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## Globalization and the Politics of Discourse

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This has been a culturally disruptive century. At the outset, Einstein's special theory of relativity overturned the canonical, Newtonian framework within which time and space were absolute, constant, and separate, rendering them relative, changeable, and imbricated. But although humankind had its fixed frames of reference in the discourses of science displaced by a strange and virtually unfigurable space-time topos, the impact of the Einsteinian revolution on the familiar discourses operating in diverse parts of the world was relatively minimal. More profoundly affecting social life was a subsequent revolution, the increasingly rapid change from commodity to representational money <sup>1</sup> and the further dematerialization of the bases of exchange, as various industrialized states removed the gold backing from their currencies. It affected not only financial policy but also people's ontological security, their understanding of the nature of their attachments and situatedness in relation to value.

Exchange has always been connected to ontological as well as practical functions. As Georg Simmel notes, systems of barter were part of a series of intersubjective relationships through which persons identified themselves and bonded with their communities. Because "interdependence of personality and material relationships, which is typical of the barter economy, is dissolved by the money economy," <sup>2</sup> it is not surprising that people's ontological anxieties are evoked in response to changes in the warrants for the value of money, not only because their wealth is at stake but also because they want their exchanges connected to a foundation with collective symbolic guarantees.

Cultural disruption associated with changes in the backing of money (gold, silver, or otherwise) have historically become entangled with more general crises of meaning because of the way monetary discourses are implicated in various other domains of value, meaning, and identity. Andre Gide's *Counterfeiters* treats this entanglement elaborately. <sup>3</sup> Written during a period of crisis in realist painting and novelistic fiction, as the guarantees connecting signs and objects became unstable, and also precisely at the time (during World War I) that France was issuing paper money no longer backed by gold, the novel

"expresses the contradiction between a persistent nostalgic attachment to gold currency, and a realistic, or rather theoretical acceptance of the dizzying novelty of inconvertibility." <sup>4</sup> **[End Page 111]** This monetary vertigo was accompanied by a more general anxiety about the way in which social life was being appropriated by economic life, "a collapse of certain profound ideological mediations between economic life and life proper." <sup>5</sup> Most significantly, for purposes here, Gide's novel adds a dimension of linguisticity to the polarities of real versus false money, authentic versus inauthentic patrimonies, and genuine versus confused desires central to the novel's motivating events. The narrative abounds in ambiguous interconnections between systems of exchange and the problem of language. For example, the novel's novelist, Edouard, has monetary concerns disrupt his writing as issues of exchange continually usurp the articulations of his characters, disturbing his attempts to give their personalities a coherent expressivity. <sup>6</sup>

The contemporary issues surrounding globalization--associated principally with the reconfigurations of space and time that new media technologies and altered systems of exchange have produced--are also articulated to a large extent in terms of issues of discursive practice. From various parts of the social order, concerns are expressed about an increasing gap between discourse and the world of objects, persons, events, and relationships.

### **Specters of Globalization**

Current spatio-temporal disruptions associated with globalization provoke attempts at identity rectification. Discursive strategies are evinced to reassemble individual or collective selves in the face of forces that are seen as centrifugal or disintegrative. However, attempts to manage a coherent presence in the face of disturbing spatio-temporal reconfigurations are haunted by prior incoherences that have been dissimulated in integrating narratives that deny alternative sources of individual and collective being.

In what follows, I turn to the articulations of some who are seeking to achieve a comfortable collective presence. Employing a Kantian-inspired strategy, I inquire into how globalization emerges as a phenomenon in various "productive understandings" rather than ask: What kind of phenomenon *is* globalization? A focus on identity-securing projects yields an appreciation of how alarmed reactions result from the perception that present global dynamics exceed traditional descriptive and conceptual strategies, as analysts in academia, the media, business, and a wide variety of other fields try both to describe what they render as globalization and to maintain the collective coherence of their identities as they rationalize their practices. Moreover, once we frame the reactions to globalization **[End Page 112]** within the diverse loci of enunciation constituting political discourse, we create the conditions of possibility for enlarging the domain of the political. We can address the disjunctures in the sources of political attachment and initiative that are erased when some loci of enunciation are suppressed within the dominant stories of the emergence of state space.

Two things about the present are relevant to this part of the analysis. There are manifest effects of technological change on global relations--as peoples, practices, and ideas are mobilized in ways that ignore juridical-political boundaries--and a poverty of description in response to those changes. A reconfigured set of relationships between local and global spaces, in which changing technologies have challenged the authority of prior temporal and spatial practices, impeaches traditional ways of mapping exchanges and power configurations, placing intolerable burdens on various levels of description with which various groups have traditionally come to terms with their locations in time and space. To pursue a brief example, the current disruption to the knowledge practices through which the academic field of psychology constructs its objects provides an exemplary case of such a descriptive lacuna. Writing on the challenge of globalization for contemporary psychology, one psychologist constructs globalization as a change in the "functional units of the social order."

