

# The Dilemmas of Globalization

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*Runaway World: How Globalization Is Reshaping Our Lives*, Anthony Giddens (New York: Routledge, 2000), 124 pp., \$17.95 cloth.

*The Challenge of Global Capitalism: The World Economy in the Twenty-First Century*, Robert Gilpin (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), 373 pp., \$29.95 cloth.

*False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism*, John Gray (New York: The New Press, 1999), 262 pp., \$25 cloth, \$13.95 paper.

*Two Faces of Liberalism*, John Gray (New York: The New Press, 2000), 161 pp., \$25 cloth.

*Empire*, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 478 pp., \$35 cloth.

The *fin-de-millénaire* has brought forth a wave of books on globalization, as a larger public seeks to come to terms with a set of circumstances that is both increasingly difficult to deny and, for many, increasingly unintelligible. Unfortunately, readers are likely to experience more heat than light if they rely on most of the contributions to this debate, some of the more touted of which are not far removed from journalistic dross on current events. Fortunately, though, profound insight is also available, if sometimes from unexpected quarters. The selection of books surveyed here captures the breadth of concerns that the debate on globalization encompasses, as well as the range of both social scientific and philosophical resources that are required to address it deeply.

What exactly is the globalization debate about? It concerns the following questions: Is the world becoming interlinked in a significantly new way? If so, how, why, and what should we make of it? The goals of defining the phenomenon, understanding it, and appraising it run through all of the recent contributions, though they differ significantly in their approaches to these problems. The lines of contrast concern whether globalization's economic, institutional, or cultural dimensions are to be highlighted; whether it is a controlled consequence of unequal power or, rather, a process that is so revolutionary and uncontrolled that it presents unprecedented chal-

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lenges to the powerful; and whether it primarily requires a response at the level of institutional design, collective political assertion, or individual ethical reasoning and practice. The point of agreement among the authors surveyed here is that globalization in some form is a real phenomenon that poses unprecedented challenges.

Robert Gilpin's recent book, *The Challenge of Global Capitalism: The World Economy in the Twenty-First Century*, attempts to come to terms with the increasingly evident instability of the global economy. After a brief period of relative calm, the post-Cold War international economy showed a remarkable, though largely regionalized, propensity to crisis in the late 1990s. Gilpin, Eisenhower Professor of Public and International Affairs Emeritus at Princeton University, seeks to identify the sources of this propensity to crisis and to explore the implications for major state actors, especially the United States. He views the challenge as that of managing the world political and economic system in a way that ensures the sustainability of globalization. Gilpin, like the other authors surveyed here, takes globalization to be a real and distinguishing feature of the current period. Unlike these other authors, however, he takes its current form to be straightforwardly desirable. For him, the presumed myopia, short-termism, and irrationality of critics of globalized capitalism are the primary obstacles to be overcome, if not through conversion then through appropriate management of these threats to the emergent global capitalist system. The central thesis of the book is that "although technological advance and the interplay of market forces provide sufficient causes for increasing integration of the world economy, the supportive policies of powerful states and cooperative relations among these states constitute the necessary political foundations for a stable and unified world economy."<sup>1</sup>

Focusing exclusively on the economic aspect of globalization and taking his cue from a chorus of mainstream economists, Gilpin uncritically assumes that a more integrated world economy is in the interests of all: "Although capitalism eventually distributes wealth more *equally* than any other known economic system . . . as it does tend to reward the most efficient and productive, it *tends to concentrate* wealth, power, and economic activities. Threatened individuals, groups, or nations constitute an ever-present force that could overthrow or at least significantly disrupt the capitalist system."<sup>2</sup> Gilpin seems unaware of the internal contradiction found here between the idea that capitalism distributes wealth more equally and the idea that it tends to concentrate it—a fact that is regrettably representative of the level of clarity of economic reasoning in this book. It is certainly possible to imagine ways of reconciling Gilpin's seemingly contradictory views (for instance, by relating them to the long- and short-term consequences of the operation of markets), but this is not something that Gilpin himself feels the need to do.

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<sup>1</sup> Gilpin, *Challenge of Global Capitalism*, p. 347.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1, italics added.

