

Master's Thesis

**‘The Nervature of Past Life’: Spatiotemporal
Constructions of Post-National Politics in the
Struggle for European Legitimacy**

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‘The Nervature of Past Life’: Moral Discourse and the Second World War in the Struggle for EU Legitimacy

Abstract

In this thesis paper, I argue that much of the struggle for European legitimacy is conducted through discursive attempts to construct a concept of European cultural and political identity in opposition to a divisive and violent past that culminated in the events of World War II. These struggles for legitimacy have resulted in the development of a specific type of moral discourse which defines Europe’s internal and external identity and guarantees its legitimacy as both a democratic institution and a geopolitical actor. However, this moral discourse also creates an anti-democratic environment in which references to the past are used to silence dissent and obscure marginalized political subjects, ultimately challenging the processes of internal and geopolitical legitimation.

My methodology is primarily based on the discursive approach to EU studies. In particular, I draw from previous discourse analyses conducted by Thomas Diez, Petr Drulák, and others, as well as my own discourse analyses of European treaties and charters and public statements by European Union and member state officials. In addition, I draw heavily on Jacques Rancière’s theories of the relationship between the political and the aesthetic, particularly his theory of politics as a redistribution of a common experience of the sensory world. I use these concepts to place the study of the EU within a wider context, allowing for the consideration of the social and cultural aspects of European integration through literary treatments of European history, values, and political identity. This interdisciplinary approach permits the integration of the disciplines of international relations and EU studies with that of literary studies and

contemporary aesthetic philosophy and grants insight into the relationship between the EU as a political institution and the experience of the political subject.

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FIGURE 1: ALTDORFER, ALBRECHT. 1537. LOT AND HIS DAUGHTER. KUNSTHISTORICHES MUSEUM,
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Introduction

Much of the European Union's legitimacy is predicated on its ability to act as a post-national political body, an "unidentified political object" which somehow marks a departure from the current geopolitical order, allowing scholars and political actors to envisage alternatives to methods of coordination of international relations based on the balance of power between nation-states. Thus, the first step in evaluating the legitimacy of the European Union is establishing whether or not it fills this goal. This is far more difficult than determining the legitimacy of a liberal democratic nation-state; the aims and goals and tendencies of this national order have been more or less established for centuries and readily coincide with popular conceptions of what makes a state right or wrong, failed or functioning, just or unjust. A post-national political entity, on the other hand, must correspond to a new global order which has as yet escaped categorization or definition. It is an order that thrives on flux rather than stability, difference rather than homogeneity, dissent rather than consensus. It is diffuse, local, and fragmented. The sort of centralized mechanisms of coordination one finds in the nation-state are no longer either present or possible in a multi-vocal, multicultural global environment.

It is in this complicated, shifting political environment that the European Union must define itself. It must be something that both is a state and isn't, both a functioning political body and something more, both a means of reconciling with an old national order and a means of creating an entirely new type of order, beyond the nation-state. In order to satisfy such formidable demands, the European Union must first determine what it means to be a post-national political body. What would such a political body look like? Would it have a territory? A "people?" Boundaries? An identity? Would it retain some features of the nation-state or abandon them altogether? Would it follow the laws of politics or of the market? Who would the principal actors be: the nation-state, the

Union, or the people themselves? And, finally, is it possible to have such a system that does not, in both form and ideology, resemble an empire?

What *is* clear is that the answers to these questions will somehow have to appeal to a multiplicitous and disparate group of political entities, commercial bodies, interest groups, and political subjects, none of whom seem too inclined to agree with each other. The task of scholars, then, is to find some sort of middle ground, something that all of these parties hold in common, a basic common denominator on which to build a vision of the European Union that would somehow be amenable to all. In doing so, they must be willing to abandon all assumptions of homogeneity, consensus, and agreement. In short, they cannot imagine that they can study the European Union as they would study the nation-state, in terms of identity or concrete political actors, or legal and administrative institutions. They must imagine a new way of studying political arrangements – not as something which is confined to the nation, but as something which is as flexible, variable, and diverse as the global environment itself.

One possible way of doing so is to abandon the constraints of politics as a discipline altogether, and to integrate tools found in other disciplines into our methodology. Many theorists have suggested using aesthetics as a means of understanding the global environment. (Lash and Urry 1994; Chen, Hwang, and Ling 2009) Although as various and conflicted a field as politics itself, it offers a means of understanding human experience in terms of sensory perception and the orientation of the subject in non- demarcated real time and space.

There are certain preliminary considerations in undertaking such an approach: firstly, in the West, aesthetics, like politics, has long been burdened by considerations of ethics and representation; secondly, we must find an instrument that will help us to integrate the study of aesthetics and politics in such a way that neither discipline is consumed by

the other. Otherwise, we would end up conducting a political study of aesthetics or an aesthetic study of politics, but a study of both as two integrated ways of experiencing the world.

To do so, we shall use Jacques Rancière's concept of *le partage du sensible*, or the shared experience of images, sounds, and shapes that compose the common arena. *Le partage du sensible* is based upon an understanding of both politics and aesthetics in terms of collective sensory experience. It does not see either discipline as a way of interpreting the other, nor does it demand an understanding of politics or aesthetics as signifiers or interpretations of a separate reality. Rather, politics and aesthetics are realities registered in terms of experience and the distinctions between "politics" and "aesthetics" are simply words that we use to categorize experience. Neither ethics nor representation are primary concerns in understanding politics; instead, through *le partage du sensible*, we can consider political realities in terms of the contextual relationships between a variety of phenomena and their interaction with one another.

We are then left with the task of finding an instrument that will help us understand these contextual relationships without resorting to generalized representations or ethical consideration. This can be accomplished by engaging in a sort of reconstruction or simulation of the experience of politics and aesthetics. To this end, we shall borrow Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope; Bakhtin's chronotopes stand for the specific interactions between space and time that allow for the development of narrative elements within a work of fiction. Since sensory experience also takes place within a spatiotemporal, or chronotopic, context, we can use the chronotope to recreate the setting of political experience. By looking at shared attitudes towards time and space in terms of common sensory experience, we can then see the contexts in which political experiences develop.

From this point, we can consider how political institutions become lived conditions, situated in a certain time and space. We can reconstruct those conditions using the chronotope in order to explore the interactions between different types of experience and knowledge within a common arena. In order to engage in this process of reconstruction, this paper will employ visual and discourse analysis of images, literary texts, political speeches, and official EU documents, as well as the works of prominent theorists.

In the first section of the paper, entitled “Politics in a Global Era,” we discuss the problems that national bias presents to the study of the European Union. I argue that many analyses of the EU as a post-national entity are derived from political understandings that are entrenched in a national perspective: in particular, the consensus or similarity of the polity and the ethical righteousness of the political order. Both consensus and ethics serve to exclude sections of the population, creating a virtual state order that is incompatible with the political experiences of its polity. Such approaches are inappropriate for the study of the EU because they conflict with the realities of a post-national political order and inhibit the creation of an inclusive, multicultural, diverse European Union.

In the second section of the paper, entitled “Politics and Aesthetics,” we consider the possibilities aesthetics offers to the study of politics as a means of taking into account the role of the political experience of the subject. We argue that previous attempts to examine the relationship between politics and aesthetics fail because, like national politics, they see the political value of aesthetics in terms of its ability to represent reality or to express ethical commitment. Instead, we argue for an approach to politics and aesthetics based upon a concept of sensory experience as the primary condition of the political. We use Rancière’s concept of *le partage du sensible* to explore the way in which aesthetics and politics coincide in the sensory experience of a common

spatiotemporal context.

In the third section of the paper, entitled “The Chronotope,” We offer a means of understanding the forms of political experience in terms of Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of the chronotope. We suggest using the chronotope in order to draw connections between various spatial and temporal markers that arise within *le partage du sensible* in the form of historical and geospatial references. I argue that through the chronotope we can find a way of bridging analysis of both individual and shared political experiences in such a way that we are capable of reconstructing the entanglement of individual and collective experience. Through this process of reconstruction, we can explore the nature of political experience without the necessity of establishing a singular view of the nature of this experience, allowing us to consider the multiplicities of experiences that arise from political conditions and the relationships that arise between them.

In the fourth section of the paper, entitled “The Chronotope of the Nation State,” I look at the way in which the nation-state is constructed in a spatiotemporal context. I argue that the nation-state is based on a concept of time as continuous, sequential, and progressive and a concept of space as planar and demarcated. Together, these concepts of time and space form a chronotope in which space, time, and the political subject are increasingly unified and homogenized into frameworks of consensus and ethics. This leads to processes of exclusion by which the chronotope of the political body is increasingly distanced from the chronotope of political experience, creating an ever-widening gap between the political subject and the state. Thus, political subjects who do not correspond to the state’s representation of political experience are rendered invisible and silenced. I then look at this process as it arises in discursive constructions of space and time following the re-unification of the German state as well as the international implications of such processes, as evidenced in reactions to German suffering and victimhood following World War II.

In the fifth section of the paper, entitled “The Chronotope of the European Union,” I look at those temporal and spatial markers that arise in discussions about the identity and legitimacy of the EU. I argue that there is a tendency to reproduce the chronotopic patterns found in the nation-state, leading to a perpetuation of the same processes of silencing and exclusion. At the same time, the EU’s moral and exemplary role as a “post-national” political body hides the manner in which it replicates national processes, doubly obscuring the extent to which it suppresses divergent forms of political experience. To further illustrate this point, I look at the spatiotemporal construction of the East/West divide in the European Union as it surfaces in discussions of European enlargement and the perceived nationalism and Euroscepticism in the former Eastern bloc.

In conclusion, I summarize my previous arguments and argue that in order to be a truly post-national political entity, the EU must make efforts to accommodate patterns of division and differentiation that define the global era. To that end, it must make room for varieties of political experience that do not correspond to frameworks based upon consensus or ethical right.

Chapter 1 : Developing a Post-National EU Politics

Introduction

In the following chapter, we shall consider the challenges that the new global environment presents to the fields of political and social analysis, particularly in terms of the EU. We argue that a national bias persists in the study of politics that prevents politics from corresponding to the political realities of a post-national era. We examine the way in which this national bias surfaces in two common methodological and political assumptions: representation based upon consensus of opinion and the conflation of relative ethical values and universal, rational truths. As an illustration of these forms of bias, we look at the way in which they arise in theories of deliberation and Cosmopolitanism in European Union studies. We conclude that if the study of post-national politics in general and the European Union in particular hopes to remain relevant, it must move beyond the national bias by finding a way of circumventing the methodological and theoretical pitfalls of assumptions made on the basis of consensus and ethics. In order to do this, we suggest incorporating art and aesthetic theory into methodologies of political studies as a means of developing a concept of politics as a form of sensory experience.

Politics in a Global Era: Representation, Ethics, and Legitimacy in a Diverse Political Environment

In its earliest forms, the discipline of international relations developed as a means of transferring the values of the liberal democratic state beyond national and territorial

boundaries. Founded on a liberal belief that a respect for rational organization and fundamental human rights were the means of securing peace between constantly warring parties, it aimed to achieve global stability through the implementation of legal structures, collective security measures, and the promotion of liberal values like equality, freedom, and justice. (Rosamond 2000) However, the geopolitical landscape is changing; neither nations nor boundaries carry the same significance that they once did.

As the nation-state falls increasingly under attack, so does the discipline of international relations. The former focus on conflicts between states is now transferred to conflicts between fragmented ethnic, religious, or ideological groups, whose disorganized, non-centralized structures render them hard to study and even harder to control through staple liberal mechanisms like international law, trade sanctions, or pleas to human decency. (Gärtner 1997) The promotion of liberal ethical values is threatened by “globalised systems that are not concerned with the collective well-being of the world’s population.” (Brunkorst 2000: 60) The nation-state is losing its grasp on its role as guardian of international peace, and, consequently, losing its position of primary importance in the geopolitical arena. “Nation-states are no longer sovereign masters of the contracts they themselves have signed.” (Brunkhorst 2000)

Although it is not yet clear what form political institutions in this new global environment will take, it is becoming evident that there are new players on the international scene of which Western scholars of international relations and political studies will have to take account in order to remain relevant. Among these new players are not only various political organizations and interest groups, but also de-nationalized, de-territorialized, and essentially

de-organized individuals; the global environment is witnessing the rise of a multiplicity of new political subjectivities with new capacities for organization, reorganization, and fragmentation. (Sassen 2006)

The political and social sciences are as yet unequipped to negotiate through this new global environment. A national bias persists in most of the social sciences that fundamentally impedes their ability to encompass political subjects and organizations that operate within a de-nationalized and de-territorialized environment. There remains an underlying “nationalist assumption that the state is an institutional expression of a ‘society’ (that is, a nation) and that humankind is (or should be) divided into a plurality of nation-states.“ (Barša 2000: 6) This long-standing tendency to link the concept of society with the nation-state has resulted in a sort of “methodological nationalism” founded upon the basic “assumption that the nation-state is the natural and necessary form of society in modernity.” (Chernilo 2006: 6)

These forms of national bias create both methodologies and theories which are inappropriate to a world that is no longer organized around the basic unit of the nation state. The greatest obstacle comes in their tendency to envision both the nation and society as closed units, meaning that they operate on “the explicit or implicit assumption of the nation-state as container and as representing a unified spatio-temporal unit.” (Sassen 2006: 397) This assumption of closure renders a nation-state based model of political analysis inappropriate to the study of post-national political environments in which fragmentation, difference, and plurality resist the development of closed, homogenous societies.

Even in those forms of analysis that seek to accommodate a post-national political

landscape, there is a persistent assumption that rationality, truth, and order will arise most naturally from a homogenous, unified social or political sphere. The national bias present in so much of political theory is grounded in the belief, derived from the nation-state model, that the state is legitimized through consensus and a rational ethical justification. In the social sciences, this has been developed into the assumption of the existence of relatively homogenous societies and a theoretical emphasis on the role of normativity in behavior. In many contemporary political analyses – even those which explicitly attempt to circumvent the exclusionary biases of the nation-state – the biases of the state and the social sciences become fused, and there develops an understanding of the political that results in the exclusion of those parties who do not conform to previously established structures of homogeneity.

These excluded parties fall into the category of those whom Jacques Rancière calls “the radical other,” or those members of society who so threaten the normativity of the group that they are excluded from even the most “democratic” processes of inclusion. In the contemporary political climate, we are seeing the rise of the radical other in the form of terrorists and terrorist organizations, members of the extreme right, and religious fundamentalists of all faiths. Yet, there are also, more benign radical others, who, because of an unfair affiliation with those groups, are also excluded from the processes of inclusion and denied a global political voice.

If political theorists hope to accommodate the diversity of global political actors, they will not only have to let go of the persistent forms of national bias that endure within their methodologies and theoretical approaches, but they will also have to make room for the consideration of the radical other. To do so, they will have to overcome what Chen, Hwang, and Ling (2009) call the “singular logic” that has so bound the study of politics to the liberal democratic nation-state. They must learn to accommodate a global environment in which there are not multiple logics, but

many; not universal values, but particular beliefs; not only Western cultural logics, but Asian, African, Middle Eastern, and Latin American as well. (Chen, Hwang, Ling 2009: 744) On top of that, it must also find a way of considering the wide-scale, global significance of values, individuals, and organizations that are non-territorial, non-centralized, and non-national.

It is in this context that the European Union has stepped into the international arena. It posits itself as a post-national political entity that is capable of pursuing the liberal values espoused by the nation-state in a multi-national, multi-cultural setting. In the creation of a European political entity, it has attempted to overcome traditional geographical, cultural, and historical divisions between north and south, East and West, by binding states through economic, political, and ethical values. This has required a new way of envisioning the political entity and the nature of the relationship between states. This has also required EU studies to depart from the traditional nation-state model and to attempt to find new ways of understanding Europe that are not exclusively bound to territory, nation, and ethnicity. (Linklater 1998, Fossum 2001)

The greatest hindrance to this project, however, lies in the fact that the EU's entire vision – the triumph over international conflict, the extension of right and values, the promotion of democracy – are grounded in the same liberal democratic beliefs that gave rise to the nation-state, thereby resulting in the development of new forms of post-national politics which remain intrinsically bound to the concept of the nation-state and of national sovereignty. (Merlingen 2007) These post-national European visions continue to cling to the national biases of consensus and ethical rationality, which does less to reinvent the political organization than to simply revise its previous forms.

Consensus, Deliberation, and the Persistence of National Bias

The social sciences and the organizational structure of the nation-state share a belief that social and political realities are best understood through representation by the majority group. This surfaces in the assumption of a unified and homogenous social body, the representation of the whole by the majority, and a preference for the rational over the intuitive, the structured over the fluid, the same over the different.

Jacques Rancière argues that the historical development of both social science and the nation-state was part of a larger process of centralization and homogenization which sought to replace the cohesive power of the feudal monarchy and the Church with “a new form of aggregation of society and new forms of collective thinking.” The result, he argues, was the creation of “new forms of anomie and of heresy, [and] a form of modern thinking about emancipation, about being different from oneself, had to be pushed aside.” (Rancière in Dasgupta 2008: 72)

Both the nation-state and the social sciences strove to develop collectivities that provided a means of unifying disparate individuals into populations, societies, and political bodies; in order to do so, however, they needed a new way of representing the collective. This arose in the form of consensus as a practice of counting that serves to build, encourage, and enforce the liberal democratic principles of unity and agreement. In its most basic form, “consensus is the reduction of these different ways of being the people into a single one, one that is identical with the counting of the population and of its parts.” (Rancière 2006: 6) As a political phenomenon, this is most evident in the symbolic and institutional arrangement of the nation-state through which the state is legitimized by the agreement of the whole. The nation-state is understood as the political projection of different forms of cultural, ethnic, and ideological unity, legitimized and ratified through processes of voting, deliberation, and consensus.

Thus, the final count, in the form of statistics, averages, or votes, becomes representative of the population as a whole, and political decisions and scientific conclusions are then developed on the basis of this unity.

The concepts of consensus, representation, objectivity, and positive truth are as integral to the social sciences as they are to the nation-state; it is these similarities that render statistical reports, classifications, typologies, national identities, and actor interests such convenient foundations for cross-over analysis and rhetorical argument. The most obvious challenge to this system, however, arises in the difference between the representation and that which it seeks to represent. Consensus relies on projecting cohesive unities on groups of people that are not inherently cohesive; in substituting the part for the whole, it ignores those elements which do not correspond to the representation by the part, or the average, and threaten to expose the consensus as being no more than symbol or representation. Consensus is not, therefore, a concept that translates well to the study of a post-national order.

Its primary failure lies in an inevitably tendency towards one of two outcomes: either the substitution of the part for the whole, as exemplified through consensus-based analysis; or, what Jacques Rancière refers to as the “[reduction] of right to fact” (Rancière 2006), the belief that a political order must somehow coincide with an ethical order supported by reason and natural right. Yet, in a global system based on difference and diffusion, the part can never adequately represent the whole and the “right” of one group will never coincide with the “fact” of the whole. To assume otherwise is not only to willfully ignore the variability and the multiplicity of political realities, but also to return to an implicitly colonial and totalitarian way of understanding global politics.

It is perhaps easy to see how theories of national consensus can easily serve to

suppress difference. It is less immediately evident, however, to see how those same theories of consensus suppress difference in post-national political theory. In the realm of the social sciences, methodologies and epistemologies based on consensus are not only confined to the study of the nation-state or contained populations. They are also present in those approaches to global politics that focus on the development of an international order based on deliberation, global institution-building, and normative power – even when those theoretical frameworks explicitly aim to overcome exclusion and the suppression of difference. A national bias based on the primacy of consensus persists in treatments of inclusion, deliberation, and participation in post-national politics.