<sup>7</sup> Modern psychology, he suggests, has constituted persons as autonomous individuals in order to achieve a model of personhood that fits with the demands of a social order that had become secularist, democratic, and individualistic (according to his liberal version of modernity). But now, he asserts, "the theory of the person that was suited to the era of individualization is ill-suited to the era of globalization."<sup>8</sup>

Certainly the comfortable, depoliticizing metaphor of suitability neglects those centrifugal or recalcitrant aspects of subjectivity that resist centralizing social forces and obscures the historical complicity of academic psychology (and its "theory of the person") with structures of authority and dominance. "Globalization" becomes a challenging phenomenon for this psychologist in the context of a project that constructs the world as a series of unproblematic functional relationships between social orders and persons. The relevance of ("Western") personhood as an object of knowledge is exhausted by its fit within a homogenizing notion of *the* social order. Neglecting structurally induced antagonisms within the order, it is a view that renders psychology complicit with the production of subjectivities that are congenial to the contemporary exercise of power.<sup>9</sup> It eschews a politicized self-reflection, remaining within the domain of official policy discourse as it recycles the "'right names' that pin people down to their place and work."<sup>10</sup>

Academic psychology shares its felt need to adjust its discourse with a wide range of groups and professions seeking to maintain their coherence **[End Page 113]** in the face of a world that no longer yields itself conveniently to their traditional discursive practices. Three projects in particular are worthy of extended scrutiny because, while they are explicitly aimed at reestablishing collective coherence, they demonstrate significantly similar structures of repression at the same time. Accordingly, my analysis alternatively maps and disrupts the attempts to facilitate the conduct of investment on a global scale (reflected in the pronouncements of certified public accountants), to consolidate and expand the domain of "believers" in the face of an altered map of spiritualities (reflected in one representation of the discourse of Christian

ecumenicalism), and to rethink the issue of political attachment (reflected in one representation of the discourse of politics). CPAs, Christian ecumenicalists, and political theorists tend to regard globalization as a relatively new challenge to the coherence and integrity of their ideational commitments (to professional coherence, to the global expansion of Christianity, and to a future of global civic republicanism respectively in the particular cases I explore). They emphasize a need to adjust their geographic imaginaries, to reconceive the spatio-temporal terrains within which their activities and thinking are registered, and, while rethinking the constituencies relevant to their work, to narrate the bases of their former coherence. Yet, as they turn their focus on the changing worlds around them, they are haunted by what is within.

Why should we regard an explicit recognition of external exigencies as haunted? Gesturing toward Jacques Derrida's concept of "hauntology," I am suggesting that in the process of coping with what they construe as a new world (dis)order, their discursive enactments repress--or in Derrida's preferred imagery, "conjure away"--the aspects of inner disorder and disjuncture that their consolidating languages of order deny. <sup>11</sup> From the more banal consolidation of accountancy in the "language of national accounting standards," through the discursive consolidation of U.S. Christianity into a "community of believers," to the attempt to consolidate postnational political cultures, predicated on an assumption of a previously existing set of relatively homogeneous and consensual domestic political cultures, the outward gaze, based on a unitary framing of the collective observer, is haunted by incoherence within.

More specifically for purposes at hand, the specters central to Derrida's notion of hauntology undermine the stability of various forms of collective "being," which are always already afflicted by their repressions of the arbitrary events and structures of domination by which they have been produced and consolidated. Diverse groups struggle to maintain the fiction of their absolute separation from the various aspects of alterity on which the coherence and singularity of their identities are founded. Collective forms of being are haunted, in short, because in seeking separation from what is foreign or outside, they repress the foreign territories within, **[End Page 114]** while repressing the ambiguities involved in ascribing a stable temporality and territoriality to themselves.

## The New World of Accountancy

For CPAs in the United States the primary challenge of globalization has been articulated as an issue of the overly parochial language of accounting. Once aspiring only to a coherent national practice, they are now seeking "an accounting language transcending national borders" as enterprises become increasingly international. <sup>12</sup> A genealogical reading of the historically changing constructions of the spaces of operation and constituencies of accountants reveals significant modifications in their professional geography since the beginning of the century. In 1905, the inaugural year of the *Journal of Accountancy*, the world of accountants was wholly national. Accountants sought state recognition for the integrity of their profession in the form of federal legal protections. The accounting profession, asserted one practitioner, must "receive

universal recognition at the hands of the state." <sup>13</sup> Insofar as there was a relevant world outside U.S. borders, it consisted of exotic accountancy venues. For example, the initial 1905 volume carried a report on the nature of the German corporation, focusing on its organization and powers. Reports on such venues supplied an exotic contrast rather than an immediate challenge, for accountants saw their clientele at this juncture as various domestic firms or manufacturing companies.

Yet the accountant's world, wholly domestic though it was, was haunted. What had been conjured away in the quest for professional integrity, some suspected, was social integrity, or, in the term Hegel suggested for it two centuries ago, *Sittlichkeit* (the ethical life). <sup>14</sup> What asserted itself from time to time on the pages of their professional journals was an attempt to reconcile the accountant as servant of a predatory commercial life with the accountant as concerned and civically responsible citizen. Just over a quarter century ago, for example, one writer in the *Journal of Accountancy* explicitly evoked the dual identity of accountant and citizen in a call for "civic responsibility," especially on behalf of "the disadvantaged." <sup>15</sup> The writer's sentiments are predicated on the assumption that the actions of his profession are radically separated from the production of disadvantage; the "disadvantaged" are represented as mere social facts, existing in a domain external to the practices of the accounting profession.