Moreover, despite the multilateral gloss of Gilpin's call for "cooperative relations" among states, it is evident that his primary concern is with the U.S. role in maintaining the "political foundations" of a global capitalist economy. He calls for the United States to project its military, political, and economic power to manage popular discontent that may arise from an unregulated world economy. To this end, Gilpin advocates a well-rehearsed litany of measures that have come to be associated with proponents of the so-called third way and other "social liberals." For example, he recommends improved worker training and education and enhanced social safety nets, which he hopes will enable workers to compete within, and cushion them from the shocks of, an integrated world economy. Further, he argues for improved global institutional underpinnings (such as a more activist role for the International Monetary Fund) that will regulate the amplitude of fluctuations of the world market economy.

Are these prescriptions taken alone convincing? A central reason why by themselves they are not is pointed to by Gilpin himself—a successful economic policy requires political foundations. The dilemma is that the redistributive and cooperative effort called for by Gilpin is part of what globalization makes more difficult. Moreover, redistribution and cooperation have always been difficult to achieve and sustain in conventional market economies. If a globalized economy has created difficulties for the maintenance of existing social support systems (for example, through encouraging tax competition across jurisdictions), then it is not clear why these difficulties will not extend to the recommended package of policies. Furthermore, the primary motive for these initiatives is not the desire to compensate or protect the losers of globalization but rather the desire to protect the stability of the emergent world market system.<sup>3</sup> This leads Gilpin to favor policies that will further the political legitimacy of the system where most required but that need not be those most favorable to all workers' interests.

Gilpin recognizes that the shape that the global market takes will "ultimately be determined by the power and interests of its dominant members." He notes, "Markets by themselves are neither morally nor politically neutral; they embody the values of society and the interests of dominant actors."<sup>4</sup> For this reason he insists that the challenge of finding the conditions for a workable global capitalism is a *political* one. However, he does not pursue the full implications of this thought when it is applied to actors other than the major economic powers. In particular, because the governing structures of the world market will be shaped in the context of real conflicts of interest, it may be reasonable for those who are least represented in the design of its governing architecture to dissent from its very formation.

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<sup>3</sup> The book ends, "If the United States does not resume its leadership role, the Second Great Age of Capitalism, like the first, is likely to disappear" (ibid., p. 357).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

The strength of *The Challenge of Global Capitalism* is that it offers a thoroughgoing and for the most part descriptively accurate account of recent debates concerning threats to the stability of the emerging world market and possible responses to these perceived threats. These include the fervent debates on the role of regional trade agreements in presenting a possible obstacle to “principled” multilateral free trade, and the propensity to financial crisis of a system of unhindered and large-scale global financial flows. A reader interested in a single introduction to the landscape of these sometimes arcane debates would do well to read Gilpin’s book. The weakness of the book, however, lies in the unoriginality of its reportage and the received character of its analyses. There is no doubt that an intellectually rigorous and robust defense of an integrated world capitalist economy can be provided, but unfortunately that is not what is done here.

Anthony Giddens offers an empirically informed and analytically deeper appraisal of globalization in *Runaway World: How Globalization Is Reshaping Our Lives*, which originated as the 1999 Reith Lectures of the BBC World Service. Giddens, director of the London School of Economics and Political Science and an adviser to the British Labour Party, has sought in these lectures to reach a much wider audience than he did in his previous sociological and popular work on similar themes.<sup>5</sup>

The book is divided into five sections (originating from the individual Reith Lectures) entitled “Globalization,” “Risk,” “Tradition,” “Family,” and “Democracy.” In the first of these, Giddens outlines his thesis that globalization is a fact of the contemporary world, characterized by the collapse of spatial and temporal distance—embodied in expanded global communications and financial transactions—as well as by the diminished power of nation-states. He quotes approvingly Daniel Bell’s statement that “the nation becomes not only too small to solve the big problems, but also too large to solve the small ones.”<sup>6</sup> Globalization “pulls upwards” and “pushes downwards,” Giddens says, meaning that it creates new spheres of activity and practical challenges on both the large and small scale. As a result, he says, it also “squeezes sideways,” creating pressures for the emergence of new economic, political, and cultural zones within and across nations that reconfigure existing patterns of authority in order better to cope with these transformations.