In a liberal democratic political system, consensus plays an important role in ensuring state legitimacy; the state is upheld by the assumption that it represents and defends the rights of all citizens equally, in accordance with the general needs, wants, desires, and beliefs of the community it represents. The process of arriving at a fair consensus depends upon equal participation by the citizens, which in turn depends on the development of a healthy public sphere, a “social room” which “entitles, in principle, everybody to speak without any limitation on themes, participation, questions, time or resources.” (Eriksen 2005: 342)

The public sphere provides the arena for the processes of deliberation, through which a populace or their elected representatives engage in open discussion, ideally in order to arrive at an agreement which is suitable to all. Eriksen (2005) identifies two values, or advantages, to the deliberative process. The first is the epistemic value of deliberation, which promotes rational problem solving, distributes information, and produces outcomes “where the quality of the reasons makes for acceptability.” (Eriksen 2005: 342) The second is the moral value of deliberation, which increases participation, ensures and protects the rights of citizenship, and legitimates and

justifies the laws of the state. Both ways are ultimately tied to what Eriksen refers to as the belief that “laws should be justified by the ones bound to them” (Eriksen 2005: 342); this understanding corresponds to the demand for representation in the liberal democracy, the idea that the law is somehow the accurate reflection of the unified will of the citizenry, or consensus.

The agreements reached through the process of deliberation, however, are not necessarily intended to create a true consensus, but to arrive at a compromise which fits into a certain normative framework in such a way that it is acceptable to all. (Neyer 2003) They do not therefore relate to the “people” in any positive sense, as consensus was intended to do in its idealized 18th century form, but to normative belief structures that enforce conformity. These norms are primarily oriented towards inclusion, openness, and non-hierarchical organization, as those values which are most likely to promote participation and rational decision-making. The inclusiveness of these norms is not based solely on an ethical impulse towards fairness, but a belief that inclusion is itself the most efficient mechanism of governance in a plural environment; thus, “non-hierarchical governance must emphasize legalism, publicity and participation (and de-emphasize majoritarianism, elitism and closed-door diplomacy) if it is to perform efficiently, effectively and lead to high quality of output.” (Neyer 2003: 702)

Ideally, these normative frameworks are developed through the equal participation of all concerned parties within the context of an open, “authentic” dialogue. The ultimate aim is not homogeneity, but “the normative commitment to modes of cosmopolitan democracy which seek to extend the boundaries of political community by institutionalizing universal moral principles which embody respect for difference.” (Linklater 1998: 122) Thus, it is seen as appropriate for any sort of institutional framework, as long as that framework is not exclusive.

Theorists argue that this normativity works to achieve consensus in a variety of ways. One is by encouraging “good behavior” among those engaged in the deliberative process—namely, politicians – by forcing political actors to behave as though they agreed with the dominant norms of society in order to maintain their status, role, or position. In this way, the self-interest of the political subject becomes dependent upon their ability to act *as if* they had the interest of the community in mind, even when they are insincere. (Neyer 2003) This is what Elster refers to as “the civilising force of hypocrisy,” by which politicians are forced to obey deliberative norms based upon inclusion, tolerance, and openness. (Lord and Magnette 2005) One of the consequences of “the civilising force of hypocrisy” is that actors must learn “to be persuasive by reasoning ‘publicly’ rather than ‘self-referentially.’” According to Lord and Magnette, “this prevents actors from presenting their favoured positions as personal preferences, and requires them, instead, to justify them as proposals from which the overwhelming majority of the political association can benefit.” (Lord and Magnette 2004: 194-195)

The problem with these structures of deliberative normativity is that they appear to reinforce processes of exclusion and silencing rather than combat them. In the name of promoting free and open participation by diverse parties, deliberative norms suppress the expression of divergent views by discouraging behaviors and opinions that diverge from what is normatively understood to be the public interest. In addition, they encourage political actors and subjects to substitute personal opinions for the opinions of the whole, thereby promoting a system in which, in order to be heard, each participant in the debate must attempt to stifle conflicting opinions by pushing them outside of the sphere of public interest, rendering them subjective and therefore private and self-interested.

In this sense, the norms of inclusiveness, openness, and tolerance serve to suppress the open expression of belief and opinion, so that the principles of inclusiveness and tolerance are only applicable to those forms of expression that already conform to the social and political values established prior to the deliberative process. Thus, the outcome of any deliberation will necessarily correspond to a set of predetermined acceptable outcomes, impeding the realization of the moral and epistemic value of the deliberative process, as described by Eriksen (2005). As a result, only those members of the debate who conform to pre-established normative values are granted the moral rights of equal participation and expression. In addition, the epistemic value of the outcome of the deliberation will be neither rational nor judged in terms of “quality,” but normative and judged on an ethical basis.

Following Foucault, Merlingen argues that rather than increasing the epistemic potential of participation in the public sphere, norms impose a certain epistemic violence upon participants, silencing articulations of difference, divergence, and opposition. He writes:

Norms cannot be thought about as unproblematic frontiers drawn around and safeguarding an essentialized human agency. Nor can they be understood as emerging from an innate capacity of individuals engaged in free and open debate to transcend their ethical self-understandings and to arrive at a consensus on a cosmopolitan morality. Norms are contingent and ambiguous. Even while they clear moral spaces in which new subjectivities and modes of conduct can flourish, they contain and entail arbitrary constraints – a form of epistemic violence – that limit the expression of difference. Epistemic violence refers here to the hierarchies of knowing and moral sentiments that are produced and maintained by normativizing

discourses. (Merlingen 2007: 441)

As the result of this epistemic violence, the final outcome of any deliberation based upon normativity will not correspond to an idealized rationality of consensus or social or political unity, but to a process of silencing and exclusion.

Rancière argues that the parties excluded from the consensus-building process fall into two categories: “the excluded,” or the marginalized subject “who accidentally falls outside the great equality of all” and whose rights have not yet been recognized; and “the radical other,” who “threatens the community in all of us.” (Rancière 2006: 6-7) It is not “the excluded” who poses the greatest problem to the rational deliberative process; the process was designed ideally to act as a means of granting ethically and normatively sanctioned rights of participation to all parties, especially the marginalized. The greatest threat comes in the form of “the radical other,” or those political subjects who so violate the norms of deliberation that they must be silenced at all costs. *They*, although purportedly no less equal than any other member of society, are necessarily excluded from the debate, because to include them would threaten the very processes of inclusion themselves.

This type of inclusion, therefore, is not necessarily a process of including all members of society or granting any substantial equality, but of generating a sort of consensus which represents the equality that *would exist* if society were truly homogenous. This homogeneity is not total; it does respect difference, but only *certain types of difference*. From such a viewpoint, there must be a least common denominator of sameness in order for the system to work – not one based upon those old “national” forms of exclusion, such as ethnicity, race, class, or gender, but upon a universal rationality derived from principles that purport to transcend such arbitrary distinctions. (see

Fossum 2001) The problem with establishing that least common denominator of rationality is that the outcome is often less an expression of true rationality than of a Western, liberal democratic system of ethical values which are fundamentally no less exclusive than those based on ethnicity or nationality.

Ethics, Cosmopolitanism, and the Persistence of National Bias

Consensus and rationality promote an understanding of sameness, as well as a biased assumption that what is right – both as in true and as in good – is based on representations of a contained homogeneity. This conflation between what is agreed upon and what is right quickly engenders an ethical bias by which subjective determinations of what is right and wrong are transformed into collective truths about what is right or wrong. This process leads to the creation of what Rancière refers to as an “ethical community.” He writes:

Since it strives to reduce the people to the population, consensus strives in fact to reduce right to fact. Its incessant work is to fill in all these intervals between right and fact through which the right and the people divide themselves. The political community thus tends to be transformed into an *ethical* community, the community of only one single people in which everyone is supposed to be counted. (Rancière 2006: 6)

Once consensus, either through positive research or deliberation, is determined to be the expression of the rational will of the people, it becomes a fact, a truth. As such,

any representation or articulation of difference is rejected as either irrational or immoral (Laclau 1996) and constitutively dismissed from the ethical community.

To explore the relationship between rational consensus and ethics, we will look closer at cosmopolitan approaches to understanding the post-national order. Cosmopolitanism has been offered as a means of establishing an inclusive, multicultural order on a post-national level by extending the liberal democratic values of equality, consensus, and legal order from the national to the global sphere. There are many different approaches to cosmopolitanism, not all of which promote a consensus-based or ethical approach (Delanty 2006); it is therefore important to specify which type of cosmopolitanism we shall explore. The following analysis will concentrate primarily upon those brands of cosmopolitanism which take an explicitly ethical or moral approach, in particular those influenced by the work of Jürgen Habermas, Andrew Linklater, and Erik Eriksen.

On a whole, cosmopolitanism seeks to develop a post-national, global politics in which the political subject is partially or completely de-territorialized, meaning that his or her political subjecthood is no longer granted on the basis of national citizenship, but on the basis of a larger, more general sense of political belonging and community. It supplants what is seen as the “unifying and divisive” bond of the nation-state and replaces it with “new forms of political community attuned to the principles of cosmopolitan democracy and transnational citizenship.” (Linklater 1998: 117)

In certain variants of cosmopolitanism, which Delanty has termed moral cosmopolitanism, this is translated into a set of certain ethical values, by which, for example, national rights, such as those of citizenship, are transformed into global, human rights. (Delanty 2006) Although it is acknowledged that an ethical, rights-based concept can lead to a sort of moral imperialism, it is assumed that those dangers

can be overcome by the codification of rights into legal structures, which provide strictures rational and just political behavior where individual humans or nation-states may fail. (Eriksen 2006: 253)

Habermas, for example, advocates the development of a world organization founded on universal liberal democratic principles. Such an organization would not replace the nation-state entirely, but instead establish a global institutional order in which “alongside the individuals, states remain subjects of an international law, thus turned into a cosmopolitan human rights regime which is able to protect citizens if necessary against their own government.” (Habermas 2007: 335) Protection against the nation-state is necessary due to its organizational fallibility resulting from the dependence of the rights of its citizenry on the quality and legitimacy of its political processes, rather than universal rationalities. (Eriksen 2006) A legal order derived from fundamental ethical principles is the dominant form of coordination in the world organization; legal innovations serve to change state’s “self-understanding” by implementing laws that teach them the benefits of cooperation, leading them to “internalize” “the spirit of legal propositions.” (Habermas 2007: 334-335)

This brand of cosmopolitanism has had a significant effect on the development of a vision from the global and international role of the EU. Many perceive the EU’s legitimacy as based on its ability to promote and secure certain ethical values on a global scale and within its own borders. Indeed, Habermas envisages “a federal European state as a point of departure for the development of a transnational network of regimes that together could pursue a world domestic policy, even in the absence of a world government.” (Habermas 2003: 96) He argues that the cohesive power of a legal union built on a common democratic political culture, such as that developed in the nation-state during the 19th century, would allow for the development of a more

politically integrated European polity,

Here we can see how moral cosmopolitanism applies the principles of normativity that arose in our earlier discussion of consensus on a post-national scale. It seeks to provide the basis for the foundation of a “delimited normative order” (Eriksen 2006), in which states, rather than individual political actors, are the primary agents and must learn to adapt to a rational, universal moral order that transcends and replaces particularized, differentiated ethical or political values. Contrary to its intent, this provides several opportunities for exclusion; we will discuss two. Firstly, although this cosmopolitan normative order intends to use legal measures to protect from the domination of the nation-state, it only does so in so far as the nation-state is a “rule breaker” on an institutional level; it does nothing to protect political subjects from the inevitable exclusion of parties that arise from the focus on consensus and ethics within the state. Indeed, it reinforces those processes of exclusion through deliberative processes and institutional formations in which the values of the state are assumed to represent those of its citizenry. Secondly, this system is explicitly connected to an 18th century Western, European value system which does not necessarily admit the participation of other types of value systems. Although it is based upon the principles of inclusion and participation, it cannot tolerate the input of those states which challenge this value system: the ‘radical others’ that adhere to different understandings of politics. Although cosmopolitanism is seen as an alternative to the nation state, it is rather an expansion of the nation-state, by which the world begins to follow national logics as encompassed in the concepts of ethics and consensus.

Here, we can return to Rancière’s distinction between political and ethical communities.

For him, true politics is the “division of violence, morality, and right.” A truly political community, then, is not one that is based upon consensus or the development of a unified will or a “people,” but of the expression and articulation of difference. He writes: “A *political* community is indeed a community that is structurally divided, not divided between diverging interest groups and opinions, but divided in relation to itself. A political ‘people’ is never the same thing as the sum of a population.” (Rancière 2006: 6) That does not mean, however, that a political community is defined by the separation of political actors which compete to establish political dominance, as in the popular conception of the liberal democratic nation-state, but that it is rather a community in which division is the primary condition of politicality and difference the basic expression of what Rancière would refer to as emancipation.

If it is only in a political community that true inclusion of difference can occur, then we would expect that a truly inclusive post-national political order would look more like Rancière’s political community than Habermas’ ethical community. This is not to say that exclusion does not occur in the political community, but, as Rancière argues, in the political community, the ‘excluded’ plays a different role than he or she does in the ethical community:

In the political community, the excluded is a conflictual actor who includes him or herself as a supplementary political subject, carrying a right not yet recognised or witnessing the injustice of the existing right. In the ethical community, this supplement is no longer supposed to take place since everyone is included. The excluded, therefore, has no status in the structuration of the community. (Rancière 2006: 6-7)

Thus, in an ethical community which, like that of moral cosmopolitanism or

deliberative normativity, the assumption that the processes of inclusion are universal entirely rules out the possibility of exclusion, meaning that those parties which are inevitably excluded are completely ignored. They are not marginalized from the community, but completely and totally erased.

This is the same tension that arose in our earlier discussion of deliberation: when inclusion is not only a matter of principle, but the very core of the identity of the discursive arena, then a failure to follow the rules of the discursive community does not only result in exile or punishment, but complete obscurity. The excluded subject is not placed in opposition to the discursive community; it loses its right to articulation and therefore to recognition. It becomes for all practical purposes silent and invisible. The political community, then, is not one of participation, but one of ethical normativity.

This is what is at stake in the development of a post-national politics. When political rights, such as the right to representation, become political facts, such as the assumption that everyone is represented, those who are not represented are not so much forcibly excluded as willfully ignored. These ignored and passed-over parties are Rancière's radical other; they are those whose position outside the ethical framework of the community robs them of their supposed right to articulation as a political subject. Thus, their experiences of political subjecthood remain unheard, and those disciplines and methods of study that hope to study real political conditions end up studying no more than the normative ethical structures that they have previously accepted.

Conclusion

The threat exclusion places towards the study of post-national politics is that it obscures certain elements of the political experience, so that any study of politics becomes less a study of politics as it is experienced than a study of politics as it has been constructed by political theorists. Ultimately, this results in the creation of a representative political order that substitutes for the experience of the political subject. This is inappropriate for a post-national politics because it leads to the imposition of certain ways of looking at politics on the experiences of people whose own understandings of their situations may diverge from the conclusions of political analysts. On a global scale, it leads to Euro-centrism, or at least a type of cultural hegemony that obscures non-European approaches. On a European scale, it leads to the domination of the East by the West and the domination of certain ethical assumptions that hide deeper fault lines beneath.

While the exclusion of certain political subjects through a national politics of consensus and ethics may be an inevitable outcome of the institutional and organizational structure of the nation-state, it is not appropriate to a de-territorialized, fragmented post-national order. A truly post-national politics can never be an ethical politics, nor will it be one that mirrors the synecdochic pretensions of the positive sciences. Only a national politics can reflect an underlying ethical order, just as only an analysis based on national order can plausibly conceive of a world in which politics is defined by the representative devices of categorical actors, national identities, and logically discernable rational interests. A politics that is relevant to a globalized order cannot ignore the multiplicitous and variable nature of political experience; rather, it must find a method of approaching the study of politics in such a way that it respects the variability of human experience without regards for national borders. A post-national analysis must then be based on something besides ethics or representation. It must find a way to move beyond consensus and ethics and to

understand politics in a different way: as a way of experiencing the world in terms of politics. Using aesthetics as a means of approaching sensory experience can help us do this.

Chapter 2 : Aesthetics and Politics: Representation, Ethics, and Experience

Introduction

If we are to find a way of conceiving of politics as something which is simultaneously shared and heterogenous, common and diverse, it cannot be through the frameworks of ethics or consensus, but through the understanding of the experience of politics as a spatiotemporal condition. It is normally argued that this type of experience, being subjective and therefore beyond categorization, is irrelevant to politics, since not only do considerations of the experiences of isolated individuals fail to demonstrate anything about the political conditions of the whole, but they also are impossible to measure in any accurate or coherent manner.

At the same time, the experience of politics is, far more than theory or analysis, the heart of what is truly political. Politics, as implemented through the demarcation of space through borders, the violence of war, the provision or denial of food or shelter or other elements basic to human survival, is at its most fundamental level an *experienced* state. It is, as Rancière argues, the basis of a specific form of experience rather than the practice of legislation or the execution of administrative duties.

For this reason, we must find a methodological means of considering the experiential aspect of the political. Measurements or other purely objective determinations, although very useful in theory building, do not correspond to heterogenous, fluctuating political environments like that of our present global environment. It is therefore necessary to put these objections aside and to explore

alternative means of considering politics as an experienced state. In the following pages, we shall consider the way in which aesthetics opens the possibility for alternate ways of understanding political conditions.

The Ethics of Representation

Politics and aesthetics have always had an uneasy relationship. They most often find themselves at odds, and attempts to synthesize the two always seem to privilege one camp over the other, simply renegotiating the terms of the argument rather than finding a common ground for discourse. From a political point of view, aesthetics is often seen as a pursuit of the leisure classes, an airy, ethereal field irrelevant to the pragmatic, real-world immediacy of politics. Art – and the study thereof – is reduced to a social object, a commodity whose aesthetic merit is subordinate to its ability to uncover, represent, or document more substantial social, historical, political, or economic events. Likewise, aesthetics tends to see politics either as the study of transient historical phenomena, insignificant compared to the ideality and universality of aesthetic production, or as an adversary seeking to stifle the artistic voice and use it as a tool in its quest for supremacy. Within this paradigm, politics is the drive for power, while aesthetics is the means of shuffling off the chains of power, destroying the political structures that bind the artist through the expression of that which extends beyond the immediacy of the political -- either into the realm of the sublime or outright spiritual transcendence

This debate appears first and most famously in *The Republic*, in which Plato condemns art as mere “artifice,” a representation twice removed from ideality and therefore further distanced from the truth than, say, the work of an artisan who produces something that can actually be used for practical purposes. For Plato, an

artist engages in nothing more than mimetic reproduction of the world, which anyone can do if you “take a mirror and turn it round in all directions; before long you will create sun and stars and earth, yourself and all other animals and plants.” (Plato: 596d-596e) Since it is little more than an imperfect copy of the ideal, art as representation is “an inferior child born of inferior parents,” (Plato: 603b) and therefore useless as a means obtaining any sort of information about the world. Far more useful is the study of the world itself, which, in Plato’s view, is much nearer to the truth than art, despite its flaws.

Whether or not scholars of politics and the social sciences envision themselves as followers of Plato, the understanding of art as irrelevant or useless persists in contemporary political thought. Politics is seen as that which deals directly with human realities, like war, deprivation, poverty, and human rights, while art merely *represents* those realities, possibly comments upon them, but can do little to directly change them in the manner of legislators or political leaders or voters. When confronted with writers and artists who dare to fancy themselves political, those who consider themselves true politicians and political theorists might ask of them as Socrates did Homer:

[If you] are a stage nearer the truth about human excellence, and really capable of judging what kind of conduct will make the individual or the community better or worse, tell us any state whose constitution you have reformed...What city attributes the benefit of the legal system to your skill? Italy and Sicily owe theirs to Charondas, we owe ours to Solon. Tell us who is similarly indebted to you? (Plato: 599d-599e)

This is even more true of those schools of political thought that align themselves with

the positive sciences, believing they are also capable of gleaning objective truths about social realities through the collection and careful examination of data. In such a context, art has even less bearing on reality, since even the moral truths which it could purport to convey are irrelevant to the scientific study of human behavior.

