

The Soul of Security

*Christianity, Corporatism,
and Control in Postwar Guatemala*

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“I need this job,” a recent deportee confessed while waiting for his interview. With a rosary tattooed around his knuckles and a faded *13* peeking out from under his collar, he continued nervously, “For real. Keep me busy. Keep me fuckin’ busy. I don’t need to be in the streets dodgin’ bullets and shit. It’s crazy out there. Guy in my church just got shot. Went to his funeral yesterday. It was sad, man. Kid was pumpin’ gas. Got three to the head. Pop. Pop. Pop. He was a *taxista* [taxi driver] and wasn’t paying his *impuestos* [taxes] to the gang. This isn’t LA. It’s fuckin’ crazy out there.” Born in Guatemala but raised in Los Angeles, deported on gang charges but redeemed by his faith in Jesus Christ, this born-again ex-gang member set his sights on a new life in a new home: postwar Guatemala City. As he paced the front office of Transactel, he imagined a routine that would shuttle him from work to church to home and then back again. “Keep me fuckin’ busy,” he prayed—in near-perfect English.¹

Transactel is Guatemala’s largest and most established call-center operation in what has become one of the world’s fastest-growing call-center industries. Armed with government-subsidized scholarships for accent training, supported by some of civil society’s most critical personalities, and leveraged by the likes of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and the World Bank, Transactel offers steady work to a growing number of deported bilinguals while at the same time participating in a new approach to Central American security—one that leans on the explicitly corporate but also conspicuously Christian logic of

control.² Or, as one security official put it, “When they land at the airport, the deported can either work legitimately or they can go to the gangs. We obviously want them to work legally. Otherwise we have absolutely no control over them.” Keep them busy, the logic insists.

This article, in response to the politics of idleness and activity, addresses the notion of control—specifically, moral control—as it relates to the practice of Central American security. Amid unprecedented rates of deportation as well as an ever-growing gang problem, how have call centers become viable spaces of control in a postwar context that can be obviously and perpetually out of control? This is a historical, ethnographic question attuned to an ever-shifting relationship between sovereignty, discipline, and governance in but also beyond Central America.³ It brings into focus how authorities define certain populations as problematic and how solutions emerge at the level of not just policy but also behavior. Security—this is the ultimate question.⁴ Yet, rather than a focus on law or legal transgression, the emphasis here is on how strategies of control (rather than conflict, containment, or even castigation) reconfigure social order. In a region long dominated by a *mano dura*, or strong-fisted, approach to *delincuencia* and disorder, in a world increasingly committed to winning the hearts and minds of popular opposition, Guatemalan call centers now court (so as to control) the deported.⁵

Thick literatures offer quick solutions as to *how* call centers have become such powerful political resources. Globalization. Neoliberalism. A War on Terror. Each can be good to think with.⁶ But a recent shift in religious affiliation foregrounds Protestant Christianity as a vital lynchpin between the political, the economic, and the subjective.⁷ Once overwhelmingly Roman Catholic, Guatemala today is as much as 60 percent Pentecostal or charismatic Christian.⁸ Most call-center employees also self-identify as “born again,” and Christian conversion (for reasons beyond the scope of this article) has become central to gang disaffiliation in the Americas.⁹ Yet, more fundamental than faith—maybe even more recognizable to the scholar of Christianity—are the Protestant images and imperatives embedded within the call-center industry. Be humble. Be punctual. Be patient. These corporately Christian virtues minister to the deported at every turn, inviting them to assume and become subsumed by ascetic subjectivities. These are monkish dispositions that coordinate (at the level of conduct) projects of capitalist accumulation with efforts at regional security. They ultimately freight this for-profit effort at gang prevention with the promise of Protestant rectitude by linking the practice of Central American security to the behavior of individual men and women. This subjective turn, this assemblage of industries and ethics, is what I call the soul of security: here, the call center’s tendency to chasten the deported with flexible work schedules, perpetual training, and mission statements dripping with the

language of responsibility and self-fulfillment. Much to the delight of security officials, this process constitutes the deported's soul as the very terrain upon which officials practice security.¹⁰

This Christian propensity for self-control reflects much larger trends, making the call center's recruitment of the deported emblematic of an increasingly patterned relationship between the soul and security. Throughout the Americas, in fact, state-level anti-gang efforts continue to pair *suppressive* policies — ones that favor incarceration and deportation — with more *integrated* efforts at gang prevention.¹¹ These are strategies that synthesize community policing with faith-based youth programs and social services. The 2007 Mérida Initiative, for example, is a US-led \$1.3 billion hemispheric effort to support security training and intelligence.¹² While a generous percentage of the budget goes toward the purchase of helicopters and razor wire, a much more modest (but certainly not insignificant) amount has been earmarked for so-called soft programs. Efforts at a softer, more integrated approach begin to explain why a growing number of security officials push the deported into call centers. With the practice of Central American security increasingly concerned with the “inner workings” of active gang members and at-risk youth, the call center provides a context in which the deported subject themselves to rigorous self-improvement programs. Bonuses linked to punctuality, micropromotions dependent upon customer satisfaction, and overall job security tethered to one's ability to perform empathy and hospitality across a ten-hour shift—these call-center metrics invite the deported to know thyself as well as to govern thyself. Herein lies the call center's confessional twist. Amid record levels of postwar violence, in a millennial milieu where new forms of Christianity undergird the most secular of social imaginaries, the call-center functions neither as a prison nor as a factory but rather as an ever-pious life coach.

Calling the Deported

The story of the call center's rapprochement with the deported begins not at Guatemala's national airport but rather in the streets of Los Angeles, California. There, in the mid-1980s, refugees from Central America's civil wars formed gangs to defend themselves against the city's already well-established Asian, African American, and Mexican gangs. Initially modest in reach, the likes of Mara Salvatrucha and Barrio Dieciocho became transnational criminal organizations in the aftermath of the 1992 Los Angeles riots. Against a torched cityscape and amid the rise of the US Moral Majority, a xenophobic shift in immigration policy expanded the legal grounds for deportation to include such minor offenses as shoplifting.¹³ With this, the total annual number of deported Central Americans

tripled in the late 1990s, rising from 8,057 in 1996 to 24,285 in 2004.¹⁴ And in 2007, as the criminalization of Latinos continued to mix with an unwieldy War on Terror, the US government tripled this already bloated number, deporting some 74,000 Central Americans to Honduras, Guatemala, and El Salvador.¹⁵ By casting such a wide net, the United States deported an estimated 20,000 active gang members to Central America between 2000 and 2004.¹⁶

The effects of this new deportation regime have been disastrous. Compounded by anemic postwar states as well as a multibillion-dollar drug trade, unparalleled rates of deportation have exponentially expanded gang affiliation while also making Guatemala one of the most violent countries in the world. With fewer civilians killed in the war zone of Iraq than shot, stabbed, or beaten to death in Guatemala, some seventeen murders occur daily in this small country, with the average criminal trial lasting more than four years and with less than 2 percent of homicides resulting in a conviction.¹⁷ As one international observer remarked, “It’s sad to say, but Guatemala is a good place to commit murder because you will almost certainly get away with it.”¹⁸ Today, impunity mixes with the swagger of transnational gangs to place the deported at the center of security concerns. Steady work, experts argue, is one way to control these men and women. Jobs, not jails; control, not containment—this is the move.

