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STUDIES IN THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF CONTEMPORARY RESISTANCE

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THE RESISTANCE STUDIES MAGAZINE

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by Christopher Kullenberg & Patrick T. Hiller

Dear Readers,

Thank you for your patience and continued interest in the open-access, peer-reviewed journal Resistance Studies Magazine.

We are glad to present articles that demonstrate the multifaceted area of resistance studies. Mike Mowbray discusses the online presentation and discussion of 2008 Greek riots as virtual spaces of opposition to mainstream account. James M. Statman looks at the psycho-political meaning of the sacrificial burning of a car in a South African township with regard to rebellion and reconciliation. E. Colin Ruggero provides a critique of widely read Leftist discourse followed by a Gramscian perspective of social change. Jeffrey Shantz provides new perspectives on social movements, highlighting affinity-based organizing, self-valorization, as discussed in autonomist Marxism and do-it-yourself politics. In this issue we are glad to share a book review of Douglas R. Egerton's Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America submitted by Ed Kinane.

The diversity of the articles demonstrates the myriad of paths resistance studies can take. We are glad to unite the contributions under the three main tenants of Resistance Studies Magazine:

- to raise awareness of current resistance activities.
- to promote the theoretical and empirical study of resistance.
- to intensify networking within resistance studies in order to inspire further research and connect researchers around the world.

As editors we are continuously searching through the publication catalogues in search of new and forthcoming literature on resistance studies. We added a new feature to this issue, where we share a list of new, upcoming and recommendable publications. We encourage readers and authors to provide us with any kind of new publications that they consider relevant to resistance studies.

As a zero-budget, open-access academic journal, the publication of every issue is both a challenge and a success. We are grateful to the authors for their collaboration, to the reviewers for their dedication and to the readers for their continued interest. We are open to any comments, suggestion and critique regarding upcoming issues.

BLOGGING THE GREEK RIOTS: BETWEEN AFTERMATH AND ONGOING ENGAGEMENT

by Mike Mowbray, Concordia University

> "Blogs have changed the world in various ways; the point, however, is to interpret them.
> - Geert Lovink, Zero Comments: Blogging and Critical Internet Culture, 2008: 1.
>
> If something scares us [it] is the return to normality. For in the destroyed and pillaged streets of our cities of light we see not only the obvious results of our rage, but the possibility of starting to live. We have no longer anything to do than to install ourselves in this possibility transforming it into a living experience: by grounding on the field of everyday life, our creativity, our power to materialise our desires, our power not to contemplate but to construct the real. This is our vital space. All the rest is death.
> - communiqué of the Athens School of Economics and Business occupation, 11/12/2008.

This paper concerns the online representation and discussion of ongoing aspects and implications of the recent uprising in Greece, sparked by the December 6th police shooting of 15-year-old Alexis Grigoropoulos in Athens. Tens of thousands of people joined protests, clashes with police, property destruction, and occupations which paralyzed major cities there for weeks, and anarchists played a significant role (both on the ground and in mainstream depictions of a masked and hooded 'folk devil'). The uprising drew comparison to the events of 1968, and speculation that the unrest might spread across Europe. The online presence of anarchists was prominent, and even after the initial protests receded, some bloggers and others continued to discuss the rebellion, and the wider relevance of Greek struggles, online.

I have sought to produce a 'cyberspace ethnography' of my online locus of investigation, delimited by available online content concerning the Greek situation from an anarchist (or sympathetic) perspective – and focused on a few blogs which remained active following the decline of popular participation in on-the-ground disruptions and protest. My main foci concern online attempts to resist the foreclosure of the Greek uprising as an isolated 'event' (with a putative ending in the symbolic restoration of 'order' on the streets), the possible indications and bases of 'collective identity' in this context, and the ways in which some blogs and forums make links (conceptual and hyper-) to other contexts, local and international, in their treatments of the Greek situation – thus focusing the (anarchist) activist imaginary beyond the limited context of the initial action. In responding to these questions, I discuss virtual spaces as a site of opposition to mainstream accounts, trace some of the connections drawn with diverse struggles, international (and translocal) contexts, and consider elements of a possible anarchist 'collective identity' (through the work of Melucci

and Uri Gordon), drawing out tensions and debates. Finally, I seek to emphasize the practice of translating and reproducing 'poetic' texts, which I relate to Lewis Call's notion of 'postmodern anarchism' and Rob Shields' work on the 'virtual' (by way of Debord and Baudrillard) in thinking about the (anarchist) activist imaginary and resistance to mainstream accounts of resistance and rebellion.

Locus, method & ethical considerations

In terms of locus and method, I employ a participant-observation approach to explore online pathways, locations, and content linked hypertextually and by common concern with an English-language 'anarchist' perspective on the Greek riots and occupations. I look primarily at a small number of blogs which continued to devote sustained coverage after the December 24th 'break' in street actions, and link out to anarchist 'hub' site news-services and discussion forums, as well as to other blogs that discuss the Greek situation from an anarchist (or sympathetic) point of view. Blogging, of course, is not a new phenomenon, having been hailed over a decade ago as the 'next big thing' and already gone through a process of apparent decline and 'Web 2.0' resurgence (Lovink 2008). However, it seems to me that the most sustained dedicated (English-language) coverage of the situation in Greece came in the form of blogs, which brought together information, links, and media from around the web and off of the streets and served a narrativizing function. Four blogs are of primary interest to my discussion:

1.   On the Greek Riots, hereafter: OtGR (www.occupiedlondon.org/blog)
2.   Social War in Greece, hereafter: SWiG (greekriots.blogspot.com)
3.   The Center for Strategic Anarchy, hereafter: CSA (anarchiststrategy.blogspot.com)
4.   Tapes Gone Loose, hereafter: TGL (tapesgoneloose.blogspot.com)

These four blogs provided a great deal of information, and focused commentary on issues raised by the Greek unrest. The first two remain active at the time of writing (April 2009), while the third wrapped up in January. Although the first three provide mutual links (with the exception of CSA omitting SWiG), the TGL blog, active until mid-February, links to none – though TGL material has been re-posted/linked at OtGR and other prominent anarchist blogs. Typically, these blogs post relatively short updates, translations and commentary on the situation in Greece and allow readers to comment on posted items (and to respond to others' comments).

Major anarchist 'hub' sites, such as libcom.org, infoshop.org and anarkismo.net also continued to present updates and generate some commentary and discussion, and were considered insofar as their content is relevant to this project. Discussion forums on these sites (and others, such as anarchistblackcat.org) provide another avenue of exploration, and an 'anarchist RSS' on Twitter proved invaluable in keeping up-to-date. Lest it seem that this focuses exclusively on text-based modes of communication, it is important to note that graphics, photos, video and comic-art productions are also a part of this virtual milieu, and that the (visual) aesthetic markers employed, while easily taken-for-granted, also merit consideration.

I sought to familiarize myself with this locus of investigation by examining the blogs noted and linking out to other sites with an eye both to surveying the range of available material – marking out a 'web sphere' (Schneider & Foot 2005) for analysis - and to participating in ongoing discussions of the significance and implications of the Greek riots and occupations, strikes and other actions. To this end, I clicked, read, viewed, posted comments, engaged others' opinions, followed links and asked questions. My aim goes beyond the role of the 'reader' and foregrounds the more holistic experience of inhabiting the 'web sphere', and of interacting with others, albeit in 'virtual' co-presence, and in an asynchronous textual mode (though I should note that attempts at engaging

in discussion and debate via comments and forums were limited by the sharp decline in others' participation from January onwards). In this sense, I provide a cyberspace (or 'virtual') ethnography (Hine 2000). I supplemented my approach with three online interviews (see Kivits 2005) conducted via email with bloggers of interest. Of course, a single paper entails the elision of many facets of the online experience, concerns of participants and producers, and responses in interviews; the necessary exclusions are my own responsibility.

I have considered postings presented as public information as openly citable, whereas discussion content has been fictionalized, and basic confidentiality and consent assured for interviewees. In my participatory role I sought to avoid imposing myself on the discussion. Although I concluded that I could refrain from broadcasting my identity in this context, I resolved to answer any inquiry about my identity and purposes truthfully – and in fact maintained my own public blog on the project. I sought to draw on the approach to participatory and engaged theorization of anarchist movements recently suggested by Uri Gordon (2007b), and clearly relevant to others' call for more 'movement-relevant theory' (Bevington & Dixon 2005). The idea here is to take radical movements seriously, to engage endemic issues, and to avoid an overly detached perspective.

Blogging the Greek riots: against the 'mainstream'

As indicated, blogs can serve to narrativize events and bring together diverse sources – along with other sites, they organize a body of content and a group of people around a common set of concerns. Together, the sites examined form a set of networked pathways of linked content, a 'web sphere' which overlaps significantly with a pre-existing 'anarchist web' (Owens & Palmer 2003) organized around common interest in (multiple and sometimes conflicting) 'anarchist' perspectives, values and identifications. In the initial period of the Greek uprising in December, 'hub' sites bustled with stories and discussion; some blogs reportedly saw 10,000 hits a day, and were cited by mainstream media as 'primary' sources. The term 'snap mobs,' coined by Patrick Meier (2008) to describe quick-forming rebellious crowds swelled by new communications technologies, captures much of the early interest in the Greek uprising, and such aspects of the initial build-up have been well-scrutinized elsewhere. The effects of quick dissemination of eyewitness accounts and video from the scene of Grigoropoulos' shooting which countered official claims later discredited by official forensics are not to be discounted. However, I am interested here in what circulates through the networked pathways after the 'snap mobs' in Greece went home, and much of the world stopped watching.

Throughout the initial period, anarchist (and sympathetic) voices sought to counter mainstream accounts – and it seems that each protest occupation in Greece had its own blog. No less than Greek PM K. Karamanlis (2009) has suggested that blogs and new media are a boon to 'troublemakers,' indicating official displeasure with the possibilities raised. Past academic work has emphasized how the mainstream press is implicated in processes that privilege the views of 'primary definers' such as state officials, 'experts' and professional commentators in ways that tend to reinforce a (post-Gramscian) hegemonic outlook which assumes a putative cultural 'consensus' and frames events for wider publics (Hall et al. 1978). Such an analysis is echoed in 'poetic' Greek texts: "Politics is the politics of consensus; the rest is gang-war, riots, chaos". The structures of mainstream news-production are similarly liable to create their own 'folk devils,' distorting real events to fit such paradigms (Cohen 2002) – a position into which anarchists have been inserted in the past, notably in the context of alter-globalization demos (Owens & Palmer 2003; Rosie & Gorringe 2009). This often seems to serve state interests in de-legitimizing dissent – as can be inferred from Greek government rhetoric focusing on the supposedly objectless (i.e. not politically motivated, irrational, monstrous and incomprehensible) violent actions of a few hooded and masked 'anarchist' youth

and urban guerillas despite clear social tensions, widespread popular participation in December's uprising, and the articulate words and actions of many anarchists. The echoes of this and other distortions (and silences) are noted with unease by bloggers and addressed by independent sourcing and commentary which question and complexify. They provide content, as one blogger put it, which counters journalism that is "soddy, agenda-driven or simply carelessly lazy" while avoiding "projecting a Grand Unification Theory of What's Really Going on in Greece." It is my belief that both the raw communications capabilities and the experiential structure of online media 'browsing' (in which the user moves laterally – or 'diagonally' – through content, media types, relatively passive and interactive responses, diverse sources and genres of material) themselves dilute the authority of mainstream sources, especially across geographic distance. The juxtaposition (and blending) of genres presents a possibility for different 'language games' (Lyotard 1979), impassioned ethical discourses, economic analyses, 'objective' reporting, or poetic renderings, to be played out and experienced in the same big arena – highlighting the need to examine the integrative problems posed in the interstitial spaces between them. In part, at least in Call's (2003) analysis, hypertextuality contributes to a relative pluralization, destabilization and possible democratization of the claims to 'truth' in defining the social, power dynamics, and lived experience - and in describing aspects of refusal and resistance, and 'events' such as those cast under the rubric of the Greek uprising.

Of course, different sites take different approaches. Initial coverage often took the form of play-by-play accounts of protests, rioting, occupations and arrests (a mainstay of CSA coverage, for example). From January 2009, SWiG frequently re-posted mainstream coverage – particularly of attacks claimed by splinter groups engaged in bombing and firearms attacks against police, state and financial targets (what was by and large available), along with demo updates and items re-posted from OtGR and 'hub' site news services (which frequently operate on an IndyMedia model in which content is submitted by users, but not vetted or edited). OtGR and TGL provide an eclectic mix of non-mainstream news and images of occupations and anarchist-linked events, relating diverse struggles in Greece linked to prisons, the repression of dissent, precarious workers and immigrants, and translations of texts produced by anarchist collectives. Not only does this material present a more complex picture, it fuels the imaginations of anarchists (and sympathizers), and keeps people (including others not necessarily politicized) informed about issues ignored in the mainstream – and 'poetic' texts and visual elements contribute to resistance in novel ways that 'news' and historical context (though essential in themselves) do not.

Denouement or persistence?

The large numbers of people drawn into open rebellion in December focused mainstream media and early commentary. However, even after the more spectacular activity on the streets died down, online discussion and news from Greece continued – though only in some forums. By mid-January, as riotous activity lessened, several blogs shut the door on the Greek uprising: previously high-activity sites focused on reconstructing a closed-ended timeline of events, posting 'position papers' and 'wrap-ups' reflecting on the situation. Others became irregular, and comments dwindled from dozens to single digits or zero. In many cases, the Greek situation was used as a transition to other topics: notably to the police killing of Oscar Grant in Oakland, which sparked a riotous response, to the popular uprisings in Iceland which deposed the government there following an economic meltdown, to riotous unrest in Madagascar, Latvia and France, and to the then-burgeoning Israeli offensive on Gaza.

Broader connections were made with the context of the 'economic crisis' – said (by some) to connect unrest across Europe and to explain working-class/youth dissent feeding into the uprising. UK solidarity events posted at some sites shifted focus to generalize and re-locate the threads

of commonality, with slogans such as "Fuck Greece, Fight here!" – a sentiment echoed in one interviewee's suggestion that those outside of Greece (in keeping with statements at an international day of solidarity) "should react wherever they are, under whatever condition of oppression, not in solidarity with the Greeks but on their own right – for themselves."

Following the early-to-mid January lull, the SWiG, OtGR and TGL blogs persisted along with the dedicated few still posting on hub-site news services and discussion forums, who, like some of the bloggers, often appear to have connections to Greece in terms of life-history and language that position them to mediate the on-the-ground situation for non-Greek speakers internationally. It appears that most of the content here is the work of a small number, with particular bloggers, posters, and forum-participants providing a great deal of translation, updates, historical and contextual detail and interpretation (particularly relative to the number of comments and other forms of response on most sites during this period). Much of this ongoing coverage focuses on attempts to broaden the context from that of a direct response to the killing of Grigoroupolous by highlighting different cases, and providing intersectional analyses weaving these diverse struggles together.

The case of Konstantina Kouneva

One prominent case is that of Konstantina Kouneva, a cleaner and active radical syndicalist fighting for 'precarious' workers like herself, employed by subcontractors – often immigrants working under poor conditions without job security or benefits. She was attacked with acid on December 23, 2008, and suffered serious disfigurement in the life-threatening attack which radical-left on-the-ground and online sources present as likely the work of her employer, a subcontracting company owned by a member of Greece's mainstream socialist party. Several posts and texts make links to her case as exemplary of women's, immigrants', radicals' and precarious workers' struggles against the forms of domination that they endure. One analyses the attack thus:

> The attack against Konstantina Kuneva wasn't a murderous one. Her likely death as a result of this attack was a secondary issue for the pigs who conducted it. The sulfuric acid was used for her stigmatisation, her degradation, her disgrace. For her return to order, to the domestic and private, to the role of woman.

Such instances illustrate the oppositional interpretations forwarded, and point to the tendency to analyze events in light of general dynamics, and to provide an 'affected' view. Similar efforts address legislation targeting protesters, new occupations in the spirit of the uprisings, attacks and counter-attacks involving anarchists and neo-fascist groups, and solidarity with radical prisoners.

Collective identity: what's moving online?

Clearly, producers and frequenters of these sites share an interest in oppositional views of events in Greece. But is there more to it than that? Alberto Melucci (1996) suggests that a key element of 'collective identity' lies in "*cognitive definitions* concerning the ends, means and field of action" (70). The connections drawn between the Greek situation and diverse local and international contexts and concerns suggest a creative tendency to view a wide range of perceived (and usually very real) injustices as interlinked and analogous. At a general level, the connections and intersectional analyses weaving together diverse struggles can be viewed as a product of a certain 'holistic' tendency that connects not only with classical anarchism (though thinkers like Bakunin and Kropotkin have sometimes been faulted for essentializing human nature or marginalizing struggles outside the class-state nexus), but with more recent anti-oppression (feminist, anti-racist, queer) and anti-

imperialist movements. This general holistic thrust (along with a determination to take on these matters directly, to refuse representation, and to embrace difference) may inform a set of '*cognitive definitions*' and orientations. I think that, in this sense, elements of a possible 'collective identity' can be articulated among many post-December accounts of the Greek situation via Uri Gordon's idea of 'contemporary anarchism as a political culture' marked by three 'conceptual clusters':

> (a) the construction of the concept of 'domination' and the active opposition to all its forms and systems, (b) the ethos of direct action as a primary mode of political engagement, both destructive and constructive, and (c) the open-ended, experimental approach to revolutionary visions and strategies, which endorses epistemological pluralism and is strongly grounded in present tense action. (2007:29)

The key concept of 'domination' for Gordon is best described as "a disvalue: what anarchists want to negate […] a generic concept for the various systematic features of society whereby groups and persons are controlled, coerced, exploited, humiliated, discriminated against, etc.—all of which dynamics anarchists seek to uncover, challenge and erode" (2007:37-38). This, I think, is a good summation of some common definitions of the type Melucci holds central to collective identity, applicable to much of the content examined. Common to almost all of the material I encountered was a (greater or lesser) willingness to engage other points of view that fit within this kinds of framework, and a corresponding distaste for vanguardist or authoritarian visions of social change (as made highly visible in reactions to comments posted on blogs by 'trolling' Leninists and state-socialists). They also share a distinct inclination to emphasize 'direct action' (which can be 'constructive' in the case of public protest, the re-articulation of everyday relations, self-organization to build alternative communities and institutions which contest, supplant or evade systems of domination such as the capital-state nexus), and a tendency which seeks concepts of domination that can weave together events as diverse as a pensioners' march, a farmers' strike, and protest acts targeting Athens' mayor for "the mass murder of trees," or targeting the range of repressive new state security measures.

