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The Global Subject and Culture

In previous chapters we addressed the connection between globalization and neoliberalism, and discussed how globalization transforms sites such as capitalism, governments and communication technologies. The central issue that has emerged in this discussion is that globalization can be understood not simply as a process or set of institutions and practices, but as a doxa. We described doxa as the effect of something coming to seem true and necessary, so that people will accept that it is 'just the way things are'. People are the subject of this chapter, because the doxa of globalization and its effects do not exist in a vacuum, and nor do they affect only governments and corporations. Ultimately their impact is on the lives, aspirations, understandings and bodies of everyday people. And just as the grid of globalization passes over and transforms institutions and broad socioeconomic practices, so too it affects, and potentially transforms, the people who inhabit these sites.

We begin by providing an account of the idea of the subject, or 'what makes a person', and discuss the extent to which questions of identity and relation are being transformed by the doxa, institutions and practices of globalization. We outline some of the central approaches taken over history to what it means to be a human subject, and how theoretical notions such as biopower and habitus can explicate the relation between subjectivity and capitalism. Finally, we address ways in which traditional cultural formations and community identity are now

mediated by technologies and discourses, and particularly the role of the medical technologies and communication technologies – the increased mobility of ideas, capital and people – in transforming cultural fields.

The question of the subject

Michel Foucault stated that the entire point of his work, which spanned more than twenty years, was 'to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects' (Foucault, 1984: 7). We will take a more modest perspective, and draft a brief history of subjectivity as a way of discussing the impact of globalization on people in their everyday lives. Our founding principle in this is the poststructural, and specifically Neomarxist, account of the subject which holds that people are not 'naturally' themselves, or 'naturally' human (in a cultural sense). Nor are individuals either the source of meaning, or free agents who make their own meanings and control their own lives. Rather, identity and meaning are produced out of social discourses and institutions, and the doxa that emerges from relations of power; people become 'themselves', human subjects, by virtue of these social forces and within cultural contexts.

This goes against the commonsense idea of what it means to be an individual, a 'me' who has certain tastes and dispositions, and who possesses certain qualities and facilities. But philosophers have never accepted this straightforward response to the question of being – or 'What does it mean to be me?' This question has been answered variously, over the centuries, initially by the ancient Greek and Roman philosophers, subsequently by the early Christians, and yet again during the shifts in understanding that came about first with the Renaissance and then with the Enlightenment. Throughout these transformations in the understanding of the subject a central idea can be traced: that being was always 'for' someone or something else. In very broad terms, we can say that the individual always had a duty. The ancient classical philosophers considered that to be truly

human was to strive for perfection of the self for the good of society. The early Christians similarly believed that people needed to strive for perfection, but in their case the aim was the glory of God and the good of one's immortal soul. In each case, truth (or Truth) was the reward of effort, and the marker of privileged subjectivity, though in each case this subjectivity, or identity, was not for oneself but for society, or God, or the principle of Truth.

The notion of identity was somewhat transformed, during the medieval period, by the conceptualizing of the great Chain of Being. This concept held that all being was organized within a rigid hierarchy: God at the top, then angels, kings, feudal lords, ordinary people, and so on, right down to worms and bugs. People's identity subsisted in this chain, and in their relationship to other beings; this implied too that identity was 'for' one's God, feudal lord and family. By the seventeenth century, though, ideas about identity were beginning to change to terms that are more familiar to people in the twenty-first century: 'the subject' emerged firstly as an object of scientific investigation with the development of scientific reason and systems of classification. Relatedly, the subject also came to be identified as the discrete, self-sufficient and self-motivating source of scientific reason through Descartes's famous *Cogito, ergo sum* ('I think, therefore I am').

But the person who is this 'I', a rational and self-actualizing *subject*, is also of course the subject of social and political forces. Philosophers focused more explicitly, now, on the question of human responsibility, and the tension between whether individuals are free (and abstract) subjects or subjected to the control or regulation of dominant groups, discourses and institutions. The emerging 'human sciences' – particularly sociology, psychology and criminology – also weighed in on the debate, and raised the question of how to classify people, and how to analyse and articulate the 'right' relations between people and people, individuals and their societies. This, in turn, led to considerable attention to what makes someone 'human': we cannot classify something unless we know the terms of classification, and the qualities of the thing being classified.

This was an important question in a period of rapidly increasing contact with peoples from beyond Europe. The explorers and settlers were coming up against peoples whose language, culture, traditions, social systems and indeed appearance were often radically different from those of their own. It was important to know what order of being they were, so that the colonists- and settlers-to-be would know the appropriate way to deal with them. So the question of what makes a human being was as much an evaluative as a taxo-nomical exercise; not just classifying, but comparing one with another, and making judgements about their relative value. And just as in earlier periods those who were privileged (Greek nobles, great saints, aristocrats) seemed to be more particularly human, more free and of more value than every-one else, so too now the European explorers generally con-sidered that they were themselves more particularly human, more free and of more value than the people with whom they were coming in contact.

This has hardly changed: we pointed out in Chapter 1 the way in which the politics of naming ensured that some cate-gories of people – Westerners – were humanized and person-alized by the reportage of the 11 September disaster, while other categories of people – Somalis, Chechens, Timorese and, of course, Afghanis – were not humanized to anything like the same extent, and the deaths and disasters that they endured were therefore not tragic to the same extent. Clearly, some kinds of identity mean more, matter more, and are worth more air time, more relief funding, more empathic grief. And certainly in many cases the peoples encountered by the explorers seemed so different that they were not considered 'real' humans, and need not be treated as such. In Australia their existence was barely acknowledged, and despite the millennia of continuous occupation of the land by the Aboriginal peoples, the British settlers designated it a *terra nullius*, an empty land, belonging to no one because no one – in the sense of 'human being' under-stood by the British – was there. In other places the peoples were massacred, enslaved or brought into relations of sub-ordination as the colonized; and this was possible in each case

because the native peoples were not classified as truly human, and so could not be the recipients of the benefits of subject status.

