

Uncanny Presence: The Foreigner at the Gate of Globalization

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Before Nietzsche's proverbial house of philosophy there stands an uncanny guest.¹ As with other foreign presences, this one is both strangely familiar and productive of anxiety; it is destined to remain outside (*foras*), both there and not there, neither recognizably present nor unambiguously absent. Is there such a guest at the gate of globalization?

I believe that we shall find that there is and that this "global foreigner" bears, however unwillingly, the stigmata of an ambivalence, of an infantile and "primitive" past, and of a confusion between psychic and material reality that Freud associates with the uncanny. This essay seeks to consider within a series of material and philosophical contexts, the spectral presences that haunt the circumstances and discourses customarily gathered beneath the name of *globalization*.² It elaborates a figure of a "global foreigner" who, I argue, bears a particular relation to both temporal and material presence. This project evinces both a disruption and a continuity in the narrative of foreignness: a new configuration of the foreigner that emerges with globalization—one delineated less in terms of the nation-state, a language, or an ethnic identity than by a cosmopolitan lifestyle, electronic forms of communication, and investment in transnational markets and finance—but in which the semantic location assigned to foreigners remains largely the same.

Let us begin with the simplest of questions: is there such a thing as a "foreigner" in the era of globalization? Don't processes of globalization make the very concept of the foreigner obsolete? Benjamin Barber seems to have argued as much: "modern transnational corporations in quest of global markets cannot really comprehend 'foreign policy,'" he writes, "because the word foreign has no meaning to the ambitious global businessperson."³ And to be sure, processes of globalization have conditioned a significant reformulation of the concepts of nation, citizenship, home, and belonging around which the foreigner is constituted in the modern world.⁴ The nation no longer bears exclusive sovereignty over its people or their transactions with those of other nations; it is superseded in certain economic and legal arenas, for example, by the World Trade Organization (WTO), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the World Bank, and challenged by both human rights covenants and environmental mandates.⁵ The nation is, hence, neither the only foundation for rights (many of which have been reformulated as "human" rather than "civil") nor the sole determinant of political legitimacy: individuals and organizations increasingly pursue economic and political engagements independently of nation-states. Citizenship has been revalued accordingly, rendered more "flexible," in Aihwa Ong's terms.⁶ The shuffling of the constituents of identity and the realignment of borders that accompany globalization may well mean that one's sense of belonging is organized around a mobile and cosmopolitan society—what Leslie Sklair has named "the transnational capitalist

class"—rather than a geographical place, a home, or a nation.⁷ A member of that global tribe may well be more "at home" in an urban center where she is not a citizen than in the working class or rural neighborhoods of the nation where she is. He may well be more adept at an anglicized and computerized *lingua franca* than at the majority of dialects from his country of origin. The sense of familiarity constructed by the computer running on her lap may well eclipse the foreignness of immediate physical surroundings.

But if globalization has, in specific ways and for certain actors, effaced traditional meanings of foreignness, this is by no means to say that the figure of the foreigner no longer exists. On the contrary, there are a number of very significant and highly consequential survivals of foreignness in the era of globalization, one of which is churned out in the most predictable way by resurgent nationalisms. A by-product of globalization, such nationalisms (and equally virulent nativisms of other sorts) strive to ward off the perceived homogenization of culture associated with globalization, often quite rightly equated with American cultural imperialism, secularism, and consumerism. Barber contends that a deeply dialectical relation exists between what, on the one hand, he calls "McWorld"—a secular, uniform, and universalizing mass culture that, spread through the "infotainment telesector," displaces diverse indigenous traditions, "forges global markets," and insists with apparent impunity that "the laws of production and consumption are sovereign, trumping the laws of legislatures and courts"⁸—and what, on the other hand, he calls "Jihad"—the reinvigoration of local cultures, ethnic and religious identities, tribalisms and nationalisms, a frenzied "preservation" of culture threatened by outside influences and, above all, by modernity. Stuart Hall has made a similar point, arguing that the nation does not just "bow off the stage of history," but "goes into an even deeper trough of defensive exclusivism" marked by "a regression to a very defensive and highly dangerous form of national identity which is driven by a very aggressive form of racism."⁹

Frederic Jameson articulates this principle of globalization's role in producing nationalisms in terms of a negative relativity that also describes the structure of foreignness. Derived from the Latin term *foras* (outside), the word foreign designates a quality or an entity conceived relatively: the foreign is always relative to the inside, the domestic, the familiar, a boundary. A container without contents, it can only be defined negatively: to be foreign is *not* belonging to a group, *not* speaking a given language, *not* having the same customs; it is to be *unfamiliar*, *improper*, *incomprehensible*, *unnatural*, *uncanny*. This structure of binary opposition, according to Jameson, is not only reproduced but fortified by globalization, which he describes as "an untotizable totality which intensifies binary relations between its parts—mostly nations, but also regions and groups." Such relations are, he argues, "first

and foremost ones of tension or antagonism, when not outright exclusion: in them each term struggles to define itself against the binary other."¹⁰

Not only does globalization spawn some very familiar versions of foreignness, it also readily absorbs, co-opts, and commodifies foreignness, aggressively marketing exotic fashions, objects for the home, music, food, and other "ethnic" artifacts. Indeed one's membership in the transnational capitalist class is, to a large degree, certified by appreciating and possessing such foreign goods. Nothing so persuasive as handmade Italian ceramics, a "world music" selection, or a lovely South African wine to confirm one's global citizenship. These lifestyle accessories, decontextualized repositories of an only slightly updated genesis amnesia, not only signify one's access to "unique" objects made elsewhere, but also that one belongs to a "nation" of consumers with the where-with-all to recontextualize, to make of one's life an artful *bricolage* of foreignness. For those members of the "First World" without such privileged access, there's always Club Med or the Epcot Center, or Pier One Imports, where prepackaged foreignness can be sampled less expensively and without risk.¹¹

But I wish to concentrate less on the foreignness produced *by* nationalism or *for* bourgeois consumption than on those foreign to globalization itself, those alien to (and alienated from, in a fashion not unlike that described by Marx) the economic class, work culture, and lifestyle inhabited by the "global citizen." Globalization has created vast numbers of low-wage jobs not only in production and assembly, but also "through the demand for workers to service the lifestyle and consumption requirements of the growing high-income professional and managerial class."¹² These workers, which I am calling "global foreigners," enable the time and space of "globalization," but it is not their home; they do not possess its products and only rarely share in its benefits.¹³ Often, though by no means always, these "global foreigners" are migrants, foreigners in the most traditional sense. As Saskia Sassen has shown, while foreign investment seeks to keep "Third World" low-wage workers—the prototypical foreigners to globalized modernity—in their place, it in fact produces circumstances that condition migration: it displaces people to industrial zones, disrupting traditional work structures, and making it difficult for them to return to rural communities; it simultaneously accustoms individuals to uprooting, making them subjectively open to moving again, and exposes them to "Westernization"; and it creates a reserve of unemployed wage laborers. Thus, "the very measures commonly thought to deter immigration—foreign investment and the promotion of export-oriented growth in developing countries—seem to have had precisely the opposite effect."¹⁴

The transnationalization of labor has not only dramatically increased global migration, but solidified the association of the foreigner with poverty, and with particular ethnic groups. This deeply engraved, negative image of immigration contains, Sassen notes, "an implicit valorization of the receiving country and a devalorization of the sending country."¹⁵ Moreover, "because immigration is thought to result from unfavorable socioeconomic conditions in other countries, it is assumed to be unrelated to U.S. [or European] economic needs or [to] broader international economic conditions. In this context, the decision becomes a humanitarian matter; we admit immigrants by choice and out of generosity,

not because we have any economic motive or political responsibility to do so."¹⁶

This interested misrecognition has no doubt fed the anti-immigrant sentiment that has swept across "First World" countries and functioned as the alibi for a veritable panic of regulation and discipline, reinforced borders, pageants of criminalization, and laws that very considerably erode immigrants' rights. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, although Western European countries made efforts to integrate permanent second generation immigrants, they also closed legal labor immigration, actively encouraged voluntary return migration, instituted punitive measures to control immigrants (such as deportation and penalties for those who employed illegal immigrants), witnessed increasing public outcry over *Überfremdung* (Overforeignization), and saw the rise of anti-immigrant parties such as the National Action Against Overforeignization of People and Fatherland in Switzerland and Jean-Marie Le Pen's *Front National* in France. In the later 1980s, dramatic increases in the number of those seeking political asylum not only led to both the Schengen Treaty and Dublin Convention (which set out procedures for restricting an influx of asylum seekers and refugees) but also raised the thorny issue of who has the right to claim such status: does extreme deprivation, for example, constitute a violation of human rights? How does one sort out politically imposed deprivation from globally produced poverty?¹⁷