Transactel’s interest in the deported, however, is not charitable. It is nakedly opportunistic. Cornering the global market on what has come to be known as *nearshoring*, Guatemalan call centers provide multinational corporations not only with competitively priced services but also a convenient time zone, what the industry calls value-neutral accents, and an unbeatable (simply unteachable) degree of cultural affinity with North American consumers.¹⁹ And, with Guatemalan call centers paying their employees more than most of the country’s doctors, lawyers, and university professors, spirits are up (as is the gross domestic product).²⁰

The problem is that the industry is growing too fast. Much like Panama and Costa Rica, whose call-center markets ballooned and then popped only a few years ago, Guatemala’s current surge outpaces its middle-class, bilingual population.²¹ In the very near future, experts predict, Guatemala’s call-center industry will reach full saturation, providing employees with an unsustainable leverage over management. With no one else to hire, employees will pit one call center against another—for better pay, for better hours, for better benefits. Saturation, by everyone’s estimation, will kill the foreign direct investment that brought the industry to life. This is also why a range of stakeholders, from security officials to CEOs, from clergy to councilmen, now make a desperate pitch to a desperate population. Call centers *need* the deported.²²

It is ultimately this need, this desperation, that provides a window

into the very soul of Central American security—and not because this recruitment strategy might work. It is safe to say that the scheme’s success will remain debatable, with even the most ideal of outcomes forever tainted by the perversely ironic story of refugees turned deportees turned underrepresented employees of an ever-expanding global service economy. Instead, an ethnographic look at this moralizing entanglement highlights how the practice of Central American security constitutes the deported’s soul as an actual site of intervention. In fact, those who work the back office for Coca Cola, United Postal Service, and Norwegian Cruise Lines; those with extensive gang experience, with tattoos up and down their arms (on their necks, faces, and fists); those who learned their English not just in LA public schools but also in the US prison system or while shuttling product from Los Angeles to Las Vegas—these call-center employees embody the shifting rationalities that now link the tedium of cubicle life and the poetics of workplace Christianity to emergent patterns of global governance. And while North-South relationships in the Americas have long been defined by invasion, occupation, and covert operation, the call center now posits a new social order that invokes moral control through a mix of Christian sensibilities and corporate maxims. Be humble. Be punctual. Be patient.

Reverent Reformers

Contextualizing this control begins with Christianity—not with revival or revelation but with a workplace righteousness that emerged in nineteenth-century North America. In that storied era of industrial growth, amid a roilingly provocative Social Gospel movement, a school of thought known as “industrial betterment” raised the question of management.²³ While pondering how employers should treat their employees, reformers drew on an explicitly Protestant vocabulary. They leaned steadily on the Christian notion of duty while also maintaining a sustained interest in some rather missionary metrics: frugality, industriousness, and temperance. It was a faith-inflected philosophy for the Gilded Age—one that railed against improper hygiene as much as child labor, against liquor as much as weak labor unions.

Washington Gladden was one of this school’s most virtuous champions. A Congregationalist minister, Gladden tethered morality to industry in seemingly intuitive ways, forging a religious vision to improve “the mental and moral qualities of the working-people.”²⁴ Invoking the biblical fact that Christ was himself a day laborer (i.e., a carpenter), Gladden’s sermons and theological reflections understood industrialism as a teachable moment. The author of such manifestos as *Applied Christianity* (1889) and *Social Salvation* (1901), Gladden preached, “The Christian law is, that we are to do good to all men as we have the opportunity; and certainly the

employer's opportunity is among his employees."²⁵ A pastoral mandate if there ever was one, this sentiment caught on for reasons far less divine than Gladden's. During the 1870s, as a technological revolution created a spiraling demand for labor, unkempt immigrants met morally anxious industrialists. Interested in a more reliable workforce, taking a page from Gladden's own prayer book, Cornelius Vanderbilt and other railroad magnates founded Young Men's Christian Associations, or YMCAs, along trunk lines to minister to their workers' spiritual needs.²⁶ And as YMCAs preached a message of sobriety, one that stewarded immigrants from the bottle to the bathtub, other industrialists went so far as to build entire communities to Christianize their workers' habits and character.²⁷ Suddenly, swiftly, sensibly (it would seem), management's Christian duty came into focus. The employer should be to his employees as the shepherd to his flock.

Missionary networks pushed this pastoral approach to Guatemala. As nineteenth-century liberals reoriented the national economy toward the cultivation of coffee, the Guatemalan government actively recruited Protestant missionaries from the United States. Beyond providing a more hospitable atmosphere for German and North American Protestants interested in business opportunities, the Guatemalan government also sought a level of control on some rather intimate scales.²⁸ Edward Haymaker, one of Guatemala's first Protestant missionaries, announced in 1887, "When the people of Guatemala begin to develop [the country] along modern lines, when they learn sanitation, motherhood, education, thrift . . . Guatemala will be one of the greatest little countries in the world."²⁹ Identifying the rural poor as "The Great Unwashed," Haymaker published Christian pamphlets on health and hygiene, all for Guatemala's Christian salvation and industrial revolution.³⁰ These two processes were hardly distinct. Inspired by the promise of modernity, located at the intersection of social salvation and self-help, missionaries linked techniques of the self to discourses of development for a postcolonial state on the cusp of industrialization.

In the end, these reverent reformers initiated a hemispheric conversation about proper management—one that continues to pulse with the rhetoric and ritual of Protestant progress. It is a conversation that formed the soteriological foundation of Frederick Taylor's *Principles of Scientific Management* (1911) as well as its eventual countermovement, Elton Mayo's school of human relations.³¹ Both approaches have defined managerial logic for the last century by providing two contrasting points of reference. Mayo's ever-principled commitment to employee satisfaction has offered a counterpoint to Taylor's so-called systematized sweating. For all their differences, however, these two approaches share a common denominator. Both Taylor and Mayo, men of science rather than salvation, spent their days (much like Gladden, much like Haymaker) asking how they could make labor *more*—not simply more wealthy or more productive but also

more efficient, more punctual, more satisfied.³² While many things have changed about the economy since the Social Gospel movement, the most obvious being the systematic restructuring of what was once known as the social, this quasi-theological interest in *more* is why the *Harvard Business Review* can oftentimes read like the *Harvard Theological Review*—why Peter Drucker and Rick Warren are the twenty-first century’s most likely of bedfellows.³³ Modern management, not unlike modern missionaries, yearns for a Protestant subject capable of self-control—of setting his or her sights on *more*.

