

GLOBAL MEDIA, CULTURE, AND IDENTITY

THEORY, CASES, AND APPROACHES

EDITED BY ROHIT CHOPRA AND RADHIKA GAJJALA



ROUTLEDGE



GLOBAL MEDIA, CULTURE, AND IDENTITY

This edited volume examines the ways that global media shapes relations between place, culture, and identity. Through the included essays, Chopra and Gajjala offer a mix of theoretical reflections and empirical case studies that will help readers understand how the media can shape cultural identities and, conversely, how cultural formations can influence the political economy of global media. The interdisciplinary, international scholars gathered here push the discussion of what it means to do global media studies beyond uncritical celebrations of global media technologies (or globalization) as well as beyond perspectives that are a priori dismissive of the possibilities of global media.

Some of the key questions and themes that the international contributors explore within the text include: Is the global audience of global television the same as the global audience of the internet? Can we conceptualize the global culture-media-identity dynamic beyond the discourse of postcolonialism? How does the globalization of media affect feelings of nationalism? How is the growth of a consumer "global middle class" spread, and resisted, through media? *Global Media, Culture, and Identity* takes a comparative media approach to addressing these, and other, issues across media forms including print, television, film, and new media.

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CHAPTER 4

The Global Nomad

Navigating Mediated Space at a Global Scale

MICHAEL JENSON

Chapter Description

The effects of globalization over the past several decades are best captured through the term *detrterritorialization*—a conception of the territorial where social, economic, and political spaces are no longer necessarily geographic. For the first time in history, cultural spaces are developing which have no tangible connection to geographical places. Technological advances in global media are major contributors to this spatial transformation. Because the perception of space provides the underlying context for our actions and events, the ubiquitous effects of such advances will only increase as global communication technologies integrate into our daily lives and erode our conceptual conventions of space.

The premise of this chapter is that the status, relevance, and defining role of space rests on how we mitigate the rapid transformation of spatial perception and navigate the increasingly powerful technologies of global mediation. This chapter investigates the relationship of space to mediated space, in three parts. The first part examines the conventional conception of space and its meaning within the existence of the everyday. The second part explores how the media technologies of globalization have detrterritorialized our world by creating a *supraterterritorialism* that forces the transformation of our spatial imagination. The final part speculates about the

potential of a spatial interaction more akin to the way traditional nomadic cultures related to and conceived of space.

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Figure 4.1 Between Two Worlds

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As for the twenty-first century there is a big question mark hanging over it. Perhaps it will answer that question, because the “unlimited possibilities” are all there, whether in biology, communications, or the conquest of space, both cosmic and terrestrial. One of the great problems of the near future will be the dramatic shrinking space of earth, of life-size reality. The effect of being enclosed which Foucault noted in the eighteenth century will in fact characterize the twenty-first. What will human space be like in a world reduced to nothing by supersonic and instantaneous communications? Space as emptiness will be unlimited and space as fullness drastically limited. There will be a new interface between the solid and the fluid, except now the terrestrial littoral is vertical! (Paul Virilio, “Interview—Landscape of Events Seen at Speed”¹)

In this volume’s introduction, a metaphor for envisioning the profound effects of rapid globalization is presented that equates the political success and worldwide influence of an African American—as illustrated in Barack Obama’s ascension to the American presidency—as symbolic of the nuanced, simultaneous, and complex atmosphere surrounding identity in our globalizing world (Figure 4.1). Obama’s success rested on persuading

the electorate of his legitimacy as both “unmarked *and* African American.”² In other words, as Eugene Robinson points out, “Obama is the personification of ‘both-and.’”³

Space has gone through a similar transformation compelling individuals to define their identity differently. For millennia, identity was largely derived from the landscapes and geographic locales one inhabited. Envisioning identity was impossible detached from the part of the world that one (and their ancestors) resided. Languages reinforced this, as one was always seen in relationship to a native city, region, or nation. Periodically, there were changes in this attitude. For example, with the discovery of the new world, hyphenated descriptions of ethnic or national groups such as Irish, Italian, or Polish American became common. The recent rise of global telecommunications has only exacerbated this cultural/geographic merging, as globalized technological advancement has forced our spatial experience into Robinson’s identity paradigm of “both-and.”⁴

