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Making other worlds possible? Riots, movement, and counter-globalisation

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‘I predict a riot!’¹ Globalisation and its malcontents²

London, 1999

A long day of carnival and peaceful protest... timed to coincide with the start of the G8 world leaders’ conference in Cologne... turned into a riot yesterday afternoon as demonstrators trashed a McDonald’s, wrecked part of the Futures Exchange, set fire to a bank, and destroyed cars and empty flats in the City of London. ... many people were injured as the police used water cannon and baton-charged up to 2,000 mostly peaceful demonstrators on horseback. By early evening, there were running battles in side streets with a hard core of protesters hurling stones and bottles, breaking into buildings, throwing out files, setting fire to papers and breaking ground floor windows.³

Genoa, 2001

Riot police launched canisters of tear gas [on] Saturday at about 2,000 protesters trying to breach a safety perimeter a day after one man was killed during demonstrations outside the Group of Eight summit in Genoa, Italy. ... Ninety-three people were wounded Saturday, including eight police. Police arrested 36 demonstrators. ... As they marched, hundreds of extremists broke off from the larger group and set fires in plastic garbage cans, overturned cars, broke shop windows and hurled stones at police. Some called the police assassins, ...⁴

Evian, 2003

Police have used rubber bullets, tear gas and water cannons against anti-globalisation protesters in Swiss and French cities near Evian where the Group of Eight (G8) summit is being held. ... In the Swiss city of Geneva authorities spent more than nine hours battling with demonstrators as they rampaged through the city centre. ... Shop windows were smashed and stores looted, leaving the city streets awash with broken glass and choking fumes from tear gas canisters. After protesters began to hurl rocks and petrol bombs, the German police were brought in for reinforcements, storming the front line to scatter the rioters and chasing ringleaders all over the city, ... In Lausanne demonstrators wearing black face masks blocked roads with burning barricades and attacked the hotel area where some summit delegates

were staying before being driven away by riot police with tear gas. Several demonstrators were injured, one seriously, ...⁵

Gleneagles, 2005

There were fresh clashes between police and anti-G8 protestors early Wednesday ahead of the official opening of a gathering of world leaders from the Group of Eight (G8) nations at Gleneagles in Scotland. ... Police had been attacked with bottles and other missiles, the BBC said. Late on Monday, riot police clashed with anti-G8 protestors in Edinburgh, the Scottish capital, leading to up to 100 arrests. ... Police said [on] Tuesday that demonstrators bent on violence would meet a "robust response" from the authorities.⁶

Heiligendamm, 2007

Germany was shocked this weekend by images of violence in the Baltic port city of Rostock, where violent anti-G-8 protesters clashed with police just days before the start of the G-8 summit in Germany. Around 1,000 police and demonstrators were injured in violent clashes which followed an otherwise peaceful demonstration, with anarchists throwing stones at police and setting cars on fire.⁷

A Utopian dream is etched into the modern militant imaginary. A dream of revolution as rupture. An ecstatic storming of the Bastille, of the Winter Palace. Animated by a longing for something different, by fear in the face of repression, and by the (im)possibility of victory. "Under the cobblestones, the beach" – the revolutionaries of 1968 wrote on the walls of Paris, articulating their realistic demand for the impossible. Their dream remains with us, returning as a global social movement once again picks up the cobblestones both to reveal and to make the worlds that might be possible in the absence of neoliberalism's enclosures and apparent certainties.

In this chapter we trace the emergence of this complex and diverse global social movement: a movement that has become variously celebrated and vilified for its association with violence in the key public events of the street protests accompanying the meetings of world leaders promoting the neoliberal cause. We attempt a summary of political, economic and cultural tendencies that in the last few decades have

produced a dissenting, and sometimes rioting global movement with significant events and actors located in Western Europe. And we continue with some theoretical reflections regarding the nature and utility of ‘the riot act’ in this context. We do not see this as writing a history of riots, in the sense that a historian might be able to present a relatively detached history of the modern bread riots in England. We are writing the present, as people who were at and involved with producing the events we write about, and who share at least some of the dreams and affects of others who were there⁸.

Emergence 1. Seattle and the time when we were winning



Graffiti in downtown Seattle, at the riots that closed the WTO ministerial meeting, 1 December 1999. Source: http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no9/seattle_chronology.html

In tracing the history and emergence of a social movement, an impossible question arises: when and where does it start? In the case of the ‘counterglobalisation’ movement – also constructed as the ‘alterglobalisation movement’, the

‘antiglobalisation movement’, the global justice movement, and even the ‘movement of movements’⁹ – we are drawn to what would later become known as the movement’s ‘coming out party’¹⁰: the spectacular protests in Seattle against the 1999 ‘Ministerial’ of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). This event drew together an unlikely coalition of comrades - anarchists and communists, environmentalists and trade unionists, catholic nuns and queer activists – who defied the cold, rain, and scores of well-armed riot police to shut down the summit, preventing the opening ceremony from taking place, and arguably contributing to the collapse of the trade negotiations conducted there. It was with Seattle and accompanying solidarity events elsewhere¹¹ that a diverse yet powerful global movement appeared, seemingly out of nowhere. From the depths of a history that was supposed to have ended with neoliberalism, a multiplicity of voices suddenly were loudly proclaiming that ‘other worlds are possible!’ That perhaps there might be alternatives to the liberalisation of trade and capital markets, and to the privatisation and enclosure of common lands and resources: to a world safe for capital but not necessarily for life.