More

The “purpose driven life” has made the call center an ideal place to control the deported.³⁴ A corporate vocabulary puts into practice what a Christian faith makes intuitive: that the body is a temple to honor (“Exercising 30 minutes a day relieves stress,” proclaims call-center signage), that the self is a wilderness to conquer (“Attitude . . . that’s the hardest thing to control here,” sighs a floor supervisor), and that the soul is a terrain to control (“You cannot buy the devotion of hearts, minds, and souls. You must earn these,” reads “The Successful Contact Center Manager’s Bag of Tricks”).³⁵ A call to self-improvement positively studs recruitment efforts. Buzzwords like *integrity* and *tenacity* as well as *passion* and *fulfillment* drive full-page advertisements in the daily newspapers. Oftentimes framed by fluffy white clouds or with images of stairways to heaven, these advertisements present coiffed employees who deliver stilted testimonials that are overwhelmingly interested in *more*. One reads, “In Transactel, I get the necessary tools and motivation to become *more*” (emphasis added).³⁶ Another explains, “Helping young people on my team is my true passion. I am pleased to be a part of their personal and professional improvement. With time, seeing someone become *more* is quite rewarding” (emphasis added).³⁷ Each confession ends with a rumbling evangelical mandate: *Bring out the power in you*.

This piqued interest in *you*—this repeated concern for *you* to become *more*—evidences how the practice of security (much like today’s corporation, much like today’s church) has become both flat and flexible.³⁸ While the nineteenth-century prison constituted individuals as a single body to the advantage of the prison guard, and while the twentieth-century factory presumed labor’s natural inability to self-discipline, the call center invites the deported to recognize themselves as a “bundle of skills” in need of management.³⁹ Punctuality is one such skill. Humility is one more. Empathy is yet another. To manage these ever-unruly skill sets, the deported undergo perpetual training. They cultivate their American accents, biting their lower lips for the letter *v* and popping their mouths for the letter *b*. They

memorize long lists of so-called power words, such as *awesome* and *incredible*. They master sympathetic tones. “I understand that reliable internet service is important to you,” each repeats with affected conviction. Rooted in allegories of industrial religion, colored by the making of Christian free enterprise, today’s Guatemalan call centers splinter the deported into an array of skills that only the deported can manage—that only *you* can make *more*.⁴⁰ No longer is the employer to his employees as the shepherd is to his flock. Instead, the deported themselves have become the shepherds; their skills have become the flock.⁴¹

This Foucauldian integration of self and power makes control, in the words of Gilles Deleuze, “continuous and without limit.”⁴² Nowhere is this more obvious, ethnographically speaking, than in those moments when the deported describe the very control to which they have become subject—the very freedom that controls them.⁴³ “You know what the call center reminds me of?” Carlos asked the question while zigzagging through traffic. Cruising some of Guatemala City’s sketchier zones, he eventually answered his own query—just after explaining how his newfound faith in Christ has kept him from killing the man who shot him in the neck just one year ago. Leaning back in his seat, taking the wheel with one hand, he waxed, “For real, you know what it feels like when I’m hustlin’ throughout my day? Answering phones and gettin’ my shit done? It feels like prison. For real. It feels like prison ’cause I know what I got to do when I got to do it. And if I fuck up, they’re gonna put me in the hole. For real. It feels like I’m back upstate hustlin’.” A former member of Mara Salvatrucha, one of Central America’s most notorious gangs, Carlos spoke from experience. Born in Guatemala but raised in Los Angeles, in and out of correctional facilities for the last fifteen years, Carlos knows the hum of solitary confinement in a place like San Quentin as well as the blur of a Guatemalan prison riot in a hole like Pavonicto.⁴⁴ Carlos is no stranger to containment. This is why I felt comfortable calling his bluff. “But you’re free,” I said. “*Por favor*,” he huffed. “I ain’t free. They fuckin’ watch me all the time.”

To Carlos’s credit, they do watch him all the time. Digital security cameras observe and record every square inch of call-center turf. Quality assurance managers also listen to and assess (in real time) an unspecified number of calls each day while Automatic Call Distribution Technology (ACDT) keeps the pace of work humming—with industry specific software generating, in the words of Ian Hacking, “an avalanche of numbers.”⁴⁵ How many minutes does it take to resolve a customer complaint before lunch as opposed to after lunch? How many seconds does an employee spend in the bathroom every day? How many minutes, on average, are employees late during the rainy season? Supervisors chart this information with ease. The workstations themselves even function as ergonomically complete punch clocks. Employees click in and click out of their computers for forty-five-

minute lunches, fifteen-minute breaks, and five minutes for the bathroom—not five minutes per trip but rather five minutes of “bathroom time” across a ten-hour shift. And an intricate swipe card system grants certain employees access to certain spaces while restricting other employees from other spaces. This is ultimately why a dense literature commonly invokes the Roman slave ship and the nineteenth-century prison while assessing the call center.⁴⁶ “Visibility,” Michel Foucault reminds us, “is a trap.”⁴⁷

Critical interest in the panoptic, however, distracts from the ethnographic fact that call centers do not watch the deported nearly as much as the deported come to watch themselves. This is the soul of security. This is security’s subjective turn. As call centers promote a near compulsive commitment to continuous self-improvement, as the practice of Central American security becomes increasingly concerned with the moral constitution of the deported, an assemblage of Christian techniques and corporate consciousness encourages a kind of introspective selfhood that is, in the words of Jean Comaroff, “capable of searching inner dialogue and free to commit itself to a moral career in the name of truth.”⁴⁸ Perpetual training, promotion schemes, and call-center competitions, with winners receiving anything from iPods to buckets of Red Bull, constantly direct the deported to turn inward toward the self—until he or she stands face to face with the Protestant subject.

Few themes capture the ambivalent moral tenor of this inward turn better than the promotion and practice of punctuality and emotional self-control. Both skills dominate the everyday lives of call-center employees; both punctuality and professionalism provide “an effective means of working on the self and a fitting medium for signaling its interior improvements.”⁴⁹ As management mobilizes missionary idioms to elevate speed, efficiency, and economy well past the practical and on to the theological, the deported come to watch themselves with a Benedictine appreciation for the clock as well as a monkish commitment to humility. “As a company, we want to advance Guatemala. It’s our mission,” a recruitment manager explains. “We want to make Guatemalans better. We want to make them *more*. Time is a big part of this. People come here, and they learn about time. They learn what it means to be on time. They learn what it means to respect time. Respecting time means respecting yourself and your neighbor.” Time as a moral imperative structures the call-center context—in advertisements, on signage, in the middle of American accent training. One student overstayed his lunch break. His instructor scolded, “We are not just learning English here but also how to stay on a schedule. You get an hour for lunch right now. That’s a pretty sweet deal. On the floor, you only get forty-five minutes. Time is money and you need to take care of it.” Prudence, punctuality, and persistence—these Protestant virtues tether the political to the economic to the subjective.

