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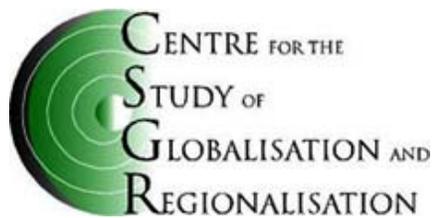
**“We are heartbroken and furious!”(#2) Violence and the  
(anti-)globalisation movement(s)”**

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CSGR Working Paper No. 133/04

May 2004

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
WARWICK



## **‘We are heartbroken and furious!’(#2) Violence and the (anti-)globalisation movement(s)**

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### **Abstract**

This is a much reworked and reoriented version of an earlier CSGR Working Paper (Sullivan 2004a). A somewhat shorter version is forthcoming as Chapter 10 in Maignascha, B. and Eschle, C. (December 2004) *Critical Theories, World Politics and ‘the Anti-Globalisation Movement’*, London: Routledge. The piece began as an exploratory comment on militant discourse and practice within the ‘(anti-)globalisation movement(s)’. It emerged from my own process of sense-making regarding the experience of violently irruptive situations, as well as from my perceptions of the contextual causes of violence in these situations. My particular fascination has been the role(s) of *affect* – and particularly of the felt experiences of depression and anger – in drawing people to the decision to literally place their bodies and psyches in the path of violent police repression in protest events. In this version I open with data derived from ‘observant participation’ in a number of events. This serves to emphasise my embeddedness within activist communities and practice, and to clearly situate the bearing that my own subjective experience has on my interpretation of protest events and of ‘anti-capitalist’ praxis. In interpreting and analyzing emerging activist desires to assert agency through activism, I highlight two related conceptual arenas. 1. A thinking through of the biopolitical necessities and manifestations effected by *Empire* – the constrained locating of sovereignty in the global – which construct the body and psyche as the only viable and meaningful locales of resistance (cf. Hardt and Negri 2000 after Foucault e.g. 1998 (1976)). And 2., a consideration of the parallels between a growing global incidence of depressed and disengaged individual subjectivities and Giorgio Agamben’s discourse on ‘bare life’ (e.g. 1994, 1998), i.e. human life stripped of citizenship as in refugees, asylum seekers, detainees etc. This suggests a concomitant understanding of the subjective spaces of affective depression as locales from where is possible for ‘new’ dissenting subjectivities to emerge. My intention remains to problematise the dynamic relationships existing between a microcosm of individual circumstances that effect a range of violent practices from self-harm to militant activism, and the macrocosm of structural societal violence within which these are located. In doing so, I offer some reflections regarding what really constitutes radical political praxis in a context of late capitalist modernity, emphasising the continual effort to subvert modernity’s assumed categories of the real, and the need for reflexivity in considering whether or not activist praxis simply mirrors, and thereby maintains, the violent biopower of *Empire*.

#### Keywords:

violence/violation, militancy, militarisation (of police), (anti-)globalisation movements, anti-capitalism, anarchism, depression, anger, bio-politics, ‘bare life’

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... the militant is the one who best expresses the life of the multitude: the agent of biopolitical production and resistance against Empire (Hardt and Negri 2000: 411).

## 2003 - A SUMMER OF PROTEST

**G8 Evian, May-June:** *Banging tekno, gabba, hard trance. It's 1.30am, Sunday 1<sup>st</sup> June, and M and I have stumbled through woodland on the edge of the activist villages camped at Annemasse to find a clearing filled with maybe ten sound systems and hundreds of dancing protesters. In a few hours people will be walking several kilometres towards Evian to build a blockade across the main road leading to the conference centre where the G8 - the leaders of the world's eight most politically powerful nations - will meet to discuss economic and political strategy. The atmosphere is energised by talk of the planned blockade, and for a moment I sense that these dancers are engaging in a timeless warrior practice of drawing energy up from the earth to strengthen their resolve in pending battle. Of course, many are here just for the party and won't make it to the blockade. Behind a dreadlocked fire-poi dancer a banner captures the reason why these 'antiauthoritarians' are here. Underneath four caricatured figures of the prostitute, the casual worker (portrayed as a turbaned Arab), the immigrant, and the youth are the words 'les victimes du systeme (6tem) servent de coupables' ('the victims of the system become its culprits') (Plate 1).*

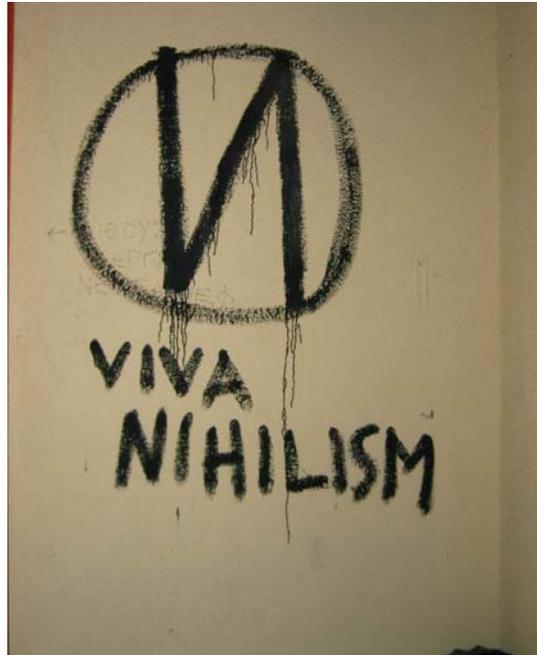


Plate 1. Banner displayed by 'antiauthoritarians' at Annemasse during the counter-summit against the G8 meeting in Evian, June 2003. Translated it says 'fear is a trap. Prostitution – casualisation – immigration - youth. The victims of the system become its culprits' (personal archive).

*M and I wake several hours later and join the main organised march through Annemasse, across the French-Swiss border into Geneva and back to Annemasse. We pass an ESSO petrol station whose pumps have been engulfed in black plastic across which is scrawled the words 'G8 - le monde n'est pas à ton service' ('G8 - the world is not at your service'). T is with the blockade and sends texts at regular intervals with updates. 'They've started with the tear-gas', 'we need more people', 'what are you guys doing?' We learn later that the blockade indeed did hold up the meeting so could be considered successful in these terms<sup>1</sup>. Meanwhile, it's blisteringly hot and although the march is large and diverse - NGOs with symbolic displays of the inequalities generated by global capitalism, a rather small group of black-clad anarchists, local flag-waving socialist blocks - the almost disconcerting lack of police generates a feeling that the action must be elsewhere. Later, over beer and veggie food in VAAAG<sup>2</sup> we learn that the police at Lausanne have invaded the Bourdonette activist campsite and are beating and detaining activists – several hundred in total (Reyes 2003: 1). After a lengthy and multilingual meeting an agreement is reached to go back into Annemasse centre to show our presence in solidarity with those held in Lausanne. So again we traipse the several kilometres into town and collect in the square where the town hall is located. Now the police are obvious and omnipresent: dozens of vans and flashing blue lights line the side roads of our route, and rows of helmeted riot-cops stand in waiting. Not for the first time I think to myself how dissent is dominated by sore feet and an aching back, interspersed with the adrenaline rush of fear, and a gorgeous camaraderie born of shared defiance.*

**EU summit, Thessaloniki, June. 'You simply must smash capitalism'!**<sup>3</sup>: *Less than two weeks later I'm at the EU 'counter-summit' in Thessaloniki. Prior to the main protests on 21<sup>st</sup> June, the last day of the summit, I spend several hours in Thessaloniki's Aristotle University campus, where squatting militant activists are taking advantage of the legal asylum granted on university premises. Here, in a philosophy department strewn with somewhat nihilistic graffiti ('peace, love and petrol bombs', 'from pigs to bacon', 'middle class war', 'fuck the world, destroy everything' (Plate 2)), glass bottles are being transformed into molotovs, gas masks are being tried on, and 'anti-authoritarians' are calmly anticipating one of 'the biggest riots Thessaloniki has ever seen'. I feel*

*overwhelmed by a lack of humour, a swaggering machismo, a palpable hatred of the police - matched by an intention to do physical injury - and a welter of self-harm scars on the flesh of several protesters. At one point I cannot take my eyes off the raised branding scars on the chest of a petite blond American woman as she talks about the pending action. This is hardcore. I leave the campus before the protest is due to begin, feeling confused and alienated by this calculated preparedness for violence and an obvious antipathy to intellectual reflection, as well as concerned for my friends there. At around 6pm, I am in Aristotle Square where the Greek Social Forum march from the west has stopped to wait for the antiauthoritarians coming from the east down Egnatia Street. The first I see of the anti-authoritarian march are teargas canisters and rocks being thrown back over the heads of the riot-police blocking the entrance to Aristotle Square. Chaos breaks out. Protesters and police are running south around me, masked antiauthoritarians are smashing shop-fronts in the square and I realise too late that I am choking and blinded by teargas. I start to panic, tell myself to breathe, and will myself to run through the tears back to where I am staying on Ermou Street. Somehow I make it, and after washing the gas from my eyes I watch from a 9th floor balcony as helmeted protesters smash cash machines, windows, and adverts. Behind the church at the east end of Ermou Street a huge plume of black smoke billows into the sky, which later I realise comes from a petrol-bombed Vodaphone store. In the evening I walk back through the streets of Thessaloniki, which for more than two days remain thick with acrid teargas. Several businesses have been gutted and are blackened with the soot from petrol bombs. Pools of blood are noticeable on the tarmac. An image that stays with me is of an old Greek man in a small corner cafe patiently brushing away broken glass from the steel window-trays that normally would be filled with syrupy sweet pastries.*



*Plate 2. 'Viva nihilism!' – graffiti on the walls of the Philosophy Department at Thessaloniki's Aristotle University during the EU 'counter-summit', June 2003 (personal archive).*

