

# The Routledge Companion to Experimental Literature



Edited by Joe Bray, Alison Gibbons and Brian McHale

# GLOBALIZATION AND TRANSNATIONALISM

Liam Connell

## I. Introduction

One of the pithiest definitions of globalization is arguably John Tomlinson's claim that it represents "complex connectivity" (1999). In sketching out this definition Tomlinson sees globalization as producing a "proximity" that comes from the networking of social relations across large tracts of time-space, causing distant events and powers to penetrate our local experience" (9). A number of important ideas are contained within this statement; it acknowledges the sheer range of cross-cutting and interrelated forms that contemporary social interactions take and it points to the interplay between the local and global as mutually interpenetrating formations. For thinking about how literary texts might engage with globalization it is useful to note two related tendencies at work in Tomlinson's description. In the first instance, globalization involves a high degree of concatenation, as various local actors are strung together by processes or "networks" that transcend their immediate locality. Somewhat contradictorily this leads to a second tendency towards concentration where the local becomes the nodal point for acting out these transnational relations. In terms of Tomlinson's account, it is important to think of these processes as experiential. Roland Robertson makes a similar point when he talks of globalization as a twofold process; referring "both to the compression of the world and the intensification of consciousness of the world as a whole" (Robertson 1992: 8). Robertson's sense that the phenomenological integration of globalization is matched by the *perception* of this process is vital for understanding globalization's force as a descriptive term.

One way to understand globalization is to see it as a particular way of narrating contemporary internationalism. To that end its status as a recent neologism is revealing. It has been hard to date the term precisely and, whereas the 2009 edition of the *Oxford English Dictionary* provides quotations dating back to 1930, the previous edition dated the term only to as far back as the 1960s. This new evidence of an earlier use of globalization is, paradoxically, not proof of a widespread use at an earlier date but, rather, proof of recent interest in the word and its development. The importance of the

relative novelty of globalization as a term resides in the way that it speaks of processes which require a new vocabulary precisely because they lack any exact precedent. In this respect, a useful way to understand globalization is to see it as fulfilling our desire to rename our international relations in order to signal a rupture with the past and with earlier forms of transnationalism.

It is not my intention to reduce globalization to a terminological question. It is clear that the word describes a range of socio-economic changes dating from the early 1970s and widely associated with neoliberalism. These changes include the international dispersal of production and consumption; the development of rules-based free-trade regimes which locked national economies into economic deregulation; rapid technological development, especially in communicative technology and a concomitant expansion of speculative capital and the dematerialization of value. A substantial part of the literary response to globalization has been the attempt to thematize it through a discussion of these issues. Given the mass-market appeal of globalization as a term, the kinds of texts that have sought to do this work have been varied in form, ranging from the conventionally realist novel to the formally experimental. Although it is possible to see even realist fiction attempting to grapple with the supposed novelty of globalization, my use of the term experimental is intended to refer to texts that self-consciously explore their own techniques of representation and narration. I want to suggest that the thematic presentation of globalization has tended to reproduce the combination of concatenation and compression that we saw in Tomlinson and Robertson's accounts of globalization. Where experimental writing has differed from other kinds of work is where it has sought to trouble this combination. By disturbing the easy link between connectivity and proximity, these kinds of literary experiments draw attention to their own capacity to represent globalization successfully. In doing so, they arguably also challenge the efficacy of globalization as a description of the forms of contemporary internationalism.

## II. Concatenation and concentration in the global novel

As an example of the way that literary texts combine the idea of concatenation with concentration it is possible to point to a large number of works that juxtapose or interleave a range of separate narratives, often focalised through separate characters, which are then gradually drawn together into a single narrative time and space. A notable example of this is the pioneering science fiction writing of William Gibson. In *Count Zero* (1987) for instance, the apparently separate plot lines of Turner, Bobby Newark (the eponymous Count Zero) and Marly Krushkova eventually find the characters fighting alongside each other in a single room. Critics are divided on how experimental Gibson's fiction might be regarded and it seems clear that while, in certain respects, his work is attempting new forms of representation, in other ways it is rather conventional. Where Gibson is experimental is in his attempt to explore the new interactions with technology and, perhaps more interestingly, his invention of slang-vocabularies which might be capable of articulating these interactions. Joseph Tabbi has praised

this last aspect of Gibson's fiction for its refusal of a clear translation or complex explanation, which he regards as representing the "image" of technology rather than technology itself (Tabbi 1995: 218). Tabbi makes connections between Gibson and more recognizably postmodern authors such as Thomas Pynchon, though it is worth noting a likely debt to earlier dystopian fiction such as Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (2007 [1932]) or Anthony Burgess' *A Clockwork Orange* (1996 [1962]). Both these novels rely upon a depiction of linguistic evolution to make their future reality appear plausible and, arguably, Gibson's lexical innovation is less immersive than Burgess'. Indeed, it is possible to suggest that this kind of lexical inventiveness is a characteristic of science-fictional texts throughout the twentieth century (Stockwell 2000: 60).

