO and IMF also represent things that transcend their financial responsibilities and levy influence on nearly all global societies and their cultures. As Daniele Archibugi notes, “Simultaneously, new social and political subjects are appearing in international life” and we are forever more integrated to these actors as much as we are partially disconnected from them, once offline (2003, p. 9). Broadly considered, “movements for peace, human rights and environmental protection are playing a role which, while it should not be overestimated, nevertheless demands appropriate institutional channels if all the world’s citizens are to participate.” (Archibugi, 2003: 9). In sum, we can view the WTO and the IMF as corporate entities and visual prototypes to globalization, less elegant than Forster’s metaphors of chains and railway tracks, but another way to fathom the global. In many ways we find the WTO and IMF optimistically portrayed in mainstream media while demonized by protester at demonstrations, by banners and placards held high. Yet why such divisive opinions: the answer, it seems, is that organizations like the WTO and the IMF often provide economic assistance to impoverished nation-states while concurrently subjecting those same nation-states to distressing repayment options, tariffs and high interest loans—terms that stifle much of the global good that is done. These and similar actions are captured and articulated in global literature and global cinema today. Thus we find issues of global health, global labor, global war, global peace, global English, global religion, among others, as themes propped up in the narratives developed under neoliberal globalization.
I. The global trajectory of literature and film

Writing about the reach of globalization is centuries old, represented in the work of E.M. Forster and Johann Wolfgang von Goethe before him, and now Hanan al-Shaykh and Junot Diaz in the twenty first century. With each attempt in literature there is an investment in forging a different creative expression for each experience under globalization. The goal then for comparative literature scholars is to chronicle, decipher and examine globalized culture found in a variety of texts. And yet writing on globalization in humanities disciplines has traipsed far behind. Recently, however, film scholars are conceptualizing the global nature of cinema which follows earlier attempts in comparative literature to establish a connection between markets and cultural production, chiefly by analyzing texts from the Global South. It is important here to connect this genealogy of the global from literature to its relatively new arrival in film studies.

As discussions have shown, the global trajectory of literature was first proposed by Fredric Jameson but more successfully formulated by Franco Moretti and Shu-mei Shih as early as the 1990s, and more recently by Christopher Prendergast et al (2004), Paul Jay (2010), David Palumbo-Liu et al (2011), Theo D’haen et al (2012), Richard J. Lane (2013) and Emily Apter (2013). In light of this, Shu-mei Shih’s overview of the aims of global literature postulated in a *PMLA* article is a good precursor to what is happening in film studies currently, and her work, along with Moretti, Prendergast, Jay, Palumbo-Liu, D’haen, Lane, and Apter’s—sustains the argument that world literature, and I would add world cinema, is now an outdated phrase. Therefore, the rephrasing of world cinema to global cinema is a vital proposition because it acknowledges its own material production as well as its artistic and social value, and “the global” promotes further questions about the limitations of world cinema discourses.
I posit this assertion because “the world” as conceptualizing mechanism for literature’s geographical reach goes as far back as Goethe’s interpretation of the Weltliteratur in nineteenth century Germany. Goethe, in a paradigm shifting move was to contrast canonicity and cultural exchange of national literature to that of a “worlding” approach; however his and others’ analyses treat only tangentially the fact that literature is “immanently global—that is, that individual works are increasingly informed and constituted by social, political even linguistic trends that are not limited to a single nation or region” (Pizer, 2000, p. 213). According to D’haen, the Weltliteratur persists a century later, where he postulates (2012, p. xv):

Institutionally speaking, the discipline of comparative literature has been traditionally conceived as encompassing world literature. In reality, comparative literature programs tended to restrict themselves to Western literature, and they failed to develop concepts and strategies for including non-Western literature which can only be read in the original by specialists. Starting at the end of the 1970s, postcolonialism paved the way for the study of ‘new’ literatures. Still, the latter’s integration with the dominant Western canon remained problematic.