However, this is not to imply that *anything goes* (as long as it opposes the hegemonic discourses and structural configurations of the dominant social, political and economic order). The generality of the shared definitions/orientations marked out here does provide the basis for some degree of boundary-maintenance (Taylor & Whittier 1992) but also elides many very real axes of difference and points of division among those involved in the coverage and discussion of the Greek situation (as it does in other contexts, both on- and offline). Contestation over key terms in the anarchist lexicon often frame tactical and strategic differences. The term 'direct action' can be taken to imply not only 'constructive' but also 'destructive' activity such as physical confrontation with police and other authorities, the destruction of property, interference with infrastructure, etc. Indeed, this is not an insignificant current in anarchist circles – and one which is highly relevant here. Some blogs and other sites tend to focus extensively on, and celebrate quite uncritically, these kinds of tactics, whether they be gluing the locks at a local bank, setting explosives (from a Molotov cocktail to a truck bomb), smashing store-fronts, paint-bombing, even mounting armed attacks on police and other representatives of the state and capital. One such blog which covered the Greek uprising seeks to provide:

> an open database on sabotage-vandalism-rioting and any action of physical confrontation with capitalism, its developments and its agents. Among other things, direct action is a field of liberated communication without the need of formal organizations and political parties.

Further examples include the 'The Ultimate Riot Collection,' a 30-part YouTube series depicting violent clashes and property destructions (with some nearing 100,000 views as of writing) or the 'World Wide Riots' blog, which presents international news items featuring rioting. Discussion and commentary often tends to take a dim view of this type of coverage, arguing not only that destructive and confrontational approaches may be counter-productive, but that the online re-dissemination of these incidents and images is distracting and meaninglessly detached from context, describing them as 'riot porn.'

Orientations regarding violence and public disorder are not always clear-cut. Indeed, the initial focus on Greece – as a scene of riotous uprising – indicates an interest in confrontational actions. In the post-December period, this became increasingly problematic as the initial widespread street actions gave way to oppositional manifestations in ongoing and new occupations (Universities and ad hoc 'social centres'), protest in solidarity with prisoners of the revolt or relating to the Kouneva case, issues of local significance (such as the razing of urban green spaces), or in reaction to attacks by neo-fascist elements. None of these received significant international mainstream coverage, though one 'direct action' demo targeting storefronts in a wealthy shopping district did make headlines. Meanwhile, urban-guerilla type actions carried out by Baader-Meinhof-esque splinter groups (who claim responsibility under names such as the 'Sect of Revolutionaries') continued to generate both local and episodic international mainstream coverage. Such cases included an attack with automatic weapons against a police post, an ambush of patrolling officers in which one was seriously wounded by gunfire, and a series of bombings targeting banks, state and capitalist institutions (as in the later attack against the Athens stock exchange) and the right-wing press. One prolific discussion-group poster suggested to me that this militaristic approach, based in a longer tradition linked to the N17 group which grew out of the 1973 movements against the military junta and its vestiges in subsequent Greek administrations, has been a significant part of the Greek anarchist scene since the mid-1990s and in his view is not linked to any 'grassroots' movement. Although the same poster tended to lump such other activities as erecting barricades and smashing storefronts into the same category, he also indicated that these could be appropriate in some circumstances.

The SWiG blog, to provide another example, presented an ambiguous reaction to the 'Sect of Revolutionaries' type attacks, re-disseminated mainstream accounts of which composed a great deal of their coverage post-December (with tags like 'officer down'). However, this may well have as much to do with the limited nature of this blog, largely re-posting material produced elsewhere (at one point, they re-posted a great deal of more 'alternative' material from OtGR). Blogs such as OtGR, TGL and others explicitly refrain from (uncritical) focus on these types of attacks on the basis that that they are already covered disproportionately in the mainstream, that their links to broader struggles and more 'productive' direct actions are tenuous, or that they are sometimes claimed to be the work of 'non-anarchists' or agents provocateurs. One blogger characterized these attacks as having "assumed center stage thus stripping the people of their own struggle (when the guns come out, the sensible majority go home…& no majority means no change)."

Visual aesthetics in anarchist representations of the uprising

Having described some of the connections drawn with diverse struggles and outlined the basis of some 'common understandings' and divisions, I now wish to take a turn to some aesthetic and 'poetic' aspects as they relate to elements of a possible 'collective identity' and (anarchist) activist imaginary. At the easily taken-for-granted level of the (visual) aesthetic elements of sites I looked at, I that found images of large crowds, fires in the streets, youths (sometimes masked) running or gathering, ad hoc barricades, broken glass, giant banners hung from occupied buildings (including

the Acropolis) and images of Grigoroupolous or Kouneva accompany more basic iconographic signals such as the black-and-red anarchist/libertarian-communist star, the circle-A anarchist symbol (sometimes presented in photographs of graffiti or banners from Greece). Sites often employ black-and-white or grey background and layout, commonly highlighted with red or by images that include flames raging in a dark urban scene (as in the case of an image, captioned 'Merry Xmas from Athens' of the giant Christmas tree in front of the Greek Parliament set alight by protesters). I should, however, note that the TGL blog, for example, offers fewer of these cues with its rose/pink layout (and as noted, does not link out to the other sites or express an 'anarchist' affiliation, except perhaps by the selection of texts and sympathetic perspective). TGL does, nonetheless, include images of riot police, in one instance depicting the classic radical-left trope of youths confronting them with…flowers.

Video and other visual content adds to the range of what is presented, not always in the form of documentary/news-type footage. Dartnell (2006: 98-104) describes online activists' use of 'multimedia artifacts' that blend words and images into aesthetically complex narratives and which address emotional and moral responses in the viewer; an example of such artifacts here might be the montage of footage and still images distributed under the title 'The Potentiality of Storming Heaven' via the AthensIMC-associated torrent site <black-tracker.gr>. Online discussions, while uneasy with the 'riot porn' qualities of this amalgam of footage prominently featuring clashes with police, carnivalesque protest and property destruction overlaid with a dark, gritty urban aesthetic (featuring a great deal of night footage illuminated by flames) and a pounding soundtrack, more than once point to its compelling qualities. The video includes interviews with rioters and full-length narration of the poetic type I will address shortly, cuing the uprising as a response to quotidian disaffection, social and economic precarity, and disgust with corruption and exploitation, social ills juxtaposed with 'anarchy' and hope. Punk and hip-hop music of a decidedly political flavour, Flickr pages of protest scenes, slideshows of burnt-out cars and riot police, sinister illustrations of figures clearly identified as police, and coarse black-and-white comic images provide a rich supplement. One comic, for example, narrates a UK protester's solidarity with Grigoropoulos and parallels perceived with Israeli aggression in Palestine, bombing in Afghanistan and the arms trade at home. Another depicts a fanciful urban landscape alit around two cartoon figures with the caption: "Now everything is burning. What do we do now?"

Some of these elements, riot images in particular, link to a kind of 'black bloc' aesthetic and logic of refusal, by violence if necessary, the day-to-day (and the paroxysmal, as in the case of unjustified police killings) violence and domination of the capitalist state. Here, the police represent the ultimate recourse of the powerful, the sometimes brutal contact point between (anarchist) struggle and the hegemonic order (see Dupuis-Deri 2007). Even anarchist (and sympathetic) commentators critical of 'violence' seem to approve (if tacitly) of the riotous activity of the initial uprising. Discussions in this vein tend to focus on whether property destruction and clashes with police are 'effective' or 'alienate the wider population' who need to be swayed. In the post-December period, this concern seems well-placed; as noted, it is often suggested that the bombings and firearms attacks of the 'Sect of Revolutionaries' and others are counter-productive, that these groups are misguided, or even that they may be agents-provocateurs. Counter-attacks, for example, by anarchists against neo-fascist groups such as Golden Dawn – for instance in early March 2009, when that group's headquarters was torched following a grenade attack on an anarchist social centre - tend to be looked to with more approval. The anarchist concern with 'direct action', while controversial in its definitions, often sets itself in opposition to strictly pacifist tactical commitments – anarchists are those who will take action, will defend themselves and overturn (or at least challenge) the forces of order.

Counter-spectacular 'poetic' texts, postmodern anarchism and the virtual

In this section, I wish to focus on translated and reproduced 'poetic' texts from anarchist sources in Greece as a supplement to alternative 'news' and commentary. This in turn concerns another tension between focus on the logistics of organization, strategy, empirico-theoretical analysis and appeals to the 'common sense' of the working class – a more modernist, unified-class-struggle-oriented anarchism – and what Lewis Call (2003) describes as 'postmodern anarchism,' which emphasizes that the critique of contemporary political economy (and other dynamic systems of the dominant political, economic and social order), a la Baudrillard, "must stand entirely *outside* that seemingly hegemonic system" (8). For Call, crossover with certain contemporary feminisms, socialisms and subaltern theories are key in attempts to undermine the effects of the everyday micro-political forces that undergird the social reproduction mechanisms of the larger and more apparent structures of formal power. This takes up a neo-Situationist flavour concerned with the "momentary ambiences of everyday life," (Debord 1957) and with creating spaces which evade routine strictures. Such spaces could be those of the riot, the occupation – even 'the virtual.' This vision is 'postmodern' in that it takes the realm of simulation (or the spectacle) as a primary field of struggle – though obviously without abandoning 'direct action'. This tendency is often dismissed or vilified by more 'traditional' anarchists and leftists (bloggers are no exception) as providing no solid plan, failing to include the wider population, being no more than 'mere abstraction' – though it persists nonetheless.

And this 'postmodern' aspect is highlighted by the selection and translation of 'poetic' political texts for reproduction online as much as in such raucous, music-filled and carnivalesque occupations as the Lyriki Scene opera house in Athens or more recently, adjacent to the Athens Polytechnic, and in the strikingly visual emphasis in cartooning, still and moving images (including the 'Potentiality of Storming Heaven' video). I was particularly struck by these texts from those involved in occupations and campaigns – reminiscent of the now radical-left-ubiquitous pronouncements of the Zapatista's Subcommandante Marcos (captured in one blog-post citation of his words: "we acquired a consciousness of language not as a way of communicating with each other but as a way of building something"). These texts provide a view that would otherwise not be known or preserved outside of its geographic context, what one blogger describes as "trench poetry" which seeks a politicization that exceeds any limited 'tactical' consideration, and refuses to present the recent Greek uprising as an isolated event (with a putative ending in the symbolic restoration of 'order' on the streets) – and which both reinforces anarchist affinities and presents a symbolic challenge to movement opponents. As expressed in a statement from the Lyriki Scene occupation:

> [W]e extend a call to every worker to redefine his role inside the dominant relations & structures. The artists of life are not the jokers of authority, We do not want to become human flashbang grenades in the artillery of psychological repression, but [rather] fireworks of joy & deep feeling on the road towards societal liberation.

Or in a Valentine's Day statement by 'December's love children,' reveling in juxtaposition:

> "Everything in its place: Everything was in place! The starving in Africa. The 'specialists' on TV. The 'bad ones' in prison. The 'anarchists' in Exarchia square. Those deciding in the parliament. Our money on loans. The police around the next corner," with "The End of Discipline. Magical Life: Those starved in the parliament, the specialists in Exarchia square, the bad ones in dieting institutes, the anarchists in museums & galleries, those deciding on 14 February, our money in Syntagma square on Xmas […]"

These texts, manifesting the symbolic challenge emphasized by Call, are brought into a translocal virtual space by the work of some bloggers. They take up – and frequently reference – Debord's (1983) call to resist 'the spectacle' – a social relation mediated by images, somewhat akin to Hall's post-Gramscian view of the hegemonic 'consensual' frame, but more radical in its challenge to the commoditization of time and the estrangement of lived experience. Like Debord, they seek to use existing concepts "simultaneously aware of their rediscovered fluidity, their necessary destruction" (ibid: 205). Call places Debord, in a fashion relevant here, along a theoretical trajectory towards Baudrillard's notion of simulation; both imply a battle for the boundaries of social, spatio-temporal 'actuality'.

Shields' (2003) notion of 'the virtual' is perhaps of use in clarifying the analytical status of this contestation. He describes the virtual as a necessary category in describing the possible impact of social (or activist) imaginaries on the unfolding actualization of events. The virtual is "real, but not actual; ideal but not abstract" (206). Pertinently, this consideration displaces critiques of ideas (such as those of anarchists) as 'merely utopian' and emphasizes the action of the ideal on the 'actual' in social processes. Social scientists, he points out, routinely deal in 'virtuality' when claims are made about 'underlying' social processes, as these are not articulated mechanisms, but posited dynamics 'in essence, if not in fact' (ibid: 32). Yet much academic writing (like the routine framing of mainstream news, the legitimating discourses of politico-economic institutions or critiques in the language of political economy) is flatly formal, neutered of its voice, of the 'virtual' point of reference (implying 'virtue') which might render it compelling to a wider audience (Rombes 2008). A striking parallel lies in the number of 'poetic' texts that refer to the apparent threat of being 'sociologized,' of the state bringing in their sociologists, psychologists and anthropologists to rein in those who are too 'affected,' who will not behave (as in the statement issued from the Athens School of Business 11/12/2008).

However, Rombes suggests that the *auteur* is everywhere (else), and blogging is part of the picture: the departure from dry factuality is ascendant – and this is desirable. He cites Baudrillard's *The Perfect Crime*: "As for ideas, everyone has them. What counts is the poetic singularity of the analysis. That alone can justify writing, not the wretched critical objectivity of language. There will never be any resolving of the contradictoriness of ideas, except in the energy and felicity of language" (cf. Rombes 2008: 438-439).

This strikes me as an excellent lens towards the 'poetic' texts which appear to operate by contesting the 'spectacular' representation of society to itself without leaning on dry factuality and emphasizing 'the virtual' as real, as entering into the processes of actualization in the 'social experiments' accompanying the uprising and ongoing opposition in Greece, and by mobilizing affect, by rocking the symbolic spatio-temporal containers that limit opposition, uprising and the (anarchist) activist imaginary to short, discrete and locally-bounded events.

Conclusions: Online spaces of resistance

I have sought to describe anarchist (and sympathetic) online efforts to counter mainstream accounts of the Greek uprising, some diverse connections and intersectional analyses made, and how these may be seen to constitute a general (but heterogeneous and often divided) set of common definitions. This should shed some light on the kinds of analytic frames that guide much of the contestation I discuss. However, it strikes me as important to emphasize more aesthetic elements as well. Aside from '*cognitive definitions*,' Melucci (1996:71) also cites "*emotional investments*" as essential to 'collective identity'. I think that these aesthetic elements point to a bridge between the two categories, and

that both riot images and destabilizing poetic pronouncements draw on an energetic common feeling (aligned against the commoditization of time, of life, of space itself) that is channeled in a refusal to address the formal structures of power as petitioners (see Day 2007). This energy has distinctively moral and emotional aspects, evoking Michel Maffesoli's (1996) distinction between 'the social' and 'sociality' in which the former consists in modern forms, rationalized, individuating and functional, while the latter is 'post-modern', linking persons via "the collective sensibility which issues from the aesthetic form [and] results in an ethical sensibility" (76). Such an emphasis is common to the kinds of 'poetic' texts examined, and emerging in some engaged academia as well (e.g. Day 2005, 2007; St. John 2008). The counter-spectacular symbolic challenge furnishes something better than the hegemonic visions of political economy and supposed 'consent' of a post-facto 'social contract', or at least displaces some portion of 'the spectacle.' It is hard to deny that there are concrete, specific and limited events at the heart of this story: the death of Alexis at the hands of the police, for example – but the way many counter-mainstream narratives have it, it is much more. Online technologies allow those outside of flashpoints like Greece to 'participate' in events via the virtual space of (alternative) global mediascapes. While some anarchists suggest that the internet as a whole is just another manifestation of 'the spectacle' (*Black Cat 'Zine* 1995, cf. Atton 2002), I believe that separating 'authentic,' 'real-life' experience from the virtual is difficult. As Pierre Levy (cf. Shields 2003: 205) puts it, "it is important that we try to accompany and give meaning to virtualization." Surely no replacement for engaged on-the-ground action, online virtual spaces have been used to ends which contribute to the elaboration of an oppositional 'collective identity' and to an (anarchist) activist imaginary that actively resists the foreclosure of the uprising in Greece – or of any struggle against domination – as a limited and isolated 'event.' In emphasizing that the uprising is not 'over,' take these lines from issued from one occupation adjacent to the Athens Polytechnic, entitled 'Carrying on: the coming revolt is already everywhere!,' translated and reproduced on OtGR:

> The biggest expectations lie ahead of us and we find ourselves in the joyous position of seeking ways to drift along with them.

> [The December uprising] abolished, even if temporarily, gendered and spectacular roles since thousands of people managed to act as one body amidst events where what mattered was what was happening, not who was doing it.

> Reality continues to gain meaning from December's revolt in an accelerating manner.

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BURNING FOR BAFANA: ON THE SYMBOLIC MICRO-POLITICS OF SACRIFICE AND REBELLION

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This essay examines a seemingly inexplicable event that transpired in Mamelodi township South Africa in which a crowd celebrating the victory of the South African national soccer (football) team Bafana Bafana, demanded that three local black police "sacrifice" their car – allow it to be burned - in honour of the team. The police refused and in the ensuing melee, several were injured and the vehicle destroyed. Drawing on James Scott's concept of "hidden transcript" and on Kristeva's work on revolt, Burning for Bafana argues that more than a sports riot, this incident can be understood as a symbolic micro-political act, precisely representing the opportunities and limit of the South African transition, the complexities of the social identity of the black police, and the psycho-political meaning of the proposed sacrificial burning of the car as both rebellion and reconciliation.