As an account of globalization Gibson's fiction has been lauded for setting out the early contours of the dematerialized geographies of cyberspace (Adams 1997). Yet, strikingly, given his early envisioning of the virtual relations produced by advanced and speculative communicative technologies, Gibson's narrative method consistently resorts to face-to-face interaction rather than the disembodied simulations of post-modern culture. Correspondingly, critics have pointed to the relative conservatism of Gibson's writing which contains "little sense of anything hypertextual" (Annesley 2006: 95) and which remains committed to "old geographic interpretations of space" that encode ideologies of home and abroad, inside and outside, centre and periphery (McCallum 2000: 350). It could be argued that Gibson's narrative method domesticates the potential strangeness of globalizing technologies by using coherent characters and narrative space to moor the reader in the face of the disorientations that these technologies produce. Nevertheless, Gibson's work manages to represent some of the key elements of globalization. In the first instance, his reduction of the global to the local seems characteristic of the experiential modalities of globalization, through which the local is persistently the theatre in which the global is performed. Furthermore, his interest in emerging technologies seems to align his work with a discursive emphasis upon futurity in discussions of globalization. Although "globalization" refers to a process rather than a state of being, at the discursive level it quickly becomes a teleology in which the process of globalization "promises an almost-but-not-quite-there globality" (Tsing 2000: 332) while seeming simultaneously to cause the very social change which brought it about (Cameron and Palan 2004: 55). In similar ways, and in contrast to the narration of technological innovation in later works such as *All Tomorrow's Parties* (Gibson 2000), the dramatization of speculative technologies in Gibson's early novels bypasses the process of their emergence and actualises their promised arrival.

Gibson's main narrative method of juxtaposed plot-lines that gradually converge in time and space is a methodology that is employed in a number of recent works which thematize globalization in other ways. A good example of this is Robert Newman's *The Fountain at the Centre of the World* (2003) which is organised around the interconnecting narratives of three members of the same family who, for reasons of circumstance, are estranged and reside separately in Britain, Mexico and Costa Rica. Through the course of the novel each character makes his way to Seattle to take part in the 1999 meeting

of the World Trade Organisation either as a delegate or a protester. In this climactic section of the novel we are presented with several incidents where the same event is narrated and re-narrated from the perspective of the different characters who are unaware, or only dimly aware, of the others' presence. If this resembles Paul Virilio's notion of "simultaneity" (1998), it is still formally realist with little attempt to disrupt the narrative coherence of any of the perspectives that the novel offers. Indeed the novel is closest here to direct reportage and it appears to draw heavily on documentary accounts of the clashes in Seattle such as Cockburn, St. Clair and Sekula (2000), with which it shares both events and descriptive vocabulary. For instance, where Cockburn *et al.* describe the "Seattle police attired in black body armor and Darth Vader-like helmet" (2000: 21), Newman describes "riot police" walking "clubs at the diagonal, long black Darth Vader capes swinging over the top of their high black boots" (2003: 276). There seems little attempt to transform Cockburn *et al.*'s journalistic simile in Newman's account and the Seattle section of his novel offers us little opportunity to think about how globalization might provoke an experimental response to problems of representation.

For other writers however, the techniques of concatenation and concentration may open up more self-conscious representational strategies that do try to experiment with fiction's capacity to represent globalization. One novel that attempts this is Karen Tei Yamashita's *Tropic of Orange* (1997) which uses so-called magic realism and cognitive mapping (Jameson 1991) to offer a modified form of realism as a way of understanding the related themes of international income inequalities, trade and labor migration. How experimental magic realism might now be considered is a moot point (see McHale, this volume) but Yamashita uses it in her novel to attempt to reconfigure or interrogate some of the spatial hierarchies that globalization involves. Arguably, this is a feature of some of the more famous works of magic realist fiction. Gabriel García Márquez's iconic work *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, for instance, explicitly attributes the notion of magic to acts of law and capital which ensure the dominance of northern investors over the rights of local workers in Macondo (1978: 245). In *Tropic of Orange*, Yamashita uses the device of an orange travelling from Mazatlán in Mexico to Los Angeles in the United States as a way of confronting high-income economies with the sublimated presence of low-income labor. Carried by the mythical figure, Arcangel, en route to a wrestling match with a personified NAFTA, the orange pulls with it the latitude of its origins transforming the climate and character of the Californian destination along the way. Through the orange, the novel challenges the notion of the political border by moving the Tropic of Cancer north with illegalized Mexican laborers who travel in search of employment in the USA. As with García Márquez, Yamashita's use of magic realism's playful aesthetics is more purposefully political than simply a form of postmodern disruption. Yamashita uses this technique as a modification of the kinds of juxtaposition that we see in Gibson's or Newman's novels, and *Tropic of Orange* interlaces the discrete but interconnected narratives of seven individuals to suggest the connections between events in different regions of the world. Significantly, this also relies upon the strategy of concentration as the various narrative strands point towards a final convergence in Los Angeles.