Certainly, the usurpation of world literature into the Western canon is problematic and one of the ways theorists have begun to deal with this is to view literature and film from non-Western countries as regionalist but also postnational. We see examples of this in the peripatetic but regional longing for Armenia and its cultural distinctness that Atom Egoyan embeds in his filmic work. Hanan al-Shaykh, another regionally concerned but postnational author (of Lebanese ancestry but now residing in London) stresses the inclusion of many diasporic communities in her globally Moroccan-Iraqi-Lebanese-British travel novel, Only in London (2001). Both filmmaker and author clue us to the notion of the globally traversable and at the same time, the lofty terrain of nostalgic memory, for places all too distant. This duality is articulated elsewhere by Rohit Chopra, whose view of global media is worth repeating to emphasis the awareness of the global in literature and film (Chopra, 2008, p. 8):

“The sense of the global implied here however, is neither that of an even playing field in
which participants from different locations contribute on an equal footing nor that of a monolithic global audience that comes content in predictably identical fashion.” Chopra is clearly invoking Saskia Sassen and her work on the global as strategic concept to flesh out what remains of the national—or rather its partial denationalization. Sassen indicates the domain that globalization inhabits: “The global does not (yet) fully encompass the lived experience of actors or the domain of institutional orders and cultural formations; it persists as a partial condition” (Sassen, 2002, p. 215-16).

Yet non-Western literature is also partially global in its orientation, as Moretti (2005) has stressed, through its association with a particular genre. Much of non-Western literature is thus caught in a dichotomy: emblematic of national concerns inherent to a region as much as this material interpenetrates the globe in its hypermobility as cultural text. The implications are what Sassen observes as “the dynamics of national-global overlap and interaction” (Sassen, 2002, p. 215). Thus, placing non-Western literature into a specific genre—for example, Argentina’s unique form of science-fiction—is one such solution to the integration problem. Another is to contest the center-periphery model for the study of culture in globalization all together. Paul Jay has summed up the “back-and-forth flows of people and cultural forms in which the appropriation and transformation of things” seems to “encourage us to continue to remap the geographies of literary and cultural forms” (Jay, 2010, pp.3-4). And so when we break free of the center-periphery model, Moretti’s notion of containment and Sassen’s partial global condition pose an alternative to the hierarchical structures of canon formations in Western literature.

Quite understandably, however, Moretti’s genre scaling is double-edged: where world literature falters as a phrase is ultimately how this category becomes a mechanism for the sale of goods—what is an obelisk and catch-all slogan. The world literature category reflects an assortment of taxonomies, old and new built on the monetary circulation of commodities. In
fact, the danger of “the world” as catchphrase is everywhere. For instance, in our current neoliberal moment, keywords on Google reveal the latest “world literature” bestsellers—from *Shalimar the Clown* (2006) by the cosmopolitan Salman Rushdie to the lesser-known, though academically-praised, Junot Diaz and his *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007). Commercial institutions such as Amazon use the phrase “world music” to homogenously group large blocks of music such as Yoruba hip-hop from Nigeria to ambient music from Iceland, as both an advertising slogan and marketing tactic. Similarly, many international film festivals deploy the “world cinema” moniker to essentially designate a foreign film category and thus exhibit a myriad of films on circuits from Busan International Film Festival (BIFF), Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), Abu Dhabi Film Festival (ADFF), and so on. What follows is a critical reading of globalization and its connection to the multiplication of markets and their jurisdiction over cultural production in the new millennium, especially film. An array of theories that pertain to the effects of globalization are considered here and then brought into the discipline of film studies to activate thinking about the global in globalization.

### II. Economic and Cultural Globalization

Studies of globalization have been plentiful over the last 15 years. In fact, there is a field developing around global studies at the University of Massachusetts at Lowell in the United States which will launch a doctoral program in September of 2014. This follows the establishment of numerous major and minor degree programs spread across the U.S.A since the 1990s. In the UK, centers have opened at institutions such as the London School of Economics to study the economic and cultural effects of globalization and an honours degree named “Global Cinema and Culture” is currently on offer at the University of Sterling in Scotland. In larger numbers students are drawn to globally-themed courses taught by faculty
in social sciences and humanities that continue to legitimize such an emerging discourse.

M.B. Steger has recently theorized the slippery history of the actual establishment of a recognized academic category of “globalization studies,” writing that (Steger, 2013, p. 772):

Panel discussions and papers presented, for example, at the annual meetings of the Global Studies Association or the Global Studies Consortium—two large international networks of globalization scholars—reveal a more complex and accurate historical picture.