Globalization is often described in a multitude of ways, from its being a process of *liberalization*, of *universalization*, or *westernization* to a form of *internationalization*. None captures the enormity of globalization’s impact better than the term *detrterritorialization*—a conception of the territorial where social, economic, and political spaces are no longer necessarily geographic. For the first time in history, cultural spaces are developing, that have no tangible connection to geographical places. This state is radically altering our traditional territorial logic and forces the adoption of new methods of conceptualizing space/geography.⁵

Along with cultural and economic forces, two additional contributors to this spatial transformation have emerged—technological advances in transportation and global telecommunication. Because our perception of space provides the context for most actions and events, the wide-ranging effects of these advances are overwhelming in their complexity. This will only increase, as global communication technologies become more ubiquitous to our daily lives and continue to erode our conventional conceptualization of space.

Though these technologies’ transformation of reality through the mass production of images does not destroy our perception of the world, Paul Virilio asserts their distortions appear bent on replacing it and describes this state as “videoscapy,” whose “repercussions will make themselves felt through the constitution of an age of instantaneous, interactive ‘space-time’ having nothing in common with the topographical space of geographical or even geometrical distance.”⁶ The most disturbing aspect here is that, with this technologically driven desire for a global “reality replacement” based on the instantaneous connectivity of our social/political landscapes, a “switch” is being thrust on societies still unaware of the consequences.⁷

Jonathan Crary stretches this scenario further by describing a new age of perceptual machines that not only allow incredible new visual terrains to be experienced but also simultaneously calibrate and distance the viewer from the viewed in a rigidly uniformed manner. This calibration provides a “straightjacket” that conditions our perception of the world generically as well as allowing objects and actions to be experienced “out of context.” Though a visual field emerges that is unprecedented in scale, autonomy, reach, and flexibility, it is one disassociated from “the unified field of geometric perspective” that has dominated our theories of vision and representation since the time of the Renaissance.⁸

Though this technologically mediated *supraterritorial* realm⁹ is distinct from the immediate material reality surrounding us, it is reliant on the events occurring within this sphere and is indicative of an age where the mediated processes of globalization present serious challenges to the traditional logic underlying space/place relationships. Such technologies erode the clarity of our spatial connection to cultural identity as all forms of human contact, relationships of social power, and historical forms of domination are stretched globally at an increasingly accelerated rate, thus deepening their impact exponentially. These circumstances invite questions concerning our cultural ability to retain, reconstruct, or recall our traditional structures of meaning, especially those associated with our spatial understanding of the world.

The discussion surrounding this spatial reconceptualization necessarily centers on alternatives to ending the envisioning of space as a mythologized and exclusionary form. If it is always considered as a series of internally coherent constructs that inherently constitute “closed” worlds, space in relationship to place will be consistently challenged and undermined by globalization. As Doreen Massey observes,

If places are thought of as settled, coherent worlds of their own, then they are surely under challenge in an age when everywhere seems to be opened up to wider forces. The constant interconnections—of economics, culture, ecology—mean that any notion of an internally generated uniqueness of place is hard to sustain.¹⁰

In the wake of this disruption, a contemporary “geographical imagination” must be cultivated that embraces the cosmopolitanism necessary to navigate the complexities of a globalized world, yet remains rooted in our traditional understanding of space. What is needed is a mentality that simultaneously accepts the gains of globalization as a universal force yet retains a connection to the values, traditions, and cultural dictates connected to specific locales. This will allow a healthy global identity that

merges a universal spatiality with one that remains geographically understandable. Ricoeur underscores this seemingly paradoxical move with the question: "how to become modern and return to sources; how to revive an old, dormant civilization and take part in universal civilization?"¹¹

Virilio presents a possible method for navigating this "split" with the notion of a stereoscopic or double vision where individuals "maintain one eye on the physical world and one eye on the virtual world." If successful, extraordinary opportunities can emerge, but the "tearing up of Being" and its "awkward consequences" to our traditional spatial logic must be confronted as the primacy of the material world dissolves. Embracing these new opportunities is possible only if an awareness of their consequences is also understood. The real and the virtual must coexist as twenty-first century modernity becomes a matter of simultaneous existence—part situated in the "real time of our immediate activities" overlaid by a mediated realm that "privileges the *now* . . . to the detriment of the *here*."¹²

Consequently, the premise here asserts that the status, relevance, and influence of material space rests on how the transformation of our means of navigating it is mediated. In a world where our traditional conceptions of space/place—once considered the epitome of stability and connection to the natural environment—are being radically reconceptualized, what constitutes the criteria for assessing the significance of space? In other words, how does globalized media enhance or detract from our experience of the immediate landscapes/places we inhabit?