For Giddens, globalization and the current phase of modernization are intertwined, if not indistinguishable, processes. This recognition enables us to understand ways in which diverse and seemingly unrelated phenomena both of everyday life and of national and global experience may be far-reaching consequences of a single set of causes. It prevents us, however, from assigning specific causal responsibility to globalization as a recent process that may be distinguishable from modernization with its more established logic.

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<sup>5</sup> See for example Anthony Giddens, *Consequences of Modernity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1991).

<sup>6</sup> Giddens, *Runaway World*, p. 31.

In the remainder of the lectures, Giddens attempts to analyze other new features of contemporary societies, linking them where possible to the globalization process. This effort is only partially successful, in large part owing to his failure to distinguish modernization from globalization. Thus, although Giddens makes a convincing case that a central feature of contemporary societies is the multiplication and intensification of unpredictable risks, especially of a humanly created kind, he does little to link this process to globalization, although it is certainly possible to imagine connections.<sup>7</sup>

The chapters on democracy and tradition represent his most robust effort to link changes under these headings to globalization, but they do not always do so successfully. Giddens's desire to reach a wide popular audience draws him toward propositions that are often insightful but sometimes dangerously simplified. In his account of the rise of a political culture of vociferous assertion of identities, Giddens argues that in a globalizing world, people are increasingly required to give reasons for their beliefs because of their intensified exposure to others "who think differently from them." Those who take up this project, and in the process endorse the possibility of "tolerance and dialogue" that is "guided by values of a universalist kind," are deemed "cosmopolitans." They are said to stand in contrast to "fundamentalists," who defend tradition through its internal claims to truth. This account is only superficially plausible, however, as a study of the historical and comparative record would demonstrate. In fact, there is substantial room and necessity within historical traditions for reason-giving, if only because there has always been substantial exposure of persons to those "who think differently from them."<sup>8</sup> By the same token, there have long been elements of resistance to dialogue in the outlook of the "cosmopolitan."<sup>9</sup>

The distinction between fundamentalists and cosmopolitans proposed by Giddens, based on the propensity for reason-giving, seems to be nothing more than a stereotype. A more convincing sociological account of how modern "fundamentalisms" are linked to globalization might have explored the manner in which modern fundamentalists differ from earlier traditionalists in the relation between their professed beliefs and their lived experiences. An important paradox today is that the increased will to difference seems to arise alongside diminished actual difference in the experience of everyday life.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> On this idea see also Ulrich Beck, *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity*, trans. Mark Ritter (London: Sage Publications, 1992).

<sup>8</sup> One need only think here of the ancient Christian, Muslim, and Buddhist traditions of providing intellectual justification of favored precepts to both believers and nonbelievers. This activity sometimes goes under the name of theology.

<sup>9</sup> One can think here of Locke's hostility to Catholics in *A Letter Concerning Toleration*. On the case of John Stuart Mill, see for example Uday Singh Mehta, *Liberalism and Empire: A Study in Nineteenth-Century British Liberal Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999).

<sup>10</sup> On this proposition see Roberto Mangabeira Unger, *Democracy Realized: The Progressive Alternative* (New York: Verso, 1998).

The vociferousness of identitarian claims may be a social and psychological response to the increased uniformity of “forms of life.” In particular, as beliefs become “thin” in the sense that they are no longer interwoven with diverse aspects of daily experience, they require maintenance through continual self-assertion.<sup>11</sup> The rise of a politics of identity may therefore be a consequence of the increased arbitrariness of the link between diverse beliefs and increasingly uniform experiences rather than of the strain upon unreasoned forms of justification in an increasingly reason-giving world.