**DSEi London, September 2003:** *It's two years since the last London-based Defence Systems and Equipment International arms trade fair took place at the Excel exhibition centre in Docklands, London. This is where arms producers from around the world meet to display the latest weapons technology. Put simply, it's where, with the help of subsidies from the UK government, global businessmen deal in death. At DSEi 2001 I was present as protesters - from local community groups to a large and provocatively joyful Pink and Silver<sup>4</sup> contingent - were route-marched at a snail's pace by police to the endpoint of the demonstration, outside the main entrance to Excel. I remember the anger I felt at seeing row upon row of black-clad police lined up to protect the world's arms dealers and the killing they make out of armed conflict. And then the dawning disbelief as news of the first attack on the World Trade Centre filtered through via calls to peoples' mobiles. And the spellbound horror as - with a hoard of other protesters who'd retreated to a nearby pub - I watched in real-time as the second plane collided with the second tower. And now it's 2003 and the arms traders are back in town. Except this time it's against a backdrop of the US/UK wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, and the extraordinary emergence of a global peace movement struggling with the contradictions between its sense of collective*

*strength and its apparent political impotence. I feel a combination of sorrow, disbelief and fury over the global arms trade and know that I want to 'do stuff' during DSEi 2003. I also know that it might be a 'hectic' event: confrontation with the state's protection of the traders is not only likely but given. In the weeks leading up to the event I participate in several organising meetings and become accustomed to being photographed by the police Forward Intelligence Team (FIT) whose job apparently is to build information on those concerned enough about the status quo to want to express dissent (Plate 3). A couple of months previously I have joined London-based activist samba band 'Rhythms of Resistance' (cf. footnote 4), partly so that I am part of an active affinity group, but also because I connect with their apparent experiential approach to political praxis: an anti-capitalist orientation that combines humour, celebration, costume, community, music and dancing in drawing attention to a range of interconnected issues.*



*Plate 3. Looking through the window of the London Action Resource Centre (LARC) at Forward Intelligence Team (FIT) Officers monitoring the arrival of activists for a meeting in the lead up to protests against the Defence Systems and Equipment International (DSEi) arms trade fair, held at the Excel centre in London, Docklands, September 2003 (personal archive).*

*Our first action in DSEi week starts at 8am on Monday 8th September, when we meet and ready ourselves to enter the corporate offices of BAE Systems<sup>5</sup>, just off the Mall. We make it in at 9am, complete with ironic placards - 'Bomb More Children', 'A Bomb is Forever',*

*'Bombs R Us' - and spend the next half-hour or so playing samba in the foyer of the corporation, before presenting the company with a trophy for their achievements in enhancing the world's array of killing technologies. The police show up and forcibly remove us from the building, even though we're not really putting up a fight. We play on outside, to bemused looks from passersby. It feels great to have walked into the belly-of-the-beast, as it were, with a sense of conviction in the face of doing something 'wrong' and possibly arrestible<sup>6</sup>. Those of our group who have locked on to furniture inside the building are arrested, and we spend much of the next few hours outside Charing Cross Police Station playing to support them until their release.*

*The 10th is the 'spikey' direct action day, for which people have been invited to protest the arms fair using whatever means they choose, the guiding principle being no violence to life. Rhythms meet early at the squat where our compadres from Sheffield Samba Band are staying, and we agree that our aim is to join others in drawing attention to the arms fair and to our dissent by causing as much disruption as possible. In practice this means keeping moving through the streets near the Excel Centre, trying to build up a crowd that can claim space and stop traffic whilst avoiding being 'kettled' - penned in and possibly Section 60'd<sup>7</sup> - by the thousands of police in the area<sup>8</sup>. There has been a call for a street party later in the afternoon so that is our hoped for endpoint for the day. We decide on various roles - I am to liaise with other affinity groups in the area and to stay in communication with M who will be space-maker and route-leader. We launch ourselves into the streets and soon are running from police, climbing over fences taller than me (not easy in a long green tutu), and eventually stopping traffic on the several-laned A13 north of Excel. Gradually there is a build up of policemen on our tails and then surrounding and grabbing us. They begin to form a linked cordon across the road. All I want is to get to the other side, but a policeman grabs me as I run. I break free, and then someone crashes into me and slows me down. Still I almost get away, but this cop seems intent on pulling me down. Eventually he has me by the arm - since I'm quite small and female and he is somewhat larger than me it is clear that I am not going anywhere. Still, he slams me into the concrete barrier that's in the middle of the road: I'm bent over it with my arms twisted behind my back, and then shoved hard into the road, landing face down on the tarmac, and bashing and twisting my elbow in the process (it's more than two months before I can*

*stretch my arm without pain). At this point I really think I'm about to be attacked further, but thankfully he melts back into what is now a wall of policemen. I do not even catch his number. As this is happening, I learn later that at least two other women in the samba band have been assaulted - one twists her knee seriously and is taken to hospital. We're Section 60'd but held only a short time and then let out in ones and twos.*

*Eventually I locate the rest of the band, and we spend the rest of the afternoon moving through the streets in an attempt to connect with other groups for the planned street party - all the time trailed by police. A group has gathered at Canning Town Roundabout, but are outnumbered by riot-cops. There's an effervescent moment as we appear in the road leading up to the roundabout, and begin playing to the cheers of those already hemmed in. Stupidly, however, we find ourselves shoved by the cops into the metal fences surrounding the island in the middle of the roundabout. I'm scared of being crushed into the fence but manage to clamber over. And again the tedious waiting game begins, wondering when and how we'll be released. We continue playing, but there's not much of a party atmosphere here, and we try to avoid becoming the intermediaries between the police and the other protesters there. After some time, we're again let out in ones and twos.*

*It's September 11th - the anniversary of that moment when global politics crystallised as a politics of violence, terror and war. Bizarrely, the UK government has chosen this day to entertain the world's arms dealers in a gala dinner at the opulent Lancaster Gate Hotel. Lancaster Gate Tube Station has been closed to everyone except arms dealers with an invite to the dinner: it is cordoned off from the public and is guarded by dozens of police (UK IMC 2003). Outside the hotel a crowd of angry activists stand behind police barricades voicing their protest. We (the samba band) arrive late as usual, but in time to move into the vacuum in the street created by police control of traffic and other protesters, and for a moment we're dancing in the street and the samba rhythms are raising the energy in the crowd. The next moment we're again being shoved violently by cops into the metal barriers lining the street. A scuffle breaks out, during which a cop punches a hole in the skin of F's drum. F reacts, is arrested and charged with assault (he is later acquitted). I can feel fear rising but it is matched by my anger at the situation. It's September 11th and my country's government is using my taxes to entertain people from all over the world whose business it is to develop and trade in technologies of death and destruction. I think*

*of the women and children killed and still being killed by bombs in Iraq, and I remember watching the B52 bombers leave from Fairford military base in March, laden with these deadly missiles. I remember how sick I felt at arriving in London on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2003 and seeing that desperate picture on the frontpage of the Evening Standard of 12-year old Ali Ismail Abbas who, in the course of 'our' disarming of Iraq, had both his arms blown off (and his parents killed). And here I am facing two rows of uniform policemen protecting those who profit from war, conflict, violence and death. As I hit the agogo<sup>9</sup> that I'm playing I feel the physicality of this act become a release and focus for the grief and rage that I feel. Physically, is this very different from smashing a McDonalds' window or throwing a molotov? Something 'clicks' regarding why these practices become part of peoples' repertoire of protest ...*

## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter is intended as an exploratory comment on the militancy emerging in (anti-)globalisation political practice and in the policing of such practice. As someone who finds themselves crossing boundaries between, and contesting the categories of, the organic and traditional intellectual (cf. Gramsci 1971; Barker and Cox 2004) – engaging in the practice of activism as well as the theorising of activist practice – the piece has emerged from my own process of sense-making regarding violence in the '(anti-)globalisation movement(s)' (Inset 1). It flows from my experiences of irruptive protest situations, as well as from my perceptions of the contextual and experiential factors that draw people towards, and make possible, the physicality of violence in these situations.

In reaching towards analysis and interpretation, my aims are threefold:

1. to explore a view that consciously militant tactics - namely violence to property and preparedness for confrontation with police - indeed are gaining legitimacy amongst protesters in global anti-capitalist politics;
2. to attempt a nuanced and contextual analysis of *why* this is the case, beyond a simplistic and moralistic framing of whether such tactics are strategically 'good' or 'bad' for 'the movements'. A particular emphasis here is on the causal inter-linkages between microcosms

of individual affective circumstances - subjectivities, desire and agency - and a pervasive macrosystem of structural political violence within which these are located;

3. and to offer some views regarding the subversive and transformative potential, or otherwise, of violent praxis in opening up possibilities for post-capitalist and post-representational subjectivities and social relations.

#### **Inset 1. On labelling ‘the movement’**

The term ‘anti-globalisation’ is problematic for several reasons. For example, ‘the movement’ draws on and is potentiated by the same processes and technologies that have made contemporary globalisation phenomena possible (cf. Sullivan forthcoming a). This, together with the movements’ support for ‘the effacement of borders and the free movement of people, possessions and ideas’ suggest that we could talk more accurately of the ‘globalisation movement’ (Graeber 2002: 63), hence my bracketing of ‘anti-’. Mueller (2002, 2003) describes ‘the movement’ more accurately as the ‘globalisation-critical movement’, while Chesters (2003) refers to the ‘alternative globalization movement’. Further, an emphasising of ‘the movement’ as merely reactionary (i.e. ‘anti’) (e.g. Williamson 2003) masks and diminishes what protagonists actually may be campaigning and motivating *for*, such that much corporate media and other analysis becomes dislocated from the discourses and practices emerging within, and constructing, ‘the movements’. I pluralise movements to reflect the realities of diversity and difference among the collectives that are contesting the status quo worldwide, and the equally diverse and situated imaginings and practices for socio-political change that they embody (as captured in the title of Paul Kingsnorth’s (2003) recent book *One No, Many Yeses*). This also is intended as a conscious rhetorical and conceptual shift away from modernity’s constant drive towards the singular, towards the root or deep structure of things (cf. Deleuze and Guattari 1988(1980): 3-25).

What I suggest in this piece is that any analysis of violence within the ‘(anti-)globalisation movement(s)’ must be framed in terms of both the global context of structural violence in which we live and the individual affective circumstances that shape our subjectivities, desire and agency. More specifically, I foreground the roles of depression and rage as two potent emotional sources that animate the politics and tactics of the ‘(anti-)globalisation movement(s)’.