To understand the relationship of these dueling spatial realms, the concept of space must be examined in all of its nuanced complexity. As a guide, the metaphor of the "modern nomad" will be used to explore how Virilio's call for the development of a stereoscopic perceptual capacity might manifest. The implications of this endeavor will be studied in three parts.

The first will examine the conventional conception of "space," its meaning within the existence of the everyday, and the effect that the universalized spatiality of globalism has on it. The second will explore how global media is *detracting* our world through the creation of a *supraterritorialism*. The final section will define a relationship to geography where space and identity are conceived in a similar fashion to many nomadic cultures. By transforming conventional modes of spatial thinking in relationship to the logic of a more technologically advanced visual realm, a more fluid and flexible conceptual platform for perceiving space can be developed. This flexibility can better align with the constant technological transformation facing our spatial boundaries while maintaining connections to the spaces and places founding our cultural identity. In other words, a

new form of technologically enhanced geographical imagination¹³ might be defined that can navigate both worlds seamlessly to the benefit of our modern existence.

Concrete Versus Abstract: Space, Placelessness, and the Modern Technological Landscape

What is the conventional view of the space/place relationship and why is it so fundamental to human existence? In short, its meaning rests within the imagination of its inhabitants and the concrete nature of space as constituted by everyday phenomena.¹⁴ The breadth of experience shaping our mental picture of place can range from a mountain vista to a shadow's passage over a threshold. Coupled with concrete experience are ephemeral qualities, such as memories and imagination. Space is the totality of experiences—emotional, rational, and spiritual—encountered in a particular locale with a “materiality” emerging through characteristics such as shape, color, texture, temperature, and light. These are the “given” content of existence and differ radically from the quantitative abstractions constituting the logic of global technologies of mediation that routinely elevate the importance of these abstractions above the “life-world” of our surroundings.¹⁵

By Virilio's argument, these technologies induce a “picnolepsy”¹⁶ or state of awareness where real-time/real-space events are lost because of an over-exposure to mediated visualization techniques. These create a disorientation where the perceptual boundaries between real time/space and image time/space are blurred beyond recognition. This “industrialization” of images elevates our visual intensity to the point that even familiar objects appear unfamiliar and encourages over attentiveness to the most banal of objects. With this, the hierarchy of our traditional spatial logic collapses, thus causing the “crucial and the incidental” to become confused under a barrage of random informational imagery. In addition, this hypervisual state has made the unstructured pursuit of informational detail an end-in-itself.¹⁷

This visual state is so influential that, like the pollution of air or water, there is now “a dromospheric and chronoscopic pollution—the gradual reduction of space/time by the various tools of instantaneous, ubiquitous visualization”¹⁸ attacking the nuanced qualities of space as well as elevating the temporal over the spatial. Our perceptual abilities are displaced through the presentation of both the near and the far simultaneously within the technologies of instantaneous communication.

Space is more integral, varied, and complex in its richness than the conventions of scientific enquiry can describe or visual technologies can reproduce. It is more than a “flattened” reference to an abstract locale, for

it reveals its character in highly nuanced atmospheric qualities. Its power is its emergence as a complete phenomenon whose attributes constantly and subtly change with the passage of time. These nuances are lost if reduced to singular aspects, such as image, and described only in terms of function within the global system. Also, space can be neither “frozen” nor extracted from time. The temporality of its subtle and constant transformations is a key to comprehend its unique character. Though related to time, space constitutes more than time itself.