In 1993, The E.U. Working Group on Immigration began preparing a common list of undesirable aliens to be circulated among law enforcement agencies, initiated common training of officials, and established a center for information exchange on border crossings and immigration; Germany reinforced its borders vulnerable to Eastern European immigration, and France, implementing harsher naturalization restrictions, revoked its policy of automatic citizenship for second generation immigrants.¹⁸ In the U.S., the "Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996" provided for, among other things, an increase in border patrol agents, improved technology, harsher penalties for illegal entry, wiretap authorization for investigating alien smuggling or document fraud, expedited removal of inadmissible arriving aliens, a broadened range of offenses for which one can be deported, further exclusions from the family unity program, increased funds for removal of aliens, limitations on public assistance and benefits, greater surveillance of non-immigrant foreign students, and, creatively, a border patrol museum.¹⁹

If these regulations at first appear to be all about securing borders along national lines, on closer inspection, they reveal themselves to be less about distinguishing between aliens to, and citizens of, particular nation-states than between global foreigners (migrant workers or the underemployed) and global citizens (transnational capitalists, their retinue, and partners). For the latter are provided streamlined and comfortable provisions that make borders much less obstructive, but such provisions (which require, for example, the capital to travel frequently) come at too high a price for the former to purchase. These new foreigners produced in opposition to the global citizen are less politically than economically delineated, less defined in terms of national, linguistic, or ethnic cultures than in terms of an elite global culture.²⁰ But, I would contend, they nonetheless bear a distinct family resemblance to

the foreigners societies have long constructed: they are relegated to the unconscious, perceived as improper, experienced as uncanny.²¹ These terms, it should be emphasized, are not unrelated: improprieties, both individual and social, are regularly consigned to the unconscious; when they appear—as they inevitably will—they do so in the uncanny instants of symptoms and dreams.²²

Freud's personification of the repression barrier as a border guard casts the unconscious as a foreigner (as, arguably, do the cartographic metaphors of his early work or his imagery of movement, drives, displacement, and transference). And if the unconscious is a foreigner, so too is the foreigner the repository of a social unconscious.²³ In the regime of globalization, this unconscious is comprised, I would suggest, of the noncorporate actors crucial to the functioning of global industry and finance who remain largely overlooked by economic and political discourse on globalization; they are that which globalization does not recognize in and as itself. Not only do these global foreigners remain largely unacknowledged (*das Unbenuusste*) in global media, national economies, corporate reports, and the language of trade and development, but they are quite literal objects of repression: of forgetting, public erasure, disenfranchisement, dismissive stereotyping, and economic marginalization.²⁴ In this context, Lacan's language games, which position the unconscious as the slave of Hegelian dialectic, become particularly evocative. I borrow from Françoise Meltzer's excellent synopsis:

...the term "consciousness" can easily replace that of "master"; and that of "unconscious" can stand in for "slave." The unconscious, like the slave, is repressed. But the unconscious works, while consciousness sleeps and catches the latter unawares. The unconscious, further, will produce the materials which allow for the very existence and shape of consciousness.... Without the material "goods" supplied to consciousness by the unconscious, the first has nothing by which—or with which—to function.²⁵

This depiction is particularly resonant in the context of global economic relations where "global foreigners" remain the (largely unacknowledged) producers of goods and services for "First World" masters and in which, for example, the gap in wages between corporate CEOs and line workers is approximately 531 to one.²⁶

Repressed into social and discursive oblivion, the global foreigner can only appear as the improper (which, not incidentally, is a common synonym for *foreign*); he is a creature disqualified from the realm of the *proprius* and this semantic disqualification bears very significant social and material consequences. Derived from medieval French and English *propre* and, ultimately, from Latin *proprius* (one's own, special, particular; a peculiar characteristic; lasting, permanent; or, adverbially, exclusively, particularly, characteristically, or in a proper sense), the root *proper* designates what the foreigner by definition lacks: identity (what identity she possesses is fundamentally derivative, a repository for what the domestic conceives itself not to be); propriety (he misreads signs, responds inappropriately, makes errors); purity (she is imbedded in stereotypes of both physical uncleanness and metaphysical confusion); literality (his words fall outside of proper meaning); property (she is, by quite logical extension, restricted from owning property). This cluster of symptoms can be glimpsed

in the codes of propriety established by transnational entities and global culture, in the improprieties assumed to characterize labor immigrants, and in the pathologization of certain (aspects of) local cultures.²⁷

They are also manifest in the increasing degree to which the global foreigner, falling outside the economy of the proper, must devise ways of circumventing the "proper" economy, that is, of operating in the informal economy, informalizing work space and relations, subcontracting, shifting market functions to the community or household, engaging in "income-generating activities occurring outside the state's regulatory framework."²⁸ These practices—pathologized, criminalized, disciplined—are, tellingly, suspected of being foreign imports. Sassen writes:

Until recently, theorization about the informal economy has focused on the shortcomings of less developed economies: their inability to attain full modernization, to stop excess migration to the cities, and to implement universal education and literacy programs. The growth of an informal economy in highly developed countries has been explained as the result of immigration from the Third World and the replication here of survival strategies typical of the home countries of migrant workers.²⁹

But if he is both relegated to the unconscious and exiled from the *proper*, in what consists the uncanniness of the global foreigner? In his essay on the subject, Freud not only associates the uncanny with the operations of the unconscious but with the foreign, signaling the degree to which the German word *unheimlich* [uncanny] connotes foreignness. It is, he writes, "obviously the opposite of '*heimlich*' [homely], '*heimisch*' [native] (or belonging to the home), and we are tempted to conclude that what is 'uncanny' is frightening precisely because it is *not* known and familiar."³⁰ He corroborates this association via the *Wörterbuch der deutschen Sprache*, where the primary meaning of *heimlich* is "belonging to the house, not strange, familiar, tame, intimate, friendly etc." (222). But, Freud hastens to point out, the root *heimlich* also carries a secondary meaning: "concealed, kept from sight, so that others do not get to know of or about it, withheld from others" (223).³¹ Now it would seem, he continues, that we are confronted with opposing meanings: "[O]n the one hand, it means what is familiar and agreeable, and on the other, what is concealed and kept out of sight" (224-5). This *double entendre* leads Freud to quote a formulation by Schelling that is an apt description both of the psychoanalytic symptom and, in our context, of the presence of the global foreigner: "*Unheimlich is the name for everything that ought to have remained...hidden and secret and has come to light [or become visible]*" (224, emphasis in original).

Freud, however, concludes his etymological investigations with a slightly different, albeit equally suggestive, point: "Thus *heimlich* is a word the meaning of which develops in the direction of ambivalence, until it finally coincides with its opposite, *unheimlich*. *Unheimlich* is in some way or other a sub-species of *heimlich*" (226). The uncanny—like the global foreigner—coincides and coexists with its "opposite." The *heimlich*—let us hear in it those new transnational home spaces opened up by globalization—is non-self coincident, it is not (merely) itself.

Uncanniness, then, is a kind of presence and this strange

presence might, like foreignness, be described as a kind of disjunctive immediacy. For being foreign has long entailed bearing a mediated relation to the present. Kristeva, for example, describes the way such mediation was institutionalized in ancient Athens in the person of the *proxenus*, who functioned “as the *middleman* between the polis and those belonging to a foreign community, providing a remedy to their statutory incapacity.”³² In modernity, such mediation often entails taking a detour through the immigration service, a refugee board, a translator, the settlement house, or a social work agency. What “natives” do in unmediated fashion—speak, work, shop, set up homes, raise children, socialize—is mediated for foreigners by an “in-between” figure capable of translating and negotiating with the dominant culture and its institutions. Meaning might also be described in these terms of (im)mediacy: if being at home means having access to (ostensibly) immediate meaning, to be foreign is to be encumbered by an awareness of mediation, to be detained by language, by practices and speech that must be thematized, reflected upon, interpreted.

