The structures of globalization are insanely complex. The world’s news media must at least try to make some sense of these structures visible. That is, the news must gratify the needs of an audience which requires an understanding of what causal systems are responsible for such felt effects as oil prices, currency fluctuations, and the migration of employment. Media professionals' ethics, peer pressure and pride in their craft impel them to make some effort towards educating the citizenry in the terms and conditions of participation in the global economy. And, in light of popular movements like the Live8 concerts in support of Bob Geldoff's "Make Poverty History" campaign, the news touches on the possibilities and challenges of global governance.

It has long been a truism of media analysis that certain abstractions are difficult if not impossible to photograph. Concepts like Labor or Class Struggle are not easily imaged. Classical and modernist cinemas tried to achieve this kind of representation through such techniques as narrative distillations of individual experience, allegorical forms, montage and direct address (the latter for example in Godard). In their attempts to picture and explain global relations, popular media tend more towards individualist and allegorical narrative, and many news reports revert to individualized "typical" narratives, which offer the additional coloration of human interest stories. Many such news stories and current affairs documentaries narrativize the navigations of a specific migrant or cosmopolitan to stitch together disparate geopolitical entities.

Other strategies include the narrativization of trade, as undertaken in Amos Gitai's *Pineapple*, or of specific sectors of the global distribution industries, as in Alan Sekula's photo-essay *Fish Story* (1995). Such efforts to render concrete otherwise invisible and ostensibly immaterial global flows are greatly to be praised. The materiality of...
globalization is indeed experienced viscerally among the rubbish-pickers of Manila, in the impact of containerization on dockworker communities, or in the misery of High Andean tin mining after the collapse of the London Metals Exchange. Cultural and even commercial depictions of these ways of life are rare enough to be extremely valuable in any attempt to understand what globalization means. Moreover, narrative has the high virtue of incorporating time into the analysis of globalization — which otherwise, as the word suggests, is largely a spatial and spatializing discourse.

The spatial description of globalization among writers as diverse as Ohmae (1990), Cooper (2004) and Beck (2000) is not without ideological and discursive import. Decreasing temporality is synonymous with diminishing historicity, and thence tends to minimize the understanding of change as anything other than a territorial advance. Consider for example the recommendations of the UN's 2005 Millennium Development Goals advisory body, which international relations focus on

- improved market access and terms of trade for the poor countries.
- improved supply-side competitiveness for low-income country exports, through increased investments in infrastructure (roads, electricity, ports) and trade facilitation (Millennium Project 2005: 46).

These recommendations — for legislative, governmental and infrastructural change — are exclusively concerned with geographical phenomena, and not at all with such time-based features as local and regional histories, cultural traditions, or histories of conflict. This spatializing tendency in the literatures of globalization scholars and development agencies is discursive (in Foucault's sense of the word) to the extent that it emphasizes power, and the field of its influence is a geography. It is also ideological insofar as the emphasis on space implies a marginalization of time, and with it a de-emphasizing of difference and contradiction. Such is the impact of Peter Singer's ethical arguments for "one law" and "one economy," and in particular his justification of UN mandated peace-keeping on behalf of wealthy nations in poor
ones (Singer 2002). One symptomatic practice of this spatializing and de-historicizing, anti-dialectical understanding of the world is the visualization of the globe as the arena of news and current affairs.

Something has happened here in the years since Margaret Morse penned her chapter on "Television Graphics and the Virtual Body." Then Morse could argue that

"as a clocklike mechanism, the logo signals a temporal, linear shift between programs and program types in television flow; as the design of its motion underlines, the logo represents an exchange along the depth or z-axis between the viewer and the screen" (Morse 1998: 72).

In addition to the regulation of time, logos were at one point privileged moments in which viewers were enticed into the virtual world of television. As we will see, this function has changed in the decade or so since Morse advanced this thesis. True at the time, now networks and globalization have gone beyond virtuality and immersion as key metaphors for digital media. And as a result, the relations between time, space and their viewing subjects have changed, subtly but significantly.

Global television news stations like Sky TV, BBC World and CNN commonly use imagery based on global maps in their title sequences. These depictions of the planet are also ideological in the sense that the presentation of the globe as a coherent space of action and interpretation corresponds to a certain sense of dread. It was not only the Twin Towers that unsettled the explicable of the universe. Long before 9/11, a kind of Kierkegaardian and existential fear and trembling entered the soul of the West as the inevitable corollary of that freedom which was the goal and vehicle of modernity. Freedom from superstition became freedom to advance towards not only an understanding of the world, but the moral grounds for action in the world. But history has proved that there is no progress in moral ideas. We have no more viable basis for ethical action than our forebears, and in the absence of an authority, sublunar or divine, the abyss of uncertainty opens up before us. News title sequences on these three channels address the problem of a secular uncertainty concerning the structurelessness of a borderless world, which these media at once embody and yet against which they inveigh. The first ideological function of these news title sequences is not to interpret the world in a certain way, but to present the world as, in principle, interpretable.