The confidence in the Cartesian notion of the self as the abstract product of higher thought did not last into the twentieth century. By this period there was fairly general agreement among scholars that the subject was neither free nor natural, but a product of time and space, and the imperatives of the local context. This had several origins, of which perhaps the best known are the writings of Freud and Marx. Sigmund Freud undermined confidence in the Cartesian subject by constructing a model of subjectivity based on the notion of the unconscious. Rather than seeing humans beings as self-regulating, abstract and rational subjects, he argued that we are governed by repressed desires and the prompting of the unconscious – that which is beyond reason or conscious thought. Karl Marx and later Marxist writers developed the notion of the subject as that which is subjected: not a free, rational or indeed 'natural' entity, but that which takes up identity only when interpellated (or called up) by powerful social institutions. What is meant by this is the compulsion (or impulsion) to identify with ideas and characteristics that are promoted as good, desirable or right. Society provides us with a number of models of good subjectivity and good behaviour, and 'summons' us to identify with them, and shape our behaviour and sense of self according to those standards.

Subjectivity, biopower and Empire

The French philosopher Michel Foucault explains this through what he terms 'biopower', which can be understood as a series of technologies and techniques – hospitals, schools, prisons, nuclear families – developed in order to analyse, control, regulate and define the human being. For Foucault, biopower – or the attitude of seeing people as resources or commodities – is tied in with the development of capitalism and changes in the role of the state. He argues that prior to the seventeenth century

the state was mainly seen as a means to an end – the glory of the sovereign, or the welfare of the people – but from the seventeenth century the state came to be seen as an end in itself. In other words, what mattered was the strength, wealth and power of the state. Its people were now thought of not as an end in themselves, with their own rights and duties, but as a resource which had to be used and taken care of, in their everyday activities, to ensure the viability of the state. His argument is that biopower helped in this change, and simultaneously contributed to the development of capitalism, by providing a healthy, active, disciplined population that was a commodity for the state and organized capital. The principle of biopower, then, means that people are not free, are not Cartesian subjects. Rather, the way people come to understand the world, the way they behave, the values and aspirations they develop and the way they react to events are fashioned out of the various apparatuses and technologies of biopower, and render people self-regulating subjects in the service of society and capital, rather than self-constituting individuals.

That is not the end of the story, though. Foucault also points out that biopower is in many ways antithetical to the ideas of human being, and of progress and reform, that came out of the Enlightenment movement of the late seventeenth century. So, while the technologies and institutions associated with biopower may have been designed to make people 'docile bodies' at the service of major organizations, the ideas that helped formulate the systems of biopower were associated with freedom and self-actualization. Because of this rift in its own discourses, and because society and capital are not homogeneous but made up of competing discourses and groups which produce different versions of events, biopower can never be fully successful. It does in many ways produce the sorts of people – human resources – that are useful for the state and for capital. But it also produces resistances. Foucault takes the prison system as an example of this; he notes that while the technologies of power used in prisons are supposed to produce 'docile' bodies and behaviour, in reality the opposite happens, and prisons in fact function as 'criminal factories'. Biopower

may be successful in producing particular kinds of subjectivities, but the effects are not always what was intended.

Hardt and Negri pick up on this notion, pointing out that one of the distinguishing characteristics of the contemporary globalized world is the imbrication of capitalism, the '**affect industries**', and biopower. They argue that the first task of the 'grid of globalization' is not just to produce consensus among subjects, but more dramatically to ensure that all thought, every notion of morality and ethics, and the dispositions and values of subjects, are produced within, and are commensurable with, the framework of Empire. This has led to a situation where the media and communication industries now occupy a hegemonic place with regard to the social, precisely because their role is to transform the social into something else – a kind of simulation of the capitalist system of production. In other words, everything that is considered inalienable within society – sporting teams, artistic production, human body parts, children and childhood – is to be reformulated and rethought as alienable, as being subject to the market. The imperative, then, is to produce subjects disposed to see and understand the world almost exclusively through capitalist eyes and categories.

How do Hardt and Negri explain and contextualize the relationship between capitalism, the media/communication industries and the biopolitical production of subjectivity at a global level? They suggest that while capital has always been disposed towards the global, it is only in the post-World War II period, and most particularly since the 1970s, that capital has effectively replaced the nation-state as the organizing apparatus and principle of the management of populations. And as the nation-state has progressively been integrated into the networks and system of Empire, the function of biopolitical management and control formerly undertaken by public institutions has given way to apparatuses and ideologies of capital-as-Empire.

In one sense this is explicable in terms of the straightforward shift from what was largely a public communication system in the first part of the twentieth century to what is the overwhelmingly commercial system today. But Hardt and Negri push this argument on another level. They suggest that the civic sphere

within which the production and negotiation of meanings (and, consequently, subjectivities) take place is now almost entirely a global civic sphere constituted by the communications equivalent of Castells's 'network society'. So, just as it is virtually impossible for corporations to compete and work outside the networks of information, technology, logistical imperatives and relationships that make up global capitalism, similarly ideas, principles and modes of subjectivity are subject to the same kind of limitations, precisely because there is nowhere else to think or be, no 'outside' the system.

Hardt and Negri's insistence on the saturation levels of biopolitical control exercised through and by the communication and media industries seems to overlook the strong anti-globalization movement which is expressed not only in demonstrations and protests, but also in local political results, movements and trends – part of what has been termed the 'turn to the local'. But, interestingly, Hardt and Negri have no time for any of these local movements, whether they involve attempts to 'reclaim' the state, or are manifested in religious revivals. Empire, for them, is a step along the way, and an important development, from modernization and the nation-state to the eventual founding of a truly (socialist) global society. The (empty) performances of politics and the erasure of difference that are played out in contemporary media under Empire in a sense presage, from their perspective, the coming of the real thing under world socialism. Hardt and Negri's theoretical orientation means that they place one of the most important aspects of the Foucauldian notion of biopower – that it can never be thought of in purely negative terms, since it creates identities that are disposed to oppose it – at the service of a kind of Marxist teleology. But there are other, non-Marxist, ways of making sense of the relationship between globalization, capitalism, biopower and subjectivity.