If uncanniness inheres in the mediated relation to presence that characterizes the experience of *being* foreign, so too is it produced, as we shall find following Freud, by the experience of *encountering* the foreign. While Freud pursues his exploration of the uncanny in multiple directions—through analyses of Hoffman’s tale of “the Sandman,” the castration complex, the repetition compulsion, death—I want to concentrate on several less conspicuous parts of the essay that are, I believe, particularly germane to the uncanny presence of the global foreigner. Freud describes the uncanny as a “class of the frightening which leads back to what is known of old [or something long known to us] and long familiar” (220) and, following his analysis of the figure of the double—in which “the extraneous [or foreign] self is substituted for [one’s] own” (234), he proposes that this and other manifestations of uncanniness are a kind of “harking-back to particular phases in the evolution of the self-regarding feeling, a regression to a time when the ego had not yet marked itself off sharply from the external world and from other people” (236). Further on, and in less individualistic terms, he contends that the uncanny also makes itself felt when an event seems to support primitive beliefs—omnipotence of thoughts, instantaneous wish-fulfillments, secret power to do harm, and the return of the dead—which ostensibly have been surmounted in modern society.³³ Resuscitating old, discarded beliefs, the uncanny is the survival of something archaic.

From these analyses of both individual and cultural regression emerges an evident association of the uncanny with an infantile and primitive past that might also be described as a kind of temporal nonpresence. This uncanny temporality is, I would argue, analogous in significant ways to the manner in which global foreigners remain alienated from modernity, that is, from the *present*. When they appear—in corporate space, the news, economic analyses or, perhaps, in the consciousness of the “global citizen”—they are uncanny, threatening, the unsettling sign of something society has ostensibly left behind.³⁴

The genesis of this temporal uncanniness begins with high modernity, in which the “modern” is intimately connected with the formation of nation-states. Conceived as a

specifically modern political formation, the nation becomes the very sign of modernity: not to be a nation, not to bear the identifying marks of well-defined territorial boundaries, a centralized bureaucracy, secular political power, and an industrialized economy, is to be foreign to modernity.³⁵ If the nation imagines itself in terms of cultural stability, continuity with the past, a timeless identity—in which the foreigner appears as the threat of mobility and impermanence—a competing narrative of modernity reads the nation as the site of ceaseless development, progress, dynamic change, and the constant revolutionizing of instruments and relations of production.³⁶ With the advent of globalization, it is the latter of these narratives, I would argue, that triumphs as the “essence” of modernity, and with it, a version of foreignness that is less a disruptive movement than an intransigent stability, an immobilization in a remote temporality. For the geography of foreignness characteristic of high modernity is largely one in which “the West” is conceived in opposition to “the rest” (referred to alternately as the “non-West,” the “Third World,” the “underdeveloped,” or “developing world”). And in this temporalized geography of modernity, to be foreign means to be backward, dependent, immobilized in time past.³⁷

As James Clifford points out, modernity has also customarily been conceived in opposition to “tradition.” He notes, for example, that “anthropological culture collectors have typically gathered what seems ‘traditional’—what by definition is opposed to modernity.”³⁸ The term “traditional,” moreover, has been known to function as a synonym for “non-Western” and this schema entails the double effect that “what is different” about peoples in modernity “remains tied to traditional pasts, inherited structures that either resist or yield to the new but cannot produce it,”³⁹ and that the “traditional” is relegated to an irrelevant past, rendered trebly foreign: “non-Western,” temporally nonpresent, inessential. What has changed with the onset of “globalization” (when homes and nations are increasingly loosened from both geographical and temporal fixities and when “time-space compression” has altered the way we measure such distances) is that the global foreigner has increasingly been defined as a kind of pathological stability within, and intractable obstacle to, global imperatives of mobility and speed: of accelerated production and exchange, rapid travel, instant communication, immediate financial transactions, and a dizzying turnover of fashion, knowledge, entertainment, and lifestyles.⁴⁰ What remains the same is the equation of foreignness with the opposite of modernity—a common synonym, it should not be overlooked, for the *present*. This figure signals the degree to which the global foreigner is positioned less as a producer, than a (quickly obsolete) *product*, of globalization, a reification that becomes even more evident if we recognize presence as a matter not just of temporality, but of materiality.

We have been speaking of globalization and its foreigners in temporal terms, but their presence is also physical. The conceptual spectrality of foreignness, the logical difficulties of pinning down its presence, have long been resolved by reference to the presence (or absence) of specifiable material objects—such as ethnically-marked foods, clothing, or other artifacts. And global citizenship is, as Sklair contends, largely a matter of possessing “relatively expensive global brands in order to forge some sense of identity with what we can only call, in a rather crude sense, ‘symbols of modernity.’”⁴¹ The

presence of globalization is also physically determined; it extends in space, is built of, and recognizable by, particular material configurations. Although the glossy cover of globalization promises a physically deterritorialized cyberspace devoid of material presence, the phenomenon itself is more place-bound than such representations suggest: globalizing information systems require an extensive infrastructure, the material presence of buildings, machines, and workers that are (as a matter of fact and a fact of matter) located within particular national boundaries (and *not* within others). Indeed, the new forms of inclusion and exclusion created by globalizing processes can, to a large degree, be spatially mapped in terms of urban centers and their tuberous peripheries of foreignness.

But Freud's essay leads us to a perhaps even more consequential uncanniness inhabiting the global foreigner's material presence. His analysis of exemplary events arousing a feeling of uncanniness begins with reference to a certain E. Jentsch, who has published a paper entitled "*Zur Psychologie des Unheimlichen*" and who, like himself, has analyzed Hoffman's tale of the Sandman. Jentsch, Freud writes, "has taken as a very good instance 'doubts whether an apparently animate being is really alive; or conversely, whether a lifeless object might not be in fact animate'" and he cites Jentsch's argument that "in telling a story, one of the most successful devices for easily creating uncanny effects is to leave the reader in uncertainty whether a particular figure in the story is a human being or an automaton" (cited in Freud, 227). Freud largely dismisses this point, however, arguing that Jentsch's focus on the figure of Olympia, the doll that apparently comes to life, misses the "main theme" of the story, which, for Freud, is the Sand Man who tears out children's eyes—a literary displacement of the castration complex. But I want to suggest that Jentsch's analysis may be more prescient than Freud allows and particularly germane to the uncanniness of the global foreigner. For this uncanniness is arguably produced by a kind of structural and social ambivalence over whether such foreigners are, precisely, animate beings or automatons, sentient presences or instruments of labor, active human agents or passive functions within a service apparatus. The latter, to be sure, are strange and threatening when they take on life, sensations, and desires of their own.

Global foreigners are, moreover, often perceived as material objects: they are the subjects of reification, their value assessed in terms of capacity for physical labor or embodied service, their presence confined to the body. And subtending this confinement to material presence is, I would argue, a time-honored presumption that foreigners cannot (or should not) transcend the material body, a conception that positions the foreigner in the lower social classes and nourishes the simultaneously repelling and alluring nature of foreignness: the foreigner is tainted by the debased social status of physical labor while exoticized by an association with carnal pleasures—and closer to the animalistic in either case. Bourdieu's depiction of the customary equivalence between the bourgeoisie, "culture," and transcendence of the body on the one hand, and the lower classes, nature, and embodiment on the other, translates, in many contexts, into a distinction between the global citizen and the foreigner: "The antithesis between culture and bodily pleasure (or nature) is rooted in the opposition between the cultivated bourgeoisie and the people, the imaginary site of uncultivated nature, barbarously wallowing

in pure enjoyment."⁴²

This logic also works in reverse. If foreigners are essentially material, one can be made foreign by being reduced to the materiality of the body. Indeed the evidence is all too clear that the presence of foreignness is routinely verified on the body: in post-apartheid South Africa, immigrants from other parts of the continent, perceived as a threat to native employment, have increasingly come under physical attack;⁴³ Amnesty International, documenting instances of violent punishment, torture, sexual assault, and denial of medical care, reports that "foreigners in Japan are at serious risk of ill-treatment at the hands of the authorities";⁴⁴ the European Monitoring Centre on Racism and Xenophobia, in their 1998 report, documented hundreds of incidents of "vicious attacks, intimidation and discrimination against racial groups...while recognizing just how few cases are ever reported";⁴⁵ Germany's Federal Interior Minister recently disclosed that "xenophobic acts of violence," including murder, bodily injury, arson, and bomb attacks had risen by 40 percent in 2000;⁴⁶ and since September 11 in the U.S.,