In the quest to recover the ethical life that a practice embedded in the commercial life may neglect (e.g., the writer refers to the valuable voluntary accounting services he offers to the "disadvantaged"), there is a conjuring [**End Page 115**] away of the more significant ghosts attendant to capitalism in general. Those phantoms are what the liberal capitalism of the industrial world excludes and represses in its stories of civic virtue: those who are not merely "disadvantaged" in the sense of (for some unfathomable reason) not sharing in the system's prosperity, but rather are necessarily, that is, structurally, excluded from economic well-being. The same structures responsible for the increasing use of professional accounting in order to produce advantage are those that are constitutive of modernity's production of comparative disadvantage. To imagine oneself as both an accountant and as a civically responsible citizen, therefore, one must ignore structural contradictions while at the same time engaging in a more general "epistemological repression," <sup>16</sup> a denial of the profound and pervasive linkages between political economy and "ethical" forms of sociality.

What is the effect of the accountant's new globalized self-understanding? Whether operating nationally or extended globally, the world of investment and the management of money, viewed through the recent reflections of the accountancy profession, have the effect of conjuring away social, political, and ethical issues. Accountants imagine a disconnected world in which structurally induced "disadvantage" interrelated with domestic and global inequality cannot be discerned. For example, one of the issues of global standardization for accountants is differing approaches to the measurement of good will, where "good will" is an accounting category. As a former head of the national accountancy standards committee has put it, a primary issue is the "useful life"

of "purchased good will." <sup>17</sup> In Simmel's terms, with the rule of money, "things become worn down and smoothed." <sup>18</sup> The accountancy profession has, in effect, hastened that smoothing process while at the same time deepening the repression of the ethico-political life.

Because global capital flows create encounters between different life worlds even as they reconfigure them, "good will," in the sense of an ethical posture toward a cultural Other, would involve a respect for that Other's practices of singularity and a recognition that Otherness is a dynamic, inextricably related to the way capital creates identity spaces. An elaborate concern with "the ethical life" would necessitate both a recognition of the contingency of one's own identity as well as of the interdependencies of global relationships as they relate to structures of inequality. It is therefore propitious to inspect the globalization problematic of Christian ecumenicalists, for they have more experience adjusting moral reasoning to changes in global structures and dynamics. **[End Page 116]**

### Performing the Coherence of Christendom

The challenge of globalization for Christian ecumenicalists must be seen in the context of a set of complex discursive enactments with considerable historical depth. Christian ecumenicalists operate across a number of interdiscursive zones with a variegated set of discursive genres. Because a globalized venue has always been part of their traditional self-understanding, they have always aspired to a theology with global validity and have always explicitly recognized antagonism and resistance as constitutive of the structural demands on religious discourse. The historical distinction between the discursive genres known as dogmatics and apologetics is founded precisely on the disjunctive difference between believers inside and nonbelievers outside. For Christian ecumenicalists, the nation-state cartography, which supplies the still dominant frame for those who develop political discourses, is less important than the pre-Westphalian religious map of believers versus nonbelievers. Moreover, their map contains a vertical dimension as well, extending from a sacred, transcendent domain downward to a secular world. The mundane world, in which they draw the map of believers versus nonbelievers, is seen as divinely invested; it is shaped in part by "the cunning hand of Providence" (as one theologian has put it in his theologized rendering of Hegel). <sup>19</sup> Christian ecumenicalists map a world in which theology and geography are combined, but of late that world seems increasingly resistant to an unambiguous mapping. It is globalization that is the ambiguating force toward which some theologians are pointing.

Despite their long-held expectation of a global commitment, Christian ecumenicalists see a need to adjust to new forces reconfiguring the relationships between the local and the global. Treating what he calls "the theological challenge of globalization," theologian Max Stackhouse, for example, calls for a "theological perspective large and supple enough truly to comprehend the social and religious pluralism of the globe," as increasing contact with other

world religions "makes certainties less stable." [20](#)

The challenge of this new world of uncertainty, as "believers" are confronted with an enforced "deprovincialization," takes place within a distinctive perceptual mapping of the globe. Christian ecumenicalists operate in a world of differential beliefs, which increases the uncertainties surrounding the production of kerygmatic (proclamatory) discourses. But Christian theologians have long recognized that their various genres of discourse--dogmatics, apologetics, and kerygmatics--are haunted. Familiar with ghosts from the outset--they are constitutive of Christian spirituality--they have a long tradition of theorizing what is supposed to be fixed and enduring with respect to sources of value, while also recognizing **[End Page 117]** that textual and proclamatory expressions of value are historically and linguistically contingent. For example, a committed deconstructionist could hardly improve on this statement by a theologian of the paradoxes and uncertainties involved in moving from the dogmas of institutionalized scriptural interpretation to the injunctions of kerygmatic discourse:

How can there be anything like dogma (which includes by definition the permanent, the lasting, the canonized in language), when historicity and linguistics have shown all language to be, despite any claim of the divine, quite human and always historical. [21](#)

The recognition of these uncertainties has energized the historical philosophical/theological work of consolidating "communities of believers"; it has encouraged a forthright confrontation with the ghosts of contingency immanent in the establishment of noncontingency. What have been less self-reflectively attended to in theological discourse are the boundary issues surrounding the primary Christian constituency, the "community of believers." This imaginary's coherence and demarcation--a clear boundary between the inside and outside--is a necessary condition for, among other things, the very distinction between dogmatics and apologetics.