Here our object of investigation should not be when and where global studies first began, but rather how dependency on global production networks comes to explain, on the one hand globalization on the macro-level—whether in film studies or other fields of the humanities. On the other hand, the flow of commodities on a micro-level needs to be thought of in relation to the territoriality of production networks and the outwardness of different global products, even global issues, to emphasize their material and symbolic value. In this vein, what economic forces drive such commerce? and what are the developmental consequences in regions beyond the G-8? Why the semantic emphasis on the global? One answer to this semantic logic is offered by Jeffrey Henderson who argues the following (Henderson et al, 2002, p. 445):

…while it is now fashionable to term ‘global’, phenomena and practices that until recently would have been more likely to be termed ‘international’ or ‘transnational’, our adoption of the former term is driven by our concerns with analytical precision. Specifically, the terms ‘international’ or ‘transnational’ derive from essentially state-centric discourses. Thus while they incorporate notions of cross-border activity of many sorts, they do not adequately express the way in which non place-specific processes penetrate and transform place-specific ones, and vice versa. They do not, therefore, help to deliver the imaginative sensibilities necessary to grasp the dialectics of global-local relations that are now pre-conditions for the analysis of economic globalization and its asymmetric consequences.

Henderson et al offers above the asymmetric consequence of economic globalization and the “precision” of the term as important in driving discussion toward not world studies but global studies. Moreover, the global extends beyond the state-centric approach and carries
what Sassen calls “the specificity and social thinkness of the global.” Sassen continues by saying the global (2002, p. 217)

requires that a vast array of highly specialized functions be carried out, that infrastructures be secured, that legislative environments be made and kept hospitable. These requirements need to be produced or secured, even in the case of what we might consider merely the cross-border spread or imposition of particular national forms, whether Anglo-American accounting or U.S. styles of food and entertainment.

The global in my theorization of it is manifest by not just the “social thinkness” in Sassen’s words, but also as a social position of possibilities that opens up the potential to go beyond crass commoditized culture and thus comment on pressing international issues not always originating from the United States. Positionality is apt here because it helps us think beyond the nation-state and is conversely a position derived by a set of national experiences, dilemmas or socio-economic problems that are brought into the global arena. Something I raised in the last section, for example, global health, global labor, global peace, etc. In other words, it is not a deadlocked approach to globalization but a shifting position, where globalization is indeed a “territorially disembodied process” as much as it “entails the contraction or erosion of national state power” (Brenner, 2011, p.112).

Still, aside from the real economic forces and functions of globalization expressed by Sassen and Brenner, we need to think about the temporality of cultural commodities and their symbolic exchanges, exemplified by new content which is uploaded every second to search engines as transnational as Google (USA) or as national as Naver (South Korea). The immediacy of these symbolic exchanges are found via celebrity news feeds—for example the so-called queer appeal of Sherlock-famed Benedict Cumberbatch in China to Brazil’s football ace Ronaldo and his charity work since his retirement in 2011 continue to garner significant online discussion by fans. This content can be produced and culled anywhere and at any time; and such constant interfacing with this material emphasizes its global appeal. Therefore, such global fandom and its fleeting symbolic value is produced via database searches, appreciation
sites, chat rooms, Facebook and Twitter news feeds that provide endless minutiae to scrutinize. These are what Sassen calls above highly specialized functions. Where this has led us, for example, is the rise of star studies; what is a new sub-discipline of film studies that emphasizes the global-national overlap in commodity circulation. Moreover, the discussion of commodities today is less problematic than it was a decade or so ago: we see scholars pursue a celebrity’s commodity flow in cultural, social and economic patterns of status, never before more transparent in our global media nexus.

Richard Lane provides another way to think about the temporality of global import-export items as ethereal as gossip. Lane calls attention to the concept of “forgetting” and that such an activity of forgetting is a “characteristic feature of contemporary capitalist society since they are essentially ‘presentist’”—that is, viewing each moment as the only reality while expunging the past in a gesture of calculated anti-historicism” (Lane, 2013, p. 863) Thus “forgetting” in the context of international markets and the cultural capital of celebrity gossip also corresponds to the material production of world literature and world cinema. Even if celebrating the arrival of novel cultural products, forgetting enforces the “presentist” notion of overseas commodities, the seductiveness of exotic material from the Global South and the replacement of knowledge production for consumer “on demand” needs; a process that is intensifying at a frightening pace.