Preface: "Give up car in honour of soccer team"

A crowd attacked three policemen in Pretoria who refused to give up their car "in honour of the South African soccer team." The policemen were in a private car in Mamelodi on Wednesday, shortly after South Africa trounced Ghana 3-0 in the Africans Nations Cup, when they were confronted by a group of people.

According to a police spokesman, the people stopped the car and demanded that the policemen give it up so it could be destroyed as a sacrifice "to honour our Bafana Bafana". When the three refused the crowd became aggressive. The driver apparently panicked and attempted to drive away, slightly injuring 11 people in the process. The driver was severely beaten and stoned before he managed to flee. He was found unconscious in a mealie field and rushed to a Pretoria hospital, the spokesman said. A charge or reckless driving has been laid against him. In turn, the three policemen have laid charges of theft, assault and damage to property.

But it seems that the "fans" went ahead with their plan. The burnt-out shell of the car was found later. *Johannesburg Star*, February 2, 1996.

Looking for Hidden Transcripts (in All the Wrong Places)

Go further, go elsewhere, interpret. Interpretation, as I understand it, is itself a revolt. (Kristeva, J., 2000, p. 2)

> The struggle between rich and poor…is not merely a struggle over work, property rights, grain and cash. It is also a struggle over the appropriation of symbols, a struggle over how the past and present shall be understood and labelled, a struggle to identify causes and assess blame, a contentious effort to give partisan meaning to local history. (J.Scott, 1985, p. xvii)

> Because something is happening here and you don't know what it is, do you Mr. Jones? (B. Dylan, 1965)

In the late 1970's James Scott spent fourteen months conducting research in a small village in rural Malaysia, seeking to describe and understand the ways in which the poorest and least powerful peasants resisted domination by and utter subservience to the more affluent peasant class and wealthy land-owners. Scott was troubled both by the romanticized, essentialist narrative of the peasant as imminent heroic revolutionary, characteristic of much 1960's-era accounts on the activist left, and particularly by that "progressive" social theory of that time which posited peasant "false consciousness" bred of presumed hegemonic power and insuperable ideology, that in its path, crushed critical analysis and self-interest, normalizing vast inequity and breeding continuous docility and tranquil acceptance of the status quo. With an ethnographic eye, Scott discovered something else, something hidden from the awareness of the wealthy and powerful in Malaysia, and from the political theorist and the social scientist in the West: continuous, low intensity "class-warfare," every-day resistance by the poor waged with he termed the "weapons of the weak": "foot dragging, dissimulation, false compliance, pilfering, feigned ignorance, slander, arson, sabotage, and so forth" (p.29). The world was suddenly a far more complicated and conflictual place.

Scott (1990) reveals a multi-layered social environment where the political is personal; a world of continuous symbolic and material conflict fought along the fault lines of domination and resistance at the very margins of official awareness. It is a conflict both constituted by and recorded through competing narratives: a "public transcript" relating and explaining the world from the partisan perspective of the dominant and "hidden transcripts", alternate accounts, interpretations, hopes and understandings generated and expressed through the lives of the oppressed.

Scott (1990) asserts that the very operation of power relations constructs, as discursive "artefact", both the justificatory public transcript and its antithesis, the hidden transcript of dissent (p.27). The boundaries, the "frontier" between the public and hidden transcripts represents a dynamic zone of contestation over the control of meaning and practice. Here discourse meld and subordinate groups engage in what Scott calls "infrapolitics:" "the circumspect struggle waged daily…like infrared rays, beyond the visible end of the spectrum." (Scott, 1990, p. 183) Much of this struggle is fought in disguised, symbolic form, often cloaked in apparent deference to the authority and legitimacy of the powerful, a resistance hidden "…in ritualisms of subordination that serve both to disguise their purposes and to provide them with a ready route of retreat that may soften the consequences of a possible failure." (p. 96)

Hidden transcripts represent a coded language of revolt, voiced through symbolic practice, which must bear the intrinsic burden of being both sufficiently explicit to provide succour and solidarity to the weak, while remaining necessarily unintelligible by the powerful; of being both substitute for direct assertion and simultaneously, a form of actual resistance. Scott's catalogue of forms of disguised defiance - the reach of what he is willing to recognize as symbolic political struggle – therefore comes to an attenuated end at the site of infra-political conflicts fought at blurred margins of public awareness.

But, does it make sense to look for hidden transcripts, to interpret as *political*, acts and discourse that are not consciously constructed or experienced as revolt by anyone? Since 1990 I have been engaged – albeit intermittently – in a project to do just that: to identify, describe and understand the ways in which macro-political dimensions of power are articulated and symbolically manifest in discourse, culture and behaviour that is typically labelled by political or professional elites as deviant, dysfunctional or pathological. Can what transpired on that field in Mamolodi in 1996 be understood as a political act?

Sports riots are of course not unique to South Africa, having become something of a globalized phenomenon. In April 2003 for example, despite proactive initiatives to promote calm, remarkably similar riots - characterized by wide-spread destruction of property (including the burning of cars), violent confrontations with police and the arrest of dozens of young people - simultaneously erupted hundreds of miles apart near the campuses of both the winning and losing universities competing for the U.S. college ice hockey championship. The next morning, as smoking hulks of cars were being towed away and panes of plate glass restored, university officials, police representatives, academic "experts" and the young people themselves were hard pressed to offer a cogent explanation of what had transpired, and while the morning-after discourse turned exceedingly serious and sanctimonious, several more candid students were said to be voicing excitement at the prospect of next year's riot.[1] (Gilyard, 2003; NHPR, 2003)

The 1996 Africa Cup of Nations soccer tournament occurred at an unprecedented time in South African history - a particular moment abundantly saturated with hopes and expectations, anxieties and uncertainties - and the spectacle of the team's improbable victory came as an easily and richly layered construction adorned with obvious political, social and psychological symbolism ready for instantaneous construction and public consumption. This was still the heady era fashioned through the discourse of the "rainbow nation" - reborn through a supposedly peaceful "miracle" - rejoining and ready to give moral leadership to an adoring global community. For much of black South Africa, after centuries of struggle and domination, this was the long-awaited moment of hope and promise; and for many whites, an unexpected period of relief and even cautious optimism, as they weighed what had been gained and lost in the unexpected transition to non-racial democracy. This was the time when all seemed possible, before it became apparent that HIV infection, violent assault, joblessness and poverty would not easily give way before the optimistic wave of democratic participation, free-market economics and forgiving, non-racialism.

Hosting the African Cup of Nations tournament represented a symbolic return to Africa for a nation long-ostracized by its continental neighbours, much as successfully hosting and winning the Rugby World Cup the year earlier had a signalled re-joining the Commonwealth and the broader community of (particularly Western) sporting nations form which it has so long been excluded. But soccer meant more. Like all institutions in South Africa, sport was racially separated. But even more, each major population group seemed to take communal ownership of one of the three major sports: cricket was clearly the sport of the white "Brits"; Rugby assumed huge popularity and cultural meaning amongst the Afrikaner; and "football", soccer, became the sporting passion of millions of black South Africans who played the game as children on ill-kempt make-shift pitches and wildly rooted by the tens of thousands, blowing vuvuzelas, at key matches between their (mostly black) teams, like the Mamelodi Sundowns, Kaizer Chiefs ("Amakhosi", complete with a symbol of an American Indian in full headdress) and Soweto's favourites, the Orlando

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1   Explanations of sports riots ranged from the social (creation of an ongoing expectation and "culture" of riots, or lack of sufficient university and police resolve); to the evolutionary/biological (atavistic springtime expression by young males), and of course concepts of "mob psychology" that haven't shifted much since the writings of LeBon (1960/1895). (Gilyard, 2003; NHPR, 2003).

Pirates ("Up the Bucs"!).

The 1995 Rugby World Cup victory became a site of iconic national significance in the discursive construction of "new South Africa" not because it was held in the country or that the South African team, the "Springboks" emerged victorious, but rather for what President Nelson Mandela did and wore at the final match. President Mandela arrived at Ellis Park Stadium Johannesburg wearing a Springbok team jersey (team Captain Francois Pienaar's Number 6), a symbol that until that very moment had been widely read within black South Africa as representing Afrikaner racial oppression. And the President not only adopted the symbol, he co-opted and transformed it, embracing the (all white) team, declaring that these are "our boys" deserving of support from the whole South African nation. The seemingly inconceivable image of a jubilant Nelson Mandela in Springbok jersey and cap on the victory podium with Pienaar, instantly constructed and gave substance to the discourse of reconciliation and a common national identity.[2]

As the tournament approached, the South African national soccer team had no such symbol or mascot or even official name, and judging from its recent history, little chance of replicating the success of the Springboks. But the Rugby victory seemed to generate a popular expectation of another, far more improbable sports miracle and the team – known in Soweto and later nation-wide as Bafana Bafana (Our boys. Our boys!) – were wildly popular.[3] This was a racially integrated team with a majority of black players, led by a white coach and Captain: a structural arrangement that accurately reflected the state of national social transformation at that time. A quirky assembly of compelling characters, "our boys", black and white, were adopted and adored by the black masses, and when they somehow managed to win the cup, to deliver yet another South African miracle, the public was euphoric, partying into the night: a joyous, exuberant demonstration that, with the exception of the sacrifice of one car after the semi-final victory, seemed surprisingly peaceful.

A Latent Vocation

> …sacrifice always implies a consecration; in every sacrifice an object passes from the common into the religious domain….(H. Hubert and M. Mauss, 1964, p. 9)

> The importance which is everywhere, without exception, ascribed to sacrifice lies in the fact that it offers satisfaction to the father for the outrage inflicted on him in the same act in which the deed is commemorated. (S. Freud, 1950 <1913>, p. 151)

> A sacrificial situation is reproduced through which an imaginary power (which is not immediately political but has this latent vocation) is established and activated. Each participant hopes to satisfy the need to confront an authority in his/her imagination….(J. Kristeva, 2000, p. 14)

What was being celebrated in the streets of Mamelodi that summer evening? Why did some group of celebrants choose the sacrifice of a car as a means to honour the team? Through addressing the particulars of that odd event, I hope to understand something more of the masked expression of the political and perhaps even a bit about the personal and social dynamics of revolt.

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2   Until 1990, it was actually *illegal* to own or publicly display a photo or depiction of Mandela.

3   Not comfortable with Soweto-derived name "Bafana Bafana", in the weeks preceding the tournament white Johannesburg media, the popular talk Radio 702 and the Johannesburg Star, attempted to organize contests to find a better alternative (although they were careful not to publicly critique the African name of the team). In the end, flooded with painfully awkward if politically correct suggestions, like "Rainbow Warriors", the media backed off and accepted this, the first name in an indigenous African language for a South African national sports team. They careful to noted that they really hadn't opposed Bafana Bafana, they were, they asserted, merely encouraging broader input.

The outbreak of festive, collective violence in that South African township can be seen to present a brief political mini-drama - a performance *identical* to that being played out on the national stage - aimed at cleansing, forgiving, accepting and symbolically reincorporating parts of the nation, segments of the national body-politic, that have committed crimes of oppression upon the whole. To understand that moment, one needs to first consider the complex, contradictory social and political meaning of the black police in an apartheid society in which "racial" group membership was absolutely deterministic of life circumstance and opportunity. This was a system without nuance, a society that attempted to police strict categorical boundaries of black and white admitting of no greys, and when they were inevitably found, assigning them a supposed racial category of their own, "coloured" people.[4] Within this corrupt hierarchical system, within a society that offered black males almost no legal means of employment outside of the mines, the black police, occupied a particularly problematic place. This is a social identity of opposites, simultaneously constructed as member of the oppressed black masses (and the compromises small or large that must invariably be made for survival) and as agent of white domination: a victim, an opportunist, a traitor, a victimizer.

The appearance of three black police at the *very moment* of celebration of the unlikely victory of "Our Boys, Our Boys!" - all of them, now constructed black and white - offered, in fact demanded, the replication the miracle of the sports-field in the immediate political, psycho-social space of the community. The crowd in Mamelodi does not seek to welcome back, to reincorporate the three transgressors through a narrative ritual of confession and forgiveness as famously, if largely ineffectually performed by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC),[5] but rather through another religious process, the communal construction of a sacrificial initiation ceremony that meets the classic definitional criteria established by anthropologists Hubert and Mauss (1964):

> Sacrifice is a religious act which, through the consecration of a victim, modifies the condition of the moral person who accomplishes it or that of certain objects with which he is concerned. (p. 13)

As transgressors, the police are offered a role only they can fulfil, to "honour" our boys, the new South Africa, by offering their car to be consumed by sacrificial fire. The car as object-of-sacrifice is not a simple gift for the greater good. The crowd does not demanded the police donate the car to some worthy NGO helping the community, as material assistance, symbolic contrition or form of extra-legal punishment. That is not what this is about: it is expressly not the use of the car for communal good, or the loss of the car to the police, that matters, but rather its *ceremonial consumption/destruction* that is required.

Sacrifice is the means by which the police are offered the chance to redeem their moral standing and rejoin the community. It is a religious process of reconciliatory atonement
that works specifically by enabling the police to be "rid of…his impurity" (Hubert and Mauss, 1964, p. 53). What impurity do the black police embody? First, on the social/ political level, they have obviously been tainted through collaboration with the "other," the apartheid oppressor. The burning of the car symbolically consumes this stain of collaboration, freeing the police of impurity, and thereby obviating the need to physically destroy them. Cleansed, they are now welcome back into the righteous community of the new South Africa.

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4   In 1986, 1,624 people applied for racial reclassification , of which 1,102 were successful: 387 Africans became coloured and 35 coloured, African; seven Chinese became white, and eight whites, coloured; 43 Malay became Indian; 16 African became Griqua; 413 formerly coloured hit the racial jackpot, becoming white; and so on. (South African Institute of Race Relations, 1987)

5   For a description and critique of the TRC as performance see J. Statman (2000)

But we can look even deeper to the language and symbols of psychodynamics. Julia Kristeva (2000, p. 20), states that purification is required specifically "when the border between two elements or two identities has not held and thus these elements or identities blur": a perfect description of the collaborative social/political status of the black police. *Sacrifice* – as distinct from truth-telling, or restitution or punishment - is therefore not called for because the police have harmed the community, but rather as consequence of their transgression of boundaries:[6]

> ..the modern individual concludes that *the impure is that which does not respect boundaries*, that which mixes structures and identities. Now identity must be kept autonomous and structurally pure in order to insure the survival not only of the living but also of the *socius*. (p.21)

Kristeva understands this blurring of boundaries as feminine, maternal: the "realm of narcissism and the instability of borders between mother and child, in the pre-oedipal mode of the psyche." (p.21) The ceremony of sacrifice is also famously portrayed by Freud (1913) as male: as celebration and repetition of the murder and consumption by the band of brothers – the boys - of the violent paternal authority: "this memorable and criminal deed which was the beginning of so many things – of social organization, of moral restrictions and of religion". (p.142) The boys of course take on some of the strengths and characteristics of their despotic father, living out a social bond energized through guilt (at the joy of the murder), obedience and repressed homosexuality, worshiping the dead father – now far stronger than when alive – and forever destined to repent and again revolt. (Kristeva, 2000, pp. 12-15)

The sacrifice of the car thus not only restores the soiled members to the brotherhood, re-establishing social boundaries, but further offers the collective opportunity to experience *symbolically* the joy and solidarity of rebellion and the murder and overthrow of the despotic tyrant…apartheid. After all, the great South African "miracle", was one of *negotiation and compromise*, not of cathartic Fanonian collective rising and violent deposition. For Mamelodi, sacrificing the car may be as good as it gets.

Burning for Bafana

As we know, the police did not offer up their car and in their panic and the crowd's anger, instantly transformed a moment rife with the symbolic possibility of redemption and inclusion into an instance of mere riot, with perhaps no more or less political content than the hockey riots. The car was not sacrificed, it was simply burned.

We do not know how the police understood that moment: they may have been terrified; they may have experienced the request as a hijacking or a symbolic assault on authority; they may simply have been fond of the car; who knows? But we can perhaps imagine what might have transpired if the police *had* willingly relinquished their vehicle to the sacrificial fire, if they were cleansed of their collaborationist impurity and restored to the moral community of the new South Africa, becoming another one of "Our Boys." Then what? After the beer and boisterous back-slapping, the dancing and song, the mood might shift to melancholy and an almost imperceptible sense of loss invades the space.

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6 William Burroughs (1987) who knows quite a bit about transgression, understood this point exactly, creating as hero, "Natural Outlaws" whose very aim is to destroy biological boundaries and smash the "so-called" laws of nature: "The biologic Police bluntly warn: 'To break down the lines Mother Nature, in her ripe wisdom, has established between species is to invite biologic and social chaos'. Joe says: 'What do you think I'm doing here? Let it come down.'"(p.32)

Although no one understood it at the time, the uplifting triumph of Bafana Bafana constituted the final chapter, the high water mark of the South African age of miracles, and by the end of the decade, leaden macroeconomic and social realities and the growing abandonment of a revolutionary agenda in all but rhetoric, made clear that the pot of gold at the end of Bishop Tutu's beloved rainbow was probably going to be horded and enjoyed by the white captains of industry and their fraternal twins, the new (and newly corrupt) black political and economic elite. The absolutely explicable failure of the South African liberation struggle to truly transform and liberate has pushed the narrative of rebellion into the realm of sentimentality, draining and diverting much of its energy onto the sports and human interest pages, a hidden transcript ever more obscure, even to those created in its discourse.