The issue of the community of believers is precisely what disrupts the recent encounter of Christian ecumenicalism with globalization. Consolidating the Christian "we" as "communities of faith," for example, Stackhouse urges a resistance to "ethnocentrism in faith" and a corresponding attention to "comparative religion." [22](#) However, two significant repressions are involved in these suggestions. The first, which constructs a "community of faith," effectively denies an ongoing history of disagreement and schism within Christianity. The second, which constructs non-Christian religious alterity as "ethnic," or (as is used later) as "cultural," effectively denies the pan-ethnic and transcultural bases of other religions. [23](#)

Instead of countenancing a world of nonbelieving alterity--incommensurable and even somewhat enigmatic spiritualities--Christian ecumenicalists enclose the world's subjects within a rigorously drawn moral cartography; conceptual mastery is the necessary strategy, but the tactics must shift. According to Stackhouse, it is ultimately necessary for all to participate in "a common life," but

persuasion must be other than merely a matter of the exercise of the traditional "dogmatic method," appropriate to "those who already (or almost) believe." What is now needed is "the apologetic method," appropriate when entering "into philosophical and cultural-linguistic systems other than our own," when making a "substantive case for that which we hold to be true in the face of those who really do not know, and cannot imagine, what we are talking about." <sup>24</sup> **[End Page 118]**

The distinction between dogmatic and apologetic methods works together with the grammatical consolidations (the "we's", "our's") to construct a united community of believers, who face a world of ideational division while repressing division within. A return to the historical period roughly corresponding to late antiquity, when Christianity was taking shape in opposition to various alternative spiritualities and cosmologies, takes us back as well to the beginning of a history of repression within Christianity. In the fifth century, Christianity elaborated a mythic secular history, a story of Christianization in which Christianity rapidly and wholly displaced paganism in "Christendom." However, historical experience is resistant to this narrative. Rather than producing a radical departure from paganism, Christianity shared its stage. As Peter Brown has pointed out, the public culture of ruling elites in the age of Constantine did not represent them in terms of Christian but rather in terms of pagan cosmology: on the mosaics in their villas and the ceremonial icons in the imperial court, as well as in poetic and letter writing styles. <sup>25</sup> Moreover, throughout the fifth century, rather than an unambiguous Christianization, Christianity and paganism worked together in public representations--in maps and calendars, for example. To the extent that a Christian world imaginary displaced a pagan one, the shift was not rapid: "the ancient representation of the *mundus* was one which shifted with the slowness of a glacier." <sup>26</sup>

As a result, the Christian imaginary never shed much of its link with paganism. There were strenuous attempts to avoid what Christians regarded as the polluting effects of pagan practices, especially blood sacrifice, but in the ancients' "thought-worlds," potentially exclusive explanatory systems coexisted." <sup>27</sup> However complete or partial was the separation of Christian doctrine from paganism--complete if one heeds only authorized Christian narratives but partial if one heeds ethno-historical scholarship--the challenge of Islam, since its beginning in the seventh century, has constituted a far more significant challenge to Christianity's distinctiveness. <sup>28</sup>

While the apologetics of early Christians, aimed most frequently at Islam, were vociferous and uncompromising about the location of "truth," contemporary Christian ecumenicalists have adopted a softer version of apologetics for a globalized age. <sup>29</sup> Stackhouse insists, nevertheless, that contemporary apologetics must specifically confront Others with a knowledge of how their doctrines specifically mislead. But resisting the unreflective coherence that his collective pronouns imply, he evinces a recognition that Christianity in "America" was shaped by various different "strands": Roman and anti-Roman, Protestant,

and reformist, for example. [30](#)

Once these different strands are acknowledged, however, they become **[End Page 119]** symbiotic for purposes of producing an apologetics aimed outward. The Protestant dimension helps to construct arguments suited to "debunking false claims to universality in the name of particularity," and the reformist dimension helps in "the recovery and actualization of a vision of eternal truth." [31](#) What finally emerges is a "theological community" ready to deliver an apologetic to convince those who fail to know or imagine what Christians are talking about. [32](#) The different strands become articulated once the ecumenical gaze recovers its outward focus.