In *The Republic*, art is not merely irrelevant, but also dangerous. It can please, but it can also mislead. An anxiety about the dangers of false representation resurfaces in various forms in contemporary analyses of art, aesthetics, and the image. It can be found in Baudrillard's fear of the non-referential image, of the simulacrum that has created a Frankensteinish "fiction of the real" which has destroyed reality itself. (Baudrillard 1983: 475) It is also present in the association between the aesthetic and political propaganda, in which heightened emotional and sensory experience become tools of political persuasion that distract the masses from perceiving oppressive political or social realities. Indeed, when politics and aesthetics mix, there will more often than not follow accusations of the suppression of democracy and mass deception. This is especially apparent in contemporary analyses of the media, in which the aesthetic qualities of news broadcasts, such as images, music, cinematographic techniques, and narrative effects, are seen as means of increasing network profits, even as they generate irrational fears that obscure political truths. (Chouliaraki 2000)

The aesthetic has become that which corrupts politics. If art is representation, it is not only capable of mirroring reality, but also of falsifying it. The very thing which makes art attractive, the heightened sense of reality it evokes, is also that which makes it dangerous, because it grants art the power to trick its audience into believing that its reality is *the* reality. It substitutes its form for the form of the world. But, unless we are to accept that there is an inherent truth incarnate in the world, the world itself, as separate from human understanding, cannot be ethical or unethical; it can

only be or not be. It is only if we perceive a distinction between art and reality, aesthetic experience and real experience, that we can allow ourselves to see art is as something which can be human, and therefore ethical or unethical. In the Platonic mindset, art is only ethical to the extent that it remains irrelevant to the world; that is, to the extent to which it reveals itself as representation, as pure entertainment, as fiction. The second that art begins to substitute itself for reality, to cease to be representation and to become something more, it becomes a lie.

Yet, if we take the argument one step further, we cannot help but question the ethics of irrelevant art as well. Following Plato, what is political is also that which is useful. Therefore, art is either removed from politics and useless, or it is political and useful to *someone*. That someone is usually the agent of political control. Here, we return to understandings of political art as propagandistic tools of the state or profit-oriented corporations. We also move into an understanding art as a luxury enjoyed by the leisure classes, and aesthetics is a tool used to separate the wealthy from the lower classes by distinguishing between good taste and bad, high culture and low. Art as form, art as beauty, is then seen as a product of class-defined taste, one element in a larger system of oppression. (see Street 2000)

Thus, art and aesthetics distance themselves from the rest of society, creating an autonomous system of artists as producers, critics as feedback mechanisms, and aesthetics as the logic which differentiates art from other fields of production. The interpretation of art, that is the way of decoding art as symbol or representation, becomes a tool of social oppression. In the words of Bourdieu, “the community can affirm the autonomy of the specifically cultural order only if it controls the dialectic of cultural distinction, continually liable to degenerate into an anomic quest for difference at any price.” (Bourdieu 1971, 1998: 1236) The critique is therefore not necessarily launched at art itself, but at the

processes of production that transform art into commodity and at the way of studying art, the transformation of art into discipline, that serves to draw art apart from the world. That which renders art irrelevant is also that which renders it wrong – not only deceptive, but oppressive as well.

These accusations have of course not gone un-protested by either artists or scholars of art. In these vindications of the political possibilities of art, the concept of representation often resurfaces as well, except here it is seen as a benefit, either because the study of art as commodity or product reveals social and cultural realities rather than obscures them, or because art as representation is an alternative means of emancipation, or because the affective nature of art allows for an ethical means of understanding the world which more objective, positivist methods ignore.

The first argument takes accusations of the commodification of art and turns it on its head and is common in semiotic and structuralist approaches to understanding art, politics, and society. Under the influence of sociology and anthropology, art is seen as a social product, which is valuable primarily as a sort of cultural document, or artifact, that helps reveal social truths. The work of art becomes a sort of social signifier whose value lies in its representational nature – not as a perfect mimesis of physical reality, but as a key to understanding social reality, as a formal document that can be “read” and interpreted in order to come to a clearer understanding of socio-political conditions. As opposed to earlier discussions of artistic form in which the form of art is evaluated in terms of aesthetic beauty, in this context, art is as an object of study, drained of its aesthetic content. Whether or not something is beautiful or moving or affective is not as important as whether or not something is representative and can teach us something real, tangible, and important about social, cultural, and political realities.

This view spills over into the field of cultural studies or Marxist-inspired schools of

literary criticism like New Historicism, which understands art as “the product of a negotiation between a creator or class of creators, equipped with a complex, communally shared repertoire of conventions, and the institutions and practices of society.” (Greenblatt 1989: 12) In this context, the artist views his product quite literally as a *product*, as a “currency that is valid for a meaningful, mutually profitable exchange.” (Greenblatt 1989: 12) Art lies at the point of intersection between the social and the aesthetic and is the locus for a certain type of material circulation between the two. In this sense, it is not necessarily the form of art is important, but its function as material object within a social and historical context. Here, we can find art’s use-value and therefore its political worth; it is a tool for understanding the real world, and therefore engaged in the real world through the very act of its representation.

The interpretation of art as social signifier is a direct inheritor of older understandings of art in terms of allegory or iconicity. (Crary 1992, Summers 2003) Art becomes a means of educating, of conveying a message, and interpretation is a matter of decoding that message and coming to a certain universal truth, or grammar of form. When we consider this from the point of view of the writer or artist, then the connection between art as signifier and the ethics of art extends beyond the mere consideration of its use-value. It becomes the site of a commitment on the part of those who are responsible for conveying that truth, for positioning their work within a social context in such a way that it carries a meaning that is not oppressive, but emancipatory. Thus, the semiotician Roland Barthes argues that “writing is essentially the morality of form;” it is “a choice of tone, of ethos,” the place in which the writer “commits himself.” (Barthes 1953: 15, 13) Art’s ability to represent the world endows it with a political power to change the world, to alter relationships between social signs in such a way that it can directly affect political and social realities, and like politics, carry an ethical weight.

This ethical engagement occurs on the level of the sign and is predicated on an understanding of reality as something which is socially produced. In such a conceptual framework, the artist as manipulator of representation is also a manipulator of reality, and therefore has a social and political duty to use that power to ethical ends. Art and artists who do not explicitly do so are seen as apolitical, decadent, and immoral, as is the work of art that cannot easily be “read,” meaning that which cannot clearly be decoded as a representation of a particular idea or statement.

This is not necessarily a question of form or style, as in the difference between modernist abstraction and 19th century romantic historicism, or between the experimentalism of James Joyce and the obvious ethical commitment of George Eliot’s realism. Each of those works of art, whether they aspire to mimesis, reject it, or take it to the extreme, have an obvious socio-political meaning. If they do not represent form, they represent idea, and therefore some how “tell the truth” in a way that is readable and therefore politically satisfying. Rather, unethical art would be more like the work of Flaubert or Balzac, who Rancière treats at length in *Politique de la Littérature*. Both writers have been accused of having rejected representation, of having privileged style over action, thereby “petrifying” their language. (Rancière 2007: 23). This is equally true of genres like 12th century Medieval Romance, whose relevance to current political situations is devalued by a tendency to see art from the distant past as something that is only valuable in terms of its function as historical document or its generic influence on more recent literary forms.

Moving Beyond Representation

In all of the instances we have discussed, whether or not art can be political, and therefore either useful or ethical, rides on the nature and value of representation. There are, however, certain issues with representation which present problems when considering the possibilities of art and aesthetics as tools of political understanding. The first and most obvious is the question of interpretation. If art is representation that can be “decoded” through interpretation, then the question remains as to whether or not interpretations can be, as formalists and structuralists would argue, universally valid. The tendency is to argue that they cannot and that meanings in art rather depend on the interpreter. This, however, leads into considerations of how interpreters derive meanings from art, which in turn leads us to questions about historical, social, and cultural influences on the processes of “decoding.” In her book *Regarding the Pain of Others*, Susan Sontag (2003) discusses the way in which the assumption that images of the violence of war will somehow provoke anti-war sentiments in its viewers hangs on the political belief that one will always perceive violence as a bad thing. She writes:

The destructiveness of war...is not itself an argument against waging war unless one thinks (as few people actually do think) that violence is always unjustifiable, that force is always and in all circumstances wrong...No, retort those who in a given situation see no alternative to armed struggle, violence can exalt someone subjected to it into a martyr or a hero. (Sontag 2003: 11)

This raises questions about the contemporary political relevance of the concept of representation itself. Representation is a decidedly Western concept (Summers 2003), while contemporary political realities are not. That is to say, if discussions about the political nature of art are to be relevant to politics as it actually is, as a global, rather

than a national phenomenon, then they must move beyond concerns with representation. By assuming that art is essentially representational, we are obstructing the possibility of seeing its relevance to cultures outside of the ideological “West,” which are, incidentally, increasingly becoming cultures inside of the geographical West. Summers writes: “When the assumptions of Western representationalism in any of its phases – including its latest [post-structuralist] phase – are brought to traditions of art making to which they have no historical connections, the result can only be fundamental cultural incomprehension.” (Summers 2003: 27) This is not only true of formal representation, but also of the assumption that art can represent or indicate something about historical or social facts; Summers argues that the idea that art must be decoded within a historical context relies upon a “submerged faith in Western progress.” (Summers 2007)

Nor can we assume that representation is a means of understanding art that is relevant to contemporary Western culture, either. As Johnathan Crary writes, we are “in the midst of a transformation in the nature of visibility probably more profound than the break that separates medieval imagery from Renaissance perspective.” (Crary 1990: 1) In this digitalized era, images are no longer automatically connected to an external referent: it is no longer certain that an image is referring to anything other than itself. “Visual images no longer have any reference to the position of an observer in a ‘real,’ optically perceived world. If these images can be said to refer to anything, it is to millions of bits of electronic mathematical data.” (Crary 1990: 2) Global society is becoming increasingly aestheticized (Lash and Urry 1994), but it is not clear that this aestheticization is occurring through the dynamics of referent and representation. The role that digital technology plays in the processes of global aestheticization suggests that representation is not a valid means of understanding the role of art in a contemporary political context. Not only, as we have seen above, can we no longer toy with the idea that representation may be somehow decoded with reference to a

universal law, but we cannot take the idea of art as representation as a given, either.

There is a third argument in favor of the ethical implications of art which does not necessarily rely upon the concept of representation, although it does not explicitly exclude representational interpretation either. Instead, it posits that the political possibilities of art derive from its ability to create alternative forms of experience, allowing us to imagine ourselves in the position of others and therefore develop a certain sympathy for our fellow beings that does not depend upon cultural or social ties. This is Richard Rorty's argument in his theory of solidarity as an imaginative process.

[Solidarity] is to be achieved not by inquiry but by imagination, the imaginative ability to see strange people as fellow sufferers. Solidarity is not discovered by reflection but created. It is created by increasing our sensitivity to the particular details of the pain and humiliation of other, unfamiliar sorts of people. Such increased sensitivity makes it more difficult to marginalize people different from ourselves by thinking, "They do not feel it as *we* would," or "There must always be suffering, so why not let *them* suffer?" (Rorty 1989: xvi)

The sense of compassion that arises from this imaginative sympathy is not to be found through thought as separate from the world, but through the synthesis of thought and feeling within the world. "This is a task not for theory but for genres such as ethnography, the journalist's report, the comic book, the docudrama, and, especially, the novel." (Rorty 1989: xvi) It is therefore not the political commitment of the artist or the ability of art to reveal "truths" about society that makes art political, nor is it the extent to which art can accurately represent the

world. It is the ability of art to create alternate pathways of experience, to displace us from the confines of our daily lives and allow us to experience the lives of others towards whom we might have remained insensible otherwise.

There is an extent to which these arguments seem to support those which Sontag so eloquently opposed in the passage quoted above; there is no guarantee that simply because one experiences the suffering of others, one will automatically believe that suffering is wrong. They carry the underlying assumption that once we see that other people have *experiences* that are similar to our own, we will conclude that *they* are similar to us – or, that perceiving similarities between ourselves and others even matters when we are discussing what is right or wrong politically. We have then returned to the same problem we found with those theories that connect the ethics of art to representation: simply because one sees or hears or experiences a work of art, that does not mean that one will see or hear or experience that art in a certain way. There are no universal outcomes to aesthetic experience. Perhaps the problem remains that even though Rorty accepts that the power of art lies in experience rather than representation, he still assumes that something will be conveyed through that experience, that there is some sort of lesson to be learned, that aesthetic experience can be ethical.

The ability of art to open alternative pathways of experience also surfaces in the work of Chen, Hwang, and Ling (2009). They argue for the “democratization” of the field of International Relations by using art, literature, and film to uncover the “multiple worlds” that constitute political reality and “help IR express and examine the complexities of subjectivity that comprise global life.” (Chen, Hwang, and Ling 2009: 745) By advocating the use of “culture-as-method,” they argue that a consideration of the humanities will combat the hegemony of an (implicitly Western) exclusivist, singular world-view, “opening up ontological space to the hybridities that drive our

worlds, especially at those sites convention deems ‘peripheral.’” (Chen, Hwang, and Ling 2009: 744) Art becomes a means of allowing us to understand plurality by expanding the possibilities of subjective experience, helping us to broaden our political scope beyond the limitations of approaches to politics based on institutional analysis or positivist methodology or the relationships between states. In this way, art becomes more political than politics itself in that it approaches an understanding of the way in which politics is actually lived and experienced by human beings, rather than the way in which it is constructed by theorists.

Lash and Urry (1994) also explore the role of aesthetics in global society, as well as its ability to mediate and engender a multiplicity of diverse, subjective experiences. They argue that society is becoming increasingly driven by the circulation of objects whose values as signs have usurped their material use-value. While these signs can be seen as cognitive, informational subjects of interpretation, they can also be understood in an aesthetic light in which design is more important than labor and sensory experience is more important than dynamics of referent and meaning. The aestheticization of the object creates a new sort of global language driven by poetic discourse, image, and the transformation of referents into signifiers. A certain process of creative poeticism develops which then engenders a system of global communications driven by poetic discourse, rather than the transmission of information based on cognitive or moral statements.

Poetic discourse is constitutive of the rituals through which we operate. It creates the very least mediated universals through which people from now many nations communicate. Globalized popular culture, functioning as poetic discourse, thus becomes everybody’s elementary forms of religious life. It imparts form to an unreflected, relatively immediate and internationalized habitus. (Lash and Urry 1994: 29)

The problem with such discourse, they note, is that to many it may seem “sinister” because it cannot be immediately accepted or rejected or assigned an ethical designation in terms of right or wrong, good or bad. Aesthetic production and poetic discourse, as divorced from the singular logic of representation, ceases to refer to an ethical framework which conveys its political significance. Rather, it exists as a form of experience which is at its foundation poetic, creative, and infinitely diverse.

The Experience of Aesthetics and Politics: Le Partage du Sensible and Real Space

In order to understand the political nature of art, as well as its potential contributions to the study of politics, we must transform the way in which we see art and politics. We can no longer see politics as reality and art as representation of reality or an expression of ethical truths; we must instead come to see both as different ways of experiencing reality. We must see them both, as Jacques Rancière would have it, “as regimes of identification,” special ways of identifying sensory elements which are equally connected to the conditions of human experience. (Rancière 2004) The issue of the ethics of art is only relevant when art is seen as something separate from reality, something which imitates it or reflects it or presents the viewer with a means of escaping from reality. When art is seen as attached to reality itself, as a certain means of redistributing space, a certain material arrangement in a certain spatiotemporal context, then one can no longer argue about what truths it conveys or whether or not it is ethical. Whether or not a certain experience of the world is inherently ethical is a meaningless debate.

This understanding of the relationship between sensory experience, politics, and art draws upon Jacques Rancière's theory of *le partage du sensible*. According to Rancière, *le partage du sensible* is "the distribution and redistribution of places and identities, this apportioning and reapportioning of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, and of noise and speech." (Rancière 2004: 24, 2007) It is the realm of sensory experience, a certain arrangement and configuration of images, sounds, and spaces that is held in common between all people. We all participate in *le partage du sensible*, both as social beings and as beings capable of sensory experience, beings which exist in the world. For Rancière, *le partage du sensible* is not only a regime of experience, but also the fundamental site for the realization of both the political and the aesthetic as different ways of identifying specific configurations within this common sensory arena. That is to say that neither politics nor art are about power or ethics or institutions or ideology, but about the redistribution of *le partage du sensible*, "the framing of the sensory world itself." (Rancière in Dasgupta 2008: 71) Therefore, "art and politics do not constitute two permanent, separate realities whereby the issue is to know whether or not they *ought* to be set in relation;" instead, they are two different ways of identifying arrangements within *le partage du sensible* and as such are intimately bound.

Art is political in that it contributes to this arrangement and rearrangement of the sensory world. When we talk about the political nature of art, therefore, we are not talking about political message or the artist's commitment to representing social realities, but about "the way in which the practices and forms of visibility of art themselves intervene in the distribution of the sensible and its reconfiguration, in which they distribute spaces and times, subjects and objects, the common and the singular." (Rancière 2004: 25) Here, representation is not the key to accessing "political realities;" art *is* political reality, just as much as the delineation of national space, the drawing of borders, the distribution of wealth, and the relationships between

people within society. This is not to say that all art is political; rather, it is to say that all art functions as politics does, all art has a real, tangible role within human space and time and as such profoundly affects our experience of the world.

We must remember that in Rancière's definition, politics is not exclusively the state or law or power, but the "configuration of a specific form of community." (Rancière 2007: 11) It is a lived reality, shared among people, registered on the senses. It is not something that is confined to the policies and practices of elected officials, but something which touches upon the very real conditions of our lives. It is also not something which is expressed through a common singularity, but through the expression of difference and the *division* of the common. Thus, art is political in that it provides a way of resisting the national politics of consensus and ethics and opening the common arena to the emergence of division, "as a way of cutting up the universal singular." (Rancière and Hallward 2009: 104) Likewise, politics, in its power to divide spaces and redistribute sensory elements, is "an aesthetic matter, a reconfiguration of the way we share out or divide places and times, speech and silence, the visible and the invisible." (Rancière and Hallward 2009: 103)

What this means is that there are no universals to human behavior, no underlying ethics of art that determine artistic experience, no scientific laws to discover. There is only experience and the relationships that surge from experience. What we consider to be art or politics is simply the reworking of those experiences in such a way that our manner of experiencing reality shifts, and a new sort of reality is inscribed upon the body through the senses. If we want to understand art or politics, therefore, it is useless to search for grammars and universals; rather, we must look at those places where they are lived, where they take shape and form and transform themselves into specific modes of experience. The question of whether or not the experience of art or politics relates to a certain ethical impetus is here irrelevant. This is not an argument

about whether art and politics should or should not be ethical; it is simply an argument that they are not ethical, in its purest sense. They are experiential.

Sensory Experience and the Political in W.G. Sebald's 'Dark Night Sallies Forth'

We can see the way in which art and politics fuse into a common realm of sensory experience beyond ethical rationality by looking at the poem 'Dark Night Sallies Forth,' from W.G. Sebald's collection *After Nature*. (Sebald 2002) In this poem, Sebald explores a common theme in his work, which we shall again touch upon later in our discussion: the reticence of German civilians to discuss the horrors of the home front experience during World War II.

Sebald describes the silence of his father on the subject of Dresden before its bombing, "of whose beauty his memory,/ as he remarks when I question him,/ retains no trace." He also writes of the experience of his mother who witnessed the bombing of Nürnberg.

During the night of the 28th
582 aircraft flew in
to attack Nürnberg. Mother,
who on the next day planned
to return to her parents'
home in the Alps,
got no further than Fürth. From
there she saw Nürnberg in flames,
but cannot recall now

what the burning town looked like
or what her feelings were
at this sight.

