

Abstract

Globalisation has become a buzz-word of the contemporary age. It connotes an infinite number of developments simultaneously. In general, the globalisation paradigm is concerned with explaining the processes by which previously distant parts of the world have become connected in historically unprecedented ways. But globalisation extends far beyond an objective, material level: It operates on the subjective level of human consciousness as well. It is manifested in a growing awareness of the world as a single space, a 'global imaginary'.

The dissertation argues that the global imaginary is largely generated by the cumulative production and dissemination of globalisation narratives: By representations of the world as a totality in the arts and sciences, in the media, and in popular culture. The dissertation identifies literature as an important site for this ongoing production and negotiation of the global imaginary.

During the 1990s and early 2000s theorisations of globalisation were made in disciplines as diverse as Economics, Philosophy, Sociology, Geography, History, and Media Studies. Globalisation was widely conceptualised as one of the most dominant paradigms since the late 20th century for explaining the transformation of political, cultural, and economic relationships in the world. Literary Studies, however, has been hesitant in addressing these transformations. The field continues to rely predominantly on postcolonial and postmodern models when evaluating transnational flows. The dissertation considers that these models fall short in grappling with the accumulating number of literary narratives of 'One World'. These narratives, it argues, demand a way of reading that directly engages with the concept of globalisation and its constituent discourses.

The dissertation therefore imports a globalisation vocabulary developed in other fields with which to examine four selected literary works: *Tokyo Cancelled* (2004) and *Solo* (2009) by Rana Dasgupta and *A Distant Shore* (2003) and *In the Falling Snow* (2009) by Caryl Phillips. The major claim of the dissertation is that, while Literary Studies may in this way benefit from an interdisciplinary approach, the field itself also has much to offer an analysis of globalisation. The four literary works serve as case studies that uncover how a novel literary approach to globalisation studies can and does significantly transform the globalisation paradigm as it is currently theorised in other fields.

Existing theory conceptualises globalisation either on a macro- *or* a micro level. It is focused either on the macrostructures of social organisation *or* on the level of human consciousness. In the four works by Dasgupta and Phillips, on the other hand, events and actions may occur on either a macro *or* a micro level, but invariably they ripple through ties of relation that intimately connect these different levels. The examination of the four literary works contributes first and foremost to a so far inadequately articulated conceptualisation of globalisation as a multidimensional narrative. Dasgupta and Phillips bring competing and contrasting globalisation discourses together in their works, thus problematizing theoretical endeavours to reduce what is, in fact, a manifold reality to a single Narrative. In the artistic global imaginary expressed in the selected works by Dasgupta and Phillips, globalisation is not derived from, nor contained within a single level of organisation. It unfurls as a multidimensional narrative that interweaves global and local perspectives and is characterised by a general awareness of worldwide causality.