My ‘data’ derive from ‘observant participation’ in relevant contexts; discourse analysis, focusing on unpublished and independently published texts that together indicate themes and ideas influencing contemporary activist praxis; and reflection on my own subjective and embodied experience/s. Theoretically, I draw on a post-structuralist analytics that owes much to my reading of Foucault (e.g. 2001(1965); 1998(1976)), Agamben (1994, 1998) and Hardt and Negri (2000) in considering subjective locations and experiences of the sovereignty effected by the biopower

of global contexts. In particular, I note the psychological and physical docility effected by the panopticon society of censored subjectivities of late modernity: a docility that is *required* and enforced by modernity's current greedy incarnation in the sovereignty of global corporatism and US unilateralism. It seems to me that Foucault, in combination with contemporary anti-psychiatry philosophers Deleuze and Guattari (also cf. Fanon 1967 (1963); Laing 1967), 'post-anarchist' political theorists such as Saul Newman (e.g. 2000, 2001, 2003), and a feminist and anthropological legitimization of ontological differences and plural subjectivities, offer much by way of elucidating a corresponding *hunger* for acts and discourses of bio/psycho-political disobedience and dissent in glocal (anti-)globalisation politics. Occasionally I use 'inset' texts as a device to extend detailed clarification of particular points and positions, and to include material drawn on in arguing for emerging discourses of protest, without breaking the flow of the main text.

### **DISCOURSES/PRACTICES OF DESTRUCTION: VIOLENCE AND THE (ANTI-)GLOBALISATION MOVEMENT(S)**

Violence as a tactic of protest is as old as there has been contested authority. But if it is possible to talk of the emergence of a *new* global social movement that is challenging the current status quo of inequalities, then I think it also is possible to perceive a globalisation of proactively militant discourse and practice - in the 'plateaux' (cf. Chesters 2003 after Deleuze and Guattari 1988(1980)) of key mobilisations, and in the ongoing direct action politics of the alternative globalisation movements. By this I refer to a trans-nationally understood and practised tactics of both symbolic violence to property and preparedness for direct confrontation with police and *not* to attacks on human life. With the property damage and the violent clashes that have occurred between police and 'anti-capitalist' protesters at significant protest events in the post-industrial north in recent years (Wood 2004), violence now is expected in these contexts<sup>10</sup>. One author, for example, refers to 'the habitual violence at anti-globalisation rallies' (Toje 2002: 3). Policing strategies and the corporate media both reflect *and create* these expectations and actualities (cf. Notes From Nowhere 2003: 307). Techniques for crowd control comprise a major and growing focus for military and police, as well as an economic boom industry for the manufacturers of a

whole new wave of crowd control weaponry (discussed further in Sullivan 2004a, forthcoming b).

The financial costs of policing protest events, as well as the costs of damage to property and of lost business, provide a conventional measure of the significance of confrontational practices in these contexts (cf. footnote 8). But a look at the published and unpublished expressions of intent made by antiauthoritarian protesters confirms a transnational strategic militancy in contemporary (anti-)globalisation protest politics. As indicated in Inset 2, it is not difficult in the post-industrial north to find calls for the *destruction* of existing institutions as a legitimate response to the destructive tendencies that in turn are identified with these institutions.

**Inset 2. Building a discourse of destruction: quotes from ‘antiauthoritarian’ zines, pamphlets and websites in the post-industrial ‘north’ (emphasis added in all cases).**

*‘We want to destroy government and rich peoples’ privileges. We want to get rid of the control that police, government and bosses have over our everyday lives. We want workers to control their own workplaces and see ordinary people run the world together without money, hierarchies or authority. This is what we call ‘Anarchy’.... Their power must be taken from them by force.... they have the police to beat us up, the prisons to lock us up, the military to shoot us, the schools and the corporate media to fool us.... changing our ideas is not enough. Capitalism must be fought in the streets’* (Anarchist Youth Network: Britain and Ireland 2003a)\*.

*‘[T]he technological system that we know is itself part of the structures of domination. It was created to more efficiently control those exploited by capital. Like the state, like capital itself, this technological system will need to be destroyed in order for us to take back our lives’* (Willful Disobedience n.d. a).

*‘[T]he state will not merely wither away, thus anarchists must attack, for waiting is defeat; what is needed is open mutiny and the spreading of subversion among the exploited and excluded’* (Killing King Abacus 2001: 1).

*‘[W]hile the industrial system is sick we must destroy it. If we compromise with it and let it recover from its sickness, it will eventually wipe out all of our freedom’* (Kaczynski 2002 (1995): 37).

*‘May the barbarians break loose. May they sharpen their swords, may they brandish their battleaxes, may they strike their enemies without pity. May hatred take the place of tolerance, may fury take the place of resignation, may outrage take the place of respect. May the barbarian hordes go to the assault, autonomously, in the way that they determine. And may no parliament, no credit institution, no supermarket, no barracks, no factory ever grow again after their passage’* (Crisso and Odoteo 2003: 6).

*‘There’s no excuse to let a fraction of our lives go by doing things we don’t love, or to let any of our talents and effort serve to prop up a world order we oppose. Instead, let’s fight so hard, and live so hard,*

that others inside the cages of mainstream life can see us and are inspired to join us in *our complete rejection of the old world* and all its bullshit' (CrimethInc. Workers' Collective 2001: 165).

'[I]t is precisely when people know that they no longer have anything to say to their rulers, that they may learn how to talk with each other. It is precisely when people know that the possibilities of this world can offer them nothing that they may learn how to dream the impossible. The network of institutions that dominate our life, this civilization, has turned our world into a toxic prison. *There is so much to be destroyed* so that a free existence may be created. The time of the barbarians is at hand' (Wildfire 2003a).

'One of the world's biggest ever trade fairs for guns, bombs, military planes & ships, small arms, mines and tanks is scheduled to take place in London from 9 - 12 September 2003.... *You are invited to help destroy this market of death ...*' (Destroy DSEi 2003).

'[W]e, as insurrectionists *must wage war on terror*: the terror of the state, the terror of hierarchy, the terror of war and most importantly the terror of civilization' (Wildfire 2003b).

\*The Anarchist Youth Network have affiliated local groups who meet regularly in London, Swindon, Manchester, Hereford, the North East of England, Stroud Valleys, Surrey, Worthing, the West Midlands and Essex, as well as university groups at Bristol and at the London colleges of Goldsmiths, SOAS, LSE, UCL and Royal Holloway (Anarchist Youth Network: Britain and Ireland 2003b).

Taken together, these statements comprise a coherent, combative and open discourse of destruction, that makes a discursive challenge to the state's assumed and masked monopoly over the legitimacy of using violence to further aims. It clearly positions antiauthoritarian activists of many flavours – anarcho-primitivists, insurrectionists, CrimethInc. dropout culturists, to name a few represented by the sources of the texts – as separated by a qualitative abyss from the 'pathological passivity' (Roszak 1971(1968): 22; Churchill *et al.* 1998) of reformist agendas, i.e. positions that, while critical of the status quo, seek to influence existing institutions and structures rather than imagine some sort of disaffiliation from them. In the last few years, this discourse has been accompanied by two key strategies in militant (anti-)globalisation protest politics in the post-industrial north: the black bloc tactic of violence to the physical symbols of corporate-capitalism (cf. Inset 3), and the Tute Bianchi/Disobedienti/WOMBLES<sup>11</sup> tactic of padding-up in order to engage in 'confrontational defence' – 'nonviolent warfare' – in articulating with police lines.

An argument common both within and without 'the movement(s)' is that violence perpetuated (against property and police) by advocates of a militant anti-capitalism is a fringe element that discredits and delegitimises 'the movement' as a whole (Cross 2002: 11). Media and popular

attention focuses particularly on the apparently mysterious and shadowy ‘black bloc’ - demonised and misrepresented as the dark underbelly of alienated anti-capitalist youth (e.g. in Watson 2003). While appealing to the voyeuristic tendencies of the media and thereby at least drawing attention to the incident of protest – i.e. ‘no fights, no coverage’ (Broughton 2003) – violence is framed as distracting focus from issues that activists are protesting against and for, and as a strategy that is divisive for ‘the movement(s)’ as a whole (e.g. Yechury 2003: 3). For others, there is little difference between violence at a protest and riots at a football match, the violent act in both contexts being low on instrumental strategy and high on cathartic release and momentary self-indulgence.

Given the pluralistic and multifaceted social context of the (anti-)globalisation movements - with their rhetorical emphasis on ‘unity in diversity’ - all of these critical views have legitimacy. Their dismissal of militant practices, however, masks several dimensions pertinent for a nuanced analysis of both the occurrence of violence *within* protest events, and the relationship of violence in these contexts to the wider socio-political milieu in which they take place.

### **Inset 3. What is ‘the’ black bloc?**

I recognise that it is as inappropriate to use a box to talk about ‘the black bloc’ as it is to imply that there is such a thing as ‘the’ black bloc in the sense of a defined ‘group’ with a defined ‘membership’. For this same reason, I eschew the use of title-case when speaking of the Black Bloc, as it seems to me that this also implies fixity and reification of what in ideal terms appears conceived as a fluid and contextual tactics, aspiring towards loosely-hierarchical and de-centralised organisation, and accessible to any who choose these terms of engagement.

The name ‘black bloc’ comes from the term ‘Schwarze Bloc’ used by German police in the 1980s to describe squatters and Autonomes who employed militant tactics in their efforts to retain occupied properties (Indymedia 2002; Infoshop 2003). Although generally perceived as ‘anarchists’, in continental Europe, where a strong centrally-organised left tradition remains a political *tour de force*, a black bloc on a protest might incorporate militant members of worker-oriented parties as well as anti-imperialist nationalists (cf. Anon. in press). In America, a black bloc first occurred during the Gulf War protests in 1991 (Infoshop 2003), and there is a sense in which a black bloc tactics here has taken on a coherence of its own that makes sense in a context with a limited left politics. Thus, ‘[a] Black Bloc is a collection of anarchists and anarchist affinity groups that organize together for a particular protest action. The flavor of the Black Bloc changes from action to action, but the main goals are to provide solidarity in the face of a repressive police state and to convey an anarchist critique of whatever is being protested that day ... Black is worn as the colour that symbolises anarchism [i.e. governance without leaders], to indicate solidarity and to provide anonymity’ (Infoshop 2003). Masking up is both a nod towards the Zapatista practice of masking so as to avoid the reification of individuals and leaders; and as a means of exploiting the

possibilities of clandestinity in a system perceived as protecting clandestine decision-making processes by the few on behalf of the many (cf. Notes From Nowhere 2003: 303-315).