Yet Christian ecumenicalists remain haunted by schisms in the ideational coherence they have ascribed to Christendom. As one theologian has noted, contemporary apologetics must confront a "breakdown of certainties" within, produced by the migration of "historical-critical methods," feminist criticism, "Marxist analysis," and "black studies," all of which point to "long obscured realities" and produce a "confusion" in the study of Christian theology. [33](#) Although the writer does not put it in these terms, the challenges to Christian doctrine within--like a recognition of the historical entanglements between Christian and other doctrines--disrupt the very distinction between a dogmatic and apologetic method. Ignoring this disruption, Christian ecumenicalists have urged a "clarity" about what doctrine is and have undertaken a new mapping of the global venues of nonbelief. [34](#)

### Performing Nation-State History

The discursive aporias expressed by both the accounting profession and Christian ecumenicalists manifest significantly greater unity than do the discourses of political theory. They resonate more with those thinkers who seek to legitimate the coherence of juridico-political structures of the state system than with those who emphasize the more centrifugal aspects of the state-dominated world. While such political discourses share with CPAs a tendency to separate ethico-political spheres from economic dynamics, there is a more historically profound relationship between Christian ecumenicalist and state-legitimizing political discourses. Especially comparable are the struggles, manifested in both the histories of Christianity and in secular theorizing of the post-Westphalian state system, to consolidate conceptually and morally their domains of operation. Their contemporary approaches to the production of their imaginaries and the narratives that support them began to emerge in roughly the same period. According to Michel Foucault, the structural changes producing both state and contemporary Christian problematics begin in the sixteenth century, when there was an **[End Page 120]**

intersection of two processes: the process which, shattering the structures of feudalism, is about to form the great territorial, administrative and colonial states; and . . . a totally different movement which, starting with the Reformation and then the

Counter-Reformation, put in question the manner in which one is to be spiritually ruled and led on this earth in order to achieve eternal salvation. <sup>35</sup>

Nevertheless, there are alternative ways to tell the story of how nations became states. As in the case of historical attempts to consolidate Christendom, those who help reproduce the nation-state's claims to the attachments of its constituency must deal with states' ambiguous spatio-temporality, which is reflected in the hyphenated term *nation-state*. While a state is understood (within dominant narratives) as a territorial entity that historically expanded its political, legal, and administrative control by monopolizing violence and incorporating various subunits into a legal and administrative entity with definitive boundaries, the primary understanding of the modern "nation" segment of the hyphenated term is that it embodies a coherent culture, united on the basis of shared descent or, at least, incorporating a "people" with a historically stable coherence.

Inasmuch as states that contain coherent historically stable communities of shared descent are largely absent, the maintenance of the coherence of the nation-state requires, at a discursive level, a management of historical narratives along the deployment of a juridical/political discourse on territorial sovereignty. Those who support states' aspirations to nation-state existence become state biographers, writing a story that imposes a coherence on what is instead a series of fragmentary, arbitrary, and power-driven conditions of historical assemblage, masked in various mythic narrations of emerging consensuality. In order to appreciate this aspect of the complicit biographical performances legitimating the contemporary nation-state, it is useful to turn to Jürgen Habermas's recent enactment of it in his reflections on the impact of globalization on civic attachment. His discussion is an exemplar of attempts to impose a democratic consensuality on arbitrary and disjunctive structures of allegiance.

Habermas recognizes that forces of globalization have disrupted both the temporal and spatial status of citizenship within the nation-state. Citizenship, he notes, receives a "double coding"; <sup>36</sup> it is located both in a legal, territorial entity, within which it is associated with the privileges of sovereignty and the rights of individuals, and in a cultural community where it is associated with a history of shared ethnic and social characteristics. Operating with a sense of crisis, but at the same time wanting to resist the politics of identity associated with ethno-national political movements, Habermas is in search of a basis for a broadened democratic frame for communal solidarity, other than an organic one in which national solidarity **[End Page 121]** is predicated on the myth of a "prepolitical fact of a quasi-natural people." <sup>37</sup>

At the same time, however, Habermas contributes to a narrative of contemporary nation-states that encourages such a myth; he suggests that only recently have we experienced pluralistic societies that "are moving further and further away from the model of a nation-state based on culturally homogeneous populations." <sup>38</sup> Moreover, his more general story of how nations became states

emphasizes a benign narrative of political integration. Neglecting the erasure of some aspects of difference and the production of others, associated with a history of imperialism, Habermas's story conjures away the within-state spatio-temporal disjunctures that remain in imperialism's wake. Because his interest in the maintenance of a civic bond privileges "a single common container, the nation-state" as a locus of attachment, he fails to heed alternative narratives of modernity that disclose diverse dynamics of attachment and disengagement. <sup>39</sup> His version of the historical integration of nations within states does not, in short, register the centrifugal forms of otherness within states, which are not simply a diversity of cultural practices but also different orientations toward civic life. These forms of diversity are registered in narratives of modernity that do not emphasize integrative dynamics.

By reacting to altered structures of exchange by conjuring away the productive effects of economy on qualified versus disqualified political identities, Habermas neglects the competition among the self-making and imbricated forces of political power and economy. Desiring to hold onto the state as the ultimate political horizon of political community, he denies the historical production of diverse ways of being in time and space, disjunctive co-presences within states, connected to episodes and structures of both economic and political domination. While earlier state formations resulted from an age of colonial imperial expansion, producing a plurality of forms of colonized subjectivity and, ultimately, complex hybrid national cultures (with elements of indigenous and colonizer practices), <sup>40</sup> the current forces constituting diverse modes of selfhood and attachment are owed not only to political dynamics but also to a neoimperialism based on a changing structure of exchange that Eric Alliez has called "capital times." <sup>41</sup>

Economic forces associated with the current forms of globalization have produced temporalities that are disruptive of states' ideational management of their pasts, presents, and futures. Flows of capital, along with the other dynamics associated with the increasingly global economy, compete with the state system's production of identity spaces and, more importantly, challenge the ideational and narrative containment strategies--for example, the Habermasian story of national integration--with which states attempt to control allegiances. "Capital times" produce a **[End Page 122]** different drama of the subject because, as Alliez puts it, "money turns value into a *flow* that tends to escape the juridical frame of political territoriality." <sup>42</sup> To extend Alliez's argument, one could say, more generally, that the state's capture of various subjectivities is challenged by a rapid system of circulation that resists the various forms of capture by which subjectivity is held in various states of nationally relevant generality.

