DISLOCALISM

The Crisis of Globalization and the Remobilizing of Americanism

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INTRODUCTION

I. GLOBALIZATION AS OBJECT . . . AND SUBJECT

Globalization, according to what has for some time become the conventional wisdom, refers to a radically new social, economic, and cultural reality in which all preexisting, locally constituted practices and ideas have ceased to be viable. Whether, as once proclaimed from the standpoint of “New Economy” Realpolitik by a Robert Reich1 or championed outright by, say, a Thomas Friedman,2 globalization’s proponents say there has been no choice but to line up and keep pace with this new reality or be left behind by history. Globalization, in this hegemonic and vernacular sense, has taken on the form of a rhetoric of obsolescence, threatening virtually all existing practices and life-ways with eventual extinction should they fail to adapt. The perceived choice has been to globalize or to become what Evan Watkins has termed a “throwaway,” a term that describes the coding of “isolated groups of the population” as those “who haven’t moved with the times” (3). As Watkins explains in his book of the same name (Throwaways: Work Culture and Consumer Education, 1993), people and practices don’t simply become obsolete with the advent of “new” technologies and economic or cultural conditions. The concept of the “obsolete” is itself already posited and rendered necessary by the discourse of the “new.” “Obsolescence,” writes Watkins, “involves conditions of both cultural and economic production in the present, not what has survived uselessly” (7). It is in the form of such a ubiquitous rhetoric of obsolescence that globalization—beginning as early as the first waves of financialization in the 1970s in the wake of the crisis of Fordism, well before the jargon itself became widespread—forced its way
into virtually all spheres of mainstream opinion and secular-intellectual discourse as though it were a new categorical imperative. Largely ever since, the response on the part of a widening range of social practices, institutional, intellectual, cultural, and otherwise, has been to jettison—or appear to jettison—existing local, regional or even national models and methodologies and embrace purportedly more global paradigms, however the latter were to be understood. My objective in this work is to analyze and critique globalization in academic, intellectual, and cultural spheres as an ideological discourse that took hold post-1980s and generated this rhetoric of obsolescence.

None of this is to deny that profound, far-reaching, and, undoubtedly, global transformations have radically altered capitalist society since the crisis of Fordism took hold in the 1970s and 1980s—roughly the same time frame during which globalization became a fixture of quotidian discourse in the Western metropolis and beyond. Recall David Harvey’s observation that the popularizing of the term itself can be traced back to an American Express Card advertising campaign in the mid-1970s and Harvey’s (self-critical) rebuke to the left for its own rush to adopt a language in which a subtle apology for economic and social policies and outcomes just as easily associated with much less savory terms (e.g., neoliberalism) was already detectable.

As regards the historical reality of the world ushered in by the end of Fordism and of the post–World War II capitalist “Golden Age,” whether or not one literally refers to it as “globalized,” there exists a rich body of theoretical and critical literature from which to draw critiques of mainstream globalization’s brave new world. This includes the work of well-known radical scholars including Harvey, Samir Amin, Immanuel Wallerstein, Mike Davis, Saskia Sassen, Fredric Jameson, Slavoj Žižek, and journals such as New Left Review, Monthly Review, or Public Culture, as well as that of many other critics and activists within (and outside) the left academy. A systematic assessment of this collective historicizing and critical demystification of globalization—upon much of which I myself rely, explicitly and implicitly, throughout Dislocalism—would require at least as much space and time as I’ve allotted to the present study. But here at least we have a critical-theoretical foothold from which it has become possible to challenge globalization’s rhetoric of obsolescence and its metanarrative of free-market, high-tech driven universalisms in their mythical power to enthrall and coerce.

I intend the present work as, in the most general sense, a contribution to this larger, collective theory and critique of globalization. Dislocalism, however, although it too concerns itself with social and economic changes
associated with the period of globalization, also differs from this trend of critical scholarship. For it is on the ideology of globalization—the latter’s “common sense” as an imperative in which the threat of obsolescence appears as if fatefully coterminous with the local itself—and even more specifically on what I understand here as the rhetorical, discursive, metanarrative dimension of such ideology that I will focus my critical analysis throughout the four chapters that comprise the main body of the book. I address the peculiar collective anxiety generated by globalization as various institutional and cultural sites answer the call to produce new work in keeping with the global “Zeitgeist.” Regarding globalization as, simultaneously, a discourse and a historical process, I examine closely the symptomatic inversion resulting from the anxiety of the global: while presenting their work as if it were a response to globalization, intellectuals, writers, academics and corporate managers are in fact working simultaneously to produce globalization itself as discourse—the very discourse that then produces the imperative to adapt to the new, to escape obsolescence.

Methodologically grounded in literary and cultural studies, the chapters that make up the body of Dislocalism, which I will preview shortly in more detail in order to explain the thinking that has gone into the selection and sequencing of their fundamental subject matter, take up the transformations produced by the above-mentioned ideology and the discursive effects of globalization, beginning in the 1980s, in four, outwardly quite diverse American cultural/intellectual objects. The first of these is management theory, especially as concerns its methods of training future corporate managers and its rethinking of the very structure of American business organizations in a fully globalized marketplace. There follows a discussion of the field of U.S. immigrant and ethnic literary narrative, and in particular the globalization of critical and interpretive scholarship centered on two immigrant novels, Julia Alvarez’s How the García Girls Lost Their Accents and Diana Abu-Jaber’s Crescent, and the process of their canonization within a transnational U.S. immigrant literature. The third chapter focuses on U.S. travel-writing and the efforts, as traced in three particular works by Robert Kaplan, Mary Morris, and Paul Theroux, to find ways to reinvent that genre itself, given what appears to be the “end” of travel in any traditional sense in the wake of globalization. The final chapter takes up the relationship between food and tourism in American popular media narratives (here magazines and broadcast television) where the response to globalization becomes a recoding of tourism itself as culinary and the seeking out of specifically American food–based experiences in places that can be (re)constructed, at least as far as eating is concerned, as nationally “other.”
II. DISLOCALISM
Its Meaning and Conceptual Necessity

In focusing my critique of globalization along such rhetorical/ideological-discursive lines, I necessarily distinguish between globalization as such a discourse and as a term referring to a real historical process. In making this distinction I argue that various intellectual and cultural sites, in responding to the call to globalize, are in fact engaging in a profoundly ambiguous and contradictory strategy through which to promote global or transnationalized practices. In so doing, however, they consolidate existing national, institutional, and local forms of intellectual and cultural methodologies. I refer to this strategy as dislocalism—a concept of my own that doubles as the title of my book and as a conceptual synthesis, a kind of theoretical miniature, of its contents.

In order to explain fully what is meant by dislocalism and how it can help to analyze more precisely these rhetorical and ideological dimensions of globalization, I will begin on the most fundamental and abstract level, focusing on the logic of the term itself. Then I will add to its critical-theoretical mediations by considering it in relation to the two categories most clearly central to any ideology–critical understanding of globalization, the nation as such, and, as a special, perhaps unique subset of the former, globalization’s unmistakable national-ideological center of gravity: America and Americanism. I use the term America here cognizant of what is already the ideology conveyed by the word itself, making it into what might almost be considered the semantic derivative rather than the root of words such as Americanism and Americanization and also as a way of pointing to the blatantly ideologizing content of the word when, forgetting the existence of the America(s) south of the Rio Grande, it is used as though synonymous with the national entity called the United States.

That “globalization” can be made as theoretically precise and diverse in meaning as the context demands is clear. But the same is true of its ambiguities in popular conceptions, and not the least of these is its seemingly indifferent capacity to take on utopian (as well as dystopian) meanings, whether on the right or the left. Conjuring images of the “blue planet” itself as seen from outer space, “globalization” and cognates such as the “global,” and so forth, become, from a purely rhetorical point of view, the perfect word: as frictionless as the world imagined to be the result if all local barriers to mobility, whether of capital or simply of ideas and cultures, really were possible to clear away through the lifting
of all forms of protectionism or the introduction of new communications technologies. Indeed, for globalization in this sense the local per se verges on becoming nothing but a barrier, the flipside of the pure abstraction of, to return to Justin Rosenberg’s expression, “the process of becoming worldwide.”

A moment’s thought is sufficient to detect the logical fallacy of simply superimposing a “mobility/stasis” onto a “global/local” binarism—as if a space divided into ten thousand mutually incommunicable localities were any less a world or a globe than one in which ten thousand were reduced to one. That, to reiterate an observation often returned to in Marx’s writings, that the world itself does not become a truly global reality in the active, historical sense before the creation of the world market in early Western modernity, does nothing to corroborate the ideology of globalization. That same world market also lays the groundwork for the most extreme reassertion of barricaded localisms: the ever more destructive and more global wars that are the result of globalizing markets themselves. The very same historical forces of “bourgeois civilization” that, as the Manifesto already had it, give us “in place of the old local and national seclusion and self-sufficiency . . . intercourse in every direction, universal inter-dependence of nations” also create the conditions for the reassertion of the “old local and national seclusion” in new, more universal, more—the world is unavoidable—global forms. Globalization, here, regardless of whether we date it back to 1972 or to 1492, works so as to overcome the local, and, without doubt, steadily reduces the historical hold of localism as a dominant form of social organization and experience. But this is a relative process. In the very process of doing so, globalization, insofar as it names an irresistible secular tendency of capitalism, likewise creates new localisms, even to the point, as recent history in particular demonstrates in multiple ways, of exacerbating the grip of the local precisely as an effect of transformations undergone on a world scale.

In what has come to be its dominant understanding since globalization entered the mainstream of public and popular discourse in the 1980s, this very necessity that it manifests itself in and as new forms of the local has undergone a kind of erasure. The ideology of globalization, its rhetorical sleight of hand—what Justin Rosenberg terms its “folly” 10—is, in a word, to make it appear as though this erasure of the local were itself the meaning and content of “globalization.” It is to convey this overdetermining resistance to the local as the obsolete that I have devised the term “dismalism” as, initially, a simplified means of reference to this specific ideological and rhetorical effect. Dismalism provides me here
with a means of referring, on the level of abstract generality, to an ideological and rhetorical phenomenon that continues to refer to itself with a signifier—globalization—that it shares with a perfectly legitimate and meaningful theoretical concept. I intend to capture by means of dislocalism what is historically specific to the rhetoric of globalization dominant since the 1980s. To that end, dislocalism self-consciously deviates from more familiar, cognate terms within the “globalization” discursive field—e.g., “displacement” or “dislocation”—through an ideological ambivalence built into the new term itself. The drive to “dislocalize” is thus, in the broadest and most immediate sense, a drive to displace the local in order to engage with the global—that is, placing the stress on the prefix, a form of dislocalism. But it is my contention—to be demonstrated at length and in multiple contexts throughout this work—that, in many instances, intellectual and cultural spheres for which “globalization” serves as a means of dislocalizing are no less invested in remaining localized. In this, then, they may be said to adhere to a dislocalism (here stressing the root noun, a neologism itself)—precisely so that older intellectual-cultural and institutional practices are not entirely displaced or dislocated, and thereby rendered obsolete. Dislocalism, in other words, describes a dislocation, 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.

III. THE NATION AND AMERICANISM

Any attempt to analyze and critique the ideology embedded in the imperative to globalize inevitably raises the question of the local in its form as the nation and what has been, according to certain theoretical perspectives, its purported obsolescence in the wake of globalization. There is simply too little space in this book to do real justice to this question and the sheer mass of theoretical literature devoted to debating it. What can and should be said here, especially as concerns the matter of how Dislocalism situates itself in relation to theories of the nation as globalization has reframed them, is that the question of its obsolescence cannot be correctly posed at all without first recognizing that the nation as a general category can often be too abstract for any answer to be made. Thus when Appadurai openly questioned, in 1996, whether the “nation-state” might be “on its last legs,” notwithstanding the care he took to qualify this claim, it was and is hard if not impossible to know what it would mean to uphold or disprove it. It seems almost too obvious a point to be made, and yet one that all too readily disappears from view, that the
respective relationships to globalization of China and, say, of Slovenia—both unquestionably nations from a juridical standpoint—are so radically different as to put into question what sort of meaning the concept of the nation could have in this context. That said, however, there remains a wide range of work, both theoretically and historically centered, that has informed the present study as concerns the question of the nation and the changes it undergoes with the onset of globalization beginning in the 1970s and 1980s. Along with now virtually classic studies by scholars such as Benedict Anderson, Ernest Gellner, and Eric Hobsbawm, these sources also include, inter alia, work by Samir Amin, Michael Mann, Roberto Schwarz, Aijaz Ahmad, and Pepe Escobar.12

But I do want to offer two further general observations here on the nation that bear in essential ways on the general theory and critique of dislocalism as well as on its various concrete instances, in the chapters that follow. The first is that any argument regarding the much-debated “decline of the nation-state” at the hands of globalization, whatever the position argued, is certain to encounter serious problems if it does not pose the underlying structural question of changes in the historical relation of the form of the nation to capital itself. I argue explicitly in chapter 1, and implicitly throughout Dislocalism, that this relation has changed in fundamental ways as capitalism has increasingly broken free of the limits of national markets and local and state regulation of capitalist enterprises, driven closer and closer toward the asymptotic (that is, never fully attainable) point of reproducing itself directly on a global plane—with the correspondingly increased potential to collapse in on itself in a crisis of likewise ever more global proportions. But this is not to argue—a point others have made as well—that the nation has therefore become obsolete in any sense, or that it exerts any less of a shaping, decisive influence on political, cultural, or intellectual developments. One could with equal and perhaps greater justification argue that, in certain ways, globalization has increased this shaping influence, even as it has also, in my terms, dislocalized it, that is, produced forms of ultra-nationalism precisely so as to counteract and correct for increasing cosmopolitanism. The globalization of capital may indeed negate what had previously been the more or less spontaneous historical identity of capital and nation during earlier phases of capitalist development, but it does not put anything positive in place of the nation as nation-state, that is, as a political/territorial entity evolved for the purpose of regulating the social effects of commodity production and “self-valorizing value” outside the sphere of value itself. (Take, as one example of this absence or sheer impossibility of nationally based regulation under the
regime of globalization, the case of global warming and catastrophic environmental damage to the planet as a whole.) The nation is, so to speak, hollowed out—the more precise concept I propose in chapter 2 is denationalization—but globalization does not fill it in with any positive, transnational substance. The concept of dislocalism here is, if nothing else, one way to try to place a conceptual marker on this negative persistence of the nation even after the ground has shifted, sometimes beyond the point of disintegration, underneath its foundations.

When the nation and nationalism in question are, respectively, the U.S. and Americanism, then the need to grasp the changed historical relation between global capital and the nation-state as form becomes even greater and, correspondingly, more difficult to meet. This is because, as successive, global economic crises are making increasingly clear, the U.S. as national economic formation occupies—or has occupied since at least the end of World War II—a position of combined military and financial dominance and in this sense a unique position in the global capitalist system. The highly ideological, mystified projection of America as exceptional, as a “nation of nations,” to the extent that the U.S. has continued to be the leading force behind globalization, can thus claim a certain degree of historical truth. In the case of America as nation, the contradictions of globalization will therefore appear—once again objectively, if only up to a point—to have become internalized. (Take, for example, the decision by the U.S. Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve not to come to the rescue of Lehman Brothers in 2008, which was certain to have enormous international as well as national implications.) The result of this—and this brings up my second observation—is that the effort to globalize or transnationalize American intellectual, cultural, or disciplinary formations itself becomes a uniquely paradoxical one. The effects of globalization, due to the leading U.S. role in its institution, are themselves identified as Americanization. Dislocalism in an Americanist context—that is, as an effort to globalize that is at the same time a move to consolidate Americanism—revolves around this ambivalence. If globalization appears as somehow internal to Americanism, what does it then mean to speak of nationally, regionally, ethnically, and racially distinctive American cultures, practices, identities, and so forth?

Indeed, a number of scholars and critics in American studies—among them, John Carlos Rowe, Melanie McAlister, Robyn Wiegman, Donald Pease, and Amy Kaplan—have addressed the latter question in a variety of ways. In a 2009 article, Pease, although utilizing a terminology quite different from my own, analyzes precisely the above paradox. While defending the advances made by a transnationalizing, “post-exception-
alist” American studies and its “abandonment of the discourse of exceptionalism as wholly identical with Cold War imperatives that had been rendered obsolete by global realities” Pease now wonders “whether this renunciation of American exceptionalism did not produce still another structure of disavowal” (22), that is, another, paradoxically globalized form of exceptionalism.

Does not the representation of the US as altogether embedded in economic and global processes turn a blind eye to the exceptions to market regulations that US policy makers have constructed to give the US an economic edge in the global economy? Does not post-exceptionalist American studies also simply ignore the ways in which two of the core tenets of the discourse of American exceptionalism—the rule of law and neoliberal market ideology—have saturated the global processes in which America is embedded? (ibid.)

One must observe great caution, warns Pease, lest the result of a globalized American studies turn out to be a “disavowal” of the already Americanized dimensions of globalization itself. I will examine some of these same difficulties in the context of American ethnic and immigrant studies in chapter 2 of Dislocalism.