The black bloc socio-political critique takes the form of drawing attention to capital's omnipresent symbols by targeting them with destructive actions. After an action, these frequently are communicated and explained via Indymedia and other websites where the tactics are debated and also are subject to critique. The following (copyleft) communiqué, for example, explains some black bloc actions that occurred during the protests that closed the WTO summit in Seattle, November 1999:

'On November 30, several groups of individuals in black bloc attacked various corporate targets in downtown Seattle. Among them were (to name just a few):

**Fidelity Investment** (major investor in Occidental Petroleum, the bane of the U'wa tribe in Columbia)

**Bank of America, US Bancorp, Key Bank and Washington Mutual Bank** (financial institutions key in the expansion of corporate repression)

**Old Navy, Banana Republic and the GAP** (as Fisher family businesses, rapers of Northwest forest lands and sweatshop laborers)

**NikeTown and Levi's** (whose overpriced products are made in sweatshops)

**McDonald's** (slave-wage fast-food peddlers responsible for destruction of tropical rainforests for grazing land and slaughter of animals)

**Starbucks** (peddlers of an addictive substance whose products are harvested at below-poverty wages by farmers who are forced to destroy their own forests in the process)

**Warner Bros.** (media monopolists)

**Planet Hollywood** (for being Planet Hollywood)

This activity lasted for over 5 hours and involved the breaking of storefront windows and doors and defacing of facades. Slingshots, newspaper boxes, sledge hammers, mallets, crowbars and nail-pullers were used to strategically destroy corporate property and gain access (one of the three targeted Starbucks and Niketown were looted). Eggs filled with glass etching solution, paint-balls and spray-paint were also used' (ACME Collective 1999).

Some, if not all, 'black bloc-ers' who identify with a tactics of targeting the omnipresent symbols of corporatism are quick to distinguish this practice from that of rioting and street-fighting, as in the following statement regarding the riots that broke out in Geneva during the June 2003 G8 meeting in Evian:

'... a "Black Block" is not the same as a riot. In the looting and street fighting I saw in Geneve the people were mostly local kids, some didn't even cover their faces. They broke any windows for the rush of it and threw anything at the police, in anger (launching plastic bottles at armoured riot police will not have much impact...) For me this popular anger is the result of alienation and the crushing of people's lives and spirits by wage slavery, media propaganda and consumerism. It is beautiful in its way but it is not the same as a Black Block.

A well organised Black Block (like we were on Sunday) is made of autonomous groups of friends who are well prepared and take the streets with some common tactical understanding of what we are there for. To take space and defend it with barricades and projectiles, to use the fleeting moment in which we control the space to destroy the property and symbols of the disgusting system we are all forced to live under. This property damage is NOT "random vandalism" it is highly political and usually carefully targeted. On Sunday I saw debates between different groups (and languages!) about the politics of different targets, stones in hand. Some targets were attacked, others left intact as a result of these discussions' (WOMBLES 2003a).

One only has to open a newspaper or watch the news to come face to face with the fact that we inhabit a global economic and political system that is built on, pervaded with and powered by gut-wrenching levels of physical and psychological violence. Bourgois (2001: 7), following Galtung (1969), asserts that the contemporary world (dis)order is infused with *structural violence* such that ‘... the political-economic organization of society ... imposes conditions of physical and emotional distress ... rooted, at the macro-level, in structures such as unequal [i.e. unfair] international terms of trade and ... expressed locally in exploitative labour markets, marketing arrangements and the monopolization of services’. At the same time, and as New York columnist Thomas Friedman wrote prior to the last Gulf war in 1991, it is becoming increasingly difficult to ignore the hidden fist of the (US) military that has been behind the hidden hand of the ‘free’ market (in Cookson, n.d.; Higgott 2003)<sup>12</sup>; or the accompanying and increasingly militarised suppression of dissent and protest worldwide (cf. Sullivan forthcoming b). Analytically, these constitute *political violence* (Bourgois 2001: 7): administered in the name of the political ideology of neoliberalism (what Graeber (2002: 62) refers to as ‘market Stalinism’), in combination with an aggressive American unilateralism (cf. PNAC 1997; Donnelly 2000; The White House 2002; Higgott 2003; Rilling 2003).

Newman (2000) points out that for Marx the State’s oppressive apparatus reflected economic exploitation and the desires of the empowered capitalist class, while for late 19th century anarchist writers such as Bakunin and Kropotkin, the State itself *originates* in and has a sustained logic of violence (cf. Perlman 1983). Today, it is tempting to see structural violence emerging from a strong collusion of both state and capitalist interests, for example, in today’s social democratic adherence to the ideology of public-private partnerships, in combination with state-supported arms-industries and the apparent use of military might to defend and expand economic interests. If this line of thought has validity, then it is impossible not to connect it with Mussolini’s understanding of fascism as ‘corporatism’ – ‘the merger of state, military and corporate power’ (cf. Pilger 2004: 20). Or to envisage an emerging contemporary form of global corporatism that favours America as the world’s largest capitalist economy and military power, and in which the state, to varying degrees, becomes an appendage of a combined and ongoing transnational and imperialist policing, military and economic effort: *viz* the presence of several national police forces in Switzerland and France for the purposes of protecting the G8 summit in

Evian in June 2003, the global but US-led ‘War on terror’, the recent US-led but coalition-backed attacks on Afghanistan and Iraq, and the use of Italian *carabinieri* among others to train Iraqi police.

Böhm and Sørensen (2003: 2) conceive this ‘globality’ of violence as ‘*warganization*’. This is the bio-political total war (cf. Arendt 1963; Foucault 1998 (1976); Deleuze and Guattari 1988 (1980)) ‘embedded in the very organisation of Empire’; indeed, *required* by the continual, multidimensional expansion of Empire’s biopower (cf. Hardt and Negri 2000). It signals the end of war as a bounded event – ‘where war is conceived as a limited enterprise in which you engage and disengage’ – and thereby also signals the end of a utopian imaginary of peace as a state of not war (Böhm and Sørensen 2003: 10). In these circumstances, *war* – war on terror, war on drugs, war on individual and civil liberties effected by the constructed paranoia of current surveillance culture and the securitisation of everyday life – becomes *the* ‘organizing principle that is constantly at play everywhere’ (Böhm and Sørensen 2003: 9). Ironically it is “‘sold” to us as a war for “freedom”” (Böhm 2002: 329), or for peace - an irony embodied in the caustic peace slogan that ‘fighting for peace is like fucking for virginity’. Thus ‘the enemy is everywhere and everybody: ... “total war” is in fact a civil war in the sense that it is a war from *within* the social, *against* the social’ (Böhm 2002: 329, emphasis in original)<sup>13</sup>. Indeed, this total war is distributed more minutely throughout society in that it also is located throughout our selves and psyches: giving currency to the analysis by state-murdered South African activist Steven Biko that ‘the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed’ (Biko 1989 (1978)). It is the ‘symbolic violence’ (Bourdieu (1998, 2001) absorbed by both individuals and collectives, that maintains hegemonic domination through the internalisation and legitimation of the categories that make the social order appear self-evident: ‘producing the unwitting consent of the dominated’ (Bourgeois 2001: 8; also Laing 1967; Foucault 1998 (1976)). And it is thereby ever present as the internal effort - the fight - required in any waking up to our contingent power and individual freedom (Fromm 2001), that makes possible an active consciousness and overcoming of the ‘regulated “interiorization”’ exacted by the corporate state (Newman 2000: 5 after Nietzsche).

An increasingly and globally-connected consciousness of the central and multiplicitous roles of violence to the creation and maintenance of global inequalities also is of emerging and defining significance in contemporary (anti-)globalisation politics. This is powerfully indicated by the existence and inter-penetration of both an ‘anti-capitalist’ movement that is global in reach, with a global peace/anti-war movement that showed its presence in the streets on 15 February 2003 (e.g. Koch 2004). It is animating ongoing direct action politics as well as street protests worldwide. This understanding – that global patterns of inequality and injustice are established and perpetuated by systemically coercive and violent relationships in the realm of the social and the subjective, and therefore that political violence is not limited to the frontline of military conflict – is articulated in precise terms by militant activists engaging in ‘anti-capitalist’ protest (see Inset 4). In the following section I consider some ways in which relationships between this multiplicitous and multifaceted political violence and activist bio-political agency might be conceptualized and interpreted.

#### **Inset 4. Contemporary ‘antiauthoritarian’ framings of structural violence**

‘Violence is not only present when human beings do physical harm to each other. Violence is there, albeit in a subtler form, whenever they use force upon each other in their interactions. It is violence that is at the root of capitalism. Under the capitalist system, all the economic laws governing human life come down to coercion...’ (CrimethInc. Workers’ Collective 2001: 70).

‘The ASBB [Anti-Statist Black Bloc] advocates the building of an organized movement against corporate and state tyranny in America. We recognize that poor and working class people have lost control of their communities and individual lives. The Democratic and Republican parties clearly support social relations in which this is furthered. By supporting the death penalty, militarism, corporate welfare, and the cutting of social spending, ... they have proven to be political parties of profit over people as all parties have. By organizing black blocs and using direct action, we confront this intolerable and unacceptable system’ (ASBB 2000).

Capitalism is ‘... a social system that condemns the vast majority of people to stunted and unfulfilled lives despite our best efforts’ (Jazz 2001: 87 *in* Graeber 2002: 4).

‘Private property--and capitalism, by extension--is intrinsically (*sic*) violent and repressive and cannot be reformed or mitigated. Whether the power of everyone is concentrated into the hands of a few corporate heads or diverted into a regulatory apparatus charged with mitigating the disasters of the latter, no one can be as free or as powerful as they could be in a non-hierarchical society’ (ACME Collective 1999).