The details of Yamashita's plot lines speak of overlapping concerns that transcend location or personal history. For instance, the character Rafaela Cortes flees Mazatlán when she discovers that her neighbour's son Hernando is both a drug smuggler and a trafficker of body parts for transplant. His mother describes his work as "Export. Import" and the realization that the exportable good is a child's heart destined for a patient in the high-income economies of the north dramatically exposes the horror of global inequality and labor commoditization (Yamashita 1997: 118–19). Meanwhile, her estranged husband, Bobby Ngu, encounters a similar scenario which has little if anything to do with their personal connection. A naturalized American who entered the USA by posing as a Vietnamese refugee, Bobby is asked to pay people smugglers for the passage of a Chinese migrant, who may be his cousin, to prevent her sale into prostitution (100). Like Hernando's trade, the possibility of this girl's exploitation by her traffickers renders the bodies of low-income workers as consumables and this is tied to high-income consumerism in explicit ways. For the girl to gain access to the USA from Tijuana she must pose as an American consumer by buying Levi jeans, Nike trainers and a Malibu t-shirt (203). The connections here are obviously thematic but they also point to structural relations between different kinds of economies which the novel's modification of realism seeks to expose. The use of magic realism for the framing device allows the whole text to interrogate these relations by suggesting that the political boundaries that regulate the global division of labor are a purposeful fiction. In doing so it tries to shift the focus of the reader away from the locally particular by showing how a range of disparate localities are, at the very least, linked to observable planetary structures.

Arguably then, Yamashita's use of magic realism points us back to Robertson's notion of globalization as a "consciousness of the world as a whole" by seeking to cognitively map a string of individual points onto the globe as a totality. This is exaggerated by a further device through which Yamashita simultaneously draws attention to and challenges the concatenation of the different narrative strands. This is achieved at the start of the novel by two tables of contents which offer the reader different ways to navigate her text. Both tables contain chapter numbers and titles, as well as an indication of the chapter's setting. The specified locations are varied and, rather than being markers of the physical setting, they frequently indicate a means of interacting with regulated physical spaces. For instance, Chapter 29 occurs on the "World Wide Web" while Chapter 43 takes place "Over the Net" as the journalists Gabriel Balboa and Emi communicate via the internet. By contrast, Chapter 40 takes place on "I-5," the Interstate that navigates the Western coast of the USA from Mexico to Canada, but signifies the first location inside the USA that is visited by Bobby Ngu's "cousin" after he has rescued her from Tijuana. This chapter location is therefore actually a reference to the illegalized migrant's successful navigation of the infrastructures of trade which are designed to extract the value from low-income labor while debarring low-income workers from the benefits of this value. As his "Little cuz" looks at her new Nike trainers, Bobby notes that they are "Made in China. Nikes get in. But not [Chinese people]" (Yamashita 230). The apparent precision of place that the chapter listings offer us is then really an invitation to read space politically rather than geographically.

What is perhaps more interesting about the two tables of contents is the way that they offer different perspectives on the narrative sequence of the novel. The first listing is organised chronologically from Monday to Sunday listing each chapter in the novel sequentially with the relevant page references. It clearly prioritises time and suggests a linear narrative that is entirely in keeping with realist aesthetics. This presentation does not announce the interweaving of the different narrative strands, but it encourages readers to experience it by inviting them to read the novel from start to finish which necessarily involves cutting between the different storylines. The second table of contents, which follows immediately from this, is set out horizontally across two pages and lists the novel's "Hyper Contexts." It provides a graphical map of the novel with the days of the week along the x-axis and character names running down the y-axis. The presentation of this second listing could be seen as an invitation for readers to follow individual characters in isolation; offering us "an atomistic sense of each character's life," in which "each chapter seems to stand on its own with little continuity from" those around it (Lee 2007: 506; see also Heise 2006: 212–14). Yet we might also think about how this presentation offers us a diagrammatic conceptualization of the world as observable in both space and time. This presentation offers us a forward momentum for each character as they move through the week but also as they move across space towards Los Angeles as a nodal location. Though it disaggregates the concatenation of the different narratives it also makes apparent the technique of concentration which is the twin feature of globalization's presentation of internationalism.