Consider, as further illustration of what I mean by dislocalism in this more mediated context, what has been, coeval with the turn to globalization, the widespread currency in cultural as well as American studies of ideas and terms such as “transnationalized” forms of border crossing and migrancy. These terms replace more familiar ones such as immigration and travel, forms of mobility in which the crossing of more or less fixed national boundaries has been tacitly understood. And, to be sure, immigration and travel, as concepts, do now seem inadequate to fully describing the new patterns of mobility of peoples across the globe. But, as I argue in detail in chapter 2, the (relatively) new, globalized paradigms nevertheless continue, in subtle ways, to reproduce the American- and nation-centered perspective they are meant to supersede. Their ideological effect is often to discount the reality of non-U.S. national specificities and histories, forgetting that a border becomes a very different thing depending on whether one is crossing it out (or outside) of rather than into the United States. Because the uneven and contradictory reality of globalization is transitive and directs the movement of migration toward global centers of wealth and capital accumulation such as the U.S., merely proclaiming the borderless condition of migrancy or the transnational can readily become a way of preserving a U.S.-centered, nation-
alist perspective. Throughout Dislocalism I show how, whatever else they do, the very categories of transnational mobility, designed to reflect more accurately a globalized sensibility, can also work—in the instance of dislocalism analyzed in chapter 2, via domestic notions of race, gender, ethnicity, and class—to consolidate existing institutional, disciplinary, and generic boundaries drawn along national and local lines. In the process they redefine and shore up American identity through the affirmation of its global others, positing the U.S. as both a global and a local place. This particular strategy of defining American identity is not new in itself, but I will show throughout the various chapters of Dislocalism that it has taken on new dimensions as a result of changes in social relations specific to the globalization-driven period from the 1980s forward.

IV. DISLOCALISM
Constants and Variables

I have already touched, very briefly, on the specific objects of analysis and research around which I have articulated and assembled the following chapters. But now that I have offered a brief introduction to dislocalism as their common theoretical and conceptual framework, I want to remark on the thinking that has governed the selection of the objects themselves—especially given what may seem, at first glance, their considerable heterogeneity. My claim here is that American management theory, literary critiques of immigration narrative, and travel- and food/tourism-writing produced under the aegis of the post-1980s globalization imperative are each, in fact, especially illuminating as ideological strategies for positing the U.S. as both a global and a local place, that is, as instantiations of the particular adaptive response to globalization I term dislocalism. Yet this still leaves the appearance of a gap between dislocalism as theoretical abstraction and its mediation in this particular set of cultural-intellectual phenomena. Let me then try to explain how I have sought to provide a mediating link. To do that, I want to show how the specific objects of analysis in the work as a whole represent variations on the specific cultural and social logic of dislocalism.

But there is, of course, at least one thing that does not vary in the four chapters that make up Dislocalism, and that is their Americanist focus. The objects or phenomena at the center of each chapter are, whether consciously or not on their own part, inseparably tied to the society, culture, and politics of the U.S. This Americanist focus, the connection of
America and Americanism to dislocalism as concept, is neither accidental nor simply normative, and thus no less in need of theoretical grounding in a book that analyzes and critiques globalization than the transition, qua dislocalism, from management theory to critical readings of Julia Alvarez, or from there to travel writing and narratives about food tourism. Recall the observation made previously, in the context of a general remark on the nation and dislocalism:

The highly ideological, mystified projection of America as “exceptional,” as a “nation of nations,” to the extent that the U.S. has continued to be the leading force behind globalization, can thus claim a certain degree of historical truth. In the case of America as nation, the contradictions of globalization will therefore appear—once again objectively, if only up to a point—to have become internalized.

If we turn to mainstream, sanctioned public opinion as voiced in the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal*, the purported internal identity of globalization with Americanization becomes the most blatant form of apology for U.S. national/imperial interests, themselves understood as inseparable from the global spread of neoliberal economic policies. Or in those and other media it becomes the mere flip side of such apologetics, which substitutes anti-Americanism for the critique of capitalism as such. Either way, what is missed is the apparent spatial anomaly in which, to be more precise, the transformations of capital that begin to make themselves felt following the collapse of the Fordist boom in the 1970s presuppose the continued domination of the U.S. over a capitalist world system in which, thanks mainly to increasingly rapid financialization, such transformations can no longer be contained within any national economic matrix and are global before they are national. But on the more immediate, manifest plane of the intellectual and the cultural, the deepest structural contradictions of globalization, insofar as they describe a space both internal and external to the U.S.—a condition that is not, it should be stressed, synonymous with globalization per se across its entire range of possible articulations and effects—will be experienced either as already American or as virtually, inescapably vulnerable to Americanization. Here we have the form of dislocalism to be specifically examined in this work: dislocalism as a form of spatializing of intellectual/cultural genres that is simultaneously global and local. Dislocalism, that is, traces the rhetorical pressure exerted by the global as a constant movement away from the local that always leads back to some other version of the local once the global threatens to reach the zero point of pure, “liquid” mobility. How-
ever, dislocalism now has a concrete social and historical moment as well: America and the American as the simultaneously global and national.

But to return now to the question of what I have termed the specific cultural and social logic of dislocalism: globalization, considered as metaphor, thought/image, or even as the basis for a kind of phenomenology, is not merely the image of a borderless, total space but of the constant movement across borders and all manner of localized barriers. It describes, to return to Justin Rosenberg’s phrase, “the process of becoming worldwide” (my emphasis), while in the thinking of Zygmunt Bauman it becomes the “liquid,” a constant flux. Globalization, in short, while finite in the form of the planetary, also projects the formal image of an infinite mobility through and across the space of the planetary.

But the image of pure, infinite, limitless mobility is, of course, an abstraction itself, a mere idea. In order to be visualized at all, to be spatialized, such mobility must be represented in relationship to something fixed.

Thus when a particular, already existing social, cultural, or intellectual form of organization, discipline, genre, and the like, is confronted with the imperative of globalization, when it, in other words, is threatened with the danger of its own immobilization as something merely local and hence obsolete, its task, ideologically speaking, is dual: it must globalize, that is, remove or supersede previously sedimented immobilizations or localizing barriers. But, in order not to dissolve altogether into what is, finally, a no less threatening state of total flux and liquidity, it must find—to borrow, in a different context, a term of David Harvey’s—a new “spatial fix” or set of localizable coordinates that can appear “global” in relation to the older localism that now threatens it with obsolescence. This is, again, the logic, the rhetorical pattern, that I term dislocalism.

But now its variables, its simplest terms, have been specified. That is, as a general strategy for satisfying globalization’s rhetorical imperative while also mapping the ideology of globalization itself, dislocalism brings into play both what I will refer to here as a specific metaphor of mobility as well as a corresponding form of “spatial fix.”

If examined now as variations on these two (as one might refer to them) phenomenological constants of dislocalism, the book’s four objects of critical analysis come into a new, more distinct focus. What we can now map out in each case, in the form of an imagined remobilization of the “genre” in question and its corresponding spatial fixation, is a distinct “imaginary solution” to the contradictions of an ideologically (re)“Americanized” globalization. But let me now illustrate this, and the pattern of variations produced by this interplay of ideological figures, with a concluding survey and schematic analysis of the chapters themselves.
V. MANAGEMENT THEORY

I begin, then, with the first chapter, devoted, on the most general plane, to an analysis of the ramifications of globalization within American management theory during a period ranging from the late 1980s until the mid 2000s. But why include management theory in a study that addresses mainly cultural and literary subjects and that does so, broadly speaking at least, from the disciplinary standpoint of cultural and literary studies? The explanation for this ultimately points to the more direct impact of the increased mobility of capital itself on this particular discipline and the resulting forms of metaphorical remobilization and spatial fix that come into play here. But a more immediate case for taking up management theory is a fact perhaps still unfamiliar to many who work in the humanities and closely related disciplines. Dislocalism in the humanities takes the form of an anxiety that the field itself and its corresponding literary and cultural objects of study have become obsolete in the wake of globalization. Critics and scholars in the humanities often perceive themselves in the position of having to respond to globalization as a corporate-driven phenomenon always already imposed on them. There is also registered the implicit belief that the humanities can escape obsolescence only within a corporatized, globalizing university by, so to speak, globalizing itself in advance. But as many cultural and literary critics have turned to questions of business, finance, and corporate culture in order to make sense of globalization, academic management theorists, along with popular management theory gurus such as Tom Peters and Peter Drucker, began, most notably since the 1980s, to turn to culture, literary fiction, and even literary/cultural theory for what were and are ultimately comparable reasons. The real measure of globalization aside, the idea of globalization has placed the humanities and what is purportedly its corporate, disciplinary other into an ironic relationship of partly blind interdisciplinarity in which each has, at a certain point, had to turn close attention to the other’s field of study in order to secure its own position vis-à-vis what have been perceived as the current realities and threatening implications of globalization. I will have a good deal more to say by way of critical explication about this in chapter 1 itself, but suffice it for now to point out how it is that, via its own dislocalized narratives of obsolescence, knowledge production in the humanities can often unwittingly function to support the very corporate practices that supposedly threaten the humanities with extinction.
Management theory, as one might suspect, joins the rest of the business academy and U.S. corporate culture generally in welcoming the advent of globalization and regarding it as both a justification of the neoliberal policies instituted in and exported from the U.S. and the U.K. in the 1970s and 1980s and an opportunity for further advances toward the global dominance of U.S. capital. But a closer examination of the discipline itself, including both its more strictly academic branch as well as its popular, mass-mediatized wing, best represented by the series of best-selling management “bibles” by the likes of Drucker and Peters reveals a profound, underlying anxiety to match that of the humanities when faced with the globalization “imperative.” The latter arises from a sense, not without a definite measure of truth, that globalization’s tendency toward the unleashing of capital from all local and national barriers to its mobility has the clear potential to place U.S. corporate managers in a position of increasing disadvantage, not only as concerns its more cosmopolitan competitors but also vis-à-vis the form of management, a.k.a. “organization” (object of an entire wing within management theory known as organization studies). To state briefly what will be elaborated upon at length below in the first chapter, globalization, insofar as it is equated in the corporate mind with the total flux of capital and the lifting of all restrictions to the transnationalization of its organizational configurations (the new, post-Fordist dominance of finance capital is clearly weighing heavily here), calls for a radical rethinking of corporate management and organization themselves, even going so far as to raise the question of what constitutes the “Americanization” of the capitalist enterprise itself. Where this rethinking leads management theory post-globalization varies in the details, needless to say, but the general direction is clear: management and organizational structure must themselves be able to mimic, to incorporate (literally) in its managers (the future generations of the so-called professional managerial class) the radical remobilization and constant flux of globalized capital. Management must become (again, as we shall see, in the words of lecture-circuit stars like Peters as well as in articles published in management theory academic journals) “post-Newtonian” and even postmodern. Here, then, we have management theory’s “metaphor of mobility”: a total remobilization of corporate human dynamics in the form of a de-centered, never-in-the-office, horizontally self-displacing managerial subject able to reproduce in living, breathing bodies the total remobilizing of capital in the abstract.

But what is it that makes such managerial agents, once they have—as this variant of dislocalism will have it—internalized as decision-making capacity the pure abstract mobility of globalized capital, into subjects?
At least once before—as recently as the heydays of Fordism and the Cold War—American corporate culture would have had a ready answer: corporate “culture” itself, either in the case of the giant enterprise, on the model, say, of Ford, as a kind of nation within the nation, or in the form of “America” as a national corporate subject itself, especially as against powerful competitors such as (in the 1980s) the national corporate subject known as “Japan.” But globalization has changed all that and put “America” and Americanization into a question. The latter is now no longer the spontaneous point of departure, but for management theory as one instance of dislocalism, the problematic point of arrival. The answer—and here the sheer complexity in the chain of managerial reasoning will require the full text of chapter 1 to clarify and render plausible—is: culture itself. Capital, in reality, never stops moving, erecting barriers as a result of its own development that it must then proceed to demolish and replace with new ones—until its final barrier (itself) is reached—and it breaks down as a whole. Under globalization, at the stage of development corresponding to the period that concerns this study, multiple barriers to this movement certainly remain, but do indeed come close enough to disappearing that capitalism itself must take notice. But so as to internalize both the reality of increasing as well as the myth of total mobility, the new, globalized manager must be able to represent the space defined by this movement, and thus must start out from a point that does not move—management’s spatial fix. And it is culture that, as the field’s scholarly and mass-distributed literature as well as the university curricula designed for the training of new managerial cadre bear ample witness, supplies this fix. Culture as such a spatial fix here is globalized and universal but at the same time subjective as well as subject to fixation, both in the form of a tradition or a canon, as well as, in the case of the branch of the management academy known as international development, multicultural and ethnic. Nor does the fix stop at culture as such; it often prefers its literary manifestation—here, generally speaking, the more classical, and hence the more “universal,” the better. And, to mix it up even more for the humanist who thought corporate reading habits went no further than Ayn Rand and Von Hayek, management theory becomes an avid reader of the theories associated with cultural studies, preferably its postmodern wing, but not excluding Fredric Jameson. For, to the extent that the accelerated, hyper- fungible financialized capital that is synonymous with globalization betokens not only a more frequent recourse to the form of credit that Marx, using the terminology of the English bankers of his own day, termed “fictitious capital,” but a trend toward the fictionalization of capital as such—a subject that chapter 1 as well as other sections
of Dislocalism will also explore—here too management theory senses the crisis this portends. It thus turns to—what else?—fiction itself, as well as the strain of postmodernism that declares everything (including, for Tom Peters, the corporate organization itself) a narrative in any case, for its most ironic spatial fix of all.

VI. (IM)MIGRATION

At this point Dislocalism turns to the less direct, more highly mediated ways that globalization and the increased mobility of capital have reshaped the underlying metaphors of mobility and imaginary spatial fixations around which certain cultural narratives of Americanism coalesce. Here, in contrast to management theory, the crucial connection between shifts in the relation of globalized capital as such to shifting forms of national identity formation, above all to Americanization as the latter’s “borders” expand and recede, is both less direct and yet also less prone to the blatant mythologizing resorted to by corporate thinking. The ideological and rhetorical strategies of dislocalism thus become, by comparison, more subtle and more difficult to unravel.

It should be noted that the tropes of remobilization and fixation that serve this cultural critique as its basic ideological variables are, in themselves, not historically unique to globalization. The reproduction of an American national identity has long made emphatic use of metaphors of mobility: witness the mythical prominence of the so-called voyages of discovery and settlement, from Columbus on, as well as the traditional figure of the U.S. as a “nation of immigrants.” But the historical realities of globalization have, I argue, both increased the resonance of such metaphors and also skewed them and forced their reimagining. As the new dynamic of globalization alters the historical relation of capital and the form of the nation, relativizing the boundaries of the nation itself and positioning global capital as both external and internal to the experience of Americanness, the latter’s ability to ground itself in a movement of the nation to and from its outside becomes more and more uncertain.

I devote my second chapter to critical analysis of current trends in American immigrant/ethnic literary studies. The latter field is especially vulnerable to the contradictions that arise when, faced with an a priori imperative to globalize and the political and ethical opprobrium of intellectual identification of any kind with the Americanism at large in the world today, the broader discipline of American literary/cultural studies undertakes to displace itself from earlier nationalist paradigms—a difficult
and paradoxical task indeed for a field with the term “American” already named in it. In effect, a way must be found to displace, or appear to displace a national-American paradigm, that is, to reinvent the metaphor of mobility that is immigration itself, without dissolving any and all semblance of disciplinary object or self-identity—that is, with the insertion of a workable spatial fix. In the case of U.S. immigrant literary studies, this takes the form, for example, of opening up the U.S./American literary canon via a process of critical reading of texts and authors that national-cultural identity once excluded—but in such a way that the readings remain anchored within a horizon of critical interpretation and evaluation that is nevertheless still identifiably and reliably American. Thus I analyze the specific ways that recent U.S. literary scholars of immigrant literature have produced dislocalizing readings of Julia Alvarez’s influential novel about Dominican emigration to the U.S., How the García Girls Lost Their Accents, readings that effectively categorize and interpret the novel as already part of a transnational canon from which most if not all Dominican national-historical specificities have been erased—and that thereby remains U.S./American if only by default. Such readings, I argue, make efforts to globalize Alvarez’s narrative by privileging the immigrant experience, but this remains immigration to the U.S., and the fact that, for example, globalization and Americanization also shape the lives of Dominicans who never leave the island ceases to be a factor in this version of the transnational. To this extent, the shift within immigrant literary studies to paradigms of the global and the transnational tends to remain on the level of the merely terminological, as opposed to the conceptual.

I also look, from this perspective, at the scholarship that is emerging in the area of Arab-American literature, in particular at how current critical readings of Diana Abu-Jaber’s novel Crescent structure arguments for the latter’s inclusion within the canon of U.S. immigrant/ethnic literary studies. Arab-American literature comes to serve, for some of its critical readers, as one of the remaining pieces of unfinished business for U.S. multiculturalism. This reveals via a different route the dislocalizing project of displacing while simultaneously reinforcing U.S.-national paradigms against the more radical effects of globalization. Yet at the same time, the relatively recent and still somewhat provisional entry of works like Crescent into the canon confers on them a kind of outlier status and a more radically globalized sensibility that is especially illuminating. More generally, in this chapter I also critique what I see as decontextualizing moves on the part of immigrant/ethnic literary studies to make globalization into what is primarily a new reading methodology for literary texts rather than to develop a fully social and historical analysis attentive to
the ways texts such as Alvarez’s and Abu-Jaber’s *themselves* reflect on and enter into critical conversation with contemporary global conditions.