Kristeva (2000, p.24) asks whether actual revolt is now even possible within the over-saturated context of power that is both omnipresent and vacant, of law that is easily circumvented, of value that is trumpeted and hollow, of spectacle and scandal:

> …if prohibition is obsolete, if values are losing steam, if power is elusive, if the spectacle unfolds relentlessly, if pornography is accepted and diffused everywhere, who can rebel? Against whom, against what? In other words…it is the law/transgression dialectic that is made problematic and runs the risk of crystallizing in spaces of repression….(p. 28)

If as she argues, growing, dynamic societies-of-life must be infused by a culture of revolt, how can this happen within a branded, consumerist world, in an age where liberatory ideologies are all but forgotten, where nationalism, conservatism and fundamentalism are on the rise, where:

> …on the social level the normalizing order is far from perfect and fails to support the excluded: jobless youth, the poor in the projects, the homeless, the unemployed, and foreigners, among many others. When the excluded have no culture of revolt and must contend themselves with regressive ideologies, with shows and entertainment that far from satisfy the demand of pleasure, they become *rioters*. (p.7, emphasis added)

Kristeva takes - really as an article of faith - that the hidden transcripts of revolt remain, formed from the very structure and meaning of human language and thought: "revolt has taken place, it has not been erased, it can be read and it offers itself to a rootless humanity now governed by the relativism of images as well as monetary and humanitarian indifference". (p 19)

And maybe those young people – the ones hurling bottles, trashing windows and burning cars after the final buzzer and the ones celebrating and burning for Bafana - are in fact reading that very faint, archaic political transcript, they can't quite acknowledge nor understand.

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BUILDING OVER PLANNING: RADICAL COUNTER-HEGEMONY AND THE DINOSAURS OF THE OLD LEFT

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Recent economic crises have catalyzed a surge of Leftist, progressive and radical discourse, particularly in the US and Europe. Among this diverse body of work, The Nation's 'Reimagining Socialism' forum and ZCommunications' ongoing 'Reimagining Society Project' are among the most widely read and prestigiously authored. Unfortunately, an unacceptable bulk of this literature repeats tired socialist maxims, arguments circumscribed by a narrow vision of how productive social change manifests. The danger is that alternative, particularly radical visions, may suffer because of the dominance of this staid discourse, forestalling opportunities for cooperation, consensus and progress. In response, this article presents a more processual approach to understanding both the modern social landscape and the complex mechanics of social change, drawing from the work of Antonio Gramsci. The Gramscian perspective suggests that those seeking radical social change cannot rely on elaborate stratagems as they risk falling into the trap of static models and totalized subjects. Instead, it is the manner in which activists articulate their vision that gives them power; careful articulation permits the flexibility needed to navigate shifting social realities. Further, careful articulation allows for seemingly disparate and common practices to be woven into a more cohesive vision of social change.

Introduction

Beginning in the March 23rd 2009 issue, *The Nation* magazine, self-described as "the flagship of the Left" and easily one of the most widely read political and cultural opinion publications in the US, invited numerous authors to participate in a forum titled "Reimagining Socialism" (Amazon.com 2009). In the opening essay, Barbara Ehrenreich and Bill Fletcher Jr. assert that they, as socialists, were not adequately prepared for the financial tumult that has swept the globe. While global capitalism trudges through this crisis, they lament, "we" don't have a plan:

> At least we don't have some blueprint on how to organize society ready to whip out of our pockets. Lest this sound negligent on our part, we should explain that socialism was an idea about how to rearrange ownership and distribution and, to an extent, governance. It assumed that there was a lot worth owning and distributing; it did not imagine having to come up with an entirely new and environmentally sustainable way of life.(Ehrenreich and Fletcher 2009)

This oddly defensive tone is persistent throughout this piece (and many of the forum's other articles), giving it a familiar 'wail and moan' undertone. Consequently, the article ends up reading something like this: *This isn't the way it was supposed to be, there was supposed to be a socialist revolution; it*

was supposed to be easy. Capitalism has entered a crisis stage and 'we' don't have a plan; 'we' need a plan. Moving forward 'we' must focus on organized solidarity as the emotional core for some larger plan that will come into being at a later date. It ends,

> And we have to be serious, because the capitalist elites who have run things so far have forfeited all trust or even respect, and we–progressives of all stripes–are now the only grown-ups around. (Ehrenreich and Fletcher 2009)

Ehrenreich and Fletcher's piece stands among many books, articles and papers that form a body of work I will refer to as 'crisis literature,' scholarship that has emerged in response to swelling economic crises. Though *The Nation's* forum and ZCommunication's ongoing 'Reimagining Society Project' have been among the most widely read and prestigiously authored, crisis literature is by no means confined to these examples. In a surprising number of cases, however, crisis literature has mirrored the work found in these two examples in an important way: it is dominated by the vanguard of the Old Left in what is apparently a significant resurgence of socialist discourse.

Unfortunately, much of this contemporary socialist discourse runs over familiar ground, repeating maxims of the 1960s and 70s, apparently insensitive to the drastically different landscape of resistance of today, in terms of both the diversity of today's radical progressive social formations and the challenges they face. This tension is palpable when looking over the articles in ZCommunication's ongoing 'Reimagining Society Project;' the project's website prominently features a quote from Ehrenreich and Fletcher's essay, while more than a few contributions build off of a rejection of its tired, socialist-centric discourse.

Indeed, also contributing to *The Nation* forum, Rebecca Solnit replies to these authors' arguments, highlighting an apparent willful prejudice in their understanding of how resistance manifests. She argues that their rather narrow, specifically socialist call-to-arms suggests an underlying 'I haven't seen it, it hasn't happened' theoretical stance. Solnit argues that there are indeed points of resistance, referencing not only uprisings and challenges to capitalism's dominance outside of the US, but changes happening within the US as well:

> "Do we have a plan, people?" Ehrenreich and Fletcher ask. We have thousands of them, being carried out quite spectacularly over the past few decades, from gardens and childcare co-ops and bicycle lanes and farmers' markets and countless ways of doing things differently and better. The underlying vision is neither state socialist nor corporate capitalist, but something humane, local and accountable–anarchist, basically, as in direct democracy. The revolution exists in little bits everywhere, but not much has been done to connect its dots. We need to say that there are alternatives being realized all around us and theorize the underlying ideals and possibilities. But we need to start from the confidence that the revolution has been with us for a while and is succeeding in bits and pieces. (Solnit 2009)

Solnit's reply highlights a recurring problem found in crisis literature, particularly within the socialist resurgence, a problem with what I'll call 'ways of looking.' Here, Ehrenreich and Fletcher's 'us vs. them' tone of inevitability and simultaneous plea for invigoration suggests a highly collapsed and essentialized view of both the modern social landscape and the complex mechanics of social change. For example, disregard or ignorance of those activities Solnit pointed to suggests that because they aren't specifically 'socialist,' they do not constitute a viable 'plan,' a position that foreshortens the scope of change to 'socialist' margins while also suggesting that within those boundaries, grandiose blueprints are in order.

Unfortunately, it may be that these reductive tendencies, problems with 'ways of looking,' are somewhat endemic to elements of socialist thought. Indeed, these problems can be found in post-World War II Marxist/Socialist literature and, it seems, socialist resurgence literature continues this tradition. It suffers from the same problems of model rigidity and narrowness of vision that led earlier authors to fatalistically throw up their hands in the face of expanding capitalist social relations. This cannot continue; historically pivotal moments such as the one we find ourselves in now are too important to be given over to stale debate and delimited perspectives.

That said, I want to make clear that it is not my intention here to promote unproductive disputes over the views of individual theorists; insular divisiveness and unhelpful bickering has hindered resistance discussions for far too long. Instead, my aim is to challenge some of the reductive tendencies that plague resistance discussions on a broad scale. Though I may criticize individual approaches, my goal is constructive response and fruitful dialogue. Similarly, while some of the work discussed below stretches back to the early 20th century, I am chiefly interested in its impact on current debates. There should be no doubt that my aim is to aide *contemporary* discourse.

I begin this discussion by teasing apart the fatalist trend mentioned above, linking it with two general theoretical themes: 1) the rise of the one-dimensional modern man and, 2) that the complexity of modern society has effectively neutralized the potential for social change. I then move on to demonstrate that such conclusions are frequently rooted in problems with 'ways of looking,' that is, an overly simplified and collapsed view of the social landscape, individual actors, and the myriad mechanisms and social processes that influence any project for social change.

Of course, such simplification is not due to ignorance, necessarily, but comes instead from theorists' focus on coherence and unity in the pursuit of large-scale models, subjugating a clear understanding of forces of antagonism and dissonance. In an effort to move away from the limiting simplicity of static blueprints and plans, I present instead a framework for theorizing reality and process. Drawing on the work of Antonio Gramsci, I present a method of approaching the complex internal dynamics of social actors, morphing social landscapes and processes of social change that remains flexible and responsive to the needs of the moment. Finally, this Gramscian perspective suggests that those seeking truly radical and progressive social change cannot rely on elaborate stratagems as they risk falling into the trap of static models and totalized subjects. Instead, it is the manner in which those forces *articulate* their project that gives them potency; careful articulation permits the flexibility needed to navigate shifting social realities. Further, careful articulation allows for 'the dots to be connected,' as Solnit solicits, weaving seemingly disparate and common practices into a more cohesive fabric of social change.

History of Hopelessness

As noted above, the problems of identity essentialization and collapsed social analyses found in socialist resurgence literature are only the recent manifestations of a much longer trend. If begin in the mid-20th century, towards the end of the second World War, the pronounced fatalism of many marxist/socialist writers of the time can be attributed to these same problems with 'way of looking.'

Written under the gloom of advancing fascism, Horkheimer and Adorno's 1944 *Dialectic of Enlightenment* is understandably pessimistic about the potential for throwing off the mantle of capitalist social relations. The authors argue that we have witnessed a neutralization of capitalism's tension between relations of production and the material productive forces of society, aided in large part by expansion of centralized planning and quasi-socialized ownership of the means of

production. As a result, "...gone are the objective laws of the market which ruled in the actions of the entrepreneurs and tended towards catastrophe" (Horkheimer and Adorno 1944: 38).

However, they lament, the dissolution of capitalist contradictions did not initiate social upheaval. Instead of ushering in a proletarian Revolution, the world suffered under totalitarianism and fascism. Instead of weakening capitalism, the authors point to a growing system of domination that has supported an ever-expanding capitalist economy and a *strengthening* of capitalist social relations. The revolutionary potential of capitalism's contradictions are neutralized through these elaborate webs of domination, weaving through and utilizing both social and cultural practices and institutions.

The view of modern Western culture as a harbinger of permanent domination is a theme continued in Adorno's *Minima Moralia*, though with a decidedly darker tone. He declares in the opening paragraph,

> What the philosophers once knew as life has become the sphere of private existence and now of mere consumption, dragged along as an appendage of the process of material production, without autonomy or substance of its own. (Adorno 1951: 15)

The collection of short essays and aphorisms opines the essential inhumanity of modern society, taking up topics that range from the culture industry and the authority of positivist science to the false equality of 'equal-pay' feminism and the effect of profit economics on human tenderness. These social problems and malignancies are, he argues, systematic, part and parcel of the elaborate socio-cultural web of domination within late capitalism.

This critique of cultural bankruptcy has influenced numerous perspectives on the possibilities for resistance and progressive social change. Anxiousness over eroding spaces and opportunities for rational-critical debate within the public sphere, deepening commodification and the elaboration of modern frameworks of domination (e.g. Habermas) have fueled, for example, the regressive, unhelpful, and unfortunately familiar New Left politics of authenticity. Rather than producing discourse that seeks to find those points of powerful (if transitory or isolated) resistance, acknowledging the problems and setbacks that exist while still teasing out the positives, it is much more common to encounter elaborate discussions of flaws and pitfalls, barriers and shortcomings.

These arguments are imbued with two interrelated themes: 1) that modern social actors are increasingly one-dimensional culture-consumers who are forever losing the tools for Revolution as they sink into a uniform mass and, 2) a pervasive sense that the potential for change is slim within, to borrow a phrase from Adorno, the 'incomprehensible framework' of modern life (Adorno 1951: 37).

Not surprisingly, these twin fatalist themes can also be found in a great deal of crisis literature, though they are particularly popular within the *Nation* forum, a testament to their persistence. Ehrenreich and Fletcher flirt with the tone of Adorno's 'incomprehensible framework' in their elaborate picture of capitalist destruction, declaring that "[i]n recent years, capitalism has become increasingly and almost mystically abstract" (Ehrenreich and Fletcher 2009). Immanuel Wallerstein offers the US Left both short-term and medium-term plans. The first amounts to a program of concession, recognizing that Obama neither wishes to nor is able to offer social transformation, and instead 'we' should press him to "minimize the pain and suffering of most people right now" (Wallerstein 2009). The medium-term goals remain vague and amount to little more than a call to dismantle capitalism:

> What must the left do? Promote intellectual clarity about the fundamental choice. Then organize at a thousand levels and in a thousand ways to push things in the right direction. The primary thing to do is to encourage the decommodification of as much as we can decommodify. The second is to experiment with all kinds of new structures that make better sense in terms of global justice and ecological sanity. And the third thing we must do is to encourage sober optimism. Victory is far from certain. But it is possible. (Wallerstein 2009)

I do not mean to criticize Wallerstein's optimism, but the indefinite enormity of the second part of the plan seems to doom the Left to the interim goals of, essentially, 'taking what you can get' within the 'incomprehensible framework.'

Indeed, a number of the contributions to the forum exude a reformist quality, suggesting an underlying belief that the potential for change is slim. For example, Tariq Ali celebrates the Obama stimulus package as a "first major step in the right direction" (Ali 2009). Saskia Sassen admits her "growth sites" investment plan is "not a revolution," adding, "[t]his would occur within capitalism, but it begins to lay the ground for a widespread and distributed economic network" (Sassen 2009). In particularly nasty dig, Doug Henwood criticizes the relatively concrete examples offered by Solnit for being unrealistic:

> I also want to dissent from another prescription: Rebecca Solnit's contention that the revolution is already happening, via 'gardens and childcare co-ops and bicycle lanes and farmers' markets and countless ways of doing things differently and better.' While many of these things are very nice, they're well short of a transformative vision. The package draws heavily on an ancient American fantasy of self-reliance and back-to-the land escapism. It's no model for running a complex industrial society. Such a system couldn't make computers or locomotives, and it probably couldn't feed 6 billion earthlings either. Maybe Solnit wants to give all that up. If so, she should tell us. (Henwood 2009)

Henwood concludes his piece, "While the current economic crisis probably won't be the magic intervention that will deliver us to a post-capitalist future, there are opportunities to advance the socialist cause" (Henwood 2009).

Overstatement and Repressed Antagonism

Again, the fatalist - and subsequently reformist - tendency discussed above leans heavily on two assumptions: the one-dimensional man and the increasing impossibility of progressive social change (i.e. 'it' is over). However, as will be discussed below, these are both *limited* and *limiting* foundations for envisioning alternative ways of life. They are limited in their ability to explain many modern social formations or any view of social actors or social action that strays from its narrow analytical lens. Thus, they are limiting in their general air of fatalism and resignation, encouraging readers to explore and lament the ornate expanses of their tomb rather than searching for cracks in its foundation.

It's Over

I want to first address the notion that the potential for progressive social change is slim within the 'incomprehensible framework' of modern life. It is worth noting that this theme is frequently manifest alongside a eulogy for a specifically socialist revolution (recall Henwood's conclusion

above). However, the notion that socialist revolution is no longer possible has at its core an obvious historical apriorism regarding the specific nature of social revolution. Here, strict adherence to socialist ideology may be one reason authors come to such dire conclusions; though socialist strategy may no longer be a viable agent of change, that does not mean change is no longer possible.

Further, at a more fundamental level, the basic notion of a socialist 'revolution' has at its core a highly collapsed view of processes of change. As Laclau and Mouffe observed, this classic socialist version of 'Revolution,'

> ...implied the *foundational* character of the revolutionary act, the institution of a point of concentration of power from which society could be 'rationally' reorganized... The classic conception of socialism supposed that the disappearance of private ownership of the means of production would set up a chain of effects which, over a whole historical epoch, would lead to the extinction of all forms of subordination. (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 178)

Not only does this approach presuppose the Revolution (capital 'r') will somehow address all wrongs in an inherently progressive way, it is also predicated upon a determinate, essentialized view of society. This Revolution envisions a single pivot for the *quick* reorganization of the whole of society, predicated on the belief that societies behave as cohesive, sutured wholes, vulnerable to the targeted rupture of Revolution and receptive to redesign across the board.

The fatalists' view that the potential for change has shrunk arises because of their adherence to a predetermined, narrow notion of what that change must look like, who will orchestrate it and what the result will be. Again, just because socialist visions and strategies may be losing traction or relevance does not mean that change is impossible. Finally, at the most fundamental level, these preconceived blueprints are built on a highly collapsed view of how social change actually happens, of the numerous social and psychological processes and practices involved and their potential impact on any project of social change, progressive or otherwise.

One-dimensional Modern Life

This brings me to the second common theme suggested above: modern societies' creation of a one-dimensional man. Consider for example Adorno's view that "everyone, however powerful, is an object," Habermas' debased public sphere and "great mass of consumers," or Horkheimer and Adorno's claim that "[t]he standard of life enjoyed corresponds very closely to the degree to which classes and individuals are essentially bound up with the system...everyone can be happy, if only he will capitulate fully and sacrifice his claim to happiness" (Adorno 1951: 37; Habermas 1962: 175; Horkheimer and Adorno 1944: 150-3). In *The Nation* forum, numerous authors lament the magnitude of contemporary social problems and individuals' apparent inability to act, chalked up to the "hyper-individualism" of a disengaged, aggregated "public" (McKibben 2009; Henwood 2009). The expansion of capitalist relations into many aspects of individual and collective life leads fatalists to a vision of modern life as little more than robotic consumption and production where individuals are part of a great mass of undifferentiated consumers who have transformed from "a public critically reflecting on its culture to one that merely consumes it" (Habermas 1962: 175).

However, as with the image of Revolution, this interpretation of individual identity in modern capitalist societies is rife with overdetermination. The notion of the one-dimensional man - aggregated in the 'great mass' - rests on an essentialized view of individual and class consciousness. In this view, 'social class' is the primary subject, each delineated by a unity constituted around

interests determined by relations of production. The problem lies is not so much in the centrality of production relations in the formula, but the assertion of unity and complete acquisition of social identity by the individual; it is implied that there is no internal antagonism within and among the 'great masses.'