Since then an array of major protest events associated with the counterglobalisation movement have occurred in northern Europe, with many key moments taking place in both Britain and France. As the vignettes above indicate, the escape of these events from permissible civil society strategies of contestation into ‘uncivil’ provocative engagements, including both defensive confrontations with police and physical damage to the property and symbols of capital¹², has been a key element of their impact. Two tendencies in particular have been noticed for their embrace of proactively confrontational tactics. These are the black bloc, stereotyped as the black-clad, masked and hooded youths who violently pierce capital’s apparent peacefulness

through the smashing of its symbols and windows whilst maintaining a confrontational stance towards police; and the Italian-inspired *tute bianche*, dressed in white overalls and everyday materials that serve as protective padding, in order to approach and break through police lines – a consciously bio-political practice¹³ intended to draw out the tendency for violence towards protestors by police as always constitutive of the state's biopower¹⁴.

Naming the enemy: neoliberal globalisation and *The End of History*

As the image above announces, Seattle was the moment when the global left regained a sense that it might be 'winning'. But in order to understand the emergence of the movement that 'came out' in Seattle, we need to dig deeper, to go further back into history, to understand *who* it was that protested, blockaded, and rioted on the streets of Seattle and in other cities across the globe, and *why* they were doing so. To begin to make sense of the counterglobalisation movement, we need to understand the process of neoliberal globalisation that had been restructuring the world since its emergence in the 1970s. And in turn, the neoliberal project can only be explained by considering the crisis of 'Fordism', the supposedly 'golden' period of relatively steady post-war capitalist growth that came to its end in the early 1970s.

From a class perspective, Fordism was based on a compromise between largely nationally organised productive capital and a (largely male and white) industrial working class organised in trade unions, the relationship between the two stabilised by a Keynesian welfare state. In terms of production and consumption, it relied on productivity growth and the development of internal markets for mass consumption. Comparatively well-paid factory workers were able, both in the global North and the

so-called ‘developmentalist’ states of the South, to buy an ever-increasing number of products, thereby generating social peace.

Towards the late 1960s, however, productivity increases began to slow down and the model entered a crisis¹⁵. In 1971, US-president Richard Nixon responded to the crisis of the international economic system by abandoning the gold-Dollar-standard, thus ending the Bretton Woods system that was one of the pillars of the Keynesian mode of regulation. The crisis of the international currency regime was part of the fundamental crisis of Fordist capitalism in the 1960s and 1970s. During this time an escalation of global struggles combined with international instabilities, as well as fiscal and legitimation crises experienced by many states¹⁶, to produce an extended period of global social upheaval.

But far from leading to emancipation, the outcome of this ‘crisis of Fordism’ was a further entrenching of capitalist structures through the emergence and subsequent victory of the *neoliberal project*. Dumenil and Levy¹⁷ define neoliberalism as

the expression of the desire of a class of capitalist owners and the institutions in which their power is concentrated, which we collectively call ‘finance’, to restore – in the context of a general decline in popular struggles – the class’s revenues and power.

This reassertion of power occurred *vis-à-vis* labour (e.g. in the battles that US-president Reagan and UK prime minister Thatcher fought and won against the air traffic controllers and miners respectively in the 1980s), as well as other fractions of capital, such as industrial/productive capital¹⁸. One of the central characteristics of the regime of accumulation underpinning and emerging from this new class project are the ‘new enclosures’¹⁹, or ‘accumulation by dispossession’²⁰: a frequently violent, *political* (qua state), ‘liberation’ of new resources for productive investment

accompanied by the creation of a globally mobile and increasingly precarious proletariat (or what some are terming the ‘precariat’)²¹.

In June 1989, as the Eastern Bloc was crumbling, political scientist Francis Fukuyama published an article declaring that *history* had come to an end²²: ‘[t]oday... we have trouble imagining a world that is radically better than our own, or a future that is not essentially democratic and capitalist’²³. The global neoliberal offensive seemed to have consigned every potential challenge to the scrap yard of history. The so-called post-1960s ‘new social movements’ still existed, but appeared incapable or unwilling to issue a direct challenge to the power of capital through what came to be derisively called their ‘single-issue politics’²⁴. With the collapse of the Berlin Wall, there appeared to be no force that could constitute an ‘anticapitalist’ project. And yet, to take up a somewhat tired metaphor, neoliberalism, at the same time as it was wiping out its remaining enemies, was busily creating its own gravediggers, or at least, its next challengers. Key strategies of the neoliberal offensive were ‘accumulation by dispossession’ through privatisation and commodification; accompanied by a rearticulation of states into agents of upward redistribution of wealth, and of international economic institutions into agencies of structural adjustment. It was at these frontlines that new networks and forms of resistance began to grow and coalesce.