Here, as in much of Sebald's work, he turns to the artistic image as a way of accessing what has been held back through failures and absences of both memory and language. He describes the experience of seeing Albrecht's painting *Lot and his Daughter* at the Art- historical museum in Vienna.

On the horizon
a terrible conflagration blazes,
devouring a large city.
Smoke ascends from the site,
the flames rise to the sky and
in the blood-red reflection
one sees the blackened
façades of houses.



Figure 1: Altdorfer, Albrecht. 1537. Lot and his Daughter. Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna.

Upon seeing this painting, he writes:

I had the strange feeling
of having seen all of it
before, and a little later,
crossing to Floridsdorf
on the Bridge of Peace,
I nearly went out of my mind.

What was inaccessible to Sebald in terms of narrative or discourse were accessible to him through image. Later in this paper, we argue that the silence of the Germans regarding their suffering during World War II derives from a hesitation to align themselves with the political ideology of the leaders of the Third Reich. To even state

the fact of their suffering due to real experience of political conditions beyond individual control would seem tantamount to claiming a sort of victimization, and therefore an ethical righteousness that conflicts with the normative framework of the contemporary ethical community.

Here, however, Sebald is able to evade that ethical silence through the sensory experience of a work of art that is, in both time and place, utterly decontextualized from the experience of his parents during the bombings of World War II. It is through this aesthetic experience that he is able to recreate the contexts of his parents' experience and access an understanding of the political conditions of World War II as they were truly lived by political subjects.

Conclusion

If we are to consider the way in which aesthetics offers new ways of understanding politics, we must first radically change our understanding of what politics and aesthetics are. We must come to see them first and foremost as types of sensory experience. This means that we cannot look for positive knowledge or rational meanings within politics and aesthetics. That is to say that we need no longer hope to *know* political conditions; in order to understand politics, we may also try to *feel* political conditions. What this means is abandoning an epistemology based on uncovering the truth and accepting one that is built on different, non-categorical ways of knowing the world, ways that are grounded in the sensory experience of a multiplicitous, variable, and shifting environment.

Aesthetics can help us do this; as we accept alternate ways of studying political experience and begin to use images, literature, and sensory perception as a way of

accessing “politics,” we can gain entry into a variety of ways of knowing about the world, therefore coming closer to an understanding of the world as it pertains to many disparate and diffuse subjectivities, rather than as it pertains to a singular, overarching logical framework.

Chapter 3 : The Chronotope: Exploring the Conditions of Political Experience

Introduction

In the following section, we will draw upon Rancière's theory of *le partage du sensible* in order to explore the relationship between politics and art, in particular those connections between them which allow for a more varied and multidimensional understanding of the historical and social events upon which they come to bear. We will place special emphasis on the "real spatial" nature of the common arena: its placement within a spatio-temporal environment realized and confirmed through the actual experience of real individuals, subject to temporal and physical constraints, grounded in a sort of "reality" that does not depend upon either the social or the individual for its existence, even though both remain in the constant process of redefining and renegotiating it. Art and politics intervene into this common space as configurations of *le partage du sensible* through which reality, or real space, is altered.

The focus of the section is then, not on art or politics as such, but on their manner of replication of real space, the way in which they generate virtual common spaces not only capable of distorting reality, but of seeing those very distortions implemented in reality itself, enacting a transformative power upon the common space. We argue that we can understand these virtual common spaces and their replication through the use of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of narrative chronotopes: the points at which different perceptions of time and space intersect to produce a certain logic or order within a narrative. Like a literary narrative, each political and artistic world adheres to its own chronotope from which it derives its meaning and legitimates itself. These

chronotopes emerge from the conjuncture of multiple perceptions of social and individual experience of real time and space which cooperate to develop political and artistic realms, each subject to their own self-generated constraints, simultaneously imitative and distortive of the real spatial-temporal arrangement experienced on the immediate level of the common

Spatiotemporal Contexts of Political Experience

A traditional objection to the study of sensory experience in any systematic way is that the expression of the individual, particularized experience does not relate to that of the collective, nor is it a reliable means of establishing a truth independent from the subjective coloring of the individual's perception. Aesthetics is sometimes suggested as a way around this problem; however, as we have seen above, this is often accomplished through the assertion of the implicit ethical values of art or through the systematic reduction of art to social object.

Chen, Hwang, and Ling, however, do not see the use of aesthetics as leading to a consideration of irrelevant subjectivities, nor do they see it as an expression of universal, ethical truths. Although aesthetics allows for the expression of subjective experience, those experiences occur within a context that prevents them from being isolated, contained, particularized. Thus, the consideration of art as political becomes a means of spanning the perceived gap between private and public, individual and social, subjective and collective terms of experience. They write:

[The culture-as-method approach] considers subjects on their own terms and in their own voices. These voicings do not simply tell about the self. They also reflect, sustain, derive from and define

structural, material and physical imperatives. Context matters equally with content. (Chen, Hwang, and Ling 2009: 746)

Aesthetic productions exist within a context that links their subjectivities to a larger world. This is important in a global environment in which the experience of the individual is becoming increasingly defined by patterns of relationships between the self and disparate, sometimes unrecognized elements. Thus, any approach to political analysis that is truly appropriate to a de-centered, fragmented geopolitical environment must be able to take into account the variable relationship between the political subject and context, the individual and the common, the self and the world.

Lash and Urry also try to conceptualize the contextual element of political and aesthetic experience. They write that the aestheticization of the world allows for the development of a certain self-reflexivity that “assumes a self which is at the same time a being-in-the-world.” (Lash and Urry 1994: 6) Through this reflexivity, the individual mediates through self and context, creating linkages and bonds of communication through the exchange of poetic discourse, while remaining subjectively independent and freed from social bonds.

In both of these cases, neither the sensory experience of the political nor of the aesthetic comes about *sui generis*; it arises from relationships between entities in a specific context with a specific location in time and space. This location sets the material – and social – conditions for the sensory experience of the aesthetic and political, as well as the way in which they are apprehended by the subject that experiences them. Our experience of *le partage du sensible*, therefore, as well as the nature of that experience is shaped and to some extent constrained by a certain spatio-temporal context that establishes the necessary conditions for the development of politics. This is a conditional context that is as essential to the practice of the aesthetic

as it is to the practice of politics.

Likewise, politics, as a means of reconfiguring *le partage du sensible*, can only come to being within a certain arena of common experience created by relationships within a shared spatio-temporal context. Political participation, the act through which the subject participates in the political redistribution of *le partage du sensible*, requires that the subject enter into these relationships and be recognized as part of these relationships by other members of this context. Indeed, as Rancière demonstrates, a traditional means of excluding groups of people from political participation is by claiming that the working or artisanal classes “have no time” to participate in politics. (2004) Political representation by elected officials who are, for all practical purposes, professionals is also predicated on this concept that in order to be political, one must devote ‘time’ to politics.

In terms of art and the aesthetic, as Rancière writes, “what links the practice of art to the question of the common is the constitution, at once material and symbolic, of a specific space-time.” (2004: 23) In this sense, both art and politics exist in what David Summers calls “real space,” in the material constraints placed upon the body as a condition of existence within the world. Summers argues that the basic condition of human existence is the presence of the body in real space, that is the actual material conditions that allow for the relationship between the embodied subject and the world; “the conditions of our own real spatiality entail the broader conditions of our finding ourselves in the world.” (Summers 2003: 38) Art is a way of playing with those real spatial conditions; it both obeys and rearranges the constraints they impose upon the body. And, even though it arranges them in ways that are related to social and cultural attitudes and beliefs, it is art’s real spatial relationship to the body that is its first and most fundamental way of registering itself onto the senses.

It is also in this real spatial context that politics is manifested. Here, we can recall Rancière's description of politics as "an aesthetic matter, a reconfiguration of the way we share out or divide places and times, speech and silence, the visible and the invisible." (Rancière and Hallward 2009: 103) While parliamentary processes and legislative decisions may be part of what we generally characterize as political action, the true form of the political is "fundamentally, a spatial organization where perceptible identities are those that make sense to the way space is organized." (Rajaram and Soguk 2006: 368) It is in space that political conditions are manifested, that political subjects act, articulate, and protests, and that *le partage du sensible* develops beyond individualized sensory experience into something that is common. "In the end, everything in politics turns on the distribution of spaces." (Rancière and Hallward 2009: 100)

The Chronotope

Although opening the study of politics to the experiential nature of political experience may allow for a more variable and flexible consideration of political conditions, the suggestion alone does not offer much in the way of a methodology for undertaking such a study. Sensory experience, though perhaps common to all people, is highly subjective, fluctuating, and variable; even if the political subject were actually aware of all sensory experiences – and it is impossible that she would be – it would be unlikely that she would want or be able to communicate them in their entirety. We must then find a way of approaching the study of political experience as an aesthetic process without assuming that we can actually represent subjective sensory experience (as in traditional social sciences), but without being forced to disregard the common altogether and sink into an entirely individualized and subjective reading. We can do this by considering the spatiotemporal contexts of political and aesthetic experience.

From that point, we can determine which elements arise in *le partage du sensible* both as forms of common sensory experience and as real constraints on the sensory experience of the political subject.

We can understand the special role of this spatio-temporal context in determining the varieties of political experience by using Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope. (Bakhtin in Morris 1994) Bakhtin envisioned the chronotope as the entanglement of relationships between space and time that underlies the development of literary narrative. On a functional and methodological level, the chronotope is responsible for organizing the narrative events within the text and of generating a sort of "logic" that helps the different events that occur within the text to make sense in relation to each other. These logics aid in the processes of generic classification and thus provide a more systematic means of studying narrative. (Brandão 2006) On a more existential level, it serves to embody the narrative, to transform it into an expression of human experience on an aesthetic and material level. Thus:

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes changed and responsive to movements of time, plot and history. (Bakhtin in Morris 1994: 184)

It is therefore through the chronotope that we find the bridge between artistic expression and lived reality, embodied sensory experience and the distribution of the common sphere.

To develop this concept, Bakhtin uses the example of adventure time in the Greek romance; adventure time is characterized by an ahistorical, non-cyclical vision of time

in which all events that occur happen simply by chance. Therefore, the ordeals that the hero must face and the random occurrences that mark the development of the narrative are not related to historical causes or context, but to a sense of a universalized, stable, unshifting duration. Therefore, as the hero triumphs over ordeals within the narrative, he arrives at universal truths about human identity that are divorced from concepts of personal identity or contextual experience. (Bakhtin in Morris 1994, Morris 1994)

A more current example would be that of the modern detective novel, in which the events of the narrative unroll in a sequence simultaneous to the discoveries of clues and facts, that is, within a certain logical, causal sequence. As the detective uncovers new evidence and then successfully places that evidence within a causal relationship to the crimes and clues that occurred previously within the text, the plot is allowed to unfold in an unceasing progression towards a final, conclusive discovery of the truth. This very clear, sequential conception of time, combined with an understanding of space as the environment in which causal connections are revealed through the close scrutiny of objects, corresponds to an understanding of man as a rational being who needs only reason and good observational skills in order to de-mystify the world surrounding him. This, in turn, corresponds to a historical and cultural context in which positivism dominates the conception of the world, science invariably leads to progress, and the human mind is capable of complete understanding. It is no accident that this genre came about during the 19th century.

If we look at how the chronotope is used to frame literary narrative, we see that two different processes of orientation arise: 1) micro-level process which relate to the sensory experience of the individual within a real temporal and spatial context; 2) macro-level process relates to something larger, shared, and held in common. In Bakhtin's work, this dual nature allows him to simultaneously consider the existential

implications of narrative and its generic and historical contexts. When we take the chronotope outside of the realm of literature and consider it in terms of the conditions of both individual and common political experience, we can also use the chronotope to bridge the intimate, local, and individual with a larger notion of political experience as something shared and even abstracted.

The chronotope has been used to this end in the social sciences in order to explore the way in which the individual relates experience to a larger social framework. (see Agha 2007, Davidson 2007) Agha uses the chronotope as a way of binding individual experience to a larger social spatiotemporal framework. For Agha, the chronotope is “a sketch of personhood in time and place” which is enacted and construed within a participation framework.” (Agha 2007: 321) The emergence of chronotopes serves to expand the ‘historical present’ of the political or social subject “by creating chronotopic displacements and cross-chronotope alignments between persons here-and-now and persons altogether elsewhere, transposing selves across discrete zones of cultural spacetime through communicative practices that have immediate consequences for how social actors in the public sphere are mobilized to think, feel, act.” (Agha 2007: 324)

Thus, just as Bakhtin saw the chronotope as a sort of embodiment of narrative, a process of making the narrative flesh, we can use the chronotope as a way of understanding how political conditions are made flesh and experienced on the level of the political subject. On a macro-level, chronotopes set the context for the development and legitimization of social and political institutions, and it is through these chronotopes that political bodies take shape.

While Bakhtin’s literary chronotopes convert narrative into flesh, political chronotopes transform political entities from concepts into lived experiences. By

orienting itself within a certain space and time, the political body takes on the appearance of being real. It is drawn into relation with other elements that share its conceptions of space and time, from which it derives support and justification for its own internal “logic.” It becomes integrated into *le partage du sensible*, becoming able to redistribute sensory reality, but also to be redistributed in turn through interaction with political subjects, other political entities, and real spatiotemporal conditions. It is opened to the processes of political participation, and subjects who believe that the political entity is real – whether or not they like it – will contribute to the development, construction, and deconstruction of the state through discourse and articulation. In short, it is through the chronotope that the political body becomes legitimate; without this spatiotemporal orientation, the political body would have no presence within *le partage du sensible*. The struggle for political legitimacy, then, becomes the struggle to establish a chronotope.

The power and legitimacy of a political body comes from its chronotope, from its ability to place itself within the context of a plausible spatiotemporal construct. However, the “logic” of the chronotope is not enough to secure state legitimacy; it must also be accepted by its political subjects as something which is real. In order to do so, it must somehow correspond to or coincide with the micro-level chronotopes of individual experience. Thus, the extent to which a subject perceives a chronotope as legitimate depends on a “social process” of participation in the chronotope or on its compatibility with a different chronotope accepted by the subject. (Agha 2007) The inconsistency of the chronotope of the larger political body with that of the individual creates a gap between the local experience of the real and the de-localized, virtual experience of a larger social or political chronotopic framework. Each exposes the other as a potential distortion, calling it into question.

The Methodological Use of the Chronotope

Bakhtin initially designed the chronotope for the purposes of generic analysis and categorization. (Salvestroni 1997) However, for our purposes, using the chronotope to “decode” the realities represented in a literary text or other aesthetic production does not take us any closer to understanding the political nature of art in terms of sensory experience. Although that was a significant part of Bakhtin’s project, Bakhtin still relied heavily on a concept of representation in order to justify the relevance of art. For Bakhtin, art remained an image, a representation, a concept of chronotopic existence. (Bakhtin in Morris 1994).

Following Rancière, however, we will see artistic chronotopes as lived experiences and therefore part of reality, rather than its representation. In that case, the distribution of *le partage du sensible* and the chronotope itself are highly contextualized and not conducive to generic classification. Instead, we can see the chronotope as a tool that allows for the consideration of localized forms of experience and contextual configurations that might go unnoticed in other treatments. In that case, we can consider art as a means of studying those local processes of distribution and redistribution, without taking recourse to questions of ethics, moral commitment, representation, or universal impulses towards sympathy.

Rather than limiting our use of the concept of the chronotope to the categorization and analysis of narrative events, we can use it to see the way in which relationships between events, beliefs, individuals, and objects play out in a spatiotemporal context. The chronotope allows us to establish a sort of context or a framework in which different experiences, subjectivities, and political conditions arise. Through the chronotope we can set spatial and temporal markers that allow us to navigate through *le partage du sensible* in such a way that the conditions of common experience become visible, even

if the subjective reactions to those conditions remain diffuse or impenetrable.

The chronotope is above all a means of establishing relationships between phenomena that may otherwise be considered unrelated due to traditional disciplinary categorizations. The chronotope thus widens our sphere of study beyond purely “political” phenomena like treaties, statistics, polling, or other traditional objects of study and allows us to include literary narrative, images, poetry, and myth into our analysis. All elements operating within the chronotope contribute in some level to the sensory experience of the political and are thus valid means of gaining insight into the multiplicities of political experience. Therefore, the aim of study is not to establish causes or determinate facts, but to understand relationships between sensory elements and to draw connections.

The way we approach time in the chronotope is not through historical or causal analysis, but by establishing temporal markers that serve as signposts within *le partage du sensible* and help to replicate the meanings and sensory phenomena that create the conditions for political experience. For example, when we look at the chronotope of the European Union, we will look at the way in which events, images, and themes surrounding the experience of WWII contribute to the varieties of political experiences within the European Union. We will see that WWII as a temporal marker allows for the development of certain types of political experience that then offer political subjects different alternatives of interaction within a common political field. Thus, we will not look at WWII or any other historical event or as a cause or effect of any one political condition, but as a temporal marker, a point of orientation in a larger, fluctuating, diffuse experience of time.

Likewise, we shall consider space in terms of its role of allowing the individual to orient him or herself within a common sphere. Space in terms of geography, borders,

or regions— that is to say, space as it is understood on a map or by scholars – is not important except in so far as it contributes to the formation of the conditions of political experience. For example, as we shall see later, divisions between East and West in Europe become important markers in delineating different types and attitudes towards political conditions and viewpoints. They emerge in *le partage du sensible* as points around which different experiences and understandings of political subjecthood converge and become salient, but they are not necessarily causes or determinants of any one type of political behavior, nor do they express fixed distinctions regarding the experience of political subjects.

The advantage of such a means of analysis is that it permits us to consider the relationships between elements, rather than attempting to draw causal connections or make generalizations about the true nature of political experience. Indeed, in reconstructing the chronotope, we are ourselves engaging in an ultimately political act; we are redistributing the conditions of political experience in such a way that new meanings and configurations of the political arise. Our process is thus a creative one more than it is a process of decoding or revealing hidden truths.

Conclusion

The chronotope offers us a methodological tool for understanding the nature of politics as an experienced condition. By using the chronotope to establish the spatiotemporal markers of experience, we can reconstruct political conditions as they are lived by the subject. From that point, we can also consider the way in which the experiences of different subjects are bound to one another in the common spatiotemporal conditions that give rise to the development of *le partage du sensible*. Thus, chronotopes offer a means

of bridging the individual and the common, so that we can discover the multiplicity of experiences, subjectivities, and impressions that compose the political arena.

In the sections that follow, we will see how the introduction of aesthetic elements allows for a more varied and diverse understanding of political phenomena. The consideration of these elements will shed light on politics as experienced on both macro- and micro-levels, allowing us to identify the ways in which both the study of politics and the practice of political organization fail to correspond to political subjects' experience of political conditions.

Specifically, we will use the chronotope as a methodological tool for expanding our notion of the ways in which the political state is constructed on a spatiotemporal level engendering certain types of political experience. We apply the chronotope to two different political bodies – that of the nation-state and that of the European Union – in order to see the way in which the organizational, political, and aesthetic phenomena that arise in treatments of both institutions are linked on a chronotopic level.

Chapter 4 : The Chronotope of the Nation-State

Introduction

Although the role of the nation-state in the European Union is much contested, there is a general agreement that the legitimacy of the European Union rests on its ability to present an alternative to systems of governance based on the balance of power between nation-states. It stands to reason, then, that the development of the European Union as a legitimate political body will have much to do with the way in which the nation-state is understood as a type of political organization. With this in mind, we will preface our investigation of the role of the chronotope in EU legitimization with a careful look at the chronotope of the modern nation-state.

We have already examined some of the ways in which national bias persists in the understanding of the European Union as a post-national entity. Our exploration of the chronotope of the nation-state will allow us to look further at the spatiotemporal contexts of the processes of consensus-building and ethical normativity within the state. From this point, we will be able to consider the ways in which those processes come to bear upon political experience and, eventually, how they persist in the structure and concept of the European Union.