In the case of the literary- and cultural-critical interpretations of immigrant fictions, then, dislocalism’s “phenomenological constants” display a structure of interaction that diverges considerably from what we have seen in the case of management theory. The metaphor of mobility here is clearly immigration itself, but here reimagined to be what many scholars in the field refer to as migration, that is, as a border-crossing that, in a certain sense, never ends, an instance of seemingly permanent mobility. Unlike immigration, migration, even when it involves physical entry into the U.S., does not end, whether in real or imaginary terms, in assimilation. And yet such a metaphor of mobility is invoked from the standpoint of a critique of Americanist nationalism. That is, at the same time, the transnational is premised on a distinctly Americanized, domesticated version of multiculturalism. It is a multicultural discourse of rights, and the domestic ethnic identity it presupposes that, implicitly, counts as the globalized American here, and that becomes, in the logic of dislocalism, the spatial fix. It should be noted here, however, that not all U.S.-based criticism of racial and gender oppression takes this dislocalized form—that globalized mobility is not always, necessarily subject to the spatial fix.

**VII. TRAVEL, TOURISM, AND FOOD**

The third chapter of *Dislocalism* examines how contemporary American travel writers such as Robert D. Kaplan (*The Ends of the Earth*, 1996), Mary Morris (*Nothing to Declare*, 1988), and Paul Theroux (*Hotel Honolulu*, 2001) have sought out strategies for redefining an American identity laboring under the global imperative by dislocalizing it along the axis of another, pervasive metaphor of mobility—travel. Globalization for what are here representatives of the sphere of literary writing itself, has, purportedly, already Americanized the world and made the “foreign” itself intangible. Consequently, the meaning of travel itself changes as it becomes a newly privileged means of situating an American national identity—the latter isomorphic in this view with the white middle- and upper-class Americans who generally do the traveling.

Kaplan’s account of his journey to the “ends of the earth” in Africa and in Asia can be read as an attempt to produce a globalized update to older travel narratives, such as, for example, those of Paul Bowles. As evoked in his novel *The Sheltering Sky* (1949) or in nonfiction such as *Their Heads are Green and their Arms are Blue* (1963), Bowles’s Africa
was an exotic and faraway place, one from which the realities of a point of departure and return such as New York seemed, at least on the surface, far removed. In contrast, Kaplan’s Africa—and indeed the whole globalized world—is a place traveled to, whether for good or for ill, in search of its similarities to the U.S. Thus the main interest in a place like Abidjan, for Kaplan, is its disturbing similarity to poor African-American neighborhoods in Chicago or Washington, DC. Kaplan travels to gain a first hand account of how globalization has affected people on the ground, so to speak. But because of this he produces a narrative that essentially confirms what we already know: that, as opposed, say, to the tiger economies of Asia or to the “BRIC”²² bloc of rapidly industrializing, formerly “third” or “second world” national economies, most of Africa and poorer parts of Asia itself (Latin America is not on Kaplan’s itinerary in this narrative) are not significant participants in the networks of globalization. The sort of dislocalism at work in Kaplan’s book proposes the need for travel (and travel writing) in order to see how U.S. foreign policies are working. Yet, at the same time, it produces only information that upholds the credibility of current policy thinking itself, even if it is mildly critical of the latter. Framed as fact-finding mission to survey the dangers of the “coming anarchy”²³ for a pax Americana, Kaplan’s The Ends of the Earth has already seen the world before it sets out. Travel becomes the alibi for globalization, a strange metaphor of mobility in which all movement has already taken place—or is a move in the wrong direction. Here, in effect, travel has become both metaphor of mobility and spatial fix in one.

Although taking a far a less overtly pro-imperial stance, something of this same dislocalizing logic pervades Morris’s Nothing to Declare. Here San Miguel de Allende, virtually a middle-class North American colony in central Mexico, becomes a setting that is something like the obverse of the New York of The García Girls (according to certain of its critics, that is.) For Morris it is a setting in which to confront her own domestic travails and, in the process, demonstrate how much better than Mexico the U.S. is for women in abusive relationships with men. Travel, as movement from one place to another that is, at a bare minimum, not the place one has just left, is reduced to its zero degree here. Again we have mobility as spatial fix, only here by means of a carefully controlled, timed encounter with poor Mexican women for whom genuine sympathy is expressed, but always with (as Morris openly admits) an exit strategy in place.

In the process of writing a travel narrative about a form of travel that can only begin where the actually existing, globalized world itself “ends,” however, an ironic formula is found for giving the genre of travel writing
itself a new lease on life. Witness Theroux’s *Hotel Honolulu*. Distraught and in mourning for a globalized planet that is fast becoming one big tourist spot, Theroux, mainly known for his nonfictional travel writing, turns to *fiction*, here to the novel form to produce a kind of spatial fix for the endangered profession of travel writing itself. In the age of tourism (read: globalization), all that may be left for the professional or intellectual traveler is the perspective gained from having already traveled. But in that case, why draw the line at reporting what one has actually traveled to in order to see? In *Hotel Honolulu* the hero, himself once a heroic travel writer, but who is now stuck fast working in a fictional, second-rate Hawaiian hotel, becomes the ironic, inverted double of Kaplan in *The Ends of the Earth*. Go as far as you like, you’re still in Hawaii—that is, in America.

The fourth chapter of *Dislocalism* examines the relationship between food and tourism in popular media narratives appearing in magazines such as *Gourmet* (I analyze Ruth Reichl’s *Endless Feasts* [2003], a Modern Library anthology of food-and-travel writing from what were then the last sixty years of the soon to be discontinued magazine’s publication [1941–2009]); in the high gloss magazine *Food & Wine* (issues ranging from 2001 to 2007); and on broadcast television in shows such as Anthony Bourdain’s Food Network series *A Cook’s Tour* (first aired beginning in 2001). Here I demonstrate how such narratives respond to the globalization of cuisine in the U.S., and a resulting if subtle culinary crisis compounded by what has traditionally been seen as the absence of a “true” American cuisine. The crisis is addressed through a recoding of tourism itself as culinary and the seeking out of specifically food-based experiences in places that can be (re)constructed, at least as far as eating is concerned, as “exotic” and “authentic.” With the exotic itself in ever-shorter supply, tourism must now be dislocalized and marketed to Americans as the nontouristic. Food becomes a crucial ingredient here, since it is a form of the exotic that can be reproduced anywhere and that is in itself seemingly innocent of the excesses of tourism. Here, as in the case of travel writing, food-based narratives imagine their audience as white and middle or upper class: the implied other of exotic and foreign cuisines, hungry for their appropriation. But in this version of dislocalism it is not food itself but the manner of finding and eating it, whether in real space and time or in purely fantasized modes of consumption, that precipitates out as American.

Here, as will be obvious, the focus as concerns variations of dislocalism has shifted once more: from the corporate sphere, to, broadly speaking, the humanities academy, to that of writing and the literary as
such, to, finally, the sphere of mass media and consumption. Of course, this is already an overdrawn schema, far too cut and dry. Management theory falls as much within the academy as does the study and criticism of immigrant and ethnic literature, while questions of ethnicity and multiculturalism and their narrativization factor into the dislocalizing of management theory no less than in the case of immigration as contextualized within a field of literary criticism anxious to keep pace with the urgency of its own global imperative. The question of gender and ethnicity in America’s (Americanized) overseas is also of inevitable importance when posing the question of how to rescue travel as experience, and with it the continued viability of the genre of American travel writing. A constant as well here, if often left implicit, is the form of American identity in relation to which this “multicultural” other is itself constituted as other: the white middle- and upper-class subject per se. The latter plays a more explicit role in chapter 3 and does so again in the following chapter. But, having taken this transition as an opportunity to foreground the overarching, complex pattern of organization and differentiation informing Dislocalism as a whole, the question remains: why the focus on tourism and food here? How does the cultural logic specific to dislocalism, that of remobilization/ spatial fixation both work itself through in and ground the choice of object here?

Tourism has, in fact, already made its appearance in chapter 3, in the context of travel and the question of its imaginary remobilization in the face of globalization. Recall that for an inveterate American travel writer such as Paul Theroux, tourism is precisely the nightmare most to be feared, the debased form taken by what had been travel once globalization has completed its conquest of distance and the unknown places on the map. How, from this standpoint, could tourism, as an experience that has purportedly come into its own under globalization and that is already popularly identified as largely American, find itself subject to the fear of obsolescence and the global imperative? What need could it have of dislocalizing itself through the reimagining of itself as a form of mobility with its corresponding spatial fix?

The answer here is too complex for the limits of an introductory chapter and will have to be deferred, in large measure, to chapter 4 itself. But the basic points are these. In the first case, tourism, though lacking the venerable lineage of travel, certainly does have a history that predates globalization. Born, it is safe to say, along with the railroads as a means of mass passenger conveyance, and thrust into adolescence, especially in the U.S., with the automobile and the construction of an interstate highway system, it is only with the introduction of relatively low cost, transoceanic
air travel that it becomes literally capable of globalization. By the time of the 1980s and the entry of globalization into mass awareness in the U.S. as virtually a specter of ultimate, end-game modernity, tourism has as much basis to feel the pressure to adapt, hence to dislocalize, as does the corporate or academic spheres, or, for that matter, travel and travel-writing themselves.

What tourism as a mass experience with a steadily more commercialized dimension had always offered its consumers—tourism being, as its critics have noted, a mode of consuming “other” cultures as such—was, in a word, ease of movement and the chance, above all, to see, to have the direct visual experience of something previously inaccessible to most except the more aristocratic and adventuresome traveler. So, for example, by the mid-nineteenth century a resident of the East Coast or the Midwestern U.S. of sufficient means could travel by rail and see Niagara Falls. By the middle of the next century, the trip could be made just as easily by car. The introduction of mass air travel, from one standpoint, does nothing to change this except to rationalize even further the ease of movement and to extend the range of exotic visibility, so to speak, to more distant sites: now not only Niagara Falls (by now become quaint and second-class) but Machu Picchu and the Pyramids.

But the increasing globalization of tourist routes and destinations also brings with it the creation of tourism as an industry in the fullest sense. In the form of a package, by the 1980s or so it had become possible in the U.S. and Western Europe for anyone with moderate income to buy a tour, say, to see the museums and architectural sites of Northern Italy or to cruise the Caribbean without ever having to do anything but arrive at an airport and a tour bus on time. Here, then, was a globalized tourism. And here, as well, its metaphor of mobility: ease of movement reduced, thanks to industrial rationalization, virtually to zero, with access to the first-hand, direct visibility of the exotic increased to what seemed the entire globe. Tourism at this point can be considered to be the dialectical flipside itself to another harbinger of globalization: the total immobility of the mass unemployed and social marginality on the “planet of slums.”

But along with it comes—as anyone who has experienced such a tour or heard the standard complaints knows—a progressive devaluation of the exotic visual experience, of the actual seeing of the Mona Lisa or the Taj Mahal. Hyper-rationalized ease of movement, combined of course with the massive proliferation of high quality, digitalized images of the exotic sites themselves, circulated via television, websites, social media, and the like, had resulted—in Benjaminian terms—to a shrinkage of the visual “aura” of the touristic site.24
Sensory consumption of the exotic site is not, however, limited to seeing. A significant attraction of the packaged tour was and is, as is also common knowledge, the prearranged meals at restaurants serving typical local foods. This, of course, could often turn out to be a bitter disappointment, but the simple fact of its inclusion in the package was an indication of the possibility of sensory compensation, here in the form of taste or the gustatory, for loss of visual aura. And from here it would not be that long a step to an omission of the rationalized movement altogether, and contenting one’s self with visual reproductions of the exotic site, together, perhaps with some sprinkling of narrative, and—now at the center of the new package—the culinary experience, whether in the form of verbal and visual descriptions of the latter alone, or, more often, combined with recipes for the reproduction of the exotic tastes. Hardly a substitute in all or even most instances for the visually motivated and centered tour, which doubtless makes tourism into what is still a growth industry in the globalized marketplace—but here we have the formula for another increasingly popular commodity: food-based tourism, whether involving literal travel or its purely mediatized representation in print and/or video formats. And here we have, in the consumption of such forms of exotic experience, whether actual eating takes place or not, what is also the formula for the spatial fix in this particular form of dislocalism.

VIII. TO BE CONTINUED
The Turn to Fiction

Broadly speaking, all four chapters examine, within differing sets of cultural and ideological coordinates, the more general phenomenon in which American literary writers, cultural producers, critics, and management theorists work through the rhetorical/ideological logic of an imaginary global remobilization and a simultaneously local spatial fixation—dislocalism—for purposes of securing the U.S. as a global and yet simultaneously nationally and culturally distinctive place. But I also focus throughout the book on another general facet of dislocalism that has particular implications for the humanities and especially for literary/cultural studies—something I refer to here as a “turn to fiction.” So, for example, as noted above, in the case of contemporary management theory the study of literary fictions becomes a way of substituting for a sense of national identity that has ceased to reproduce itself reliably on the level of the capitalist enterprise. The professional managerial class, not surprisingly, prefers its fictions to be solidly “timeless” classics on
the order of Beowulf or Joseph Conrad’s The Secret Sharer, given the more immediate and palpable threat to management represented by the increasingly volatile, transparently fictionalized quality of finance capital itself. Meanwhile, travel writers, anxious, as I have already observed, that the planet may be turning into one big tourist spot, find themselves impelled to turn their narratives into a paradoxical form of travel fiction as another form of spatial fix. Within immigrant/ethnic literary studies, meanwhile, there can be detected a “turn to fiction” of a different but equally ironic nature. Driven by notions of the obsolescence of the literary itself, critics within this field implicitly or explicitly position the literary texts produced by the experience of immigration as “testimonios,” that is, as post-fictional documentations of the hardships and abjections of the lives of immigrants as purportedly globalized subjects. Immigrant narratives themselves thus also become, for the dislocating American critic, something oddly akin to Žižek’s “desert of the real.” In the end, that is, immigrant literary narratives stand in for reality itself, thus preserving their fictionality as if something nonfictional. Dislocating food narratives, meanwhile, often take the form of quasi-fictional narratives as well: the articles and stories collected in Endless Feasts, for example, are presented to the reader as tantamount to classic American literature, and Reichl’s Modern Library collection itself as their would-be literary anthology. In the wake of the globalization of food in the U.S., such narratives compensate by narrating recipes and other accounts of American cuisine within a fictional or quasi-fictional mise-en-scène that itself substitutes for the missing national ingredient.

I should note here that my theory of a “turn to fiction” does not attempt to make any qualitative statements about the political possibilities of the genre of fictional writing per se nor of the literary as opposed to other narrative forms. Rather, I show that, however varied in form, dislocalism’s “turn to fiction” serves an essentially conservative function. Fiction becomes a mimetic equivalent for dislocalism’s contradictory need to situate itself within a global reality that threatens to leave it with no place to stand at all.
CONCLUSION

The “Turn to Fiction”—and “Fictional Capital”—Revisited

The introduction to Dislocalism closes with a brief remark on a “general facet of dislocalism that has particular implications for the humanities and especially for literary/cultural studies” which I refer to as the “turn to fiction.” The latter, as very briefly outlined and previewed there, appears, with greater or lesser emphasis, as a recurrent conceptual and analytical theme throughout all four chapters of the book. But I want to devote this concluding chapter to some further reflections on the turn to fiction insofar as it represents a possible direction and focus for future work. This is both because of what I see in general as the significance of the turn to fiction in relation to globalization and its accompanying crises and because the turn to fiction is relevant to those working with fictional narratives and imaginative texts (across a range of disciplines in the humanities) not only in writing but in the many newer forms of mass, electronic, digital, and visual media. Lastly, there is also the question of the turn to fiction as a dislocalizing strategy in its own right, a way of fending off globalization’s rhetoric of obsolescence.

But I conclude with the turn to fiction also because it gives me the immediate opportunity to return, in a more detailed if still necessarily speculative way, to what I see as a key moment in the theoretical argument developed in chapter 1 as concerns the critical analysis of U.S. management theory and corporate culture more generally. This is the question of the connection between 1) the latter’s dislocalizing resort to fictional narratives themselves as well as to theories of narrative and fiction for purposes of theorizing globalized corporate organizations and 2) the un- or semiconscious dilemma posed to management by “fictitious,” or, as modern critiques of political economy more often term it, “fictional cap-
“Fictional capital” is, as far as I know, not literally part of the conceptual language of management theory. Nor is the connection between the literal “turn to fiction” in U.S. management theory and the turn to something approximating “fictional capital” in its present form within a heavily financialized global capitalism (to be explained in some detail below) explicitly posited—much less able to pass through management’s own ideological filters.

To refer, selectively, to the pertinent section of the first chapter: having explained how, for management theory, “[a]longside helping to guide managers in their organizational decision making by providing ethical templates and by furnishing simple and compelling behavioral models capable of reflecting complex situations, fiction itself becomes a blueprint for organization,” chapter 1 continues:

[I]t is hard to avoid the speculative conclusion here that, however unwittingly, unsystematically, and, so to speak, facing backwards, management theory [has] been driven to formulate or at least to imagine something like the Marxian category of . . . fictional capital. [. . .] [O]ne does not have to be knowledgeable on this point of Marxian critical political-economy to have more than an inkling that, 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, then, as bizarre as this undoubtedly may appear, it is hard to see what alternative remains but to complete the ideological inversion itself 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. (53, 54)

The concluding sentence in the above self-citation, especially in the absence of further argument, leaves the hypothesis of a hyper-fictionalization in a still somewhat precarious position. While I think it is virtually self-evident that a discipline such as management theory cannot, without calling its own raison d’être into question, literally “question the continued viability of global capitalism,” to conclude that the only way it could accommodate the thought of nonviability would be through thinking not only corporate organization but capitalism itself as fictional leaves out a number of other possibilities. Perhaps, for instance, the very
thought of capitalism’s nonviability is not considered for far more elemental reasons than those having to do with disciplinarity. (Although, of course, that does not mean that management theorists may not have sensed quite acutely the fact that crises, even severe ones, have been in the offing.) But, then, how to explain both the continuous alarm-sounding and the continued popularity of corporate lecture-circuit gurus such as Tom Peters and others who employ much the same rhetoric of “now or never”? Perhaps, after all, it is quite possible to be a fervent adherent of a postmodern, myth-empowered “liberation management” or of Drucker’s views on the primacy of the culture of the organization and an unrepentant neoliberal or neo-Keynesian when it comes to charting U.S. capitalism’s sure course into the future. And yet, granting any one of these hypothetical possibilities, the existence of something like a “political unconscious” when it comes to management theory’s need to steer clear of a Lacanian “real” that is, in this case, not only the darker side of globalization but its specific role in fueling, accelerating, and increasing to an almost fantastic degree the volcanic explosiveness of global financialization and hence of capital’s hyper-fictionalization can still be counted as no less plausible than are the above mentioned counterpossibilities. Management theory’s “turn to fiction” still requires some explanation, and even if the references to fiction in volume 3 of Capital and in, say, Sandra Sucher’s Harvard Business School teaching guide Teaching the Moral Leader are as fortuitous and unrelated as the fact that Marx and Sucher have both read Macbeth, management theory’s linking of “fiction” to capital, whatever the context, suggests that the hypothesis advanced rather brusquely in the above passage from chapter 1 opens more doors than it closes.