### III. Mark Lombardi's narrative poems

Yamashita's "Hyper Context" chapter map could be seen as one way of using writing to visualize global geographies as they form social interaction. In this respect it is limited in the range of connections and in the scale of the geographical area that it covers. Nevertheless, as a model of what might be possible it invites comparison with the images in Mark Lombardi's *Global Networks* (Hobbs 2003). Although he saw himself as a visual artist with connections to a long line of visual representation – identified by Robert Hobbs as including history-painting of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, and modernist and postmodernist artists such as Duchamp, Beuys and Haacke (Hobbs 2003: 12, 34) – Lombardi consciously described his work as "narrative structures" (13) and compared it to that of "early storytellers" who relied "on drawing" as a way "to communicate their narratives" (14). Moreover, Hobbs also notes Lombardi's debt to the "model offered by French modernist poet Guillaume Apollinaire's visual/verbal *Calligrammes*" (36), an influence which clearly ties him to a tradition of visual poetry (see Bray, this volume). This combination of influences, combining visual poetry and narrative storytelling, suggests a way of reading Lombardi's drawings as narrative-poems which offer us a model for a certain kind of experimental literature of globalization that is focused on the world as a conceivable object determined by lines of connection that are social, economic and political. Lombardi's works seek to map

the contours of interconnection between politicians, security agencies, drug cartels and US banks by using a self-devised system of diagrammatic connections that links together remote institutions and personalities. Often focusing on the collapse of financial institutions or political scandals, Lombardi shows prominent actors such as George H.W. Bush, Oliver North and Bill Clinton entangled in an intractable network of relations which possess both a spatial and temporal element. The seven versions of *World Finance Corporation, Miami, ca.1970–84* are perhaps the most interesting illustration of this approach since while the first five track a temporal process in illustrating the involvement of World Finance Corporation's head, Guillermo Hernández-Cartaya, in Colombian drug-trafficking and C.I.A. and Mafia-funded attempts to assassinate Fidel Castro (1966–1971), in the final two versions Lombardi dispenses with the temporal analysis to show instead the spatial interconnections of capital flows from and to World Finance Corporation (see Figure 17.1). Correspondingly, the work shifts from an elongated spine, with curving and overlapping tendrils representing Hernández-Cartaya's financial benefactors and his misappropriation of funds, to roughly spherical patterns, which seek to track the synchronic flow of capital. While the earlier versions of this work are suggestive, if somewhat obliquely, of world maps in their geoidal form,

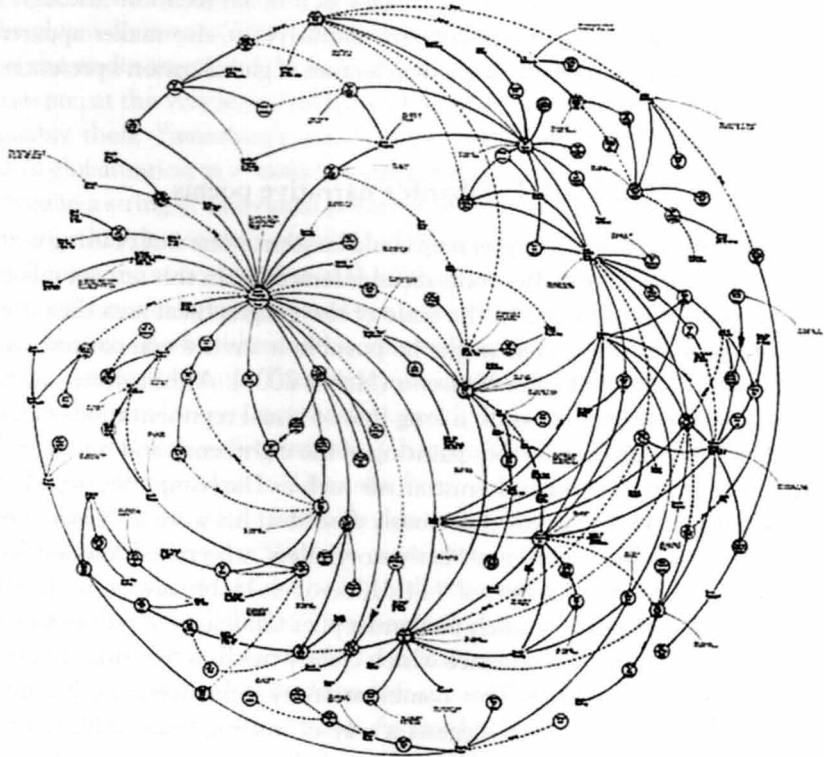


Figure 17.1 Mark Lombardi, *World Finance Corporation and Associates c.1970–84, Miami-Ajman-Bogota-Caracas (7th version)*. Courtesy of Pierogi gallery.



the later versions take on a “quasi three-dimensional quality” (66) which is suggestive of the globe as a discernible, planetary, object. What is striking about this presentation is that it appears to achieve a combination of both aspects of globalization as Robertson defines it. The spherical appearance of these works responds to our “consciousness of the world as a whole,” while its structure is composed of the various textual components which are able to suggest a “compression of the world” by connecting remote nodes of capital and governance into a coherent shape.