These corporately Christian values also yield observable practices. Excusing themselves from interviews because they have *six minutes* (rather than a more general, much softer *five minutes*) left in their lunch break, the deported cut their days into hours and then their hours into minutes. A onetime member of North Hollywood, a Los Angeles–based gang with outposts throughout Central America, offers a quick but representative riff. Now a born-again Christian, Andrés left Guatemala for Los Angeles when he was five years old. Deported some twenty years later, after fist-fighting his way through the US prison system, Andrés now tames what he understands as his “divided self” with a Christian appreciation for punctuality. “What time you got?” Andrés asks, “I left my machine at 2:30. It’s 2:31. Is it 2:31 or 2:32? 2:31? Ok. I got forty-five minutes for lunch. So I got forty-four minutes left. It’ll take four minutes to get to Burger King and four minutes to get back. I need to use the bathroom. That’s like five minutes. What does that leave me? Shit. Like twenty-five minutes to eat. Right? A’ight. Let’s go.”

Andrés’s compulsive attention to time could be linked to an intricate compensation package, one that docks a percentage of his paycheck with every second of work missed. But there is something more here than money. At the end of each month, as call centers print bonus checks by the thousands, an email circulates—one that lists the full name of each employee as well as his or her rate of attendance. The names of those below 97 percent appear in bright red. Of ethnographic interest is that this email produces a controlling dose of shame for those already marked by a hypermasculine hip-hop swagger that clashes with corporate culture. As if functioning as some adaptation of Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *Scarlet Letter*, these emails animate why church elders did not put Hester Prynne inside a prison but rather put the prison inside of Hester Prynne.⁵⁰ Helpful, in fact, is the juxtaposition of Hawthorne’s stylized prose with Andrés’s altogether raw assessment of these emails. Their visceral reactions correlate at a fundamental level, one that scholars of affect rightly understand as prediscursive but not presocial.⁵¹ As Hester Prynne places the letter *A* to her chest, she recounts how she “experienced a sensation not altogether physical, yet almost so, as of a burning heat . . . as if the letter were not of red cloth, but red-hot iron.”⁵² Andrés, on his name appearing in red for all to see, sighed, “It’s fuckin’ cold when they do that. For real. It makes me feel like shit. Makes me feel like I need to be better. I hate when they fuckin’ do that.” Instead of the foreman and his steam whistle lordling over labor, instead of the prison guard gazing from afar, red ink and an avalanche of numbers prompt Andrés to manage his soul for something *more*.

Humility

The problem, of course, is that becoming *more* is not easy. It never has been. Augustine of Hippo narrates as much in his *Confessions*, with the bounded will constituting Christianity's most spectacular of moral dramas.⁵³ Yet the difficulty of it all has intensified, it would seem. While Augustine wrestled with pear trees, these deported men and women struggle with histories of sexual abuse, drug addiction, and extended periods of incarceration. Salvation has since steadied the lives of many, with big falls yielding even bigger redemptions; yet the call center nevertheless provides a somewhat surreal stage on which society expects the deported to perform Christian respectability. Wrenching cultural confrontations complicate the effort at every turn.⁵⁴ The call center, to reference a pair of television shows, pulls these deported men and women from the set of *The Wire* and plants them (without a wardrobe change, without a new set of lines) onto the set of *The Office*.⁵⁵ They are instructed by both minister and manager alike to embody the Christian virtues of service and humility, but public subordination still chafes for those ordered to act like—at times to lie that—they live and work in Nashville, Tennessee, or in Tacoma, Washington. In some effort to assuage a culturally conservative clientele, one committed (at least in theory) to buying American, the deported must swallow the fact that they were of absolutely no use to the United States until the United States deported them. Now repatriated, they play the part of an American while getting paid like a Guatemalan—an irony that the deported do not miss. “They pay us shit,” a former member of Barrio 18 explains, “It’s shit money. [The call center] pays us \$2.50 [USD] an hour. In Tacoma, I got paid \$37.50 [USD] an hour working construction. \$2.50 an hour?! It’s good for here. . . . [But] that’s shit money, man.”

Frustration turns to insult as the deported realize that their middle-class lives in Guatemala look absolutely nothing like middle-class lives in Los Angeles, California. “I used to have my own place in LA,” explains one employee. “It was nice. Big bedroom. I was making money. Running crystal [meth] between Vegas and LA. I miss it.” Cinderblock houses, corrugated metal roofs, chickens underfoot—this is Guatemala’s professional class. And as their pirated cable television reminds them of what they are missing, from where they came, insult becomes injury as the work itself gets out of control—as the customers themselves get aggressive.

The very nature of customer service, as one might expect, invites a certain amount of abuse. “No one calls to say thank you,” a floor manager admits. But more than simple complaints, calls quickly and constantly escalate to outlandishly violent events. During heated disputes over credit card statements and primary billing addresses, over misplaced parcels and delayed deliveries, bigoted customers often ask the deported if they

are monkeys, if they live in trees. Baited by Spanish accents, by soft J's and rolled R's, customers invite the deported to go fuck themselves; they call the deported *niggers* and *spics*, *wetbacks* and *fuckfaces*. All the while management coaches the deported to respond with empathy, compassion, and emotional self-discipline. "Humility." This is how Andrés answered my question about how he weathers such storms. "I'm not perfect," he added. "No one is. I just try to be humble. To be faithful and humble. It's hard, man. For real. I make mistakes. They make mistakes. I'm no robot. You know? It's hard. It hurts me. Real bad. But I try to be humble and just serve the person."

This language of selfless service braids the material demands of a post-Fordist economy with the new-age rhetoric of Christian servitude.⁵⁶ Customer service manuals, quality assurance supervisors, and a seemingly endless cycle of training sessions now frame humility as a heroic venture against the darker side of humanity. All invite the deported to corral their unwieldy instincts for something *more*. A representative call-center handbook pleads with the employee to avoid ("at all costs") the four Fs: *fretting*, *flailing*, *fuming*, and *freaking out*. In their stead, the handbook asks them to choose—to recognize that they have the power to choose—an "optimal lifestyle." Seven daily practices define this vision of optimal living, one that links the cultivation of the body with the moral maintenance of the soul. These seven daily practices are (1) do not smoke, (2) do not consume caffeine, (3) do not drink alcohol, (4) relax fifteen minutes a day, (5) exercise twenty minutes a day, (6) consume no more than 30 percent of daily calories in the form of fat, and (7) consume twenty to thirty grams of fiber a day.⁵⁷ This optimal lifestyle, the handbook insists, generates an optimal attitude, which in turn fosters optimal service. It is this very logic that organized the development of managerial discourse, of industrial betterment itself, allowing a range of Protestant reformers, from Glad-den to Haymaker, to link rituals of consumption and moral posture with the demands of industrial labor. Eat right, drink less, walk more, they preached. *Bring out the power in you*, they insisted.