But if only so as to be able to advance further down the road toward future projects involving critiques of globalization from within (and from the standpoint of) cultural studies, I see it as necessary to clarify further than I have in my brief aside in chapter 1 what is meant by the hyper-fictionalization of capital. This is especially important, given what has become the vastly increased role of finance and financialization in all areas of global social and economic policy, in both rescuing and reimagining the nation itself, in promoting debt as the continued social remedy for everyone and everything from consumers, homeowners, and students to universities and municipalities in the “developed world” and in the widespread emphasis on institutions offering “micro-credit” as a supposed remedy for poverty in the poorest parts of the “underdeveloped” capitalist periphery. All of these social and political ramifications of finance-capital have, obviously, enormous implications for changes in the sphere of the cultural as well, both in practice and in theory. This
is something *Dislocalism* has analyzed in depth in the case of management theory. And it has shown how the turn to fiction in relationship to corporate practices, immigration, travel, and food (in addition to being a conservative strategy for fending off the threat of obsolescence) can be read as symptomatic of the fictionalization of the economy itself (in ways that we shall discuss in more detail below). Given a context in which the humanities suffer from a sense of increasing irrelevance both within and outside the academy, this trend of turning to fiction, stories, and cultural theory at large cannot be ignored and suggests the need for an analysis that connects the questions of politics, economics, and socio-historical contexts to the study of cultural and literary texts. Indeed, the work of critics such as Masao Miyoshi, Lisa Lowe, Cedric Robinson, Fredric Jameson, and others has taken important steps in this direction. In order to progress within this mode of analysis, I will attempt to work out the forms of mediation between the turn to fiction and an increasingly “fictionalized” economy.

Therefore, I will begin with some thoughts on what is meant by the hyper-fictionalization of capital itself, both via a review of the—for our purposes—more pertinent aspects of the concept of (as it is customarily translated) “fictitious capital” in *Capital*, volume 3 and of some of the current theories of the phenomenon in light of the recurrent and, as some would claim, downward spiraling crises of post-Fordism. I will follow these sections with a brief review of one important section of Georg Lukács’s *History and Class Consciousness* on the relationship between reified consciousness, theory, totality, and capitalist crisis. From here, for illustrative purposes that I trust will have become clear, I shift to an abbreviated analysis of the work of management theorist Stephen Denning, author of numerous publications on the role of storytelling in corporate and financial organizations, particularly at the World Bank, where he was a high-ranking official during the mid- to late-1990s; and, finally, again for purposes of illustrating, a critical reading (in relationship to the notion of hyper-fictionalized capital) of Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus’s introduction (“Surface Reading”) to “How We Read Now,” a special 2009 issue of the theoretical and literary/cultural journal, *Representations*.

I want to make it absolutely clear here that my purpose, as throughout the text of *Dislocalism*, in juxtaposing the approach of management theory to narrative, fiction, and culture to that of literary and cultural studies is not to conclude that such convergence is proof that narrative, fiction, and culture have therefore lost all oppositional value and that the work of cultural and literary studies should be limited to social and
economic theory and critique. While there is no doubt that the latter should indeed be a central part of the work of cultural studies, the point of analyzing this convergence has been to demonstrate the historically specific manner, across disciplinary and intellectual boundaries, in which the hyper-fictionalizing of capital has determined dislocalism’s turn to fiction in the neoliberal period.

I. MARX’S CONCEPT OF “FICTIONAL CAPITAL”

The concept of “fictional capital” (“fiktives Kapital” in the original German) does not make its appearance in Marx’s major work until well into its third and final volume, left unfinished and published posthumously in 1894 after undergoing considerable editing at the hands of Engels. It is mentioned repeatedly but sporadically in part five of Capital, volume 3, “The Division of Profit into Interest and Profit of Enterprise,” and, as shall be noted momentarily, using a variety of more or less synonymous terms. Marx first refers to it in chapter 25, entitled simply “Credit and Fictitious Capital,” where it functions, as it often does in Capital, as another term for credit itself, specifying one sense in which the latter can be identified in its relation to—or as itself a paradoxical form of—capital.3

In the subsequent chapters that make up part five of volume 3, Marx also uses, more or less interchangeably, other terms such as “illusory” and “illusion”; “paper duplicates”; “non-existent”; “imaginary”; and even “insane.”4 What makes them interchangeable is, as even a perusal of the chapter titles of part five makes clear, their shared opposition to “real capital,” that is, capital, whether in the form of commodities, money, or means of production, that represents a definite quantum of value in the form of objectified or “dead” labor and that can, via the absorption of additional “living labor” in the form of labor-power, valorize itself yet again and thereby commence or continue to accumulate.

Two further points need to be emphasized here. The first is that, writing at what was still, relative to the present, a phase of overall expansion and growth, here of capitalism’s “first industrial revolution,” Marx clearly perceived the contradictions and crisis-potential latent in “fictional” or “illusory” capital. But he regarded the latter as an inevitable and in this sense perfectly nonillusory aspect of credit itself, a necessary facet of the turnover of industrial capital if it was to continue to expand. The potential for what I have termed, with more than strictly economic realities in mind, hyper-fictionalization—here the failure to convert
fictional back into real capital, about which more, and with reference to more authoritative theories of such failure and its potentially huge contemporary repercussions to follow shortly—is certainly glimpsed by Marx (and Engels). The effects of the great crisis of 1857 can clearly be read in Marx’s caustic references to the illusory and even the insane.

But there are suggestions in volume 3 of Capital—and this is my second point—that Marx attached greater significance to the concept of fictitious or illusory capital than is conveyed by the more or less straightforward concept of credit. These make their appearance in chapter 27, “The Role of Credit in Capitalist Production,” in connection with a series of remarks on credit as a precondition for the formation of joint-stock companies.5 Just after the passage on the transition of the joint-stock company to the form of the cartel or monopoly (“one big joint-stock company with a unified management”) added, presumably, some three decades later by Engels (see note 5) Marx writes:

This is the abolition of the capitalist mode of production within the capitalist mode of production itself, and hence a self-abolishing contradiction, which presents itself prima facie as a mere point of transition to a new form of production. It presents itself as such a contradiction even in appearance. [. . . ] It is private production unchecked by private ownership. (569; my emphasis)

It is exceedingly difficult to connect what Marx is saying here to anything more concrete or conjunctural vis-à-vis its own mid-nineteenth century historical frame of reference, much less our own contemporary moment. But without claiming any special, hidden affinity here between, say, 1857 and 2008, it would also be hard to top the first and last sentences in the above-cited passage as dialectical crystallizations of the panic in the fall of 2008 after the decision to let Lehman Brothers go down and the ensuing decision, in the midst of the Bush–Obama regime change, to nationalize whatever still appeared to be standing on Wall Street—or was it rather to complete the process of letting the big banks inch ever closer to declaring themselves the agents of nationalization, at least when it came to the public coffers? Both sentences can be read both ways. And either way, the contradiction “abolishes” itself by making no effort to present itself as anything else, by merging with its own prima facie appearance—this being the price of now being enabled, if nothing else, to wait things out, to buy time. But to wait for what? No one, as we shall see shortly in the section to follow, really seemed to know. Officially sanctioned economic theory, in the wake of master theorist Greenspan’s remarkable confes-
sion and abdication, also declares itself, in effect, at an end. Recall once more Marx’s words in the passage cited above: that “the abolition of the capitalist mode of production within the capitalist mode of production” is a contradiction “that presents itself as such a contradiction even in appearance.” Here then we have a contradiction between the reality of “abolition” (panic, meltdown, crisis) and the reality that capitalism somehow continues to be capitalism even when it “abolishes” itself by socializing huge volumes of private capital. “Even in appearance”: is not that as good as if to say that the contradiction here is also, unabashedly, that between the reality of abolition and the abolition of reality? Capitalism becomes, that is, a kind of fiction—but not as opposed to its reality; rather, a fiction that is intrinsically an essential part of that reality, as a real fiction.

II. “HYPER-FICTIONALIZATION,” OR REAL FICTIONAL CAPITAL

If, by now, all of this is itself beginning to sound too abstract, then consider the following brief analysis, excerpted from a longer piece written by the Marxist economist (as well as art critic and historian) Paul Mattick Jr. in October, 2008 for the Brooklyn Rail. Writing just before the passage of the second version of the so-called TARP (“Troubled Asset Relief Program”) bill, initially voted down by the U.S. House of Representatives in September 2008, Mattick writes that if the House does finally approve spending the “trillion dollars or so that you might have fantasized would some day pay for new schools, healthcare, or even just bridges that don’t fall down” then

[t]his will be money spent not for things or services but simply to replace some other money, now departed from this world of woe. Or, more accurately, money that people thought was real has turned out to be imaginary; to deal with this, more imaginary money—money that future economic activity is supposed to generate—will take its place. Such a radical detachment of money from anything but itself may be hard to grasp, but it’s the key to understanding what’s going on. [my emphasis]

Although Mattick refers to “imaginary money” rather than to “fictional capital,” it is clear from the logic of his argument here—and in the three following pieces for the Brooklyn Rail—that this is synonymous with the elaboration of Marx’s theory of fictitious capital that I have referred to as
hyper-fictionalization. The latter, to repeat, refers to a threshold of capitalist crisis that, having been reached, makes it impossible to reconvert fictional back into real capital through the accumulation of new masses of surplus value. Existing stocks of fictional capital, in whatever form (for stocks and other forms of financialized goods such as securities, credit default swaps, etc., can still, up to point, be sold and converted back into money or means of production, or even reinvested) face the imminent threat of devalorization. As Mattick puts it in the conclusion to “Up in Smoke”:

What will the financiers invest in, if they become solvent again? This is the big question that is neither asked nor answered. It’s just assumed that the natural course of prosperous events will resume. If debt expansion could bring prosperity, however, we’d already be living in a golden age. The problem is that all the money that has sloshed around the world for the last thirty years [i.e., since the crisis and collapse of Fordism] has led less to growth in what economists, in times like these, like to call “the real economy” — the economy of production, distribution, and consumption of actual goods and services — than to the expansion of the imaginary economy whose real nature is currently becoming visible. (4; my emphasis)

Hyper-fictionalization also reveals itself in the numbers themselves. See, for example, the original English version (2009) of economist Robert Brenner’s prologue to the Spanish translation of his 2006 book The Economics of Global Turbulence. In a section of this study entitled—appropriately enough, given our general focus here on fictional capital—“Speculation Dependent Accumulation,” Brenner recounts what very nearly became, in 1998–2000, a crisis of the proportions of 2008, when the fallout of the Southeast Asian collapse of 1997–98 hit the U.S. economy. Revisiting the government bailout of the gigantic hedge fund, Long Term Credit Management, Brenner writes: “What happened next . . . could not have revealed more graphically and definitively the extraordinary degree to which an increasingly enfeebled real economy had come to depend on waves of runaway speculation, consciously nurtured by US economic authorities” (27). Brenner details the succession of measures, including successive reductions of the Federal Funds rate and even (shades of things to come) inducements to the “Government Sponsored Entities” Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac to increase their loans to U.S. homebuyers by enormous amounts. “In view of such powerful and blatant official support for the stock market—and the implicit assurances that lay behind it,” Brenner continues:
It should have surprised no one that share prices took off as they had not done since the 1920s, severing all connection with the real economy, its actual growth and profitability. In the brief period between the Fed’s interest rate reductions of autumn 1998 and spring 2000, the S&P 500 share index recovered the ground it had lost since the previous summer and shot up by a further 30 per cent, its price-earnings ratio reaching 35:1, the highest in all of US history. By the first quarter of 2000, the total value of the equities of US non-financial corporations, their market capitalization, had reached $15.6 trillion, more than triple its level of $4.8 trillion in 1994, with the consequence that, in that brief interval, the ratio between the market capitalization of non-financial corporations and non-financial corporate GDP leaped from 1.3:1 to 3:1, more than 75 per cent above the highest level previously reached during the post-war period (1.7:1 in 1968). This was so, despite the fact that, in that six-year period, after tax non-financial corporate profits (net of interest) had risen by only 41.2 per cent. By contrast, it had taken fourteen years, from 1980 to 1994, for the ratio of non-financial corporate market capitalization to GDP to increase from 0.9:1 to 1.3, even though non-financial corporate profits had risen by 160 per cent in the intervening period. [my emphasis]

Can one, in the end, make real sense of figures such as these and not at least begin to reflect again, even if from an angle not precisely articulated by its author, on what is meant by “the abolition of the capitalist mode of production within the capitalist mode of production itself”?

Hyper-fictionalized capital has other critical analysts as well that, were a review of this concept within contemporary critical theory our central purpose here, would certainly have to be mentioned and carefully assessed: from David Harvey, who, for example, in his 2010 address to the World Social Forum makes repeated mention of the “fictions” that have characterized asset market and financial affairs over the last two decades (1) to the concise but theoretically rigorous exposition of fictional capital’s central and unprecedented role and effects within the current crisis in Norbert Trenkle’s 2008 “Tremors on the Global Market.” As Trenkle as well as Brenner and Mattick is careful to remind us, no matter how crucial financialization and its ever more self-endangering resort to the hyper-fictionalization of capital become in the drive to reinflate “bubblenomics” (Brenner) each time one of its speculative balloons (third world debt, informational technology’s “new economy,” real estate) bursts, we are still left with the question of what enabled the crisis to be evaded so effectively for most of what is now the thirty year interregnum called post-Fordism? And this is not, moreover, only a question
of economics—which brings us back now to the turn to fiction once more and how fiction, in keeping with the specific ideological structures of dislocalism, comes, as one might say, to coincide with the real for want of the real.

III. CRISIS AS FICTION, OR, FROM REIFICATION TO STORYTELLING AT THE WORLD BANK

In *History and Class Consciousness*, written in the early 1920s in the wake of the First World War, Georg Lukács observes as follows:

> The superior strength of true, practical class consciousness lies in the ability to look beyond the divisive symptoms of the economic process to the unity of the total social system underlying it. In the age of capitalism it is not possible for the total system to become directly visible in external phenomena. For instance, the economic basis of a world crisis is undoubtedly unified and its coherence can be understood. But its actual appearance in time and space will take the form of a disparate succession of events in different countries at different times. . . .13

Lukács’s reference to the appearance of the “disparate” brings up the theoretical concept for which *History and Class Consciousness* is best known, namely that of “reification”: the necessary fragmentation, isolation, and alienating objectification of reality as perceived by the social consciousness of bourgeois society, extrapolated by Lukács from Marx’s theory of the fetishism of the commodities. The connection drawn by Lukács here between reification, totality, and crisis turns out, as I think can be demonstrated in shorthand here, to be a key, but thus far neglected link between fictional capital in its crisis form (hyper-fictionalization) and the turn to fiction—as well as between both of these and dislocalism itself.14 “The further the economic crisis of capitalism advances,” Lukács continues a few lines further on:

> the more clearly this unity in the economic process becomes comprehensible to practice. It was there, of course, in so-called periods of normalcy, too, and was therefore visible from the class standpoint of the proletariat, but the gap between appearance and ultimate reality was too great for that unity to have any practical consequences for proletarian action.

> In periods of crisis the position is quite different. The unity of the economic process now moves within reach. So much so that even capital-
Lukács might very well have had someone like Max Weber or Georg Simmel, or—leaping ahead, anachronistically, a decade and some—one like Keynes in mind here when speaking of “capitalist theory.” But in what sense could it be said—if at all—that “unity . . . now moves within reach” vis-à-vis “capitalist theory,” in the case of the long crisis of post-Fordism and the increasing domination of financialization and of hyper-fictionalized capital within it? Here, keeping in mind the sheer impenetrability and hyper-complexity of a financialized capitalism that leads capitalist theory in the case of management into its turn to fiction, might we not attribute to the dominant, conscious social representatives of capital what is rather a tendency toward the total abdication of theory as such? Is there any longer a capitalist theory properly speaking except the one that must “remain wholly untouched” by a global crisis as it has evolved and matured within the specific dynamics of post-Fordism? A crisis that can only give way to a “speculation dependent accumulation” (in Brenner’s understated expression), that is, more precisely, to a fully realized “abolition of the capitalist mode of production within the capitalist mode of production” (Marx). And would this amount to anything more than a consciousness of the crisis of hyper-fictionalized capital, reified in the sense of remaining “wholly untouched” by theory itself and putting in the latter’s place what has been reduced, finally, to nothing more than the conscious forms or mediations of hyper-fictionalized capital—that is, to fictions themselves?