When reading Lombardi’s work, however, his aesthetic approach breaks apart the twin aspects of Robertson’s definition by making it impossible to read them simultaneously. The visual coherence of globalization as a physically-observable connectivity can be apprehended only from a distance, taking in the whole work. However, from this perspective, the textual content which describes the various people and organizations that are connected is illegible. It is only by stepping forward that we can read the words and from this vantage point we lose sight of the whole. As a result, the two layers of the work, which describes local events but also how these cohere as globalization, remain separated. Accordingly, by making convergence possible only at the level of the globe, Lombardi’s work rejects the tendency of thematic representations of globalization to combine concatenation with concentration at the local. One consequence of this is, arguably, that it draws our attention to the ways that globalization seems to defy apprehension. To that end, we should be cautious about any claims that Lombardi’s work makes the global knowable. For instance, Hobbs notes that Lombardi could not “verify the accuracy of all the events, people, and financial numbers cited in his drawings”; nor can we now (51). In this respect it is useful to note Bill Maurer’s claim that our “enjoyment” of Lombardi’s work derives from our sense that “we have discovered something when we look at his elegant diagrams” when what they really record “is the sustenance of our own ideal(ist) projects, the denial of the asymptotic relation between reasonable care and truth in the clean lines and clear nodes of the network he traces” (2005: 498). The clarity of Lombardi’s work represents an act of wish-fulfillment in which we read his lucid rendering of complexity through our own desire to know that which cannot be known. Nevertheless, while never able to certify its vision, Lombardi’s work remains able to speak of the enormous scale of globalization by suggesting its geographical diffuseness, and also allows us to retain a sense of the process of its materialization as an observable object.

#### IV. Hypertextuality and multitextuality

Reading from Yamashita’s tentative combination of text and space to Lombardi’s more fully realised visual poems, a combination of the literary and the visual begins to seem one of the most productive means of experimenting with ways of representing globalization (see Prinz, this volume). To that end it is worth considering a text such as Douglas Coupland’s recent novel *JPod* (2006) which similarly gestures towards the experiments of visual poetry but which also constructs a literary model of hypertextuality which challenges the text’s presentation of itself as a closed site of meaning.

Like Lombardi, Coupland trained as a visual artist and this has had a substantial influence on his writing practice. His first novel *Generation X* (1991) radically disrupts the textual flow by breaking the paragraphs with marginalia of slogans and cartoons that evoke the détournement of the Situationist International (Ford 2005; see Miller, this volume). In *JPod*, the disruption of the narrative is more intermittent and, in some respects, more easily integrated into the plot because the interruptions relate more directly to adjacent narrative events. Yet at the same time this integration is somewhat implicit, and the interruptions are most frequently connected with the narrative-content by association rather than being directly deictic. Moreover, Coupland's use of alternate font sizes, typesetting and Chinese logograms breaks up the formal integrity of the page in ways that more profoundly disrupt the narrative form.

A significant example occurs when the protagonist-narrator flies to China to rescue his erstwhile boss who has been trafficked to work on a Chinese production line. When he arrives in a "city" called simply "Special Economic Zone" or "SEZ" he is confronted by the development of modern Chinese consumerism, where high-end luxury cars have become "the new dream" of modern China (Coupland 2006: 264). Arriving at his hotel the narrator goes to sleep and the novel then provides a seven-page digression showing large Chinese logograms with slogans of modern consumerist activities underneath: Shopping, Boredom, Pornography, Cosmetic Surgery, Tourism, Internet browsing and TV (see Figure 17.2).

The relation of these words to the plot is tangential rather than narrative, and the novel provides no explanation for their appearance or context. As a result it is not clear from the text whether the English words beneath the logograms are actual translations or not. Johanna Drucker's suggestion that late twentieth-century visual/verbal work owes a debt to both "Concretism" and "to mass media commercial design and electronic (video and computer) technology" (1996: 39) offers a way to read Coupland's commingling of the visual and the verbal here. The labelling of the city after its economic function transforms Chinese geography into an entity of markets rather than politics. Similarly, although the presentation of the Chinese characters in large centred type seems to emphasize their aesthetic quality, the choice of vocabulary evokes consumerism and connects their visual appeal to the aesthetics of billboards. The scale of the logograms in comparison to the English type, emphasizes a visual rather than a semiotic appreciation but the fact of their translation speaks to a negotiation between difference and universalism whereby these images might stand as a locally particular expression of the universal (Robertson 1992: 102).



Figure 17.2 Two examples of the Chinese logograms, "Boredom" and "Pornography," in Douglas Coupland's (2006), *Jpod*, pp. 266–7.