Our material landscapes often seem fixed and unchanging but are constantly changing in relationship to the passage of time. Space intricately references place, as each experience is interpreted differently by each individual “viewer.” Each subsequent experience changes both the inhabitant and the space itself, as both are caught in a state of constant “Becoming.” The flattened and distance-less world of globalization often leads to a profound sense of loss because it can only describe part of the picture. Space, then, is composed of and determined by a multitude of qualitative experiences that play out over time. Its complexity cannot be reduced to a specific set of descriptions based solely on the quantifiable agendas of science or economics. The gamut of existence comprises an integral web of concrete experience, multiscalar in nature, and ranges from the crossing of a door step to globally significant events viewed on television or the Internet.¹⁹

The “vision machines” of global telecommunication underlie much of the current attack on the unique qualities of space. The ubiquitous nature of the industrialized landscape, our need for efficient travel, and our desire for instant communication have radically transformed the ways of experiencing our surroundings. Though the environments created by industry are often condemned for their generic qualities, life before the advent of these technologies was neither long nor idyllic. Materially, our quality of life has greatly improved and has afforded profound transformations to our existence. The trade-off has been the loss of many of our traditional aesthetic, cultural, and spiritual values associated with space and its unique relationship to place.

This trade-off underlies the powerful sense of loss often felt when experiencing many landscapes that now constitute our surroundings. Intellectually, their worth can be accepted, but emotionally, the loss they represent is hard to rectify. Ted Relph describes this state as:

Modern landscapes are profoundly ambivalent. On the one hand, they are obvious manifestations of technical accomplishments and widespread material prosperity—obvious because we know and appreciate them for these qualities in daily life. On the other hand, they reflect aesthetic confusion, ethical poverty and a disturbing

dependence on technical expertise, but these are subtle and can only be identified by a deliberate effort of observation and reflection. The source of this ambivalence can be traced directly to humanism, the philosophical perspective which encourages the exercise of human reason for human benefit.²⁰

The benefits of this process are distinct and calculable, for its transformational power emerges tangibly. Its associated losses are more subtle because they are less tangible and defy conventional measure. Thus, the paradox of modernity presents itself as a series of ambivalent gains and losses.

This ambivalence cannot be overcome by rejecting the benefits of technological progress for some return to a romanticized preindustrial past. Defining how modernization might support the creation of meaningful spaces as well as material benefit is a more sound strategy. It is not sensible, nor possible, to reject globalization or the atmospheric reality it creates for a vision of a pre-industrial, craft-based society arbitrarily chosen and artificially manifested. Both aspects are utopian and extremely dangerous. However, Relph correctly believes that "we have enough technical knowledge. It is time to reconsider matters of quality, value, and distribution."²¹

The challenge lies in the development of a mode of operation that critiques the mediated effects of globalization through a system of values supporting a more authentic way of inhabiting and building. This system must wholeheartedly accept the uncertainty and change that future technology brings yet demand more than a superficial reality based purely on mediated images. Society must insist that the qualitative attributes of particular environments temper the universal forces of technology and globalization. Only then can we maintain the "rootedness" so imperative to our cultural identity. Individuals must still be from a specific place while operating within the emergent spatial logic of the vision machines driving globalization.

Speed, Collapse, and the Emergence of Supraterritorialism

In the essay, "Environment Control," Virilio profoundly asks,

What are the implications for the transparency of air, water, and glass, for the "real space" of the things surrounding us, when the "real-time" interface supersedes the classical interval, and distance suddenly gives way to power of emission and instant reception?²²

In answering, the author describes a transparency based on the derangement of both sense-appearances and transparency itself. Here, derangement

is considered a transparent state with zero materiality because nothing lies beyond the image nor is there a material density approaching that of the concrete world. This type of transparency refers to the ephemeral apparitions transmitted instantly over distance. Both Virilio's question and subsequent answer indicate an emergence of another simultaneous realm existing in parallel to our life world. Though detached from our world, it still transforms and blurs our perceptions of it.

In the "Over-exposed City," Virilio indicates how qualities of spatial boundary have been transformed from stone façade to "screen" and then from screen to electronic interface. The contemporary metropolis has lost the traditional defining oppositions of "city/country . . . centre/periphery . . . localized/axial" as well. These dichotomies have collapsed with the revolutions of transport, telecommunications,²³ and virtuality; globalism has been brought into the domicile through interfaces devoid of any real depth. Through electronic transmission, they create a "kind of distance, a depth of field of a new kind of representation, a visibility without any face to face encounter . . ."²⁴ Amazingly, immense vistas appear within the perspectives displayed within the immaterial depth of a flat-screen monitor and what appears as miles in our concrete world are presented on a screen no more than a few inches deep.