Of course, such thinking must remain entirely hypothetical, at this point. With it, however, we come back around full circle to dislocalism in its various manifestations—first and most obviously to management theory again, but with, I think, a more mediated explanation for the turn to fiction—this genre’s dislocalizing form of “spatial fix”—as inseparable from the hyper-fictionalization of capital in the epoch of globalization.

So as to illustrate, in passing and symptomatically, the idea that the turn to fiction in management theory is also a turn to fiction as a surrogate for theory, I want to make a few observations here concerning the work of Stephen Denning, an author, lecturer, and management consultant, whose books include The Springboard (2000), The Leader’s Guide to Storytelling (2005), and The Leader’s Guide to Radical Management (forthcoming) as well as a novel and a book of poetry. A high-ranking official for years at the World Bank, and at one point its program director for Africa from 1996 to 2000, Denning directed the Bank’s program in
“Knowledge Management.” In a 2005 publication, *Storytelling in Organizations: How Storytelling is Transforming 21st Century Organizations and Management*, edited and co-authored by Denning together with, inter alia, Laurence Prusak, former high-ranking executive at IBM, and John Seely Brown, former chief scientist at Xerox, Denning tells how, beginning in the mid-1990s when the fortunes of the World Bank, a notoriously “change-resistant” organization, were in rapid decline, he was given the supposedly broom-closet type assignment of doing something about “information management” at the Bank. He says: “The scene had changed. Now private banks had emerged and they were lending far more to developing countries than the World Bank could ever lend. And they were doing it faster and cheaper and with less conditionality than the World Bank” (102). He goes on to say, “There was even a worldwide campaign to close the World Bank down. There was a political slogan chanted by protesters, ‘Fifty years is enough!’ So our future as a lending organization was in question. Simply becoming more efficient wasn’t going to solve our problems” (102). He began to test his idea that the Bank should not remain a straight lending institution but become an institution of knowledge management. Denning reports that he tried “rational” arguments but they were not working and no one was listening to him.

But a series of happy accidents led him eventually to the idea of storytelling as a highly efficient mode both of storing and transmitting information and knowledge and of bringing about institution-wide change. By 2000, the year he left the Bank for better things, it had a “Knowledge Management” division in place, and even the Bank’s president lost no opportunity to tell the various change-catalyzing, so-called springboard stories (among them the “Zambia,” the “Madagascar” and the “Pakistani Highway” anecdotes). The story that began to change the minds of the World Bank executives was the Zambia story:

In June 1995 a health worker in a tiny town of Zambia logged on to the website for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, Georgia, and got the answer to a question on how to treat malaria. (Now, this in 1995 in a tiny town not the capital. Zambia was one the poorest countries in the world.) But the most important part of this picture for us in the World Bank is this: that World Bank is not in the picture. We don’t have a know-how organized so we could share our knowledge with the millions of people in the world who make decisions about poverty. (104)
With this story, there began, to hear Denning tell it, the shift in the World Bank that reshaped the institution. To hear Denning tell it, the World Bank’s *esprit de corps* had undergone a complete overhaul, and storytelling had everything to do with it.

But storytelling has an implied other here. In a section of Denning’s chapter in *Storytelling in Organizations* (“Using Narrative as a Tool for Change”) subtitled “Unlearning What I Knew about Storytelling” Denning starts by confessing to surprise at

telling you about it [storytelling] at all. That’s because 5 years ago, when I stumbled upon this, I knew that knowledge was solid and objective and abstract and analytic. And I knew that something like storytelling was nebulous and ephemeral and subjective and unscientific. I knew that all of these qualities of knowledge—solid, objective, abstract, analytic—were the good qualities. And I knew that all of the qualities of storytelling—nebulous and ephemeral and subjective and unscientific—were very bad. Over the next couple of years I learned how wrong I was. In effect, I had to unlearn a great deal of what I thought I knew about organization and storytelling. (99)

Could it be, in fact, that Denning had to “unlearn” the assumption that storytelling was, in fact, “subjective and unscientific”—and that, like “knowledge,” it too had its “solid and objective” aspect? Not at all. “From a strictly rationalist perspective,” he writes on the following page about attempting to convince the World Bank to adopt knowledge management, “the situation [in 1996] was hopeless. But a strictly rationalist perspective is an inadequate way of understanding organizational realities” (100).

One must remind oneself that this is a (former) high-ranking official of the World Bank. Of course, not all “rationalist perspective” is to be dropped in favor of the “subjective and the unscientific.” In the Preface to *Storytelling in Organizations*, Denning, here writing more self-consciously on behalf of the other contributors to the volume (included among whom is the mathematician and computer scientist John Seely Brown), writes that “in promoting the cause of narrative, we’re obviously not opposed to science. Nor are we proposing to abandon analysis. Where science and analysis can make progress and make a useful contribution, we should use them. Where they can’t or don’t, they should step aside and let narrative contribute” (xii). But, to hear Denning tell it, “science and analysis”
apparently had to step aside in the mid to late 1990s to pull the Bank out of its doldrums. The concluding chapter to the volume, also authored by Denning (“The Role of Narrative in Organizations”) goes so far as to draw up a warning against the “enemies of storytelling”: none other than Plato, Aristotle (who, we are told, “helped implement much of the intellectual agenda of The Republic”), and Descartes, the originator of “Scientism.”  

It would be a fallacy, of course, to regard Denning’s outright call for storytelling to replace or at least take priority over objectivity and analysis as typical of capitalist theory in the age of bubblenomics. Recall, however, that, at least as concerns management theory, this privileging of narrative and fiction has solid academic credentials. (Curiously, Denning, unlike Peters and the various management theorists cited and discussed in chapter 1, insists that to accomplish their task, stories must both be “true” and have “happy endings” [121–23]). But, while outwardly a caricature, given what counts as respectable, credentialed capitalist theory, whether in economics departments or in the pages of the Wall Street Journal, the New York Times, and the Financial Times, and the general inability—or refusal—to explain, for example, how it is that the world of international finance could have accorded to Alan Greenspan an unquestionable theoretical authority, Denning’s outright case for storytelling over theory is more like a collective self-caricature. It is as sure a symptom as any other of how the quest to theorize hyper-fictionalized capital without posing the question of the whole, now more plainly exposed than ever by the evolving crisis of post-Fordism, ends, whether explicitly or not, by theorizing nothing but the reality of the fictional.

IV. THE WAY WE REIFY NOW

But what, then of the theory of fiction in the hermeneutic sense—necessarily inclusive here of the many cultural genres of fiction as something read or simply interpreted—given what is, as I have speculated, the pressure to abandon theory itself, leaving only fiction in its place? Let us, for the sake of maximum clarification here, quickly retrace our steps to my hypothesis regarding what has, in the post-Fordist historical context that has generated dislocalism per se, become the specific dynamic interrelation linking systemic crisis, capitalism as social totality, and reification. History and Class Consciousness, to repeat, observes that under the exceptional conditions of capitalist crisis, the tendency of consciousness in its scientific, theoretical form (initially independent of the class-belonging of its
subject) to remain effectively blind to the whole of society and to focus on the isolated facts and experiences that make up the multiple branches of knowledge and their many corresponding theories is interrupted. By placing in question, inescapably, the continued existence and survival of the “economic process” of capitalism, the “unity of the latter moves within reach,” both to practice and in theory—so much so that capitalist theory cannot remain untouched by it, thereby becoming forced, if only momentarily, to confront its fragmented, reified configuration. This assumes, however—correctly for the historical period in which Lukács formulated the theory of reification—that crisis itself, as a crisis of the reproduction of capital as the dominant relation of society, is temporary. Society then resumes its normal mode of self-reproduction as do the reified forms of consciousness that are an essential part of such reproduction.

But the turn, by fairly wide consensus, to a financialized, speculation-dominated form of capitalism after the end of the Fordist boom and the onset of a long period of decline in the real economy accompanied by the periodic rises and falls of “bubblenomics” creates the conditions for a crisis, or a series of crises, of a new type. With globalization now a virtual fait accompli and the hyper-fictionalization of capital becoming, progressively, the only remaining means for prolonging any semblance of continuous self-reproduction, crisis is never fully overcome. It remains periodic only in appearance, and looking transparently—to those willing or able to see—like the “abolition of the capitalist means of production within the capitalist means of production” the hyper-fictionalization of capital is bound to reach the point at which the social whole that is constituted and reproduced through capital assumes necessarily the appearance either of the totality that it is or—as its dislocalized form of reification—a real fiction.

Thus far I have developed the turn to fiction concerning hyper-fictionalization in relationship to management theory, and were it my purpose now to continue rethinking the other chapters of Dislocalism from this same vantage point, I would be drawn to reflect again, most immediately, on the question of “testimonio” as “real fiction” in the prelude to the analysis of dislocalizing readings of immigrant fictions in chapter 2, and perhaps subsequently to the problem of uncertain boundaries between the real and the fictional in the dislocalized travel writings that are the subject of chapter 3. And in the case of chapter 4, I would refocus on the “real fiction” that now, in certain mediatised contexts, has become the recipe itself as a form of reading/watching for dislocalized gourmets.

But, taking the final pages of this conclusion as an opportunity for surveying the possible ramifications of fiction in the theoretical context
I have tried to map out here—very freely and still inconclusively—for the critical analysis of literary/cultural fictions, I have decided to venture some critical observations on “The Way We Read Now,” a recent special issue of the journal *Representations.* Clearly intended as a manifesto of sorts, the issue consists of seven articles, including a programmatic introduction by editors Stephen Best and Sharon Marcus. “The Way We Read Now” generated considerable notoriety and controversy by framing itself as simultaneously an ironic sort of commemoration of and simultaneously an organized, deliberate repudiation of Fredric Jameson’s *The Political Unconscious* and the method of “symptomatic reading” as purportedly codified by Jameson’s book, first published roughly a generation prior to “The Way We Read Now.”

Best and Marcus entitle their introduction “Surface Reading,” a practice they openly counterpose to Jamesonian symptomatic reading and to the influence of the two theoretical discourses that epitomize the idea and practice of depth-based interpretation and, as they say, “hermeneutics of suspicion”: Marxism and Freudian psychoanalysis.

What, then, apart from the self-proclaimed nemesis of symptomatic, depth-based readings, is surface reading? According to a rapid survey of Best and Marcus’s quite lucid overture, surface reading is “looking at rather than seeing through,” surface itself being “neither hidden [n]or hiding” (9). Paraphrasing contributor Anne Anlin Cheng—who writes about architectural “surfaces”—they write that “underneath surface there is only more surface” (8–9). “Attention to surface” is equated with a “practice of critical description,” according to which “what . . . theory brings to texts (form, structure, meaning) is already present in them (11). “The purpose of criticism is thus a relatively modest one: to indicate what the text says about itself” (ibid.) For Marcus herself, writing in her 2007 book *Between Women,* surface reading is termed “just [that is, “only”] reading.” “Just reading,” write Best and Marcus, “sees ghosts as presences, not absences, and lets ghosts be ghosts, instead of saying what they are ghosts of” (13). Best and Marcus strike a kind of alliance at one point—one may well wonder whether reciprocated—with the so-called “New Formalism,” and its ideal, according to Marjorie Levinson’s review of the trend in a recent issue of *PMLA,* of “learned submission” to the text, a “bathing” in the “artwork’s disinterested purposelessness” (Best and Marcus, 14). Best and Marcus make the invocation of Levinson’s work an entrée of sorts for invoking the authority of Adorno, especially the essays from *Notes to Literature,* “Commitment” and “The Essay as Form.” Citing the latter—“thought’s depth depends on how deeply it penetrates its object, not on the extent to which it reduces it to some-

thing else”—becomes a justification for affirming Adorno’s advocacy of “an immersive mode of reading that does not need to assert its distance and difference from its object” (ibid.). Adorno, that is, becomes here the champion of “surface” and an ally in the abandonment of the Jamesonian interpretive model with its Marxian and psychoanalytical “depth” hermeneutics.20

And so on. I have (so far) purposefully left out of this abbreviated remapping of “Surface Reading” Best and Marcus’s more explicit references to politics, ideology, and even capital itself so as not to clutter unnecessarily here what is already quite a distinct picture—a picture, namely, of what reading, or a theory of reading would become if all connections between what is read and what is not literally present in what is read could somehow be erased. “Surface” here wastes no time at all in becoming a tautology, but with a twist: it becomes what we would read if reading were all there were, as though one could read without thinking. It is, in the world of “Surface Reading,” as though reading, even “just reading,” were not already premised on depth, if only in the sense of distinguishing between representans and representandum. For we certainly cannot read without posing the question of the possibility of difference from what is—from the “surface” as that which is not read. We cannot read, that is, without repeatedly posing the question, the possibility of the negative.

But what, for me, makes “Surface Reading”—and “The Way We Read Now” in toto, as, I think, quite well captured in Best and Marcus’s introduction—so redolent, indeed so symptomatic of the new ideological inflection of “real fiction” as reification itself in the moment of hyper-fictionalized capital fully comes into view only when the authors themselves characterize the “now” in the title of their collective project. The reader will, I hope, forgive a citation in full of the pertinent passage:

In the last decade or so, we have been drawn to modes of reading that attend to the surfaces of texts rather than plumb their depths. Perhaps this is because, at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, so much seems to be on the surface. “If everything were transparent, then no ideology would be possible, and no domination either,” wrote Fredric Jameson in 1981, explaining why interpretation could never operate on the assumption that “the text means just what it says.” The assumption that domination can do its work when only veiled, which may have once sounded almost paranoid, now has a nostalgic, even utopian ring to it. Those of us who cut our intellectual teeth on deconstruction, ideology critique, and the hermeneutics of suspicion have often found those demys-
tifing protocols superfluous in an era when images of torture at Abu Ghraib and elsewhere were immediately circulated on the internet; the real-time coverage of Hurricane Katrina showed in ways that required little explication the state’s abandonment of its African American citizens; and many people instantly recognized as lies political statements such as “mission accomplished.” Eight years of the Bush regime may have hammered home the point that not all situations require the subtle ingenuity associated with symptomatic reading, and they may also have inspired us to imagine that alongside nascent fascism there might be better ways of thinking and being simply there for the taking, in both the past and the present. We find ourselves the heirs of Michel Foucault, skeptical about the very possibility of radical freedom and dubious that literature or its criticism can explain our oppression or provide the keys to our liberation. Where it had become common for literary scholars to equate their work with political activism, the disasters and triumphs of the last decade have shown that literary criticism alone is not sufficient to effect change. This is in turn raises the question of why literary criticism matters if it is not political activism by another name. . . .” (1–2)

The logic of what is being said here, unless I am mistaken, boils down to this: Everything is transparent after all, right there on the “surface.” What is transparent is sheer domination and lies, making the very theory of ideology—another “depth” hermeneutic after all—superfluous, and along with it, the critique of ideology as well, to which Best and Marcus appear, in some idiosyncratic way to have equated “literary criticism.” As “heirs of Foucault,” they/we must be “skeptical of the possibility of radical freedom” (2) (This same admission is repeated is less equivocal terms on p. 16: As they say: “We also detect in current criticism a skepticism about the very project of freedom, or about any kind of transcendental value we might use to justify intellectual work.”) They ask why then does “literary criticism matter if it is not political activism by another name”? Here too the answer comes only toward the end of “Surface Reading”:

Surface reading, which strives to describe texts accurately, might easily be dismissed as politically quietist, too willing to accept things as they are. We want to reclaim from this tradition the accent on immersion in texts (without paranoia or suspicion about their merit or value) for we understand that attentiveness to the artwork is itself a kind of freedom. [...] Criticism that valorizes the freedom of the critic has often assumed that an adversarial relation to the object of criticism is the only way for the critic to free himself from the text’s deceptive, ideological surface and uncover
the truth that the text conceals. We want to suggest that, in relinquishing the freedom dream that accompanies the work of demystification, we might be groping toward some equally valuable, if less glamorous, states of mind. (16–17)

There is scant indication anywhere in “Surface Reading”—or in the essays that make up “The Way We Read Now”—of much concern for a theory of the deeper, social and economic realities that might explain why it is that “at the end of the first decade of the twenty-first century, so much seems to be on the surface.” For that, if one's field is literary and cultural criticism, one would have to turn to critics such as Fredric Jameson among others. Although they do not say so outright, theory itself, along with the “freedom dream” and uncovering “the truth that the text conceals” if it happens to require an “adversarial relation” on the part of the critic would be yet another casualty of “surface reading.” Or rather, theory, to find its way into the “way we read now” according to Best, Marcus and co., would need to have already found a place for itself on the surface—as a part of the reified, post-Fordist, dislocalized landscape where, alongside hyper-fictionalized capital itself and the society that rests on it, it too would line up with its putative objects as nothing more than a real fiction.
Introduction


3. “The problems which had dominated the critique of capitalism before the war, and which the Golden Age [from World War II to 1973, not the beginnings but the apogee of Fordism] had largely eliminated for a generation—‘poverty, mass unemployment, squalor, instability’—reappeared after 1973. Growth was, once again, interrupted by severe slumps, as distinct from ‘minor recessions,’ in 1974–75, 1980–82, and at the end of the 1980s.” Eric Hobsbawm, The Age of Extremes (New York: Vintage, 1996), 406. Meanwhile, the financial crisis that began in 2007 with the massive default on subprime mortgages, threatening a genuinely global collapse of banking with the bankruptcy of Lehman Brothers in September 2008, certainly has appeared, despite state-funded rescue packages, to leave the world’s political and business elites without a clue as to how to avert a truly global crisis of unprecedented severity. This has, to say the least, made the real contradictions of globalization far more difficult to conceal. Indeed, as this crisis has unfolded, the slogans and official truths of neoliberalism, globalization chief among them, became, at one point almost overnight, the targets of officially sanctioned skepticism and anger. One must be extremely cautious, even and especially when day-to-day events appear to warrant them, not to deliver eulogies that may turn out to be premature. Nor must one lose sight of the fact that, in the view of many economists, not all of them on the left, the crisis at one point dubbed The Great Recession has its roots in the breakup of Fordism more than a generation ago, and in the transition to the finance-driven economy that itself gave us neoliberalism and ushered in what passes for the heroic age of globalization. The point, for purposes of the present work, is to analyze—with an eye to critique—cultural and intellectual phenomena beginning in the 1980s, in which globalization, as measured against the needs of shoring up Americanism, has exerted the latent force
of a crisis all along. What is certain about the chain of events beginning in 2007 is, in a sense, how powerfully they corroborate the “globalization anxiety” of dislocalism. The utopian universalism heralded by the neoliberal prophets of globalization beginning nearly three decades ago certainly now reveals more of its sinister and dystopian side than most could then have imagined. Globalization itself, it seems, has run the risk of becoming a casualty of its own master-narrative: has not it too appeared to be threatened with obsolescence?