In other instances, the textual interruptions in Coupland's novel gesture towards a hypertextual aesthetics. At the narrative level his characters frequently resort to Google in order to answer the kind of speculative questions that Coupland uses as a form of character interaction in all his fiction. In *JPod*, the frequent lack of a purposeful connection between the plot and retrieved information speaks to the randomness of our interactions with the world through the internet and at times appears to consciously mimic the so-called "spoetry" found in spam-emails (Gallix 2008; see Epstein, this volume). Coupland also acknowledges the global scale of these interactions by pointing to the way that they play on our assumptions about the nature of international relations, such as in his choice to reproduce a Nigerian embezzlement money-transfer-scam (Coupland 2006: 27). The reader cannot know whether this email is a genuine fake or an imitation of Coupland's own making. Yet this hardly matters because, as a result of their ubiquity and their endless repeatability with minor variations, the meaning of such emails is constituted in their form just as much their actual content. The fact that meaning here resides in the form more than in the obvious content of these emails complements the previous example, where the logograms seem to signify difference more than their translatability. What is more, moments like this allow Coupland's novel to suggest the ungoverned movement of the hypertext from one point to another. Though his novel involves an obvious narrative sequence, its attempt to represent the internet as a pool of potentially limitless content means that the possibility of digression is constantly present. In different ways both Suman Gupta (2009: 77–85) and Berthold Schoene (2011) have argued that hypertexts represent the literariness of globalization and both are interested in the way that hypertextuality is visible in existing literary practices (see also Tomasula, this volume; Hayles 2004). Coupland's approximation of hypertext's nonsequential juxtapositions may be one way that this is achieved.

A more provocative example of this kind of approach is found in the novel *Looking for Headless* published since 2007 as part of Goldin+Senneby's larger Headless project. The concept for Headless is that the two Swedish artists, Simon Goldin and Jakob Senneby, set out to explore the potential connections between an offshore-fund called Headless and a secret society known as Acéphale founded by Georges Bataille and the Collège de Sociologie in the late 1930s (Goldin+Senneby 2009a). To explore this idea they hired the author John Barlow to ghost write the novel *Looking for Headless*, as the pseudonymous "K.D." a fictionalized version of offshore financier Kate Dent. As part of a series of exhibitions of the project, actors were paid to play "the fictional author" K.D. and each chapter was read publicly before its publication (Cohen 2009: 53). Styled as a murder mystery, the novel is composed of thinly fictionalized real-life events including Barlow's attempt to find the company called Headless, a meeting of academics assembled by Goldin+Senneby to discuss the project, and a series of art exhibitions in which the work is displayed. Most of the "characters" in the novel are also personae of real people who have collaborated with Goldin+Senneby as "outsourced workers" (K.D. 2007–2010: 126). Moreover, along with Barlow, the novel hints that its authors are also drawn from this cast of characters: Chapter Seven, for

instance, is narrated by an actor who plays K.D. at the Bienal Internacional de São Paulo and may have been written by actor and writer Noemi Marinho who collaborated in this exhibition (Goldin+Senneby 2009b: 48–9; K.D. 2007–2010: 146–56). In his contribution to *Headless*, as both an emissary for Goldin+Senneby and as a character in *Looking for Headless*, Angus Cameron describes multiple-authoring as a multitext (K.D. 2007–2010: 163). However, we might also think about the way that the novel itself resembles the hypertext through its blurring of real and fictional words. For instance, early in the novel the persona John Barlow wonders why Goldin+Senneby are so paranoid about Kate Dent:

Barlow has seen the video footage of Kate, he's Googled her; she exists, and she works for Sovereign, the company who G+S claim was registered by Sovereign as an off-shore company here in the Bahamas in 2002 . . .

(K.D. 2007–2010: 45)

Combined with the uncertainty produced by the layers of *Headless*, and the frequent inclusion of real people as novelistic personae, the declarative “he’s Googled her” immediately becomes an interrogative “have you Googled her?” and an imperative “Google her’: I have and she does exist.” Likewise, Chapter Two, which recounts Barlow’s travel to the Bahamas in search of *Headless*, is interspersed with extracts from a travel blog that Barlow wrote on his actual trip (2008). The URL is supplied at the start of the chapter (K.D. 2007–2010: 32) and in this way the reader is invited to move between the novel and its co-texts. This technique seems to be imitative of hypertextuality in a similar way to *JPod*. However, whereas Coupland’s interest is with construction of subjectivity within globally dispersed mediated-networks, *Looking for Headless* and the *Headless* project “appropriate or mimic strategies of the offshore” by concealing authorship and responsibility for the narrative (Einarsson 2009: 37). Such strategies challenge the very notion of the centre, of the rooted, or of agency in order to construct a commentary on the kinds of secrecy which the offshore represents (Figure 17.3).