Hate crimes have been reported in over thirty states all over the country, against people who are Muslim, Sikh, Hindu, Arab, Pakistani, Afghan, Indian, Iranian, Turkish, Greek, Latino and Native American. In a New York parking lot a man tried to run over a Pakistani woman and threatened to kill her for "destroying my country." In California, a Yemeni shopkeeper was shot and killed after receiving threatening phone calls and notes. A Creek Native American woman in Tulsa was told by a group of White men to "Go back to your own country!" before she was run over by their car and killed.⁴⁷

Such events, the list of which could, unfortunately, be continued indefinitely, at once concretize the intangibility of foreignness, degrade the foreigner into nothing but the material of the body, and ensure that the foreigner is made sensibly to experience her foreignness.⁴⁸

The physical pain at the core of these incidents is itself a form of foreignness, an aversiveness experienced as alien, in which one's own body is rendered adversarial.⁴⁹ But perhaps even more relevant to our discussion is the fact that pain, as Elaine Scarry contends, robs one of the presence of the world; it is, as foreignness, a distinctive relation to presence:

a destruction experienced spatially as either the contraction of the universe down to the immediate vicinity of the body or as the body swelling to fill the entire universe. Intense pain is also language-destroying: as the content of one's world disintegrates, so the content of one's language disintegrates; as the self disintegrates, so that which would express and project the self is robbed of its source and its subject.⁵⁰

In this scenario, the foreigner's body is hyperbolically present, while his or her world is effectively eradicated: "the absence of pain is a presence of world; the presence of pain is the absence of world."⁵¹ Further, because pain is language destroying, it has the effect of rendering people foreign by likening them to animals, infants (*infans* = without language), and barbarians, by making them, as literally as possible, *ζῷον λογὸν οὐκ ἔχον* (animals not possessing language/reason).

Near the end of his essay on the uncanny, Freud adds "one more point of general application" that is, I think,

pertinent to our understanding of the global foreigner. “[A]n uncanny effect,” he writes:

is often and easily produced by effacing the distinction between imagination and reality, as when something that we have hitherto regarded as imaginary appears before us in reality, or when a symbol takes over the full functions and significance of the thing it symbolizes, and so on.... The infantile element in this, which also dominates the minds of neurotics, is the over-accentuation of psychical reality in comparison with physical reality—a feature closely allied to the belief in the omnipotence of thoughts. (244)

“Effacing the distinction between imagination and reality”: might not the same be said of the hyperbolic discourse proliferated by the Bretton Woods institutions—the IMF, WTO, and World Bank—and ritually echoed by American corporations, politicians, and media? Has not the symbol *globalization*, in many instances, taken on a life of its own, outrun and overshadowed the thing it symbolizes? What Freud identifies in infants and neurotics as “over-accentuation of psychical reality in comparison with physical reality” might well describe, I would argue, the degree to which the discursive vision constructed by these entities occludes material circumstances. Indeed, when material evidence of poverty, negative growth, or depression invades this discursively protected space, it appears as something uncanny, unreal, the product of some unhealthy imagination.⁵² Expressed in linguistic terms, global financial institutions have constructed a truth effect by hermetically sealing off the relation between signifier and signified. Words refer to meanings that seem increasingly self-evident the more they are reiterated and that do not require irrelevant detours through the alien turf of materiality. Referents—material presences—are rendered foreign: improper, irrelevant, uncanny.⁵³

Let us be more specific. The language purveyed by global financial institutions is one of free trade, liberalization, elimination of barriers, openness, maximized profits, economic growth, increased efficiency, investment opportunity, fiscal discipline, and monetary stability. It thus clearly casts those that oppose or do not comply with their policies as reprehensibly constrained, illiberal, closed, inefficient, undisciplined, and unstable.⁵⁴ The incessant reiteration of this rhetoric, moreover, threatens—and, I would argue, *aspires*—to eclipse material conditions. Michel Camdessus, former Managing Director of the IMF declares, “Globalization is a positive development for the world economy.... To begin with, globalization is the continuation of the trend of growing openness and integration among economies that has brought the world a half century of unparalleled prosperity.”⁵⁵ The WTO’s website asserts: “GATT and the WTO have helped to create a strong and prosperous trading system contributing to unprecedented growth.”⁵⁶ And it avers, in disingenuously inclusive language:

Trade barriers around the world are lower than they have ever been in modern trading history. They continue to fall, and we are all benefiting. If trade allows us to import more, it also allows others to buy more of our exports. It increases our incomes, providing us with the means of enjoying the increased choice.⁵⁷

The World Bank, beneath the banner “Our Dream is a World

Free of Poverty,” claims to support “a broad range of programs aimed at reducing poverty and improving living standards in the developing world.”⁵⁸ These are the thoughts invested with omnipotence, the “psychical reality” constructed by global financial institutions.

Yet for much of the developing world the “physical reality” is quite different: during the decades of rapid globalization since the 1970s, poverty has dramatically increased and living standards decreased. For seventy developing countries, most operating under “structural adjustment programs” (SAPs), average incomes were less in the mid-1990s than in 1980, and for forty-three less than in 1970.⁵⁹ Among 159 countries with available data, fifty had negative average annual growth in GNP per capita in 1990-98.⁶⁰ Even in Mexico, the IMF’s poster child of the eighties, the living standard of more than half the population was lower in 1996 than it had been in 1980.⁶¹ Worldwide, one third of the world’s labor force is either underemployed or entirely unemployed;⁶² 1.2 billion people live on less than one dollar a day;⁶³ and some 50,000 people die daily from preventable, poverty-related causes—lack of food, shelter, clean water, and sanitation.⁶⁴ As the International Forum on Globalization (IFG) reminds us, “too often conventional measures of economic performance such as Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and Gross National Product (GNP) create an illusion of growing prosperity even as a country is depleting its real capital and mortgaging its future to foreign bankers to finance luxury imports for the rich and military armaments to keep the poor in check.”⁶⁵ Narda Melendez, the Coordinator of the *Asociacion Andar* in Honduras, puts the matter more starkly:

What has structural adjustment meant for our people? Greater poverty, greater inflation, and great unemployment. According to data from the Honduran College of Economists, poverty grew from 68 to 73 percent, over 54 percent of the economically active population is unemployed, and inflation has increased 63.4 percent since 1990. Misery is reflected in the faces of men, children, women, and old people, who must wander through the city in search of food, housing, and work. The World Bank officials who have visited the country must have seen this misery from the moment they disembarked from the plane....⁶⁶

But is it possible that, in some sense, they could not see? That such material evidence has been rendered ghostly and imperceptible (a statistically irrelevant detail, an improper consideration) by the World Bank’s own discursive vision? Would not such a “seeing” indeed amount to a foreign incursion into the discursive hegemony of the World Bank and its partners, a debilitating threat to the fantasized omnipotence of their language?

If the language of globalization deters such recognition, so too does the breach between the material world occupied by global citizens and that inhabited by its foreigners. Marking the dramatic increase in inequality both between and within societies since the 1960s, the *U.N. Human Development Report 2000* testifies “that the richest 20 percent of the world’s population consume 86 percent of the world’s resources while the poorest 80 percent consume just 14 percent.”⁶⁷ In 1999, the world’s richest 200 people had combined wealth of \$1.14 trillion while the 582 million people in the least developed countries had a combined income of \$146

billion.⁶⁸ Merrill Lynch-Cap Gemini reports “total wealth controlled by people with assets of at least \$1 million nearly quadrupled from 1986 to 2000.”⁶⁹ In the U.S., since 1983, almost all the growth in household income and wealth has accrued to the richest twenty percent.⁷⁰ The top twenty percent of U.S. households own 84.6 percent of all wealth in the country.⁷¹ The net worth of the top one percent of U.S. households now exceeds that of the bottom ninety percent.⁷² These are the material conditions that haunt the discourse of globalization. In a strange inversion, they have become more spectral, apparently more difficult to believe, than the language that purports to describe them: a foreign presence, uncanny.