In this sense, these representations reverse Althusser's theme (1971) concerning ideology's task of interpellation. And
Certainly soundtracks as well as graphics, not least in their
fanfares and martial urgency, address viewers as subjects of
news discourse. BBC World, for example, has a raft of
variations on a musical theme based on a regular,
metronomic, repeated note every second; news headlines
introduced by a sustained growling bass note with plenty of
attack and slow decay, underpinned by a percussive
syncopation of the basic rhythm and a crescendo in the upper
register culminating in a snare drum tap; and succeeded by a
cymbal-like note at lower volume to facilitate the transition
to the volume and timbre of the spoken word. (One of the
most inspired and yet most typical uses of music is the
British news organization ITN's use of Sibelius' *Karelia Suite*
fanfare, with its stirring sense of a call to battle and high
ideals). Such auditory cues are designed to attract the
viewer's attention from other domestic activities, and to
signal the urgency of news reporting as time-bound activity.
News title-sequence music typically hails the global news
viewer as a member of the cosmopolitan elite, whose fingers
are always on the pulse, and whose interests are not
restricted to the local. Equally significant to its constitution of
the viewer as cosmopolitan, however, the news presents the
world as object, not known necessarily, but knowable. The
subject who is interpellated (called to and simultaneously
constituted as subject of this discourse in particular) is then
directed towards a god's-eye view of the undifferentiated flux
of human activity, which news reporting will draw into an
objectifiable unity that can be addressed as content: as
stories, as graphics, as maps. Thus the achievement, in
ideological terms, is not the centering of the viewer, who is in
any case presumed to be dispersed, but the centering of the
world as a single entity which can be described, spoken of or
about, argued over. And yet, as a secondary ideological effect,
the news discourse develops the "world," once constituted as
knowable, as a medium through which the cosmopolitan
viewer can be constructed as the missing point in the
discourse. It is the viewer for whom all this is laid out, a
position which actual viewers are then invited to occupy, and
from which they can then act as ideological agents.

This is the explanation, I believe, for a particular quality of
machine-drawn images: the externality of the videographic
mode of presentation. The royal road of narrative analysis has
so often led to the problematic of identification. This still
drives, for example, the human interest story, the invitation
to imagine oneself as a member of a bereaved family, as the
grieving mother of a stricken child, as the shamed executive
or the successful athlete. But the videographic proposes itself
as non-human, and in the context of news titles, imagery of
the world rarely uses the kind of humanist expression of icons
Like the Vitruvian man. Leonardo da Vinci’s engraving, based on the principles of the ancient architectural author Vitruvius, places the ideal human body at the centre of an ideally geometrical and perfected universe. In the words of Kenneth Clark (from the book of his signature BBC TV series *Civilisation*), that engraving contains the idea that "through proportion we can reconcile the two parts of our being, the physical and the intellectual" (Clark 1969: 65). Unlike Leonardo’s sketch, our representations of the Cosmic Man are neither cosmological nor expressions of a transcendent mathematical ideal.

Instead we give ourselves new maps of our own lack of both position and proportion. The element of the circle persists from Leonardo’s ideal, but stripped of its perfection, its humanity and its universalism. The sphere that remains is uncentered, admitting the plurality of subjects, the endless number of individual consciousnesses at work in the world, and which in aggregate are the world. As image, the contemporary globe stands in for the foment of individuals, and for their paradoxical unity as the mass of humanity. At the same time the globe stands for the givenness of the global as the dimension in which events occur. These sequences show our planet as if it were seen from space, from a vantage outside the world. Yet this kind of image lacks the accretion of ecological belief that colors the Apollo images of Earth from orbit, or even the less iconic earth observation by satellite pictures that deck the pages of *National Geographic*.

The discursive task of the digital globe that runs through these sequences is then to produce the world as a unity. To do so, they draw on icons like the Vitruvian Man and the Apollo picture. Sky News Australia’s idiosyncratic self-presentation as a nation-continent is explicable in terms of the station’s strapline, "Australia’s News Channel," in a terrestrial market dominated by city-based channels and a satellite market where it competes with global players like CNN and BBC World. Yet it shares with its peers the use of a map projection that barely challenges the eurocentrism of global maps. While 3D graphics do not need to enact the same distortions as 2D projections of the planetary sphere, they nonetheless replicate the distortions we expect from paper maps and atlases. The reason is not entirely ideological – the desire to emphasize the metropolitan nations. Neither
The Peters map emphasizes the equatorial regions to indicate a political orientation towards the underdeveloped world.