Individuals and the habitus

One of the central factors involved in this shaping of behaviour and ensuring a connection between the individual's sense of self

and the wider socioeconomic framework is what Pierre Bourdieu terms 'the habitus'. This refers to those:

> systems of durable, transposable dispositions, structured structures predisposed to function as structuring structures, that is, as principles which generate and organize practices and representations that can be objectively adapted to their outcomes without presupposing a conscious aiming at ends or an express mastery of the operations necessary in order to attain them. (Bourdieu, 1990: 53)

That is, a subject's personal history, embedded within a social context, produces tendencies to act in particular ways, in a variety of situations. Practices – including our sense of self, and what we understand by 'human' – are strongly informed by past conditions. These past conditions – or rather their effect on our identity – are immediately forgotten. So, as Bourdieu writes, habitus is 'history turned into nature, i.e. denied as such' (Bourdieu, 1977: 78). This is most easily observed in the conversation of children, who prefer not to be reminded of the time before they knew how to behave 'appropriately' in public. Children will often hotly deny that they wailed loudly during a church service, or threw a tantrum in a supermarket, insisting that they have always been model citizens. Their history, which has produced the person they now are, must be forgotten so that their identity can seem secure and permanent.

The habitus develops, then, out of a particular combination of social contexts, personal experiences, and one's relation to objective structures; and these past conditions, or 'history', are forgotten in the interests of producing the fantasy of the subject as self-constituted and autonomous. This has a Freudian inflection, recalling the centrality Freud accorded to the unconscious in the constitution of the self. After all, what is forgotten is also, arguably, repressed, as is the matter which Freud insisted was the stuff of the unconscious. So, if we are motivated by forgotten history, then we are motivated in fact by the unconscious.

Where does habitus come from? It is a product of individual tastes, tendencies and dispositions which are developed by, and must be contextualized in terms of, its relation to the objective

structures of a culture. For Bourdieu the relationship between these objective structures (which he refers to as 'cultural fields') and habitus doesn't completely determine people's actions and thoughts, but no practice is explicable without reference to them. As agents move through and across different fields, they incorporate into their habitus the values and imperatives of those fields, and this shapes their own dispositions. We are who and what we are largely because of where we have been, and how this has informed our sense of self and our sense of choice. We have thus moved a long way from Descartes's autonomous, abstract individual and also from the earlier understandings of the subject as one who was potentially self-actualizing, and able to decide freely to be ethical for the good of all. Bourdieu's subject – the subject of the twentieth-century world – is not precisely flotsam, to be tossed about by the winds of time and place, but is certainly a product of time and place.

The habitus, and hence our sense of self and of human identity, is also intimately bound up with how the physical body is understood. This is one of the apparently solid aspects of identity, and central to our understanding of the self because the body encompasses us, and provides our individual boundaries. The nineteenth-century philosopher William James wrote that the body is 'the storm centre, the origin of co-ordinates, the constant place of stress in all that experience-train. Everything circles around it and is felt from its point of view' (James, 1967: 284). For James, then, we are because we are embodied – which again takes us a long way from Descartes's purely cerebral subject. Bourdieu provides a way of thinking across these two positions, writing that 'The body is in the social world, but the social world is in the body' (2000: 152); in other words, we become who and what we are because our world – the contexts in which we live, and through which we move – insinuate themselves into our being. This 'being' includes the body, its characteristics, and ways of seeing and recognizing the world; and how we look, how we feel, and what we do with our bodies thus 'proves' who and what we are.

Robert Altman's 2001 film *Gosford Park* makes much of this notion of the socialized body and being. The film is set in

England in the period between World Wars I and II, when the strict social division between classes was beginning to break down. It moves between and across two general 'communities', or types of subject: the servant and the upper class. In the process it traces the effect of being on the body, and perhaps of the body on being. In general terms, the 'maids' are either over- or underweight and of course poorly dressed; their bodies do not fit with the norms of the leisure class. The 'ladies', by contrast, are slender and toned, and always beautifully dressed. But the below-stairs people for the most part move briskly and purposefully through the great country house, while the above-stairs people – particularly the women – are languid and slow in their movements: they have no purpose, and no tasks to perform, and so their bodies are not functional units. In fact, their bodies, however slight, often seem a burden – they slump on to furniture, rest their chin wearily on their hands, or lean against a wall. But class and gender are not the only determinants of embodied subjectivity. The daughter of the house, Isobel (played by Camilla Rutherford), embodies anguish and uncertainty; her shoulders are hunched, her head droops, and her every move is awkward, as though she is expecting to fall, or to be struck. The housemaid Elsie (played by Emily Watson), on the other hand, is statuesque and confident; and though she loses her job when she moves outside her formal role as 'servant', her body never loses assurance, and her identity remains secure.

This is what we could call the 'materialist' dimension of the habitus; in Bourdieu's terms, 'Social reality exists, so to speak, twice, in things and in minds, in fields and in habitus, outside and inside of agents' (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 127–8); we always embody both physical and social identity. And though we may think of the body as something individual – as subject to, belonging to, and characteristic of the self – this notion of the individual, self-contained body is itself a product of the habitus:

> this body which indisputably functions as the principle of
> individuation . . . ratified and reinforced by the legal definition
> of the individual as an abstract, interchangeable being . . . [is]

> open to the world, and therefore exposed to the world, and so
> capable of being conditioned by the world, shaped by the
> material and cultural conditions of existence in which it is
> placed from the beginning . . . (Bourdieu, 2000: 133–4)

What this means is that the body is no more 'natural' or inevitable than other aspects of identity and classification. How bodies are viewed, understood and evaluated changes from period to period, place to place. Moreover, the body is the grounds too not only for the exercise of biopower we discussed above, but also for that process of classification – the politics of naming-to which we referred in Chapter 1. So people are identified and produced in evaluative as well as taxonomic terms: as men/women, Euramericans/people of colour, Anglos/Asians, old/young, rich/poor and so on. Consequently, the relation between the body and the self is central to the relation between the body and the wider community. Individuals are 'themselves' because they are simultaneously members of class, age, profession, race, ethnicity and family sets, among others. And our wider social (political) identity is also tied to the body: under both kinship and ethnicity social formations the individual's identity is firstly that of a 'natural' connection with the group, predicated on 'blood ties', family relationships, or having similar physical characteristics.