But homogenizations of identity and consciousness are not confined to *pessimistic* readings modern lives, it is more endemic than that. Take for example Habermas' development of the public sphere as a locus for rational debate. It presupposes that the political identities of participants are malleable, as consensus is achieved through the reconstitution of these identities through debate. However, Habermas' final rational consensus, an inclusive 'we,' simultaneously implies an end to the very antagonism that creates diverse political identities, the life-blood of deliberative democracy. An inclusive 'we' can only exist in a totalizing, authoritarian sense; the tolerance of antagonism is the justification for a deliberative democratic system (see Laclau and Mouffe 1985). Similarly, the repeated invocation of 'solidarity' as a prime catalyst for change in the *Nation* forum neglects the inherent complications of the term and the murky, possibly repressive reality of its realization.

Repressing Antagonism

Indeed, if we step back and look at both of these fatalist themes, it seems there is a common tendency to downplay or remove elements of conflict, difference and division. This simplification may only be a discussion tool, or, it may be stem from issues deeper within the socialist theoretical foundation; namely, a desire for unity and harmony in society that ultimately colors analyses of reality.

This is an issue that has seen debate on numerous fronts, notably in discussions over dialectical materialism's potentially deterministic reading of consciousness formation. Briefly, if dialectical materialism suggests that consciousness is determined by the nature of an individual's or class's social existence, as reemphasized by Lukacs, then it follows that analyses of consciousness are forever subordinate to analyses of social relations, here, relations of production. Thus, the broad and simplified strata of economic analyses (workers, bourgeoise) are applied to consciousness analyses, rolling over subtle variations and points of conflict within these ideal-typical categories. When Lukacs argues that the consciousness of the proletariat will be the "last class consciousness in the history of mankind," it is because the proletarian Revolution has been predestined to eliminate classist social relations simply by virtue of its economic aims, bringing this argument to the point of a self-referential feedback loop (Lukacs 1968: 70). Again, it is difficult to accept the social unity implied here. Indeed, it only appears plausible if consciousness is understood as *entirely* and *constantly* determined by specific social processes, here, relations of production and consumption.

A clear problem with this line of thinking is that the focus on coherence and integration may come at the expense of a recognition of dissonance and antagonism. Again, I make this point not to engage in a squabble over theory, but because it has serious implications for the goal of progressive social change, a goal I share with the authors discussed here. Collapsing identity in this way not only overshadows antagonisms that may give depth to the one-dimensional individual and make visible spaces for resistance, but it threatens to mask antagonisms within forces for change as well. For example, there is no necessary connection between, say, anti-capitalism and anti-racism or anti-sexism. To ignore these points of dissonance because of a focus on social relations of production and consumption is to subordinate the importance of social relations of race and gender.

What should be pursued is a framework that allows for flexibility in identity and consciousness, one that allows antagonism and dissonance to remain visible without losing sight of the points of

unity and coherence.

An Alternative Framework

The key first step in building this framework is to accept that no social identity can be applied in a totalized way; there always remain elements of dissonance and spaces for antagonism within a given subject. As suggested above, totalizing identity requires complete confidence in the labels applied, introducing an historical apriorism that leaves models vulnerable to the shifting reality of social relations.

Indeed, insensitivity to morphing social relations is one reason the fatalist, one-dimensional man came into being. There should be no doubt that capitalist social relations have reached deep into individual and collective life, but this does not necessarily negate the possibility that antagonisms remain. Indeed, the way forward does not necessarily involve rejecting these fatalist visions entirely, but rather in developing ways to incorporate their merits. Though the landscape may look throughly commodified and subordinated to the logic of capitalist social relations, we are obliged to look deeper. Indeed, we must accept the notion of commodification as an integral part of modern social relations, incorporating this recognition into our analyses in order to skirt its effect on our conclusions. We must prepare to look deeper, recognizing and examining its nuances, strengths and weaknesses without being blinded by its extent. To do this, we must develop the right tools. If there are indeed spaces for dissonance and antagonism, they lie beneath the surface of the one-dimensional man and between the cracks of mass culture.

The process of theorizing cracks and dimensions is greatly aided by incorporating a Gramscian perspective in the analysis.

A Gramscian Perspective

I want to emphasize the use of the word perspective here. A clear problem with drawing from Gramsci's thought is the contentious history of his usage. For example, David Harris writes that within the field of culture studies, Gramsci's use has been uneven and, unfortunately, often as a weapon in academic rivalries rather than in constructive debate. He is bothered by,

> the astonishing tendency for the figure of Gramsci to keep coming to the fore, as a leading theorist and guide, as a source of specific pieces or concepts which guide analysis or less specifically as a kind of model of good practice, able always to 'teach a lesson', keep the faith, and see off the rivals. For me, this tendency is linked to the academic context of the production of these works: briefly, it is conventional in academic writing to conduct a debate with rivals before allowing the chosen theorist to emerge as the person most likely to synthesise the offerings, make sense of the debates, or offer some suitably pleasurable resolution and closure. (Harris 1992: 7)

Harris' account suggests that the reputation of Gramsci's thought may suffer from irresponsible use. Unfortunately, while Harris' intention may have been to question the use of Gramsci at certain times, his tone only seems to fan the flames, further subordinating Gramsci's original work to modern academic theatrics.

Despite this hurdle, Gramsci remains helpful in attempting to create a framework capable of incorporating antagonism, commodification and shifting social realties. As Adam David Morton

argues, "rather than simplistically believing Gramsci has the answers or holds the key to different historical and contemporary problems," stress should be placed on "the importance of thinking in a Gramscian way" (Morton 2007: 35). Scholars should aim to internalize his method so as to approach their subject with the aide of Gramsci's thought without leaning dangerously the figure of Gramsci himself. His work should be reexamined in order to develop "a point of departure to deal with similar problematics in our own time" (Morton 2007: 36).

With this advice in mind, I want to move on to those elements of Gramsci's thought most helpful to this discussion of collapsed identities, prescriptive analyses and processes of social change. Of particular interest here are Gramsci's development of the concept hegemony and his elaboration of the importance of articulatory practices.

Domination through Hegemony

The best way to incorporate a Gramscian perspective in our discussion is to first make clear the loose framework for understanding modern power relations that undergirds Gramsci's work. This can be easily seen in Gramsci's two-part theory of the state:

> For it should be noted that certain elements that fall under the general notion of the state must be restored to the notion of civil society (in the sense, one might say, that state = political society + civil society, that is, hegemony protected by the armor of coercion). (Gramsci 2007: 75)

Here, Gramsci establishes 'the state' broadly, as an array of social relations that represents the domination of a particular social group over others and not in the more common and narrow definition of the state as simply government. Within the framework of this broad 'state,' Gramsci theorized that dominant groups maintain their position through a mix of sheer force (coercion through political society) and, more importantly, with the active participation of the subordinate groups (consent through hegemony in civil society).

The use of coercion in the process of domination is the domain of what he calls 'political society,' meaning "the armed forces, police, law courts and prisons, together with all the administrative departments concerning taxation finance, trade, industry, social security, etc." (Simon 1990: 71). In Gramsci's view, however, these are only a portion of the state's domination framework. Indeed, the role of political society, the "apparatus of state coercive power," is to enforce "discipline on those groups who do not 'consent'" (Gramsci 2003: 12). The state, or dominant group, only turns to coercive tactics if efforts to manufacture consent fail.

Consent to domination, the second portion of Gramsci's formula of power, is developed within civil society. It is an internalized form of domination that differs from the external, "direct domination" achieved through the coercive force of political society (Gramsci 2003: 12). Civil society is the sphere within which the state pursues (and maintains) hegemony, a social order where "a common social-moral language is spoken, in which one concept of reality is dominant, informing with its spirit all modes of thought and behaviour" (Femia 1981: 24).

Hegemony, however, is not simply achieved through the alignment of the free choices of subordinate groups. Consent is actively manufactured within civil society; hegemony is pursued through "extremely complex mediums, diverse institutions, and constantly changing processes" (Buttigieg 1995: 7). "Through their presence and participation in various institutions, cultural activities and many other forms of social interaction, the dominant classes 'lead' the society in

certain directions" (Buttigieg 2005: 44). Hegemony operates through the social institutions of civil society: the church, the educational system, the press, all the bodies which help create in people certain modes of behavior and expectations consistent with the hegemonic social order.

One of the key strengths of Gramsci's 'state = political society + civil society' formula is its versatility. In contrast to defining boundaries or components based on specific, tangible characteristics, he presents these elements as a theoretical spaces, planes where the myriad processes of domination and resistance take place. The model attempts to account for the fact that mechanisms of domination can and will vary between different societies and different times. Consequently, in applying it to this discussion, we are able to incorporate issues of commodification into our models rather than being blinded by their apparent totality. Approached in this somewhat generalized way, hegemony becomes a useful tool for beginning to look for the cracks in the 'incomprehensible framework' and finding the hidden edges of the one-dimensional man. If there are indeed spaces for antagonism, difference and contestation, the hegemony model can help us explore them.

Culture and Counter-hegemony

The gramscian plane of contested hegemony is a useful model not only for large social systems, but for small groups and even an individual's internal struggles as well. This brings us to the role of culture in the production of (and resistance to) domination. The term 'culture' is used here to indicate the systems of values and norms that underpin individual practices, the behavior of the elements of civil society and, in the case of a hegemonic culture, the behavior of political society as well. Culture is the wellspring from which the rationale and validation for innumerable institutions and practices flows. Like ripples in water, the existence, structure and behavior of the myriad facets of political and civil society can be traced back to culture. We might also use the word 'ideology' in the sense that culture provides social phenomena with a set of rules, codes, and conventions imbued with meanings particular to specific social groups. Gramsci understood cultures as *groupings* of "all the social elements which share the same mode of thinking and acting" (Gramsci 2003: 324). Thus, different cultures may view the same phenomena in disparate ways as their particular ideological systems (Gramsci refers to this as a culture's 'common sense') colors their experiences in different ways.

Thus, the term is not meant to indicate any *particular* group of values and norms. While it is possible to speak of a dominant culture, it is by no means the only culture. Further, cultures are 'precipitates,' ways of being and living that are formed by the "interaction of a multitude of historical processes at particular moments of time" (Crehan 2002: 72). Thus, cultures (and their 'common sense') are somewhat transitory and, in this sense, are themselves arenas where "dominant, subordinate and oppositional cultural values meet and intermingle...vying with one another to secure the spaces within which they can [frame and organize] popular experience and consciousness" (Bennett 1986: xix). It is important to understand this view of culture as we begin to discuss Gramsci's ideas about social change.

Gramsci conceived of two methods for challenging domination: a 'war of maneuver' and a 'war of position,' best understood as points on a continuum rather than mutually exclusive options. A 'war of maneuver' involves physically overwhelming the coercive apparatus of the State, that is, the institutions of political society. However, the success of this strategy depends on the nature of the State's hegemony, that is, its position within civil society. In a comparison of the State in Czarist Russia with that in liberal democracies (referred to as the East and the West respectively), Gramsci notes that the strength of the latter lies in a sturdy civil society [here Gramsci uses the term *State* to mean government, or political society, as opposed to his more broad definition used elsewhere and

throughout this text (i.e. State= political society + civil society)]:

> In the East the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper relation between State and civil society, and when the state tottered, a sturdy structure of civil society was immediately revealed. The State was just a forward trench; behind it stood a succession of sturdy fortresses and emplacements. (Gramsci 2007: 169)

Though Gramsci's specific aim in the above passage was to rule out any idea that what worked for Lenin in 1917 would work in the Western liberal democracies of the time, the core idea remains useful in a contemporary context. In modern liberal democracies, direct confrontation (armed uprising, general strike, etc.) will not threaten the dominant groups so long as their credibility and authority is firmly rooted in civil society. Buttigieg notes, "civil society, in other words, far from being a threat to political society in a liberal democracy, reinforces it—this is the fundamental meaning of hegemony" (Buttigieg 2005: 41).

However, Gramsci does not give up on the notion of radical change in liberal democracies, he was a writer principally focused on a radical transformation of capitalist society. His central concern was "how might a more equitable and just order be brought about, and what is it about how people live and imagine their lives in particular times and places that advances or hampers progress to this more equitable and just order" (Crehan 2002: 71). Consequently, it was his view that "one should refrain from facile rhetoric about direct attacks against the State and concentrate instead on the difficult and immensely complicated tasks that a 'war of position' within civil society entails" (Buttigieg 2005: 41)

Described by Gramsci as "the only viable possibility in the West," a 'war of position' is resistance to domination with culture, rather than physical might, as its foundation (Gramsci 2007: 168). Cox succinctly describes a 'war of position' as process which "slowly builds up the strength of the social foundations of a new state" by "creating alternative institutions and alternative intellectual resources within existing society" (Cox 1983: 165). As discussed above, the dominant system of values and norms simultaneously advances the goals of the hegemonic group and works to reenforce hegemony, discouraging behavior that does not advance their goals or challenges their supremacy and encouraging behavior that sees subordinate groups adopting and internalizing the hegemonic system of values and norms. Thus, for Gramsci, issues of culture are what lie at the heart of any revolutionary project; culture is "how class is lived," it shapes how people see their world and how they maneuver within in it and, more importantly, "it shapes their ability to imagine how it might be changed, and wether they see such changes as feasible or desirable" (Crehan 2002: 71). Consequently, it is through the development and strengthening of alternative cultures that deep and lasting social change is wrought in societies where domination is insured by hegemony within civil society.

Applying a Gramscian Perspective

It is relatively easy to re-approach the 'incomprehensible framework' of capitalist social relations in modern society from a Gramscian perspective and it has been done by numerous authors with myriad variations and subtleties. Generally, though, we might say that the array of power associated with contemporary capitalist society can be described as something akin to a global State in the Gramscian sense whereby, again, " [S]tate = political society + civil society, that is, hegemony protected by the armor of coercion" (Gramsci 2007: 75). These social forces are "dominant in their ability to provide material rewards and impose sanctions" and they are perhaps even more

successful at articulating capitalist values as universal, "…portraying specific definitions of 'free trade' and 'competitiveness' as representing the general interests of all citizens," instead of a few (Evans 2000: 230). Indeed, Gramsci also commented on the hegemonic subterfuge of the 'free-trade' movement in his time:

> Thus it is asserted that economic activity belongs to civil society, and that the state must not intervene to regulate it. But since in actual reality civil society and state are one and the same, it must be made clear that *laissez-faire* too is a form of state 'regulation,' introduced and maintained by legislative and coercive means. It is a deliberate policy, conscious of its own ends, and not the spontaneous, automatic expression of economic facts.(Gramsci 2000: 210)

Thus, the most powerful forces of capitalist expansion, then and now, are the legions of ordinary people who believe in it, who truly feel it is a practical and functional system based on economic fact as opposed to being a political project. Therefore, instead of focusing on the thin head of power through socialist Revolution and the reorganization of government and economic authorities, it is the wide base that must be first addressed. And though this base is subject to hegemonic articulation - internalizing capitalist values and replicating them in social relations - hegemony can never be settled, it is always contested and must constantly reproduce itself. As Gramsci once noted, any radical project of social change must be,

> preceded by an intense labour of criticism, by the diffusion of culture and the spread of ideas amongst masses of men who are at first resistant, and think only of solving their own immediate economic and political problems for themselves...(Gramsci 2000: 58)

Those seeking change must look for those spaces where hegemonic articulation is weakest, drive their wedges there, and articulate an alternative culture upon which a new social landscape can be built. Finally, it must be remembered that domination may ultimately turn to coercion in order to maintain power when hegemony is threatened. It is only the careful articulation of an alternative culture that can create the necessary psychological and social foundations for productive resistance and continued struggle in the face of such violence.

Articulating Antagonisms

I want to return now to the problems of totalization and false social coherence I raised earlier. I argued that the two fatalist themes I presented both stem, in part, from a focus on coherence and integration at the expense of fully evaluating areas of dissonance and antagonism. The Gramscian perspective, as it is developed above, offers a way to incorporate the slippery reality of social relations, avoiding the totalizing problem without denying or contesting the specifics of the socialist project. Indeed, this perspective offers an alternative way of framing the socialist project, or, for that matter, any other project for social change.

A Gramscian perspective allows us to avoid becoming fatalist about the potential for change in modern society. If we approach the intense expansion of capitalist social relations in terms of hegemony, it becomes easier to theorize those places where the hegemony is contested, those spaces of antagonism and dissonance. While old sites of disruption and dissonance may appear to have faded, tension remains. Consider for example the rise of numerous new forms of resistance in the ecology movements, urban justice movements, LGBT movements and the corpus of activists known as the 'movement of movements.' However, rather than leaping on these movements as

new saviors with a 'plan,' they are best seen here as evidence of the potential for resistance. Laclau and Mouffe celebrate this diverse blossoming of activism as representative of,

> the multiplicity of social relations from which antagonisms and struggles may originate: habitat, consumption, various services can all constitute terrains for the struggle against inequalities and the claiming of new rights. (Laclau and Mouffe 1985: 161)

It seems then that the potential for contesting the hegemony of capitalist social relations is not necessarily gone, but the antagonisms may have shifted in location and form. Thus, the development of a modern project of social change, informed by Gramsci, has two key elements: 1) identifying the direct relationships between particular social problems and the hegemonic value system and 2) identifying the mechanisms by which the hegemonic value system masks its relation to those problems, insinuates itself into the minds of the subordinate, and creates behavior that reenforces its primacy. This careful analysis is vital in order to accurately articulate an alternative system of values and norms, subsequently expressed through alternative social institutions and intellectual resources, aimed at dismantling hegemony by subverting it.

Thus, when Ehrenreich and Fletcher highlight the need for 'a plan,' they misunderstand the source of power for a project of social change. Forces for change cannot rely on elaborate stratagems as they risk falling into the trap of static models and totalized subjects. Instead, it is the manner in which those forces *articulate* their project that gives them power; careful articulation permits the flexibility needed to navigate shifting social realities.