These same themes of service and humility structured a sermon that Andrés and I had witnessed just a few days earlier. In fact, moments before the pastor invited Andrés to tell his own story of salvation, to deliver an hour-long testimony about persistence and progress, he lauded the Christian duty to serve, to understand (with humility) that no one is perfect, that no one is a robot. Shuttling between the themes of crack and cubicles as well as redemption and renewal, Andrés pitched his testimony broadly to everyone in the church that night. But his real target, he would later admit, was a young man named Mario. Raised in the United States but deported from Los Angeles in 2002, this former gang member had spent the last five years on the streets of Guatemala City, where he slept, stole,

and smoked—be it crack, PCP, or marijuana. One month sober, in and out of Christian rehabilitation centers for more than a year, Mario twitched from withdrawals as his language skills landed him a back-office job for a major multinational corporation, one that promised upward mobility, expendable income, and self-fulfillment. Hope swelled. This is why, soon after the service, with the aftertaste of revelry still shifting his weight from foot to foot, Mario explained:

I'm gonna be at this job for five years. Minimum. Five years. I'm gonna work every day, man. [He puts an imaginary phone to his ear.] "Hello, can I have your tracking number, please? Oh, you are experiencing a problem with your delivery? Let me see how I may help you?" I'm gonna work this. Five years, man. At least. I mean, I'm gonna work and then be manager or supervisor or whatever. This is a good job. This is good money. I'm not gonna go back to the streets. No fuckin' way, man. No fuckin' way. And I know Jesus will help me.

Later into the night, after I had attended not one but two services with Mario, his confidence began to wane. Emotionally exhausted, driving along a poorly lit highway, his spirits drooped as his thoughts turned to his first paycheck:

I'm kinda nervous about having all that money, man. I mean, I'm not the kind of guy who does well with all that kind of money. I mean, take that guy right there. You give him some money and he's gonna buy a burger and go to the movies. That guy over there? He's gonna buy some donuts or something. But, that [other] guy? He's gonna get lost. He gonna get some crack and just get lost. I'm that guy, man. That's why I'm at church. I'm making a fresh start. I'm gonna go to church. I'm gonna go to work. I'm gonna go home. That's what I'm gonna do. And I need to do it all [at once]. None of this step-by-step stuff. This *poco a poco* bullshit. If I don't change totally, I'll be back into it again. I'll be back on the streets smokin' crack and jackin' people for cell phones.

One week later, Mario handed his entire paycheck over to his brother for safekeeping. Also a deported ex-gang member who found Jesus at about the same time that he found work at a call center, Mario's brother promised to dole out the money at a responsible clip while also setting some money aside to pay for Mario's rent, activate his cell phone, and buy Mario a kitchen stove. This effort, planned weeks in advance, resonated with the kind of individual responsibilities advocated by not just church elders and faithful coworkers but also onsite sales representatives who spend their days peddling credit cards to call-center employees.

The problem is that Mario's plan did not work. Mario cashed his paycheck late one Friday afternoon and delivered, as planned, the money

to his brother—but not before taking a bigger cut than he had originally intended. Mario quickly burned through that money in a matter of hours, asked his brother for more money, and then burned through that money as well. Within twenty-four hours, Mario had smoked his entire paycheck, stretching a late night into a week-long bender. Having never returned to work, having for all intents and purposes disappeared, Mario last spoke to me over the phone. He was working on a coffee plantation just outside of Guatemala City, where it sounded like he was living hard and drinking harder. His plan, he told me, was to return to the city to find work at a different call center. Yet I have not heard from Mario since. His father tells me that he left the plantation shortly after we last spoke, but his brother, still employed by a call center, has no idea where he is. His former roommate, a fellow ex-gang member and close friend from Los Angeles, says the same.

To be fair, Mario could be anywhere. He could be working at a different plantation, holed up in another rehabilitation center, or hustling crack in the capital. He could also have made another break for the United States. But each of these scenarios seems unlikely, given how small the country can feel and how violent it has become. Someone would have heard from him by now. Someone would have seen him. This is why family and friends, until proven otherwise, assume that Mario is dead.

Inconceivable as it is indicative, painful as it is predictable, Mario's disappearance, maybe even death, is tragic. Yet, sadly, it is not altogether unusual. While an increasing number of deported ex-gang members find their professional groove within this rapidly growing industry, with their Christianity syncing smoothly with the moral demands of corporate culture, many more do not make it. They return to gang life, fall back into addiction, or simply lose faith—in Jesus, in themselves, in life. Here one day, many are gone the next. Management, in response, does not blink. They are not paid to blink, they insist. Instead they troll the airports looking for more talent. “The ones that we fight for are the *mojados* [wetbacks],” the director of human resources admitted. “They are the most valuable here. Because they have perfect English. Perfect. We can place them in any account. We find them in the airport.”

Life Itself

The call center's laissez-faire approach to human capital would seem to demand a righteous response, one that relies on the power of critique.⁵⁸ Much could be said along these lines, of course. Both Mario and Andrés have been jerked around by powerful economies for far too long. Yet it is important to note that the strength of critique tends to evade the less comfortable possibility of implication—of not simply the idea that we all participate in global capitalism but also the ethnographic fact that

deported ex-gang members tend to want (at times, desperately need) call-center jobs. Critiquing call centers into oblivion flattens the fact that these positions provide calm ports amid unthinkably turbulent storms as well as some much-needed dignity. “I remember I was on the eighth floor of Transactel,” explained a born-again Christian and onetime member of Barrio 18. “That’s near the airport. And I was on the eighth floor [looking out the windows]. And I remember I had a mug, right, a coffee mug. And I was on the eighth floor with the mug, and I could see all the garbage trucks, right, and I start crying. ’Cause it was raining. I start crying because I remember I was working, under the rain, the year before [as a garbage collector]. And I could see the trash truck pass by. . . . I could see myself, sitting, inside the truck, behind there. Just, like, wondering, what God was going to do with my life.” Pushed to Los Angeles at three years of age, deported on gang charges seventeen years later, he flailed in Guatemala. McDonald’s rejected him. “When I landed in Guatemala, I decided to do something I would never do in LA. . . . Work at McDonald’s. Cause McDonald’s *sucks* in LA, right? It’s the worst job you can get. To work at a fast-food restaurant? But when I got there, what do you think they told me? They said, ‘You got tattoos, pal. We are not accepting people with tattoos.’” Years later, after gathering Guatemala’s garbage, he found himself overlooking the city—from the eighth floor, in a pressed shirt, and with a warm cup of coffee. Emotions grabbed him. “And I would just see myself right there [in the garbage truck], and like, I just broke down. And, and people [at Transactel] would be like, ‘hey, are you OK?’ I just . . . and I would be like, I just. . . . I can’t believe how good, how good God is. God has been wonderful, man.” It is this wonder, this potential for dignity, that makes the call center more complicated than some crass distinction between right and wrong.⁵⁹ This is why radical critique (at least for now) will have to give way to what Fiona Terry has called a “second best world.”⁶⁰ This is a world in which call centers crave the very self-regulating subjectivities that Central American security officials covet and that new forms of Christianity help cultivate.