To relate this to literature again, Shih writes that (2004, p. 16)

the recent interest in globalizing literary studies has largely involved attempts to locate conjunctures between contemporary literature and the economic formation of global capitalism, and thereby name a new literary structure of feeling—structure—in terms of the organization of various literatures into a world system and feeling in terms of the literary production of new affects in new forms, styles, and genres. Though Shih stresses Raymond Williams’s “structure of feeling,” it is not meant as a type of class consciousness but rather appropriated to imply a type of market consciousness—unabashedly connecting market regimes to assist in organizing “various literatures in the
world system” to emphasize “new affects in new forms, styles, and genres” in literary production. The global as a term thus acknowledges not a world of difference beyond the West, but a world that is globally integrated by market forces, “interethnic and intercultural politics of power” that exists in-between and across the Global South and Global North axial divide and its convergences (Shih, 2004, p. 17).

Perhaps more important, the world as conceptual premise de-economizes and restores a disavowal to real economic forces impinging on cultural production. To contest notions of world literature and world cinema is to admit that the monetizing factor is a central principle in the promotion of Eurocentrism, which the phrases world literature and world cinema actually denotes. This criticism, applies, for example, to such categorical effects of merging nearly all of Asia, Africa, Latin America and the Middle-East’s visual histories into either area studies, or worse, lumping them together on survey courses in most art history programs in the United States and the United Kingdom. Although these divisions do produce hierarchical knowledges in the fields of area studies and art history, often times there are just too few scholars hired to diversify and thus de-Westernize departmental curriculum. But unlike art history's global art inertia and neglect of cultural production from the Global South, there has been progress made as I have shown in the field of comparative literature, and as I shall discuss shortly, in film studies as well.

We may therefore deduce that the preference for Eurocentric thinking has faded in recent years, though there is a lag, and some scholars still engage with this worldview. Yet, notwithstanding Eurocentrism remains a point of contention for those working in postcolonial studies, cultural studies, sociology, comparative literature and film studies. For instance, with the current tectonic shift away from the Global North as economic center, the world as metaphor and moniker loses much of its veracity despite how it still conjures Europe and America in terms of source and origin of advanced cultural, religious, political ideas. With
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exceptions, this end to what some might call an Anglo-European singularity was not lost on Hilary Clinton either, “who, in her role as U.S. Secretary of State appealed for sustained U.S. state funding for global communication, stated that the U.S. is ‘losing’ in ‘an information war,’ while ‘Al-Jazeera is winning,’ and the Chinese and Russians are opening up global English language networks” (Zhao, 2014, p. 278). With television networks like Al-Jazeera actively recruiting grassroots British and American journalists, sometimes poaching this talent to present news content in global English, such a move allows reporting on issues generally overlooked or ignored by mainstream western media (e.g. war profiteering on a global level, political corruption on a global level, banking scandals and the ramifications for the Global South, etc.); a move that is also analogous to the Southern Hemisphere encroaching on the media oligopoly of the Global North.

Another reason why we must unbundle world literature and world cinema is to think about how they are not conceptualized across the scaled boundaries of capital. Rather they are understood as big concepts attached to large retrieval networks—for example, Amazon or Google search results—instead of the multiplicity of their connections to global markets and global resistances, whereby literature and cinema move across different scales of production, distribution and reception, and most importantly, space. Today, we often forget that the global flow of capital comes to assert varying notions of difference in literature and cinema that belong to a duality in the process of globalization: “a state-centric and a multicentric world, the interaction between which creates turbulence” (Waters, 1995, p. 12). Thus we must think beyond the homogenization principle in globalization, where Appadurai (2000) has aptly shown it to be a reductive framing, much like cultural purity, also flawed, comes to be part of the heterogenization principle in globalization, if we follow Cazdyn and Szeman’s (2011) argument. In other words, each can still be found in our deterritorialized, digital age
but it is the “embeddedness of the national and the specificity and social thinkness of the global” that ought to be our critical focus (Sassen, 2002, p. 217).

III. Contesting the World, Welcoming the Global in Cinema

A prudent starting point to understand global cinema in film studies would be to view it as a discourse, an “epistemological premise,” detailing how this new category in film studies has been discussed and conceptualized over the years. Thus my denunciation of the phrase and category of world cinema is linked to its institutionally homogenous and problematic orientation to comprise new cultural capital, which continues what Stephanie Dennison and Song Hwee Lim call the “effect of colonialism in an age of globalization” (Dennison and Lim, 2006, p. 2). Despite the inadequacy of the phrase world cinema, Dennison and Lim do not, themselves, discard it.