6. I should also mention here that my work differs from scholarship on globalization that attempts a critical understanding of globalization as a process and that nevertheless regards that process as a fait accompli and then proceeds to map its effects on culture and its other quotidian realities. Here I have in mind especially work by critics such as Mike Featherstone, though many others could be mentioned. See, for example, John Tomlinson, Globalization and Culture (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999) and Cultural Imperialism: An Introduction (London: Continuum, 2001); and Jan Nederveen Pieterse, Globalization and Culture: Global Melange (Lanham, MD: Rowman Littlefield, 2009).

7. Not least—if not only—because of the hyperabstraction and strangely neutralizing physicalism of the term “globalization” itself. As Justin Rosenberg writes: “The word ‘globalization’ is a geographical term, denoting a process over time of spatial change—the process of becoming worldwide. Twist and turn this word as you will, space, time and a reference to the shape of the planet are its only intrinsic concerns. Prima facie, it contains nothing else which can be drawn upon in order to explain any real-world phenomena it is used to describe.” “Globalization Theory: A Post Mortem,” International Politics 42 (2005): 11.

8. Studies of globalization have come to house discussions of contemporary politics, economics, culture,finance, technology, and so forth, with an increased emphasis on the “corporatization” of institutions. The term “global” thus comes to describe those institutions and institutional practices—such as global corporations—that stretch beyond the limits of a bounded national space. The term “transnational” functions in a similar way. “Global” is also sometimes used interchangeably with the term “cosmopolitan,” especially when qualifying groups of people. In “The Vanguard of Globalization,” James Hunter and Joshua Yates describe as “cosmopolitan” those elites that “travel the world . . . and see themselves as ‘global citizens’ who happen to carry an American passport” rather than as “U.S. citizens who happen to work in a global organization” (355–56). Timothy Brennan explains that in “marked contrast to the past, the term [“cosmopolitan”] has become less an analytical category than a normative projection complementing at once celebratory claims and despairing rec-
ognitions: the death of the nation-state, transculturation (rather than a merely one-sided assimilation), cultural hybridity (rather than a simplistic contrast between the foreign and the indigenous)” (At Home in the World, 2). Another closely related term is “glocal.” Used in different contexts, it generally refers to the way that local places are affected by global policies. Thus, cultural studies of local communities become a way of measuring how the global influences them. In “Glocal Knowledges: Agency and Place in Literary Studies” Robert Eric Livingston writes that understanding the “scenarios of globalization . . . requires resisting the impulse to set global and local into immediate opposition. Their intertwining may be more helpfully understood by what Japanese marketing consultants have termed dochakula, “glocalization” (148). Livingston argues that as opposed to the terms global and local, glocal emphasizes “constant, often conflictual, working and reworking of practices” (149).

9. Think here, for example, of the incorporation of the former Soviet bloc into a globalized, “free-market” economy, and the resulting collapse, especially in the Balkans, into civil war, “ethnic cleansing,” and the formation of microstates.


14. Questions such as who and what “Americans” and “America” are have never been simple. Benedict Anderson, in Imagined Communities (1983), has already shown the problems in designating the U.S. as “America.” Anderson argues that the geographical closeness between the centers of the original thirteen colonies, along with their tight-knit connections via print and commerce, allowed the U.S. to establish a version of nationalism different from that of South America. This also helped the U.S. to “eventually [succeed] in appropriating the title of ‘Americans’” (64). Anderson further shows that despite the tight connections between the centers, the “non-absorption” of Canada along with the “rapid expansion of the western frontier” serve as reminders that nationalism in the U.S., or what can be termed the project of “Americanization,” was never completed (64).

15. Yet, as David Harvey has noted, the U.S. “would not have been able to impose the forms of globalization that have come down to us without abundant support from a wide variety of quarters and places.” He nevertheless maintains that “globalization is undoubtedly the outcome of a geopolitical crusade waged largely by the U.S.” Spaces of Hope, 69, 68.


17. See, for example, Bauman’s Liquid Modernity (London: Polity, 2000).

19. This seemingly *sui generis* anxiety of obsolescence clearly has its extrinsic, fully objective basis, given the ways administrative budget cuts and restructuring have increasingly shifted priorities toward nonhumanistic disciplines such as business and the sciences. So, for example, in the words of Grant Farred, “the susceptibility [of the humanities] to corporatization includes . . . not only the ‘streamlining’ or ‘upgrading’ of academic or bureaucratic functions in the university but the ‘restructuring of academic curricula’ themselves.” Here of course such restructuring is, rightly, regarded as something that the humanities must resist.


21. See here again the previously cited work by American studies critics such as Rowe, Kaplan, and Pease.

22. Brazil, Russia, India, and China.

23. The title of Kaplan’s widely read 1994 *Atlantic Monthly* article (and, subsequently, a book of essays), which became a manifesto of sorts for neoconservatives such as Samuel Huntington and Francis Fukuyama.


Chapter 1

1. Accounts of globalization, whether subscribed to by university administrations or by the humanities themselves, essentially function as narratives of obsolescence. In the Introduction, I have cited Evan Watkins, who in his *Throwaways* (1993) explains how the concept of the “obsolete” is itself the necessary creation of the discourse of the “new.” The rhetoric of obsolescence suggests that entire institutions can be rendered ineffective if they do not produce work useful in the context of globalization.


3. At the same time, it is also important to note here that this inverse mirroring of business and the humanities is an uneven one. While, spurred on by globalization, management theorists are turning to scholarship by critics such as Jameson, Derrida, and Lyotard, we have yet to see major literary and cultural theorists taking a serious interest in management theory *qua* theory. And as literary/cultural theorists engage with issues of economics and business, their work essentially retains a focus on culture and the cultural.

4. Though Tom Peters has some detractors in management circles, his ideas have influence and are in perfect congruity with the ways that organization studies and
management theory in general has seen a turn to issues of culture and postmodernism.

5. This comment appears in Tom Peters’s biography on his website and in virtually every biographical blurb publicizing his books and speaking engagements. http://www.tompeters.com/toms_world/press_kit/who_is.php.


10. Here, of course, I can only touch on a question too complex and wide-ranging for me to do full justice to in this space. See, foremost in this respect, the well-known arguments concerning globalization, capital, and space in the works of David Harvey, especially The Limits to Capital (1982/2006); The Condition of Postmodernity (1989); Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography (2001); and A Brief History of Neoliberalism (2005). See also, for an analysis that, although its terminology is not mine here, closely parallels and argues in much greater detail for the theory sketched out above, Bob Jessop’s “What Follows Neo-liberalism? The Deepening Contradictions of US Domination and the Struggle for a New Global Order,” chapter 4 in Political Economy and Global Capitalism: The 21st Century, Present and Future, ed. Robert Albritton, Bob Jessop, and Richard Westra (London: Anthem Press, 2007). See especially the section of this chapter entitled “The Ecological Dominance of Capitalism vis-à-vis World Society,” where Jessop writes as follows: “one could argue that the ecological dominance of capitalism is closely related to the extent to which its internal competition, internal complexity and loose coupling, capacity for reflexive self-organization, scope for time-space distanciation and compression, externalization of problems, and hegemonic capacities can be freed from confinement within limited ecological spaces policed by another system (such as a political system segmented into mutually exclusive sovereign territories). This is where globalization, especially in its neo-liberal form, promotes the relative ecological dominance of the capitalist economic system by expanding the scope for accumulation to escape such political constraints. Neo-liberalism promotes the opening of the world-market and reduces the frictions introduced by national ‘power containers’” (81). See also, for a fuller elaboration of this theoretical argument, Jessop’s The Future of the Capitalist State (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002.) On a more general plane see also Zygmunt Bauman’s many writings on globalization, including Globalization: The Human Consequences (Cambridge: Polity, 1998), especially chapter 3, “After the Nation-State—What?” (55–76), in which he develops the theoretical distinction between universalization and globalization, given what he terms the “extraterritoriality of capital.” “The very distinction between the internal and global market, or more generally between the ‘inside’ and the ‘outside’ of the state,” writes Bauman, “is exceedingly difficult to maintain in any but
the most narrow, ‘territory and population policing’ sense” (65). He continues: “Due to the unqualified and unstoppable spread of free trade rules, above all the free movement of capital and finances, the ‘economy’ is progressively exempt from political control . . .” (66).

11. “Thus, while capital must on one side strive to tear down every spatial barrier to intercourse, i.e., to exchange, and conquer the whole earth, it strives on the other side to annihilate this space with time, i.e., to reduce to a minimum the time spent in motion from one place to another. The more developed the capital, therefore, the more extensive the market over which it circulates, which forms the spatial orbit of its circulation, the more does its strive simultaneously for an even greater extension of the market and for greater annihilation of space by time.” Grundrisse, 539

12. This was noted as long ago as the 1940s by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer in The Dialectic of Enlightenment.


14. Boston College School of Management offers a PhD degree in Organization Studies. See http://www.bc.edu/schools/csom/graduate/phdprograms/phdos.html.

15. Note that a desire for a simpler version of culture is also a theme in cultural anthropological writings. Take for example, Claude Lévi-Strauss (Tristes Tropiques, 1955), Ruth Benedict (Patterns of Culture, 1934), and Mary Douglass (Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo, 1966), all of whom studied non-Western groups of people in order to produce simpler, more diagrammatic patterns of culture. Their assumption was that Western societies were too complex to study and studying non-Western societies would be helpful in producing simpler patterns of culture. For a good analysis of the notion of culture for anthropologists, see Susan Hegeman’s Patterns for America, 1999. Business theorists have routinely borrowed anthropological notions of culture for their own purposes.

16. See, for example, the edited volume International Management and International Relations: A Critical Perspective from Latin America, ed. Ana Guedes and Alex Faria (New York: Routledge, 2010).


18. The course’s original creator is Robert Coles, a psychiatrist who was a long-time professor for both the Harvard Law and Business schools. He published an edited volume with coeditor Albert LaFarge in 2008 titled Minding the Store: Great Writing about Business from Tolstoy to Now (New York: The New Press).

   Sandra J. Sucher, one of the instructors of this course, published a teaching guide for others. Teaching the Moral Leader: A Literature-Based Leadership Course (New York: Routledge, 2007). Another instructor of this course, Joseph Badaracco Jr., published Questions of Character: Illuminating the Heart of Leadership through Literature (Boston: Harvard Business School Press, 2006).

19. Other examples of such management courses include “Managerial Ethics: Lessons from Literature and Film,” listed in the catalogue at NYU’s Stern School of Business. In the spring of 2006 this course required the students to read, inter alia, Sinclair Lewis’s If I Were Boss: The Early Business Stories and Shakespeare’s Henry
IV. Virginia Wesleyan College lists a course in its business catalog titled “Management in Literature,” featuring a typical reading list that includes management standards such as Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness* and *Henry IV*, along with the *Autobiography of Malcolm X* and writings by Mahatma Gandhi.

20. For example, the journal *Management Decision* recently published an article—Islam Gazi and Michael J. Zyphur’s “The Sweetest Dreams That Labor Knows: Robert Frost and the Poetics of Work”—that analyzes Frost’s poetry in order to understand how work can be a “personally liberating but also [a] culturally stifling” tool. “The relation of poetic knowing to more mainstream forms of theoretical knowledge,” the writers argue, “is particularly poignant in the field of Management, where one of the greatest criticisms of organizational theories is that they do not resound with the everyday lived experiences of managers.” Gazi and Zyphur further posit that “because of the emphasis in poetic works on understanding as it appears from within a person’s own experience, the study of poetry is one way to integrate [management] theory with experience” (4–5).


22. See also, on the subject of fictional or “fictitious” capital, David Harvey’s *The Limits to Capital*, especially chapter 9. Here Harvey defines fictitious capital as the “money that is thrown into circulation as capital without any material basis in commodities or productive activity” (93). See also Harvey’s discussion of the category at numerous points in *The Condition of Postmodernity* (1989) and in “The Geopolitics of Capitalism,” in *Spaces of Capital: Toward a Critical Geography* (2001).

23. Here they draw upon the entry on fiction, written by D. Davies, for the 2001 edition of the *Routledge Companion to Aesthetics*.


25. See, for example, Peters, flamboyant and unabashed as always, in *Re-Imagine*: “Brits ruled the world, from a wee island, for hundreds of years. While I, an old Navy guy, admire the Royal Navy, I more admire the entrepreneurial British Trading Companies . . . that made it all possible . . . [and] funded the Royal Navy” (1). Heeding lessons learned from the old British Empire, American managers can build the “virtual” and “flexible” organizations that will deliver the world back to the U.S—a nostalgic replay of the days of Churchill and Roosevelt: “The Yanks tipped the balance in WWII . . . Greatest Weapons Producers . . . via the Greatest Economy? Yup” (ibid.).

26. This essay, published in the *Handbook of Globalization, Governance, and Public Administration* (ed. Ali Farazmand and Jack Pinkowski), is typical in the way that it attempts to take stock of the issues affecting development management. Jennifer Brinkerhoff is a faculty member at the Elliot School of International Affairs at George Washington University. Derick Brinkerhoff is a researcher at RTI International, a corporate research organization located in the Research Triangle in North Carolina.


29. This motif of an automatic American self-distancing in relation to European colonialism is an old theme in American literature. See, for example, Herman Melville’s *Typee* and Mark Twain’s *Innocents Abroad*. Mary Louise Pratt, writing in *Imperial Eyes*, analyzes this gesture at length, observing the general tendency of travel writers to represent themselves as innocent of colonialism even as they are complicit with it. I will comment more on this aspect of travel writing in the third chapter.


Chapter 2

1. Janice Radway, in her 1998 Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, proposed changing the name of the Association and possibly dropping the term “American.” While in the 1950 and 1960s critics such as Henry Nash Smith and Warren Sussman sought to give the interdisciplinary formation of American studies spanning the diverse disciplines of history, English, sociology, and anthropology a loose unity via the term American, scholars today are working hard to decenter the very term while attempting to maintain some semblance of a unitary field.


4. This strategy is a broader phenomenon in the field of literary studies. In a very different spirit from that of Arac, who is attempting to work out the issues relating to globalization by displacing Americanist paradigms, Marjorie Perloff’s 2006 MLA Presidential Address makes a case for a return to aesthetics and the “merely literary,” advocating single-author studies by positioning Samuel Beckett as a global writer because his work is globally read and celebrated. A further example of the attempt
to globalize nationalist paradigms can be found in Stephen Greenblatt’s essay “Racial Memory and Literary History,” published in the January 2001 special issue of the *PMLA* titled “Globalizing Literary Studies.” Greenblatt makes an argument similar to Perloff’s for Shakespeare as “always already” a global writer: “Shakespeare may never have left England, yet his work is already global in its representational range” (59). Arguing what is superficially true, namely, that Shakespeare’s works are *read* globally, Greenblatt both makes room for the “global” and yet leaves the author’s centrality in the canon intact.

5. For a lengthier discussion of this issue see Walter Benn Michael’s *Our America* and Werner Sollers’s *Beyond Ethnicity*.

6. Academic debates on the topic in sociology and economics range from considering whether immigration has an adverse effect on the U.S. economy or testing out the hypotheses that more investment in developing nations would curb immigration and that higher mobility and true globalization is not the answer to the problem of immigration. See, for example, George Borjas’s “The Labor Market Impact of High Skill Immigration,” *American Economic Review* 95, no. 2 (May 2005): 56–60. Also see Devesh Kapur and John McHale’s “What Is Wrong with Plan B? International Migration as an Alternative to Development Assistance,” in *Brookings Trade Forum—2006*: 137–72. Also see Richard C. Jones, “Multinational Investment and the Mobility Transition in Mexico and Ireland,” *Latin American Politics & Society* 47, no. 2 (Summer 2005): 77–102. For an excellent examination of the notion of “illegal immigrants,” see David Bacon’s *Illegal People: How Globalization Creates Migration and Criminalizes Immigrants* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2008).