In critique’s stead, in the spirit of a conclusion, a nuanced observation comes into focus about Christianity, corporatism, and control in the practice of Central American security. It is an observation that shifts this analysis from the ethnographic to the political, from this article’s guiding question (*how?*) to a more pointed matter (*to what effect?*). To what effect, this conclusion asks, have call centers become viable spaces of control in a postwar context that can be obviously and perpetually out of control? The answer pursued here begins with the fact that the soul of security provides a softer approach to the deported than ever before. Again, jobs, not jails; control, not containment—this is the move. But, by turning toward the subjective, by availing the soul to the practice of security, a growing num-

ber of men and women come to be understood not as a menace to society but rather as unsound and unproductive—as expendable. The call center (as a supremely soft security scheme) has come to define life itself along some rather Christian coordinates. If humble, punctual, and patient, then the call center rewards the deported—with bonuses, corporate swag, and training programs that *bring out the power in you*. Yet, if prideful or undisciplined, if reckless or rough, the deported disappear—they are, in fact, allowed to disappear, to vanish without a trace. Their divided souls—the very souls that the call center makes legible through a corporately Christian register—end up justifying their disappearance as well as a socially acceptable lack of concern for those never seen again. The soul of security, in the end, advances a set of criteria by which a range of social actors assesses the deported as either out of control or in control, as either lost or found.

Take the lead-up to Mario's first paycheck. In between church services, on his day off, Mario found himself the subject of an intervention. Organized by coworkers and fellow churchgoers, riddled with shouting matches and long bouts of weeping, the meeting eventually ended in frustration. Mario ultimately left the room to clear his head while Andrés talked to me about preparing Mario for payday. He explained, "You gotta know how to talk to these cats. You can't just get up in their face and talk down to them. You see how he was gettin' all frustrated and angry? I just calmed 'im down. I was like 'check yourself, bro.' And then I was like *pow!* You can't talk to them when they are all frustrated. They aren't gonna listen. You gotta wait until their heart is open." That Andrés participated (along with Mario) in the governance of Mario well outside the reach of not just the call center but also the nation-state evidences an ever-expanding security apparatus, one that extends into the everyday lives of the deported. This is what Mariana Valverde has called "the democratization of the pastoral."⁶¹ The soul of security shouldered an increasing number of individuals with not simply new responsibilities (e.g., Mario) but also new domains of control (e.g., Mario's heart).

Yet, the constitution of the soul as the very terrain upon which individuals practice security also reframes the criteria by which these individuals assess these new responsibilities and these new domains of control. Again, the case of Mario proves instructive. One month after the intervention, catching Mario's floor manager on his break, I asked what had happened. "To Mario?" he asked. "He didn't come to work. . . . It happens all the time. It's not my problem. Why [did he leave]? No idea. I guess his heart wasn't into it." To the manager's credit, he quickly substantiated this otherwise flippant comment with rows of numbers, each making legible the quality of Mario's heart. On a sliding scale from 1 to 100, Mario's heart had been mapped along the lines of rudeness, politeness, customer rapport, professionalism, personal responsibility, tone, and accent. That

each metric seemed to confirm the manager's suspicion is not the issue; that we sat there together reading Mario's heart across a morass of numbers, however, is. These moral metrics, the very ones by which management controls employees, bring the soul of the deported into being; they make the deported (by way of the soul) both governable and self-governing.⁶² Yet, these numbers also frame not just the deported but also security more generally as a matter of having a heart that is either "open" or not, that is either "into it" or not. This is a significant development for a postwar context long defined by a strong-fisted approach to delinquency. The wrath of the sovereign now competes against much softer efforts at control. From informal death squads to the politics of self-improvement, from overcrowded prisons to "bringing out the power in you," the call center allows the practice of security to nest onto the surface of the heart—to bury itself deep inside the soul. Whether this approach proves effective, in some kind of criminological sense, is not yet clear. It may never be clear. Obvious, though, is that the Christian underpinnings of this corporate construction provide a moral mechanism by which to determine the value of life itself. Mario's heart, for example, "wasn't into it." The numbers say as much. This is why management did not blink when he disappeared. They just counted him as lost and then headed back to the airport.

Notes

This article draws on fieldwork in Guatemala City (2006–2007, 2008, 2009, 2010, and 2011) and across a variety of church and corporate settings. With research assistants from the Universidad del Valle, I completed more than three hundred open-ended interviews with men and women associated with the call-center industry. Special thanks to the following research assistants: Liggia Samayoa, Margarita Rivera, Luna Sofía Oliva Alfaro, Monica Pelaez, and Mandy Lucía Ortega Lemus. I complemented this baseline information with a series of key informants. Special thanks to Joan Sullivan and Rebecca Bartel for archival research as well as Simon Krishnan and Basit Kareem Iqbal for editorial assistance. Colleagues also provided close readings: Kathryn Lofton, Tomas Matza, Bruce O'Neill, Kedron Thomas, Elaine Peña, Austin Ziederman, Lalaie Ameeriar, and Pamela Klassen. I presented versions of this article at the University of Toronto's Centre of Criminology Colloquium and its Monk School for Global Affairs. An audience at the National University of Singapore provided rich suggestions. Fieldwork was supported by the Wenner Gren Foundation (2006–2007, 2010–2012), the Harry Frank Guggenheim Foundation (2010–2012), and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada: Research Development Initiative (2010–2012) and Standard Research Grant (2010–2013). Livia Tenzer managed the production of this article with great skill. Thank you. Finally, great credit must go to the *Social Text* collective, especially Randy Martin, for such insightful suggestions for revision.

Those whom I interviewed remain anonymous or are cited by pseudonym. In some cases certain details (insignificant to the analysis) have been changed to protect further the identities of my informants.