One scholar who has picked up on the need to move past world cinema as a frame of analysis is Dudley Andrew. As one of the founding theorists and cognoscente in the studies of global film and literature, Andrew has pushed the boundaries of film studies as an imbricate replication of the geopolitical as well as of a polysemic “atlas” of twentieth and twenty-first century image production. Andrew’s recent chapter “Time zones and jetlag: the flows and phases of world cinema” provides a historiography of cinema in an internationalist vein (Andrew, 2010). He recognizes the development of the paradigmatic nature of global films as a political (though less economic) one: 1. the cosmopolitan phase (1918); 2. the national phase (1935); 3. the federated phase (1945); 4. the world cinema phase (1968); and 5. from world cinema to global cinema (1989). Andrew highlights these “eras of cinema with reference to major political dates,” with 1989 undoubtedly marking the reconfiguration of the world phase to the global phase, signaled by the cataclysmic Tiananmen Square protests and the fall of the Berlin Wall (2010, p. 80). Familiar to us now are several landmark theories that
portent to a post-’89 moment: for example, Fukuyama’s flawed “end of history” thesis (1992), or, more accurately, King’s (1997) and Denning’s (2004) discussions regarding the collapse of the “three worlds” paradigm and the intensification of a global consciousness and a global system.

For Andrew, the fifth phase, the global cinema phase, supplants the earlier phases in that: “World systems imply transnational operations and negotiations that encourage the spread and interchange of images, ideas, and capital across and throughout a vast but differentiated cultural geography” (2010, p. 80). This final phase, a politico-linguistic shift from what this essay interprets as the transition from world cinema to global cinema is crucial because it presents an association of geographical spaces and domains which have then produced different ethnic films and multi-million dollar productions, independent and diasporic texts, even the most amateurish of filmic representations that amount to global cinemas’ operational diversity of, and cultural subsistence to, one centralized system of political-economic modeling—neoliberal globalization.

To be sure, Andrew is aware of the global impacts that various manifestations of neoliberalism have had on global culture. In fact, he engages with this, albeit in less direct ways. But while Andrew hints at the predominance of neoliberalism, I view 1989 as the historical juncture for the rise of a “planetary marketplace” (Comaroff and Comaroff, 2001, p. 17). And it is this absence of naming the motivation and momentum of neoliberalism more explicitly, that I undertake the task of considering what neoliberalism means to the production of subjectivities in their variegated cinematic forms as political and economic narrative constructions. In acknowledging this globalist phase, as Andrew does politically, mention must be made of the periodic development of capitalism in accordance to his historic parameters for film studies (e.g. 1918 and monopoly capitalism, 1935 and national capitalism, 1945 and Keynesian capitalism, 1968 and declining Keynesian capitalism, and
1989, with neoliberal globalization). In other words, “the global is not merely the accidental site of fusion or confusion of circulating global elements” writes Appadurai (2013, p. 251), but one borne out of specific spatial expansions—that is, neoliberal globalization and its altering of our perceptions toward culture in our denationalized era.

To me, the scale of global cinema rather than the episteme of its categorization is crucial to demarcate the global restructuring happening under neoliberal globalization and thus to delinked the world as territorial methodology. This presents a novel interpretation of social relations, even experiences brought to life in cinematic terms. In broad terms, Neil Brenner (2011, p. 132) elegant remarks on the scaling of economic, social and culture institutions and geographies to the global and is something I would like to connect to cinema and our understanding of its globalizing character. He finds:

The current round of global restructuring has significantly decentered the national scale of political-economic life and intensified the importance of both subnational and supranational scales of sociospatial organization. These transformations undermine inherited conceptions of geographical scale as a static, fixed, and nested hierarchy, and reveal its socially produced, historically variegated and politically contested character. From this perspective, geographical scales must be viewed not only as the products of political-economic processes but also as their presupposition and their medium (Smith). Scalar arrangements are thus never fixed in stone but evolve continuously in conjunction with the dynamics of capital accumulation, state regulation, social reproduction, and socio-political struggle.