To hold onto a model of civic constitutionalism, which requires a unitary or consensual political culture, Habermas must invent a legal/political sphere that is quarantined from economic dynamics. As Mitchell points out, "by arguing that the economy and state administration remain self-regulating spheres, closed off from one another and their environments, he can posit the existence of a third

kind of sphere, that of law making and political debate." <sup>43</sup> Habermas valorizes, for example, what he sees as an autonomous and politically integrative political culture in the United States, based on an interpretation of "an impressively continuous constitutional history of more than two centuries." <sup>44</sup> Without treating extensively the history of exclusions associated with U.S. constitutionalism, reference to the removal of the Cherokee nation from the state of Georgia--in spite of Chief Justice Marshall's ruling with respect to their treaty-making status--should impeach an integrative model of constitutional history. And inasmuch as the increasing demands for Cherokee lands was significantly implicated in producing the desire for their removal, the example also impeaches attempts to invent an autonomous sphere of law making and political debate. The Cherokees in fact won the debate and lost their lands because of the way governmental force, and ultimately law making, ignored judicial opinions and fell in line with the forces of economic acquisitiveness. In the case of other nation-states, law making has been, historically, more implicated in forms of subjugation that arrest mobility rather than demanding removal--for example, the many vagrancy laws in Latin American countries, designed to force native peoples to work on haciendas. In Guatemala, for example, "through vagrancy legislation, the government assured a readily available labor force"; substituting vagrancy laws for debt peonage, the government obliged Indians with minor or no landholdings to show that they had worked for at least 100 days a year. If not, they were "obligated to work for very low wages" on haciendas, even when they were not in debt. <sup>45</sup> Ultimately, then, Habermas's story of the nation-state, extended toward a future of continued civic constitutionalism, conjures away what Foucault referred to as "the blood that has dried on the codes of the law," <sup>46</sup> inventing instead a unitary and felicitous history of citizen attachment to legal structures within states. [End Page 123]

## Conclusion: Dispersed Selfhood and the Politics of Community

Despite the insensitivity of his story of the nation-state to structures of exclusion, Habermas recognizes the diversity of cultural attachment now extant within states. However, within the story he tells, it is difficult to evoke the necessary recognition of the history of political wrong to empower those segments of the social order that have not flourished within the "impressively continuous" constitutional history. And, most significantly for purposes of enlarging the sphere of the political, a political community that can encompass highly mobile boundaries and identities cannot be approached within conceptual strategies that seek to aggregate political selfhood. To consider an alternative to such aggregation, we can turn to an analysis of some confessions that evoke St. Augustine's attempt to achieve oneness in time but imply a different conclusion, Alexander Garcia Duttmann's meditation on the present as "the time of AIDS." <sup>47</sup>

Pointing to the temporal peculiarity of people who have AIDS, Duttmann evinces more general insights about the ultimate inability to be one-in-time of both individual and collective subjects. Noting that the anticipation of "dying before one's time" disturbs the temporal habitus of the AIDS sufferer, Duttmann suggests that the resulting anxiety-driven fluctuations in perspective on that

person's relationship to time constitutes a "Being-not-one of time" and a "Being-not-one with AIDS" that "foils the constitution of a coherent time and of the coherence of a life"; it is a "collapse of the subject, through and for which the unity of life exists." [48](#)

In his analysis of "confessions" of AIDS-infected and thus temporally disrupted people, Duttmann discerns a marked contrast with the Augustinian coherence in time. Although, like Augustine, AIDS-infected people often see their act of writing as a way to gather the self, as an act of "coming to oneself," there is another topos of self-reflection that works against the attempt to become coherent in time through writing. Duttmann describes it as the topos of "Being-not-one" and "Being-not-at-one":

In the short time left, the sick person who attempts to come to himself through writing must write all the books that remain to him to be written. But time for writing, the time that actually corresponds to these books, is being robbed by death, by the fact that the author will die "before his time." Writing devours the time it no longer has, since it is devoured by time and since Being-not-one threatens to cancel the production of coherence and unity. [49](#)

Duttmann sees the clash of topoi experienced by the writer with AIDS as reflective of a more general aspect of temporal existence. "The time of **[End Page 124]** life," he states, "never just forms a closed unity and always already exposes itself to Being-not-one," [50](#) and he concludes that

perhaps one only has time to live and time to die when one is neither indebted to an identity nor reduced to its opposites, disruption and fragmentation. Perhaps one has this time--without having it at one's beck and call--in originary Being-not-one, in originary not-belonging, in originary im-pertinence. [51](#)

The discernment that AIDS provides of the disruption or "im-pertinence" of the Being-one-in-time of the subject operates at the level of collective (and thus historical) time as well. The "time of AIDS" is therefore more than merely the catastrophe of a spreading disease. The resistance of AIDS to a cure constitutes a disruption in the story of modern medicine, whose temporal self-understanding as a historical trace is captured by the idea of ending *all* disease. At this collective level, AIDS constitutes a "rupture in history." [52](#) Because AIDS has not been contained spatially or temporally, it renders "geopolitical, social, economic, national, cultural, ethnic, sexual boundaries" permeable. [53](#) Duttmann's response to this attenuation of boundaries and the resulting sundering of collective coherences is not an attempt to restore the continuity of various forms of individual and collective being. Instead, he urges an acceptance of "originary im-pertinence," not only, in the case of AIDS, to confront the destructive force of the disease but also, more generally, to confront the fragility of all identity coherence in time, individual or collective.