Technology and the subject

Globalization changes this, and changes the connection between habitus and context, because it transforms social understandings of time and place, the limitations on the body, and the wider question of being. In a period when we can claim any identity in an internet chat room, when medical technology has made so wide a range of prosthetics available that any of us could potentially be the Six Million Dollar Man, and when scientists are on the verge of cloning humans, we seem to be standing on the brink of a Brave New World where the interface between human and machine has fallen away. The very idea of human

being begins to take on shades of Foucault's famous declaration of the 'death of the subject':

> As the archaeology of our thought easily shows, man is an invention of recent date. And one perhaps nearing its end. If those arrangements were to disappear as they appeared, if some event of which we can at the moment do no more than sense the possibility . . . were to cause them to crumble, as the ground of Classical thought did . . . then one can certainly wager that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea. (Foucault, 1973: 387)

This Huxleyan world doesn't, then, necessarily deliver freedom or infinite possibility; rather, the intrusion of new ways of thinking and being may actually foreclose what we are and can be. The permeability of the boundary between human and machine is one of the central issues at stake here, and it is propelled by the new technologies that seem to be rendering the everyday material world less accessible.

Technology is, arguably, one of the most significant factors influencing the nature of subjectivity, because it radically calls into question the definition of human being. Advocates of the technological turn may argue that we are all, in fact, already cyborg, at some level. If we have fillings in our teeth, if we have had inoculations against disease, if we use computers and telephones, then we are already intimately, physically, interfacing with machinery. In fact, simply using a basic tool can take on a cyborgish quality, if we consider the process of perception involved. Michael Polanyi reminds us that any use of a tool – using a hammer, probing something with a stick – involves the interface of the body with that tool:

> The way we use a hammer or a blind man uses a stick shows that in both cases we shift outward the points at which we make contact with things outside ourselves. While we rely on a tool or a probe, these instruments are not handled or scrutinized as external objects. Instead, we pour ourselves into them and assimilate them as part of ourselves. (Polanyi and Prosch, 1975: 36)

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Thus we always have a very permeable boundary between ourselves and the technologized world we inhabit, and this has always been a disturbing concept, explored over and over in films and books. The almost-human is far more frightening than the obvious machine, or indeed the savage. Think of the deeply unsettling quality of the cyborgs in *Alien* or *Terminator*; their machinic power, both physical and 'intellectual', is unsurpassable by 'mere' humans; their implacability due to the absence of human affect makes them terrifying; and the fact that they look like people means that we can never be certain of who is what.

Of course these are films of the late twentieth century; the twenty-first century may well take a different reading of beings, and has already introduced alternative forms of quasi-human identity in the form of vactors (virtual actors): Lara Croft, for instance, is not really human, not really machine, and not just cartoon either, but is capable of straddling all those formations. What we may identify increasingly is the category of the quasi-human. One of the more surprising instances of this category, relevant here because it was produced by and through technology, was the case of little Leo, a pet dog who was flung into the traffic near the San Jose International Airport in California in a road rage incident in February 2000. The story of his death was run on CBS News, and touched a nerve among the public around the world. A web site was set up, and a photo of Leo published there along with a photofit of the killer. The language throughout the incident, both on news reports and on the web site, seems more pertinent to that of a childkilling than the death of a dog. For instance, the web site included a letter from 'Leo's mom', written in the language of grieving with which we are familiar in human circles; the writer even referred to 'my precious little boy who I loved with all my heart' (Burnett, 2001). Frustrated by the slow progress made by the police, she hired a private investigator, and finally Leo's killer was arrested, found guilty and sentenced to three years in prison.

While it is not unusual, perhaps, for pet owners to invest the relationship with a parent/child quality, the extent of this case, and the outrage expressed in the (virtual) community makes it significant. What does it mean if a considerable portion of the

community can evince such a reaction to the death of an animal, while (human) children are routinely killed by parents and strangers with only very occasional comparable community action? We can suggest that it is the effect of media technology; we have already seen its ability to personalize and humanize, and in this case it has allowed even an animal to become part of 'us', while simultaneously dehumanizing, say, children in Iraq. When it comes to the question of human being, it seems, technology is never neutral.

This goes against the perspective on technology posited by the German philosopher Martin Heidegger. Heidegger's central point is that technology is related to truth (or, rather, to Truth) because it is committed to what he calls 'revealing'. He pins this argument on the original Greek term, *technē*: 'the name not only for the activities and skills of the craftsman but also for the arts of the mind and the fine arts. *Technē* belongs to bringing-forth, to *poiesis*; it is something poetic' (1977/1993: 318). When he shifts his attention to the modern era (the mid twentieth century), he identifies technology's threatening quality, and locates this in its 'challenging' aspect, its ability to unlock natural resources and natural power sources, and so to 'unconceal' the actual. Human beings cannot 'unconceal', according to Heidegger; they can only notice and respond to the possibilities so exposed. This means that human beings are not autonomous, but rather are resources themselves – what he calls a '**standing reserve**'. He is not clear for whom or what we are resources, or who or what orders our use, falling back into a kind of Platonic transcendent realm which 'calls' us into action, and into being. Technology is a problem to us, then, in so far as it makes our lack of autonomy apparent to us. And he ends his essay on technology with a call to arms – or rather, to art:

> Because the essence of technology is nothing technological, essential reflection upon technology and decisive confrontation with it must happen in a realm that is, on the one hand, akin to the essence of technology and, on the other, fundamentally different from it. Such a realm is art. (1977/1993: 340)

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We would agree with Heidegger's notion that technology is not just a thing, or a way of getting something done; but argue that it has nothing to do with transcendence, and everything to do with people and institutions. That is, technology is neither neutral, nor committed to the Truth, but is deployed in a way that is always interested, because it is always made available for someone's profit or power or pleasure. Because of this it is important to reject the notion of technological determinism; as Slavoj Zizek writes:

> the way computerization affects our lives does not depend directly on technology, it results from the way the impact of new technology is refracted by the social relations which, in their turn, co-determine the very direction of technological development. (Zizek, 1996: 198)

Paul Virilio too locates technological developments as entirely caught up in social relations, particularly in a kind of personal neocolonialism. He suggests that with the end of World War I the possibility of a total war against human beings was opened up because of the deployment in that war of weapons of mass destruction. The human body, he argues, became the next 'territory' to be invaded, explored and transformed (Virilio, 2000: 55). He raises such topical issues as cryogenics, human cloning and the mapping of the human genome in this respect. These are not, he argues, neutral, scientific or objective moves, but have the potential to be put to work against individuals, and in the service of dominant groups, institutions and discourses. The genome project, for instance, is ideally suited to a new kind of eugenics, one which would promote the production of 'new model' people 'built on the lines of transgenic crops, which are so much better adapted to their environment than the natural products' (Virilio, 2000: 136). This has obvious ramifications for those kinds of people who are not well suited to the neoliberal doxa. Indeed, the potential for inequity is evident in almost every technological move we can imagine. Cloning or cryogenics will hardly be available to the poor, for instance, and taken to its extreme it is possible to imagine a world inhabited

by Dr Strangeloves, those with the resources to support their own inexhaustible life, while the poor, the indigent, the merely 'difficult' or noncompliant are technologized off the face of the earth.

Identity, collectivity and territoriality

For the most part, of course, we still live in material bodies in the material world, and this means for most of us that we live as members of national communities. Nationalism indeed appears to have been the primary form of identity during the twentieth century, and is the type of formation most directed to the individual; as Craig Calhoun writes:

> In the discourse of nationalism, one is simply Chinese, French or Eritrean. The individual does not require the mediations of family, community, region or class to be a member of the nation. Nationality is understood precisely as an attribute of the individual, not of the intermediate associations. (Calhoun, 1997: 46)

But nationalism has never existed in isolation from the other two formations, kinship and ethnicity. Looking back to the Peace of Westphalia, we remember that one of the bases of the nation-state was the principle of territoriality, and this is raised consistently with respect to the ethnic foundations of nation-states. Calhoun again writes:

> historical research shows noteworthy continuities between modern national cultures and their antecedents and in patterns of geopolitical regions and relations. We can also see that nationalism derives much of its force from the phenomenological experience of ordinary people that, in general, their nations are always already there. (Calhoun, 1997: 30)

To a very large extent, then, the subject has always been a territorial identity: *in place* as a member of a kinship group; *in*

place as part of an ethnic collectivity; and definitely *in place* under the national principle of territoriality. We can identity this 'always already there' in the discourse of national leaders and activists for social change, particularly at times of great social flux. The former Yugoslavia is an example of territoriality and its antecedents taken to a violent extreme; the state of Israel is another, because the idea that Jerusalem was always 'ours' (whoever may be represented by the 'our') is central to the fifty-year struggle between the people of Israel and the people of Palestine. Clearly, then, though collective identity may be in fact a bureaucratic formation, produced rather than necessary or natural, it is also mobilized to classify and divide. And, like all principles of vision and categorization, collective identities divide at the same time as they unify. Within the religious/ ethnic formation we can identify, for instance, 'Jews' as a distinct category of people, possessing a shared set of values, traditions, beliefs and sense of identity, and radically separated from Gentiles as well as from other Semitic peoples. But this collective identity of 'Jews' is not just a unifying force against the outside; it is also marked by internal divisions and 'racisms'. Think of the categorical and evaluative difference between Ethiopian and Israeli Jews, for instance, or between reform and orthodox Jewish congregations. Another example, one which shows up the internal 'racisms' of a modern state rather than an ancient religion, can be seen in the history of California. Virilio writes that this state actually organized itself to include only those people selected as worth having:

> in the early 1930s California had to cut itself off from the rest of the Union to avoid being submerged by the tide of humanity. It was ringed by the 'blockade' . . . Indigents, tramps, people of colour, lone women, abandoned children, the sick and the infected were pushed back, or pitilessly interned in camps in the desert, health criteria here becoming mingled with social and racial prejudices. (Virilio, 2000: 25)

In other words, the 'us' that was California was a product of elitism driven by economic and social pressures. And indeed,

the process of collective or community formation is never pure, straightforward or 'natural', but is always 'interested', always changing, and always productive of identity and understandings of who and what the subject is.

We have argued that the question of subjectivity is intimately connected with the body and the way particular bodies are classified, assessed and valued through notions such as Foucault's biopower, Bourdieu's habitus and James's 'storm centre'. The body is also connected with our relations and associations with others, whether we are considering categorical forms of identity like age groups, gender, race, or specific formations like kinship, ethnicity and nationalism. We can trace in this a parallel between individual identity and group identity: they go through similar patterns of formation and constitution. Bourdieu writes that there is a collective or shared habitus, predicated on what comes to seem, for any community, 'a commonsense world endowed with the objectivity secured by consensus on the meaning (*sens*) of practices and world' (Bourdieu, 1977: 80). These meanings are generated by a society's dominant stories about tradition and the present, about the norms which circumscribe practice; and they produce in community members a sense of a common history, a common relation to objective structures, common beliefs and dispositions to practice. Like the habitus, this historical process of becoming is forgotten; as Craig Calhoun writes, 'Clearly people experience their social worlds as always in some part given to them prior to their own actions' (Calhoun, 1997: 31). It is 'their own actions' that produce the systems and structures in which we live as communities, and narratives of the community that come to seem the 'truth' of the community.