‘We could never match the violence of society. The bottom line is, we live in a society where you have to fuck people over to achieve security for yourself’ (‘Joe’ *in* Thompson 2003).

## FINDING FRONTLINES: ACTIVISM IN SEARCH OF AGENCY

I know one bitingly articulate activist whose existential pain was so extreme that he would slash his own arms and torso to pieces. One cut required more than 80 stitches. At activist gatherings and mobilisation meetings I have seen the scars of physical self-laceration on more people than I care to remember. Others retreat into the temporary psychic cotton wool of drugs - from alcohol to ketamine. And who in the activist communities does not know of someone who has attempted or succeeded in suicide? All these are tools for pain management. *We are heartbroken and furious!* I mean, how many of us, and to what degree, do we have to be hurting before the reality of where we're at collectively begins to sink in? (Sam, activist, personal notes 23-11-03).

There is no divine order, other than to love the life you live and to spread joy. But if that is the case, then I must be a fundamental human (Rupture 2004: 3).

We've arrived at a frightening and depressing place in conceptualising contemporary supraterritorial phenomena. The story so far is one where political violence in the service of global corporatism and American unilateralism permeates social, psychological and economic relationships. Where bodily and subjective docility are required by these colonising structures, and extended via the disciplining governmentality of universalist discourses, 'civil society', and representational 'democracy' (cf. Tormey 2004). Where, short of suicide, it is impossible to extract oneself from these violating global contexts.

How do people cope and retain hope under the weight of these contexts? How do individuals come to struggle; to the attempt to effect change by exerting agency? And how might 'anti-capitalist politics' really be radical – in the sense of opening up and constituting spaces for 'the' post-capitalist, post-represented human? These are questions I attempt to pursue in this section.

### **Denial, depression, desire ...**

I feel as if I am at a dead  
end and so I am finished  
All spiritual facts I realize  
are true but I never escape  
the feeling of being closed in ... (Ginsberg *in* Roszak 1971(1968): 130).

I'm trying to say what I think brotherhood really is. It begins – it begins in shared pain (Le Guin 1974: 54).

The psychoanalytic and psychotherapy literature is rich with observations and analyses of the ways in which humans and animals cope with extended suffering and trauma. A pattern is of

desensitisation to the repeated experience of, or exposure to, violence such that traumatic experience becomes normalised and thereby denied (cf. Miller 2001 (1979): 100; Pinkola Estes 1993: 244-246; Jensen 2000; and references therein).<sup>14</sup> This process appears enhanced when people become ‘used to not being able to intervene in shocking events’ because of ‘formidable punishments for breaking silence, for fleeing the cage, for pointing out wrongs, for demanding change’ (Pinkola Estes 1993: 246). By this reckoning, violence – *violation* – is normalised via the *denial* or silencing of felt experiences of violation, as well as the internalizing of the rage that such experiences can engender. This constitutes a *depression*/repression of affective experience, and a corresponding suppression of an ability to act according to desires to transform situations, even if the possibility for transformation presents itself. As such it permits the internalised ‘symbolic violence’ by which, as noted above, a hegemonic and violating status quo is legitimated through ‘our’ own consent (cf. Bourdieu 1998, 2001).<sup>15</sup> Further, because emotions are felt - experienced - bodily, i.e. are embodied (cf. Csordas 1994), alienation from emotional responses to trauma can extend into alienation from ‘the’ body (Totton 2002), translating into bodily as well as psychological self-harm practices. Self-mutilation or cutting, the use of drugs that afford escape from pain, eating disorders and suicide: all these are increasing, are certainly present in activist communities (i.e. as indicated by the statement with which this subsection opens) and are interpreted by many as sacrificial practices offering pain, blood and control for release from existential pain (cf. Wolf 1992; Milia 1999; Wurtzel 1999).

#### **Inset 5. Delineating depression**

While not a new ‘disease’, depression or ‘melancholy’ as a category of ‘illness’ *has* increased dramatically in post-industrial society. In the early 1990s the results of a long-term, international and multi-generational study indicated that people born after 1955 were ‘*three times* as likely as their grandparents’ generation to suffer from depression’. Similar findings emerged for countries as disparate as Italy, Germany, Taiwan, Lebanon, Canada, France, Puerto Rico and New Zealand, suggesting that this trend is global in reach (figures reported in Wurtzel 1999 (1994); 298-299, emphasis in original). Also indicative of this trend is the rocketing numbers of prescriptions made for anti-depressant drugs in recent years, causing some commentators to describe this as a ‘legal drug culture’ (New York Times 1992 quoted in Wurtzel 1999 (1994); 298). In Britain in 2002, 2 million and 4 million prescriptions were written for the antidepressant drugs Effexor and Seroxat respectively, with 3,000 and 8,000 under-18s on these two drugs (Boseley 2003; Lawrence 2003). Of course, the business of anti-depressants, particularly the new range of Prozac-like drugs known as SSRIs (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitors), also is enormously lucrative: in 1993 \$1.3 billion was spent in the US on prescriptions for Prozac alone, up 30% from 1992 (Wurtzel 1999 (1994): 296). Aggressive marketing by company representatives, not unknown in the medical-pharmaceutical industry, no doubt contributes to increasing consumption. But this is unlikely to explain completely the rise of both incidence and medication of depressive ‘illness’.

Worldwide, figures for suicides articulated as responses to marginalising impacts associated with neoliberal policy also are rocketing. For example, while ninety-five farmers committed suicide in 1988 [in Punjab, India], there was a 10-fold increase by 1999 with 986 farmers committing suicide (Sharma 2003: 2). [In Karnataka, India] [m]ore than 500 farmers have killed themselves since 1995 (NewsTabs 2003). This phenomenon was brought into sharp relief by the public suicide of Lee Kyung Hae, leader of the Korean Federation of Advanced Farmers Association, at the Fifth Ministerial of the World Trade Organization in September 2003 (Carlson 2003).

As suggested by the material presented in Inset 5, the incidence of depression and its medication is increasing dramatically worldwide. This is interpreted here as signalling psychological and affective distress at the forms of social-political and economic organisation in which individuals are embedded, as well as the suppression of this distress via extensive medication and the removal of such ‘disordered’ people from society (cf. Foucault 2001 (1965); Smail 1984; Baron 2003; Sontag 2003: 5). From an anti-psychiatry perspective, depression and the subjectivities and practices that flow from this state of being, emerge from a necessary dissociation or splitting from subjective experiences of trauma (e.g. Laing 1967; Smail 1984). Thus, ‘[d]epression consists of a denial of one’s own emotional reactions ... in the service of an absolutely essential adaptation’ to traumatising contexts (Miller 2001 (1979): 46). In this reading depression might be more a barometer of *social* (ill-)health, than a mental illness that inhabits unfortunate individuals (i.e. as conventionally analysed and treated). Further, as a phenomenon of socio-economic and socio-political denial and disengagement, accompanied by subjectivities of negation and the attacking of self, depression represents a reducing of the socio-political layers that construct modernity’s ‘normal’ and manageable *citizens* (cf. Agamben 1994, 1998). Depression, and the subjectivities and practices with which this state of being is associated, thereby *coherently constructs the affective and physical body as the experienced locale of socio-political relationships* – the biopower of *Empire* (Hardt and Negri 2000).

My experience is that depression and self-harm practices are talked about somewhat more candidly among activists engaging in ‘anti-capitalist’ political praxis than in other everyday contexts (which is not to say that these phenomena are not present in other contexts). At the 2003 UK Earth First! summer gathering, for example, a meeting to workshop mental health issues in the activist communities was so popular that a second session was rescheduled. It was as if once a space had been created where these experiences could be shared the floodgates opened, enabling

voice after voice to speak of the pain, fear and anger felt at the multiplicitous violence of modern society, and a yearning for release from these contexts. For some, depression embodied a long-term and recursive sense of alienation at modernity's fragmenting and devaluing of relationship (Jensen 2000). For others, depression and symptoms of post-trauma distress had arisen in response to the experience of police violence in protest situations, such as at the infamous G8 meeting in Genoa in July 2001; sometimes as a sense of guilt if friends had been attacked while chance circumstances had led one away from a potentially dangerous situation. Still others talked of their alienating experiences at the hands of the formal psychiatric system. Indeed, a recent study suggests that participation in activism increases a sense of well-being and mitigates symptoms of depression (cf. University of Sussex 2002; Drury 2003), confirming that activists might be both choosing appropriate channels for the self-treatment of depression and accurately addressing contextual causes of distress.

It seems to me that this nexus of interrelationships sheds light on the unfolding of a confrontational bio-politics in contemporary (anti-)globalisation protest. As Wurtzel (1999 (1994): 299) argues, 'one of the striking elements of this depression breakout is the extent to which it has gotten such a strong hold on so many young people.... Affecting those who [should] have so much to look forward to and to hope for', as well as the generation(s) that are most clearly identified with current militant practice in (anti-)globalisation politics. In this aspect depression represents an individual withdrawal from desiring the future, since it signals a loss of hope, of optimism, in the possibilities that the future holds. But by stripping away conventional engagement with the political-economic *status quo* – which, as Jensen (2000: 108) puts it, requires adhering to the commandment that 'Thou shalt pretend that nothing is wrong' – the subjectivities of depression also create spaces for the experience and articulation of new *desires*. From here, the 'politics of possibility' (cf. (Sullivan forthcoming a) of the (anti-)globalisation movements – of the World Social Forum's slogan 'another world is possible' and its reframing as 'other worlds are possible' by activists of a conscientiously pluralist orientation – can be interpreted as a radical reinsertion of a politics of *desire* regarding the future. This indeed is 'a new offensive in the arena of dreams, of rights, of liberty, for the conquest of the future' (Cuevas 2000: 3). And imagining – desiring - something different is the first step towards dissent, defiance, and disobedience regarding the status quo.

## Anger, activism, agency and affinity

When actions are performed  
Without unnecessary speech,  
People say, “We did it!” (Lao Tsu 1972).