John Speed’s map suggests the inadequacy of thinking in terms of hemispheres.

is it merely a matter of reiterating the most familiar mapping conventions, nor of de-emphasizing the largely news-free zones of the open oceans.

The ideological issues in mapmaking can be summed up crudely by presenting some examples. The Peters projection, as the spacing of the grid indicates, emphasizes the equatorial regions where the more familiar Mercator projection emphasizes Northern and Southern latitudes. Peters is widely used – by the United Nations Development Agency and by the journal *Third Text* among many others – to indicate an allegiance or an orientation towards the underdeveloped world, the choice marking a differentiation from orientations grounded in the metropoles. The upside-down map serves a similar task for inhabitants of the Southern hemisphere, playing on the etymology of the word orientation, which derives from the now discarded practice in pre-Baroque mapping of placing East at the top of the map in honor of the Holy Land and the scene of Creation in the Garden of Eden. The Surrealist map, with its elimination of England and the USA in favor of Easter Island and Labrador is perhaps the most famous parody of the principle that *scale* equates to *significance*. The Pacific-centered map is a favorite of scholars and policymakers interested in the often-noted phenomenon of “westward drift” in U.S. capital and the rise of the Asian super-economies, a map emphasizing the Asia-Pacific Rim as the new powerhouse of globalization. John Speed’s world map of 1627 represents another vision of the world as hemispheres, a phenomenon so deeply associated with the Cold War but which has now fallen largely out of use. The very redundancy of the hemispheric map is itself intensely suggestive of the normative powers of cartographic convention.

It’s my belief that cartography is at least as significant to the visual regimes of the contemporary world as illusionistic depiction is. Illusion (perspectival illusion, for example) has therefore a more radical role to play, precisely because, in its association with leisure media, it is marginal to government and management. News, which sits between leisure and workplace media and to some extent marks their border, unsurprisingly seeks ways to reconcile the graphic and photographic modes of documentation. Beyond the title sequence, news (even more than current affairs) deploys other non-figurative media apart from maps, notably the visual display of numerical data (stock trading graphs, charts
of election poll shares). These graphical formats belong to a third regime of modernity, the spreadsheet. Digital graphics are the heirs of baroque systems of empire – cartography, bureaucracy and double-entry bookkeeping. Yet empire no longer functions as it did in the counter-reformation, and the signs of its changing nature can be read off from its self-presentation in graphic and cartographic form.

(Continued on next page)
TV news titles — picturing the planet
(continued)

There is certainly a play on familiarity in these sequences of spinning globes, and even a lightly ironic exaggeration brought into play. These are after all expensive and sophisticated examples of both digital graphic technique and the branding of station identity, pitched at both mass and niche markets. I am chary of attributing more significance to my sample and interpret it as evidence of an ideological maneuver intended to cheat audiences of a true knowledge of the world. On the contrary, these logos require knowledge of the world so that they can offer to present it.

Instead, I want to argue that the nature of the Earth changes when we cease to consider it as a planet, as a world, or as cosmopolis, and instead consider it as a globe. The depictions of the planet we see in news program title sequences can be subjected to ideological analysis by anyone reading this: the centering on the North Atlantic, the bounding of the globe by both corporate logos and ongoing or typical storylines, and so on. The claim to know and present the world predates television, and I have little to add to what, in some sense, everybody knows. What I find intriguing is less some presupposed falsification of the world, and rather more the accuracy (or lack of accuracy) of these graphical accounts of the world as globalized, here at the beginning of a century in which globalization must, in some form or definition, be taken as a fundamental given.

Equally given in the 21st century is the mediation of human relations via global media and especially global news reporting. We can no longer take the face-to-face as the normative mode of human interaction. Our increasingly interlaced and planet-spanning networks of interdependence and communication are enacted most pervasively through money, but also through the cycles of picturing, recording, reproduction and distribution that link us multilaterally across continents. My inevitably consumer choices articulate with coffee farmers I will never meet; my charity is articulated with pictures of famine-stricken regions I will never visit; my voting behavior is imbricated in refugee camps I pray never to inhabit. Actions in which I recognize
what I take to be my very self, my most precious identity, are
couched in the music, the movies, the brands and the news I
opt to allow into my life, the products and services I pay for
with my money or my attention. This much also we all know.