Culture is central to this notion of collective habitus, and the field of cultural production can be understood as being every bit as significant to, and inflected by, globalization as the media, the economy or technology. And certainly it has long been a significant part of community identity: one of the important indicators of nationhood is the identification of a body of art and cultural heritage which is distinctively 'national', located in sites with are identified with the nation (the *British* Museum, the

Australian National Gallery). But culture itself is always subject to change, as Raymond Williams writes, though defining culture as 'the whole life of a people', rather than the restrictive 'art and heritage' definition.

Williams argues that there are three levels of cultural meaning which organize our collective lives, and our understandings of ourselves and our society. These he terms dominant, residual and emergent cultures (Williams, 1980: 40). Dominant culture is the norm of current practice, being the contemporary doxa that structures identities and actions. An example of this is the process of nationalism in a globalizing world, and the way the doxa of neoliberalism shapes social structures and practices. Residual culture is that which forms the basis of traditional beliefs and practices, and may be very much at odds with dominant culture. Although the earlier modes or residual forms may have been forgotten, and have lost their power, our sense of self is still influenced by old belief systems; as Gilles Deleuze writes, 'we continue to produce ourselves as a subject on the basis of old modes which do not correspond to our problems' (1988: 107). We can see ongoing examples of this in the protracted struggles between Catholic and Protestant people in Northern Ireland, or between Jews and Palestinians in the Middle East; their founding principles of difference are based on a set of religious ideas that have little relation to the problems that in fact are being engaged.

There is always a point of conflict between dominant and residual culture, because the latter constitutes a threat to the present, a way of undermining its legitimacy by reference to the authority of antiquity ('We've always done things this way,' which carries the subtext of 'So the old ways must be right'). The third form, emergent culture, influences both dominant and residual culture. It includes those meanings, values, ways of being and ways of understanding that are in the process of being constructed, that have not yet been fully incorporated into the social, or defined as part of effective contemporary practice. Again, aspects of globalization are part of this notion of emergent culture, particularly the possibility of being fully connected through the global technological networks, or the

possibility of cyborgism that continues to seduce and threaten human 'being'.

For any social formation, the past continually inflects the present, while the future continually beckons, offering new formations and new possibilities. This means, by extension, that subjectivity or a sense of identity, whether individual or collective, is also constantly facing change. How can we explain this with reference to what we have insisted is the durable and transposable nature of the habitus? We have argued that a person's habitus can tolerate social upheavals, and moving from one field to another, because there is a 'continuity of meaning' throughout most national cultures (usually promoted by governments, in concert with major institutions). Globalization affects this, Arjun Appadurai has suggested, through the more or less unregulated flow of cultural texts, in concert with the continuous 'flowing of peoples' and ideas that characterizes the contemporary world. These continually and rapidly changing circumstances and contexts work on the habitus, and 'move the glacial forces of the habitus into the quickened beat of improvisations for large groups of people' (Appadurai, 1997: 6). We have to improvise more often, he argues, because in the contemporary world we are continuously confronted with images, narratives, information, voices and perspectives from all corners of the globe that don't equate with the 'received ideas' of our habitus, or the terms of residual or (local) dominant culture. So, rather than having stable identities, people have to 'make do' with whatever is at hand – to borrow identities from various (usually media entertainment) sources. This means that people are necessarily distanced not just from 'official' cultural texts and their meanings, but from any institution or text which claims to have a monopoly of meaning, simply because, in a globalized world, what is understood as normal is always subject to (very rapid) challenge and change.

Mobile identities

Globalization thus transforms the habitus, the idea of the subject, and the constituents of collective identity because it

breaks down the 'natural' connection being identity and the physical body, identity and place, identity and tradition. Nicholas Negroponte writes:

> The post-information age will remove the limitations of geography. Digital living will include less and less dependence upon being in a specific place at a specific time, and the transmission of place itself will start to become possible . . . In the post-information age, since you may live and work at one or many locations, the concept of an 'address' now takes on new meaning. (Negroponte, 1996: 238)

This notion that distance and physical limitations have become irrelevant is becoming a doxa of the globalizing era. We discussed in Chapter 3 the tendency of time and space to collapse, or be truncated, through the effects of technological networking and the almost instantaneous flows of investment and ideas. But the notion that this transfers directly to the freedom of individuals to move is rather specious. Boundaries are indeed collapsing, or at least becoming permeable, but not everyone can move, or move freely. There is a profound difference between the 'nomadic chic' available to globetrotters and the enforced nomadism of the refugee, for instance. In other words, class has a considerable effect upon who moves, how often they move, and under what conditions.

Zygmunt Bauman points out that only the wealthy, the 'high up', actually travel freely and by choice around the world. The poor, the undesirable, the 'low down' are either trapped in place, or driven out of their homes. He writes that 'In 1975 there were 2 million forced emigrants – refugees – under the care of the High Commission set up by the UN for that purpose. In 1995 there were 27 million of them' (Bauman, 1998: 86–7). So while people flows are high and increasing, as are the flows of ideas and capital, for the most part people are moving unwillingly, and arriving unwelcomed. The global networking of which Castells writes does not equate to access for all. Rather, it reinscribes differences and inequities: the old patterns of us and them, core and periphery. It also renders the question of identity

highly problematic: our identity is very much tied back to our national identity, and so 'A person without country must therefore be understood to lack not only a place in the external world but a proper self' (Calhoun, 1997: 46). Thus it is possible to treat refugees, asylum seekers and illegal immigrants as subhuman, not-quite-subjects.