In the following section, we will investigate the chronotope of the nation-state by isolating the various concepts of time and space that arise in theoretical, historical, and fictive treatments of both the nation and the state. We argue that despite theoretical distinctions between the nation and the state, they share a common chronotopic orientation in which time is seen as continuous, sequential, and progressive and space is seen as planar and demarcated. It is due to this chronotopic association that the two

have proved to be such complementary forms of social and political organization; it is also within the context of this chronotope that the nation-state achieves a certain political legitimacy, as expressed through consensus, representation, and ethical “rights.” These modes of achieving legitimacy tend towards the creation of the nation-state as a virtual entity, rather than one corresponding to the experience of the political subject.

Following the methodological program discussed above, we shall identify different temporal and spatial markers relating to the nation-state as they appear within *le partage du sensible*. We shall then use them to create a sense of what the spatiotemporal context of the nation-state is like and, therefore, how it is experienced on both a macro and a micro level.

The Nation and the State

The nation-state developed from the marriage of two sometimes complementary, often contradictory political concepts. The first, the state, emerged during the 18th century as part of an attempt to re-envision the political body as something that inhered in a principle of rational organization, rather than in the body of the monarch or the privileges of noble birth. (Gärtner 1997) The state is less a political body than a rational instrument, designed for the realization of both efficient administrative organization (Weber 1946) and the protection of universally established ethical principles, or rights. (Gärtner 1997) Its legitimacy is derived from the universality of its projects: fundamental rights, rational organization, and equality. The nation, on the other hand, is a 19th Century invention. It is traditionally understood as a political body which has developed organically from the intrinsic unity of a

particular ethnically or culturally homogenous group, rather than a universal rationality. It is a highly subjective, often fictive unit, organized around shared myths, rituals, and a strong connection to a pre-modern past. (Smith 1991) The legitimacy of the nation is derived from its particularity: the distinction and separation of the national people, its linguistic and cultural differences with regards to other nations, and the particular historical events that have led to its development.

Despite these apparent incompatibilities, the nation and the state are united in a chronotopic context. It is for this reason that the marriage between the nation and the state has proved to be so durable, despite differences in their respective ideologies. Although one may be “organic” and the other “rational,” one may be “mythological” and the other “scientific,” both accept that historical events have a clear causal nature, the political body is representative of an eschatological progress towards the best possible institutional arrangement, and that space is both planar and capable of being partitioned into “containers” which coincide with both authority of the political leaders and the equality of the citizenry.

It is on the basis of these assumptions that the nation-state enters into its process of homogenization and consolidation, such as those we saw in our discussion of consensus and ethics in the first chapter of this paper. The nation-state’s representations of homogeneity do not always coincide with the experience of the subject, leading to the exclusion or silencing of non-represented subjects – particularly those subjects whose recognition threaten the very notion of homogeneity upon which the legitimacy of the state rides

In the following section, we shall look at the different attitudes towards time and space in the nation and the state, respectively; we shall then see how they unite in a common

chronotope, producing the concepts of consensus and ethical rationality that help support their legitimacy and participate in the process of homogenization and consolidation.

The Time of the Nation: Myths of Continuity, Sequence, and Progression

As with all political bodies, the nation also must place itself in a spatiotemporal context in order to obtain a sense of political legitimacy. Without a spatiotemporal orientation, it cannot enter into *le partage du sensible* in any significant way, it would have no context, no way of defining itself, no way of making itself believable. The modern nation inserts itself into *le partage du sensible* through the creation of images and experiences that impart a sense of ethnic and cultural homogeneity, ultimately constructing a virtual national chronotopic political experience that replaces that of the localized individual. In order to build its chronotope, it must then establish certain spatiotemporal markers that set the conditions of its existence. Temporally, it must establish an historical origin that gives the reason for its existence, a guaranteed future that vouches for the stability and endurance of the nation-state. Spatially, it must inhere in a territory as proof of its international legitimacy and as a way of determining the boundaries of authority and identity.

The nation establishes its temporal markers through the development and perpetuation of national myths. These myths, which set the origin, the causes, and the future of the nation, serve to promote an understanding of continuous, sequential, and progressive time in order to create a sense of cultural and ethnic homogeneity, singularity, and duration. In the following section, we will look at the way in which national myths

play a role in constructing chronotopes that “prove” and legitimize the existence of the nation and ensure national cohesion.

A myth acts as “a simple and non-falsifiable causal theory that justifies actions or assertions and is somewhat widely held by the discursive community.” (Gastil 1992: 489) National myths are therefore what supports and justifies the nation, what gives a reason for its existence, and what makes it then seem natural, unquestionable, or “non- falsifiable.” They are not simply a set of stories that create a common emotional bond; they create a set of *facts* that allow members to perceive the nation as a real, legitimate, and sometimes even scientific entity. Narrative and myth are thus extremely important to the development of the nation and the discursive construction of national identity. (De Cillia, Riesegl, and Wodak 1999; Kjaer and Palsboro 2008)

In terms of political discourse analysis, we can consider the process of national myth-building roughly in terms of what Diez calls “Discursive Nodal Points” (DNPs). DNPs are contested ideas without fixed or stable meanings that provide the site for the development of metanarratives which combat this uncertainty by filling in the contested zones with a more stable meaning. (Diez 2005) We can see the nation as a sort of DNP: it is predicated upon the concept of a fixed ethnic populace which rarely exists in its pure, imagined form; it is attached to a land or territory that is probably not historically mono- ethnic nor does it belong to a certain ethnic group in any substantial way; and, it is often seen through the lens of theories of nationalism developed centuries after the birth cultural or ethnic “nation” in question, and therefore highly anachronistic, if not entirely fabricated. Consequently, the nation is a highly unstable concept, and the myths and narratives that are built around it serve to stabilize its meaning, and therefore give it a greater political legitimacy. The

legitimizing power of the myth corresponds directly to its ability to place the nation within a certain chronotopic context, to give it a time, a history, and a reason for being and a place in which its political power can be made manifest.

This is not to say, however, that national myths are either stable or universally accepted. They do, however, enter into *le partage du sensible* both through political and aesthetic alterations, and are thus part of the common experience of the political unit. Therefore, just as we cannot mistake them for unshifting determinates of national identity or representations of universally held beliefs or formal structures, we cannot discard them as irrelevant to understanding the position of the differentiated political subject, either.

In the context of the modern nation, these myths arise in terms of a *continuity* with the past in the form of ethic or cultural heritage, a *sequential* line of historical events that symbolize and preserve this continuity, and a continual *progression* as demonstrated through the re-awakening of the nation and its restoration to a just and natural political order. These concepts of time are generated and “given flesh” through the development of narratives that propagate national myths and permit the discursive construction of national identity.

Myths of Continuity and Sequence

Myths of continuity are myths that uphold the legitimacy of the nation by proving the existence of the nation as people prior to all attempts to construct a national political body, stake land claims, or engage in struggles for self-determination. They serve as evidence that the nation is a real thing, as is the national identity, and that the present

situation only exists because it is legitimated by the past. It is for this reason that history and archaeological discoveries have always played such a large role in the development of the nation; the idea of the nation is constantly reinforced by myths of origins, heroic ancestors, and archaeology in order to prove its duration through time, and therefore its political legitimacy. (De Cillia, Rieseigl, and Wodak 1999) This is also why challenges to the legitimacy of a nation are usually launched with reference to a supposed “inauthenticity” or relative “newness.” (Halliday 2001)

Continuity is an important element of the foundation myth, or the story surrounding the origins of the nation which provides a central point of orientation in the spatiotemporal order of the nation state. (Sassen 2006) Foundation myths illustrate the “first cause” of the nation, either the moment at which it came into being or first gained a concept of its identity. The foundation myth may provide the first historical temporal marker of the nation, the point at which the nation’s history begins, however, its overall message or symbolic power extends far beyond the past. It is the locus of national continuity, the expression of the belief that the nation as it exists in the present is not only the direct inheritor of the past, but its actual embodiment. It also guarantees that the nation will endure far into the future, becoming the embodiment of both the glories of the past and the efforts and achievements of the present. Thus, the entire history of the nation, its temporal location, can be “constructed through a glance at the founding myths of a nation...which reveals the future as an inherited project and hence also located partly in the past.” (Sassen 2006: 395-396) That is to say that the past not only legitimizes the present, but ensures the future, creating a continuous link between the origins of the nation and its destiny.

In the Czech foundation myth, disseminated in its most widely known form in the collection entitled *Old Czech Legends*, by the 19th century Czech writer, Alois

Jirásek, a wandering tribe under the leadership of a man named Čech, from whom the name of the tribe is derived, stumbles upon the Bohemian promised land. In addition to abundant natural resources, the land was also entirely unpopulated, and after 3 days of meditation, Čech determined that this land was to be the final stopping point of the migrating tribe. The Czech tribes thus settled in the land that was to become Prague, and Čech's granddaughter, Libuse who had the gift of prophecy, predicted that, "Just as princes and army commanders bow their heads when they enter a house, so will they bow their heads to my city. It will be honored, noble, and respected by all the world." (Demetz 1997: 5; Sayer 1998)

We find in this myth several important elements that resurface in many foundation myths— that of the European Union included. Firstly, the myth both locates the foundation of the nation at a direct point in the past and aligns it with a sense of transcendent universality that places it beyond historical contingency. Thus, in the resemblances between the discovery of Bohemia and the Old Testament story of Moses, the mystical nature of both Čech's decision and his granddaughter Libuše's prophecies of the foundation of the city of Prague, we learn that the destiny of the Czech nation is not bound to mere historical fact, but to something more powerful, transcendent, and beyond the reach of logical argument.

Secondly, it emphasizes the ethnic continuity of the nation. This is indicated discursively by the symbolic unity of the name of the Czech people and their spiritual father, Čech. The name of the tribe is transformed into a shared patronym, demonstrating both an unbroken connection with the past and a spiritual kinship with all members of the nation. That ethnic continuity, rather than political continuity is the focus of the nation is significant; in many, if not most, cases, these ethnic nations were at some point deprived of political autonomy. Hence, the threat that such historical ruptures pose to the concept of national continuity is prevented by a focus on ethnic

continuity. (Smith 1991)

Thirdly, the myth acts as an important predictor of the nature of the future development of the nation. In this way, Jirásek's emphasis on the democratic nature of the early Czech tribes proves the Czech's innate propensity for the type of political organization found in the 19th century democratic nation-state, (Demetz 1997) just as Libuse's husband, Premysl's humble origins prove the equality of all Czech peoples, regardless of wealth or societal background. (Sayer 1998)

The predictive elements of the foundation myths, such as those found in Libuse's prophecies or in the demonstrations of national characteristics in the figures of Premysl or Čech impart an important sense of sequence to the foundation myth. Sequence provides something like a structural framework for the concept of continuity. It suggests that time moves in a linear path in which each historical event follows upon the other in such a way that events link the present to the past. Myths of sequence give further proof of the continuity of the nation by demonstrating the way in which the promise of the foundation of the nation as well as the intrinsic national unity of the people is revealed through subsequent historical events.

Because myths act as "causal theories," they are inseparable from a concept of time centered upon sequence; the emphasis on the historical and ethnic factuality of the nation grants a strong legitimating power to the sequence of historical events. History and historical memory become the basic elements of the collective myth of the nation. (De Cillia, Riesegl, and Wodak 1999) What is important, however, about these myths of sequence is not that they establish a story about national origins, but that they demonstrate the inevitability of what is to follow.

Myths of Progression

Myths of progression serve to promote the idea that the nation is part of an infinite upwards. The power of progression is most evident in what Smith calls “the nationalist salvation drama:” the idea that “nations exist from time immemorial, and that nationalists must reawaken them from a long slumber to take their place in a world of nations.” (Smith 1991: 20) Here we see the importance of progress; although the nation may find its roots in the past, the foundation of the modern nation-state becomes the apex of the national history. (Halliday 2001) The formation of the nation-state becomes representative of both the righteousness of the national people and the legitimacy of the modern political order, which has succeeded in righting historical wrongs and returning the geopolitical landscape to its natural state.

In the 19th Century, the role of ensuring the progression of the nation fell to the nationalist hero, who was responsible for the rediscovery of the nation and the return of its people to an awareness of their particular past and destiny. In this century, such progress falls within the jurisdiction of international law. Since the institutionalization of the Wilsonian principle of self-determination, the belief that the rightful restoration of the nation is bound to the progress of humanity has become an important feature of the protection of human rights. The principle of self-determination, as confirmed in the UN Charter of Human Rights, asserts that ethnic groups have a fundamental right to a international legal recognition. (Halliday 2001) From this point of view, the recognition of the nation is a key element of the ethical development of humanity, in which human rights are increasingly recognized as we grow into an awareness of the rational, universal, fundamental ethical rights granted to all humans.

National Space: The Demarcation of Place

The concept that the nation represents something natural, or empirically real is essential to the legitimacy of the nation-state. Myths alone, however, cannot give the nation its sense of “realness;” it must become visible, observable, and empirically evident through its manifestation in a particular place. In order for the nation to present itself as a real, empirically observable entity – that is, to become visible – it must inhere in space

Anthony Smith refers to these place-oriented fusions of land and history as “ethnoscapes.” The ethnoscape develops through a process of “territorialization of memory” based on the idea of an essential and real bond between an ethnic group and its particular history and the natural landscape which is “the unique and indispensable setting for the events that shaped the community.” (Smith 1999: 150) Thus, through the ethnoscape “nature becomes historicized and its features celebrated; at the same time the community and its history becomes naturalized, and its development comes to be seen as part of the natural order.” (Smith 1999: 151) Thus, the occupation of the ethnoscape by the nation becomes a matter of “historic necessity,” and therefore a key element in asserting the territorial authority and legitimacy of the nation-state.

Returning to the Czech foundation myth, we can see the importance of the ethnoscape in asserting the political legitimacy of the nation. The Czech lands, being entirely unpopulated, were open to occupation by a single tribe destined to rule over that territory for all of eternity. Although these claims to ethnic homogeneity are in strict opposition to historical and archaeological discoveries from the time period (Demetz 1997), not to mention the ethnic make-up of Bohemia during the time of Jirásek’s writing, the myth justifies the territorial occupation of Bohemia by an ethnically homogenous Czech nation.

The ethnoscape permits the spatial realization of mythical time of the nation, granting it a full chronotopic identity, a presence in both space and time. Spatially, this presence relies on a principle of *demarcation*, or the act of setting out particular, named territories in space that would otherwise be abstract and, in a sense nameless. This act of national demarcation creates the illusion that “the map of the world reflects a pre-existing reality – the distribution of peoples across the globe” (Halliday 2001: 447) through which the nation can begin to claim a true political presence. It is therefore only by attaching itself to a concept of space can its chronotope appear whole, allowing it to become part of *le partage du sensible* and therefore truly political.

The role of demarcation in the national concept of space can be best understood through Tuan’s distinction between space and place. He writes:

Space is a common symbol of freedom in the Western world. Space lies open; it suggests future and invites action. On the negative side, space and freedom are a threat. A root meaning of the word ‘bad’ is ‘open.’ To be open and free is to be exposed and vulnerable. Open space has no trodden paths and signposts. It has no fixed pattern of established human meaning; it is like a blank sheet on which meaning may be imposed. Enclosed and humanized space is place. Compared to space, place is a calm center of established values. Human beings require both space and place. Human lives are a dialectical movement between shelter and venture, attachment and freedom...A healthy being welcomes constraint and freedom, the boundedness of place and the exposure of space. (Tuan 1977: 54)

National space, like place, is attached to meaning; it is subjectively experienced and associated with the self. It is also enclosed and definite. Through the experience of

national space, national history takes on shape, just as through the narrative of national myth, space assumes a meaning and becomes place.

It is through the principle of demarcation that boundaries and borders become salient. Prior to the development of the territorial state, boundaries were of lesser importance. In the Frankish or Roman empires, for example, boundaries were established by voluntary limitation, not because there was no desire for control beyond the reach of the centralized empire, but because the very recognition of boundaries demands the recognition of the equal right to sovereignty and legal legitimacy of other states. (Sassen 2006) Once the understanding of the nation as empirical fact was established through the processes of territorialization, borders became of greater significance. This was especially true once nationalist movements expanded the concept of the nation beyond that of a political community of equals into an ethnic group bound by common traditions, customs, histories, and cultural practices, nations came to be seen as separate, distinctive communities established on scientific and empirical grounds. (Halliday 2001)

Once the nation became fact, as a historical entity necessarily bound to a certain territory, or ethnoscape, the demarcation of national places became of crucial importance. Indeed, through the demarcation of national space, boundaries have come to be perceived not only as an important guarantor of the rights of the national peoples involved, but also of an overarching global stability. (Halliday 2001)

The Nation and the Experience of the Political Subject

As memory becomes rooted in space and territory is connected to a sense of political experience, the nation-state acquires the property of appearing real. Through this

realness it becomes political; that is, it has the ability to insert itself into *le partage du sensible* and to influence the subject's sensory experience of the world. In doing so, as a political body, it becomes more than real; it also becomes "fact." It is provable both in a spatial sense, through visibility and observation, and in a temporal sense, through myths of causation and continuity. That is not to say, however, that this national construction of reality is capable of entirely supplanting the political experience of the subject.

Through the processes of national centralization and demarcation arises a disjunction between the local experience of political subjects and the chronotopic construction of the nation. (Sassen 2006) This results in a sense of political alienation or a distrust of state space, like that we find in the following passage from W.G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*, in which the protagonist, Austerlitz himself, discusses the difference between intimate, human places and the massive state buildings that represent political power.

Someone...ought to draw up a catalogue of types of buildings, listed in order of size, and it would be immediately obvious that domestic buildings of *less* than normal size – the little cottage in the fields, the hermitage – the lock-keeper's lodge, the pavilion for viewing the landscape, the children's bothy in the garden – are those that offer us at least a semblance of peace, whereas no one in his right mind could truthfully say that he liked a vast edifice such as the Palace of Justice on the old Gallows Hill in Brussels. At the most we gaze at it in wonder, a kind of wonder which in itself is a form of dawning horror, for somehow we know by instinct that outsize buildings cast the shadow of their own destruction before them, and are designed from the first with an eye to their later existence as ruins.

(Sebald 2001: 4)

Here we see how it is not the grandeur of the state that resonates the most with personal experience, but rather the intimate, local places which people see as a part of their own experiential landscapes. It is the sheer size of state architecture that prophecies its “later existence as ruins,” because it betrays the extent to which such public, expansive places are no more than constructions of experience, rather than experiences themselves.

Likewise, the centralizing projects of the nation and the broad generalities of its myths expose its falseness – and therefore its weakness – by bringing into stark relief the gaps between the experience of the political subject and that posited by the state.

State Time: Universality, Timelessness, and Progress

Like the nation, the state also strives to establish itself as fact through the development of a chronotope. However, its factual basis lies less in experience, subjectivity, and myth than in rationality, uniformity, and truths that are universally “self-evident.” In this sense, time plays less of a role in the state; things that are rational today were rational yesterday, and neither their continuity nor their sequence needs to be emphasized. That does not mean, however, that neither concepts of continuity nor sequence is important to the state. They provide the fundamental structure for the development of state progress: the notion that over time, the underlying rational order of the world has become realized through a progressive sequence of events and that the state has been instrumental in the process of realization.

From the beginning, the legitimacy of the state has been predicated on the idea that it represents the highest point of human social development, and as such its authority is beyond question. As Max Weber writes: “The bureaucratic structure is everywhere a late product of development...Everywhere its origin and its diffusion have therefore had

‘revolutionary’ results...The march of bureaucracy has destroyed structures of domination which had no rational character.” (Weber 1946: 244) Progress is in this sense a state of revelation, in which the rational is made apparent by the ever increasing ability of the human mind to grasp the inherent logic of the world.