The world we inhabit is mediated, and at least some forms of
that mediation, notably those associated with global
corporations (including the public service corporation of the
BBC, permanently threatened with privatization and thence
perpetually on the brink of corporate modes of operating) are
invariably ideologically informed. So what's new?

At least two things strike me as different from earlier states of
affairs. The first is the alteration undergone as it were
internally by what was previously the key political institution
of modernity, the nation state. The second is the shifting
nature of and aspirations for the possibility of a successor
mode of political-economic governance or management in
what Habermas (2001) refers to as the "postnational
constellation."

The first of these has two problematic outcomes in terms of
the generation of anxiety which news titles address. The first
is that the abandonment of the welfare state leads, as Claus
Offe (1984, 1985) analyzed it in the 1980s, to a
"recommodification" of both capital and labor, neither of
which is any longer bound by the common ground of the
state to bring their labor or their capital to one market.
Capital has migrated. And labor either has done the same, or
entered into non-labor means of earning a living, notably in
the globalizing criminal economy of drugs and arms dealing,
but also in political or otherwise ideological groupings, from
the Zapatistas to radical Islamists. The second problematic
outcome is the decreasing ability of the nation-state to
control taxation, labor relations, and even the monopoly on
violence (Hardt and Negri 2004) in the face of global
pressures, including treaty obligations and the need to attract
and hold inward investment. This change has removed the
traditional instruments and spheres of influence through
which the state was legitimated.

In their absence, the national has had to be foregrounded,
and that largely in terms of its cultural cohesion. Thus the key
legitimation instruments of the state have become essentially
cultural, including arts subsidies, education policy, control
over immigration — and now endocolonisation (Virilio 1994)
or the "state of emergency" (Agamben 2005) through which
government's establish emergency powers as the permanent
basis for rule. The loss or diminution in effectiveness of a
state-guaranteed level playing field for capital and minimum
rights for workers and consumers, allied with the anxieties
provoked in national efforts to restabilize state legitimation through xenophobia and international comparisons, produces a condition in which a further ground of certainty, the state as a field in which conflicts can reach compromise and at least temporary consensus, has lost its authority.

Utopian hopes for the supercession of the state by supra- or international powers have been dashed in the decades following the foundation of the United Nations, now overshadowed by the 1947 formation of the Bretton-Woods agreement, and more particularly the first iteration of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade. GATT and its successor the World Trade Organization, since they do not need to secure the consensus of the populations over which they exert their influence, have not needed to concentrate on the common rights due to workers. Workplace conditions are still displaced to the realm of national sovereignty while, however, that sovereignty has effectively been whittled away by economic imperatives to cater to requirements of increasingly mobile capital. Meanwhile, governments are constrained by the terms of the treaties involved in the WTO, GATS and other transnational instruments of governance, to abide by terms which effectively compel them to provide standardized infrastructural, legal, contractual and tax regimes that benefit global trade. The disparity felt between the service to capital and the absence of any parallel duty to standardize working conditions, health and safety, pay and social benefits for labor has lead to a general belief that any realistically conceivable system of global governance will not imitate the lost welfare state, but rather the management of corporations. While a significant number of people benefit from this arrangement, we do not need to look to sub-Saharan Africa, the Caribbean, central Asia, the high Andes, or the archipelagos of the western Pacific to find populations who have failed to thrive as a result of the ensuing system. Internal discrepancies in earning and in all social indicators continue to grow in the world's powerhouse economies. Moreover, these effects are increasingly understood as effects of the globalization of capital, even where, as in the USA and to a certain extent the European Union, the institutions of federal government in particular are deeply distrusted by significant elements of the population.

The absence of either an unique source of rule and rules, or of a viable and legitimated chain of rule makes us free, but it leaves us uncomfortable. Everyday experience tells us we are subject to rules and to rule, yet nowhere do we find an agency that can genuinely claim responsibility for them. There is, in short, and reducing the state of affairs to its most general and banal statement, a habit of anchorage which globalization has unsettled, not simply by raising the anchor, but by changing
the nature of the seabed.

An unusual feature of New Zealand TV's One News title sequence is the transparency of the globe, the globe as a skin whose further side remains in view. Clearly a metaphor for the sleepless eyes of Argus, this transparency also operates to express the world's presentation of itself for that gaze. It's a view, then, in the sense that the word "view" has of both the gaze and the gazed upon. Heidegger's "world view" concerned the framing of the world; in contrast, this presentation offers us the world as the arbiter of vision, that which contains all vision by offering itself in total as visible through and through. Nor is this a point of view, since for any individual point of view, the world is opaque, both because the phenomenal world absorbs all gazes and keeps its silence, and because the global, unlike the phenomenal world, holds itself apart in invisible abstraction.