## V. Conclusion

A useful way to grasp Goldin+Senneby’s representation of globalization as decentred integration is through the “Mind Map” that they provide to accompany their installations, which is reproduced in the catalogue to the exhibition in Toronto’s Power Plant (Goldin+Senneby 2009b). Nicky Marsh has compared this map to Lombardi’s work, suggesting that its “huge entangled networks . . . demonstrate . . . that the offshore confounds easy mapping or visual representation” (Marsh 2011: 93). Read alongside Maurer’s reading of Lombardi as providing an illusion of knowledge which is finally impossible, we can read Goldin+Senneby’s map as promising explication but signalling only entanglement. The ever-knowing *Looking for Headless* seems to acknowledge this when it portrays the persona of Angus Cameron speculating about the operation of offshore finance and using the map to pull “everything together in my mind” to

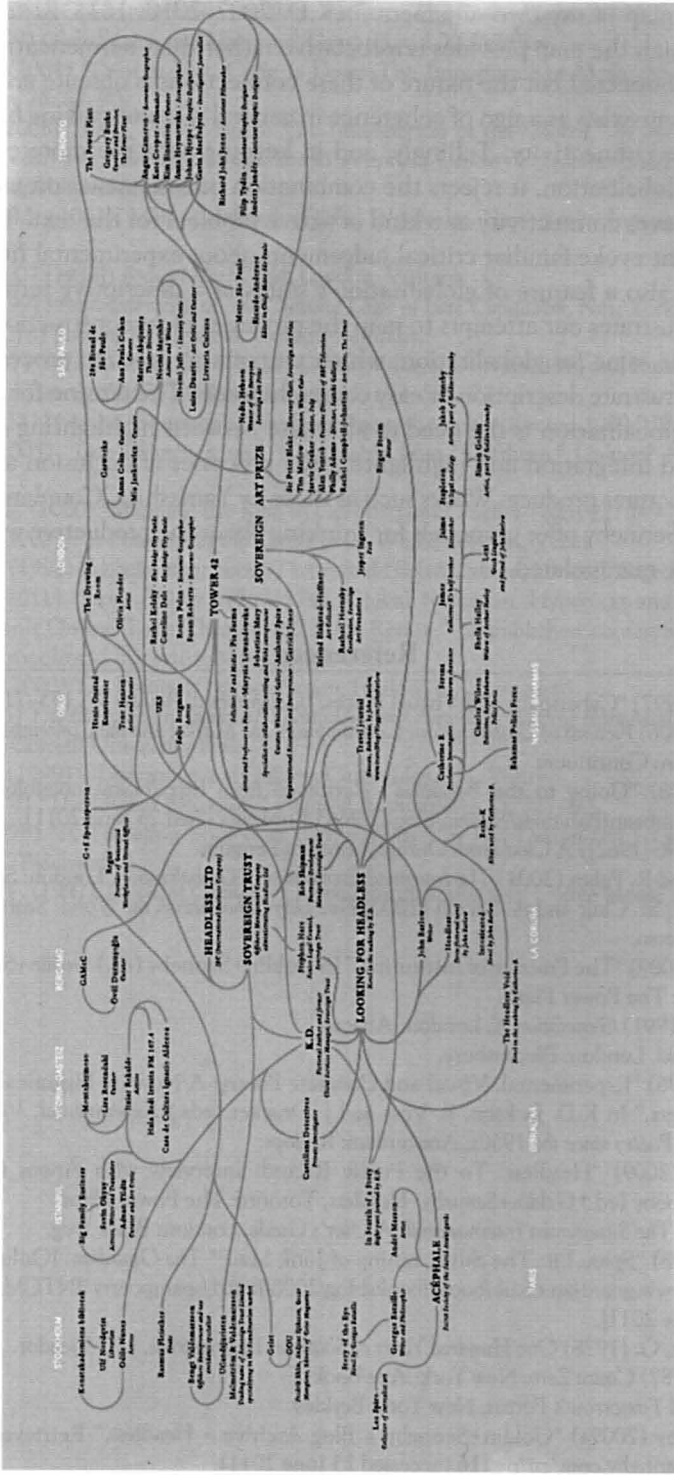


Figure 17.3 Headless mindmap by Kim Einarsson, design Johan Hjerpe and Filip Tydén for Goldin+Senneby. Courtesy of Goldin+Senneby.

help “form a map of my own arguments” (K.D. 2007–2010: 162). Revealingly, the coherence which the map provides is associative rather than hermeneutic. Points on the map are connected but the nature of these connections is obscure and imprecise. As such the map exists as a sign of coherence in general without making fully readable its own diffuse connectivity. Tellingly, and in keeping with the more experimental literature of globalization, it rejects the combination of concatenation with concentration and leaves connectivity as a kind of active problem for the text. This sense of openness might evoke familiar critical judgements about experimental literature, but it is crucially also a feature of globalization’s status as a descriptive term. If *Looking for Headless* frustrates our attempts to map the processes of its construction, we might equally say the same for globalization, which purports to describe processes that, by their nature, frustrate description or easy comprehension. The tension for any attempt to represent globalization is the need to alternate between highlighting structures of coherence and integration and highlighting the processes of occlusion and dispersal that these structures produce. Works such as those by Yamashita, Coupland, Lombardi and Goldin+Senneby offer us models for thinking about the productive ways that this tension can be manipulated.