For example, consider the unique historical moment in which Ehrenreich and Fletcher have sounded their call. The past twelve months have witnessed capitalist ideology come under criticism and scrutiny, the scope of which has not been seen since the early part of the 20th century. Not only have tangible problems like ecological damage and workers' rights come into public debate, but more subtle cracks in the ideological base have begun to widen to a point where even the world's wealthiest populations feel the uncertainty. These crises have provided the seedbed for frequent, public and relatively detailed discussions about the interplay of economics, society and politics - crisis literature. The discourse is wide-ranging. From the Left, much of the discourse is dominated by the socialist resurgence discussed here. On the political right, the crises have sparked deep reevaluations of conservative politics, moving away from a more or less universal support of American-style capitalism. For everything in between, the discourse draws on both of these elements, producing a vague sense of 'rupture' or instability.

However, what this amounts to is not necessarily a crisis of capitalism, but a crisis of capitalism's hegemony, that is, capitalism's ability to create in people certain modes of behaviour and expectations consistent with the hegemonic social order. Thus, the *Nation* authors' proposals of institutional confrontation and alteration are premature. In modern liberal democracies, direct confrontation (armed uprising, general strike, etc.) will not threaten the dominant groups so long as their credibility and authority is firmly supported by this hegemony. However, crises in the material world, such as those we have seen recently, *do* have the ability to weaken hegemony. Indeed, what is at stake here is the extent of capitalist ideology's hegemony. As the hegemonic cues and messages become less convincing, actors begin to shy away from those practices that previously reenforced capitalist ideology, expanding their ability and willingness to listen to counter-hegemonic alternatives.

When recognized as a hegemonic process, the focus on Revolution gives way to efforts aimed at strengthening counter-hegemonic articulatory practices. Those seeking change must develop

and disseminate discourse that offers the tools necessary conceive of different modes of life. The difficulty with fighting hegemonic domination is that the subordinator and subordinated are presented as the same, that is, the subordinated are absorbed in the system so as to mask their externality to the relations to which they are subjected. Precise, timely and appropriate counter-hegemonic articulation can drive wedges and construct (reveal) externality and antagonism. Once the subordinated are no longer be considered 'absorbed,' once there is a relationship of antagonism and a recognition of externality, a snowball effect may occur. Armed with the language of an alternative discourse, anyone becomes capable of describing (to themselves most importantly) the relations of subordination and oppression of which they are a part of.

Alternative Articulations

Thus, the question that concludes this essay is 'What does counter-hegemonic articulation look like?' Here I would like to return to Rebecca Solnit's reply to Ehrenreich and Fletcher. I have argued here that much of the crisis literature - particularly the socialist resurgence - suffers from the same problems of rigidity and narrowness that lead earlier authors to fatalism. I have tried to present this as a problem with 'ways of looking' rather than make value judgments about the socialist project in particular, largely to avoid discussions that might distract from my intended focus on processes of change.

However, it is difficult to answer this final question without addressing the way the socialist resurgence has framed this moment of unstable capitalist hegemony. As I noted above, this is a unique moment in recent history, but it should not be taken lightly or allowed to be framed in a debilitatingly rehearsed way. Unfortunately, I believe anti-capitalists of all stripes have suffered from the reanimation of well-trod 'socialism vs. capitalism' discourse. I have experienced deep frustration as this moment has been co-opted and dominated by what I feel are somewhat threadbare positions.

Of course, it could be argued that this resurgence is itself a counter-hegemonic articulatory practice, framing the moment within particular discourse, and, in a way, it is. But, interpreted in the worst way, this articulation of contemporary antagonisms seems focused more on reviving the careers and relevance of Old Left thinkers rather than fomenting forces for broad social change. Any articulatory practice must be understood as a sort of 'branding' effort. However, this portion of the socialist resurgence appears to be embracing 'branding' in a more capitalist-marketing sense, meaning it may be an articulatory practice, but it is far from counter-hegemonic. Indeed, the apparent ignorance of those activities Solnit pointed to - and Henwood's outright patronization of them - suggests that because they aren't specifically 'socialist,' they do not constitute a serious enough 'plan' for change.

But the social networks, activities and institutions Solnit highlighted may have transformative power specifically because they are not part of a broad 'plan.' I argued above that those seeking a 'plan' are making a crucial error in focusing on powerful, top-of-the-chain institutions, that is, loci of political and economic power. From a Gramscian perspective, if 'socialist planners' seek the sort of broad change hinted at in phrases like "mass democratic planning," "a new world out of the ashes of the old" or even simply a "point where the revolution seems more than a distant dream," perhaps a deeper skepticism of the social institutions of capitalist society is called for (Ehrenreich and Fletcher 2009; Duggan 2009; Moody 2009). Sassen's "small steps that would occur within capitalism" and Henwood's economic facelifts through "state action, prodded by organized and thoughtful activism" do little to address underlying social structures (Sassen 2009; Henwood 2009).

Indeed, there appears to be a basic assumption that the sphere of economic activity and the social sphere are somehow distinct from one another, that is, it would be possible to develop more sensible and egalitarian economic models on top of and in concert with the social and political institutions of the democratic capitalist state. This is a mistaken belief. These are intertwined ideological systems that affect behavior, values and expectations in astoundingly complex ways. It is not enough to simply suggest that current social structures be steered toward a more socialist paradigm; the possibility that they must be scuttled entirely needs to be taken seriously.

In contrast, the activities and practices Solnit highlighted have the potential to create entirely new social arrays, altering the expectations, values and belief systems of individuals by linking counter-hegemonic social conventions with foundational, everyday material practices. 'Gardens, childcare co-ops, bicycle lanes and farmers' markets' can combine theory with practice in ways that form strong social-material-psychological bonds, bonds that are the bedrock for developing alternative ways of living. Beyond that, these practices can and are undertaken now, today, and that gives them the power of demonstration. Rather than relying on a fetishized, instant 'Revolution' in the eternal tomorrow for movement energy and passion, these activities offer simple, predictable and demonstrable rewards today. Again, Henwood criticized Solnit's suggestions, arguing such things were "no model for running a complex industrial society" (Henwood 2009). While we might ask if that is necessarily a bad thing, Henwood is right. Taken together, these practices may not form global, national or even regionally-scaled models. However, they are powerful, even central elements of *locally-scaled* projects of social change, their power particularly evident within (though not confined to) radical communities across the US and Europe.

Social movement literature has recently begun to emerge from a primary focus on radical communities and movements' engagement with political and economic institutions, a practice that has masked the power of activism that does not directly confront such institutions and overlooked the fact that, for the majority of activists, battling with police is not generally seen as an important step towards change. In the words of John Sellers, director of the Ruckus Society, '[t]o truly be radical, you've got to go for the roots, and the cops aren't the roots' (Sellers 2004: 185).

What has emerged is a recognition that the articulation of contemporary radical politics has evolved its early focus on style, moved past a focus on confrontation with economic and political institutions, and has blossomed into a complex network of communities, organizations and institutions. Radical communities are doing their best to operate outside of those systems they wish to change, building potentially powerful foundations for their vision of another world. Heavily influenced by the DIY (Do-it-Yourself) ethic of the modern DIY/Punk community, these efforts reflect a growing understanding among activists of the important differences between reflex, reaction, and action:

> REFLEX is to get pissed off…To talk shit…To get drunk…To bicker and complain.
> REACTION is throwing bricks…It's stealing food and eating out of dumpsters… It's a defense…It's saying "NO!"
> ACTION is growing vegetables…Action is saying "yes" to community needs…It is building our own future. (Augman 2005: 236)

This Anti-Capitalist's Articulation

Given radical communities' potentially potent move towards a counter-hegemonic, culturally-

grounded, everyday forms of resistance and creation, when I encounter 'we don't have a plan, let's make one' pleas akin to Ehrenreich and Fletcher's, I can't help but feel both angry and, in many ways, scared. I'm angry when authors approach resistance discussions unaware of the work and progress being made by many, exuding an air of confidence in tired mantras and stale programs for change. I am scared that other anti-capitalist struggles may suffer because of it.

In moments like these I find myself speaking directly to these authors, on a very personal level, at times out loud and frequently through blog postings. While these outbursts are certainly not the most clearly articulated arguments, they are ardent expressions of my reaction as part of an anti-capitalist community that takes great issue with being co-opted by a Leftist vanguard and subsumed under the banner 'progressives of all stripes.' So, in the interest of helping to articulate a non-socialist anti-capitalist position, in closing, I present the following screed from my personal blog, the original inspiration for this article:

> Who is this 'We?' Because you and I do not have a plan, Ehrenreich and Fletcher, but my friends and I do. In fact, as Solnit points out, there is a whole lot of 'planning' going on that you appear unsurprisingly unaware of. Further, the implication that the flawed logic of capitalism would inevitably create a situation where, as you put it, socialist 'seizure' would occur is rather lazy. Crises in capitalism create spaces, but not the wedge needed to widen these gaps and exploit the crises. Indeed, you cannot wait for crises, you must be prepared for them and then push them over, otherwise the wounds heal and the Beast limps on.

> But again, who is 'We?' I assume you are speaking to 'socialists' and yet you try to link with 'progressives of all stripes.' But what about those progressives that take issue with activists of the 1960s and 70s stealing energy and legitimacy from today's activism with tracts like this. You're right, YOU don't have a plan. Dr. Eherereich, your United Professional, a union for "white collar workers" whose mission is to "protect and preserve the American middle class," is probably not in any shape to create the necessary institutions to support deep, radical social change.

> The assertion that there is no plan so clearly demonstrates the disengagement and false radicalism of such Dinosaurs of the Left. There is no plan that includes an Obama, as you suggest. In fact, socialist support for Obama is perfect: the co-option of farm workers' 'Si Se Puede' lends radical cred to an an upper-middle class dream: 'Yes We Can' while sipping imported Bordeaux in a million dollar loft, pleased that a soft revolution, using familiar methods in familiar routes of economic and political power, has allowed the trappings of the 'good life' to remain.

> So no, I'm sorry, 'we' don't have a plan. But while you scramble to *plan* your vision of a new world, there are many of us who have already begun to *make* a new world, one practice at a time, one day at a time. (Ruggero 2009)

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UNDERSTANDING ANARCHY: CONTEMPORARY ANARCHISM AND SOCIAL MOVEMENT THEORY

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An earlier article (Shantz 1998), written almost three years before the dramatic anarchist interventions during the Seattle WTO meetings of 1999, suggested that theories of social movements were ill-suited either for understanding or even appreciating the innovative practices and ideas then being undertaken by anarchists in North America. That article, and a series of follow-up articles, predicted the return of anarchist movements to a place of importance within anti-capitalist struggles and offered the view that sociological movement analysis would largely be taken by surprise by the development (see Shantz, 1999a; 1999b).

Unfortunately, in the years following Seattle change has been slow in coming for social movement analyses that might properly understand the political practices and visions of anarchism and their significance in the development of political movements, particularly within North America. Former Yale anthropologist David Graeber (2002: 61) uses rather bracing terms to discuss the gap that exists between social movement activists and analysts in the social sciences:

> It's hard to think of another time when there has been such a gulf between intellectuals and activists; between theorists of revolution and its practitioners. Writers who for years have been publishing essays that sound like position papers for vast social movements that do not in fact exist seem seized with confusion or worse, dismissive contempt, now that real ones are everywhere emerging. It's particularly scandalous in the case of what's still, for no particularly good reason, referred to as the 'anti-globalization' movement, one that has in a mere two or three years managed to transform completely the sense of historical possibilities for millions across the planet. This may be the result of sheer ignorance, or of relying on what might be gleaned from such overtly hostile sources as the *New York Times*; then again, most of what's written even in progressive outlets seems largely to miss the point - or at least, rarely focuses on what participants in the movement really think is most important about it.

In even more provocative terms Graeber (2002: 61) goes on to suggest that part of this gap relates to a conscious refusal on the part of some social scientists to engage with the ideas and practices of anarchism.

> Much of the hesitation, I suspect, lies in the reluctance of those who have long fancied themselves radicals of some sort to come to terms with the fact that they are really liberals: interested in expanding individual freedoms and pursuing social

justice, but not in ways that would seriously challenge the existence of reigning institutions like capital or state. And even many of those who would like to see revolutionary change might not feel entirely happy about having to accept that most of the creative energy for radical politics is now coming from anarchism - a tradition that they have hitherto mostly dismissed - and that taking this movement seriously will necessarily also mean a respectful engagement with it.

There has been, for the most part, a disconnection between studies and theories of social movements and studies and theories of direct action. Similarly, interest in movement strategies and tactics has taken a back seat to studies of movement organizations and resources, ideological frames or broader political processes or contexts (Schock, 2005).

Schock (2005) notes that the weaknesses of social movement scholarship might be addressed by drawing upon insights from the literature on direct action, which has, unfortunately, remained largely beyond the purview of social movement scholars. The primary reason for this lack of engagement between the two literatures is, according to Schock (2005), the fact that the literature on direct action draws on anarchist and Gandhian theories and philosophies that remain peripheral to mainstream sociology. At the same time, the academic literature on social movements draws heavily on Marxist theories and philosophies that are central to mainstream sociology and which privilege macro-structural analysis. Such theories also tend to emphasize the role of violence in social change, while overlooking the everyday activities that build the social or community groundwork in periods before revolutionary uprisings. Schock (2005) also notes that much of the literature on direct action is directed at activists rather than academics. This has left a gap between what he identifies as the instrumental-normative discourse of the direct action literature and the social scientific discourse of the social sciences.

In order to address this situation, with an eye toward developing alternative approaches to social movement analysis, it is important to look at the context in which new movements are emerging, especially the shifting social relations experienced in the transformation from Keynesian to neo-liberal capitalism. It is also necessary to examine the various ways in which activists have responded, and are responding, to these changing, and changed, conditions and the innovations they are constructing in terms of movement organizations and repertoires of action, as well as their development of values and ideas, strategies and tactics.

In attempting to re-think social movements in the current context I focus on overlooked or under-appreciated tactics, practices and forms of organizing that have been central to recent movement development and which pose important challenges to conventional thinking about politics. The key principles of contemporary movements that I identify and examine in the following sections of this work are affinity-based organizing, self-valorization, as discussed in autonomist Marxism, and do-it-yourself (DIY) politics, as developed in anarchist and punk movements. Taken together these aspects of movement practice express a striving for autonomy and self-determination rather than a politics of dissent or demand.

Keynesianism and the sociologoy of social movements

Theories of social movements must become attuned to the specifics of the current context and prepared to recognize the new movements and antagonisms that are only now emerging in North America. These movements necessitate a rethinking of the social movement theorizing typical of Keynesian sociology. To begin that rethinking it is useful to examine the contextual shift signaled at the level of state-society relations by transformations from a Keynesian social citizenship state to a

neo-liberal crisis state.

In the first half of the twentieth century, the threat of militant working-class movements pushed advanced capitalist societies to shift from a Rights State, in which government activity was limited largely to securing the conditions for the free market, to the social citizenship state, or what some autonomist Marxists call a Planner State. Movements in response to the "insecurity of access to the means of survival for citizens" (Del Re, 1996: 102) pushed the state to assume expanded responsibilities for the population. The social citizenship, or Planner State "administratively distributes legality so as to reintegrate the underprivileged classes within the fiction of a guaranteed community in exchange for renouncing the virtual subversiveness of difference" (Illuminati, 1996: 176). Under the Planner State the reproduction of labour power was managed by the state through the institutional networks of schools, hospitals, welfare programs and unemployment provisions (Dyer-Witheford, 1999). This is the general framework of what has come to be understood as the welfare state.

These structures of welfare under Fordist relations were based on the logic of "the reproduction of the norm of the wage relationship" (Vercellone, 1996: 84). Welfare state provisions and the distribution of social services, such as social assistance, social security, and public health represent a form of income (Del Re, 1996: 101). Part of this is a crucial shift from the sphere of production to the sphere of reproduction "where what is guaranteed and controlled (without direct links to production but nonetheless aimed at it) is the reproduction of individuals" (Del Re, 1996: 101).

Most social movement analyses in North American sociology are largely confined to the forms of the Keynesian state and those movements which emerged during the epoch of Keynesianism (or the first years of its demise). This leads to a restricted focus, as in much social movement analysis, upon statist or reformist or integrative movements and strategies. "Protesting by using the language of rights obviously means asking the State's permission for protection. 'Rights' are invoked, contested, distributed, and protected, but also limited and appointed by the law" (Del Re, 1996: 107). Mainstream social movement theories give attention to structures, organizations and practices that are relatively effective for making such rights based demands upon states or for gaining recognition or legitimacy for marginalized or "excluded" identities. All of this reflects the priorities of state-centric or integrationist politics or what has been called a politics of demand.

Craig A. Rimmerman (2001) discusses the assimilationist "civil rights strategy" that many postwar movements have adopted. These movements focus primarily on reforming the legal system to protect their constituency or identity group, gaining political access and increasing acceptance so that members might integrate into mainstream society (Rimmerman, 2001). This approach to social justice seeks to assimilate people into an inherently oppressive system founded on exploitation. Rather than a fight for the abolition of oppressive social institutions the focus is on a fight for recognition and inclusion within those institutions. It also neglects to acknowledge that equal opportunity means something quite different than liberation (Rimmerman, 2001: 56). The civil rights strategy that has been adopted by so many movements and movement theorists prioritizes people gaining the equal opportunity to be exploited, which might, of course, represent a real temporary gain but is also certainly confined within a logic that allows for the reproduction and extension of the very processes that allow for exclusion in the first place.

None of which is to dismiss or reject the significance of such movements. Rather it is a question of emphasis and the recognition of a need to understand the important emerging movements that are mobilizing, and have mobilized, according to different political priorities and for which mainstream sociological theories are less appropriate. Recognizing these limits, emerging political

movements have turned away from the politics of demand with its symbolic demonstration or marches, and towards a politics of autonomy.[1]

In many cases people do not have access to resources, in money or technology, that are deemed necessary for movement success. This is true of all situations where class inequality exists. Because of this, among other reasons, people resort to non-conventional forms of political action (Brym, 1998: 346). The last twenty years have been marked by the emergence of a wide and diverse range of social and political uprisings that have suggested important innovations in the strategies and tactics of radical movements for social change. Even more these movements have raised interesting questions about the character of what might be understood as revolutionary activity.