Giddens’s view of the changing role of democracy is more plausible than his account of the origins of global identity politics. Here, he points to the fact that the rise of transnational social, economic, and ecological phenomena that “escape democratic processes” is a reason for a diminished appeal of democracy, whereas diminished “reserves of traditional deference,” the rise of the global information society, and the increased need for “flexibility and dynamism” in a global electronic economy are inconsistent with authoritarian government, which depends on the ability to control flows of information and to influence access to privileges through control of settled institutions. Giddens argues that these structural changes necessitate a “democratization of democracy.” He calls for a deepening and a broadening of democracy, which would enable collective decision-making in new (transnational) areas of concern and enrich the range and nature of popular political engagement in existing areas of democratic oversight. The analysis and prescription seem plausible, and more than vaguely attractive. How such a program is to be achieved politically under the existing conditions of “democratic deficit” to which Giddens himself points, is far less evident. Apart from a claim that the European Union reflects the embryonic form of future global governance, Giddens appears to have, in this area, little to offer.

Finally, Giddens’s view of the role of power relations (or rather of their lack) in making a globalized world may be questioned. He refers to globalization as “emerging in an anarchic, haphazard fashion, carried along by a mixture of influences”—it reflects a “runaway world” not driven by a collective human will.<sup>12</sup> This view seems to pay too little heed to the manner in which the current form of globalization has been influenced by the determined activities of dominant international actors to create it.<sup>13</sup> As mainstream observers such as Gilpin well understand, this cre-

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<sup>11</sup> Anthropological examples are plentiful. For an argument regarding the link between increased religious self-assertion in India and the increased “thinness” of religious experience, see Sudipta Kaviraj, “Religion, Politics and Modernity,” in *Crisis and Change in Contemporary India*, Upendra Baxi and Bikhu Parekh, eds. (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1995).

<sup>12</sup> Giddens, *Runaway World*, p. 37.

<sup>13</sup> Giddens goes so far in his neglect of the role of power in shaping the form of globalization that he writes of the ostensibly increasing prevalence of “reverse colonization,” in which “non-Western countries influence developments in the West” (*ibid.*, p. 34).

ation has taken enormous political work. Giddens shows a tendency to write of the globalization process as if it were exogenous, conflicting in spirit with his call for an exercise of collective human will to reshape it.

It may be argued that an appraisal (as contrasted with an understanding) of the phenomenon of globalization requires an engagement with fundamental philosophical questions as well as with facts of the social world. This may be true for a variety of reasons, among which are the manner in which globalization forces attention to the requirements of coexistence amidst cultural difference, and in which it creates new forms of authority and relationships that may require examination by normative political theory. The recent impressive contributions to the debate by John Gray and by Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri forcefully illustrate this point. Their books should be viewed as events of significance both for contemporary philosophy and for the broader understanding of the world in which we live. Both share a robust insistence on “crossing the chasm” between philosophical and worldly observation—although they could not be more different in style and in substance.

Gray, a professor of European thought at the London School of Economics and Political Science, published *False Dawn: The Delusions of Global Capitalism in the United Kingdom* in early 1998, just prior to the series of calamitous regional events in East and Southeast Asia, Russia, and Latin America that shook confidence in the stability of the world market system. The U.S. edition reviewed here comments on these events and summarizes his argument in an additional postscript. Two years later, Gray has supplemented this largely empirical work with a far-reaching philosophical treatise entitled *Two Faces of Liberalism*. Gray was previously known as a libertarian philosopher and was given credit by Margaret Thatcher for his influence on market-promoting conservatism. Once thought of as a Hayekian, Gray had abandoned this position entirely by the time he wrote *False Dawn*, which adeptly surveyed current arguments and evidence for the propensity of the global capitalist system to exacerbate social inequalities and economic instabilities. In that work, Gray’s denunciation of the emerging global market economy focused on pragmatic arguments. For example, he argued that social inequalities in the United States, reflected in such facts as the incarceration rate, undermine its claim to being a model for the world, and that the paths to development of countries such as Japan “falsify” the Enlightenment view that “countries modernize by replicating Western societies.”<sup>14</sup>

*Two Faces of Liberalism*, in which Gray defends a “value pluralist” moral perspective and criticizes the project of bringing about a global convergence of institutional forms, may be seen as a philosophical companion to *False Dawn*. The central claim of value pluralism is that the human good takes irreducibly diverse and often conflicting forms, and that

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<sup>14</sup> Gray, *False Dawn*, p. 170.

these various forms are reflected in the different lives that people lead as well as in the different pulls in people's lives. Gray submits that the existence of a myriad of forms of the good is a "fact of ethical life." He notes that under globalizing conditions of easy transport and communication, distinct values are increasingly brought into confrontation as an "inescapable social condition."<sup>15</sup> This raises in sharp form for nations and for individuals a dilemma of conviviality: How will we live together when we are so far apart?