Emergence 2. The end of *The End of History*

In the first half of the 1990s, diverse social movements worldwide existed relatively independently of each other: by and large, they were not perceived, nor did they generally perceive themselves, as being linked in a global movement against

neoliberalism. For that, the end of history had to end, and come to an end it did. If there is a date that heralded the birth of current glocal post-capitalist politics and consciousness – whereby the ‘dots’ of these localities and concerns became ‘joined-up’ in a globalising awareness of ‘a common enemy’ – it is New Year’s Day, 1994. On this date Mexico entered NAFTA²⁵, and the Zapatista National Liberation Army²⁶ emerged from its mountain refuges in the state of Chiapas, South-East Mexico, to seize the city of San Cristobal de las Casas and several other towns²⁷. Under the declaration of ‘¡Ya Basta!’ – Enough! – their campaign was against the president, the army, 500 years of oppression since the ‘discovery’ of the Americas, and 40 years of ‘development’; and for free elections, land rights, self-governance, and the autonomy to live and die with dignity according to established cultural practices²⁸. Tanks, Swiss aeroplanes, US helicopters and 15,000 troops were employed by the government to counter the rebellion, and a heavy military presence still remains in Chiapas. A number of distinctive elements have constructed ‘Zapatismo’ as a cogent symbol of contemporary glocal self-determination politics, embodying the style and content, as well as the state’s response, of counterglobalisation politics today. These include powerfully emotive imaginary of the metaphorical David challenging the Goliath of neoliberal modernity and the state; the mystique conferred by the masking of participants – for identity protection, as a conscious statement of antipathy towards the cult of individualism associated with modernity, and as symbols of the silence and invisibility of those rendered voiceless by colonialism and neoliberalism; and the paradoxical intermingling of an affirmation of tradition with a looking to the future and the new – represented by skilful use of the emerging internet to popularise the Zapatista struggle and concerns²⁹, as well as by a committed challenge by both women and men against the ‘macho society’ of their traditional past³⁰.

In combination with the brilliant and poetic Zapatista uptake of globalisation technologies in their use of an emerging internet to publicise concerns and desires, the 1st of January 1994 acted as the catalyst that pulled together seemingly disparate struggles in a consciousness of sharing a common enemy: namely, the alienations and dispossessions normalised by the conceptual and material enclosures demanded by neoliberalism. It is this contemporary history that made possible the heroic moment of Seattle 1999, as movements worldwide became entrained into the riotous and mutinous energy of a global counterglobalisation movement.

Reading the riot act: will the destruction be constructive?

But what is it about the riot act that fascinates so many of us, political radicals, commentators and spectators alike? While mainstream pundits usually focus on the seemingly mindless smashing of material property as well as confrontational attitudes towards police, arguably it precisely the rupturing of ‘normal’ political space and time – this transgression of civility – occurring in riots that is able to achieve something that *everyday* political practice cannot. As we write, activists throughout Europe and beyond are beginning to pour their energies into mobilising for the international climate change summit in Copenhagen in December 2009. And once again, the question has erupted: what is the political point of this kind of confrontational politics? Given this live debate, we seek now to offer some reflections on the riotous summit protest as an enactment of the dream of revolution as rupture, asking: what are the possibilities and limits of such an event-focused political practice? We start with an example to set the scene.

The Annemasse blockade, G8 Evian 2003

Without any warning, the police attacked our totally peaceful demonstration with massive volleys of teargas. [...]. Even though for most of us this was the first time in such a situation, we never panicked [...]. Soon one felt how fear was overcome and washed away by courage. [...] While in the front some people held the police at bay by throwing stones and others extinguished the gas grenades right in front of the police lines, the Attac-campus groups supplied the barricade with wood for protection from gas. In the midst of all this, a large group of 'Pink & Silver' danced and sang carnival-rhythms³¹.

Nothing was *supposed* to happen at the blockade in Annemasse, making what *did* happen that much more significant. The attempt to blockade one of the highways leading to the conference centre hosting the 2003 G8-summit in Evian, France, had been organised largely by groups within the moderate counterglobalist ATTAC-network³², not known for 'kicking off' against the police. We were both at the G8 protests in Evian/Annemasse in 2003, and one of us (Tadzio) joined this blockade, not expecting any confrontation with the police. At least, not the type of confrontation where the protesters fight back.

Tadzio recalls: on the march to the planned blockading point, I talked to several activists, most of whom had never been in potentially confrontational situations, and were anxious about the possibility of a police attack. After walking for some hours, we arrived at a line of police reinforced by water cannons – and were attacked with tear gas within thirty seconds. What was surprising in this situation was not the tactics of the police, but the way the crowd responded: after initially retreating about 50-100 metres and recovering from the initial shock of the attack, a number of masked protestors began building a barricade and setting it alight, while others threw stones at the police. Very soon, almost the whole march participated.