The emergence of crisis states

The vast social struggles of the 1960s and 1970s, including the struggles of the new social movements, began to corrode the basis of the Planner State. "Movements of workers, the unemployed, welfare recipients, students and minority groups began to make demands on the vast system of social administration that transgressed the limits set by capitalist logic" (Dyer-Witheford, 1999: 101).

These various and often overlapping cycles of struggle elicited multiple responses from the constituted authorities of state and capital. As Dyer-Witheford suggests: "In the realm of government, the Planner State is replaced by the 'Crisis State' - a regime of control by trauma" (1999: 76). Under the Crisis State, the state governs fundamentally by planning or, more commonly, simply allowing crises within the subordinate classes. Dyer-Witheford (1999: 76) suggests that the post Fordist phase, in which the Fordist organization of the social factory is dismantled "must be understood as a technological and political offensive aimed a decomposing social insubordination."

The Crisis State emerges as part of shifting forms of accumulation, notably the projects of capitalist globalization "in which certain sectors throughout the world, capital is moving away from dependence on large-scale industries toward new forms of production that involve more immaterial and cybernetic forms of labor, flexible and precarious networks of employment, and commodities increasingly defined in terms of culture and media" (Hardt, 1996: 4). This might be called "the post-modernization of production." These new forms of production marked a radical break from the Fordist arrangement of mass concentrations of labor power and have impacted the conditions under which opposition movements might be expected to emerge and the types of strategies and practices they might be encouraged to undertake.

Recent transformations to bring the state more in line with the needs of global capital have led to the emergence of what might be called a "crisis state"[2] which claims to be feeble in the face of global forces while flexing its muscles against the poor and oppressed. Ruling elites have been hard at work removing reforms won from capital, through great struggles, over the past century. Social programs continue to be dismantled with cuts to health care and public education, the introduction of new anti-labour legislation, restrictions upon social assistance (and workers' compensation and unemployment insurance), and "loosened" environmental regulations being among the more familiar minarchist initiatives. Rather than offering a "safety net" or some manner of "social security," these policies create various crises within the working classes of Western industrial nations,

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1   Anarchists are respectful of the reforms which oppressed people have been able to secure and especially of the struggles it has taken to win those reforms. Anarchists actively defend those reforms against neo-liberal governments and their capitalist backers who seek to dismantle them. At the same time anarchists do not privilege reforms as ends but view them as reified moments of struggle.

2   See Antonio Negri (1989).

crises which undermine attempts to expand demands for services or to resist transformations which favour capital.

Notably these policies have been embraced by mainstream political parties of both the Left and the Right. In the U.S., for example, the Democratic Party has routinely adopted positions quite similar to the Republicans on matters such as welfare, affirmative action and NAFTA. One sees similar shifts in Britain and Australia under so-called Labour governments. In response to this convergence, anarchists refer to the "Republicrats," signifying their belief that there is no difference between these parties of the ruling classes. Anarchists mobilize against Republicrat policies which advocate building more prisons and developing tougher sentencing practices including mandatory terms. For anarchists such policies appeal only to "racist crime hysteria" (Subways, 1996: 11) and sentiments which demonize the poor.

These "crisis state" transformations have given shape to an austerity politics with the conversion of the Welfare State into a penal state, the primary function of which is understood to serve as a law and order mechanism. Worthy social services now include boot camps, "workfare", changes to Young Offenders legislation, and violent repression of peaceful demonstrations and contravention of previously recognized rights to freedom of speech and assembly. Dismantling of the Welfare State, without simultaneously developing adequate alternatives, has meant an increase in poverty and more extreme disparities between rich and poor (Heider, 1994). These conditions have been ideologically justified through a vigorous redeployment of *laissez-faire* discourses. The broken record of *neo*-liberal policies, in harmony with manipulated debt "crises" and a chorus of pleas for competitiveness, have provided the soundtrack for the current box office smash, "Return to 19th-Century Capitalism."

Lines of affinity

Among the most notable forms of resistance recently have been the variety of "new poor people's movements that have emerged since from the late 1980s to today in response, partly, to the intensifying destruction of social safety nets" (Dyer-Witheford, 1999: 103). Significantly, these movements have refused confinement within the parameters of actions or activism considered appropriate for "responsible citizens." Beyond the practices of civil disobedience characteristic of many new social movements, these new poor people's movements have developed and practiced a diverse repertoire of "uncivil practices." These movements are engaged in projects to develop democratic and autonomous communities/social relations beyond political representation and hierarchy. The political significance of their politics is found less in the immediate aims of particular actions or in the immediate costs to capital and the state but "more in our *creation of a climate of autonomy, disobedience and resistance*" (*Aufheben*, 1998: 107).

Contemporary movements for autonomy, of which anarchists are a major part, take a critical stance with regard to the statism of both the revolutionary left and the more reformist social movements. For anarchists both so-called revolutionary and so-called reformist positions converge around a representational politics that substitutes a generally hierarchical and authoritarian form of organization for a politics of self-determination and autonomy. As the editors of the libertarian communist newspaper *Aufheben* suggest: "What both leftist and eco-reformist positions have in common is that they both look outside ourselves and our struggles for the real agent of change, the real historical subject: leftists look to 'the party' while eco-reformists look to parliament" (1998: 106).

Key aspects of movements such as anarchism include an emphasis on autonomy and the construction

of alternative social structures (Hardt, 1996). Through the daily experiences of "thoroughgoing struggle" these movements constitute "a *positive pointer* to the kind of social relations that could exist: no money, the end of exchange values, communal living, no wage labour, no ownership of space" (*Aufheben*, 1998: 110). Autonomist Marxists refer to these radical and participatory forms of democracy which thrive "outside the power of the State and its mechanisms of representation" as a constituent power, "a free association of constitutive social forces" (Hardt, 1996: 5-6).

For many contemporary anarchists, including prominent commentators such as Richard Day and David Graeber, those who conceive of theory as a struggle against power work according to a logic of affinity rather than a logic of hegemony. This logic of affinity, which includes inter-subjective reasoning as one of its modes, also involves typically discounted affects such as passion, strategy, rhetoric and style (Day, 2001: 23).

> This mode of shared decision-making in a terrain of undecidability, this kind of community, cannot take the form of a *Sittlichkeit*, or even a multicultural *civitas*. It cannot, in fact, be a community at all as these are currently conceived. Rather, individuals and groups linked by affinities that are temporary and always shifting are best seen as examples of what Giorgio Agamben has called "coming" communities (Day, 2001: 23).

In my view glimpses of these coming communities, are already here, prefigured in the *bunde* or affinity groups and heterotopias of contemporary anarchism.

As Epstein (2001: 10) and others suggest:

> This anarchist form of organization makes it possible for groups that disagree in some respects to collaborate in regard to common aims. At the demonstrations in Quebec City in May 2001, affinity groups formed sectors defined by their willingness to engage in or tolerate violence, ranging from those committed to nonviolence to those intending to use "unconventional tactics." This structure made it possible to incorporate groups which otherwise would not have been able to participate in the same demonstration.

This non-centralized and adaptive form of organization allows for an inclusive movement that is open to a diversity of tactics, perspectives and goals. This is an important aspect of organizing in a post-Fordist context as participants eschew the more stable forms of organization such as unions or community groups in favour of a flexible and variable coming together of generally small affinity groups.

Hetherington (1992: 92) suggests that the emergence of such groups relates to two specific processes: "the deregulation through modernization and individualization of the modern forms of solidarity and identity" and the "recomposition into 'tribal' identities and forms of sociation." Transformations in capitalist economies encourage reflexive forms of individualism which are not easily referred to such structural characteristics as class.

> These non-ascriptive 'neo-Tribes' as Maffesoli calls them, are inherently unstable and not fixed by any of the established parameters of modern society; instead they are maintained through shared beliefs, styles of life, an expressive body-centredness, new moral beliefs and senses of injustice, and significantly through consumption practices. (Hetherington, 1992: 93)

It is suggested by Hetherington that the concept *Bund*, expressing an intense form of solidarity which is highly unstable and which requires ongoing maintenance through symbolic interaction, better expresses the character of these forms of sociation than does community. Active involvement in anarchist projects provides participants with important experiences and lessons in solidarity, mutual aid and collective action, all cornerstones of anarchist politics.

According to Epstein (2001: 2) the anarchist practice "combines both ideology and imagination, expressing its fundamentally moral perspective through actions that are intended to make power visible (in your face) while undermining it." For anarchists, the convergence between ideology and organization is crucial.

It is not opposed to organization. It is about creating new forms of organization. It is not lacking in ideology. Those new forms of organization *are* its ideology. It is about creating and enacting horizontal networks instead of top-down structures like states, parties or corporations; networks based on principles of decentralized, non-hierarchical consensus democracy. Ultimately it aspires to reinvent daily life as whole. (Graeber, 2002: 70)

Anarchist tactics, such as black blocs, exhibit another characteristic of *bunde*, as described by Epstein (2001: 2) who suggests that "today's anarchist activists draw upon a current of morally charged and expressive politics." This moral approach to politics is expressed through a focus on tactics of direct action. As Graeber (2002: 62) suggests, direct action tactics like the black bloc are symbolic of the "rejection of a politics which appeals to governments to modify their behaviour, in favour of physical intervention against state [and capitalist] power."

Beyond affinity

Recent celebrations of the supposed newness of anarchist affinity groups, as offered especially by Richard Day and David Graeber, neglect important debates and developments within actual anarchist projects. They also fail to contextualize affinity as itself a contested and varied aspect of broader practices and relations that are engaged in what might be called anti-systemic struggles. Thus neither Graeber nor Day offer much engagement with critics who offer cautions about the limits of uncritical celebrations of affinity-based lifestyles within contemporary anarchism. Similarly they have little to say about the renewal of explicitly class struggle oriented forms of anarchism that have emerged recently as contemporary anarchists come up against limits in the politics of affinity. Thus, where class struggle anarchism, or anarchist communism, is addressed at all, Graeber, explicitly and Day, implicitly, relegate these manifestations of anarchist organizing to the status of anachronistic holdover from a so-called "old anarchism" (see Graeber, 2002).

Affinity, which because of its playful and affective expression within anarchist movements has gained the most attention from recent anarchist theorists, especially those informed by sociological and anthropological perspectives, is perhaps not even the most significant aspect of contemporary anarchist politics. While affinity is crucial in developing networks and cycles of struggle, clearly in terms of contesting state and capital, affinity is not enough.

Much of new social movement theory, including the new anarchist social science, is based on a premise that capitalist societies have entered a "post-modern" age in which conflict over class has given way to cultural issues. Certainly the class locations of participants within recent social movements (especially students and radical youth) and the issues raised by those movements (environmentalism, gay and lesbian rights, feminism) have posed a compelling challenge to class analyses.

Clearly new categories of subordination have have emerged as points for mobilization. Recognition of these categories and the practices which sustain them is important in overcoming the economism of much of Marxist theory. Explanations which view new movement issues as secondary to class or as diversions from class struggles are obviously inadequate. Class must be contextualized as it is lived and the lived experience of class includes problems of race, gender, sexuality and environment.

However, the actions of new social movements also have real effects upon the exercise of property rights and state power (Adam, 1992: 39). "To confine them to a form of cultural expression is to ignore their effects on the amplification of civil liberties, on curbing the violence of state and capitalist institutions, and on more equitable distribution by employers and bureaucrats" (Adam, 1992: 39). As several authors (Adam, 1992: Darnovsky, 1995: Starn, 1997: Tarrow, 1994) stress, social movements are resistant to unicausal explanations. As Starn (1997: 235) suggests, the decision to mobilize "underscores the need to insist on social analysis that avoids the extremes of an ungrounded culturalism or a deterministic economism to examine the inseparable intertwining of cultural meaning and political economy in human experience."

Even movements which are viewed as being expressive of "new values," such as environmentalism, have interesting intersections with class movements which are largely excluded in new movement theories. Adam (1992: 46) raises, for example, the significant and sustained efforts of union health-and-safety committees to control industrial impacts upon nature. To separate these efforts from "environmentalism" proper is purely arbitrary. This is especially so if one considers that environmental contaminants and their consequences are concentrated and most severely felt in working-class communities.

Against claims that new social movements reflect a shift to "post-industrialism" or "post-modernism" Adam (1992: 50) further points out that "all of these movements have representation in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and Eastern Europe." Similarly, Starn (1997) finds new movement themes and strivings in the mobilization of Andean peasants who have hardly moved beyond conflicts over property and the government. Additionally recent movements against global trade organizations such as the WTO and IMF and World Bank have strongly challenged the imperialist practices of global capital and its agents in national states.

In the face of economic restructuring and "downsizing," dismantled social services and declines in real wages since the mid-1970s one might well conclude with Brym (1998: 475) that the claim that most people in industrialized nations are satisfied materially is quite dubious. Likewise increased levels of poverty and homelessness forcefully suggest that conflicts over class, property and government, far from diminishing, have become more prevalent in the first years of the 21st Century. Theories which ignore political economy in favour of cultural issues or "postmodern values" do a disservice by denying the ways in which the origins, identities, and development of subordinated categories of people remain fully rooted in the dynamics of advanced capitalism.

Both Adam (1992) and Brym (1998) argue that the focus on social movement "newness" reflects a short historical memory. Adam (1992: 46) suggests that the perception of movement newness more likely results from a new recognition of movements which had long been discounted or devalued or a revival of movements after decades of Nazi, Stalinist or McCarthyite repression.

What is now necessary is an explanatory framework which accounts for the intersection of cultural transformations with both the ongoing and emerging practices of the state and capital. "To ignore

the dynamics of capitalist development, the role of labour markets in reorganizing spatial and family relations, and the interaction of new and traditional categories of people with dis/employment patterns is to ignore the structural prerequisites that have made the new social movements not only possible, but also predictable" (Adam, 1992: 56). Analyses which ignore political economy also fail to understand the lived experiences through which new movement identities and practices emerge and the ways in which they are related to state and capital.

Do-it-yourself class struggle: self-valorization

The new subjectivities emerging from the transition to neo-liberalism have sought to contest and overcome the impositions of productive flexibility within regimes of capitalist globalization. Rather than accepting the emerging socio-political terrain or, alternatively and more commonly, attempting to restrain it within the familiar territories of the welfare state, recent movements have "appropriated the social terrain as a space of struggle and self-valorization" (Vercellone, 1996: 84).

For many contemporary activists and theorists the concept of self-valorization offers an important starting point for thinking about "the circuits that constitute an alternative sociality, autonomous from the control of the State or capital" (Hardt, 1996: 6). Originating in autonomist Marxist reflections on the social movements that emerged most notably in Italy during the intense struggles of the 1970s, the idea of self-valorization has influenced a range of libertarian communist and anarchist writers. As Hardt (1996: 3) suggests:

> Self-valorization was a principal concept that circulated in the movements, referring to social forms and structures of value that were relatively autonomous from and posed an effective alternative to capitalist circuits of valorization. Self-valorization was thought of as the building block for constructing a new form of sociality, a new society.

A key aspect of self-valorizing, affinity-based politics is a focus on direct action tactics and do-it-yourself (DIY) activities. For participants in a diversity of contemporary movement groups, DIY activities offer a context for coming together, a shared opportunity for mutual expression and, perhaps most significantly, unalienated labor. Contemporary usage of the term DIY in underground movements comes from punk rock and its visceral attack on the professionalization of rock and the related distance between fans and rock stars. This anti-hierarchical perspective and the practices that flow from it are inspired by a deep longing for self-determined activity that eschews reliance on the products of corporate culture.

As an alternative to the market valorization and production for profit embodied in corporate enterprises, anarchist DIYers turn to self-valorizing production rooted in the needs, experiences and desires of specific communities. In place of a consumerist ethos that encourages consumption of ready-made items, anarchists adopt a productivist ethos that attempts a re-integration of production and consumption.

It is perhaps highly telling that in an age of multinational media conglomerates and gargantuan publishing monopolies a number of younger people have turned towards artisanal forms of craft production in order to produce and distribute what are often very personal works. Even more than this, however, are the means of production, involving collective decision-making as well as collective labor in which participants are involved, to the degree that they wish to be, in all aspects of the process from conception through to distribution.

While cultural theorist Walter Benjamin spoke of disenchantment in the "age of mechanical reproduction," DIY projects offer expressions of re-enchantment or authenticity. This authenticity is grounded at least in the sense that such works help to overcome the division between head and hand that reflects the division of labor in a society of mass-produced representation. As attempts to overcome alienation and address concerns with overly mediated activities, DIY activities suggest a striving for what an earlier era might have called control over the means of production and what has now come to include control over the means of representation. Perhaps ironically this has been aided by the availability of inexpensive desk top publishing and other means of "mechanical reproduction" since the 1980s (though not all anarchists choose to use it).

Along with DIY production often comes the collective production of alternative subjectivities. For many the content as well as the process of DIY production expresses a confrontation with the cultural codes of everyday life. While such activities express a variety of styles and viewpoints, they tend to present a vision of a desired society which is participatory and democratic. In production, content and, often through distribution in gift economies, they advocate active production of culture rather than passive consumption of cultural (or even entertainment) commodities. Self-production provides an opportunity for producers to act against the proprietorship of information. Most DIY literature, for example, is produced as anti-copyrights or as "copylefts" and sharing of material is encouraged. Indeed as a key part of gift economies, DIY takes on an important place in experimenting with communities that are not organized around market principles of exchange value. They help to create a culture of self-valorization rather than giving creativity over to the logics of surplus value.

Twentieth century notions of self-valorization echo the arguments made by classical anarchist communists such as Kropotkin and Reclus, regarding the construction of grassroots forms of welfare developed through mutual aid societies. Self-valorization is one way by which a variety of recent theorists have sought to identify social forms of welfare that might constitute alternative networks outside of state control (Hardt, 1996; see Vercellone, 1996 and Del Re, 1996). As Del Re (1996: 110) suggests, part of the new parameters for change includes "the proposal to go beyond welfare by taking as our goal the improvement of the quality of life, starting from the reorganization of the time of our lives."