Value pluralism is a sophisticated form of nonrelativism. It asserts that we must accept that there is an understandable and moreover legitimate diversity in the way in which the good is differently interpreted. This demand follows not from the conditional status of truth ("Truth is different on the other side of the Pyrenees") but rather from the universal truth of a conditional ("Truth is complexly plural here *and* there"). A particular view of the good comes to govern our ethical lives not because it is the only true view but because of the particularity of who we are. Value pluralism is not infinitely expansive but, rather, accommodates a reasonable diversity determined by facts of history, rationality, and human nature. The incommensurability of values and the imperfect capability of reason alone to guide us together generate the truth that the many ways to live a good life cannot be ranked. This insight carries over to the appraisal of the different forms of society and regimes in which people can live, and to judgments regarding their comparative legitimacy. Gray writes in this regard: "No regime can truly claim to embody the best settlement of conflicts among universal values. Disputes about which regime is everywhere best are without sense. The diversity of regimes is like the diversity of goods. It is not a mark of any lack in human life. It is a sign of the abundance of good lives that human beings can live."<sup>16</sup>

Gray attempts to show that liberal philosophies that attempt to construct accounts of the good society in the abstract or with universal application are insupportable in the light of value pluralism. Thus, while Gray shares with John Rawls a preoccupation with determining the form of shared institutions that can reconcile our plural conceptions of the good, he is, unlike Rawls, convinced that it is generally not possible to identify an "overlapping consensus" with which to underpin such institutions.<sup>17</sup> For example, Gray claims that Rawls's idea of the "priority of liberty" cannot be sustained because we cannot know exactly what types of liberty to prioritize without first resolving conflicts among incommensurable values.

Gray argues that throughout its history liberalism has contained "two faces": in the first, toleration has been justified as a means to the triumph of a single truth through

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<sup>15</sup> Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*, p. 34.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>17</sup> For the idea of an overlapping consensus see John Rawls, *Political Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993).



the progressive application of powers of persuasion; and in the second, toleration has been “valued as a condition of peace, and divergent ways of living are welcomed as marks of diversity in the good life.”<sup>18</sup> The first tradition, which Gray traces to the “canonical” account of Locke, tolerates diversity but looks forward to its ultimate demise. The second tradition, represented early on by Hobbes, views the task before society as creating an appropriate *modus vivendi* under which diverse conceptions of the good might coexist. Gray argues that history and introspection warn us against the belief that a shared conception of the human good will ever evolve. Accordingly, he asserts: “Liberalism’s future lies in turning its face away from the ideal of rational consensus and looking instead to *modus vivendi*.”<sup>19</sup> The institutions that will sustain a *modus vivendi* in a particular moment will depend on the actually existing pattern of human diversity.

In what ways does this approach complement Gray’s critique of emergent globalized capitalism, and how fruitfully does it do so? As already mentioned, Gray’s philosophical doctrine leads to condemnation of efforts to press for the creation of uniform ways of life and institutions throughout the world. The significance of diverse national institutions is that they may each emerge from a distinct *modus vivendi* as a result of the variant pattern of human diversity, across and within nations. To attempt to eradicate such diversity is to wage war against legitimate moral plurality. It is important to note that Gray’s hostility to globalization derives from its assumed tendency to impose uniformity, and that this leaves open the possibility that he would accept and even embrace a globalization that does not entail such imposition.

Gray offers reasons why we should seek conditions of coexistence with others whose values differ from ours—accepting that their lives and their institutions will be different from ours, possibly in ways that challenge our comprehension. However, he offers us little guidance as to *how* we should do so, whether in terms of the psychological orientation of the self, or in terms of the construction of shared institutions.