We have already noted the degree to which entities such as the WTO, its cohorts and cheerleaders, make use of a language of liberation: of free trade, the elimination of barriers, liberalization, and openness. Let’s look more closely at this language; it has been particularly potent in “effacing the distinction between imagination and reality.” Freedom, of course, comes well qualified with moral credentials; it is the inverse of bondage and slavery, of oppression and constraint; it nearly always bats for Team Good. And there is little doubt that this inference of goodness is counted upon to slip into—and bathe in blinding light—the entire range of practices carried out by global capitalist institutions, such that these global “freedom fighters” seem to be liberating not only trade, but nations, ideas, and people. A staple of this language of liberation, as evinced in our citation from the WTO website above, is the trope of eradicating trade “barriers.” But just what *are* these barriers, these obstructions and obstacles that hinder “free trade”? As a number of activist groups and NGOs have been at pains to point out, they are largely labor laws, living wages for workers, small businesses, self-reliant farming, environmental protection, and, most ironically, democratic governance.⁷³ The “liberation movements” championed by global financial institutions have, that is, created large numbers of low-wage jobs that are temporary and without benefits, carried out in deplorable work conditions, and easily terminable. “Freeing” the economy to attract foreign business, as the IFG notes:

...often translates into the lowering of minimum wages and the weakening of collective bargaining laws. By the end of 1997, Haiti’s minimum wage was only \$2.40 a day, worth just 19.5 percent of the minimum wage in 1971. Costa Rica, the first Central American country to implement a SAP, saw real wages decline by 16.9 percent between 1980 and 1991, while during the first four years of Hungary’s SAP, the value of wages fell by 24 percent.⁷⁴

Thus if such policies make trade more free—and that is disputable—they clearly do not make *people* more free. For as the U.N. *Human Development Report* quite rightly insists, “poverty limits human freedoms;” it restricts one’s capacity to benefit from basic human rights.⁷⁵ Neither do such policies make economies more free; in fact, they have increased the economic bondage of developing countries by augmenting their debt loads. For the forty-one most heavily indebted countries, total external debt rose from \$55 billion in 1980 to \$215 billion by 1995.⁷⁶ The mantra of freedom chanted by global capitalist institutions is, in Freud’s terms, tantamount to an infantile and neurotic belief in the omnipotence of thoughts, in a wish fulfillment untested by “the material reality of the

phenomena” (249), in the fantasy of an absolutely performative language.

Liberation from trade barriers not only produces a highly dubious form of freedom, but leaves an uncanny material residue: the ghosts of local businesses and small industries, the remnants of small-scale farms, phantom democracies. Under the sign of being made more “efficient” and “competitive,” many small businesses have been ruined by the removal of protective tariffs, thereby creating greater reliance on imports: another form of economic servitude difficult to reconcile with the fantasy of freedom. Similarly, IMF policies and the WTOs “Agreement on Agriculture” have transmogrified many small farms growing food for local people into large-scale, export-oriented agri-businesses focused on high-profit luxury items such as flowers, shrimp, cotton, coffee, and exotic fruits and vegetables, often under absentee management by global corporations. The net effect is to undermine many societies’ ability to produce food for themselves through subsistence agriculture or, as Carlos Andres Perez, former President of Venezuela, put it somewhat more bluntly, “the IMF practices an economic totalitarianism which kills not with bullets but with famine.”⁷⁷

Perhaps the most ironic “barrier” to fall before transnational capital, the most ironic signified to be eaten by its own signifier, has been democracy itself, for as Jerry Mander, Debi Barker, and David Korten dryly note, “it is not efficient for global corporations when individual nations are permitted their own expressions of what is best for their people via their own democratic laws.”⁷⁸ Indeed, despite the unctuous language that routinely associates “free trade” with political, social, religious, and personal freedom, the Bretton Woods institutions have not hesitated to support repressive regimes when they are financially advantageous, nor to fund forced population transfer schemes, such as that carried out by the Suharto government in Indonesia.

The IMF’s allegedly liberatory practices are customarily effected through the mechanism of Structural Adjustment Programs—and the term *adjustment* (to settle, put in order, regulate, make fit for use, alter slightly) merits its own analysis—which insists on privatization of health services, water supplies, education, public housing and transport, safety, sanitation, and other public services. These services, that is, are transferred into the hands of transnational corporations to be operated as profit-generating businesses, which will, in turn, produce revenue to service the debt. But we should no doubt pause to consider whether “privatization” can be reconciled with the notion of “free trade” at all, that is, whether the fantasy can be reconciled with itself. To privatize means to restrict access, to close to the public, to reserve exclusively for individual or personal use. And how “free” is a trade to which one has no access? We should perhaps also bear in mind that the term *privatize* derives from the Latin verb, *privare*, meaning to deprive or bereave, a meaning trace that takes on considerable significance when we look at some of the devastating effects of privatization schemes:

In Zimbabwe, spending per head on healthcare has fallen by a third since 1990, when a World Bank Structural Adjustment Program was introduced. The quality of health services has declined by 30 percent since then; twice as many women were dying in childbirth in Harare hospital compared to 1990; and fewer people were visiting clinics

and hospitals because they could not afford user fees.⁷⁹ Privatization has also meant increased (i.e., profit-generating) prices for water. When in Cochabamba, Bolivia, the city “was forced to privatize its water services by the World Bank and IMF, rate increases as much as tripled for some of the poorest customers. In a country where the minimum wage was less than \$60 per month, many users received water bills above \$20 per month.”⁸⁰ In addition, residents who had possessed family wells or irrigation systems for decades were suddenly required to pay for the right to use this water. In KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, when those who were too poor to pay for their water had their supplies cut off, they resorted to polluted river water, resulting in a deadly outbreak of cholera.⁸¹ It is of no small significance that greater expense and effort have been dedicated to eradicating such contamination from the global Imaginary than from the world’s drinking supplies.

Not only are IMF and World Bank practices—no matter how well-dressed in a language of liberation—difficult to reconcile with any notion of human freedom, they are also a very awkward fit with that much more strictly delimited version of freedom, “free trade.” To trade ostensibly means to exchange, barter, buy and sell, and, as we have already noticed, the practices of transnational corporations and capitalist institutions often exclude actors from precisely these activities. A good example is the “liberalization” of soybean and soy oil import policy in India in August of 1999, which resulted in subsidized imports of soybeans being dumped on the Indian market. “Within one growing season,” reports Anuradha Mittal, “prices crashed by more than two-thirds, and millions of oilseed-producing farmers had lost their market.”⁸² In this instance, and it is one among many, so-called “free trade” meant precisely the inability to trade, exclusion from the system of exchange. One might make a similar argument about the practice of devaluing currencies. Isn’t the effect of decreased purchasing power precisely to exclude actors from trade, a barricading rather than an “opening” of the economy? But perhaps the most egregious instance of this liquidation of trade in the name of “free trade” is the case of the Trade Related Intellectual Property Agreement (TRIPS), which regulates patents, copyrights, and trademarks, and which, by recognizing corporations as owners of seed, for example, has “convert[ed] farmers into thieves when they save seed or share it with their neighbors,”⁸³ and which has aggressively prevented pharmaceutical companies outside of the U.S. and Europe from manufacturing life-saving drugs at prices affordable to populations in “developing” countries. This “agreement” in effect restricts trade in, and profit from, intellectual property to industrialized countries, which hold ninety-seven percent of all patents, and to global corporations, which hold ninety percent of all technology and product patents. The human devastation caused by TRIPS regulations—a ghastliness purged from the discursive fantasy purveyed by the WTO—has already been enormous.⁸⁴

The discursively constructed presence of globalization—a vision of free trade, liberalization, openness, and opportunity—is, to borrow Freud’s language, an “overaccentuation of psychical reality in comparison with physical reality” that renders uncanny the foreigners left at its gate. For while processes of globalization have shifted borders and redefined belonging, they have by no means done away with

foreignness. The concept of the foreign appears not only, as I have suggested, in resurgent nationalisms and exotic commodities, but in a figure we have named the “global foreigner,” who is a by-product of the service and consumption demands of global citizens, the transnationalization of labor, revised immigration regulations, and the “structural adjustments” mandated by the IMF and World Bank.

The global foreigner we have described is, in conclusion, less ethnically than economically defined, less delineated by national borders than by the cultural and lifestyle boundaries erected by a global elite. Nonetheless, this global foreigner resembles a long line of ancestors through her position as a societal unconscious, her impropriety, and her uncanny presence. It is on the last of these terms that we have concentrated, marking the degree to which the global foreigner is defined by a certain quality of both temporal and material presence: a mediated presence, associated with an infantile and primitive past, a presence reduced to materiality through labor and sometimes violence, a discursively hidden presence that appears only in uncanny times and spaces.