Terms such as near and far are no longer relevant because the difference between macro and micro is extended to fantastic bounds through devices such as the electron microscope and satellite camera.²⁵ Virilio concludes, "At the end of the twentieth century, urban space loses its geopolitical reality to the exclusive benefit of systems of instantaneous deportation whose technological intensity ceaselessly upsets all of our social structures."²⁶ Our computerized window to the world brings absolutely everything to the same place, simultaneously. It is a place that is "no place" in the classical sense because it is a location with no physicality. It exhausts both natural and physical description because of its existence in all locations and positions simultaneously. The ultimate measure of this realm is that of speed-distance whose virtuality obliterates physical distance to the point that all conventional spatial characteristics seem to be interchangeable at will.²⁷

Contemporary global culture has become *hypervisual* where comprehending what is perceived is beyond our capacity to understand as reference points and conventional cultural indicators are dislocated from their traditional locales.²⁸ Though greater transmission speed of information and imagery is taken for granted as an outcome of globalization at times it seems a motivating force because it occurs in a spatial realm where questions of social or environmental concerns are easily pushed aside.

Virilio describes this unchecked manifestation of speed as "dromology" or the largely unchecked acceleration of social, political, and economic worlds globally. This informational acceleration encourages the emergence of a technological superficiality as the transference of people, objects, images, and ideas become exceedingly more rapid and compressed. In addition, the creation of a unified global media system where political debate will increasingly occur within communication outlets controlled by conglomerates and other highly organized institutions such as government will occur. Time, space, and conversation needed for the consensus building founding a strong democratic process will disappear as the line between governments and media outlets blur. Even as democracies continue to emerge and then merge and blur, the outcome will be the control of debate or dissent before it even begins.²⁹

This distance-less realm of the temporal instance, where the flattened image is more powerful than the dimensional object, and the actual as well as the mediated are barely distinguishable, constitutes the *supraterritorial*. Here, money and power structures move around the globe instantaneously as the abstractions that underlie them are broken into bits of information and transported in a flash. It is a world devoid of history and contains only a transient connection to our material world. An "infosphere" with its own set of operations and ethical standards that often only tangentially reflect those of this world. At once connected yet detached, at other times concrete and permanent in appearance, while being able to transform into something unrecognizable instantaneously. A realm that is both simultaneously frightening and fascinating.

Potentially negative effects aside, the possibilities for this space are as limitless, as its structure is boundless. If the potential for grand vistas is used benevolently, the ability to centralize information and connect the dots between problems or issues will be unrivaled. It is its detachment and tangential connection to the life world that makes for a powerful tool of observation with the possibility to become anything or anyone imaginable within this realm being its curse and its blessing. When all histories and cultural hierarchies become neutralized, infinite possibilities to analyze and construct new traditions, identities, or cultural grounds quickly come to the forefront.

Modern societies must adapt and exist fluently between the territory of our world and the *supraterritory* of virtual media. As the metaphor of the modern nomad comes into focus, it is imperative to follow the advice of Yi Fu Tuan and remember: "The visual media, even as they open our eyes, blind us to other realities."³⁰ The emergence of a supraterritorial logic of instant transport and telecommunications within the wake of globalization is as unstoppable as turning back the clock is impossible, so how one

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chooses to navigate both realms is the only power an individual can control. It is the sole means of avoiding being overwhelmed by the homogenizing onslaught of the *supraterritorial* and will take the development of a modern geographical imagination to master it.

The Stereotopic Geographical Imagination: Connecting Lived to Mediated Space

In undertaking the speculative development of a modern geographical imagination that contemporizes our conceptual understanding of space, discerning the spaces of representation from the representations of space and the benevolent potential of both realms is imperative.³¹ After this primary step, connections between the two realms can be made for the necessary development of a “stereoscopic” vision (one side ocular and one side mediated). However, several misconceptions must be overcome before this step can be undertaken.