Take, for example, Gray’s discussion of the role of human rights in pursuing a *modus vivendi*: “We will come to think of human rights as convenient articles of peace, whereby individuals and communities with conflicting values and interests may consent to coexist.”<sup>20</sup> On this account, the particular content of the human rights that merit recognition is potentially shifting, although it is likely to have recurrent features due to shared elements of our nature, because we can only know what rights to protect according to the pattern of the specific and possibly changing interests that we have. This view seems, however, to generate a dilemma: How can an account of human rights as simply an article of peace be reconciled with the fact that we often strongly *desire* to uphold

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<sup>18</sup> Gray, *Two Faces of Liberalism*, p. 105.

<sup>19</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*

them, and that it must be so if they are to be realized? The ferociousness of conflicts over human rights today may stem in part, as Gray would have it, from a failure to recognize that the true role of such rights is to establish the conditions of a *modus vivendi*, and will thus require significant compromise. But a *modus vivendi* might simply result from a balance of force, encapsulating a bare minimum of agreed-upon rights, and yet maintaining substantial room for sharp disagreements deriving from differing conceptions of the good.<sup>21</sup> Under such conditions individuals could disagree strongly about the rights that people should have, even if they agreed on the rights that should be recognized in the interest of peace. Moreover, their struggle on behalf of their own values could lead to instability of the *modus vivendi*. This circumstance does not in fact seem to differ greatly from that which currently prevails.

Gray is unclear about what his vision of a *modus vivendi* requires of individual agents in this situation. He suggests that all that is required of individuals in order to sustain a *modus vivendi* is that they be sufficiently motivated by the benefits of peaceful coexistence. But he also suggests that liberals in particular should wholeheartedly embrace a value-pluralist morality in which “divergent ways of living are welcomed as marks of diversity in the good life.” This second view is far more demanding in that it conceives of a *modus vivendi* as requiring an active recognition of the value in others’ lives, whether or not we share the values by which they live.

What is the extent and nature of the space that lies between the recognition of the value in others’ lives and the desire to assert one’s own values? Here is where one can reasonably exercise one’s powers of persuasion—but how is the individual value-pluralist liberal to find and live within this space in the course of his life? What of a liberal society in its relations with others? The answers to these questions may influence the form of the *modus vivendi* for which we can best hope. Shared institutions that are upheld when the “marks of diversity in the good life” are welcomed are likely to differ from those that can arise merely from commitment to the requirements of peaceful coexistence. It is likely that they will also be much more difficult to achieve. Gray provides us with a view of how to address the confrontation of values that are mutually incommensurable. Still, without an existential doctrine and a moral psychology his account falls short of establishing a needed “ethics of interrelation” for a globalized age.

However, would an ethics of interrelation alone be enough to resolve the dilemmas of contemporary globalization? Contemporary globalization may be structurally distinct from the forms of economic, political, and social integration that have preceded it, requiring new conceptual tools both to understand and respond to it. Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri attempt to show how in *Empire*, a kaleidoscopic effort that transcends all

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<sup>21</sup> This is the sense in which the phrase is used by Rawls in *Political Liberalism*, sometimes prefaced by “mere.”

boundaries of discipline. Approaching the problem from the points of view of critical theory and radical history, philosophy and politics, they offer a magisterial account of the nature of contemporary globalization and what they argue to be its establishment of new forms of domination. This account will not satisfy some readers either intellectually or politically, but the effort that it embodies is breathtaking. In consideration of the limited theme of this review, I will address only a small aspect of Hardt and Negri's omnibus argument—the formal legal and institutional structure of contemporary globalization and the impact that it has on the forms of possible opposition.

Hardt, an assistant professor of literature at Duke University, and Negri, an intellectual leader of Italian “autonomist” movements and currently a prisoner in Rome, describe contemporary globalization's logic as involving the spread of juridical and political innovations most closely associated with the United States over the space of the globe. The extension of these innovations constitutes, they argue, the projection of a new kind of power—“network” power—that has no particular center and that is not defined by its possession by a particular group. Rather, it corresponds to the general requirements of the maintenance of order over the realm in which it operates, which is referred to as Empire. Hardt and Negri argue that the current global system increasingly functions on the model of classical empires, particularly that of Rome, in that it operates according to a diffuse structure and is characterized fundamentally by the subscription to a common set of institutional principles rather than by the everyday exercise of direct control.<sup>22</sup> However, in the interest of order, imperial power (which may correspond to the assertion of force of a particular dominant state such as the United States or more generally to supranational organizations and initiatives) may be called upon to intervene in specific cases, so as to maintain the rule-based regime of network power.<sup>23</sup>