The example of the Australian detainee camps is a case in point, where people who arrive without papers, and without a clear warrant of identity, can be incarcerated and denied access to normal channels of communication, in remote, inhospitable and inaccessible parts of the country. Denied freedom of movement, only barely accorded the status of human beings, they have become not subjects but objects of national policy, tools for the winning or losing of elections, absences around which discourses can circulate. That this is not accidental is demonstrated by the fact that the Howard government in Australia forbade the navy and the press to photograph asylum seekers prior to the hotly contested 2001 federal election 'because it would humanize and personalize the people' (ABC News, 17 April 2002). The asylum seekers subsequently protested at their treatment with tactics that included hunger strikes and, in some cases, the stitching together of their lips. These were met with scorn and outrage by government spokespeople, who said that it was proof that they were 'not the kind of people we want here' – not 'like us'.

The farcical nature of this government attitude can be seen in (at least) two respects. Firstly the asylum seekers had, in the opinion of numerous medical officers, been driven to distraction and despair by their treatment, and a number had attempted suicide and been committed to psychiatric care. In other words, first we drive them mad, then we use their madness to prove that they don't belong among us. Secondly, it is not rare to starve oneself or pierce one's flesh in Australia; many people are continually dieting, or coping with eating disorders like anorexia or bulimia; many people have pierced lips, tongues, noses, brows and genitals; but in neither instance is this used to insist that they are not properly human, not 'part of us'. And while all this was happening, Australia was still welcoming business

migrants, tourists and foreign investment. It was possible for the Australian government to exclude the asylum seekers despite the fact that were are in no way different from other Australians (many of whom in fact have the same ethnic and linguistic background as the detainees) because they had first been dehumanized.

To what extent is it possible, then, to talk of a global culture, or a global subject? Clearly, some subjects are indeed global – Bauman's 'high up' being that instance. But, for most, identity is always being negotiated across and between local, regional, national and global spheres. As Bauman again points out:

> Progressively, entry visas are being phased out all over the globe. But not passport control. The latter is still needed – perhaps more than ever before – to sort out the confusion which the abolition of the visas might have created: to set apart those for whose convenience and whose ease of travel the visas have been abolished, from those who should have stayed put. (Bauman, 1998: 87)

And of course for those who possess the capital and the literacies, it is possible to travel while staying in place, and to participate in a community that is truly global and free, because virtual – the cyberculture community of MUDs and chat rooms, web sites and e-zines, multimedia entertainment and digital cultural production. Other global cultural moments might include the experience of being part of a fan community, for instance, whose members across the world have posters of Will Smith on their walls, or listen to classical music; or being among the audiences gathered for media events like Live Aid or the funeral of Princess Diana.

Global culture?

This does not necessarily mean that what they are experiencing is global culture. In fact, some theorists argue that there can be no such thing as truly global culture because identity and

cultural attachment rely on emotional and traditional reso-
nances. The Coca-Colonization of the world can't hope to
achieve this because it is comparatively recent, manifestly com-
mercial, and lacks the specific signifiers of cultural identity to
which people can relate. Held and McGrew write in this respect
that 'there is no common global pool of memories; no common
global way of thinking; and no "universal history" in and
through which people can unite' (2000: 16). This means global
culture is limited in its capacity to mobilize identity and affect.
Indeed, being necessarily premised on capitalism and the
dissemination of narratives through the electronic media, it can
exist only in so far as corporations find it profitable to construct
and market new memories and new shared experiences. Rather
than an actual culture, they might argue, it is a fiction conjured
up and disseminated by the global media.

Most theorists, though, fall into one of two camps with
respect to the question of a global culture. One is the cultural
homogenization camp, the other the cultural hybridization
camp. The former equate globalization generally with the
homogenizing of culture, the resultant retraction or dismissal of
local cultures, and the Westernization of the globe. Though
cultural products of course flow across and around the globe,
most of the flow is from the West out. And because of the power
of the media to mobilize identity and affect, it is argued, the
effect is of a single commodity/identity world, the destruction
of the local and the authentic, and the reimagining or renarra-
tivizing of traditions as commodities. In this perspective, global
culture means Western culture writ large. For those without the
resources to resist this cultural neocolonialism, the future is
Western. Those with some resources, though, can resist and turn
the homogenizing process back on itself. Curator and critic Hou
Hanru makes this point in discussing the interaction between
Western and Chinese art, writing:

> After some initial moments of excitement and hope, Chinese
> contemporary artists' contact with western-dominated global
> art has been disappointing and frustrating, which has pushed
> many artists to reconsider their relationship with the

> international art world. On the one hand, they confirm the
> necessity to search for a space for expressions which are both
> personal and universally significant. On the other hand, they
> recognise that it is now time to restructure the art world and
> create a genuinely global scene. (Hou Hanru, 1999: 191)

It is unlikely that everyday people in their everyday worlds
would have the capital, the literacies or the contacts to be able
even to dream of restructuring any part of their world, but the
art world is of course a somewhat privileged sphere, and one
that is able to claim some of the benefits offered by globalization.

Hou Hanru doesn't, though, suggest an inversion of the
West-out flow of cultural forms. Rather, he takes up a concept
previously applied to the economic sphere: 'the *glocal*'. This
unlovely word was coined by Roland Robertson to describe the
selling of goods and services on a global scale, but targeted
appropriately to particular local markets. For Hou Hanru, it can
also describe the possibility of producing art in a dynamic ten-
sion between global and local tastes, traditions, narratives and
imperatives. This is an expression of the second strand of the
cultural globalization debate: the idea of cultural hybridization,
or the blending of foreign and local to make a new form.

According to Beynon and Dunkerley (2000: 18–19), this flow
(what Hou Hanru calls the glocal) is two-way. While global
culture obviously impacts upon the local in the massive
production and distribution of global consumer goods and
images, the local impacts on the global too. There is a practically
limitless pool of examples of these practices. We can think, for
instance, of popular music, where gamelan instruments and
sitars interface with rock guitars, where African-informed rap
music is picked up and reworked by Japanese or Australian
Aboriginal musicians. We can look to Fiji, where politicians and
businessmen wear traditional *sulu* wraps with Western suit
jackets and ties, or Papua New Guinea, where the traditional
woven bags, the *bilum*, are increasingly being made with
Western products, and incorporate Western designs. With
globalization, clearly, things change; old cultural forms may be
swept away, or replaced, or they may absorb and re-form the

new cultural products that impinge on their space and sell them back to the centre.