This ‘stand-off’ continued for several hours, after which the march returned to the camp. Intriguingly, although we had not achieved our goal to block the road we had planned to, the general feeling was one of victory. At an evaluation meeting in Berlin some days after the action, several of the speakers invoked what had become known among the march’s participants as ‘the spirit of Evian’. In spite of criticism for breaking the *attac*-network’s line or discrediting the movement in the eyes of the ‘wider public’, many of those who participated in the blockade that became a riot felt that something had changed: for them, the riot transformed what they could think and do politically.

How are we to understand the transformative effect of this mini-riot in Annemasse? We recognise that it is impossible to generalise from one riotous event to the ‘nature’ of riots in the counterglobalisation movement. One riot is not like another: they vary both in their impacts and acceptability across time and space³³, and a riot in a society where no one ever throws stones at the police is likely to have a very different meaning to one where this happens all the time. In what follows, we draw on some key theorists of the riotous event to elucidate the varied occurrence and manifestations of riots associated with the counterglobalisation movement in Europe, and to contribute to current debate regarding the meaning and effect(s) of these events and practices.

Effervescent Crowds

We draw first on the work of Emile Durkheim to explicate a sense that – as with the riot in Annemasse described above - there indeed have been riots in this movement

that have opened up political space; that have changed what can be thought and done and thereby displaced the limits of the socially and politically possible. Durkheim³⁴ suggests that ‘[i]n the midst of an assembly that becomes worked up, we become capable of feelings and conduct of which we are incapable when left to our individual resources’. Sometimes this means that mass gatherings merely reaffirm a social collective’s underlying principles as transcending each single individual. But sometimes it can mean that the very principles of a collective are transformed: that new social and political spaces are opened, in a moment of what Durkheim called creative or “collective effervescence”.

The starting point of his analysis is the potentially ecstatic nature of mass events. The coming together of a normally dispersed group of people, a description which clearly applies to contemporary European counterglobalist protestors (though he was drawing on research regarding Australian indigenous people), disrupts the monotony of everyday life, producing events where ‘a sort of electricity is generated, [which] quickly launches [the participants] to an extraordinary height of exaltation.’ This effervescence – also associated with a carnivalesque reversal of social norms³⁵ and the transgressive noise of the potentially revolutionary Festival³⁶ – produces ‘passions so heated and so free from control’ that they can lead to generally ‘outlandish behaviour’. Durkheim argues that it is in such riotous moments and epochs – producing an intense ‘world of sacred things’ - that societies (or movements) are born³⁷: Thus:

Under the influence of some great collective shock in certain historical periods, social interactions become much more frequent and active [...]. The result is the general effervescence that is characteristic of revolutionary or creative epochs. [...] People live differently and more intensely than in normal times. The changes are not simply of nuance and degree; man [*sic*] becomes something other than what he was.³⁸

But how do riots actually produce the changes in established subjectivities that can open new political spaces? First, they encourage participants to stretch the boundaries of ‘normal’ social morality. As Farge and Revel note in their study of a set of riots in mid-18th century Paris, the bourgeois involved in the street fighting temporarily broke the boundaries of their class and their morality.³⁹ Second, these changes in subjectivity induced by riots might last beyond the riotous event itself. Here, an elaboration of Durkheim’s original concept of effervescence is useful. Durkheim in fact describes two different categories of effervescent events without properly distinguishing them. These are those which produce a certain intensity of feelings that in turn reconstitutes and reiterates group cohesion, such that no lasting transformation of participants’ sense of the possible occurs. Alternatively are those that constitute genuinely creative events, where, ‘for some reason, these collective interactions become extraordinarily powerful and intense’⁴⁰; permitting some transformation of norms and values, and thereby shifting the individual and social identities that otherwise reconstitute and reproduce those norms and values. The positive feedback generated in such events induces lasting transformations in a way that everyday, ‘run-of-the mill’ riotous ‘rituals’ do not.

For such effervescent riots to be further effective, however, requires that their political energy diffuse and take hold beyond a circle of immediate participants. Aristide Zolberg’s analysis of riots and other collective effervescent events as ‘moments of madness’ illustrates some ways in which this might occur. He argues that moments of madness are intensive learning processes, where new ideas spread to larger publics; that these ideas become institutionally located in the networks of social

relations established during the moments; and that the aggregate experiences of individuals does indeed matter in producing possible transformation⁴¹.

Moments of madness: transgression produces transformation?

The practical question now becomes: do riots in counterglobalisation politics constructively open and reorganise political space in ways that survive the event and produce emancipatory social change? There are many ways in which we might engage with this question.

Recall the account of the Annemasse protest given above. Contrary to behaviour expected from *attac*-activists, the participants of the march responded to the police's assault by drawing on a repertoire of protest – the burning of a barricade, the throwing of stones at the police – which by and large was new and alien to them. Although it was the non-*attac* protesters at the front who started building the barricade, and throwing stones at the police from the front lines, others quickly became caught up in the dynamic of the event, and felt empowered to confront the police. This confrontation contributed to a transformation of protestor subjectivities by opening up new political spaces of contestation, and changing a sense of what is politically possible⁴². It was this changed sense of the limits of the possible that became the basis for post-summit evocations of 'the spirit of Evian'; and which allowed participants to break the long-established non-confrontational guidelines of *attac*, and to form linkages with other militant anti-capitalists in Berlin, thereby creating networks which subsequently were very active in the mobilisation for the G8 summit in Heiligendamm in 2007. *Attac*-activists from Leipzig felt similarly empowered by the event, and afterwards were more inclined to confront the police, as well as engage in

other forms of direct action.

