

## WHAT IS GLOBALIZATION?

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As a word to describe our contemporary times, “globalization” has been used in a myriad of ways and in a wide number of fields – from being a phrase of corporate catch-copy to a piece of serious academic terminology. The global merging of major corporations, trillion dollar financial transactions which take place daily, the privatizations and deregulation of neo-liberal politics, the globalization of law, global culture and the sharing of common experiences, the power and control of the global media, the anti-globalism movements – such trans-national phenomena as these are increasingly characterizing so many situations around the globe today. All sorts of issues now appear to us as global issues and it is often said that they have become impossible to solve at the level of the state. However, “globalization” is not simply a word to be used to understand the present. It has become a word through which we can gain a new perspective on the many problems caused and preserved by that age we have come to know today as “modernity.” After two World Wars and environmental pollution on a global scale, we can say that they have formed the conclusion to the purely modern world and have made clear to all the violence which lies within our notions of freedom and democracy; notions which have been thought of as universal truths of humanity. Today, once again, problems of historical awareness concerning colonial rule and of world order, including fascism, are being raised again and re-interrogated. The contemporary age of globalization can also be thought of as an age in which the so-called developed world is increasing arbitrary, and one in which many regions around the world, from their colonization onwards, have been placed irreversibly within a global framework. In this presentation, while trying to rethink some of the problems of modernity and the issues raised by our present age, I would like to think about what kind of problems we face when we try to come to terms with this kind of turning point specifically with regards to knowledge.

Knowing and understanding globalization is not just about adding a new set of knowledge to what we already know about our world. The research field which uses globalization as a keyword should be understood as critical of fields which have been systematized as the learning of the nation-state. Furthermore, it should not be understood as a field which simply attempts to clarify a specific issue. Globalization research aims to critically reconsider that thinking and knowledge which has assumed an, often unacknowledged, national framework and attempts to rearrange and reconstruct the framework of existing social science and thought which have until now been the property of the state and nation. History is always a dialogue between the present and the past and has continuously been re-written within the restrictions of the “now.” In the contemporary age of globalization, once again, the re-writing of history is beginning to happen in many regions around the world. This history is not just the story of two terrible World Wars. After more than half a century, we need to understand those wars, and the many conflicts around the world today, not as some sort of deviation from the trajectory of the modern world, but its necessary conclusion. To know and understand globalization is to re-interrogate the knowledge of modernity.