NOTES

¹ I am grateful to Chris Breu, Wail Hassan, and Vaheed Ramazani for reading this work and for clarifying and enriching its argument with their incisive comments. Portions of this article are drawn from chapters 3 and 4 of my book *The Concept of the Foreign: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2002).

² See Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale, trans. (New York: Vintage, 1968), 7. Nietzsche’s uncanny guest is nihilism and, while a rigorous analysis of the significance of nihilism to globalization is outside the scope of this paper, there is, I believe, much to suggest that Nietzsche’s denaturalization of the highest values and reassessment of metaphysical categories; his insistence on exposing the origin of values customarily protected by their transcendence and on investigating the conditions that enable interpretations and values; his critique of a morality that “is a way of turning one’s back on the will to existence” (11) and that substitutes an invented “true” world in the beyond for the present world of becoming; and his conception of a nihilism that, far from merely throwing one’s hands in the air, is a calling to account of philosophy and the very condition of possibility for worldly transformation might be exceedingly fruitful for analyzing the figure of the “global foreigner” outlined below. Equally evocative might be an analysis of the uncanniness that Derrida discloses in the history of friendship or Heidegger’s assessment of being-in-the-world as a fleeing from uncanniness into the “tranquilized familiarity” or “self-assurance” of *das Man*. For all three of these thinkers, uncanniness is associated with a possibility that precedes significance. See Jacques Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins (New York: Verso, 1997); Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1962); and Rebecca Saunders, “Keeping a Distance: Heidegger and Derrida on Foreignness and Friends” in *Crossing Borders: Nations, Bodies, Disciplines*, Hugh Silverman and Michael Sanders, eds. (New York: Continuum, forthcoming).

³ These circumstances include the dramatic growth of global markets and finance since the late 1970s; a decrease in governmental regulation of, and increase in privatized apparatuses for, cross-border transactions; the greater mobility of capital; interaction and transactions in cyberspace; the decline of national sovereignty and transfer of economic and legal authority to transnational entities. For historicizing perspectives on globalization (including arguments for and against globalization as a new phenomenon), see Enrique Dussel, “Beyond Eurocentrism: The World System and the Limits of Modernity,” Walter Mignolo, “Globalization, Civilization, and Languages,” and Masao Miyoshi, “Globalization, Culture, and the University,” in *The Cultures of Globalization*, Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi, eds. (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998), 3-31, 32-53, 247-270.

⁴ Benjamin Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld: How Globalism and Tribalism are Reshaping the World* (New York: Ballantine, 1995), 29.

⁵ I have explored these constituents of foreignness at length in *The Concept of the Foreign: An Interdisciplinary Dialogue*.

⁶ The WTO, for example, has the authority to discipline, and override

decisions of, individual nations; and international human rights covenants have successfully challenged the legislatures and judiciary systems of nation-states and, in Europe, had a significant impact on national policy formation. See Saskia Sassen, *Globalization and its Discontents: Essays on the New Mobility of People and Money* (New York: New Press, 1998). On environmental movements, see Joan Martínez-Alier, "'Environmental Justice' (Local and Global)" and David Harvey, "What's Green and Makes the Environment Go Round?" in Jameson and Miyoshi, *Cultures of Globalization*, 312-326, 327-355.

⁶ See Aihwa Ong, *Flexible Citizenship: The Cultural Logics of Transnationality* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1999).

⁷ Leslie Sklair, "Social Movements and Global Capitalism," in Jameson and Miyoshi, *The Cultures of Globalization*, 299.

⁸ Barber, *Jihad vs. McWorld*, 13.

⁹ "The Local and the Global: Globalization and Ethnicity," in *Culture, Globalization and the World-System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity*, ed. Anthony D. King (Binghamton, NY: Department of Art and Art History, State University of New York at Binghamton, 1991), 25-26. Elie Kedourie identified the beginnings of this dynamic early on:

The relentless developments of modernity have also worked to debilitate and destroy tribalism and its social and political traditions. The consequence is an atomized society which seeks in nationalism a substitute for the old order, now irrevocably lost. Its members find for themselves a link with obscure and mysterious kingdoms, seeking solace in archaeological speculations; or else, in search of the fulfillment which reality denies them, they re-enact with conscious and deliberate frenzy tribal practices which anthropologists had surveyed and recorded and which Western rule, by destroying their social context, had robbed of significance. (Elie Kedourie, *Nationalism* [Oxford: Blackwell, 1993], 107)

¹⁰ Jameson and Miyoshi, *The Cultures of Globalization*, xii. This argument, as Chris Breu has pointed out to me, might be rephrased psychoanalytically: such relations are first and foremost ones of repression when not outright foreclosure.

¹¹ The ironic underside of this commodification is the cast off Nikes and UCLA T-shirts that clothe much of the "Third World."

¹² Sassen, *Globalization and its Discontents*, 48.

¹³ We should no doubt not overlook the ominousness of being labeled foreign to "the global"—that is, to the world itself—a position that might be described in Heideggerian terms as being stripped of worldliness, of what shows up as world, as without the being specific to *Dasein*: inhuman at best, in-existent at worst.

¹⁴ Sassen, *Globalization and its Discontents*, 34. Sassen also perceptively analyzes the discrepancy between a global economic regime aimed at neutralizing borders and national immigration policies that seek to reinforce them.

¹⁵ Sassen, *Globalization and its Discontents*, 31.

¹⁶ Sassen, *Globalization and its Discontents*, 31.

¹⁷ On the refugee claim process in Canada, see Robert F. Barsky, "The Construction of the Other and the Destruction of the Self: The Case of the Convention Hearings," in *Encountering the Other(s): Studies in Literature, History, and Culture*, ed. Gisela Brinker-Gabler (Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1995), 79-100. See also Oxfam Policy Paper, "Response to UK Government's White Paper on immigration, citizenship and asylum: Secure Borders, Safe Haven" (March, 2002), as well as other papers available at <http://www.oxfam.org/eng/policy_pape.htm>.

¹⁸ For further discussion of these regulations, see Saskia Sassen, *Guests and Aliens* (New York: New Press, 1999), chap. 6.

¹⁹ September, 2001, <<http://www.telalink.net/~gsiskind/docs/IIIRA.html>>. These regulations have been further revised in the aftermath of September 11. For texts of relevant legislation, see <<http://www.thomas.loc.gov/home/terrorleg.htm>>. Helpful legal analyses of the "Patriot Act" are available at <<http://jurist.lawpitt.edu/terrorism3b.htm>>. Georgetown Constitutional Law Professor David Cole has been vocal in noting the degree to which "antiterrorism" legislation is aimed at immigrants. See, for example, "Immigrant Liberties are First Casualty of War," <<http://www.npr.org/news/specials/response/essays/011015.colecommentary.html>> and "Online Newshour: Law and Liberty," October 26, 2001. <www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/congress/july-dec01/patriot_10-26.html>.

²⁰ It might also be argued that global foreigners who are migrants bear a doubled alienation, their cultural difference measured against the alternative norms of an immobile indigeness on the one hand and a hypermobile transnationalism on the other: neither staying at home nor possessing multiple homes, they are merely away from home.

²¹ On the relation of these terms to foreignness, see Saunders, *The Concept of the Foreign*, chaps. 1 and 4.

²² Both Vaheed Ramazani and Chris Breu have pointed out to me the degree to which the phenomena I am analyzing correspond to the structure of fetishism.

²³ I have argued further, in *The Concept of the Foreign*, that the foreign is (and is like) the unconscious in its negative relativity, alogicality, and its disclosure in obscure signs that must be submitted to a translation. See chapter 3.

²⁴ Freud's term for the unconscious, *das Unbewusste*, is also the German word for "unknown."

²⁵ Françoise Meltzer, "Unconscious," in *Critical Terms for Literary Study*, eds. Frank Lentricchia and Thomas McLaughlin (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1990), 158.

²⁶ See Sarah Anderson, John Cavanagh, Chris Harman, and Betsy Leondar-Wright, "Executive Excess 2001: Layoffs, Tax Rebates, the Gender Gap, Eighth Annual CEO Compensation Survey" (Washington, DC: Institute for Policy Studies and United for a Fair Economy, 2001), October 2001, <<http://www.ufenet.org/press/2001/EE2001.pdf>>. I am indebted to Dale Fitzgibbons for his assistance in locating this information. For an overview and analysis of these global economic relations, see also Michel Chossudovsky, *The Globalisation of Poverty: Impacts of IMF and World Bank Reforms* (London: Zed Books, 1997). A synopsis of this book, as well as numerous other helpful essays, can be found at <<http://www.universityofthepoor.org/library/articles/>>. Multiple resources are also available through the Third World Network at <<http://www.twinside.org>>.