Commentators who align themselves with the hybridization argument sometimes suggest that the networking of the globe does not necessarily lead to the extinction of local culture and local forms. Rather, they argue, it may regenerate traditional practices, languages and forms of cultural production. A.D. Smith, for instance, argues that the new communication technologies 'make possible a denser, more intense interaction between members of communities who share common cultural characteristics, notably language' which can re-energize 'ethnic communities and their nationalisms' (Smith, 1990: 175). Examples of this can be seen in the Zapatista movement, whose struggle for independence and dignity is mobilized via the internet, as is the Electronic Intifada associated with Palestinian resistance. And the 'dense interaction' Smith observes is evident among many diasporic communities. We can think of, say, expatriate German associations which keep alive traditional music, dancing and stories, or Chinese Associations which ensure that second and third-generation children learn their languages, and Chinese history and culture. Such groups operate not just in town halls and community centres, but also via web sites, newspapers, radio stations and films produced in their languages and about their cultures.

The counter-argument is that such practices do not demonstrate 'authentic' cultural practice. As often as not, the traditions maintained by diasporic communities bear little resemblance to what can be found in the original country, which is often known only in an idealized version, and is transformed anyway by the new context. The Chinese dish *chop suey*, for instance, served in restaurants across the West, is never found in China; the name of the dish comes from the Cantonese for 'odds and ends', and it is an invention of Chinese in America. Gregory Lee notes that 'Non-Chinese think it's Chinese. The Chinese outside America think it's American. It is neither one thing nor the other: it is hybrid' (Lee, 1996: 219). The films used by diasporic communities, and the advertisements and other products designed to inform others about a local culture and its traditions, are often

no more than the work of global capital in packaging something that signifies the 'exotic' to sell it to a global market. Wrenched from its local place, decontextualized and repackaged, there is arguably little connection between the globally distributed form and the original to which it refers. As Beynon and Dunkerley point out (2000: 20), many of the 'traditional' arts and craft on display in tourist centres are highly dubious in their origins, and their function is not the revival of a local culture but the production of tourist goods. Difference is deployed, then, as part of the global market trajectory, and not because of any inherent appreciation of other cultures and their values. As Baudrillard writes:

> For 'We respect the fact that you are different' read: 'You people who are underdeveloped would do well to hang on to this distinction because it is all that you have left'. Nothing could be more contemptuous – or more contemptible – than this attitude, which exemplifies the most radical form of incomprehension that exists. (Baudrillard, 1993: 132)

Of course it isn't only the West that decontextualizes or appropriates other cultural forms. Masato Nakamura, a contemporary Japanese artist, directly addresses and plays with this issue. One of his more famous series of works constitutes displays of multiple McDonald's 'golden arches' signs, obvious markers of multinational corporate, market-driven value. In these installations he produces visually stunning works that also decontextualize these markers of global capital from their function and their identity, repositioning them as art objects whose value is firstly in the aesthetic, and secondly in the pleasure of poking fun at a major transnational corporation.

The second counter is that fears about inauthenticity depend on the belief that there is, or ever was, a truly authentic form. Few poststructural theorists would argue this. Jean Baudrillard discusses this concept with relation to the thesis of the relation between reality and representation. He argues that rather than an original object or form – the real – producing its referent or cultural variants, in fact the real is preceded and produced by its

representation. He terms this 'the simulacrum' (1983: 3), which points to the extent to which reality can exist for us only as and where we have cultural referents to give us frameworks in which to think and see. Photographs, video recordings and other memory banks, for instance, not only record the important moments of our lives, but can even become more important than the original moments, as Susan Sontag pointed out. Of course, although 'the real' has effectively disappeared, communities behave as though it exists and still provides an epistemological basis and a teleological focus to everyday practices. So the real does not have a material history or ontological status, but it is a constitutive fiction around and upon which social practices are organized, evaluated and explained.

Conclusion

Why should we be interested in this insertion into national and local cultures of a homogenizing, globalized culture? One answer, offered by Arjun Appadurai, is that culture is that which expresses, or sets the groundwork for, 'the mobilization of group identities' (Appadurai, 1997: 13). So the effect of flows of texts that offer new or different ideas of how to understand ourselves as members of a collective is that the terms of membership of the national group are open to being redefined, and the hegemony of so-called 'national cultures' can be challenged. This does not mean that identity is entirely up for grabs; there is little evidence of any genuine global culture. Rather, what we see in the realm of cultural identity is what we have seen in the other fields passed over by the grid of globalization: those with capital are able to exploit the vast opportunities made available by the doxa of globalization, and its practices as undertaken through the economy or the realm of technology and the media. Their identity may be transformed in terms of what Appadurai calls 'elements of a postnational imaginary' (1993: 428): transnationally oriented social and cultural forms that resonate with the possibility of reworking neocolonialist cultural flows and renegotiating the imposed homogeneity of the nation-state

or the ethnic tradition. But those without capital and specific literacies are likely to be appropriated, disadvantaged and disturbed by globalizing tendencies. This doesn't mean they will necessarily sink into invisibility. The 11 September attacks in the United States; the anti-globalization protests in Seattle, Melbourne and Genoa; the popular uprising against IMF-driven economic policies in Argentina; and the success of extreme right-wing political parties in Austria, France and Italy; all these constitute, in their different ways, a 'biting back' of the social and the local against the institutions, policies and practices associated with globalization. In our next chapter we will look at how the processes and doxa of globalization, and its meanings and consequences, are disseminated, reproduced, played out and negotiated within the public sphere.