The first concerns the erroneous perception that virtual technologies can recreate our present world in such detail as to replace it. This idea was prevalent in the earliest stages of the development of virtual reality technologies. To insist on this possibility is to deny the multivalent spatiality and temporality of our surroundings. The experiential quality of our existing reality is so varied and complex that any attempt to recreate it through mediation could only produce a superficial facsimile. Though our technology becomes more sophisticated, its foundation is largely one of the surfaces and can only mimic the nuances of our reality and not truly reproduce its richness. This leads to the second misconception that a concerted resistance or “turning away” from the destructive forces of globalization and its stepchildren—virtual and telecommunication technologies—is possible. This mistaken attitude must make way for more measured and careful deliberation of their authentic role, meaning, and utility. We must acknowledge the benefits that these technologies bring while ceasing to accept their increasing influence with a passive distrust.

New methods of interpreting the connections of these technologies to our existing landscapes must be developed comprehending the full impact of space on the human psyche. Ruskin indicates how this *change in attitude* might emerge: “Every advance in our acuteness of perception will show us something new, but the old and first discerned thing will still be not falsified, only modified and enriched by the new perception.”³² This indicates the possibility of a multivalent and multiscalar process of interpreting space that incorporates these mediated vision technologies with our history and tradition. It outlines a multidimensional attitude

toward space that can serve as a foundation for the interpretation of its meaning through the utilization of the perceptual strengths afforded by each realm.

David Harvey describes the transient and complex nature of spatial configurations in a manner very relevant to this discussion in his call to connect our social and geographical imaginations:

Space is neither absolute, relative or relational in itself, but it can become one or all simultaneously depending on the circumstances. The problem of the proper conceptualization of space is resolved through human practice with respect to it. In other words, there are no philosophical answers to philosophical questions that rise over the nature of space—the answers lie in human practice. The question “what is space?” is therefore replaced by the question “how is it that different human practices create and make of distinctive conceptualizations of space?”³³

The “meaning” of real space must be evaluated but not just in its physical and formal manifestations. Their connections to human activity, which give meaning to space, afford the best avenue to conceive of the space place relationship to identity.

To encounter space with an unprejudiced attitude, modes of perception that appreciate “everything” in its connectedness must emerge. This “seeing” must omit as little detail as possible and avoid the imposition of a preordained agenda on the encountered. It must seek to comprehend the given world in its entirety, while also attending to the particular characteristics that make a location a unique space.³⁴ A humility acknowledging essences defining space while being open to the diversity of individual ecologies and varieties of human actions/accomplishments that underlie experience. It is an inherently open, inclusive, and varied viewpoint that comprehends the quality of individual place while avoiding the imposition of a singularly fixed or ideologically closed viewpoint. It must value the characteristics of individual spaces by acknowledging the fragility of their existence and search for the distinctive within the continuous. To understand how an element simultaneously emerges as a specific outcome and contributing factor in the process of the appearance of the world would be its greatest and lasting benefit.³⁵ We must relearn how to appreciate the tapestry constituting our material, social, and historical worlds.

It is here that the global vision machine’s power for seeing the world with an objective gaze that can seek meaningful connections within spatial encounters becomes most apparent. By returning “to things,” in the form of

a deeper, detailed method of observing, the complexity and fluidity of the world can manifest from a much broader viewpoint. Because this type of perception can be random, the transient nature of space can be appreciated as its spirit emerges through myriad scales and cultural structures. These new vision technologies can bring to light many of the commonality and universal aspects of our existence.

For balance, an open and continual process of evaluating the meaning of mediated images can offset the rapid transformations and temporal/spatial collapse brought about by globalization to continually reassert the primacy of the spatial logic of this world in the face of these forces. Globalization is largely based on ideological agendas that are one-dimensional readings of natural and social processes. These serve as the basis for the alignment of processes that construct the hyperefficient strategies of modern industry. The power and achievement of these techniques are undeniable; however, they are based on abstractions that may provide only a partial picture of the material world.

Such universals allow logic and precision to serve as the foundation for the technological society that is globalizing our world to continually materialize, so information can be accumulated and organized rapidly. This affords the ability to construct conceptual frames of understanding and perception, which allow connections between cultures, economies, and disciplines to be made. However, these frames are superficially precise, and though our vision machines have great potential in interpreting and providing meaning to our existence, humans can perceive the world in a multitude of ways utilizing all the senses plus our memory and imagination. Abstractions, generalizations, and numeric systems that coincide with technological development must be offset by value systems that are essentially human, spatial, temporal, and qualitative.