The insight that Duttmann derives from the impertinence of commitments to unitary modes of individual and collective selfhood applies to reactions to the contemporary forms of globalization, which seek to assert various forms of collective coherence. A politics of communicative consensus and political aggregation cannot measure up to various destructive forms of policy aimed at constructing a unitary national order within states. As Jacques Ranciere has put it, "the current dead end of political reflection and action is due to the identification of politics with the *self* of a community"; to approach politics (as different from mere policy) for him is to resist drawing on such unitary identifications. [54](#)

What is the alternative to privileging particular narratives of attachment as the basis for collective coherence and as the foundation of the political? Accepting a productive engagement with Habermas's desire to achieve a politics that includes a "reciprocal recognition of different cultural forms of life" [55](#) but, at the same time, resisting his civic constitutionalism, which presumes a community bound through centuries of shared commitment, I will conclude by juxtaposing Jean-Luc Nancy's notion of political community as a dynamic of binding and unbinding. Nancy's political community is predicated on a model of the social bond **[End Page 125]** that countenances particularities and eschews generalized communal attributes. His commitment to community, based on the "unworking of communication," is diametrically opposed to Habermas's model of community based on communicative consensus. It accommodates a recognition of incommensurable modes of presence. "Community," for Nancy, cannot be based on communicative consensus because there is no stable spatio-temporality and thus no unambiguous identity boundaries from which to assure communicative integration. Nancy suggests that the singularities of subjects who find themselves in common cannot be confined within aggregated social identities. [56](#)

For Habermas, current forces of globalization require the restoration of a coherent articulation of the society's "political will," [57](#) which he presumes has a continuity with that society's history of civic association. His evocation of the idea of a collective political will is complicit with the way a state stages a temporally coherent national culture, rendering national politics as a collective's will to realize its essence. In contrast, Nancy encourages an approach to the political that resists sacralizing the state-oriented, unitary civic self and is "receptive to the *meaning* of our multiple, dispersed, mortally fragmented existences." [58](#) The political response to contemporary globalization within this frame accepts disjointed co-presence, which has resulted from a continuous dynamic of globalization within which governance and economy have been continuously imbricated spheres of activity. An enlargement of political circumspection within such a frame must therefore avoid the production of a model of community that references itself in one coherent temporal trajectory, based upon a single "horizon behind us" [59](#) and anticipating a unified self-presence to be accomplished.

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## Notes

\* I am indebted to Randy Martin for reactions to an earlier draft of this essay.

1. The distinction between "commodity money" and "representational money" belongs to John Maynard Keynes. See his *A Treatise of Money*, vol. 1 (London: Macmillan, 1930), 7.

2. Georg Simmel, "Money in Modern Culture," *Theory, Culture, and Society* 8 (August 1991): 18.

3. Much of my discussion of the novel and its historical context is indebted to Jean-Joseph Goux, *The Coiners of Language*, trans. Jennifer Curtiss Gage (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1994).

4. *Ibid.*, 21.

5. *Ibid.*, 20.

6. Gide took pains to achieve an ironic distance both from the ontological angst that situates his novel and from realist fiction. See his ruminations on the writer, Edouard, in his "Second Notebook," trans. Justin O'Brien, afterword to *The Counterfeiters*, trans. Dorothy Bussey (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927), 397.

7. Edward E. Sampson, "The Challenge of Social Change for Psychology: Globalization and Psychology's Theory of the Person," *American Psychologist* 44 (June 1989): 917.

8. *Ibid.*

9. For a politically perspicuous analysis of the depoliticizing impetus of modern academic psychology see Ellen Herman, *The Romance of American Psychology* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994).

10. The quotation is from Jacques Rancière, "Politics, Identification, and Subjectivization," *October* 61 (summer 1992): 62.

11. Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, trans. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Routledge, 1994).

12. Stephen H. Collins, "The Move to Globalization," *Journal of Accountancy* 167 (March 1989): 82.

13. *Journal of Accountancy* 1 (January 1905): 40.

14. Hegel, ever the advocate of the necessity of the ethical life, argued, in one of

his earliest works (c. 1795), that the relationship between the commercial life and the ethical life (*Sittlichkeit*) is tragic, for from the point of view of the ethical life, the commercial life is both necessary and destructive. G. W. F. Hegel, *Natural Law*, trans. T. M. Knox (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1962), 94-95.

[15.](#) Ralph W. Estes, "The Accountant's Social Responsibility," *Journal of Accountancy* 129 (June 1970): 41.