Scale to me helps to convey issues that affect the entire globe. In other words, how do films speak globally to various countries that experience some form of social antagonism, debilitating experience or enlightening phenomenon? What globalizes a national perspective? In light of this, big issues ought to form the basis for new global cinema anthologies to better conceptualize the global issues we face today. For example

Famine and Global Cinema
Contagion, Altruism and Global Cinema
Cosmopolitanism and Global Cinema
Global War in Global Cinema
The Global Recession in Global Cinema

My list is meant to be generic in titling and vision; however, it does show the possibility of new directions in film studies to further legitimate global cinema as an issue-based category and cinematic outlook on the world. Thus the global restructuring of balances and imbalances in the world can be transferred into film studies to better articulate social, cultural, even artistic interactions in a polymorphic grammar of scalar arrangements.

Elsewhere, James Tweedie threads together the last two phases of capitalism—1968 and 1989—and “stages” or I would say “scales” art cinema in politico-economic terms (as well as cultural and industrial) to globalization. It is here that he shows that a global new wave can reach, like Hollywood, “beyond the boundaries of its domestic market and define the terrain of global image culture as its territory” (2013, p. 2). His notion of globalization “glimpsed from the margins, where market forces arrive along with visions of a future already portended by Hollywood cinema itself,” seems an answer to the back-and-forth flow of people and cultural content suggested by Paul Jay earlier in this essay. It cements, conceptually, a newly prescribed “global art cinema” in and beyond the “global Hollywood” paradigm. Thus the troubled argument that Hollywood’s cultural hegemony has practically vanished under the re-centering of globalization, is countered by Tweedie, where he imaginatively places the “New Waves” from Taiwan to Ireland, from China to Mexico, having a much larger role in the cultural markets from the decolonization period in the 1950s and 60s, to our post-’89 market revolution. Here my departure from Tweedie’s fascinating argument is through an examination of global positioning and not youth culture, novelty and modernism, his key tropes, all affiliated to be sure, with contemporary global cinema. Yet, many films communicate the global cinematic imagery of a post-’89 climate captured in various micro formations, coinciding with different neoliberal subjectivities, playing at (possible or impossible) lives on screen. This is a cultural condition that is conceptualized via
the outwardness of global cinema to depict issues such as global poverty, global outbreak, global knowledge, and so forth—seriously overlooked in discourses pertaining to global cinema.

IV. The Outwardness of Global Cinema

The formula of neoliberalism in countries from the Global South have yet to be rethought like they are being currently in Southern Europe, and this leads me to another point here about the globality of cinema. If the global financial sphere has been decentred and now leans to the Global South (“Chindia” Brazil and South Africa with their leading financial centers and formidable trade on investments), something new in terms of global financial hegemony, then the counter-hegemony occurring in the cultural sphere of these regions of the world is in fact something that is not new and has found a critique elsewhere. As Ella Shohat and Robert Stam explain (1994), by the mid-1990s Asia and Latin America and to a lesser extent Africa all came to firmly expand their media industries via transnational and inter-regional competition and partnership.

Among the salient trends of recent years have been: a notable increase in Asian film production [that in Korea and China has doubled by 2012]; the emergence of audiovisual media giants in Mexico and Brazil (Brazil’s Rede Globo is now the fourth largest network in the world [now the sixth largest by 2012]; the rise (and occasionally the decline) of centralized, state-sponsored film production in both socialist and capitalist countries (Cuba, Algeria, Mexico and Brazil); and the appearance of First World nations and institutions (notably in Britain, Japan, Canada, France, Holland, Italy, Germany) as funding sources for Third World filmmakers [that has been seriously constrained by the Global Recession since 2008].

Shohat and Stam’s information is now dated, written as it was before the Global Recession of 2008-12, thus my interjection above is to update some of their figures. Nevertheless, the central thread of their argument is still salient and complements my own in terms of analyzing the continuous growth of global media in developing and recovering nation-states.
adopting neoliberalism. Production under these terms of globalization becomes crucial. Indeed, many organizations understand these partnerships as not just competitive or market-driven responses to the “global rift” in the words of L.S. Stavrianus (1981), but rather a positive cross-cultural understanding of cinema, recognizing globalization’s impacts on filmmaking. The Global Film Initiative (GFI), a San Francisco-based film organization found in 2003, decidedly takes the “global” in their foundation’s name and says the following on its website about its mission:

The Initiative has developed four complementary programs to promote both the production of authentic and accessible stories created in the developing world and their distribution throughout the schools and leading cultural institutions of the United States. The Global Lens film series is the flagship endeavour of this mission and a short video about its annual premiere at the Museum of Modern Art can be viewed below.¹

But it is not just semantics here: The Global Film Initiative functions like a creative NGO, procuring funding for riskier or needs-based film projects from the Global South. Thus GFI’s acknowledgement and active support for a “globalization from below” works because they pluck filmmakers at the margins and provide them access to American culture institutions to exhibit their films. Put plainly: the big issues from around the globe have been and continue to be circulated in the cultural nexus of the Global North. This circulation illustrates, for better or worse—a global consciousness that is now in vogue.