If Evian/Annemasse was only a little mad, the riotous carnival planned in the city of London's square mile to coincide with the G8 summit in Köln, Germany, on June 18th 1999, could be construed as bordering on 'insanity'. In this event, ten thousand protestors wearing carnival masks and accompanied by driving samba rhythms, a punk band, and sound-systems, noisily and unexpectedly took over the disciplined space of the city. Its effects penetrated right to the heart of the city's sacred cow of speculative finance: the London International Financial Futures Exchange⁴³. Over £10 million of damage was caused, the basement of the LIFFE building was flooded through 'release' of one of London's 75 buried rivers, sixteen people were arrested on the day with around 50 more arrested in connection with the event up to a year later⁴⁴.

Among many counterglobalisation protesters this event left a legacy of distrust of the state and its institutions. At the same time, within the UK it also generated a plethora of questions regarding the utility of all the time, energy and resources devoted to the staging of one-off spectacular events, and the socio-political validity of a secretive vanguard of activist organisers orchestrating events requiring participation of broader publics⁴⁵. Nevertheless, it could be argued that this 'carnival against capitalism' that became a riot was effective in wreaking havoc on a key stronghold of capital, and thereby creating a symbolic challenge that went beyond the state's monopoly of violence, attacking the sanctity of private (commercial) property, as well as capital's contemporary enclosure of public space⁴⁶. It fed into and spawned an array of similar carnivalesque approaches to summit protests, contributing to a common strand in counterglobalisation tactics of identifying potent buildings and symbols of neoliberal

capitalism as targets for attack.

But in what way does this ‘symbolic’ challenge really matter? Ernesto Laclau⁴⁷ suggests that the normalisation of every social relation of domination requires an accompanying act of forgetting its origins in *political* operations of power and violence: effecting a silencing and closure of discursive, political and epistemological alternatives. One reading of the spectacular protest events mentioned is that they challenge this social forgetfulness, bringing to the fore the antagonisms and struggles that infuse normalised social relations. They demonstrate that the police’s monopoly on violence and the sanctity of private property are not in the natural scheme of things, but are politically constituted and policed. In this reading then, riots are events that can create a space of intensity where such social myths are more easily revealed and challenged than in relatively routine moments of everyday interaction.

But perhaps we should not over-valorise the smashing tactics of confrontational engagements with police and property in counterglobalisation politics? While the immediacy of an event might contribute to possibly transformative effects on the political subjectivities of those involved – feeding desire for other possible worlds⁴⁸ – at broader scales inciting the violence of the state might indeed do exactly that; reinforcing and justifying violence at repressive intensities that become more of the same rather than producing something other. If ‘transgression does not deny the taboo but transcends it and completes it’⁴⁹, then in this reading a transgressive politics that bubbles over into riotous violence might reinforce rather than smash the taboo of the state’s monopoly on violence; requiring greater thought and reflexivity in becoming subjectivities that refract rather than reproduce the violences underpinning

capitalism's enclosures.

Running riot with Deleuze and Guattari

A further reading of the possibility for transformative excess in the production and experience of riotous counterglobalisation events might come from the poststructuralist philosophers Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari. The quasi-religious concept of revolution invoked at the beginning of this section (of revolution as total, immediate rupture), and which underpins Durkheim's notion of effervescence, has been problematised and replaced in today's counterglobalisation movement with a conception of building 'other worlds' in long, drawn-out processes of social change that nonetheless does not abandon an accompanying promise of the 'radical' and 'ruptural'. How, then, can we theoretically conceive of this type of social change? Here we use some of the tools provided by Deleuze and Guattari, who combine a subtle understanding of social change both as ruptural *and* as gradually constructed through time and space, with that rarest of academic qualities: revolutionary optimism.

The basis for their optimism lies in the world that Deleuze and Guattari encounter. It is in principle disorderly, a world of becoming, not of being, of nomadic movement through relatively undisciplined and bounded spaces. It is a world of multiplicity and difference, irreducible and indivisible. Here, unity and stability can only ever result from the operations of power, capture, and *territorialisation*⁵⁰, such that order is not the almost unchangeable status quo, but rather a tenuous construct which at all points has to be re-established by the state and other 'apparatuses of capture'⁵¹.