7. Inderpal Grewal has discussed this question at length in *Transnational America*.

8. Critics such as Immanuel Wallerstein and David Harvey have shown that, abstractly and formally speaking, the existence of economic interconnections between the various parts of the world is hardly anything new. Nevertheless, the present, globalized stage of capitalism does represent a qualitative change. Globalization entails the direct, immediate reproduction of capitalist relation of production on the level of the global, rather than, in composite fashion, on the level of the nation, as a “functional economic space.”

9. See, for example, the work of E. San Juan Jr., Michael Omi, Howard Winant, and Paul Smith in Gordon Avery and Christopher Newfield’s *Mapping Multiculturalism*.

10. Critiques of identity such as Lowe’s have shown the problems that arise when positioning the categories of identity—easily appropriated by capital—as though they were themselves outside and critical of the dominant social relations. Such critiques distinguish between identity as a politics of recognition and representation and other ways of analyzing identity.

11. See, for example, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri’s *Empire* and a critical review of the book by Timothy Brennan, “Empire’s New Clothes” published in *Critical Inquiry*.

12. A somewhat more nuanced version of this argument can be found in Stephen Greenblatt’s essay “Racial Memory and Literary History,” which I reference above.

13. One could add to this list the work of scholars whose work, now widely read within literary and cultural studies, reflects an even more immediate, activist engagement with the contemporary problems of globalization. See, *inter alia*, works such as Mike Davis’s *Planet of Slums*; Andrew Ross’s *Fast Boat to China* and *Low Pay, High Profile*; and Grace Chang’s *Disposable Domestics*. 
14. Take, as only one further example of this, the 2005 volume *Writing the World: On Globalization*, ed. David Rothenberg and Wandee J. Pryor, featuring contributions from writers such as Naomi Klein, Arundhati Roy, and Frederick Buell. In the Introduction, “The World as We Found It,” the editors define the task of the book as the attempt to capture the world as it has changed with the onset of globalization. It claims to bracket off what it sees as familiar tales of exploitation and oppression, backed up by statistics or data, in favor of showing “how all of our lives are interconnected”—as though the real truth of globalization were hidden somewhere even beyond its immediately measurable or theorizable realities as typically understood (xiv). Much of the work in the book is in effect aimed at uncovering this hidden reality. Roy’s piece, “Ladies Have Feelings, So . . . Shall We Leave It to the Experts?,” argues that it is the elites that tend to buy into the “expert viewpoint” sympathetic to globalization projects such as dam building in India, while ignoring the reality of those adversely affected by such projects. This is, of course, perfectly true and politically crucial, but it implies that the deeper reality of those marginalized or disadvantaged by globalization resides beyond the reach of “experts,” and hence, perhaps, also of intellectuals and of theory themselves. Roy herself is an interesting figure in this respect, as she became famous as a result of her novel *The God of Small Things* but since then has primarily dedicated herself to writing in nonfictional genres.


17. I will elaborate on this matter later in the sections devoted to the criticism on Alvarez and Abu-Jaber.

18. One of many examples of this trend is the caption on the back cover of Jessica Hagedorn’s *Dogeaters* (1990), which states: “Welcome to Manila in the turbulent period of the Philippines’s late dictator. It is a world in which American pop culture and local Filipina tradition mix flamboyantly, and gossip, storytelling, and extravagant behavior thrive.”

19. It is, Beverley claims, not any factual inaccuracy but “the Big Lie of racism, imperialism, inequality, class rule, genocide, torture, oppression . . . that is at stake in testimonio” (*Testimonio*, 3)—thereby disavowing any connection between facts and the latter.

20. See, for example, Julie Barak’s “‘Turning and Turning in the Widening Gyre’: A Second Coming into Language in Alvarez’s *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*”; Loes Nas’s “Border Crossings in Latina Narrative: Julia Alvarez’s *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*”; and Jennifer Bess’s “Imploding the Miranda Complex in Julia Alvarez’s *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*."


22. This move on the part of both Suárez and Newton is reminiscent of the argu-
ments—discussed above—that were made in defense of Rigoberta Menchú’s renowned testimonio when she was accused of having fictionalized key parts of her story. The basic move here is to pull back from all strong claims to veracity and emphasize the constructed, that is, fiction-like, character of truth itself—even, in the case of Arturo Arias’s “Authorizing Ethnicized Subjects,” asserting the “potential inability of Westerners to grasp a subaltern testimonio” (77).

23. According to Noam Chomsky and Edward Herman’s *The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism* (Boston: South End Press, 1979), right-wing death squad activity during the period following the 1965 invasion, under the directly U.S.-backed Balaguer regime, well exceeded anything under Trujillo—a fact that the exceptionalizing “regime of terror” narrative would tend to obscure (243–44).

24. Other critical work on the *The García Girls*, such as Joan M. Hoffman’s “She Wants to Be Called Yolanda Now,” concentrates, as do many other readings of Latina texts, exclusively on how immigrant characters, in this case the Garcías, manage their lives in the United States. Hoffman writes: “All of these girls—Carla, Sandra, Yolanda and Sofía—do come to some trouble in the New World . . . . As the title of the novel suggests, not only words but also the manner of speech is significant to the story of the García girls’ coming-of-age in America. The struggle to master a second language is a constant reminder to these girls of their weakened position as strangers in a new land” (21–22). Thus, on the one hand, Hoffman acknowledges that the girls suffer from a weakened position as result of being immigrants. Yet, on the other hand, she champions that same identity. The article ends with the following remark about Yolanda: “As troubled as it may be—by memory or failed love or fragmented identity or that precarious tightrope that is the immigrant’s life—Yolanda still has spirit in her, she still has her art, her writing, her refuge. With that she will always be able to invent what she needs to survive” (26). Hoffman makes a case for reading the novel almost exclusively along the lines of the U.S. rhetoric of individuality and individual immigrant spirit. She concentrates on what is most typical about immigrant struggles in the U.S. and ends with the suggestion that even though Yolanda is in a precarious position as an immigrant, she has become sufficiently Americanized to realize that she can “invent” her own life. Though Yolanda is neither Dominican nor U.S./American per se, the very fact that it is her “identity” that is foregrounded serves to keep the novel well within the horizons of a U.S. nationalist paradigm reproducing dominant ideologies.

25. This tendency to champion the tough, adaptive spirit of immigrants while defending their identity rights can be traced in socio-historical scholarship on (im)migration as well. For instance, Mary Chamberlain in her Introduction to the edited volume *Caribbean Migration*, a broad and instructive examination of the phenomenon of mobility from and through the Caribbean, states of the project that it “shifts the focus away from the causes of migration toward the nature and meaning of the migration experience, a shift that has radical implications for those concerned with the consequences of migration and its future.” This shift results in a form of analysis that attempts to capture what she calls the “vibrant culture of transnational and circular migration, in the home and the host countries” (10). In this shift, the focus on migrant culture can become celebratory—as signaled in the terms “vibrancy of culture.” Take here as another example Peggy Levitt’s cultural profile of Dominican (im)migrants in her book *The Transnational Villagers*. While the latter situates its findings within a
global economic and social context, it nevertheless exhibits a tendency to rely on the
descriptive language and metaphors of a more cosmopolitan narrative of (im)migra-
tion. Emphasizing the continuous contact between the residents of the Dominican city
of Miraflores and Boston, she writes: “Though electricity goes off nightly for weeks at
a stretch, nearly every household has a television, VCR, or compact disc player. And
although it takes months to get a phone installed in Santo Domingo, the Dominican
capital, Mirafloreños can get phone service in their homes almost immediately after
they request it” (2). “Because someone is always traveling between Boston and the
Island,” she goes on to say, “there is a continuous, circular flow of goods, news, and
information. As a result when someone is ill, cheating on his or her spouse, or finally
granted a visa, the news spreads as quickly in Jamaica Plain as it does on the streets
of Miraflores” (3). There are a couple of points here that are especially worth consid-
ering. While Levitt does not state this, the mainland-island networks through which
flow the goods, news, and information mentioned above are not unlike the financial
networks connecting cities such as New York, London, and Beijing—networks that
appear to transcend unevenness within and across national boundaries so as to pro-
duce a culture of transnational cosmopolitanism. Invoking the gossip that travels faster
between Boston and Miraflores than between Miraflores and Santo Domingo, even if
unintentionally, feeds into this same cosmopolitan narrative of mobility. Emphasis is
placed on cosmopolitan interconnectedness rather than, say, on the uneven distribu-
tion of electricity.

Nevertheless, such metanarratives of (im)migration are still highly instruc-
tive when placed next to the critical metanarratives informing the scholarship on The
García Girls. The details provided by Levitt show the extent to which the lives of
Dominican immigrants in Boston are lived in continuous contact with the lives of those
who remain on the island—a reality elided in the fetishized, identity-based reading of
immigrant culture and in narratives of assimilation within the United States. Cham-
berlain’s edited volume, while tending to foreground the cultural with its focus on the
“intergenerational transmission of culture,” and its documenting of women’s stories
of adaptation and change in the face of an obligatory mobility,” nevertheless opens
up new ways to consider the “links between subjectivity and material life” (11). Take,
for example, Elizabeth Thomas-Hope’s contribution to the volume, “Globalization
and the Development of Caribbean Migration,” which situates the Caribbean colonies
“from the outset as part of the wider global political economy.” Thomas-Hope ana-
lyzes the way that mercantilism, the transatlantic slave trade, and the plantation were
already signs of globalization. The essays in Caribbean Migrations, despite sharing
with the identity-based work on U.S. (im)migrant literary fiction a focus on the culture
of (im)migration, also help to bring to light the connections between the material and
the cultural.

26. See, for example, Russell Crandell, Gunboat Democracy: U.S. Interventions
in the Dominican Republic, Grenada and Panama (New York: Rowan and Littlefield,
2006).

27. Eric Williams, From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean
1492–1969 (New York: Vintage, 1984); Sherri Grasmuck and Patricia Pessar, Between
Two Islands: Dominican International Migration (Berkeley: University of California
Press, 1991); Tom Barry and Beth Wood et al., eds., The Other Side of Paradise (New
York: Grove Press, 1984); James Ferguson, Far from Paradise: Introduction to the

28. Although earlier immigrant narratives also frequently made reference to the way images and narratives of the U.S. were already a distinct presence in preimmigration homelands (the protagonist of Abraham Cahan’s The Rise of David Levinsky, for example, says that in Russia he was told the standard tale of the U.S. as a land in which the streets were paved with gold), the actual passage to the U.S. in these narratives appears as absolute and final.


30. Such denationalization has, of course, its sinister correlate in the treatment meted out to Arabs and Muslims by the U.S.-led war on terror, most notably in the case of the extrajudicial detention and torture of suspects at the U.S. base at Guantanamo and elsewhere in secret U.S. detention/torture centers. Often suspected of a loyalty to Islam that supersedes any loyalty as American citizens, Muslims living within the U.S., regardless of their legal status, are rhetorically denationalized, considered to be possible terrorists at worst and resident aliens at best, and the legitimate targets, as such thinking goes, of constant monitoring. In ideological terms, American nationalism balks at the inclusion of the figure of the Arab/Muslim in a way that it does not in the case of certain other minorities. (For an extended discussion of this point see Evelyn Alsultany’s “Selling American Diversity and Muslim American Identity Through Non-Profit Advertising Post-911,” American Quarterly 59, no. 3 [Fall 2007].) As embodiments of Žižek’s “desert of the real,” Arab-Muslim immigrants to the U.S. are rhetorically and ideologically outside the latter’s borders even when they physically, and legally, reside within them.


32. Steven Salaita’s work in general deals with crucial historical and political complexities relating to questions of nation-state, colonialism, and the construction of Arab and Muslim identity. See, for example, The Uncultured Wars: Arabs, Muslims and the Poverty of Liberal Thought—New Essays (London: Zed Books, 2009); Anti-Arab Racism in the USA: Where It Comes From and What It means for Politics Today (London: Pluto, 2006); and The Holy Land in Transit: Colonialism and the Quest for Canaan (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2006).

33. A very typical claim is expressed by Tanyss Ludeshcer in “From Nostalgia to Critique”: “Arab American Literature is an understudied and undervalued area of ethnic literature” (95).

34. Fadda-Conrey also cites the edited volume Bridge We Call Home: Radical

35. Writing in Late Victorian Holocausts, Mike Davis has made the point that there is no link between food availability and famine. It is the ability of people to buy the food that determines whether they can eat it. Davis documents how the British in the nineteenth century had interlinked world markets and how the building of railways—for example, in India—made it possible for grain to be produced and shipped out of the region and sold in the markets in Europe. Phyllis Bennis, in “‘And They Called It Peace’: U.S. Policy on Iraq,” outlines how the U.N. sanctions against Iraq (since the early 1990s) that restricted the sale of oil made the country largely dependent on imports for food. And since then Iraq has become even more dependent on food from elsewhere.

36. For a thorough explanation of how corporate agribusiness, monocultural agriculture, is reducing the ability of farmers to feed themselves, see José Bové and François Dufour’s The World Is Not for Sale: Farmer’s Against Junk Food and Food for the Future: Agriculture for a Global Age.

Chapter 3

1. The fact that the remotest corners of the world have been turned into tourist resorts is, contrary to what might appear, not a reason to conclude, as Dean MacCannell speculated long ago, that modern consciousness is that of a tourist (The Tourist, 1976). When MacCannell aptly noted that the “empirical and ideological expansion of modern society [was] intimately linked in diverse ways to modern mass leisure, especially to international tourism and sightseeing,” tourism was well on its way to creating a service economy and to becoming an integral part of the project to repair societies left devastated by the failure of development projects (3). Places like South Africa are a prime example of this attempted repair.

2. While travel writers such as Theroux regularly lament the succumbing of travel to pervasive global tourism, travel books continue to appear consistently on The New York Times bestseller lists. Nearly every major daily newspaper carries a section on travel. Numerous magazines such as Travel and Leisure, Salon contain feature articles by travel writers. The popularity of books by writers such as Bill Bryson and Theroux are only a few instances among many to indicate that travel writing, judged quantitatively, is anything but a dying genre.

3. All three authors continue to publish works that essentially deal with the same issues analyzed in detail here. See, for example, Kaplan’s Imperial Grunts and Hog Pilots, Blue Water Grunts; Mary Morris’s The River Queen (2007); and Paul Theroux’s Blinding Light (2005).

4. I will discuss issues of gender and travel writing below in relationship to the work of Mary Morris.

5. The same is true of many of Kaplan’s other writings as well, notably his two recent books recounting his travels with the U.S. military, Imperial Grunts: On the Ground with the American Military, from Mongolia to the Philippines to Iraq and Beyond (2006) and Hog Pilots, Blue Water Grunts: The American Military in the Air, at Sea, and on the Ground (2008). In the former he writes that “by the turn of
the twenty-first century the United States military had already appropriated the entire earth and was ready to flood the most obscure areas” (3). Kaplan, a consistent proponent of the 2003 invasion of Iraq, has become even more blatant in his view that the U.S. is a benevolent presence as against “native” governance structures around the world. The distortions here, even in comparison to those in The Ends of Earth, are extreme to the point of caricature, especially as concerns the Islamic Middle East, and at one point they reach the extreme of advocating war with China. But Kaplan also considers the American empire to be in need of serious overhauling. He uses the “travel” writing and firsthand accounts in Imperial Grunts and Hog Pilots as a purportedly more credible platform from which to “view at ground level what it was that the U.S. was up against” (Imperial Grunts, 3) and to recommend how empire can be better managed. “The drama of exotic new landscapes,” he writes, “had always been central to the imperial experience.” Thus, in his words, “a series of books about the empire—at least to some degree—had to be about travel” (14).

6. Nothing to Declare appeared just three years before the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) was signed in 1992, and several years before the treaty was implemented in 1994. The perception that Mexico is integrally connected to the U.S. is articulated by some of the language in the preamble to the NAFTA agreement:

The Government of Canada, the Government of the United Mexican States and the Government of the United States of America, resolved to: STRENGTHEN the special bonds of friendship and cooperation among their nations; CONTRIBUTE to the harmonious development and expansion of world trade and provide a catalyst to broader international cooperation; CREATE an expanded and secure market for the goods and services produced in their territories. . . . (NAFTA—Preamble, Capital Letters Original)

While the NAFTA language gestured toward what was already happening—the creation of an expanded market and cooperation of trade between the three signatory nations—the impending agreement prompted public rearticulations of the anxiety over the coming erasure of the boundaries between the U.S. and Mexico. The media exacerbated fears that hordes of Mexicans would stream across U.S. borders, demanding undeserved rights to jobs and money. The inclusion of Mexico in NAFTA provoked a resurgence of racist stereotyping, constructing Mexico as yet again the dangerous Other in the national imaginary of the United States. Though Morris does not speak directly about these ideas, her book, reflecting the public conversations at the time, also works to construct Mexico as a place of danger.

7. For a more detailed discussion of Quetzalcoatl, see Davíd Carrasco’s Quetzalcoatl and the Irony of Empire (2000).

8. Theroux’s novel Blinding Light (2005) also tells the story of a blocked writer, Steadman, with one, twenty-year-old, bestselling book to his credit. He travels to Ecuador to secure a drug he hopes will unblock his brain, but instead it temporarily blinds him. Thus here too the act of writing is frustrated, and travel is the result.