A common perception of militant activism is that it is a childish and reactionary *acting out* of anger driven by adolescent angst and a displacing of Oedipal rage onto ‘papa state’. As Miller argues (Miller 2001 (1979): 121) ‘[p]olitical action can be fed by the unconscious rage of children ... [and] partially discharged in fighting ‘enemies’, without having to give up the idealization of one’s own parents’. It gives rise to comments such as: ‘[s]mashing things comes off as a little kid whining in the streets about how much he doesn't like his little situation’ (Frank 2003); or, ‘... you did a great job of acting like children on a tantrum while eroding (*sic*) the credibility of the peace rally’ (Shot By You 2003).<sup>16</sup>

Perhaps some physically confrontational protestors indeed are attracted by the very potential of violence to the moments of protest that are part of anti-capitalist/(anti-)globalisation politics. Violence in this reckoning would be an end in itself, although importantly the brutality of a context of *everyday violence* (e.g. football riots, pub brawls, domestic violence, etc.) is shifted into the *political violence* of the protest (cf. Bourgois 2001).<sup>17</sup> *Activism* as opposed to *reactivism*, however, is a targeted and strategic expression of the emotion of anger, as well as an ethical assertion of *the right to be angry*, given contextual circumstances that are thought and felt to be wrong (cf. inset 6).

### Inset 6. Asserting the right to be angry

‘Black Bloc is about taking anger and directing it toward an enemy, a rational target’ (‘Joe’ in Thompson 2003).

‘Consciously object, sabotage and turn fear into anger’ (WOMBLES 2003c: 14).

‘Capitalism Kills. People suffer and die because of Capitalist exploitation and wars. The planet is being consumed by pollution and destruction. Millions are made refugees by economic, ecological and military abuses. They are persecuted, detained and deported. The way of life in the G8 countries is based on this suffering and persecution... If we really mean this then to just go into the streets and party is an entirely inadequate response. *It is right to respond to overwhelming injustice with anger* and entirely appropriate to leave Lausanne and Geneve looking like a war zone for a short while’ (WOMBLES 2003a).

‘The point about the Black Bloc is that people simply want the autonomy to be able to express their anger as they see fit’ (Anon. in press: 7).

It is not difficult to perceive the targeted violent act in the context of protest as generating an immediate and individual experiential satisfaction, in part through effecting direct concrete results in exterior public space (e.g. Fanon 1967 (1963)). These actions transform the lack of agency many experience given a global political economy that constrains options for spontaneity and self-determination and which generates the permanently unfulfilled desire of consumer capital, effecting a sense of empowerment through engendering direct, concrete results in exterior public space. But when such physical acts also are part of a strategy of ‘smashing’ coherently selected targets (cf. Inset 3), it is not appropriate to frame them as violence as an end in itself, since they embody a conscious subversion of the *symbolic violence* that otherwise fosters collusion in disempowering contexts. Militants themselves are quick to distinguish their actions from those of incoherent, unstrategic riotous activity (e.g. Inset 3).

In fact, it seems to me that there is not a great deal of difference between these actions and the carefully planned sabotage of deliberate ‘monkey-wrenching’ acts (cf. Abbey 1991 (1973); Do or Die 2003) occurring outside the circumstances of major street protests. Inset 7, for example, reproduces the statement made by veteran UK Trident Ploughshares activist Ulla Roder, arrested in March 2003 for causing criminal damage to a Tornado ground attack aircraft in protest at the attack on Iraq. I quote this in its entirety for its coherence of intent, its linking of contexts, and its beautiful, angry passion. It is unlikely that many people will appreciate or accept the parallels between the sober, directed sabotage of an older woman such as Ulla, and the smashing tactics of antiauthoritarians, black bloc or otherwise. But these parallels exist in both intent (‘mindful destruction’ of *things* that cause, or represent causes of, violence to life (cf. Anon. in press)), and felt experience (anger and need for release). Even the clear difference in activist style between accountability and clandestinity<sup>18</sup> appears to be breaking down, if Ulla's non-appearance at two recent court hearings is anything to go by (Trident Ploughshares 2003).

**Inset 7. Statement issued in March 2003 by veteran UK Trident Ploughshares activist Ulla Roder, after attacking Tornado military aircraft in protest at the 2003 US/UK attack on Iraq.**

‘I looked at the seat in the cockpit in the streamlined white Tornado warplane, which I had just entered. In my mind I had the picture of a young pilot, boy, son, father; the many years of fear for the people of Iraq; for their survival; for a new world war - nuclear war; fear of losing the little bit of freedom we people have left in this world, to a state which has officially declared that it wants “Full Spectrum Dominance” on earth as well as in space and which has shown all willingness and cynicism to use whatever means of

power to gain this. All this made me lift the red and black bolt-cutters in my hand. Crash! I shouted out aloud in the hangar. There was no-one to hear, but it helped. "We don't want your war, Bush and Blair!" This for all the dead civilians in Iraq and all the children still suffering at poor hospitals, caused by 12 years of sanctions against civilians. Crash! The control panel was out of commission.

The echo of the hammering was still in the air when I started on the wings. The hard surface resisted my attempts. **This** for my disabled friend who cannot afford a decent wheelchair. **This** for my other disabled friend who daily has to crawl up a stone stairway outside his house, because a proper house with disabled access cannot be provided for him and his family. **This** for all the marginalised people, the sick and older folks; **This** for all the people in poverty whose basic needs are not fulfilled; **This** in hope for the future of our children in the world. I had done enough.

The nose cone got the rest of my anger and all the energy I had. Lies! Disarmament treaties and negotiations - thirty years! International law! Ignorance! All lies to buy time for the weapon industries and military to re-arm for the warfare of the 21st Century. Shame! Shame! Shame on all nuclear weapon states. Shame for all the time the courts have ignored the arguments of ordinary people. Now really tired, I slammed the bolt-cutters down on the back of the plane. This for all the arrogance from intelligent, learned people, who have never glanced long enough into the eyes of a young drug addict to understand why they suffer, but coldhearted send them away for shoplifting for their daily needs instead of giving them access to proper treatment because that is too expensive. A fiver a week or you go to prison! Problem solved. Then I returned to the cockpit and silently put the bolt-cutters down. On top I placed a piece of bread and in silence I symbolically shared it with all the hungry breaking off small pieces and spreading it around, praying for peace and justice in the world. I then went down to two fuel containers on the ground looking like two ugly fat bombs. On each was placed the sign: TO THE GULF. I put my last bit of bread on each of the signs. My job was done. No more will anyone face the horrors of war from that plane. One more war machine was disarmed. I felt a deep inner peace.

I now waited for someone to arrive. After a while I was very respectfully and peacefully detained and led away, while the alarm sounded through the whole base. Good! More delay in the preparations for war. And now I am facing a trial, maybe for £25 million pounds worth of damage - more than my entire family will earn in a lifetime by hard and decent work. A Tornado costs £70 million pounds. We paid for this plane and we will pay for all the other planes I saw out there that night, being got ready for an illegal war' (Roder 2003).

Another example of strategic militancy in 'the movements' can be found in the tactics of the Italian Tute Bianchi (now Disobedienti) who go into police lines, prepared not to attack but to invite a defensive confrontation (as indicated by their mock salute of a fist with the little finger raised, waved at the police to mean 'Come on, break it!' (Anon. 2001: 3)). This is a conscious strategy to draw out the tendency towards violence of the police, thereby making explicit the violence that is systemic to contemporary capitalism: exposing the fallacy and fantasy – the contradictions - of the Hobbesian 'social contract' (e.g. WOMBLES 2003a). As such, it constitutes an instrumental bio-politics (cf. Foucault 1998 (1976)): a means of physically confronting the repression of the state and its support for corporatism as the primary means of structuring society. Foucault (among others) articulates body (and psyche) as the locale(s) of power's micro-physics which, as argued above, can be self-attacked in multiple ways as a further

expression of this micro-physics. In this bio-political tactics of protests, the body is re-constituted individually and collectively as the appropriate (and only possible) locale of rebellion.

Participation in the organising and practice of actions that transgress the boundaries of ‘good bourgeois behaviour’, especially when accompanied by a clear cosmology that conveys the broader meaning of such actions, also has socio-psychological significance in terms of reinforcing internal social and psychosomatic coherence (or *habitus*) (cf. Cross 2003 after Bourdieu 1990 (1980)). This is in part by ritualising the experience of repression in these contexts (Mueller 2003: 7). The sharing of such extreme experiences is integral to the building of solidarity. As Barker and Cox (2003: 8) note, ‘[f]or many activists ... it is a turning-point to be at the receiving end of police aggression and to discover that an institution they have been brought up to see as underwriting their safety and the moral order is in fact prone to violence against “ordinary people” ... pursuing what they understand to be eminently moral (and often altruistic) pursuits’. And again, ‘[b]eing attacked by heavily armed riot police is terrifying. It has happened to me many times now and I think you never get over the fear. But I have come to feel more and more like fighting back and I have come to understand more the value of the Black Block’ (WOMBLES 2003a).

Perhaps the most politically powerful aspect of protest actions, however, is not the actions themselves, but the social and psychological dimensions that infuse organisation and experience(s) of them. Take, for example, the forming of groups of affinity: small, extra-institutional socio-political groupings arising from direct relationships, trust, shared interests and actions, reciprocity and an emphasis on consensus and inclusive processes of decision-making. These attempt a shift to group emergence from shared values as opposed to conventional identities (such as sex, race, religion etc.) or geographical location (cf. WOMBLES 2003c: 10). This emphasis on direct relationships in the context of affinity groups can be considered, and is consciously framed as, an insurrectionary act and process in itself. It arises from an understanding that capitalism means that ‘most of our encounters have already been defined in terms of predetermined roles and relationships in which we have no say’ (Willful Disobedience n.d.), and that it functions in part by fragmenting social relations - favouring competition over

cooperation and requiring objectification (e.g., people = human resources, 'nature' = natural resources) rather than communion.