An important element of this concept of the state as a manifestation of progressive time is the role of rupture, or the idea that the development of the state marks a decisive break from a less developed, less evolved past. Laclau discusses how this concept of rupture was also key to the understanding of progress during the Enlightenment; in that case, rupture was intended to demonstrate a radical emancipation from the irrationality of the past and to impose a chasm between the present and what came before. Thus, in the state, narratives of continuity and sequence take on a different character; they continue to establish the historical foundation of the political body, but do so in terms of the decisive break with an undesirable or somehow inferior past and the awakening of a new era of rationality and order.

State Space: Planarity, Divisibility, and Expansion

This traditional Weberian definition of the nation-state has become well entrenched into contemporary conceptions of the state. Whether the role of state bureaucracy is contested or defended, the modern state has become identified with the processes of rationalization and bureaucratization that characterize post-Enlightenment modernity. This is also true of the concept of modern space, which has become identified with the oppressive rationalization of Weber’s ‘iron cage.’ (Summers 2003) The construction of modern space is seen as a process of “emptying out” the place markers that once defined the subjective, local spaces of the pre-Modern era. (Lash and Urry 1994) It represents the substitution of the local for the national, the particular for the universal, the dispersed for

the centralized. In terms of Tuan's distinction between space and place, the state becomes the political embodiment of expansive, de-humanized space.

Yet, the association with the state and space is also seen as an expression as the innate rationality of the state, and therefore the sense of justice, equality, and freedom associated with the liberal democratic values which it embodies. We see this interpretation of state space in the novel *The Glass Room*, by Simon Mawer, in which a young Czech family constructs a modern house built on the principles of functionalism as an expression of their personal alignment with the values of the modern state.

Space, light, glass; some spare furniture; windows looking out on a garden; a sweep of shining floor, travertine, perhaps; white and ivory and the gleam of chrome...*der Glasraum, der Glastraum*, a single letter change metamorphosing one into the other, the Glass Space becoming the Glass Dream, a dream that went with the spirit of the brand new country in which they found themselves, a state in which being Czech or German or Jew would not matter, in which democracy would prevail and art and science would continue to bring happiness to all people. (Mawer 2009: 25-26)

As we can see from the above passage, modern space is embodied in the concept of the plane – space, light, windows, “a sweep of shining floor.” The plane is a way of conceiving of space as the relation between equivalent points and is imposed on real space in such a way that it allows for the perception of symmetry, uniformity, connection, and continuity. It is the basic form of order in “civilized space;” it supplies the basic format for the understanding and practice of architecture, construction, writing, city planning, cartography, and time. (Summers 2003) It also provides the basic format for the understanding of political order within the rational state, of the charting out and

representation of political territory, and the means of conceiving of social and spatial relationships between political subjects. (Scott 1998) Planarity is what makes it possible for us to conceive of the demarcation of abstract space in territory, the uniformity of state authority over otherwise heterogeneous elements, the equality of citizens, and the homogeneity of people who have little connection to each other beyond the occupation of a certain territory.

The development of the plane depends upon the construction of what Ernesto Laclau(1996) refers to as a “chain of equivalencies,” or the ties of equality that bind each element of a system to each other in order to create a sense of sameness and inclusion. We can see this manifested in the state in the form of citizenship, in which all members of the political body are theoretically equal by virtue of their bonds of sameness. The foundation of a legal and political community as understood by the modern nation state demands an equality between members, based on the rights of citizenship and the laws of the nation. (Smith 1991) This equality between members, as well as the concept of citizenship and legal jurisdiction, are all rooted in an understanding of national or state territory as that which establishes equivalence. Without a planar spatial order, the concept of uniform relations between equivalent points would be impossible. (Summers 2003)

The concept of consensus, in particular, would be impossible without the concept of planar order. Consensus is the practice of establishing equivalency between the members of the state in order to justify the unitary nature of the whole, so that the state can legitimately act in accordance with the will of “the people,” despite differences or unevenness among the population. While in terms of the nation, consensus may be conceived of as something arising “naturally” from a shared ethnic identity, in the rational state, it arises through statistics, polling, and representational rule. Thus, if the

nation-state can be considered to be, as John Schwarzmantel writes, “one of the great success stories of modern times in successfully transcending localism and in bringing citizens together in the unit of the nation state” (Schwarzmantel 2001: 390), it is not because it unified pre-existing communities and societies, but because it made forms of institutionalized unity possible through the representation of itself in consensus and counting.

Another key feature of planarity is its connection to universality. A planar state, in which all points are equal, has no need to respect boundaries. The rationality of its projects are universal and thus cannot be confined within territorial borders. Thus, we see that since the inception of the nation-state, “civic solidarity has been transformed step by step into a more and more abstract concept of solidarity.” Rights were progressively extended from a demarcated number of citizens to *everyone*; “therefore *every* human being is virtually supposed to be a member of the particular civic body of *any* republican nation-state.” (Brunkhorst 2000: 53) This planar universality does not only apply to rights, however; it can also apply to the principles of rationality themselves, including the acceptance of certain ethical or normative views that are deemed to be universal. Thus, planarity is not only the condition of the state, but also of cosmopolitan attempts to see the expansion of rights and values on a global level through the principle of equivalency.

One of the drawbacks of the planar representation is that it only has one side; it admits no difference. “A fully planar image...can only be seen from one side, and occludes its farther side in being made to face us, which contravenes its quasi-substitutive value by implying virtual space.” (Summers 2003: 357) Truly planar images will never be able to reveal more than their surface. Therefore, because the viewer cannot see the back or the sides of the planar image, if the image is to appear “real,” it must rely on virtual representations of space. The planar image that seeks to “represent the world” must conjure up virtual worlds in order to capture the multifaceted, irregular, shifting nature of

real space.

Likewise, the modern state as based on a planar order can never fully represent a heterogeneous society; however, as we have seen above, its rationality depends on its ability to fully represent the world. Thus, in order to achieve full representability – and therefore democratic legitimacy – it must conjure up a virtual representation. “The people” is one such representation, as are fictions of national identity, or the legitimacy of elected bodies. However, as discussed in the first section of this paper, representation is never a condition of the political; the political is generated through experience and through one’s articulation of that experience. The political options offered by the modern state through the representation of planar order seek to replace the experience of the political subject with a virtual representation of uniformity. The confusion between this planar representation and real experience results in what Rancière refers to as an “ethical community.”

Silencing and Exclusion in the Experience of the Nation-State

In a 2007 study, Davidson explores the way in which references to space and time (temporal and spatial deixis) in the discursive patterns of East Berliners are used to subtly indicate political position and to create a “referential common,” or a sense of East German-ness. She argues that the use of adverbial deictics like “here” and “now” both demonstrate one’s physical position in a spatiotemporal context and indicate political belief and biographical information – in the case of her paper, attitudes towards German reunification and pre-reunification citizenship. (Davidson 2007; see also Silverstein 2005)

In Davidson’s analysis, time periods – specifically those before and after reunification –

develop an ideological significance transferred from the perceived moral or ethical legitimacy of the state. Speakers consider the present time period in a positive or negative light depending on the degree to which the speaker concedes the morality of the present government. Thus, in Pan-German for a dominated by West German hegemony, the present is seen as a time of moral superiority, “a point of progress beyond fascism and dictatorship.” (215) However, in East-Germany, the present is known as “these so-called West times” (*diese so genannte West-Zeiten*), the time of domination of Western values, distinguished from a less commercial, more authentic, Eastern past.

She also notes the emergence of patterns of disfluency, or pauses and gaps in discourse, that arise during the process of temporal or spatial deixis – the use of temporal or spatial markers that permit the orientation of the speaker in a chronotopic context. Disfluency becomes a way of allowing speakers to express “a position taken on moral grounds” without having to overtly align themselves with a political opinion that might diverge from the moral strictures of the present state. (Davidson 2007: 223-224) It operates as a sort of subtle formal structure (Van Dijk 2009) that permits speakers to discretely position themselves politically, to indicate the presence of multiple voices or opinions, or to avoid committing themselves to a certain political viewpoint. As an example, she gives the case of a former employee of the Berlin Light Works who uses disfluency when referring to the former East Germany in order to express tacit regret over the collapse of his former employer following the introduction of the market economy. (Davidson 2007)

In Davidson’s analysis, we see the way in which the distinctions between the chronotopic political experience of the political and a larger, state-sanctioned chronotopic experience, result in processes of silencing and exclusion. Here, the pressure of conforming to the norms of a consensus-based process of nation- building, combined with a dubious ethical position resulting from an alignment with the past literally serve to suppress the

articulations of the political subjects. Articulations of their personal experience of political conditions – the experience of Communism, of regime change, of the redistribution of political spaces and environments – are thus suppressed, and language becomes a means of representing a false point of view, a false politics, a false orientation of self in a political and historical environment.

There is a similar process of silencing in fictive treatments of WWII. In *The Rings of Saturn*, Sebald writes of an encounter with a British gardener at a manor house who as a young boy during World War II used to watch the planes leaving from Britain on bombing expeditions to Germany. The gardener was fascinated with Germany and “even learnt German, after a fashion, so that I could read what the Germans themselves had said about the bombings and their lives in the ruined cities.” (Sebald 1998: 39) However, he could find few accounts of the bombings:

To my astonishment, however, I soon found the search for such accounts invariably proved fruitless. No one at the time seemed to have written about their experiences or afterwards recorded their memories. Even if you asked people directly, it was as if everything had been erased from their minds. (Sebald 1998: 39)

The Germans’ inability to talk about the violence suffered by their people during WWII is a consistent theme in Sebald’s work. In 1997, he delivered a series of lectures on the subject, published in slightly altered form in *On the Natural History of Destruction*. He describes “a curious blindness to experience” in accounts of the bombings of German cities found in both the foreign and the German press. (Sebald 1999: 20) as well as an unwillingness among the general populace to discuss their experiences. He writes that perhaps there were ethical sentiments or feelings of guilt that prevented them from speaking:

It is also possible...that quite a number of those affected by their air raids, despite their grim but impotent fury in the face of such obvious madness, regarded the firestorms as a just punishment, even an act of retribution on the part of a higher power with which there could be no dispute. (Sebald 2003: 14)

Yet, the extent to which the German populace saw the violence of WWII as just retribution is questionable in light of contemporary popular attitudes towards the processes of denazification during the 1940s and 50s, as well as Konrad Adenauer's policy of *Vergangenheitspolitik*. In a 1949 address to the parliament of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG), Adenauer laid out his policy of *Vergangenheitspolitik*, stating:

The government of the Federal Republic, in the belief that many have subjectively atoned for a guilt that was not heavy, is determined where it appears acceptable to do so to put the past behind us. (Adenauer in Judd 2007: 61)

This is not an attitude that appears to express a great sense of guilt or a feeling that the punishment of the German people was just or deserved. However, at the time the German population was also very conscious of being seen as the perpetrator or the guilty party on the international level. Indeed, even those actions of public "atonement" that were undertaken during the *Vergangenheitspolitik* era, namely the continued demarcation and detention of Nazis were done with the consciousness that "Germany was watched over by the Allies." (Frei 2003: 37)

The German silence towards the experience of suffering during World War II can be

seen in the same light as those acts of discursive disfluency found among the former East-Berliners. Because the act of articulating personal experience implies too great an alignment with what is ethically questionable, they were unable to express – or even accurately describe – the nature of their war experience. In the processes of silencing we have seen above, those political subjects who found themselves on the side of the perpetrators, on the side of those who had committed grievous moral, ethical, and political wrongs, were stripped of their rights to articulate their political experiences – even when they had also experienced intense suffering, loss, and physical pain. If a political order based on the Westphalian-era balance of power is to be overcome, then so must those distinctions of victim and perpetrator that divide political experience into right or wrong.

Conclusion

In the chronotope of the nation-state, we see that the dual legitimizing processes of consensus building and ethical rationality are built into the special chronotopic arrangement of the nation-state. This chronotope, which is based on a concept of time as continuous and progressive and space as planar and demarcated, tends towards a process of unification, homogenization, and saturation which distances itself from the political experience of its subjects, thereby exposing gaps between the macro-chronotope of the state and the variety of micro-chronotopes of the subjects. The nation-state then must rely on the concepts of consensus and ethics as a means of obscuring those discrepancies and legitimizing the state.

Chapter 5 : The Chronotope of the European Union

There is no agreement on what “Europe” means, especially as a political entity. While some understand political unity of the European states as the natural political manifestation of a pre-existing cultural or civilizational unity, others perceive it as a rational instrument designed to achieve certain goals, such as peace, economic prosperity, or trade. Still others see Europe as an expression of universal rational values, which Europe, having first created them, now has a responsibility to promote both on the international scene and within its own borders. (Eriksen and Fossum 2004) As Thomas Diez writes: “When we talk about ‘Europe,’ we therefore probably mean different Europes.” (Diez 2004: 320)

This lack of a unified identity is often seen as a key threat to the legitimization process within the EU. Eriksen (2005), for example, sees the lack of identity as a hindrance to the development of a European public sphere, and therefore a main cause of a “democratic deficit” within the EU. At the same time, it is clear to many that no European identity will resemble a national identity such as those which pertain to the nation-states; rather, a European identity would be “conducive to a wide range of identities and forms of belonging.” (Fossum 2001) A European identity, therefore, would be a post-national identity, based on inclusion of difference and political integration.

However, many of the alternative forms of political organization within the EU inadvertently embrace certain of the presuppositions upon which the nation-state was founded, thus perpetuating its logic rather than destroying it. Although this may not be immediately apparent within their institutional structures, through the investigation of the chronotopes of the nation and of the EU, we see the continuation of certain concepts of

time and space through which both the nation-state and the EU are experienced by their political subjects.

In the following chapter, we will consider the chronotopic constructions that arise from the EU's attempts to establish internal and external political legitimacy. By establishing the spatiotemporal markers that set the framework of European identity, we can then see whether or not the EU as a political body corresponds to a collective political experience or, as the nation-state, creates a construction of political experience that bars participation and enforces homogeneity.

European Identity and the Legitimacy Debate

Before discussing the role of the chronotope in defining European legitimacy, it is useful to engage in a quick overview of the major arguments within the legitimacy debate. In all arguments, we see a resurgence of certain concepts that are central to the process of legitimizing the nation-state, particularly those state-like determinations that assert the universal rationality of the European project and concepts of a particularized European culture, civilization, and values that recall national attitudes to ethnicity and the existence of a unified national people.

Often, EU legitimacy corresponds to the division between the nation and the state that we found in our earlier discussion. This division arises most clearly in the federalism versus functionalism debates of the 1950s and 60s. Federalist approaches to European integration sought a solution to the conflicts between nation-states that dominated the first half of the 20th century through the implementation of ideological values in a formalized legal institution. Ultimately – and perhaps paradoxically – this would result

in “the reproduction of a state-like entity, replicating the format of the nation-state, albeit in supranational form.” (Rosamond 2000: 27) Functionalism, on the other hand, adopted a technocratic, rationalistic, and normative approach to the organization of the European Union that promoted “the prioritization of human needs or public welfare, as opposed to, say, the sanctity of the nation-state or the celebration of any particular ideological credo.” (Rosamond 2000: 33)

In functionalism we find an attitude that is more akin to that of the state, in which organization is subservient to universal rational mechanisms and its duty is to ensure that those mechanisms are respected in the form of political organization. In federalism, we find a more national approach, in which political organization is tied to the realization of certain cultural values and ideologies. It is important to highlight here a theme that will prove persistent in our analysis of the EU, which is that both approaches were posited as a means of overcoming what were perceived as the dangers of the totalitarian and exclusionary nation-state. Thus, it is not entirely accurate to say that federalism wanted to build a European “nation;” however, it is indubitable that certain national tendencies did – and do—persist in federalist aspirations.

Of course, these early debates have become more complicated, nuanced, and varied over time, and it is now perhaps more appropriate to see them in terms that move beyond the state versus nation, function versus federation binaries. We can now place legitimacy approaches in a more multi-sided schema, such as that found in Jachtenfuchs, Diez, and Jung’s (1998) influential typology of “polity-ideas,” or those ideas which run beneath various forms of discourse within the legitimacy debate. They have identified four primary polity-ideas that influence EU legitimacy discourse: Federal State, Intergovernmental Cooperation, Economic Community, and Network. Each represents different ways of conceiving of European legitimacy in terms of the role of the nation-state, the end goal (final cause) of European integration, and its identity as political body.

Additionally, Eriksen and Fossum have identified three different “options” for repairing what is known as the “legitimacy deficit” in the EU, each focusing on a different definition of the EU’s identity as a political body:

The first speaks of the EU as a *problem-solving entity* based on derived legitimacy and a narrow economic citizenship; the second sees the EU as a *value-based community* premised on social and cultural citizenship; and the third invokes a *rights-based post-national union*, based on full-fledged political citizenship. (Eriksen and Fossum 2004: 346, italics my own)

Each of these three options in some way echoes and replicates certain of the chronotopic assumptions of the nation-state. While the underlying dynamics are obviously more complex and variable, we can see an adherence to planar order and rational equivalence in both the rights-based union and the rational problem-solving entity. The value-based community recalls certain ideas of ethnic or cultural homogeneity and bounded equivalence found in the concept of the nation. At the same time, they are all for the most part attached to a sense of newness, to the idea that the European Union is something radically different, both from other political entities and from its own past.

If we look at the definition of the EU as a problem-solving entity, we see a reflection of certain understandings of the state as a rational administrative instrument. From this point of view, the EU has a role based on a functional differentiation of organizational jurisdiction, purpose, and outcome. As Thomas Diez argues, such viewpoints are usually considered to be Eurosceptic; however, this determination is not entirely accurate. They are often less opposed to the EU itself than to the intrusion of the EU into spheres outside of its rightful jurisdiction, that is, into the spheres of competency belonging to the nation-state. In this framework, the EU should play a role pertaining to economic coordination,

while the nation-state maintains a political role based on participation, national identity, and consensus. (Diez 2001) This sort of polity-idea, then, is not a full out rejection of the EU, but rather an expression of the belief that the EU should retain functional, administrative powers that are in line with its role as a rational instrument. This determination is similar to those arguments that the state is valuable because of its ability to embody rational principles of organization based on natural, mechanical laws.

Just as within the state chronotope, these views see the political entity as a rational entity that ultimately binds its members through a process of abstract equivalence. These members, however, are not citizens, but nation-state units that cooperate in accordance with a set of rational laws. Thus, space is opened through free trade, border restrictions are dropped, and mobility encouraged – only when it serves the interests of the nation-state and follows rational economic principles. (see Klaus 2009) The EU thus takes on only those powers necessary for its satisfactory performance as an instrument of the nation state, while the nation-state maintains control over the political powers, especially those connected to the representation of the citizenry. There is a separation between rational, economic governance and governance by a national political community based on a cohesive social identity. (See Diez 2001)

It should be noted that despite the emphasis they place on the symbolic and ethnic importance of the national state and their opposition towards value-based definitions of the EU, these more functionalist or instrumentalist approaches do not entirely reject the idea of a European cultural heritage; however, they see it as reflected in terms of the set of universal, European values summarized in the second stanza of the preamble to The Treaty of the European Union: “the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law.” European heritage is thus tied to the universal, rational values of the liberal democracy, rather than

the ethnic particularity reserved for the nation-state

The belief that European Unity lies in its role as a “value-based” community retains some of the understandings of the nation as the political expression of a unified culture or ethnicity. This approach often signifies an attempt to reconstruct a Europe based on a certain shared pan-European identity expressed in common origins, cultural values, shared identity, and a sense of descent and is the predominant attitude among those who support the “softer” side of European integration – that is, integration justified by common culture, values, and history – towards the foundation of the European Union is oriented towards ideas – or ideals – rather than interests.

This understanding of European legitimacy often circles around the idea of a unity founded on a European culture, a “European family” bound by common cultural or civilizational descent, if not ethnic, and ethical values. We find this in some of the earliest expressions of the need for a formal institutional bond between European states; in 1946, Winston Churchill’s argument in favor of a form of European integration was that “The first step in the re-creation of the European family must be a partnership between France and Germany.” (In Judt 2007: 155) As we shall see later, it is around this process of “re-creating” the European family that a quasi-national foundation myth of the European Union has been developed.