9. The genre of the fictional meta–travel narrative bestows on Theroux a kind of authority in much the same way that the notion of the firsthand account does on Kaplan. But nonfictional firsthand accounts of Hawaii are countless. In foregrounding the concept of perspective, Theroux’s book remains credible while still playing with
the boundary between fact and fiction. In fact, playing with the boundary between fact and fiction is precisely what critics of the genre of travel writing characterized it as doing. Much has been written about the way in which travel writers negotiate such boundaries, primarily as a way to caution against taking the often “firsthand” narratives of the travel books as “true.” Critics such as Mary Louise Pratt, Paul Fussell, and Terry Caesar continue to stress the way in which travel writers invent the world they claim to see. James Clifford has pointed to the need of ethnography to make clear distinctions between the literary travel writers and ethnographers themselves, primarily because travel writers are largely considered unaccountable for the highly entertaining narratives they produce of the places they visit. But travel writers themselves, if only so as to hold fast to the generic identity they have selected for themselves, must also doggedly hold on to the notion of “real” reporting. As I have shown, both Kaplan and Morris rely heavily upon the claim to firsthand veracity. And to reiterate, even The Sheltering Sky, one of the better-known of the travel novels that Paul Bowles was producing as early as the 1940s, transports the reader into imagining that there is an interior of Africa that exists outside of the book. Theroux’s own earlier novel The Mosquito Coast (1982), the story of a utopian society project in Latin America that eventually goes sour, builds itself around a similarly constructed belief on the reader’s part in the “there” of the fiction. Travel writing has also and long since discovered how to position itself close to the margins of the fictional when its claims to the veracity of the “firsthand” are endangered.

10. In an interview, with Barbara Lane for the Commonwealth Club of California, Theroux states: “it’s a mistake to confuse the ‘I’ in a novel with the person writing the novel. Because writers are notoriously unreliable . . . the whole notion of writing—writing is invention, it’s imagination. You improve things, or you might make it worse, but what you’re doing is inventing the truth” (Commonwealth Club of California). And yet, embracing the confusion between him and his narrators, he says: “I can only write about a writer like myself, who has my habits. I can’t imagine writing any other way except the way that I write. So when I think of a writer . . . my own experience is tried and true” (ibid.).

Chapter 4

1. The publication of Gourmet magazine ran from 1941 to 2009. The Gourmet brand continues to have a television and web presence.

2. All of these publications and programs have a presence through a variety of media. The magazines Food & Wine and Gourmet have a web presence. Anthony Bourdain’s narratives find their expression on television shows, books, and the Internet.

3. Contemporary narratives about polar expeditions, such as Sarah Wheeler’s Terra Incognita: Travels in Antartica and David Campbell’s Crystal Desert: Summers in Antartica, still retain much of these risky and dangerous aspects, but even these lament the onset of tourism in polar zones. Campbell, for example, discusses the spoiling of natural surrounding by whaling and sealing. But for the most part, contemporary narratives do not chronicle tales of starvation or hunger for the narrator/traveler/tourist, but some do introduce risk in consuming the food itself. One example
would be television shows such as *Bizarre Foods with Andrew Zimmern* where Zimmern eats a variety of “risky” food—worms in Mexico, cow’s heart in Morocco, or lemon ants in Ecuador. Such media narratives take full advantage of the visual and audio technology to produce the riskiness associated with eating “bizarre” foods.

4. A comparison of food photographs in magazines such as *Redbook*, *McCall’s*, or *The Saturday Evening Post* during the mid-twentieth-century to late-twentieth/early-twenty-first-century publications, as well as in a variety of mass/social media, makes this point.

5. For a lengthy discussion of genetically modified food and standardized farming see José Bové and François Defour’s *The World Is Not For Sale: Farmers Against Junk Food* and Vandana Shiva’s *Stolen Harvest*.

6. More research needs to be done on the consumption of U.S. food around the world. Many anecdotes suggest that such consumption can become a way establishing prestige and status by association with the U.S. And in nations where this is a recent phenomenon, such as China, it also consumed as a novelty, and sometimes as a snack for children while the “real” food is consumed at home.


8. See chapter 1 for a discussion of how management theorists employ the idea of literature as timeless for dislocal purposes.

9. Though distinct historical forces have always produced regional foods, recently the ideas of regionality and locality have taken on a different sort of significance. Barbara and James Shortridge, in the Introduction to their edited collection, *The Taste of American Place*, attribute a renewed interest in what they call “neolocalism” to the fast-paced lifestyle that has eroded a sense of community and a “commitment to experiencing things close to home” (7). Contemporary regionalism and localism in relationship to food that emphasizes “local” ingredients is often politically positioned against the global trends of genetic modification, use of pesticides, and standardization. And “local” foods need not be produced “close to home.” In fact, “local” foods are marketed and sold to consumers living far way from the “originary” site of harvest and preparation.

10. What is missing from this quasi-historical account (as well as from the historical perspective of *Endless Feasts* overall) is the effect of Prohibition on the California wine industry. Repairing the wine business after Prohibition was lifted would indeed require pleas to potential consumers. For more detailed histories of California wine industries see James T. Lapsley’s *Bottled Poetry: Napa Winemaking from Prohibition to the Modern Era* (1996) and Thomas Pinney’s *A History of Wine in America: From the Beginnings to Prohibition* (1989).

11. For a lengthier discussion of the history of food production companies, see Harvey Levenstein’s *Revolution at the Table* (2003).

12. In *Spaces of Hope* (2001), Harvey explains that “globalization’ seems first to have acquired its prominence as American Express advertised the global reach of its credit card in the mid 1970s. The term spread like wildfire in the financial and business press, mainly as legitimation for deregulation of financial markets. It then helped make the diminution in state powers to regulate capital flows seem inevitable and became an extraordinary tool in disempowerment of national local working-class move-
ment . . . And by mid 1980s it helped create a heady atmosphere of entrepreneurial optimism around the theme of the liberation of markets from state control” (13).

13. Wallerstein, in theorizing the idea of a “world culture,” points to the “dialectic of creating simultaneously a homogeneous world and distinctive national cultures within this world” and “the creating of simultaneously homogeneous national cultures and distinctive ethnic groups or minorities within these nation-states” (“The National and the Universal,” 99).

14. So, for example, in the June 2008 issue Sigal tells us in her “The Chef, the Pig and the Perfect Summer Party” that the jet-setting chef has time to throw a sophisticated barbecue in his home outside of Manhattan. He serves “sweet-tangy carrots flavored with pink peppercorns and a silken pea puree sparked with jalapeños,” and “spit-roasted meat” (23). The recipes are included for those wishing to try the food themselves, but because this is New York, fusion’s “native” land, the food alone can tell of his travels.

15. An athletic analog to this same phenomenon can be cited as well: the recruitment by Houston’s NBA franchise of Yao Ming, a Chinese basketball phenomenon over seven feet tall. This has as much to do with globalization as it does with winning games. Yao, as a mega-celebrity both in the U.S. and China, is clearly understood to be a gateway into China for companies that thereby help to sell not only Apple computers, credit cards, and Gatorade but also NBA paraphernalia to two billion Chinese. Of course, it is because Yao can play the game that he takes the court in Houston. The presence of international players in the NBA has become commonplace. But the game itself, more obviously than in the case of the space of culinary consumption, remains American.

16. A Cook’s Tour began to air in 2002. There were around thirty-five original shows produced and aired regularly until 2005. Weekly reruns of the show continue on the Food Channel, but Bourdain now has a similar show entitled No Reservations on the Travel Channel. In these programs, Bourdain samples food while visiting places both within and outside the U.S. He has also published books under the same title as his television series and has written numerous others, including works of fiction that feature prominently the theme of food. I have chosen to analyze A Cook’s Tour—with references to the book version as well—in part simply because it has been a relatively long running show and has made Bourdain into a well-known television personality. Food programming on television has come a long way since the PBS-based instructional cooking of Julia Child and Jeff Smith; it need not provide recipes for dishes and can function exclusively as a narrative.

17. Bourdain’s later television series No Reservations aired an episode in 2008 in which he visits Laos and the home of someone who lost a limb as he accidentally dug up a bomb dropped in the 1970s by the U.S., a bomb that was aimed at neighboring Cambodia. His injury occurred four decades later, while he was cleaning up around his house. Bourdain is appropriately contrite and apologizes on behalf of the U.S. as he partakes in the little bit of food the impoverished family has.

18. The New Orleans episode shows him getting kicked out of Emeril’s restaurant in New York, implying that it was for the unkind remarks he made about Emeril in his books—The Kitchen Confidential and A Cook’s Tour. A Cook’s Tour contains a section called “Full Disclosure” in which he says that he is uncomfortable doing A Cook’s Tour series and being associated with the Food Network because he has always made fun of the cooks associated with the Food Network.
Conclusion

1. Or perhaps management academics, similarly to others, generally do not think outside the box of their own disciplines except when the continued existence of that discipline itself, and hence their future employment, is at stake.

2. See, in addition to what has already been cited above from chapter 1, this adjacent passage:

In the third volume of *Capital*, Marx refers to the system of credit in general as “fictitious capital.” So, for example, the buying and selling of shares on the stock market neither creates new value nor injects increased capital into the firm whose shares are being traded. “Fictitious capital” is different from the money originally supplied for use in production. It is an additional amount of money that simply allows for the circulation of income or profit. In fact, this circulation represents claims to future, still unrealized surplus value, making it appear that the amount of capital has increased. Thus the increase in the price of shares, to take the most obvious example of fictitious capital, creates the illusion—the stuff of everyday economic life on Wall Street—that the stock market itself is creating value. Essentially, fictitious capital refers to a form of financialization—the listing of a given amount of prospective money capital on the books—that makes a claim on the future generation of real, nonfictional profits or surplus value.

None of this poses any real threat to the reproduction of capital as a whole as long as such claims themselves are eventually made good and fictional is converted into real capital. But what happens if—or when—a point is reached beyond which this realization (in more than one sense here) ceases to be possible, and, to avoid defaulting on the claims already lodged against fictional capital, still more fictional capital must be injected into circulation in the hopes of putting off the inevitable day of reckoning? Here one encounters what has become a major question in discussions of contemporary political economy, one to which I cannot do real justice here. The most recent U.S. financial crisis, triggered in 2007–8 by massive defaults on subprime home mortgages and the resulting deflation of what had been Wall Street’s latest, real estate–based speculative bubble, is only the latest indication that such a point—what we might term “hyper-fictionalization”—may have been reached.” (53, 54)

3. Here we also learn that, as is so often the case, terms later assumed to have been coined by Marx are in fact carried over into the conceptual system of Marx’s critique of political economy from the language of, in most cases, the British political economists and capitalists of the late eighteenth and early to mid-nineteenth century whom he studied assiduously, from Adam Smith to, in this case, W. Leatham, a Yorkshire banker who spoke of “fictitious capital” in a pamphlet published in 1840. As Marx’s brief citation of Leatham makes clear, the latter was referring to a fact that every banker knows: at any given moment a bank has more money-capital out on loan than it does on deposit, but this does not prevent the bank from listing its still-unpaid loans as assets, or from selling them as the commodities known, generally speaking, as “securities.” What counts as fictitious for Leatham is the supposition that the debt
will, at some point in the future, be repaid.

4. See, for example, chapter 29: “the capital of the national debt remains purely fictitious, and the moment these promissory notes become unsaleable, the illusion of this capital disappears. Yet this fictitious capital has its characteristic movement for all that . . .”; “interest-bearing capital always being the mother of every insane [verrückten] form, so that debts, for example, can appear as commodities in the mind of the banker . . .” (596); “Even when the promissory note—the security—does not represent a purely illusory capital, as it does in the case of national debts, the capital value of the security is still pure illusion” (597). Also see chapter 30: “These promissory notes which were issued for a capital originally borrowed but long since spent, these paper duplicates of annihilated capital, function for their owners as capital in so far as they are saleable commodities and can therefore be transformed into capital.” “But these titles similarly become paper duplicates of the real capital, as if a bill of lading simultaneously acquired a value alongside the cargo it refers to. They become nominal representatives of non-existent capitals” (608). “This kind of imaginary money wealth makes up a very considerable part not only of the money wealth of private individuals but also of banking capital, as already mentioned” (609) [my emphasis throughout].

5. To get at this deeper meaning would ultimately require, however, an attempt to come to terms with what will strike the contemporary reader of this particular section of volume 3 either as a case of inconsistent editing, or—more likely—as one of Marx’s more erroneous moments in the theory of “the role of credit in capitalist production.” Rather than take the time to map out this confusing problem here, however, I consign this task, for those who want the details, to this footnote and proceed directly in the body of the text to the one or two remarks which, if my own reading of Marx here is on the right track, are the clearest indications of this.

While observing, so far quite uncontroversially, that the formation of joint-stock companies results in “tremendous expansion in the scale of production” as well as the “transformation of the actual functioning capitalist into a mere manager, in charge of other people’s capital” (567), Marx adds:

Capital, which is inherently based on a social mode of production and presupposes a social concentration of means of production and labour-power, now receives the form of social capital (capital of directly associated individuals) in contrast to private capital, and its enterprises appear as social enterprises as opposed to private ones. This is the abolition of capital as private property within the confines of the capitalist mode of production itself. (ibid.)

This is followed, after a dense chain of reasoning that I cannot take the time to summarize here, by what seems an even more mystifying miscalculation on Marx’s part in which it is claimed that the separation of capital’s managerial function from capital ownership also becomes a point of transition in which labor itself is separated from capital as mere “money capital.” Thus the “result of capitalist production in its highest development [the joint-stock company] is a necessary point of transition back into the property of the producers, though no longer as the private property of individual producers but rather as their property as associated producers, as directly social property” (568). At this point, Engels himself interjects a passage, perhaps meant to correct for Marx’s error as concerns the future of the joint-stock company, a passage (familiar from Lenin’s Imperialism) observing the real “point of transition” latent in the latter
change in form of capitalist property: the creation of giant cartels and monopolies. And then—as if to compound the problem of what Marx ultimately saw as the historical possibilities latent in “fictitious capital”—the words are again Marx’s, and, after being stated once again that “this [presumably still the credit-enabled joint-stock company] is the abolition of the capitalist mode of production within the capitalist mode of production itself” (569), a strikingly different picture of such a dialectic (and the one which is my chosen point of departure above) is drawn:

It gives rise to monopoly in certain spheres and hence provokes state intervention. It reproduces a new financial aristocracy, a new kind of parasite in the guise of company promoters, speculators, and merely nominal directors; an entire system of swindling and cheating with respect to the promotion of companies, issue of shares and share dealings. It is private production unchecked by private ownership. (ibid.)

6. Edmund L. Andrews reported on Greenspan’s congressional testimony on October 23, 2008 in the New York Times, wherein Greenspan conceded that he was at least partially wrong in opposing regulation. He states: “Those of us who have looked to the self-interest of lending institutions to protect shareholder’s equity—myself especially—are in a state of shocked disbelief.” When questioned about his free-market ideology, Greenspan said: “I have found a flaw. I don’t know how significant or permanent it is. But I have been very distressed by that fact.” http://www.nytimes.com/2008/10/24/business/economy/24panel.html.

National Public Radio reported some of conversation between Greenspan and Rep. Henry Waxman (D-CA). Waxman: “In other words, you found that your view of the world, your ideology, was not right, it was not working.” Greenspan replied: “How it—precisely. That’s precisely the reason I was shocked, because I’ve been going for 40 years or more with very considerable evidence that it was working exceptionally well.” http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=96070766.

7. Not to be confused with his father, Paul Mattick Sr. (1904–81), a well-known German theoretician of the “council communist” movement, who later emigrated to the United States.


14. In the context of globalization theories, an immediate tendency in response to
the above might be to question whether (referring to the first citation from Lukács) “the
ability to look beyond the divisive symptoms of the economic process to the unity of the
total social system underlying it” is now made possible by the existence of globalization.
Not to dismiss that there might, in the end, be something to this, depending on how
the historical changes referred to as “globalization” are themselves theorized, but rather
to confer on globalization, whether in theory or in practice, anything like the potential
to overcome reified consciousness, is, at best, to beg that question. And it has been the
objective of the theory of dislocalism to demystify such notions. That the “unity of the
social system” has increased enormously in scope and depth since the 1920s is beyond
dispute, but so, along with this, has the weight and penetration of reification, and now
not only on the level of the “divisive symptoms” but of ideologies of the whole—for
example, dislocalism—that, as stated in the Introduction, “make it appear as though
[the] erasure of the local were itself the meaning and content of ‘globalization.’”


16. Bret Benjamin, in his book Invested Interests, has suggested that we think about
the stories that World Bank published as those of success as literary fiction. Utilizing
the term World Bank Literature from Amitava Kumar’s edited volume of the same
name, to which Benjamin also contributes, offers an interesting analysis of the ways in
which we can understand the Bank as a social/cultural institution. My analysis looking
directly at the material produced by management emphasizes the attempt to under
stand the ways in which the Bank (and management in general) itself understands what
it is doing with storytelling.

17. He goes so far as to suggest the kind of stories that do the work. “As a storyteller who is aiming at eliciting organizational change through stories, one doesn’t
need to tell the story with the panache of a Charles Dickens or a Mark Twain. With
such writers, the explicit voice of the narrator is so large and generous and conveys
so much enthusiasm and gusto for life that the reader is often swept along by it, and
the stories become as real if not more real than life itself. In our context, it is more
relevant to think about the minimalist stories of Raymond Carver. Remember that we
are aiming to leave lots of space for the listeners to invent their own stories, and to fill


20. “Instead of ‘reducing’ cultural phenomena, the essay immerses itself in them
as though in a second nature, a second immediacy, in order to negate and transcend
the illusion of immediacy through its perseverance. It has no more illusions about
the difference between culture and what lies beneath it than does the philosophy of
origin. But for it culture is not an epiphenomenon that covers Being and should be
destroyed; instead, what lies beneath culture is itself thesis, something constructed, the
tion of “thesis,” italicized in the original, my emphasis).


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