The target of these constant attempts at capture is ‘a pure and immeasurable multiplicity, the pack, and irruption of the ephemeral and the power of metamorphosis’. This is what they refer to (perhaps problematically) as the *war machine*, which ‘brings a *furor* to bear against sovereignty, a celerity against gravity, secrecy against the public, a power (*puissance*) against sovereignty, a machine against the apparatus’⁵². The war machine – akin also to Hakim Bey’s *Temporary Autonomous Zone*⁵³ - thus is not a tangible institution, but the irrepressible desire for nomadic transformation, for becoming. It is present only in its metamorphoses⁵⁴, in moments of invention and creation:

[a]nd each time there is an operation against the State – insubordination, rioting, guerrilla warfare, or revolution as act – it can be said that a war machine has revived, that a new nomadic potential has appeared, accompanied by the reconstitution of a smooth space or a manner of being in space as though it were smooth.⁵⁵

Of course, not each and every riot generates creative flashes of the war machine; ‘smooth’ space is not generated every time a roving band of (mostly) guys in hooded sweaters lobs some rocks at the police. And presumably, Deleuze and Guattari would not think so either, for the destruction and ‘violence’ they advocate is not simply a ‘nihilistic form [...] of physical destruction’, but rather a creative, generative (Nietzschean) form of constructive destruction⁵⁶.

In this reading, then, an imputed act of political radicalism is transformative to the extent that it escapes as a *line of flight*, drawing into the world – manifesting - *other* subjectivities, spaces, and possibilities. Imagine the striated space of the state, where all movement is relative to, and overcoded by, the centre – then an instance where the ‘war machine’ flashes up, where there is an escape from the regularised lines of stasis and movement of the state effecting ‘a deterritorialisation, through a movement which

interrupts or suspends familiar, confining, formal possibilities...a movement out of which the participating bodies are drawn along new vectors in experimental ways⁵⁷. The riotous drawing of a line of flight creates new possibilities, opens up new political spaces, produces other worlds. It occurs in the moments where creative violence and excess is not subordinated to political reason; where risk and chance have outcomes which cannot be predicted, and where connections are created between elements hitherto unconnected.

Open ends

We have come a long way. In the course of this political and reflective journey, we have ripped up the pavements of Annemasse and London, seen barricades burn and celebrated the creative excess of contemporary confrontations between the counterglobalisation movement and the institutions of global capital. Having arrived where we are now – what, finally, of that famous beach? The answer must remain open: it is as if we have ripped up the cobblestones to find sand – and then realised that we still do not know whether it really is the beach, or just another desert. It is ultimately only in the processes within which spectacular events are embedded that their political meaning is constituted.

The dream of revolution as a singular, one-off rupture has been discarded by most within the counterglobalist movement. But the desire for ruptural politics has not, and for good reason. We have suggested here that riots can be events that rupture ‘normal’ political time and space, that speed up history, and open new political spaces for contesting otherwise normalised, ‘sedimented’ social relations of domination. They can generate an effervescence that might create new collective solidarities: in other

words, they can create ‘movements’ where before there was only relatively isolated groups – this much we learn from Durkheim. They can create ‘militants’ where before there were protestors unable to challenge the power of the police. Speaking strategically, then: there is good reason to be critical of an exclusive focus on organising protests, and every reason to attempt to build movement links beyond a one-off event. But there are no reasons to stop organising altogether for moments of excess, of madness, of effervescence. Radical politics cannot live without the intensity created in such moments: it is those moments that make other worlds possible.

¹ Kaiser Chiefs, *I Predict a Riot*, (B-Unique, 2004).

² Named after a much-circulated short article elaborating the militarising of corporate interests apparent in the 2003 Iraq War and celebrating the massive and global anti-war movement that emerged in that year, Norman Solomon, “‘Globalization’ and its malcontents”, *Media Beat*, 20 February 2003, online. <http://www.fair.org/index.php?page=2224>, accessed 22 February 2003. This of course also revisits the title of the widely read critique of neoliberal economic policies written by the International Monetary Fund’s own chief economist, Joseph Stiglitz, who published *Globalisation and its discontents* in 2002 (London: Allen Lane, Penguin Books). In the ‘vignettes’ presented here we draw here on corporate media reports of protests against the G8, the Group of the world’s eight most industrialised countries (the United States, Japan, Germany, UK, France, Italy, Canada and Russia). The G8 is only one international organisation whose summit meetings form a focus for intense policing effort and counterglobalisation protest. Others are the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the World Economic Forum and the European Union, all of which have attracted large-scale summit mobilisations involving a multiplicity of protest tactics. We use the G8 here as a convenient acknowledgement of the symbolic and material inequalities expressed as current configuration of institutions comprised of a minority agree on economic, military and environmental policy that arguably sustains the global inequalities and ecological damage that affects the lives of a global majority.

³ Vidal, John and Brooks, Libby 1999 ‘Day the City turned into a battleground’, *The Guardian* 19 June 1999, online. <http://www.guardian.co.uk/uk/1999/jun/19/johnvidal.libbybrooks>, accessed 25 November 2008.

⁴ Vinci, Alessio and Wallace, Kelly 2001 ‘G8 leaders condemn violence as protesters, police clash’, *CNN.com/world* 23 July 2001, online, <http://edition.cnn.com/2001/WORLD/europe/07/21/genoa.violence/>, accessed 25 November 2008.

⁵ BBC News 2003 ‘Protesters rampage in Geneva’, online. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/2954190.stm>, accessed 25 November 2008.

⁶ UK News 2005 ‘Fresh violence erupts near Gleneagles G8 site’, 6 July, online. http://www.monstersandcritics.com/news/uk/news/article_1031220.php/Fresh_violence_erupts_near_Gleneagles_G8_site, accessed 1 December 2008.