²⁷ Derrida has demonstrated the degree to which the family of meanings inhabiting the proper grounds Western metaphysics as "the absolute parousia of the literal meaning, as the presence to the self of the logos within its voice." Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), 89. He states that "to make enigmatic what one thinks one understands by the words 'proximity,' 'immediacy,' 'presence' (the proximate [proche] the own [propre] and the pre- of presence), is [his] final intention in [Of Grammatology]" (70). See also "La parole soufflée," on "the unity of the proper as the nonpollution of the subject absolutely close to himself," *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 183.

²⁸ Sassen, *Globalization and its Discontents*, 153. Like the not-structure of foreignness itself, these "improper" practices are defined by the very regulatory framework they evade. Manthia Diawara describes a similar dynamic in West Africa between, on the one hand, traditional markets and merchants and, on the other hand, nation-states and their multinational allies. See "Toward a Regional Imaginary in Africa," in Jameson and Miyoshi, *The Cultures of Globalization*, 103-124.

²⁹ Sassen, *Globalization and its Discontents*, 153.

³⁰ Sigmund Freud, "The 'Uncanny'" in *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, ed. and trans. James Strachey (London: The Hogarth Press, 1955), XVII: 220. Hereinafter noted in the text.

³¹ As Grimm's dictionary explains it, "From the idea of 'homelike,' 'belonging to the house,' the further idea is developed of something withdrawn from the eyes of strangers, something concealed, secret; and this idea is expanded in many ways..." (quoted by Freud, 225, emphasis in original).

³² Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991), 49.

³³ "Omnipotence of thoughts" is Freud's term for belief in the ability to will events or actions, fulfill wishes, do good or harm to others through the power of thought. This is a primitive belief that, according to Freud, we have surmounded, "for the whole matter is one of 'testing reality,' pure and simple, a question of the material reality of the phenomena" (249).

³⁴ The depiction of the temporally nonpresent as a species of foreignness has a long history. Evocation of the past as a foreign country, for example, evinces the degree to which the passage of time is perceived to leave behind foreignness: a forgotten self, an inscrutable ancestor, a strange way of doing things, death.

³⁵ As Benedict Anderson famously contends, the nation-state is not only predicated on a distinctly modern conception of time—a simultaneity measured by clock and calendar, expressed in novel and newspaper—but is structured "modularly": because it became "a known model, it imposed certain 'standards' from which too-marked deviations were impermissible." Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York: Verso, 1983), 81. This imperative, and the destabilizing effect it has had on indigenous political systems, has, particularly on the continent of Africa, contributed to the rise of authoritarian regimes, single-party systems, and ethnic conflict. A good introduction to these issues can be found in Peter J. Schraeder, *African Politics and Society: A Mosaic in Transformation* (New York: Bedford/St. Martin's, 2000).

³⁶ The former narrative is signaled by, for example, Homi Bhabha who

writes: "the political unity of the nation consists in a continual displacement of its irredeemably plural modern space...into a signifying space that is a chaotic and mythical, paradoxically representing the nation's modern territoriality, in the patriotic, atavistic temporality of Traditionalism." Homi K. Bhabha, "DissemiNation," in *Nation and Narration*, ed. Homi K. Bhabha (New York: Routledge, 1990), 300. The latter narrative is exemplified by Marx and Engels, as in the following well-loved paragraph from the *Manifesto*:

The bourgeoisie cannot exist without constantly revolutionizing the instruments of production, and thereby the relations of production, and with them all the relations of society.... Constant revolutionizing of production, uninterrupted disturbance of all social relations, everlasting uncertainty and agitation, distinguish the bourgeois epoch from all earlier ones. All fixed, fast-frozen relations, with their train of ancient and venerable opinions are swept away, all new-formed ones become antiquated before they can ossify. All that is solid melts into air, all that is holy is profaned, and man at last is forced to face with sober senses, his real conditions of life and his relations with his kind. (Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* [New York: Penguin, 1967], 83)

³⁷ The temporal disparities of modernity have also been noted by Walter Mignolo who writes, "Toward the end of the nineteenth century . . . spatial boundaries were transformed into chronological ones . . . savages, and cannibals in space were converted into primitives and exotic Orientals in time" ("Globalization, Civilization, and Languages," in *The Cultures of Globalization*, 35); by Andreas Huyssen who argues that, "questions of discrepant temporalities and differently paced modernities have emerged as key to new and rigorous understandings of the long-term processes of globalization, which supplant rather than merely adjust Western modernization paradigms" ("Present Pasts: Media, Politics, Amnesia" in *Globalization*, ed. Arjun Appadurai [Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2001], 252); by Saskia Sassen who contends that "Discrepancies between the rates of acceleration affecting different economic activities can engender differing temporalities, and it is these differences that should be of the greater interest to us" ("Spatialities and Temporalities of the Global: Elements for a Theorization" in *Globalization*, 267); and by Michael Hanchard who describes "inequalities of temporality that result from power relations between racially dominant and subordinate groups," contending that "unequal relationships between dominant and subordinate groups produce unequal temporal access to institutions, goods, services, resources, power, and knowledge" ("Afro-Modernity: Temporality, Politics, and the African Diaspora," *Public Culture* 27 [1999], 252).

³⁸ James Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature, and Art* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 231.

³⁹ Clifford, *The Predicament of Culture*, 5.

⁴⁰ The term "time-space compression" is David Harvey's. See David Harvey, *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1990).

⁴¹ Sklair, "Social Movements and Global Capitalism," 303.

⁴² Pierre Bourdieu, *Distinction: A Social Critique of the Judgement of Taste*, trans. Richard Nice (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1984), 490. Also relevant here is Martha Nussbaum's analysis of disgust as a method for policing the boundaries between ourselves and our own materiality. See "'Secret Sewers of Vice': Disgust, Bodies, and the Law," in *The Passions of Law*, ed. Susan Bandes (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 19-62. The semantic association of foreigners with materiality also intensifies the foreigner's impurity (or lack of proprius). For impurity is material; it is dirt, stain, blood, in Mary Douglas's well-known phrase, "matter out of place." See *Purity and Danger: An Analysis of Concepts of Pollution and Taboo* (New York: Praeger, 1966). And in a long tradition that extends from Plato's *Phaedo* to Descartes's distinction between *res extensa* and *res cogitans* to Kant's pure reason, philosophy expels the material as impurity. Hence, foreignness represents a defilement of philosophy not only because of its association with disordered thought, but by virtue of the foreigner's exaggerated materiality. This conceit can also be located in Hebrew thought, in the idolatry that contaminates Yahweh; and, in psychoanalytic theory, as the maternal that contaminates signification. On the latter, see Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

⁴³ See Achille Mbembe, "At the Edge of the World: Boundaries, Territoriality, and Sovereignty in Africa," trans. Steven Rendall in *Globalization*, 42.

⁴⁴ Amnesty International, "Japan: Foreigners in detention face violence, humiliation and discrimination." AI-Index ASA 22 October 1997. <<http://www.web.amnesty.org/ai/nsf/Index/>>.

⁴⁵ United Nations Development Programme, *Human Development Report 2000* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), 60, hereafter referred to as "UNDP." See also "Oxfam Statement on the UNDP Human Development Report" July 2001, <www.oxfam.org/eng/policy_pape.htm>.

⁴⁶ Dietmar Henning, "Germany: Violence against foreigners increases by 40 percent." 27 February 2001. *World Socialist Web Site*. <<http://www.wsws.org/articles/2001/feb2001/germ-f-27.shtml>>. See also Human Rights Watch report on Germany. 24 May 24 2002. <<http://docsmgmt.hrw.org/germany-pubs.php>>.

⁴⁷ Chip Berlet, Mitra Rastegar, and Pam Chamberlain, "Nativism," *The Public Eye* 15, no. 3 (Fall 2001): 8-9. A Publication of Political Research Associates. For a recent overview of anti-immigrant backlashes in Europe and the U.S., see "No Easy Entry: The Anti-Immigrant Backlash," *World Press Review* 49, no. 4 (April 2002): 6-13.