Recently, art historians have also gravitated to global conceptions pertaining to the visual arts. Hans Belting’s timely study, *The Global Contemporary and the Rise of New Art Worlds* (2013) acknowledges how art history is also experiencing an ontological and epistemological shift toward analyses that are concerned and newly centered on global art making and global marketing of such work (Belting et al, 2013, p. 2).

Global art is no longer synonymous with modern art. It is by definition contemporary, not just in a chronological but also, as we will see, in a symbolic or even ideological sense. It is both represented and distorted by an art market whose strategies are not
just economic mechanisms when crossing cultural borders, but strategies to channel art production in directions for which we still lack sufficient categories. Art on a global scale does not imply an inherent aesthetic quality which could be identified as such, nor a global concept of what has to be regarded as art. Rather than representing a new context, it indicates the loss of context or focus and includes its own contradiction by implying the counter movement of regionalism and tribalization, whether national, cultural or religious. It clearly differs from modernity whose self-appointed universalism was based on a hegemonial notion of art.

The reimagining of museums as platforms for global cinema exhibition as well as Belting’s emphasis on the borderless potential of global art, not only rebrands the cultural diversity of international producers and directors showcased at places like MoMA, but also those practitioners armed with multivalent visions to narrate new and timely non-Western art historiographies. In a lesser sense, these examples also show what Roland Robertson calls “interactive comparison with other societies” (Robertson, 1992, p. 12) and a global affinity to articulate these alternative modernities, always persistently waiting in the wings. Indeed, organizations like The Global Film Initiative and scholars like Belting insist on giving value to multi-ethnic, tran-national stories from every corner of the globe. But they are not the only ones. Increasingly, we are finding other institutions following suit: the British Film Institute in London and the Global Peace Film Festival held in Orlando, Florida, are two salient examples. Here these institutes tap into thinking about how film and art now carries a global branding and then what to do with such a branding when audiences now actively seek this culture out. Indeed, as more supra and infra-national films are shown in these cultural venues and written about by globally-situated scholars like Belting, these films and art objects proliferate and elides borders, globally-orientated, and thus reaches beyond older territorial constraints that supposedly bind these very films and art objects.

When it comes to the global arenas of culture seen historically, Paul Willemen (2013, p. 96) seeks a way through the world cinema model by proposing what Andrew, Tweedie and I have reconfigured as its global phase.
From the start, Italian, French, Swedish, British and American films, along with performers and technicians, circulated internationally without carrying an ostentatious national logo or provenance. As such, cinema has always been uneasy with nationalism, preferring to indulge in fantasies of universalism based on a simple inversion of the language-national ethnos ideology, thus maintaining that romantically nationalist ideology intact while seeming to go beyond it: because image-discourses allegedly operated without having to pass through the narrow defile of a particular verbal language, cinema was often described as the first genuine universal ‘language’ capable of restoring humanity to its pre-Babel unity.