Hardt and Negri suggest that the emerging world order is indebted to the institutional model and historical example of U.S. society in at least two ways. First, it reflects the principle of the absorption of new political and social jurisdictions into an “open space” that is in principle “unbounded,” in which “diverse and singular relations” are being “incessantly reinvented.”<sup>24</sup> Captured in this image is an idea of the polity as engaged in ongoing expansion into a frontier, as well as in the ongoing creation and management of internal social diversity. Contemporary globalization, argue Hardt and Negri, is characterized by an analogous expansion of the domain of common legal and

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<sup>22</sup> Hence they hold that “imperial expansion has nothing to do with imperialism”; rather, “against such imperialisms, Empire extends and consolidates the model of network power.” Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, pp. 166–67.

<sup>23</sup> Thus, Hardt and Negri describe the special role of the United States as deriving from its being “the only power able to manage international justice, *not as a function of its own national motives, but in the name of global right*” (*ibid.*, p. 180).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 182.

institutional structures across the globe. The process of expansion of the domain of Empire leads to the continual incorporation of new social groups. In addition, the restless pursuit of opportunities by capital inside this expanding domain leads to a continuous fracturing and recombination of social identities. In this way, the postmodern world of Empire is distinct from the modern world that preceded it, which was marked by relatively settled, if fictitious, identities within national boundaries.

Second, Hardt and Negri argue that contemporary globalization reflects the singular American constitutional innovation that there is no role for “the transcendence of power.” The U.S. doctrine of checks and balances, they point out, sought a republican variant of a Roman principle that balanced monarchic, aristocratic, and democratic power, assigning roles instead to the executive, judicial, and legislative branches. Under contemporary globalization, argue the authors, an analogous “mixed constitution” of the global order has gained a *de facto* force. This mixed constitution consists of the holders of a “monarchic unity of power and its global monopoly of force; aristocratic articulations through transnational corporations and nation-states; and democratic-representational *comitia*, presented again in the form of nation-states along with the various kinds of NGOs, media organizations, and other ‘popular’ organisms.”<sup>25</sup> This political framework—acting jointly with increasingly flexible and shifting global production and the continuous fracturing and recombining of social identities—forms an increasingly unified new regime of accumulation, in which capital seeks all opportunities within the always moving terrain of Empire. This postmodern regime of accumulation is to be contrasted with its modern predecessor, which relied on relatively settled institutional conditions within national boundaries.

The general description of contemporary globalization as operating according to a decentralized principle of the replication of common institutional forms seems more immediately fruitful than is the attempt to draw an analogy between the effective constitution of the globalized world and that of the United States. The greatest analytical strength of Hardt and Negri’s account of the world order appears to be its conception of the current process of globalization as a phenomenon of power, if of a decentered kind. Hardt and Negri conceive of Empire as constituted in part in a manner that is spontaneous and “self-organizing.” This account seems to correspond to the common intuition that the uniformity-producing element in contemporary globalization results from the assertion of a form of power, which corresponds to the increased difficulty of existing outside of Empire. At the same time, it avoids a reductive view of that power as emanating from a single or determinate source. However, this account also skirts the boundaries of an ill-defended functionalism, due to its failure to articulate fully what is the chain of causes underlying the system’s self-organization.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 314.

<sup>26</sup> This difficulty of course overshadows the entire Marxian tradition to which Hardt and Negri belong.