⁴⁸ There is a distinct resemblance between this certification of foreignness and the process Elaine Scarry identifies in the Old Testament, where "the Word is never self-substantiating; it seeks confirmation in a visible change in the realm of matter" and in which "hurt becomes the vehicle of verification; doubt is eliminated through the incontestable reality of the material world." Elaine Scarry, *The Body in Pain: The Making and Unmaking of the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 202.

⁴⁹ This is the argument made by Elaine Scarry in *The Body in Pain*: "the person in great pain experiences his own body as the agent of his agony," she writes. The signal of the body in pain "contains not only the feeling 'my body hurts' but the feeling 'my body hurts me.'" Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 47. Indeed the negation that we have located at the foundation of foreignness is, according to Scarry, also the primary attribute of physical pain:

The first, the most essential, aspect of pain is its sheer aversiveness. While other sensations have content that may be positive, neutral, or negative the very content of pain is itself negation. Pain is a pure physical experience of negation, an immediate sensory rendering of "against," of something being against one, and of something one must be against. Even though it occurs within oneself, it is at once identified as "not oneself," "not me," as something so alien that it must right now be gotten rid of. (Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 52)

⁵⁰ Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 35.

⁵¹ Scarry, *The Body in Pain*, 37.

⁵² While I concentrate in what follows on the occlusion of material circumstances effected by global corporate entities, one might make a similar argument for the way in which global media events eclipse local circumstances. A stunning example of this phenomenon is reported by the International Labour Resource and Information Group:

An activist in Cape Town told how he woke up one morning and found the body of a dead man in his front garden. Apparently the man had been murdered during the night. The murder took place on the same day that Princess Diana was killed in a car crash in Paris, France. For many days thereafter, every time he switched on his television or radio he heard every detail about the life, death and family of Princess Diana. During the same period he kept going to the police, to neighbours, to many people in his community trying to find out the details of the man who had been murdered in his front garden. It was two weeks before he was able to find out the name of the man. He never found out why the man was killed (International Labour Resource and Information Group, *An Alternative View of Globalisation*. ILRIG Globalisation Series No. 1 (Cape Town, South Africa: 1998), 1, hereafter referred to as "ILRIG").

⁵³ I am adopting a model of signification here that not only distinguishes signifier (word) from signified (concept or mental image), but signified from referent (a phenomenal object). I have discussed the phenomenon of material-obliterating forms of signification in the context of South African apartheid at length in *The Concept of the Foreign*, chap. 7.

⁵⁴ Since September 11, we can add to this list "allied with terrorism" as "antiglobalization" activists have been charged with advocating a message compatible and thereby collaborative with Osama bin Laden's parochial and fundamentalist valorization of local culture.

⁵⁵ Cited in ILRIG, 5.

⁵⁶ "The WTO in Brief: Part 1. The Multilateral Trading System—Past Present and Future." 20 March 2002. <<http://www.wto.org>>.

⁵⁷ "10 Benefits of the WTO Trading System." 20 March 2002. <<http://www.wto.org>>.

⁵⁸ "At a Glance." 25 March 2002. <<http://www.worldbank.org/about/whatis/glance.html>>.

⁵⁹ The International Forum on Globalization, *Does Globalization Help the Poor?* (San Francisco: International Forum on Globalization, August 2001), 30, hereafter referred to as "IFG." Further analyses are available at <http://www.oxfam.org/eng/policy_pape.htm>.

⁶⁰ UNDP, 6.

⁶¹ IFG, 33.

⁶² From the *International Labor Organization, World Employment Report*

1998-1999, cited in IFG, 12.

⁶³ UNDP, 4.

⁶⁴ IFG, 3.

⁶⁵ "A Better World is Possible! Alternatives to Economic Globalization." Summary of an Upcoming Report by the Alternatives Committee of the International Forum on Globalization, 13. Available at <www.ifg.org>.

⁶⁶ Center for Economic Justice, "Global-South Perspectives on the World Bank and IMF". <<http://www.preamble.org/cej>>.

⁶⁷ Cited in Global Exchange, "Top 10 Reasons to Oppose the World Trade Organization," 14 November 2001. <<http://www.globalexchange.org/economy/rulemakers/topTenReasons.html>>. Of the top 200 largest Transnational Corporations (TNCs) in the world, 172 have their world headquarters in the U.S., Germany, U.K., France, or Japan. Seventy percent of all world trade is from one industrialized country to another. Forty percent of world trade is from one TNC to another. See ILRIG, 20, 23.

⁶⁸ UNDP, 82.

⁶⁹ Cited in IFG, 2.

⁷⁰ Edward Wolff and Jerome Levy, Economics Institute, Bard College, cited in IFG, 1.

⁷¹ United States Federal Reserve, cited in IFG, 4.

⁷² Jeff Gates, *The Boston Review*, 1999, cited in IFG, 4.

⁷³ *A Citizen's Guide to the World Trade Organization* argues, for example, that "while its proponents say it is based on 'free trade,' in fact, the WTO's seven hundred-plus pages of rules set out a comprehensive system of *corporate-managed trade*" and a "global system of enforceable rules is being created where corporations have all the rights, governments have all the obligations, and democracy is left behind in the dust." Published by the Working Group on the WTO/MAI, July 1999. Available at <<http://www.ifg.org>> or <<http://www.globalexchange.org>>. Along similar lines, the IFG contends that, "where corporate globalists see the spread of democracy and vibrant market economies, citizen movements see the power to govern shifting away from people and communities to financial speculators and global corporations dedicated to the pursuit of short-term profit." "A Better World," 5. Global Exchange avers that, "the WTO has essentially replaced national governments with an unaccountable, corporate-backed government...[and that] under the WTO governments can no longer act in the public interest." "Top 10 Reasons."

⁷⁴ IFG, 24.

⁷⁵ UNDP, 73. Among the most burlesque employments of this trope of freedom is the designation of "free trade zones," which not only participate in this poverty production, but are often surrounded by barbed wire fences, heavily guarded, locked from outside, and operated under pitiless disciplinary codes. This point was suggested to me by Jan Nederveen Pieterse's paper, "Fault Lines of Transnationalism: Border Matters." Paper presented at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign Third Transnational Workshop, "Transnational Practices: Spaces, Economies, and Identities," 29 March 2002.

⁷⁶ The Ecologist Report, *Globalizing Poverty*, cited in IFG, 10.

⁷⁷ Cited in IFG, 9. If subsistence agriculture has proven to be one of those "barriers" from which the world is being liberated, another is environmental protection. The World Bank has bankrolled numerous dam, road, and mine projects that have resulted in ecological degradation and the displacement of indigenous peoples from their land. Perennially in pursuit of cheap supplies of natural resources, the WTO has ruled illegal every environmental or public health law that has challenged its advance.

⁷⁸ IFG, iii.

⁷⁹ IFG, 10. The UNDP also notes discriminatory bias against disadvantaged groups in social spending. The poorest receive less in public spending and subsidies. See UNDP, 78.

⁸⁰ IFG, 11. On Cochabamba, see also Jim Shultz, "World Bank Forced Water Privatization on Cochabamba." *Minneapolis Star-Tribune*, 5 July 2000. <<http://www.commondreams.org/views/071500-101.htm>>; and Oxfam, "Globalisation," Submission to the U.K. Government's White Paper on Globalisation, 17 April 2002, sec. 3. <http://www.Oxfam.org/policy_pape/htm>. Monopolies both of "common heritage resources" (water, land, air, forests, and fisheries) and of biological and genetic materials for private gain has rendered startlingly literal the searing irony of Ngugi's Wa Thiong'o's "Banquet for Modern Thieves and Robbers," at which Gitutu, for example, proposes that: "We, the top-grade tycoons, can trap the air in the sky, put it in tins and sell it to peasants and workers, just as water and charcoal are now sold to them. Imagine the profit we would reap if we were to sell the masses air to breathe in tins or, better, if we could meter it!" *Devil on the Cross* (Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann Books, 1982), 107.

⁸¹ IFG, 11.

⁸² Anuradha Mittal, "Land Loss, Poverty and Hunger" in IFG, 35. Mit-

tal also notes the epidemic of suicide among small farmers in India—more than 500 cotton farmers in 1999.

⁸³ Vandana Shiva, "WTO Agriculture Rules: Threatening Third World Farmers," in IFG, 43.

⁸⁴ Oxfam has issued numerous policy papers analyzing the deleterious effects of TRIPS. See <http://www.Oxfam.org/policy_pape/htm>.