In other words, whereas earlier treatments of the seven continents various film canons under the rubric of foreign to international to world cinema tended to regard each as a separate entity marked mostly by national origin, we ought to instead explore the ways in which any and all cinema is the nationalized expression of a globalized integration—that is, a spatial process of outwardness in the act of moving across the globe; a process that has been well under way since the birth of cinema but is now more fully radicalized. More pertinent, in my view, is the not so straightforward conjecture that neoliberalism solely creates global identities, as individuals or groups, relying on the contradictory associations to the thinkness of the global and the denationalizing forms of subjectivities. Thus we see such a “trajectory delineated for them in advance, and that they sometimes assume forms which are profoundly antipathetic to the existing social formation” (Silverman, 1992, p. 2). Cuban cinema is one example of this antipathetic subjectivity. In fact, Castro’s Cuba has been delinked from direct neoliberal channels of economic hegemony and this makes the socialist island nation-state very unique economically, at least by today’s standards. But Cuba must still react to the global pressures put on the production, distribution and reception of film, especially with the United States only recently loosening its embargos on the island nation-state. Indeed, we find a thriving grey market and globally inspired film school taking commodities (global cinema) and talent (non-Cuban filmmakers) from all corners of the globe, enriching their culture in the process.
Thus when Cuba is added to the fold we can interpret global cinema as a “complex ecology,” to appropriate a phrase from Dudley Andrew again which includes a select number of films from the Global North (territorially diverse or globally conscious American and European cinemas) as well as nation-states that operate via socialist political economies (Venezuelan and North Korean cinemas) from the Global South (Andrew, 2006, p. 19). Essentially, works of global cinema refuse, to borrow from Mike Wayne, “to be mere entertainment, yet banish from your mind a cinema that is worthy but dull or a cinema of simplistic polemics” (Wayne, 2001, p. 5). For Willemen, he argues that the appeal of global cinema has been to show that the flows of capital allow for “comparisons to be made [which] is the universal encounter with capitalism, a process that has determined (although it never was the only determination) and accompanied every manifestation of cinema throughout the world and which, moreover, has massively accelerated since the 1950s…” (Willemen, 2013).

In thinking about what allows for such movements, Willemen’s aesthetic and political economic comparison recently published looks broadly at the “capitalist-industrial production of culture” for films, providing a sturdy overview of global cinema’s undeniable connection to market.

V. Conclusion

Global cinema, I have argued, is a positive concept that diminishes the neoliberal “scale” of its markets and exposes instability and anomie, implicating all things social and even cultural in its web. As this article has made clear we must develop “case-sensitive and site-specific” prototypes of national expression to borrow from Apter, to help grasp the global phenomenon of economic subjugation more resolutely. Intriguing is Apter’s critique, like Shih and Moretti’s before her, of the weakness of the world literature moniker. She articulates how it plays a role in the creation of things such as “oneworldliness,” that comprises, in
homogenous tones, hundreds of national literatures into its monolithic structure. Against such oneworldliness, Apter considers terms such as “untranslatable,” “terrestrial,” and “regionalist” to destabilize the double-bind between global and national, stating: “literary history’s cartographic catalogue is thus either constrained by the national habitus or the agglomerative rubric of world literature” (Apter, 2013, p. 40). One way around this oneworldliness problem is to think of the cohabitation of different national literatures and films comingling on a global scale; what John D. French calls a distinction between “subnational specificities with supranational processes”—linking them, though never in equivalences in studies of cinema from Egypt, Japan, Canada and elsewhere to some larger global theme—immigration, international division of labor, global war, etc. (Apter, 2013, p. 42-48). In other words, seeing films from Egypt as single strands that persist as outstanding examples of national film culture (especially when these directors are awarded prizes at prestigious film festivals) and/or a diverse user group of global cinema “within globalization” (seeing them as beacons to a postnational cinematic order to get at pressing global problems).

Equally, the predominance of global cinema “encourages us to continue to remap the geographies of not just literary and cultural forms” writes Jay, but also the global flows of cinema and its circulation, its contamination and its convergence of forces that transcend interpretation and meaning (Jay, 2010, p. 4). Fused to the complicated center-periphery model of globalization held by many political science and cultural theorists is how global flows are now in fact de-centered via “regionalization” of power and culture (i.e., the Pacific Rim, sub-Saharan Africa and the Southern Cone). We see particular examples with the rise of China economically; Korea’s stability after the IMF bailout in 1997; and the recovering markets in South Africa and India. In some ways this trio of territories offer together, a multi-dimensional and broad-ranging analysis of filmmaking that exposes degrees of repression, disunity and consumer hysteria brought about under the parameters of “national” interest in
free-market statehood on screen. Instead of arguing for unequal emphasis away from the national imaginary, this essay has considered global cinema as having constituent elements of domestic culture, mainly ethnic identity, specificity and uniqueness to class, where “filmmakers around the world are known to have been in dialogue with one another’s work, and other cultural and political exchanges to form the dynamic context of these dialogues” for many decades now and thus transcends the culture that produces it (Newman, 2010, p. 4).

Notes

1 The website for The Global Film Initiative can be found here: http://www.globalfilm.org/


3 See Dudley Andrew, “Times zones and jetlag: the flows and phases of world cinema”; and see XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX
Works Cited