1. All interviews cited in this article result from the author's fieldwork conducted in Guatemala City during the periods 2006–2007, 2008, and 2009.
2. The Guatemalan government subsidized some 2,000 scholarships for advanced English language skills and training for call-center work; see “Beca de Perfeccionamiento Intensivo de Idioma Inglés para Contact Center,” Becas Solidarias, Government of Guatemala, www.becasolidaria.gob.gt/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=61&Itemid=69 (last modified 26 January 2010). The World Bank supported Invest in Guatemala, a not-for-profit organization that supports the call-center industry; see Agencia de Atracción de Inversiones and Invest in Guatemala, *Guía para el Inversionista*, 2009, www.investinguatemala.org/pdf/guia_del_inversionista.pdf. USAID runs rehabilitation programs that prepare ex-gang members for the formal economy, including call centers; see Kevin Lewis O’Neill, “Delinquent Realities: Christianity, Formality, and Security in the Americas,” *American Quarterly* 63, no. 2 (2011): 337–65.
3. Michel M. Foucault, “Governmentality,” in *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*, ed. Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991), 102.
4. Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977–1978* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 23.
5. For more on *mano dura*, see Ellen Moodie, “Seventeen Years, Seventeen Murders: Biospectacularity and the Production of Post-Cold War Knowledge in El Salvador,” *Social Text* 99 (2009): 77–103.
6. To take just the topic of neoliberalism, one could read this recruitment effort as the latest episode in the privatization of security. See Teresa P. R. Caldeira, *City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in São Paulo* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000); Setha Low, *Behind the Gates: Life, Security, and the Pursuit of Happiness in Fortress America* (New York: Routledge, 2003); Kevin Lewis O’Neill and Kedron Thomas, eds., *Securing the City: Neoliberalism, Space, and Insecurity in Postwar Guatemala* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2011).
7. The aim here is to make some general claims. For more detailed work on Christianity in Guatemala, see Virginia Garrard-Burnett, *Protestantism in Guatemala: Living in the New Jerusalem* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1998); Kevin Lewis O’Neill, *City of God: Christian Citizenship in Postwar Guatemala City* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010).
8. Pew Forum, *Spirit and Power: A 10-Nation Survey of Pentecostals by the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life* (Washington, DC: Pew Forum, 2006).
9. Kevin Lewis O’Neill, “The Reckless Will: Prison Chaplaincy and the Problem of Mara Salvatrucha,” *Public Culture* 22, no. 1 (2010): 67–88; Jon Wolseth, *Jesus and the Gang: Youth Violence and Christianity in Urban Honduras* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2011); Robert Brennenman, “From Homie to *Hermano*: Conversion and Gang Exit in Central America” (PhD diss., University of Notre Dame, 2009); Edward Flores, “Faith and Community: Recovering Gang Members in Los Angeles” (PhD diss., University of Southern California, 2010).
10. Michael Hardt, “The Global Society of Control,” *Discourse* 20, no. 3 (1998): 97: “Where the production of soul is concerned, as Musil might say, we should no longer look to the soil and organic development, nor to the factory and mechanical development, but rather to today’s dominant economic forms, that is, to production defined by a combination of cybernetics and affect.”
11. Washington Office on Latin America, “Daring to Care: Community-Based Responses to Youth Gangs in Central America and Central American Immigrant Communities in the United States,” *Special Reports* 48 (2008).

12. Clare Ribando Seelke, “Mérida Initiative for Mexico and Central America: Funding and Policy Issues,” *Congressional Research Service*, Report 40135 (January 2010).

13. Nicholas De Genova and Nathalie Peutz, *The Deportation Regime: Sovereignty, Space, and the Freedom of Movement* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

14. Mary Helen Johnson, “National Policies and the Rise of Transnational Gangs,” *Migration Information Source*, April 2006, www.migrationinformation.org/usfocus/display.cfm?ID=394.

15. Clare Ribando Seelke, “Gangs in Central America,” *CRS Report for Congress* (Washington, DC: Congressional Research Service, 2009), 8; Geoff Thale and Elsa Falkenburger, *Youth Gangs in Central America: Issues in Human Rights, Effective Policing, and Prevention* (Washington, DC: Washington Office on Latin America, 2006), 3.

16. Ana Arana, “How the Street Gangs Took Central America,” *Foreign Affairs* 84, no. 3 (2005), 107.

17. David Grann, “A Murder Foretold,” *New Yorker*, 4 April 2011, 42; Maya Wilson, *Guatemala: Crime Capital of Central America* (Washington, DC: Council on Hemispheric Affairs, 2009).

18. James Painter, “Crime Dominates Guatemala Campaign,” *BBC News*, 10 May 2007, <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/americas/6643935.stm>.

19. For background on Guatemala’s call-center industry, see Philip Peters, “Zagada Selects Transactel as Premier Guatemala BPO Member for Its Sphaero Alliance,” *PRWeb*, 30 July 2007, www.prweb.com/releases/2007/07/prweb543096.htm.

20. According to the monthly financial news group *The Banker*, “Guatemala’s economy has been humming along nicely, if not spectacularly, for the past few years of its post-civil war recovery, with gross domestic product (GDP) accelerating from 2.6% in 2005 to an expected 5.6% this year.” John Rumsey, “Guatemala: Right Place, Wrong Time,” *The Banker*, 1 November 2008.

21. According to the Zagada Institute, “While the Central American Near-shore region registered a 32% growth rate in our 2007 report and was projected to improve just under 40% per annum over the next 24 months, the region far exceeded those numbers by registering a 57% average annual rate over the last two years.” Furthermore, worker density in the sector is estimated at 45,095, “a net growth of 24,083 workers from the 21,012 figures reported in our 2007 reports. This represents an aggregate growth of 115% over the last 24 months. This growth momentum exceeding 50% per annum is anticipated to be sustained and will drive contact center and BPOs worker density to 66,700 by the end of 2010.” See Philip Dickenson Peters, *Central America Contact Center & BPO Report 2010: An Expanding Bilingual Niche* (Coral Gables, FL: Zagada Institute, 2009), www.zagadacaptive.com/index.php?route=product/product&product_id=124.

22. Byron Dardón Garzaro, “Call Centers demandan más guatemaltecos que hablen inglés,” *Prensa Libre.com*, 4 April 2009, http://prensalibre.com/noticias/Call-Centers-demandan-guatemaltecos-ingles_0_28197233.html.

23. William Howe Tolman, *Industrial Betterment* (New York: Social Service Press, 1900); William Howe Tolman, *Hygiene for the Worker* (New York: American Book Company, 1912).

24. Washington Gladden, *Working People and Their Employers* (Boston: Lockwood, Brooks, 1876), 44–50.

25. Washington Gladden, *Applied Christianity: Moral Aspects of Social Questions*

(Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1889); Washington Gladden, *Social Salvation* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1901); Gladden, *Working People*.