The belief that the survival of the European Union is contingent upon an awakening and recognition of a pan-European culture or family remains a common argument. For example, in an essay entitled “The Future of European Integration: Cultural Aspects,” the former General Director of Heritage and Cultural Promotion of the Regional Government of Castilla-Léon, Javier Toquero, writes:

If we really believe in and want a European Union, we must join in

our common culture. My personal, pro-European conviction is that Europe will be something when we believe that we belong to a ‘European Cultural Union. (Toquero 2003: 245)

It should be noted, however, that this viewpoint is not necessarily tied to a nationalistic concept that Europe should be mono-cultural or should suppress its current cultural diversity. Toquero, for example, also asserts that “Of course, it is certain that not all European cultures can feel themselves to be equally close – our emotions are different before a piece of Lapp art made of carved antlers and the Piazza de San Marcos.” (Toquero 2003: 247)

The belief that Europe should serve as a rights-based post-national union surfaces most obviously in those moral cosmopolitan approaches to the European Union discussed in the first section of the paper. Habermas’ understanding of European legitimacy, for example, emerges from his theory of communicative logic as a means of social inclusion, in which deliberation, cooperation, and the protection of basic rights ensure rational institutional development.

A communicative logic conceives of the EU as a polity *sui generis*. As such, it has proceeded well beyond intergovernmentalism, and has established a polity that is sensitive to cultural difference. The EU, in this view, is in need of direct legitimation and a firmer basis of popular participation than the one provided for by the democratic processes at the state level. (Eriksen and Fossum 2004: 438)

From this viewpoint, therefore, the EU rises directly from the implementation of rational values based on human rights, and is therefore itself the political embodiment of a rational ethics that provides the foundation of its legitimacy. As we shall see later, this is

perceived as extending to the EU's international role, in which it becomes responsible for ensuring the values of moral cosmopolitanism on a global scale.

Bellamy and Castiglione (2003) take the formation of a legitimacy typology farther by introducing a matrix between internal and external forms of legitimacy and polity and regime determinations of legitimacy. While internal legitimacy relates to the values, customs, and social norms of political actors, external legitimacy relates to the general, universal, and formal principles and values underlying the organization and effects of political systems. As might be expected, internal legitimacy mainly affects the way in which citizens view the political body, while external legitimacy affects the role of the political body on the international scene. Polity determinations relate to the common, public sphere of decision making, whereas regime determinations relate to the type of governance and the institutional structure of the political body. Internally, polity is important in terms of language, culture, history, and the perceived relationships between citizens and the state. Externally, it determines the extent to which other states recognize its attitudes towards citizenship and internal justice as consistent with international law. Regime determinations relate to the style of governance and its range of power. Internally, it is important in terms of political culture and the expectations of its citizenry, while externally, it is important in terms of the "rational-legal characteristics associated with the rule of law," such as protection against injustice, the granting of democratic rights, and the separation between the public and the private.

In our following discussion, these distinctions drawn between different attitudes towards European legitimacy will become important ways of distinguishing between the relationship of certain ideas of time and space to different and diverse conceptions of both the EU as a viable political organization and as an element in the sensory experience of political conditions. They will prove useful means of outlining the complex and multiplicitous nature of debates and concerns surrounding the spatial and temporal

“markers” within the European chronotope.

Indeed, these modes of typologizing the European legitimacy debate have already permitted us to consider several important aspects of European identity. We have seen that even as polity ideas diverge, they tend to do so in ways that support either a cultural, quasi-national European identity or a rational, state-like political entity. They are engaged in the perpetuation of many of the experiential, aesthetic, political, and conceptual conditions of the nation-state. As we shall see below, these forms of perpetuation are thus embedded in the European chronotope, where we find similar conceptions of time as continuous, sequential, and progressive and space as planar and demarcated. As in the nation-state, these chronotopic attitudes result in processes of closure and exclusion and the construction of virtual political experiences that do not correspond to those of the populace.

Establishing European Legitimacy: Finding a Chronotope

The political legitimacy of the EU depends on finding a chronotope, placing it within a certain spatiotemporal framework that provides its cause and purpose, as well as its territory and jurisdiction. We can see the importance of the chronotope in the following quotation from an essay entitled: “Is Europe a Mapmaker’s Illusion?”

For unlike China, a country with a long history, or the United States, a country with a short history, the European area is still an abstract territory. It is not a state, or a nation, or an empire, or even a ‘country.’ It is a concept, a geopolitical model in progress. (Victor 2007: 37)

In this essay, the author questions whether or not European identity can be considered in terms of European geography, or whether it is as shifting and indeterminate as the official boundaries of Europe itself. What is evident here is not only the idea that Europe is still undefined, but the extent to which the author connects that definition to a concept of history. We see that the author links the act of determining political space with a clear determination of historical identity; a political entity that remains a “concept” or “a model in progress” is not yet capable of setting its territorial boundaries.

In the following sections, we shall explore constructions of European time and space through the chronotope. In order to do so, we shall first identify various temporal and spatial markers, or references and constructions of time that surface frequently in *le partage du sensible* and therefore become part of a larger, common political experience.

European Time in the Legitimacy Debate

In reconstructing the framework of European time, three primary temporal markers surface: 1) the distant European past, as symbolized by figures like Charlemagne or values like liberal democracy or the Judeo-Christian tradition; 2) the recent past surrounding WWII and the triumph over nationalist totalitarianism through the founding of the European Union; and, 3) the complete and radical rupture with the past and the foundation of a new, post- national political body.

This three-part temporal framework is clearly established in the preamble to The Treaty of the European Union. The first three reasons, or legitimations, it lists for the necessity of European integration place the EU firmly within a temporal context. Thus, the

designers of the treaty confirm that they are:

RESOLVED to mark a new stage in the process of European integration undertaken with the establishment of the European Communities,

DRAWING INSPIRATION from the cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe, from which have developed the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law,

RECALLING the historic importance of the ending of the division of the European continent and the need to create firm bases for the construction of the future Europe

Firstly, the designers note the “newness” of the European Union and its expression of a fundamental break or rupture with the past. Secondly, they place the European Union firmly within the context of a “cultural inheritance” which has progressively built over centuries until reaching the point of developing a set of “universal values.” Thirdly, they recall Europe’s divisive past, simultaneously placing it clearly within the context of European historical identity and invoking a clean rupture with Europe’s darker history, allowing a new, unified prosperous political entity to arise.

We are here reminded of Saskia Sassen’s definition of national time as that which negotiates between the national past and the future in such a way that the past becomes a mark of the necessity of the state (Sassen 2006) Thus, both a cultural continuity and a

decisive break with the sequence of past historical events culminates in a necessary progression to a unified European future. We can also recall Anthony Smith's "nationalist salvation drama" in which "nations exist from time immemorial, and...nationalists must reawaken them from a long slumber to take their place in a world of nations." (Smith 1991: 20) In this European salvation drama, Europe is rooted in a set of universal, unquestionable principles developed in a distant (here, unnamed) past; these principles were at some point forgotten, resulting in war and division; the founders of the European Union are then charged with instituting a "new phase" in the continuous European history and reawakening Europe's true state of cultural unity

This three-part temporal framework surfaces in other elements of the EU institutional framework, as well. Kjær and Palsboro, for instance, note the way in which European legal institutions do "not merely [refer] to an already existing 'European-ness' of law, established in the past, but [also emphasize] the necessity of organizing law differently after the atrocities done in the name of the national legal systems in the twentieth century." For this reason, the European Convention of Human Rights is continually described as a "revolution" in legal discourse, the creation of a legal morality heretofore unseen, when it is not in actuality a singular document. Both in its construction and its processes of self-legitimation, European law employs "both strategies of *perpetuation*, *preservation*, and *reconstruction* and strategies of *new-construction*." (Kjær and Palsboro 2008: 614) Thus, even as European lawmakers strive to perpetuate a European heritage located in an historical past, they also strive to create something absolutely new which marks a rupture from previous forms of organization.

In the following pages, we shall sketch out some of the ways in which the three part European temporal framework surfaces in discussions of what is ultimately the foundation myth of the European Union: the story of the unfolding of the processes of integration within the context of both a continuous perpetuation of history and a radical

break from the past. We shall find that this European time mirrors the national time, both by creating the possibility of unity and agreement within the legitimacy debate and by engaging in processes of closure, homogenization, and exclusion. The development of an exclusive and homogenous time

Continuity, Culture, and Heritage: The European Past

Representations of European cultural heritage, or the “cultural, religious and humanist inheritance of Europe” as mentioned in the Treaty of the European Union, promote the EU as either something rooted in either a distant past which gave birth to certain universal truths transcend time or space, but are nevertheless European in nature: “the universal values of the inviolable and inalienable rights of the human person, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law.” (Preamble to the Treaty of the European Union) In these representations, certain pan-European heroes emerge to form what Ernst Haas calls the “‘immanent myth’ of European unity,” or the claim that distant historical antecedents, such as the Roman and Carolingian empires, set the precedent for European integration. (Haas 2008: 4)

One such hero emerges in the historical figure of Charlemagne, who has become appropriated as representative symbol of pan-European political alliance. He has become a “vector of collective memory” that unites most of Europe in a common historical – and territorial – context, effectively bridging the Franco-German divisions that seemed such a threat to the early processes of European integration. (see Judt 2007) In this way, the European embodiment in the Carolingian prototype effectively erases a 1300 year history of inter-state wars.

The role of Charlemagne as a quasi-heroic unifying figure has been quite consciously

cultivated by European Union officials and widely adopted within the public realm. The Charlemagne building in Brussels acts as the physical location of the European Union's project of integration, the building in which the European Commission treats issues of enlargement, interpretation, and trade (all of which relate to overcoming national boundaries). The Charlemagne Prize is granted in Aachen, the seat of Charlemagne's empire, to citizens who have performed "distinguished service on behalf of European unification" and outstanding contributions to the cause of European understanding and communal endeavour, of humanity and world peace." (Charlemagne 2009) Even The Economist's recurring column on the European Union is entitled "Charlemagne."

These European heroes, however, are not limited to political figures; scientists, artists, and philosophers make an appearance as well. Kant figures largely, primarily because of his role in first establishing the idea of an international legal framework, credited as being the prototype for the European Union. (Rosamond 2000) Erasmus and Socrates lend their names to the EU-sponsored programs of academic exchange.

Through the symbolic power of these historical figures, the EU as institution becomes the direct outcome of the innovations of a set of European political, cultural, and intellectual heroes and is therefore responsible for carrying out the projects of its progenitors. For example, in his call for the development of the EU as a post-national entity, Linklater writes: "The conjunction of forces transforming contemporary Europe suggests that the time is ripe to engineer a further revolution in political thought, or, more accurately, to complete the Copernican revolution in thinking which was initiated by Kant." (Linklater 1998: 113) He thus posits the EU both as revolutionary, signifying rupture, and as continuous, a sort of torch bearer for the heroes of the past. This reinforces a concept of Europe and, consequently the European Union, as the inevitable outcome of a temporal continuity.

In a 2008 the President of the European Commission, Jose Barroso delivered a speech at the launch of the European Foundation for Democracy, tellingly entitled “Democracy: a European invention patented 25 centuries ago in Athens.” Barroso stated that:

More recently, it was after WWII that the project of European integration was born, based on certain values: liberty, the rule of law, social justice and respect for human rights, fundamental freedoms and diversity. As the founding fathers made clear, the EU's *raison d'être*, while channeled through an ongoing process of economic integration, is in fact about realising the higher political values of peace, freedom and solidarity. And if we see how far we have travelled since those beginnings 60 years ago you will agree with me that it is impossible to be pessimistic about Europe. (Barroso 2008)

For Barroso, although European integration may appear to some to be about economic interests, it is “in fact” about something quite different: it is about the realization of “higher political values.” These higher values, which we can associate with an image of ascension, of evolution, development, and progress, have been realized – that is, manifested through time – as Europe has “traveled” through a sort of temporal space towards the universalization of values, to fulfill the mission (its “*raison d'être*”) established by “the founding fathers.”

We can see in Barroso’s speech the development of a fundamentally nationalist chronotopic attitude. Europe is on a sort of temporal journey through which it must ascend – or, in a sense, return – to the values established by its founders. Although it may appear to travel in a different direction – for example, towards achieving economic goals – it has in fact never been derailed from its universal, “higher” goals. The universality of this value-based temporal construction is bound to a sense of necessity;

here, Europe has no choice but to see the ideals it “patented 25 centuries ago in Athens” realized around the world. In this speech, as well as all of the aforementioned constructions of European historical continuity there is a clear reproduction of nation-state concepts of time. European time becomes the expression of a continuity with the past, but also with a progressive and sequential movement towards its culmination in a right and natural political order.

Although the individual and ideological markers of the common European past are varied, they are generally associated higher moral principles – often, universal values that are understood to extend beyond the boundaries of the European Union to touch a fundamental concept of humanity. Umberto Eco, for example, lists the following:

The fundamental principles of the so-called Western world, the Greek and Judeo-Christian heritage, the ideas of freedom and equality born out of the French Revolution, the heritage of modern science that started with Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Descartes, and Francis Bacon, the capitalistic form of production, the secularization of the State, Roman or Common Law, the very idea of justice achieved through class struggle (all typical products of the European Western world, and we could cite many more) are nowadays no longer the exclusive domain of Europe. On the contrary, they have spread and become popular in America, Australia, and – although not everywhere – in many parts of Asia and Africa. (Eco 2003:15)

The above passage is from an essay printed in *La Repubblica* on May 31, 2003, one of several articles printed by leading European papers as part of an initiative launched by Habermas in response to the US invasion of Iraq. Collectively, these articles, written by prominent European intellectuals (and one American), launched a collective appeal for

the development of a common European foreign policy in hopes that a common foreign policy based on the ethical and cultural values espoused by “Core Europe” would help to balance, if not control, the bellicosity of the United States. These articles also sought to contribute to discourse surrounding the nature of European identity, hoping to begin a dialogue that would lead to some sort of solidarity among Europeans.

In these articles, each of the authors invariably draws on the past in order to root the concept of being “European” in some sort of temporal schema, creating a set of foundation myths about the European Union. They all list similar examples to Eco’s, primarily centering around either the development of values and institutions, or what Muschg calls “common memories and habits, acquired step by step through the process of distancing oneself from fatal habits.” (Muschg 2003: 26) In these attempts to define the historical sources or causes of European values, however, we see a troubling theme emerge. There is an assumption on the part of many of the authors that through the tragedies of European history – namely, the two World Wars, the Holocaust, and Colonialism – Europe has developed a certain moral superiority that has given it special insight into the most rational and ethical forms of political organization.

For example, in his article, Habermas writes:

A culture which has been beset more than any other culture by conflicts between town and country, sacred and secular authorities, by the competition between faith and knowledge, the struggle between states and antagonistic classes, has had to painfully learn how differences can be communicated, contradictions institutionalized, and tensions stabilized. The acknowledgement of differences – the reciprocal acknowledgement of the Other in her otherness – can also become a feature of a common identity. (Habermas and Derrida 2003: 8-9)

The troubles that have beset Europe “*more than any other culture*” have allowed its people as a cultural whole to develop a more advanced insight into the processes of communication, institution-building, and negotiation. Thus, Europe’s history, for right or wrong, has led it to a point of communicative, institutional, and ethical rationality that other cultures, which have not faced the same trials, have not had the opportunity to develop.

Ironically, one of these values is the respect for otherness and difference, which Habermas argues is capable of forming a basis for the development of a European identity, as opposed to that offered by the ethnic homogeneity of the nation-state. He argues, favorably, that the development of this identity based on a respect for otherness will lead to a process of common will formation which will override the undesirable intrusions of minority voices: “Only the consciousness of a shared political fate, and the prospect of a common future, can halt out-voted minorities from obstructing a majority will. The citizens of one nation must regard the citizens of another nation as fundamentally ‘one of us.’” (Habermas and Derrida 2003: 7)

We see in these understandings of European heritage a willingness to embrace a sense of cultural continuity. As in the nation, this continuity is revealed and manifested in sequential historical events, all of which have contributed to the progressive development of European culture. This progression has culminated in the development of the European Union, which embodies the universal rationality and ethics both developed and discovered by the European people. It should be noted here, however, that in this instance European culture is not entirely particular. It is specifically European, but it is also, in a cosmopolitan sense, the expression of universal values, which either have or will be accepted by diverse peoples around the globe – not because of undue force or domination, but because of an indisputable, self-evident righteousness.

Rupture, Progress, and the Temporal Other: WWII

The greatest of the historical trials with which Europe was faced is usually understood to be that of the Second World War. WWII is in this sense not only a “learning experience,” like those mentioned above, but also a point of dramatic rupture with the darker aspects of the European past and the basis of the foundation of the European Union. It is seen as striking the decisive blow to the immorality and instability of the Westphalian-era balance of power and the historical event that opened the way for the development of the European Union. (Linklater 2005) In this context, the development of the EU becomes a sort of struggle for universal emancipation and the EU itself becomes the marker of a “radical chasm” between the moral present and the past.

WWII and the subsequent rupture with the past have become the central element of the foundation myth of the European Union. Habermas succinctly summarizes this myth in the 2003 article by Habermas also quoted above:

A bellicose past once tangled all European nations in bloody conflicts. They drew a conclusion from that military and spiritual mobilization against one another: the imperative of developing new, supranational forms of cooperation after the Second World War. (Habermas 2003: 12)

This particular foundation myth is a powerful one in the legitimacy struggle of the European Union, simply because it is highly successful in creating a common temporal context for all arguments within the legitimacy debate, regardless of their other differences; like Charlemagne, it has the power to serve as a “vector of collective memory” which unifies even those most disparate elements within the political field. (Larat 2006) For this reason, it “is still part of many Sunday speeches of European

integration and continues to legitimize the integration project.” (Diez 2005: 23) It grants an ethical legitimacy to the EU that transcends divisions between supranational and intergovernmental approaches, or economic and political functions by binding all legitimacy approaches in a common temporal context by which the European project becomes ultimately a means of overcoming nationalism and establishing peace in Europe. (Diez 2000)

Although there is so little agreement as to what purpose the European Union should serve presently, there is an almost unanimous agreement that the purpose it served in the past. Following the Second World War, there arose a general concern with finding a means of preventing another such occurrence in the future. While there were those who pushed for the construction of a full on federal union, at the very least it became clear to many that it was essential to establish a lasting peace between France and Germany. (Christiansen 2001) Haas argues that it was this political climate which emerged out of the memory of the two World Wars “which, in western Europe, made people receptive to the historical-cultural arguments of the mythmakers.” (Haas 2008:4)

Thus an integral part of the European project has been the overthrow of a Westphalian-era nation-state system, with all of its accompanying immoralities and totalitarian tendencies, and its replacement with a moral political system based on post-national principles of inclusion, human rights, and the respect for difference. (Linklater 1998) From its beginnings in the development of the ECSC, the formation of a pan-European institutional framework was seen as an indication that the nation-state would be inevitably replaced by a “post-national” order. (Rosamond 2000) A key element of this post-national identity is its grounding in a moral opposition towards the irrationalities and atrocities of the past and, as such, it “includes the development of a common set of basic norms – being against nationalism for instance.” (Diez 2000) In this context, we can see how the emphasis on rupture does not necessarily imply a post-national time or a

break with Westphalian-era politics; indeed, the concept of rupture, newness, and innovation are distinctly modern concepts that are also a central part of the chronotope of the nation-state.