⁷ <http://www.spiegel.de/international/germany/0,1518,486573,00.html>, accessed 7 December 2008.

⁸ Also see Mueller, Tadzio 2004, “What’s really under those cobblestones? Riots as political tools, and the case of Gothenburg 2001”, *Ephemera* 4:2; Sullivan, Sian 2005 ‘We are heartbroken and furious!’ Rethinking violence and the (anti-)globalisation movements’, pp. 175-194 in Maignushca, B. and Eschle,

C. (eds.) *Critical theories, world politics and 'the anti-globalisation movement'*, London, Routledge. Also published in 2004 as *CSGR Working Paper* no. 133/04.

<http://www.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/CSGR/wpapers/wp13304.pdf>; and Sullivan, Sian 2008 'Viva Nihilism!' On militancy and machismo in (anti-)globalisation protest, in Devetak, R. and Hughes, C. (eds.) *Globalization of political violence: globalization's shadow*, Warwick Studies in Globalisation, Routledge, London. Also published in 2005 as *CSGR Working Paper* no. 158/05.

<http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/fac/soc/csgr/research/workingpapers/2005/>

⁹ Mertes, Tom, ed. 2004, *A Movement of Movements: Is Another World Really Possible?* (London, New York: Verso)

¹⁰ Klein, Naomi, (2004) "Reclaiming the Commons", in Tom Mertes, ed., *A Movement of Movements: Is Another World Really Possible?* (London, New York: Verso)

¹¹ N30 London (1999) UK London N30 1999, online. <http://bak.spc.org/N30london/>, accessed 17th December 2008.

¹² For a comprehensive review of protest tactics and consideration of their problematic categorisations as 'violence', see Amory Starr 2006 "'... (Excepting barricades erected to prevent us from peacefully assembling)": so-called "violence" in the global alterglobalization movement', *Social Movement Studies*, 5(1): 61-81.

¹³ Foucault, Michel 1997b 'The Birth of Biopolitics', in Michel Foucault, *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*, ed. by Paul Rabinow (New York: The New Press 1997), pp. 73-79.

¹⁴ Also see Sullivan *ibid.*, 'We are heartbroken...'; and Starr *ibid.*

¹⁵ Aglietta, Michel, (1987 [1979]) *A Theory of Capitalist Regulation – the US experience* (London and New York: Verso)

¹⁶ Harvey, David, (1989) *The Condition of Postmodernity* (Oxford: Blackwell), pp. 141-2, 171

¹⁷ Dumenil, Gerard and Dominique Levy, (2004) *Capital Resurgent – Roots of the Neoliberal Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press) pp. 1-2.

¹⁸ *Ibid.* Dumenil and Levy (2004); cf. Gill (1990).

¹⁹ Midnight Notes Collective, (1990) "The New Enclosures", *Midnight Notes* no. 10.

Available at <http://www.commoner.org.uk/02midnight.pdf>, accessed 17/08/2008; a process that saw its first expression in Britain's 'enclosure movement' which opened in the early middle ages and saw major consolidation with the General Enclosure Acts of the early 1800s. For an excellent analysis of the radically transformative effect that this process has, particularly in terms of disembedding economy from the regulatory effects of both nature and other social institutions, see Karl Polanyi *The Great Transformation: the Political and Economic Transformations of Our Time*. Boston: Beacon Press 2001 (1944).

²⁰ Harvey, David, (2003) *The New Imperialism* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 137-179

²¹ E.g. The Frassanito Network 2005 Precarious, Precarization, Precariat? Impacts, traps and challenges of a complex term and its relationship to migration, *This Tuesday: logs on migration, labor, transnational organizing*. Online. <http://www.thisuesday.org/node/93>, accessed 17 December 2008. Of course, capitalist production has always relied on migrant labour in variously precarious positions, as in the emerging colonies, and through the production of a landless underclass via the Enclosure Acts in west Europe.

²² Francis Fukuyama 1989 The end of history, *The National Interest*, 16: 3-18, republished as a book length monograph as Fukuyama, F. *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin Books 1992).

²³ *Ibid.* p. 49.

²⁴ Katsiaficas, George, (1997) *The Subversion of Politics – European Autonomous Movements and the Subversion of Everyday Life* (New Jersey: Humanities Press). Available at http://www.erosseffect.com/books/subversion_download.htm, accessed 04/09/2006. P. 262.

²⁵ The North American Free Trade Agreement between Mexico, USA and Canada.

²⁶ i.e. EZLN – Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional. For further information go to one of the many websites that focus on the Zapatistas, for example, <http://lanic.utexas.edu/project/Zapatistas/>.

²⁷ Rovira, Guiomar *Women of Maize: Indigenous Women and the Zapatista Rebellion* (London: Latin American Bureau, 2000).

²⁸ Esteva, Gustavo 'Basta! Mexican Indians Say "Enough"! ' pp. 302-305 in Rahnema, Majid and Bawtree, Victoria (eds.) *The Post-Development Reader* (London: Zed Books, 1997 (1994)), p. 302.