For radical political theorists in Italy, the experiences of the social movements "show the possibilities of alternative forms of welfare in which systems of aid and socialization are separated from State control and situated instead in autonomous social networks. These alternative experiments may show how systems of social welfare will survive the crisis of the Welfare State" (Vercellone, 1996: 81). These systems of social welfare, however, are based on social solidarity outside of state control through practices of autonomous self-management. Beyond providing necessary services these practices are geared towards freeing people from the necessity of waged labour, of valorization for capital.

We might refer to Manuel Castells, Shujiro Yazawa and Emma Kiselyova in suggesting that autonomy movements offer "alternative visions and projects of social transformation that reject the patterns of domination, exploitation and exclusion embedded in the current forms of globalization" (1996: 22). In constructing these alternatives, anarchists often develop practices that disrupt the smooth functioning of capitalist economics or liberal democratic politics. This suggests, following sociologist Leslie Sklair, that that anarchist movements exemplify a "disruption" model of social movements and resistance to capitalism which does not seek an organizational model that would allow for greater integration within mainstream political channels. Through

their uncompromising rhetoric and immodest strategies anarchist movements resist attempts to divert their disruptive force into normal politics. Activists attempt to reject the entire context within which they can be either marginalized or assimilated; they occupy their own ground. Thus one must also move beyond Sklair's focus on disruptive politics to look at the constructive projects which make up so much of contemporary anarchism.

Politics which impede the capacities of states and capital to impose their global agenda offer possible beginnings for revolutionary politics in an age when many thought revolutionary politics had run their course. The collapse of authoritarian communism and the seeming triumph of neo-liberal capital throughout much of the world led many to lower their sights to little more than a radical democracy. Anarchism shatters such "end of history" scenarios and provides a radical vision for the renewal of struggles for a future beyond statist capitalism.

Towards the coming communities?

For anarchist sociologist Richard Day, today we require an analysis of the relation of projects of social transformation with "actually existing democracy." Despite the contributions of the liberal-democratic state (redistribution of wealth, "rights" enforcement), liberal democracy "remains a frighteningly arborescent form which relies upon dead power to achieve its effects." The analysis undertaken by contemporary anarchists is, for Day, compatible with a move away from subject positions associated with the system of liberal-capitalist nation-states, in favour of identifications produced by what Giorgio Agamben has called "coming communities." Such a perspective provides a way to think about "community without universality" and "history without teleology." For Agamben the task of contemporary politics will no longer be "a struggle for conquest or control" of power as domination, but will involve the creation of "a community with neither presuppositions nor a State"

Day rejects the idea of a radically democratic society, especially as expressed in the works of Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, because it maintains a global-singular level of community with a specific identity which would contain a plurality of spaces. As I have argued above, and as has been suggested in an earlier work (see Shantz, 1998), this radical democratic vision has generally appeared as something like "global civil society" or cosmopolitan democracy or cosmopolitan citizenship.

> It would seem that this form of radical democracy is reliant upon something akin to, if not formally identical with, the nation-states that make up the current system of states, within which 'the liberal institutions - parliament, elections, divisions of power - are maintained' (Day, 2001: 34)

In both Marxist and social democratic visions the answer to questions posed by the presence of difference within subordinate groups and movements has been the unifying space of the party. For Day, contemporary radical projects seek alternatives that may not be in need of a universalistic component.

> Rather, let us imagine that they will thrive only as a multiplicity of coming communities, working together and in disparateness to simultaneously ward off corporate, national and state identifications, and to nurture new forms of creative commonality (2001: 36)

For Hakim Bey, another anarchist writer influenced by poststructuralist theories, the greatest hope for resistance (revolution) rests in the assertion of difference against capitalist hegemonism (sameness).

Difference is revolutionary in an age of one-world capitalist globality precisely because it disrupts the single-world, the mono-culture (1996: 25). To be revolutionary, however, particularity must not seek hegemony, it must remain anti-hegemonistic in character. As in classical anarchism, the two forces of the opposition are autonomy and federation. Autonomy without federation would be reaction, whereas federation without autonomy would end self-determination. Authentic difference is non-hegemonic and must be defended against the hegemonism of reaction (and capital). Against (one world) sameness and separation, difference and presence. Bey's favourite example of revolutionary difference, and indeed the favourite of many anarchists including Graeber and Day, is the Zapatistas of Mexico because they defend their difference (as Mayans) without asking others to become Mayans.

Conclusion

Anarchy encourages a critical re-conceptualization of politics as currently constituted. It offers a glimpse of politics which refuse containment by any of the usual containers such as protest, "civil disobedience" or the state. Thus, it may further challenge the meanings of sovereignty in the current context. Such manifestations may open spaces for a (re)constitution of politics by destabilizing tendencies towards enclosure of any totalizing discourse, be it one of state, class or identity. Just as global transformations de-stabilize "state-as-container" metaphors, reformulations of identity and community as in anarchism de-stabilize "identity-as-container" notions. Political spaces are created in defiance of political containers.

Following Castells, Yazawa and Kiselyova (1996), one might suggest that autonomy movements respond to the processes of social precarization and cultural alienation currently associated with global processes of governance by challenging the global order, disrupting circuits of exploitation and asserting counter-institutions. Attempts are made to (re)construct cultural meaning through specific patterns of experience in which participants create meaning against the logics of global intrusions which would render them meaningless. Radical social movement alliances are largely engaged in transforming the normative cultural and political codes of emerging global relations.

Autonomy movements are movements involving individuals, social groups or territories excluded or made irrelevant by the "new world order". This distinguishes them somewhat from institutional global social movements which seek increased participation by members who are not yet rendered irrelevant (and who thus have something with which to bargain). In any event, how does one ask a global (or national) body to grant the "subversion of the dominant paradigm" or the "liberation of desire?"

Theory requires a more sophisticated understanding of those struggles which allow for the (re)production of categories, which inhibit or encourage the forging of community or solidarity, and which prevent alternatives from emerging. Conventional social theories have failed to recognize alternatives, in part due to their uncritical acceptance of dubious metaphors. Studies of social movements have under-theorized the significance of "unreasonable" or affective aspects of movement behaviour. The present work offers an attempt to understand such "unreasonable" discursive strategies, beyond condemnation (or rejection) as illegitimate or impractical. "Interests and groups defined as marginal because they have become 'disturbances' in the system of social integration are precisely the struggles which may be the most significant from the point of view of historical emancipation from social hierarchy and domination [emphasis in original]" (Aronowitz, 1990: 111). Anarchy asks us why we should assume that a "global civil society" will be any better than the civil society that brought poverty, homelessness, racism, and ecological annihilation in the first place.

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BOOK REVIEW

Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America,
by Douglas R. Egerton
Oxford University Press, 2009, 342 pages, hardcover,

Reviewer: Ed Kinane

True Revolutionaries

When words are not used with care, ignorance deepens. Damage is done when those mischosen words relate to vital matters: our origins, our identity, or our values and aspirations.

We grew up hearing about the "American Revolution." But both those words mislead. Our custom of calling that war "American" is pretentious. The war was confined mostly to a narrow swath along part of the east coast of the northern temperate zone of the Western Hemisphere. Here in the US we call ourselves "Americans" oblivious to all those hundreds of millions living in Canada, Mexico, Central America and South America. The inhabitants of these immense regions are no less "American" than we are.

And what is a "revolution"? To my mind, a revolution is a 180-degree change in the power structure and in socioeconomic arrangements. Does the so-called American Revolution qualify as that?

I was well along in years before I realized that what I had been taught was a revolution was really a militant rightwing demand for tax cuts – a demand resulting in colonies seceding from their ruling country. And it was not until I had read Howard Zinn's 1980 classic, *A People's History of the United States*, that I realized that the "American Revolution" was no revolution. For most people then living in the 13 colonies -- women, Native Americans, working class whites…or slaves – the "revolution" was not even a reform.

The historian Douglas R. Egerton focuses his work on US slavery and recently published his sixth book *Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America*. It explores how the revolutionary- i.e. egalitarian and liberatory - *rhetoric* of our nation's founders affected enslaved African Americans. The founders' pithy and stirring truth "all men are created equal," was a slogan they did not want their human chattel to hear.

Many of our founders – George Washington and Thomas Jefferson foremost among them – were slaveholders. Many had no intention of giving up that source of their wealth. (John Adams was a notable exception; Benjamin Franklin was a small-scale slaveholder turned abolitionist.)

Death or Liberty is well-researched and well-documented. Perhaps its most telling document is the

painting on its cover, "The Death of Major Peirson, 6 January 1781." That colorful painting, by the 18th century Boston-born artist, John Singleton Copley, depicts the British officer dying in pitched battle. In contrast to the blond, supine, expiring major, and equally central to the painting, is an elegantly arrayed African American rifleman fiercely fighting alongside the red coats.

Truth is, until reading Egerton, I had not given much thought to the role of slaves in the "American Revolution." Nor had I imagined them fighting against their "revolutionary" masters on behalf of the invading Brits. But fight they did. And in the thousands they and their families fled to British lines seeking freedom.

Egerton's book opens our eyes to African American to their enslavement. Not waiting for some emancipator, in the 1780s and 90s and thereafter, many sought to escape bondage. In the chaos of war some fled into the anonymity of urban slums mingling with free blacks or escaped to work on seafaring ships. Others, risking torture if caught, tramped north to Canada, south to Spanish Florida or west beyond the frontier.

But many slaves sided with one or the other of the clashing armies and navies – whichever side seemed to promise the best chance of freedom. For many that promise went mostly unfulfilled. Either the "revolutionaries" at war's end failed to free their black allies or the Brits dumped *their* black allies in chilly, hostile Nova Scotia or along the British-ruled west coast of Africa.

For me, Egerton's narratives of particular slaves and their fates raise the question of the human spirit. Clearly, the African slaves, male and female, endured enormous pain and privation. How much hypocrisy, humiliation, servitude and torture will a human tolerate before taking drastic steps?

Death or Liberty shows the emptiness of "revolutionary" rhetoric in the face of slavery's contradictions and coercions. It also shows how the bloody and protracted slave revolt against French planters in Haiti, culminating in Black victory in 1804, helped incite Black resistance and militancy in the newly constituted United States.

The Haitian slave revolt, considered the only successful slave revolt in history, preceded certain violent, but aborted, slave revolts – like Denmark Vesey's – in the US. This spread of truly revolutionary fervor from the Caribbean to the US mainland makes for a fascinating story. When French refugees from Haiti, with their African house slaves in tow, arrived in Virginia and other states, the news of the Africans' Haiti uprising could not be contained.

While it may have been outside Edgerton's scope, I wish he had at least briefly explored the link between the rhetoric of the "American Revolution," and that of the 1789 French Revolution ("*liberté, egalité, fraternité*"). In neither case was the rhetoric meant to apply to black chattel. But in both cases those Africans – the true revolutionaries – took those inspiring words to heart.

I am not clear, though, after reading this useful book, to what extent those revolutionaries needed the prod of "White" ideals - or whether those self-emancipators simply heeded their own innate sense of human dignity.

Kinane, an activist, editor and writer based in the USA, can be reached at edkinane@verizon.net. He was active with Peace Brigades International in Haiti, Latin America, and Sri Lanka, and active with Voices in the Wilderness in Iraq in 2003.

UPCOMING, NEW AND NOTEWORTHY BOOK PUBLICATIONS

People Power: Unarmed Resistance and Global Solidarity
Howard Clark | Pluto Press Sep 2009 | 0-745-32901-2
Across the world, nonviolent movements are in the forefront of resistance against repression, imperial aggression and corporate abuse. However, it is often difficult for activists in other countries to know how best to assist such movements. The contributors to Unarmed Resistance and Global Solidarity place nonviolent struggles in an international context where solidarity can play a crucial role. Yet they also warn that good intentions are not enough, solidarity has to listen to local movements. Using clear examples, the contributors assess various forms of solidarity, criticizing those in the global North who try to impose their view of what is possible and arguing that a central role of solidarity is to strengthen the counter-power of those resisting domination and oppression.

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Readings on Social Movements. Origins, Dynamics, and Outcomes (2nd Ed.)
Doug McAdam and David A. Snow | Oxford University Press Jun 2009 | 0-195-38455-5
A comprehensive and timely anthology, this wide-ranging, authoritative compilation by two of the best scholars in the field features the most salient research and articles available on social movements.

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Title: Civil Resistance and Power Politics The Experience of Non-violent Action from Gandhi to the Present
Adam Roberts and Timothy Garton Ash | Oxford University Press Oct 2009 | 0-199-55201-0
This book tells the compelling story of each of the major campaigns of civil resistance that have shaped our world over the last century.

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Wretched Rebels. Rural Disturbances on the Eve of the Chinese Revolution
Lucien Bianco; Translated by Philip Liddell | Harvard University Press Jan 2010 | 0-674-03542-9
This book, a condensed translation of the prize- winning Jacqueries et révolution dans la Chine du XXe siècle, focuses on "spontaneous" rural unrest, uninfluenced by revolutionary intellectuals.

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The Making of a Human Bomb: An Ethnography of Palestinian Resistance
Nasser Abufarha | Duke University Press Jul 2009 | 0-8223-4439-4
In The Making of a Human Bomb, Nasser Abufarha, a Palestinian anthropologist, explains the cultural logic underlying Palestinian martyrdom operations (suicide attacks) launched against Israel during the Al-Aqsa Intifada (2000-06).

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We fight to win. Inequality and the Politics of Youth Activism

Hava Rachel Gordon | Rutgers Nov 2009 | 978-0-8135-4670-4

In an adult-dominated society, teenagers are often shut out of participation in politics. We Fight to Win offers a compelling account of young people's attempts to get involved in community politics, and documents the battles waged to form youth movements and create social change in schools and neighborhoods.

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Encyclopedia of Social Movement Media

John D H Downing | SAGE Publications Aug 2010 | 978-0-7619-2688-7

The one-volume encyclopedia will include around 250 essays on the varied experiences of social movement media across the planet over the 20th and 21st centuries. It will also contain thematic essays on selected issues such as human rights media, indigenous people's media, and environmentalist media, and on key concepts widely used in the field—e.g. 'alternative media,' 'citizens' media,' 'community media,' and 'social movement media.' The encyclopedia engages with all communication media: broadcasting, print, cinema, the Internet, popular song, street theatre, graffiti, dance. Some entries address social movement media of the extreme right. The entries in the encyclopedia are designed to be relatively short, providing clear, accessible, and current information on a topic

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Making Feminist Sense of the Global Justice Movement

Catherine Eschle and Bice Maiguashca | Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Dec 2009 | 0-7425-5592-5

In recent years, the global justice movement has grabbed headlines and reshaped political imaginations worldwide. Surprisingly, however, feminism is largely absent from accounts of the movement—despite the fact that feminists are extensively involved on the ground. Addressing this significant gap in the literature, Eschle and Maiguashca shine a powerful light on what they term "feminist antiglobalization activism." Drawing on their fieldwork at the World Social Forum and European Social Forum, 2003–2005, they begin by outlining the vital role of feminist antiglobalization activism in Forum processes and events while also emphasising its diversity. The authors then trace the origins of this activism, the critiques and aspirations of those involved, their political practices beyond the Forum, and their efforts to forge a sense of solidarity among themselves and with others. Taking feminism seriously, Eschle and Maiguashca conclude, points us toward a richer and more theoretically nuanced understanding of the global justice movement and its struggle for other possible worlds. Their book thus offers vital insights not only for feminists, but also for all those interested in contemporary social movements and in global governance and resistance.

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Globalization and Postcolonialism: Hegemony and Resistance in the Twenty-first Century

Sankaran Krishna | Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. Dec 2008 | 0-7425-5467-8

Globalization has become a widely used buzzword, yet popular discussions often miss its deeper realities. This book offers the first clear explanation of the impact of colonialist legacies in a globalized world in an era defined by the "War on Terror." Sankaran Krishna explores the history of the relationship between Western dominance and the forms of resistance that have emerged to challenge it. Moving beyond the simple formulation of "They hate us because we are rich, we are free, and they are crazy," he asks, "What have we done that might generate such animosity? What face has the United States presented to the developing world over time?

Krishna argues that we live on an interrelated globe, that history matters a great deal in constructing contemporary realities, and that others create stories or narratives about the world based on their experiences just as we do based on ours. He contends that the interactions between the West and the non-West have not been politically innocent, economically egalitarian, or culturally benign in their consequences. Presenting a lucid exploration of the intertwined histories of both globalization and postcolonialism, this book uses compelling real-world examples to make sense of this crucial relationship.

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Contesting Patriotism: Culture, Power, and Strategy in the Peace Movement

Lynne M. Woehrle, Patrick G. Coy, and Gregory M. Maney | Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc. 2008 | 0-7425-6448-7

During war, space for debate shrinks. Narrow ideas of patriotism and democracy marginalize and silence opposition to militarism abroad and repression at home. Although powerful, these ideas encounter widespread resistance. Analyzing the official statements of 15 organizations from 1990-2005, the authors show that the U.S. peace movement strongly contested taken-for-granted assumptions regarding nationalism, religion, security, and global justice.
Contesting Patriotism engages cutting-edge theories in social movements research to understand the ways that activists promote peace through their words. Concepts of culture, power, strategy, and identity are used to explain how movement organizations and activists contribute to social change. The diversity of organizations and conflicts studied make this book a unique and important contribution to peacebuilding and to social movements scholarship.

Engaging Social Justice: Critical Studies of 21st Century Social Transformation

David Fasenfest | Brill Publishing 2009 |978-90-04-17654-6

The global economic collapse of 2008 has brought into sharp relief the penetration of global capitalism and its impact on working people both in the industrial core and in developing nations. In response, social movements challenging the World Trade Organization and annual gathering of progressive groups and NGOs at the World Social Forums have embarked on the goal of creating an alternative to the neo-liberal policies that have immiserated generations. The articles in this book address the need for a progressive pedagogy, highlight the organizational forms of resistance to capitalism, and explore new forms of struggles against capitalist practices by people throughout the world.