Of course, the dynamics of any group or organisation can be conservative and constraining, and activist communities are no exception to this. For example, the internal *structuring* of what Marcellus (2003: 3) describes as a 'pretentious and authoritarian elitism' among those prepared to commit violent acts can itself take on a conservative and exclusionary tendency, such that participation becomes 'more about just identifying oneself with a ... group' than about libertarian and strategic/creative political action. Or the pressure to be 'radical' and to eschew any form of populism again can propagate an exclusionary elitism (cf. Anon. 2001: 4). But in ideal terms, the presence of dynamic organisational practices emphasising autonomy and affinity in themselves constitute the means to mitigate against a potential sedimenting – or molarising to use Deleuze and Guattari's term (1988 (1980)) - into the restrictive and regulated structures characterising legally-constituted social groupings. Such practices include: the fluid, dynamic and temporary nature of affinity groups formed for the purposes of specific actions; the access activists have to emerging trans-local cultures of resistance and disobedience - located virtually via the internet (e-lists, discussion groups etc.) and physically (at meetings, parties, actions etc.) – that recursively open and shape activist values and tactics; and the conscious adherence to anarchist and network principles of organisation that recognise the value of horizontal networks as well as temporary hierarchies.

To summarise, a gulf of difference distinguishes activist agency involving violence to property and preparedness for confrontation with police from an unconsciously reactive, infantile acting out of anger. The former are manifestations of broader and recursive cultures of practice, organisation and discourse. They represent the weaving of a social fabric based on mutual aid, affinity, reciprocity, direct relationship and solidarity that in itself constitutes a psycho-cultural break with the accepted warp and weft of a modern sociality (i.e. of de Sade, Darwin, Hobbes and Freud) that assumes individualism, competition and tendencies towards violence as the dominant drives for humanity. While the experiential power of the 'rite of passage' of irruptive situations and the contribution of such 'peak experiences' (cf. Maslow 1973) to individual and collective identities cannot be underestimated (cf. Mueller 2004), the social practices with which

they are accompanied arguably are at least as politically challenging as the moments of protest constituting a direct action bio-politics.

**But ...**

When you are acted upon violently, you learn to act violently back (CrimethInc. Workers' Collective 2001: 36).

If this movement progresses in terms of escalating violence alone then we will lose, because they have guns and we do not (Anon. in press: 19).

The above analysis locates me outside a strictly pacifist activist discourse and practice, or at least, in support of a position of 'deep' questioning of a reactionary violence/non-violence dichotomy in protest politics. Indeed, I actively affirm the transformational and communicative value of 'sitting in the fire' of anger and conflict (cf. Mindell 1995).

But please read the small print. Debord (1983) famously wrote that, alienation cannot be combated 'by means of alienated forms of struggle'. Indeed, if (anti-)globalisation politics is about moving *beyond* the oppositional categories that support the status quo – about proleptically imagining other possibilities for being/becoming (cf. Habermas), and about a process of creating and doing the new as well as contesting the old – then violence surely has a compromised place within 'the movement(s)'. It is a response that is defined by, and thereby increases, the reactionary violence of the state in its support of *Empire*, and that can slip easily into a reactive opposition that strengthens rather than outgrows the strong (cf. Newman 2000: 3). It reinforces the power that is, by definition, present in opposition to its resistance, while also making the opposition more and more like its enemy, amounting to 'a terribly ugly mirror image' (cf. Böhm and Sørensen 2003: 6, 12-13). This is the familiar equation that violence + violence = more violence. Thus, just as the structural and political violence of neoliberalism sediments into interpersonal violence in everyday domains (Bourgois 2001: 29) – constituting what Bourdieu (1998) refers to as the 'law of the conservation of violence' – violence in the context of protests also easily shifts between the 'meaningful' political act into the boring violence of the everyday (cf. Marcellus 2003).<sup>19</sup> By resonating with the particular masculinities of a conventional, humourless and Leninist Left perspective that emphasises the violent necessity of the revolutionary moment,<sup>20</sup> a politics that otherwise is framed as antiestablishment and subversive

becomes conventional rather than radical: overly bound by past imaginings of what is possible. On this point, a strengthening of particular ‘hegemonic masculinities’, i.e. that valorise physical strength, machismo (in relation to other men as well as to women), and emotional passivity (discussed in Cross 2003: 14-15; also Viejo 2003), perhaps also generates its own momentum and problematic – one which is akin to that also represented by the machismo of a male-dominated, body-armoured riot police. Given reports of sexual harassment made by women at the anarchist encampment at Thessaloniki’s Aristotle University in June 2003, for example, it indeed is tempting to see an emerging dynamic in militant factions whereby ‘worthy’ political violence is transmuted and normalised ‘back’ into the banal and disempowering violence of everyday sexism.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, it is hard for me not to stay with the conclusion that a conscious orientation towards violent praxis acts to buttress inequalities, as well as being ‘profoundly disabling’, both physically and psychologically (Bourgois 2001: 12). Given the context of structural and symbolic violence characteristic of late-capitalism, of the distributed biopower of *Empire* (Hardt and Negri 2000), and of US military imperialism, however, it also is hard to avoid the corresponding conclusion that the period of social change in which we find ourselves will be associated with escalating levels of violence, in (anti-)globalisation protests as elsewhere.

### **AND NOW? BECOMING UNCIVIL SOCIETY ...**

‘It starts when you care to act, when you do it again after they say no, when you say “**We**” and know who you mean, and each day you mean one more’ (WOMBLES 2003d: 39).

Following Foucault, Agamben and Hardt and Negri, the sovereignty of the global manifests and is sustained as biopower. This ‘not only regulates human interactions but also seeks directly to rule over human *nature*’ (Hardt and Negri 2000: xv, emphasis added). Given this omnipresence - the pervasive structural violence that permeates the global in which ‘we’ all are located, together with the accompanying tyrannies of universalising liberal civil society discourses – is it possible for individuals to come to agentic struggle that might subvert, transgress and *unravel* these structures?

Perhaps this problematic can be framed differently as engendering a multiplicitous *opportunity* for empowerment, since it also implies that the frontlines of struggle, indeed, are everywhere - investing all thought, action and sense of self with political meaning and potential (Sullivan 2003). As Hardt and Negri (2002: 21) suggest, the omnipresence of Empire's biopower is precisely the medium in which 'a completely different ethical and ontological axis' becomes articulated, becoming a social revolution of subjectivities.

But where and how might this 'ontological basis of antagonism' (Hardt and Negri 2000: 21) emerge? Is it possible to experience, articulate and share understandings of structures and practices that are 'dehumanising' in their violence without being interpreted as promoting a constructed, hegemonic humanist and universalising rationalism that discounts difference? (On which point, it is salutary to note that even Foucault, famous for his analyses of all subject positions, of all resistances, as located within and constructed by the multiplicitous micro-forces of power/discourse, framed his life and work as guided by a Nietzschean project of 'eternal return': an ethical endeavour to 'become what one is' (Miller 1993)). And can this come into being without constructing a corresponding liberal tyranny of the safe and 'nice'? - instead affirming an exploration of seriously subversive subjectivities that yearn for and embody a consuming fullness 'of gaiety, ecstasy and dance' (Deleuze and Guattari 1988 (1980): 150), over equivalent limit experiences of pain, absence and negation (i.e. as elaborated - even fetishised in places - by Foucault, Deleuze and Guattari, and Agamben and, of course, de Sade)?<sup>22</sup>

What I have attempted to articulate in this chapter is that it is unsurprising that violence is emerging in (anti-)globalisation politics as a conscious transformation of felt experiences of pain and rage in relation to the glue of structural violence that makes possible the biopower of *Empire*. I have suggested further that the intertwined experiences of depression and rage are affective articulations with alienating and violating contexts that in (anti-)globalisation politics become animated by the desire for new praxes of being human. In this analysis, the stripped down subjectivities of a contemporary upwelling of affective depression comprise political locales of latent desire: echoes of Agamben's philosophy of 'bare life' (1994, 1998) as comprising spaces emptied of citizenship from where 'new' philosophies and praxes of what it means to become human might emerge. I have also indicated that militant practices can be both empowering and

radical, and constraining and conservative, and that it is only with the explicit locating of such practices within the discourses, situations and subjectivities in which they emerge that intent and effect can be elaborated and interpreted.

Of course, struggle also implies and requires tactics. Just as for Negri (2002) the ‘multitude’ is ‘a whole of singularities’ that cannot be collapsed into a homogenous mass of people, the material discussed in this chapter also suggests that the political tactics of the multitude do not comprise competing alternatives to each other: instead they are complementarities that in themselves affirm the pluralism sought by the rhetoric of the movements. The difference and singularities embodied by tactics are themselves politically heretical given the fundamentalism associated with global power and universalist agendas (cf. Baudrillard 2003: 4). In other words, no one has a monopoly on tactics. But actions will be stronger in total if their experience is communicated and debated amongst individuals and collectives, such that the corresponding openings – and reclaimings – of social, physical and subjective spaces are able more fruitfully to jostle, overlap and re-create each other.

As made clear in the accounts with which this chapter opens, I locate myself as someone who desires and participates in struggle for change. For myself, I am inspired by a brilliant image by graffiti artist Banksy, of a masked protester with arm raised to violently throw – not a molotov, but a bunch of flowers (see Plate 4). This captures both the engaged anger and the seriously subversive and celebratory creativity comprising the hallmarks of a global politics of defiance that has its feet planted firmly in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. My desire is for a processual, *interstitial*, Dionysian radical politics that exploits, explodes, and subverts the instability of correspondences between signifier and signified, inside and outside, the messiness of experience and the reified categories of modernity. And in doing so attempts a continual transcendence – a going beyond – that acknowledges the destruction inherent in creativity, but that is not a call for nihilism as an end in itself.



*Plate 4. Subverting with flowers as molotovs (Banksy Stenciled graffiti, Banksy n.d.).*

In this reading, militancy in (anti-)globalisation politics is a proactive politics of the lived rather than the managed human. The supraterritorial soil in which it is fertilised is the painful legacy ‘we’ have been bequeathed: of the Holocaust and Hiroshima; of Chernobyl, Bhopal and the Exxon Valdez; of Thalidomide, BSE and the technocratic penetration of genes and atoms; of advanced democracies promoting the trade of arms and the precursors of WMDs to repressive regimes worldwide; of endless privatisation and commodification – from nature, to states of mind, to knowledge; of the construction of a 25 foot high concrete wall to separate communities even as the memory of the Berlin Wall is still warm. Is it surprising that ‘we’ distrust and even despise modernity’s fabricated ideologies of self-interested economic rational man, of ‘there-is-no-alternative’ political realism, and of faith in civilisation and technocratic solutions? Or that we fill our subjective spaces with the identities and practices of activist, nomad, anarchist, pagan, outlaw, raver, ‘wild woman’, sambista, poet, WOMBLE, clown, shaman, hactivist, heretic – modernity’s ‘freaks’, everywhere? I feel not. But then, of course, I could just be depressed.