[16.](#) This is Fredric Jameson's expression in "Marx's Purloined Letter," *New Left Review* 209 (January 1995): 98.

[17.](#) Estes, "The Accountant's Social Responsibility," 41.

[18.](#) Simmel, "Money in Modern Culture," 30.

[19.](#) Max Stackhouse, "The Theological Challenge of Globalization," *Christian Century* 106 (December 1989): 470.

[20.](#) *Ibid.*, 468.

[21.](#) Thomas F. O'Meara, Foreword to Karl Rahner and Karl Lehmann, *Kerygma and Dogma*, trans. William Glen-Doepel (New York: Herder and Herder, 1969), 8.

[22.](#) Stackhouse, "The Theological Challenge of Globalization," 468.

[23.](#) This latter repression has a long tradition. During Christianity's earliest encounters with Islam in the ancient world and continuing through the Renaissance, Christian writers avoided using religious markers for Muslims and instead referred to them in ethnic terms: as Saracens, Moors, Tatars, among others. See Bernard Lewis, *Islam and the West* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 7.

[24.](#) Stackhouse, "The Theological Challenge of Globalization," 471.

[25.](#) Peter Brown, *Authority and the Sacred* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 11-12.

[26.](#) *Ibid.*, 9.

[27.](#) *Ibid.*, 69.

[28.](#) Bernard Lewis has put the matter simply: "Compared with the remoter cults and cultures of Asia and Africa, Islam and Christianity are sister religions, with an immense shared heritage." Qtd. in *ibid.*, vii.

[29.](#) See, for example, the apology of Al Kindy in the ninth century, one of the earliest known exhortations to Muslims to embrace the (true) Christian faith: *The Apology of Al Kindy: Written at the Court of Al Mâmûn (circa A.H. 215; A.D. 830)*, in *Defence of Christianity against Islam*, 2d. ed., ed. and trans. Sir William

Muir (New York: E. and J. B. Young and Co., 1887), 81. And for a contemporary version see Lawrence E. Browne, who, after studying Islamic doctrine, assiduously concludes that Christian doctrine be clearly presented, particularly in cases in which its truths contradict the teachings of Islam: *The Quickening Word: A Theological Answer to the Challenge of Islam* (Cambridge: W. Heffer and Sons, 1955).

[30.](#) Stackhouse, "The Theological Challenge of Globalization," 470.

[31.](#) Ibid.

[32.](#) Ibid., 471.

[33.](#) Dennis M. Campbell, "Why Should Anyone Believe? Apologetics and Theological Education," *Christian Century* 106 (February 1989): 136.

[34.](#) Ibid., 138.

[35.](#) Michel Foucault, "Governmentality," in *The Foucault Effect*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 87-88.

[36.](#) Jürgen Habermas, "The European Nation-State: On the Past and Future of Sovereignty and Citizenship," *Public Culture* 10 (winter 1998): 404.

[37.](#) Ibid., 406.

[38.](#) Ibid., 408.

[39.](#) The quotation is from Arjun Appadurai's critique of Habermas's argument in "Full Attachment," *Public Culture* 10 (winter 1998): 449.

[40.](#) For an elaboration of this aspect of hybridity see Nestor Garcia Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures*, trans. Christopher L. Chiappari and Silvia L. Lopez (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995).

[41.](#) Eric Alliez, *Capital Times*, trans. George Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996).

[42.](#) Ibid., 6.

[43.](#) Mitchell, "Nationalism, Imperialism, Economism," 423.

[44.](#) Habermas, "The European Nation-State," 409.

[45.](#) Kay Warren, *The Symbolization of Subordination* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1978), 11.

[46.](#) Michel Foucault, "War in the Filigree of Peace," trans. Ian McLeod, *Oxford Literary Review* 4 (fall 1979): 18.

[47.](#) For Augustine, the management of coherent selfhood must involve one in a

struggle with the problem of the nonpresence of the past and future existence. Augustine responds to the ontological challenge posed by the passage of time explicitly by speculating about how to reconcile the radical nonpresence of past and future states with the unity of one's existence. His solution was to invent the concept of distension, a process through which the self is projected into the past through memory and the future through anticipation. See Saint Augustine, *The Confessions*, trans. John K. Ryan (New York: Doubleday, 1960), 301.

[48.](#) Alexander Garcia Duttman, *At Odds with Aids*, trans. Peter Gilgen and Conrad Scott-Curtis (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1996), 3-4.

[49.](#) *Ibid.*, 15.

[50.](#) *Ibid.*, 16.

[51.](#) *Ibid.*, 25.

[52.](#) *Ibid.*, 27.

[53.](#) *Ibid.*, 40.

[54.](#) Rancière, "Politics, Identification, and Subjectivization," 59.

[55.](#) Habermas, "The European Nation-State," 409.

[56.](#) Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, trans. Peter Connor, Lisa Garbus, Michael Holland, and Simona Sawhney (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1991), 41.

[57.](#) Habermas, "The European Nation-State," 414.

[58.](#) Nancy, *The Inoperative Community*, xi.

[59.](#) Jean-Luc Nancy, *The Sense of the World*, trans. Jeffrey S. Librett (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1997), 9.

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