26. Samuel W. Latta, *Rest Houses for Railroad Men: How the Railroad Men Regard Such Conveniences* (New York: Welfare Department of the National Civic Federation, 1906); C. Howard Hopkins, *History of the Y.M.C.A. in North America* (New York: Association Press, 1951); Stauro D. Brandes, *American Welfare Capitalism: 1880–1940* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

27. Stephen R. Barley and Gideon Kunda, “Design and Devotion: Surges of Rational and Normative Ideologies of Control in Managerial Discourse,” *Administrative Science Quarterly* 37, no. 3 (1992): 366.

28. Washington Gladden’s *Working People* shared a readership with Samuel Smiles’s wildly popular *Self-Help, with Illustrations of Conduct and Perseverance*, 2nd ed. (London: John Murray, 1869). “Heaven helps those who help themselves,” Smiles writes (13). Distributed throughout Latin America, Smiles’s next three volumes painted an equally Protestant profile, one with Puritan impulses: *Character*, new ed. (London: John Murray, 1876), *Thrift* (London: John Murray, 1885 [1875]), and *Duty, with Illustrations of Courage, Patience, and Endurance* (London: John Murray, 1880).

29. Quoted in Virginia Garrard-Burnett, “Liberalism, Protestantism, and Indigenous Resistance in Guatemala, 1870–1920,” *Latin American Perspectives* 93, no. 2 (1997): 35–55.

30. Marilyn T. Williams, *Washing “The Great Unwashed”: Public Baths in Urban America, 1840–1920* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 1991).

31. Frederick Winslow Taylor, *The Principles of Scientific Management* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1911); Elton Mayo, *The Human Problems of an Industrial Civilization* (New York: Macmillan, 1933).

32. Kim McQuaid, “The Businessman as Reformer: Nelson O. Nelson and Late Nineteenth Century Social Movements in America,” *American Journal of Economics and Sociology* 33, no. 4 (1974): 423–35.

33. Rick Warren quotes Peter Drucker liberally. Drucker, in turn, declared the megachurch “surely the most important social phenomenon in American society in the last thirty years.” See Peter F. Drucker, *Management Challenges for the 21st Century* (New York: HarperBusiness, 1999), 29.

34. Rick Warren, *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth Am I Here For?* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).

35. Malcolm Carlaw et al., “The Successful Contact Center Manager’s Bag of Tricks: Ten Key Practices,” in *Managing and Motivating Contact Center Employees: Tools and Techniques for Inspiring Outstanding Performance from Your Frontline Staff* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002), 209–28.

36. “Bring Out the Power in You” advertisement, *Prensa Libre*, 2 July 2010.

37. *Ibid.*, 16 July 2009.

38. Emily Martin, *Flexible Bodies: Tracking Immunity in American Culture from the Days of Polio to the Age of AIDS* (Boston: Beacon, 1994). See also Edward F. Fischer and Peter Benson, *Broccoli and Desire: Global Connections and Maya Struggles in Postwar Guatemala* (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2006).

39. Bonnie Urciuoli, “Skills and Selves in the New Workplace,” *American Ethnologist* 35, no. 2 (2008): 219.

40. For allegories of industrial religion, see Richard J. Callahan, Jr., Kathryn Lofton, and Chad E. Seales, “Allegories of Progress: Industrial Religion in the United States,” *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 78, no. 1 (2010): 1–39. For the making of Christian free enterprise, see Bethany Moreton, *To Serve God*

and Wal-Mart: *The Making of Christian Free Enterprise* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009).

41. Emily Martin, "Managing Americans: Policy and Changes in the Meanings of Work and the Self," in *Anthropology of Policy: Critical Perspectives on Governance and Power*, ed. Cris Shore and Susan Wright (London: Routledge, 1997), 249.

42. I follow Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri to argue that Michel Foucault's notion of biopolitics must connect with Gilles Deleuze's notion of "control societies" to capture the new postindustrial cartography of productive relations. See Gilles Deleuze, "Post-scriptum sur les sociétés de contrôle," *L'autre Journal* 1 (1990): 3–7; Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000); Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Multitude: War and Democracy in the Age of Empire* (New York: Penguin, 2004).

43. Patrick Joyce, *The Rule of Freedom: Liberalism and the Modern City* (London: Verso, 2003).

44. Pavoncito is a maximum security prison in Guatemala that has been the site of prison riots.

45. Ian Hacking, *The Taming of Chance* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), vii.

46. David Sims, "The Right Balance for the Call Center: Somewhere between Prison and an Encounter Group," *Customer Interaction Solutions* 25, no. 5 (2006): 48–50.

47. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (New York: Random, 1977), 200.

48. Jean Comaroff, "Missionaries and Mechanical Clocks: An Essay on Religion and History in South Africa," *Journal of Religion* 71, no. 1 (1991): 10.

49. Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Of Revelation and Revolution, Volume 2: The Dialectics of Modernity on a South African Frontier* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 223.

50. Nathaniel Hawthorne, *The Scarlet Letter* (Boston: Ticknor, Reed, and Fields, 1850).

51. William Mazzarella, "Affect: What Is It Good For?" in *Enchantments of Modernity: Empire, Nation, Globalization*, ed. Saurabh Dube (New Delhi: Routledge, 2009), 29. See also Brian Massumi, *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 30.

52. Hawthorne, *Scarlet Letter*, 35.

53. Augustine of Hippo, *Confessions*, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (New York: Penguin Classics, 1961).

54. See Philippe Bourgois, *In Search of Respect: Selling Crack in El Barrio* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 114–74.

55. *The Wire* is an HBO drama series dealing with the complexities of Baltimore city police efforts to infiltrate an inner-city drug syndicate. *The Office* is an NBC mockumentary that pokes fun at the idiosyncrasies of a dysfunctional branch office of the fictional Dunder Mifflin Paper Company.

56. See Bethany E. Moreton, "The Soul of Neoliberalism," *Social Text* 25 (2007): 103–123.

57. Rosanne D'Ausilio, *Wake Up Your Call Center: Humanizing Your Interaction Hub* (West Lafayette, IN: Purdue University Press, 1998), 80.

58. This approach and paragraph owes full credit to Peter Redfield, "Doctors, Borders, and Life in Crisis," *Cultural Anthropology* 20, no. 3 (2005): 330.

59. It is certainly worth a note that scholars have long observed that unemployment draws people to where the work is, but here employment provides a certain

harbor from a world of violent disappearance. While beyond the scope of this article, the question of gang violence as it bears on the spirit of labor formation merits closer thought.

60. Fiona Terry, *Condemned to Repeat? The Paradox of Humanitarian Action* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002).

61. Mariana Valverde, *Diseases of the Will: Alcohol and the Dilemmas of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), 19.

62. Nikolas Rose, *Governing the Soul: The Shaping of the Private Self* (New York: Routledge, 1999).