European Space in the Legitimacy Debate

The attempt to establish the spatial markers of the European Union is highly loaded. Europe's political territory has not yet set his boundaries, and as such attempts to set its boundaries become embroiled in a whole set of questions about the true nature of European identity. The main dilemma underlying the discussions of European space can be summarized in the following question posed by Pierre Lévy: "Is Europe and area occupied by a civilisation or an area destined to expand on the basis of universal values?" (Lévy in Rémond and Zourabichvili 2007: 62)

Core Europe and Normative Power: Demarcation and Planarity

Europe is not truly a continent, but rather a sub-continent of Eurasia, and in that sense, there are no true physical, geographical features that determine its boundaries. (Davies 1997) Attempts to identify physical boundaries have often been instruments of political or social intent. The designation of the Urals as Europe's eastern-most boundary, for example, was used first by the geographers of Peter the Great and then by Charles De Gaulle as a means of incorporating Russia into the rest of Europe. (Brague 2007, Victor 2007) This holds true today, as demarcations of European space often reflect political alignments more than physical geography.

We have seen previously how the figure of Charlemagne has become an important symbol of the historical continuity of the processes of European integration; he has also become an integral figure in establishing the European “ethnoscape” upon which the belief in a Core Europe, or European “heartland” is based. (Habermas 2003; Brague 2007) These repeated evocations of the name of Charlemagne have both a spatial and a historical dimension. Spatially, the name is attached to specific locations, *places*, that physically locate the otherwise abstracted spatial concept of “Europe.” On a temporal level, the use of Charlemagne’s name provides a myth of common origin similar to that used to construct and legitimize the nation state. Charlemagne establishes a common European origin in the Franco-Germanic tribes of the Völkerwanderung, who finally, like the wandering Czech tribes, were able to settle and find their homeland in the territories of what is now referred to as “Core Europe.” (Habermas 2003) The figure of Charlemagne thus reinforces the common tribal ancestry of the French and the Germanic peoples, which has been such a key element in the European integration process (Judt 2007), as well as granting a spatial origin to Europe as a “territorial” unity based on imperial centralization.

However, in this construction, “fringe” members of Europe, including the Southern European, Slavic, Scandinavian, Anglo-Saxon, Magyar, Roma, Balkan and Baltic peoples, who exist on outside of the core both ethnically and geographically are excluded from explicit connection to this symbol of unification by virtue of a lack of direct historical linkage – indeed, the “Italian” Lombards and the “Spanish” Saracens were direct adversaries of Charlemagne rather than imperial subjects. This demarcated, Core Europe, is then a specifically Franco-Germanic Europe, attached to a myth of historical origin shared by only a section of the EU’s population.

We can see here how attempts to set spatial boundaries directly conflicts with the universalizing drive of the concept of the European Union as an inclusive, post-national

force. As we have seen above, both European values as expressed in universal, fundamental rights and the EU's role as an instrument of rational organization are crucial to the EU's identity as a legitimate political body. Both understandings of the EU's identity are rooted in a certain universality that resists cultural – or territorial – particularity. This explicitly maintains the internal legitimacy of the EU by preventing the development of European identity into a form of national identity that would appear to obscure regional, cultural, national, and religious diversity. This universality is a crucial element of the EU's identity as a post-national political body. (Fossum 2001)

As Brague writes, “If the limits of Europe coincide with the limits of civilization, how can we distinguish it from the world at large?” (Brague 2007: 9) Determinations of European identity that place it strictly within the realm of values have difficulty determining Europe's spatial boundaries. This rights-based understanding of Europe places Europe and the outside world in a chain of equivalencies that create a planar order that reduces the possibilities of demarcation.

This is, more or less, the logic behind many of the “Normative Power Europe” arguments, which conceive of Europe's global role as being tied to the affirmation and expansion of normative frameworks of “good governance.” (Linklater 2005) These norms have a strong ethical nature; as Merlingen writes, “The “N” in NPE gestures, however obliquely, towards qualities intrinsic to the human condition that the EU has a moral obligation to respect and defend in world politics.” (Merlingen 2007:439) The acceptance of NPE is almost unanimous among EU politicians, with the exception of certain strong Eurosceptics; indeed, Diez argues that “the discourse of the EU as a normative power... is perhaps the only form of identity that most of the diverse set of actors within the EU can agree on.” (Diez 2005: 3)

In these arguments, we find the spatial component to our earlier discussion of the

continuity of European heritage and values. Because, like that of the rational state, the EU's identity is derived from a set of universal principles, there is nothing to block its planar expansion. The universality of the lessons learned through Europe's long history of suffering has granted Europe with the right and the duty to expand its values on a spatial scale through the imposition of certain political, economic, and, especially, ethical norms on non-European parties. As Thomas Diez writes:

The European experience becomes the standard for the world, and Europe is called upon to embark on a 'mission civilisatrice'. In this, the European experience itself is brought into being as a specific one; an experience that leads from despair to having seen the light and is therefore pleasurable for EU members." (Diez 2005: 18)

This civilizing mission is the direct inheritor of those undertaken by the colonial powers. However, the fact that NPE has been positioned as a post-national approach to foreign policy hides its very national – and imperial – origins. Merlingen argues that the supporters of NPE believe that “they offer a critical perspective on European foreign policy that moves beyond traditional sovereignty-centric thinking;” however, they are unable to do so because “the understanding of power and norms remains partly under the influence of a tradition of political theory at the core of which is the notion of sovereignty.” (Merlingen 2007: 438) That is to say that underlying the concept of norms and power, there is an intrinsic association with certain forms of thought that tend towards the domination of a weaker party by a more powerful one.

The European Chronotope in East and West

The particular constructions of European time and space that we have discussed above all tend to replicate those processes of unification, homogenization, and centralization we found in the chronotope of the nation-state. Particularly, political and theoretical discussions of the EU continue to rely upon the concepts of consensus and ethics as important means of legitimating the state, perpetuating a national bias that engages in the same practices of exclusion found in the nation-state. One of the most powerful ways in which the European chronotope manifests its powers of exclusion has been through the processes of internal demarcation, or the division between East and West. Through this chronotopic division, the progressive realization of European values through time is inscribed upon territory through the gradual expansion of borders.

The divisions between East and West have become an important part of the European chronotope. Since the fall of the Iron Curtain, this division has been a central question in the process of enlargement and has currently gained more force with the question of Turkish accession. However, the division between East and West was not always understood as the primary division in Europe. Before World War II, the most significant divisions in Europe lay in the religious, economic, and industrial differences between northern and southern Europe. With the collapse of Communism, “Central and Eastern Europe now became the incarnation of Europe’s past, a past that the West had overcome, and a zone of war and nationalism that was stuck in history.” (Diez 2004: 327)

Eastern and Central Europe then became a full chronotopic embodiment of Europe’s spatiotemporal other. In this construction, Europe has been able to reinforce its own internal and external legitimacy and to justify its expansion into the East on the grounds of ethical rationality and full planarity. (Diez 2004) That is to say that by positioning the East as the embodiment of both Europe’s temporal other – specifically, Westphalian and WWII-era nationalism and fragmentation – and its spatial other – the European territory outside of Core Europe – Europe has been able to legitimize its process of enlargement

on an ethical and rational level. Through this construction of otherness, it is able to place Central and Eastern Europe within a chain of equivalencies that demand its integration into the wider European Union.

Thus, Europe's expansion into the East has been one of planarity, based on ethics and the implementation of rational mechanisms, as embodied in the *aquis communautaire*. It has not moved into the region by force, but by the "soft" imposition of economic, political, and social norms, and in doing so, has reinforced the role and legitimacy of those same norms within the larger Union. We can see the way in which European enlargement is associated with the planar spread of universal values in the following quotation from Andrew Linklater:

With the end of the bipolar era, the EU moved to the larger canvass of enlarging the organization to assist post-socialist societies which were struggling to achieve economic prosperity and political stability. To its earlier project of eliminating war between the European powers, the EU added the new challenge of encouraging democratic politics and respect for human rights across the continent. (Linklater 2005: 368)

In this way, the East has become a symbol of the European past – not the idealized past of Charlemagne or the Frankish kings, but the European past that must be conquered and overcome. The East has become the representation of a nationalistic, Westphalian order, while the West is the spatiotemporal embodiment of those universal European values which have triumphed over the divisions of the past.

There is an underlying assumption in much academic literature that there is something specifically Eastern about nationalism. Anthony Smith, for example, asserts that the "healthy" sort of nationalism that characterizes the modern nation-state is a particularly

Western concept in which the ethnic nation is tempered by the rational state. Conversely, in Eastern Europe and Asia, there is greater emphasis on the ethnic nation as a “community of common descent” with little regard for territorial or state organization. (Smith 1991: 12) Likewise, Gärtner argues that in Eastern and Central Europe, the ethnic nation is in essence at war with the rational state, which acts as “the major obstacle to achieving a homogenous nation.” (Gärtner 1997: 13)

These chronotopes are used to obstruct minority opinions within the EU, particularly coming from the East, by framing opposition to the EU as an historically backwards, specifically Eastern approach. This is evident in the reaction to the February 2009 speech given by Vaclav Klaus before the European Parliament in Brussels. In this speech, he criticized the EU harshly, comparing it to the Soviet Union and questioning the overall legitimacy of its policies and procedures. (Klaus 2009) Klaus in turn was criticized equally harshly by those EPs who were present at the speech. Daniel Cohn-Bendit accused him of presenting “completely twisted and manipulated view of the European reality,” which “indicates that the man has lost all touch with reality.” Jo Leinen said that his speech demonstrated that Klaus “himself has not fully arrived in the EU yet” and “remains in a national-state-centric thinking.” (Moss 2009)

Of all the reported reactions to Klaus’ speech, the most damning was that of German Social Democratic EP Martin Schulz, who said, “We take note that a person who is totally isolated was applauded by a mixture of anti-Europeans and neo-fascists.” On a discursive level, such a remark is categorized as “implicature,” or the act of phrasing statements in such a way that they discreetly imply an alignment between a rival party and an ideology, individual, or opinion that is rejected by the framework of discursive normativity. It is “an invaluable tool for making relatively tenuous arguments and placing the world within a preferred ideological frame.” (Gastil 1992: 481) Here, Schulz associates Klaus with neo-fascists in order to align him with the nation-state-centric,

totalitarian, fascist past that serves as the primary ideological other for the moral and ethical framework of the European Union.

What is remarkable here is that Schulz himself is no stranger to the negative effects of implicature. In 2003, Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi compared him to a Nazi concentration camp guard and then modified his statement by saying that he actually meant to compare Schulz to a character on the 1970s U.S. sitcom *Hogan's Heroes*. (Deutsche Welle 2003) Regardless, both characterizations are demeaning, and both equally serve the purpose of drawing on a collective European myth of otherness in order to dismiss and exclude political opposition. Whether or not these acts of implicature are valid – or even taken seriously by either fellow politicians or the general public – they constitute acts of epistemic violence by manipulating discursive and ethical norms in order to silence opposition.

We can see here the way in which the European chronotope engenders an ethical framework that permits acts of exclusion by establishing discursive zones of ‘radical otherness.’ These zones, which encompass extreme right ideology, fascism, or even too strong an affiliation with Westphalian-era politics, serve as a political no-man’s land; any association with these taboos result in a decisive and complete exclusion from the open framework of inclusion that defines the rational ethics of the post-national European Union. (see Diez 2000)

The question here is not whether or not Klaus’ accusations are valid or even, in this context, hyperbolic; the question is whether or not they are isolated. If they are not Klaus’ personal views, but rather express a more general experience of historical political conditions in such a way that they enter into the sphere of common experience, then they cannot be disregarded or dismissed as insane or “neo-fascist.” Regardless of whether or not these opinions are historically valid or in line with deliberative or ethical norms, they

are a part of a common political experience that must be taken into account if the study and practice of EU politics hopes to accommodate more than a dominant handful of political experts and technocrats.

One of the political realities which the EU must face is that in Eastern Europe, nationalism plays a different symbolic, political, and emotional role than it does in Western Europe. In the wake of the fall of Communism, in Eastern Europe, nationalism became connected with an ideal of democracy, economic growth, and opposition to the multi-ethnic anti-nationalism of the USSR. (Halliday 2001; Judt 2007) This association persists – not because of any backwardness on the part of Central and Eastern European countries or politicians, but because a different range of political experiences within these countries has given rise to certain attachments and values that may differ from that adopted by the mainstream European elite.

Michnik (2009), for example, writes of a resurgence of a “politics of history” in the former Communist countries, in which it is claimed that “at the threshold of democratic transformation, it was demanded of [the former Eastern bloc countries] that they give up their national and historical identity.” (Michnik 2009: 446) The new post-national order of the EU becomes equated with the totalizing power of the Soviet Union, which also sought to destroy their national pasts. Although these characterizations may not be historically accurate, they are politically poignant because, Michnik argues, they help dispel a general anxiety about Eastern European cultural identity after the fall of Communism. In these reconstructions of Eastern European identity, the Eastern nations become the perennial victims of foreign expansionism and all “disasters were the result of Polish [or Eastern European] benevolence, trust, and gentleness, and the malice and cruelty of foreigners.” (Michnik 2009: 44)

This essentially “apologetic relationship to one’s own national past” (Michnik 2009: 446) is similar in a way to the processes of forgetting that have permitted the development of the temporal structure of the European chronotope. The difference here is that the advocates of the politics of history are not asserting the universality of their experience or values, but its particularity, the isolated and rare nature of their specific form of victimization. This sort of particularity is seen as antithetical to the universalizing project of post-national politics and is thus ignored; however, it is characteristic of an increasingly fragmented geopolitical order. This sort of national retrenchment is a widespread consequence of globalization (Schwarzmantel 2001) Both scholars of politics and politicians who attempt to ignore this, or isolate the expression of this phenomenon as the ramblings of a lunatic, are consciously shutting themselves off from the expressions of political experience that are fundamental to grasping the realities of political conditions in a global era.

In his essay “Journey to the West,” Czeslaw Milosz (2001) recounts a journey he made as a young man from Poland to Paris. Although he and his traveling companions set out in search of a West they perceived as culturally and spiritually superior, he develops an increasing sense of dissatisfaction, skepticism, and alienation from the cultures and nations through which he travels. Part of his sense of dissatisfaction arose from political affinities for the sufferings of the working class and an opposition to capitalism and landownership, which, in 1931 at the time of his journey, his experiences with the Polish Communist regime had yet to tarnish. But another part arose from a sense that the citizens of the West willfully ignored the political realities that accompanied their relatively cushioned lifestyle; they were protected from “having to identify with their own government, or even nation, although they, even the poor, simultaneously profited from all this power and wealth.” (72) While they may profess political beliefs that opposed some of the less savory applications of imperial or national power, the intrinsic order and stability of both their government and their society prevented them from

experiencing the repercussions of their revolutionary ideologies.

Their revolt against the bourgeoisie concealed a secret respect for order, and they would have quaked had someone told them that if they carried their rebellion to its conclusion, it would mean no more little bakeries, no more package-goods stores or bistros with their cats dozing in the sun behind the windowpane. (72-72)

What we see here is a sort of reversal of the temporal distinction between the development of East and West. Rather than the locus of civilized sophistication, the West begins to betray both a sort of naivety and conservatism that is not present; indeed, it is precisely its conservatism, its belief in the value of an established order, that allows it to indulge in the luxury of radicalism. It will never have to face the consequences of its beliefs. Milosz concludes by juxtaposing the words of a Soviet official who declared to him after the war that “We’ll teach them [the French] to work!” and of a former countryman, now residing in France, who exclaimed in anger “Vous, les Slaves, vous êtes des fainéants!” [You Slavs, you are idlers!]. (76) Milosz poses the question:

Who was right? Does virtue express itself in the patient shaping of the landscape over the centuries, in the bustling about the vineyards, in the carving of oaken Louis XIII and Louis XV wardrobes, in the slow, rhythmic work of a skeptical and experienced people who lighten the strain of their tasks with pauses, a chat, a glass of wine – or is it expressed by sudden thrusts of will capable of raising a St. Petersburg out of the swamps on the Neva, and of releasing interplanetary rockets from the empty steppes? Men who understand their place in the world differently cannot be measured by a common

standard. (76)

Perhaps we can glean some sort of wisdom from Milosz's treatment of the East/West divide. Instead of an overarching, homogenizing chronotopic framework guided by temporal notions of progress and civilizational development, we can rather see a contextual interplay between a variety of spatiotemporal political experiences. While France may thrive on a "slow, rhythmic" development, Milosz's East rises through revolution and "sudden thrusts of will." To try to apply a single concept of virtue to two such different ways of orienting the self to the world, of conceiving of the sensory experience of the political, is to engage in a practice of self-defeat. Here, the temporal narratives that frame *le partage du sensible* diverge in pace and rhythm, creating a spectrum of political experiences that cannot be placed within a single chronotopic context without privileging one concept of virtue over the other.

Conclusion

In summary, we wish to propose an alternative means of studying post-national politics through the integration of aesthetics into the discipline of political studies. Traditional methods of studying politics perpetuate a national bias that renders them inappropriate tools of understanding the experience of political subjects in a global environment. This is particularly evident in two common methodological and political assumptions: representation based upon consensus of opinion and the conflation of relative ethical values and universal, rational truths. Both assumptions ultimately obstruct the consideration of the experience of the political subject and result in processes of systematic exclusion and silencing.

Following the work of Jacques Rancière, we argue that what is truly political lies in the division of political experiences within a community, rather than in those acts of legislation or institutional developments that are usually termed political by political analysts. Indeed, such categorizations of political experience tend to engage in certain forms of bias – namely those of consensus and rational ethics – which are not only wholly inappropriate to a post-national geopolitical environment, but also result in the systematic exclusion and silencing of members of the population that challenge the absolute universality of those predetermined categories. Therefore, if we are to truly study politics, we must move beyond epistemic *categories* of political phenomena and focus on political subjects' sensory *experience* of political conditions.

In order to circumvent these processes of exclusion, we must find a means of taking the experience of the political subject into account in our studies of political conditions. I suggest using aesthetic theory as a way of deepening our understanding of politics as an experienced state. Following Jacques Rancière, we can see that both the political and the

aesthetic are types of experience that emerge through *le partage du sensible*. Thus, to truly understand politics, we must find a way of entering into the realm of sensory experience of political conditions.

In this paper, we have used Bakhtin's theory of the chronotope as a methodological tool for bridging the gap between the experience of the individual and the spatiotemporal constructions upon which state legitimacy lie. Just as each individual locates herself within a spatiotemporal context, so do states. It is upon this orientation that the state legitimacy lies; without a clear location in territory or historical sequence, the state has no true political presence. With the help of the chronotope, we have seen the ways in which conflicts between the experience of the political subject and those constructions of spatiotemporal experience put forth by the political body result in the systematic exclusion and silencing of difference and dissent.

Although the European Union posits itself as a post-national body, it is clear from its spatiotemporal orientations and the way in which it constructs its own chronotope of legitimacy, that it continues to rely on certain forms of national-state construction. In particular, its insistence upon the role of ethical values and universal right in assuring its legitimacy promotes a concept of cultural and ideological homogeneity that results in the suppression of difference and perpetuates a colonial mentality.

Abstract

In this thesis paper, I propose an alternative means of studying post-national politics through the integration of aesthetics into the discipline of political studies. I argue that traditional methods of studying politics perpetuate an exclusionary, homogenizing national bias that renders them inappropriate tools of understanding the experience of political subjects in a global environment.

I argue that to circumvent these processes of exclusion, we must find a means of taking the experience of the political subject into account in our studies of political conditions. Following Jacques Rancière, I argue that both the political and the aesthetic are types of experience that emerge through a distribution of common sensory experience, or *le partage du sensible*. I propose the use of Michal Bakhtin's chronotope as a means of considering the connections between the sensory experience of the individual and larger political conditions, in particular as it relates to the development of state legitimacy.

In the last two sections of the paper, I apply the chronotope to the study of two different types of political structures: the traditional nation-state and the European Union. In doing so, I attempt to uncover the ways in which both entities perpetuate similar notions of time and space, ultimately engaging in similar processes of exclusion and silencing. I then argue that if the European Union hopes to become a truly post-national political entity, it must relinquish its underlying national bias.

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