To add a little more precision, the view engaged does not belong to a point, and thus does not obey either the window metaphor that Heidegger's worldview essay promotes, or the perspectival geometries governing depiction and illusion. The world presenting itself as both global and as view invokes some other order than the point as its referent. The viewer is dispersed but not indefinite, still individuated but now ensconced not as a member of the masses but of a network, in the sense firstly of the broadcast TV networks, and secondly of a team, global in span, of journalists, technical staff, stringers, informants and infrastructure. The subject implied is then an ensemble gaze, though not Hardt and Negri's multitude, with their differences and dynamism. Subjected to a world or subject of the transparent planet that gives itself to total network vision while hiding itself from any individual gaze, this networked subject that sees interminably is the nearest thing that global media can offer as a subject position capable of undertaking the lost authority of religion and science, of responding to the broken habit of anchorage, the distress and vertigo of freedom. What these spheres tend then to enclose, brand and distinguish as discrete is the externality of freedom encoded in the externality of videographic effects.

Our freedom, which gives us so much grief, is unmanageable as long as it produces only the sensation that we are standing, incapable and uncertain, at the brink of a precipice, and nonetheless responsible for all that happens subsequently. The implication of a networked ensemble subjectivity, whose primary role is to witness the process of the world rather than to intervene in it, accommodates this freedom. Without denying or destroying that freedom, the networked subjectivity displaces it where it causes far less aggravation:
external to the individual, and out with the parameters of
either depiction or scientific imaging that otherwise have
offered us our key ways of understanding the secular
universe. In externalizing freedom in the visual allegory of
videographics, however, the networked subject in the mold of
the corporate logo is essentially subject to the global as much
as subject of the world. And in either case, this subject is
stripped of agency, which the network replaces with the
omnivoyance of twenty-four/seven coverage.

To some extent this is fine. I am not among those for who
fear surveillance or mourn the passing of privacy or identity. I
have never really believed in the primacy of an inner life
except in what it has become for us — the publication of
intimacy. So I am happy enough to greet this latest turn in
the history of subjectivity, the more so since it shifts the
balance away from the subject towards the constitution of the
world as object. This to me is the challenge of documentary:
the problematic of all the ways the world can be approached,
as it must be approached, as an object. I agree here with
Adorno (1997: 37) that the subject-object divide is necessary
to the extent that without it we are lost in undifferentiated
terror, the terrain of myth and fate; yet that this divide is not
the final word in the relation between human polis and the
physical universe.

My concern here is rather with the notion that this
constitution of the world as videographic, implicated as it
seems to be in nostalgia for an authoritative discourse while
knowing that no such authority exists. This constitution of
the world builds an ideological image of the world-object as
author of its own authoritative statement, a statement which,
however, is limited to the merest announcement of existence
and the solitary statement of its own unity. Such a limited
conception of truth is the bread and butter of documentary
analysis. But when it becomes the generalized hallmark of a
genre of documentary practice that occupies such a strategic
position in the defining of the practice, I find grounds for
concern.

The responsibilities shirked in the effort to find a
reconciliation between yearning for and dread of freedom
include the identification of truth, where truth is not so much
a given as the pursuit of ethical as well as provable qualities
of the world. I proposed at the beginning of this article that
the spatializing, anti-dialectical drift of contemporary global
news graphics harbor an ideological response to dread. And I
will here ask in conclusion whether digital graphics offer a
particularly powerful way of resolving the twin challenges of
conflict and dread of freedom. A fuller account of this
problem will require more research into the emerging global
news services, especially those arriving from the powerhouse Asian economies of India and China. Will they too seek to heal conflict through digital surfaces? Or will they devise both new iconographies and new digital visualization tools more appropriate for the 21st century, when the hegemony of the English language and of both the USA and the old British and British settler colonies will diminish?

The question I have is whether the means of announcing this new subjectivity are in some way implicated in the shift. Do graphical codes have a specific task to perform in establishing the distance between viewer and viewed that enables the post-aristocratic, managerial gaze? Do these TV news graphics indicate a democratization of this managerial perspective, the managerialism of a networked corporation? And is the ethos of the mutually-imbricated definition of a global object committed to revealing itself and an ensemble subject as bereft of agency, other than the power to witness specific to 3D motion digital graphics? Or does the ethos antedate and drive its mediation?

(Continued: Notes)
References