²⁹ <http://www.eco.utexas.edu/Homepages/Faculty/Cleaver/zapsincyber.html> lists some 44 websites focusing on the Zapatistas.

³⁰ In the Spirit of Emma *Zapatista* (London: Active Distribution, 1999), p. 9.

³¹ Engelmann, Lukas, Oliver Pye und Pedram Shahyar, (2003) *Auswertung der Evian-Kampagne*

(Berlin: Attac Berlin). Available at <http://www.attacberlin.de/fileadmin/Evianauswertung.rtf>, accessed 14/08/2008.

³² Cassen, Bernard, (2003) "On the Attack", *New Left Review* no. 19. Available at <http://www.newleftreview.net/NLR25303.shtml>, accessed 21/09/2008.

³³ Anonymous, ed., (2001) *On Fire; The Battle of Genoa and the anti-capitalist movement* (London: One Off Press); The Free Association, (2004) *Moments of Excess* (Leeds: Leeds Mayday Group). Available at http://www.nadir.org.uk/Resources/Moments_of_Excess.pdf, accessed 02/08/2008; Drury, John, Steve Reicher and Clifford Stott, (2003) "Transforming the boundaries of collective identity: From the local anti-road campaign to global resistance?", *Social Movement Studies* no. 2

³⁴ Durkheim, Emile, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York: The Free Press 1995 (1912)), pp. 211-2.

³⁵ Bakhtin, Mikhail *Rabelais and His World* (Indiana University Press 1984).

³⁶ Lefebvre, Henri *Everyday Life in the Modern World* (London: The Athlone Press 1984 (1971)); Sullivan, Sian 2006 On dance and difference: bodies, movement and experience in Khoesān trance-dancing – perceptions of 'a raver', pp. 234-241 in Haviland, W.A., Gordon R., and Vivanco, L. (eds.) *Talking About People: Readings in Contemporary Cultural Anthropology*, 4th Edition. McGraw-Hill, New York.

³⁷ Durkheim, *ibid.* pp.218-9; cf. *Ibid.* The Free Association, *Moments of Excess*.

³⁸ Durkheim, *ibid.* pp. 212-3.

³⁹ Farge, Arlette and Jacques Revel *The Rules of Rebellion – child abductions in Paris in 1750* (Cambridge, Oxford: Polity Press 1991)

⁴⁰ Lockwood, David, *Solidarity and Schism: The 'Problem of Disorder' in Durkheimian and Marxian Sociology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press 1992), p. 34

⁴¹ Zolberg, Aristide 1972 "Moments of Madness", *Politics and Society* 2:2, pp. 206-7; The Free Association 2004.

⁴² Cf. *Ibid.* Drury, Reicher and Stott, 'Transforming the Boundaries'.

⁴³ We draw here on the description of 'J18' in Notes From Nowhere *We Are Everywhere: The Irresistible Rise of Global Anticapitalism* (London: Verso 2003); and Anonymous 2000 May Day: Guerilla? Gardening? *Do or Die* 9: 69-81, online. http://www.eco-action.org/dod/no9/may_day.htm, accessed 26 November 2008.

⁴⁴ Wikipedia 2008 Carnival against capitalism, online.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carnival_Against_Capitalism, accessed 3 December 2008.

⁴⁵ E.g. *Ibid.* Anonymous, May Day...; Anonymous 2001 Give up activism, *Do and Die* 9: 160-66.

⁴⁶ Klein, Naomi *No Logo: No Space, No Choice, No Jobs* (New York: Picador 2000)

⁴⁷ Laclau, Ernesto, *New Reflections on The Revolution of Our Time* (London and New York: Verso 1990), pp. 32-4.

⁴⁸ Cf. Sullivan, Sian 2005 An *other* world is possible? On representation, rationalism and romanticism in Social Forums, Special Issue *ephemera: theory and practice in organization*, 5(2): 370-392. <http://www.ephemeraweb.org/journal/5-2/5-2sullivan.pdf>

⁴⁹ Bataille, Georges *Eroticism*, trans. By Mary Dalwood (London: Marion Boyars 1987 (1957)).

⁵⁰ Deleuze, Gilles and Felix Guattari *A Thousand Plateaus - Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (London and New York: Continuum 2004b (1987)), p. 9.

⁵¹ Also see Foucault, Michel *The Will to Knowledge: The History of Sexuality*, Volume 1, trans. by Robert Hurley, London, Penguin 1998 (1976)).

⁵² Deleuze and Guattari 2004, p. 388.

⁵³ Bey, Hakim 1991 *The Temporary Autonomous Zone*, online.

<http://www.hermetic.com/bey/taz3.html>, accessed 23 November 2000.

⁵⁴ Deleuze and Guattari 2004, pp. 397-8

⁵⁵ Deleuze and Guattari 2004, p. 426

⁵⁶ Reid, Julian, 2003 "Deleuze's War Machine: Nomadism against the State", *Millennium* 32:1, p. 69

⁵⁷ Hughes, John *Lines of Flight: Reading Deleuze with Hardy, Gissing, Conrad, Woolf* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press 1997), p. 46.