A related lack in Hardt and Negri's account may be seen by comparing it with *Runaway World*, which is characterized throughout by a lively sense of the systemic uncertainty that besets the contemporary global order, by reason of decentralized and incomplete human knowledge and control over both social institutions and nature. Although Hardt and Negri recognize the prevalence and unpredictability of crises to which the global order is vulnerable, they conceive of these primarily in terms of the unforeseeable "sequence of events" set in train by an "insurrectional event" in which acts of rebellion upset Empire's systemic logic.<sup>27</sup> Hardt and Negri imagine that there is a recurrent systemic tendency to return to a dominant pattern of power that operates according to specific principles. Although this may be largely true, there is a contrasting perspective in which the world is experienced as resolutely outside the control of all actors due to the lack of a discernible systemic logic. The second perspective seems to capture as important a part of contemporary experience as does the first.

While Hardt and Negri emphasize that contemporary globalization proceeds according to a logic of modular adoption of established institutional forms, there is a strong perception in influential quarters of an embryonic contest between powerful regional groupings of countries over the structure of the world economic system and the hierarchy of dominance that will prevail within it. From this point of view, the contest within the world system is not only over the flow of "flotsam and jetsam" atop an imperturbable skeletal structure but rather a real struggle over the terms in which the order will be constituted.<sup>28</sup> How are we to judge which of these pictures of the world we live in is the right one? In light of these controversies, can Hardt and Negri be sure that the workings of the system are indeed systematic?

Convinced of the coherent and overriding logic of contemporary globalization, Hardt and Negri argue that liberation from the processes of increasing economic, social, and psychological control represented by the extension of Empire can only be served by working through the processes of Empire itself.<sup>29</sup> In this regard, they exalt the migrant, the nomad, and the deserter, whose wanderings are both set in train by the flexible economy of Empire and act against its predictive, extractive, and regulatory powers. These figures reflect for Hardt and Negri the productivity and creativity of the "multitude," whose "perpetual motion" is both a consequence of Empire and a form of resistance to it. It seems that there is a degree of tension here within Hardt and Negri's own narrative. If, as they

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<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 60–61.

<sup>28</sup> For an excellent account of such struggle between major economic powers in the postwar period see Harold James, *International Monetary Cooperation since Bretton Woods* (Washington, D.C.: International Monetary Fund, 1996).

<sup>29</sup> "The multitude, in its will to be against and its desire for liberation, must push through Empire to come out the other side" (Hardt and Negri, *Empire*, p. 218).

suggest, Empire is the creation of a framework for “perpetual motion” (the restless global reassertion of systemic power under shifting conditions) then how can these isolated figures, however numerous, by their movement contest its logic?

It is arguable that, even within Hardt and Negri’s framework, the defense of place may be as necessary and as potent a political act as is its abandonment. The assertion of place in a decentered, shifting, uniformizing world may be an act that more effectively contests its logic than does movement. But if a place is to be made for the collective defense of place, then it is also necessary to find a way in which the possessors of the different, sometimes mutually incommensurable values associated with these places may find each other to be mutually intelligible and even commonly supportable. In contrast to Hardt and Negri’s hoped-for resistance by a “multitude in movement,” can there be a role for the collective assertion of a “multitude in place”? Here, the careful moral philosophizing of John Gray may have something to offer to the alternately despairing and exultant social theorizing of Hardt and Negri. A “multitude in place” requires an ethics of interrelation, by which each particular and well-grounded subject may find a basis of commonality with others. The discovery of a sense of commonality amidst incommensurability seems a requisite for the assertion of any new form of collective self-assertion that may act as a countervailing force in contemporary globalization. However, how such a discovery might occur remains an open and difficult question, given the contradictory movement of the creation of common forms of experience the world over and the ever-widening horizon of incommensurability experienced by ordinary people thrust into contact with new values and new forms of life.

The variety of recent contributions to the debate on globalization surveyed here illustrates the range of considerations that must enter into any adequate account of the opportunities and challenges posed by the current phase of world society. An adequate account must recognize what may be valuable in the process of globalization, but it must not do so blindly. It must recognize what is new in our situation that merits the name globalization, while not assimilating everything that is new to it. It must offer an account of the moral and existential challenges that are present in the broadened encounter with diversity and examine the requirements of an ethics of interrelation, even as it recognizes that diversity in actual forms of life may be becoming increasingly rare. It must recognize that power is greatly present in the shape of the emergent globalized world, but it must not assume that this power is all-determining. Our understanding and our appraisal of globalization will arise out of these contrasting demands of both action and insight.