### References

- Adams, P.C. (1997) “Cyberspace and Virtual Places,” *Geographical Review* 87: 155–71.
- Annesley, J. (2006) *Fictions of Globalization: Consumption, the Market and the Contemporary American Novel*, London: Continuum.
- Barlow, J. (2008) “Going to the Bahamas”, Retrieved from <http://www.travelblog.org/Central-America-Caribbean/Bahamas/Nassau/blog-259665.html> (accessed 25 June 2011).
- Burgess, A. (1996 [1962]) *A Clockwork Orange*, London: Penguin.
- Cameron, A. and R. Palan (2004) *The Imagined Economies of Globalization*, London: Sage.
- Cockburn, A., J. St. Clair and A. Sekula (2000) *Five Days That Shook the World: Seattle and Beyond*, New York: Verso.
- Cohen, A. P. (2009) “The Practice of Instituting.” In Goldin+Senneby (ed.) *Goldin+Senneby: Headless*, Toronto: The Power Plant.
- Coupland, D. (1991) *Generation X*, London: Abacus.
- (2006) *JPod*, London: Bloomsbury.
- Drucker, J. (1996) “Experimental, Visual and Concrete Poetry: A Note on Historical Context and Basic Concepts.” In K.D. Jackson, E. Voss and J. Drucker (eds.) *Experimental, Visual Concrete: Avant-Garde Poetry since the 1960s*, Amsterdam: Rodopi.
- Einarsson, K. (2009) “Headless. To the Public Record: Interview with Angus Cameron.” In Goldin+Senneby (ed.) *Goldin+Senneby: Headless*, Toronto: The Power Plant.
- Ford, S. (2005) *The Situationist International: A User’s Guide*, London: Black Dog.
- Gallix, A. (2008) “Spam Lit: The Silver Lining of Junk Mail?” *The Guardian*. [Online.] Retrieved from <http://www.guardian.co.uk/books/booksblog/2008/jul/01/spampoetry?INTCMP=SRCH> [accessed 30 June 2011].
- García Márquez, G. (1978) *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Basingstoke, UK: Picador.
- Gibson, W. (1987) *Count Zero*, New York: Ace Books.
- (2000) *All Tomorrow’s Parties*, New York: Berkley.
- Goldin+Senneby (2009a) “Goldin+Senneby » Blog Archive » Headless.” Retrieved from <http://www.goldinsenneby.com/gs/?p=116> (accessed 23 June 2011).

- (ed.) (2009b) *Goldin+Senneby: Headless*, Toronto: The Power Plant.
- Gupta, S. (2009) *Globalization and Literature*, Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Hayles, N.K. (2004) "Print Is Flat, Code Is Deep: The Importance of Media-Specific Analysis," *Poetics Today* 25: 67–90.
- Heise, U.K. (2006) "1970, Planet Earth: The Imagination of the Global." In B. McHale and R. Stevenson (eds.) *The Edinburgh Companion to Twentieth-Century Literatures in English*, Edinburgh, UK: Edinburgh University Press.
- Hobbs, R. (ed.) (2003) *Mark Lombardi: Global Networks*, New York: Independent Curaters International.
- Huxley, A. (2007 [1932]) *Brave New World*, London: Vintage.
- Jameson, F. (1991) *Postmodernism or, the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*, New York: Verso.
- K.D. (2007–2010) *Looking for Headless*, Goldin+Senneby.
- Lee, S.-I. (2007) "'We Are Not the World': Global Village, Universalism, and Karen Tei Yamashita's Tropic of Orange," *MFS Modern Fiction Studies* 53: 501–27.
- Marsh, N. (2011) "Goldin+Senneby's 'Headless': From the Public Record 2009," *Wasafiri* 26: 92–4.
- Maurer, B. (2005) "Due Diligence and 'Reasonable Man,' Offshore," *Cultural Anthropology* 20: 474–505.
- McCallum, E.L. (2000) "Mapping the Real in Cyberfiction," *Poetics Today* 21: 349–77.
- Newman, R. (2003) *The Fountain at the Centre of the World*, London: Verso.
- Robertson, R. (1992) *Globalization: Social Theory and Global Culture*, London: Sage Publications.
- Schoene, B. (2011) "From 253 to 6775235741: Global Narration, Hypertext and Community in Geoff Ryman's Online Tube Theatre and Print Remix," Unpublished conference paper, Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK.
- Stockwell, P. (2000) *The Poetics of Science Fiction*, Harlow, UK: Longman.
- Tabbi, J. (1995) *The Postmodern Sublime: Technology and American Writing from Mailer to Cyberpunk*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- Tomlinson, J. (1999) *Globalization and Culture*, Cambridge, UK: Polity.
- Tsing, A. (2000) "The Global Situation," *Cultural Anthropology* 15: 327–60.
- Virilio, P. (1998) "A Traveling Shot over Eighty Years." In J.D. Derian (ed.) *The Virilio Reader*, Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Yamashita, K.T. (1997) *Tropic of Orange: A Novel*, Minneapolis, MI: Coffee House Press.