The geographical imagination, then, claims the necessity of bringing the detached mediated visions (supraterritorial) of globalization into a balanced relationship to attributes that are humane. The former is a technologically induced detachment, the latter focuses on embracing complexity and the nuanced connections of our world. How this is done successfully is a matter of how we place technology within the natural and cultural landscapes that it transforms in its spread. Heidegger frames this issue with a question: how do “we let technical devices enter our daily life, and at the same time leave them outside, that is, let them alone, as things which are nothing absolute but remain dependent upon something higher”?³⁶ In other words, how can the benefits of globalization and its technologies of mediation be encountered, so that the essential value of our surrounding landscapes is not lost and the attributes defining our essential humanity are not overrun?

The Modern Nomad: Navigating Space/Mediated Space in a Rapidly Globalizing World

The development of the ability to inhabit both the world of our immediate perceptual experiences and the technological visions that provide a detached and overarching view is not only possible but imperative. It is possible only if our value systems properly align our perceptions of "things" with our abstract paradigms, generalized descriptions, and singular agendas of development. In addition, these values must be flexible and continually forming with the attitudes they demand, not wielded timidly but with the conviction that emerges only after deeply circumspect evaluation. For the balance between our perceptual and mediated realities to be struck, a new type of geographical imagination must be forged. One not solely "rooted" in a particular landscape or space but has a rootedness nonetheless.

This connection is similar to the attribute formed by many traditional nomadic tribes. They were not tied to one locale but inherently connected to the entire system forming their surroundings. These individuals were in tune with seasonal changes, environmental rhythms, and natural variations and had a profound sense of their place in the overall schema of the cosmos through an abstracted, but sophisticated, understanding of its structure. Details such as rock formations and certain species of animals were studied to comprehend the relationships of things encountered in a hunt. One reason for the necessity of this understanding was immediate, for daily survival; the other was for the long-term progress of the tribe. There was a continued attempt to comprehend the meaningfulness of the whole as well as the meaning of the individual life contained within it at various scales. These "primitives" were acutely aware of both their immediate surroundings and its place within the temporal continuum of the cosmos. Though homeless in the sense of a particular locale, they were acutely "at home" within the landscapes that they inhabited.

Our modern geographical imagination must take on a similar form because of the inherent homelessness of our contemporary existence. As the mediated imagery of globalization forces its way into our psyches and its demands for mobility and change increase, modern individuals must adapt by cultivating the ability to inhabit simultaneous scalar realms. One realm is immediate, qualitative, and tactile, the other, abstract, detached, and highly mediated. This simultaneous inhabitation of these realms still demands a richness and diversity of detail so important to our humanity. A balance must be maintained for our drive toward material prosperity that recognizes the needs of the human spirit or the latter will succumb to the superficiality of the image. To maintain a healthy tension between these structures, change and temporality must be acknowledged as a fundamental

attribute of space. If engaged forthrightly, there is no reason to fear the technological advancements of globalization, for a continuously adaptable value system can forge a unity between new and old. By this, the values traditionally grounding us can be recalled to serve as a guide to the empathetic assimilation of a technologically mediated future. One where our relationship to it is simple, relaxed, and spiritually fulfilling.

Endnotes

1. Paul Virilio, *Virilio Live*, ed. John Armitage (London: Sage Publications, 2001), 71.
2. See Rohit Chopra, "Introduction," this volume, 2.
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MEDIA

This edited volume examines the ways that global media shapes relations between place, culture, and identity. Through the included essays, Chopra and Gajjala offer a mix of theoretical reflections and empirical case studies that will help readers understand how the media can shape cultural identities and, conversely, how cultural formations can influence the political economy of global media. The interdisciplinary, international scholars gathered here push the discussion of what it means to do global media studies beyond uncritical celebrations of global media technologies (or globalization) as well as beyond perspectives that are a priori dismissive of the possibilities of global media.

Some of the key questions and themes that the international contributors explore within the text include: Is the global audience of global television the same as the global audience of the internet? Can we conceptualize the global culture-media-identity dynamic beyond the discourse of postcolonialism? How does the globalization of media affect feelings of nationalism? How is the growth of a consumer "global middle class" spread, and resisted, through media? *Global Media, Culture, and Identity* takes a comparative media approach to addressing these, and other, issues across media forms including print, television, film, and new media.

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