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<sup>1</sup> As Mueller (2004) suggests, the 'success' of this action also might be framed in terms of peoples' *experiences* of it. He argues that since many of those involved had not engaged previously in physically confrontational protest, this experience was one of a sense of empowerment in having pushed beyond fear and normative constraints on what is personally and politically possible. (Key initiators of the action were participants in the ATTAC network which normally restrict its political activities to campaigns, lobbying and presence at mass marches for a redistributive Tobin Tax on financial speculation - ATTAC is the 'international movement for democratic control of financial markets and their institutions', see <http://attac.org>).

<sup>2</sup> The 'Village Alternatif, Anti-capitaliste and Anti-Guerre' just outside Annemasse, where activists were invited to camp and base themselves for the duration of the G8 counter-summit (28<sup>th</sup> May to 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2003).

<sup>3</sup> Banner heading Thessaloniki's Indymedia website (Thessaloniki IMC 2003).

<sup>4</sup> Pink and Silver refers both to the colours worn by London-based percussive band 'Rhythms of Resistance' (ROR), and to a *style* of protest, based on exploding the contradictions embodied by capitalist discourses and practice through the deployment of 'tactical frivolity' involving music, dance, costume, carnival and 'revolutionary play'. As the ROR website explains, 'Rhythms of Resistance formed as part of the UK Earth First action against the IMF in Prague in September 2000. A Pink and Silver carnival bloc, focused around a 55 piece band, detached itself from a march of 67,000 and outmanouvered police resources defending the IMF annual summit. With an international 'black bloc' and a large contingent from the Italian movement, 'Ya Basta', three diverse forms of direct action worked towards a common goal and resulted in the shut down of the IMF summit' (Rhythms of Resistance 2003). Samba and Afro Bloc drum bands emerged in 1970s and 1980s Latin American contexts as strategies both of political expression and black awareness: as 'a force of resistance and source of self confidence' (Browning 1995; Rhythms of Resistance 2003). Several activist percussive bands have formed in the UK and throughout Europe, such that 'an international network of percussive resistance to the march of capitalism is now emerging' (Rhythms of Resistance 2003).

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<sup>5</sup> BAE Systems ‘designs, manufactures, and supports military aircraft, surface ships, submarines, space systems, ... guided weapons and a range of other defence products’, has total annual sales in the region of £12 billion, and claims to be oriented towards ‘innovating for a safer world and delivering total solutions to customer requirements, from the outermost reaches of space to the depths of the oceans’ (BAE Systems 2004). Currently the company is being investigated by the Serious Fraud Office (Leigh and Evans 2004).

<sup>6</sup> Part 7 of the UK Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 extends aggravated trespass to trespass in buildings and is specifically targets office occupations by activists. It also widens the definition of ‘trespassory assemblies’ in the Public Order Act 1986 from twenty people to groups of two people (Section 57, ‘in the definition of “public assembly” for “20” substitute “2”’), and again extends police powers to impose conditions on protest outside corporate offices, etc. (Her Majesty’s Stationary Office 2003).

<sup>7</sup> Section 60 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act (1995) gives the police powers to stop and search and person or vehicle within a locality if violence is anticipated (Her Majesty’s Stationary Office 1994).

<sup>8</sup> Policing of the government subsidised arms trade fair cost £4,380,000 and more than 1,600 officers were present in Docklands on every day of the event (The Wharf 2004). In total, 144 protesters were arrested (BBC News 2003).

<sup>9</sup> Hand-held bells hit with a wooden drumstick.

<sup>10</sup> I am not forgetting that those in the ‘Global South’ who are contesting the insidious effects of neoliberalism on their lives and livelihoods have had to endure much higher levels of violence for much longer, and it is not unusual for protests to culminate in the death of protesters at the hands of police (cf. Bretton Woods Update 2003). It is in part due to outrage and empathy regarding these incidents and trends that people in the post-industrial north are contesting and critiquing current globalisation processes, and particularly the securitisation of the inequities and injustices required by global state-corporate capitalism.

<sup>11</sup> White Overalls Movement for Building Libertarian Effective Struggles (for more information, visit [www.wombles.org.uk](http://www.wombles.org.uk)).

<sup>12</sup> The current Assistant for Strategic Futures in the Office of Force Transformation of the Pentagon (Thomas P.N. Barnett) reports in a recent article, for example, that ‘of the 132 military interventions of the USA in the past twelve years, 95% were in areas he calls »gaps«, which (in his terminology) were either not ready or willing to couple up to ... capitalist globalisation and in which ca. 2 billion people live’ (Barnett quoted in Rilling 2003: 6).

<sup>13</sup> Witness, for example, the increasing incidence of requests by states that citizens report ‘suspicious behaviour’ observed in fellow citizens: from Irish health minister Michael Martin proposing to set up a telephone hotline so that people can inform on those breaking the country’s new smoking law (West 2003); to plane spotters at Fairford (from where B52 bombers took off to bomb Iraq in 2003) military base being provided with relevant phone numbers for the reporting of ‘anything of a security nature’ during the war on Iraq (Lee 2003).

<sup>14</sup> This suggests that there indeed is *qualitative pattern* to experiences and ways of accommodating (and perpetrating) patterns of trauma and violence. This is not the same as saying that every person experiences events and processes in exactly/absolutely/quantitatively the same way. Further, perpetrators as well as victims are created by brutalising contexts and discourses. A well-known social psychology prison experiment illustrates, for example, that a social situation sanctioning a discourse of dehumanisation (in this case of prisoners) is all that is required to shift the behaviour of ‘ordinary people’ into that of vindictive perpetrators of physical and psychological violence, even where they have no apparent previous history of such behaviours (cf. Zimbardo in press). The implications of such analyses suggest that currently ‘the west’ more broadly is located within such a social ‘experiment’, in the panic-driven discourses regarding ‘evil’ Islamic fundamentalists, immigrants ‘swamping’ our states, and the ‘anarchist travelling circus’ of (anti-)globalisation protesters, all of which act to reify difference, and thereby prevent communication with, ‘the Other who is not Us’.

<sup>15</sup> Denial also might be seen in the detachment of spiritually-oriented positions that fetishise retreat and withdrawal into interior reflective and perhaps personally transformative spaces as the primary means to engage with exterior transformation. As argued in *Willful Disobedience* (n.d. b; also Mindell 1995), these make the problematic and incoherent assumption that by addressing first-order alienations (between subject-object, nature-culture), the violations effected by second order alienations (e.g. private property, the division of labour, and alienated power) will be simply transcended or slip away. My personal stance is that becoming conversant with ordinary spiritual/mystical experiences of ‘ekstasy’ is a seriously subversively political practice that extends ontological consciousness, claims mind:body:spirit spaces not sanctioned by modernity’s fetishising of rational consciousness, and which can become tools in extending experiences of the possible in searching for and constituting ‘the’ post-capitalist and post-representational human (cf. Sullivan 2001, 2004b). But, if asserting agency requires articulation between interior and exterior spaces, then such flight from the organised particulate body will itself not be enough to

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effect socio-political change. Assuming a ‘spiritual rank’ (Mindell 1995: 62-63) or high ground that delegitimises the potential for transformative action through engagement with contexts, thereby becomes as helpful as its mirror attitude - that of denying the role/s of individual and collective spirituality in aiding an envisioning and engendering of societal alternatives open to multiplicitous human experience.

<sup>16</sup> Given the perennial conflict between socialist hierarchical and anarchist positions towards socio-political change – or between the ‘verticals’ and ‘horizontal’ as these orientations are coming to be known in the current UK context – it is pertinent to note that this accusation of infantilism was precisely what Lenin (1993 (1920)) used to discredit an emerging anarcho-syndicalism in the early part of last century. He, of course, favoured Bolshevik discipline, organised revolutionary force and administrative centralisation. Nietzsche too dismissed the militant practice associated with 19<sup>th</sup> century anarchism as a reactive politics of *ressentiment* – as ‘the spiteful politics of the weak and pitiful, the morality of the slave’ and the ‘vengeful *will to power* of the powerless over the powerful’ (Newman 2000: 1-2).

<sup>17</sup> It certainly is not unknown for such contextual relocations of violence from the everyday to the political to occur. As a Salvadoran guerrilla fighter expressed to Bourgois (1982: 24-25), for example, ‘[w]e used to be *machista*. We used to put away a lotta drink and cut each other up. But then the Organization [the FMLN – Farabundo Marti Liberation Front] showed us the way, and we’ve channeled that violence for the benefit of the people’.

<sup>18</sup> This is the difference between accepting that the legal system provides an appropriate space for the justification of one’s actions, versus carrying out actions while masked and with every intention of avoiding arrest and trial by a justice system perceived to be supporting the structures being contested.

<sup>19</sup> Bourgois (2001: 12), for example, notes that political repression and ‘worthy’ resistance in wartime El Salvador during the 1980s now ‘reverberate in a dynamic of everyday violence akin to that produced by the fusing of structural and symbolic violence during peacetime’, such that the per capita homicide rate was almost twice as high after the (US-sponsored) Civil War as during it ( p. 19).

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Italian Marxist Antonio Negri in the 1980s writes that ‘[p]roletarian violence, in so far as it is a positive allusion to communism, is an essential element of the dynamic of communism. To suppress the violence of this process can only deliver it – tied hand and foot – to capital. Violence is a first, immediate, and vigorous affirmation of the necessity of communism. It does not provide the solution, but is fundamental’ (1984: 173 in Callinicos 2001: 4).

<sup>21</sup> This is *not* the same as saying that discourses and practices of bio-political violence is somehow an exclusively male domain. Indeed, numerous references regarding different times and spaces indicate that this is not the case (e.g. Klausmann *et al.* 1997; Ruins 2003; LeBrun n.d.).

<sup>22</sup> I pursue this line of thought in Sullivan 2004b.